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Crusading Quilts: Social Reform and the Woman's Christian Temperance Union

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CRUSADING QUILTS: SOCIAL REFORM AND THE WOMAN’S CHRISTIAN TEMPERANCE UNION

By Amanda Lensch

OPTION II EXHIBITION PROJECT

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background

I selected the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union as the core idea for my online exhibition project because upon entering the University of Nebraska-Lincoln’s (UNL) Quilt Studies program, I became intrigued by the topic of quilting for a cause. This is not only because of its current popularity, but also because of its long-standing history. For centuries this activity has manifested itself in the hearts and hands of women, whose philanthropic hearts have turned to needle and thread in order to express their love and support for a particular cause. I began researching different aspects of quilting for a cause for this exhibition project including quilts made to support a war effort, quilts to support medical and health challenges faced by individuals and society as a whole, and quilts made in support of religious organizations and social causes.

In order to create a cohesive and effective online exhibition, it became clear that this topic should be narrowed. Thus I decided to focus on the quilts made by women who supported a single organization. After deliberating among the possible organizations, I selected the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU). This selection was based on the fact that the WCTU has a long history, representing one of the most popular and influential social reform organizations of the Progressive Era. It is also an organization that sparked the making of many quilts between 1874 and 1920 - its heyday. The WCTU is still in existence today, although it has declined in popularity and influence since the 1920s.\(^1\) The WCTU’s history of utilizing quilts to demonstrate support of its causes made it a natural choice for examination of the overarching theme of quilting for a cause.

The WCTU has solidified its place within American social history as a significant and highly influential social reform organization. Consequently, it has often been the subject of
scholarly study. This exhibition examined the WCTU through the lens of the quilts its members made, while simultaneously highlighting how quilts can be used to support a cause. This exhibition provided a visual microhistory of a larger movement of women who quilted for social causes and for philanthropic reasons.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this project was to showcase the commitment, compassion, and creativity that women have exhibited on behalf of social causes, specifically the WCTU, through the act and art of quiltmaking. There was evidence that quilting extends far beyond the reaches of hobby or artistic expression, and moves into the realm of social activism and philanthropy. This phenomenon was demonstrated through this online exhibition.

**Limitations**

There were several limitations to this study, including: 1) the decision to focus solely on one organization, 2) the availability of images of quilts with WCTU connections, and 3) time.

Firstly, the decision to focus solely on a single organization presented a limitation that sharpened the focus of the project. It was not possible to showcase the broad scope of the overall phenomenon of quilting for a cause throughout American social history within this single exhibition. However, because the scope was narrow and aimed to highlight only one period of time and one organization, it allowed a deeper exploration of a single example. Consequently, one story that of the WCTU, was examined in depth rather than a broader comparison of the different manifestations of the quilting for a cause phenomenon.

Secondly, because the IQSCM does not hold within its collection an adequate number of quilts directly linked to the WCTU to comprise an entire exhibition, quilts from other collections, both public and private, were identified. Requests were made for permission to use selected images in the online exhibition. Some institutions (and individuals) did not respond to requests
for permission. This resulted in several quilts being eliminated from the online exhibition, but
they were included and documented in my research, and in this report. Permissions were
granted for nine quilts from other collections, which when combined with the IQSCM examples
provided an adequate selection of WCTU quilts for the online exhibition.

The third limitation to this project was time, and the desire to complete this master’s
project within the customary two year time frame for the degree. The original plan was to utilize
the same format for this online exhibition project as the World Quilts digital project that is
currently under development by staff at the International Quilt Study Center and Museum.
However, the digital platform for World Quilts was not ready in time to use it. Therefore, I
developed Crusading Quilts in Wordpress, which is a blogging site. Eventually Crusading Quilts
will be incorporated into the World Quilts digital project produced by the IQSCM.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The following literature review examines a wide array of sources, which provide an overview of different aspects of the quilting for a cause phenomenon before closely examining the activities and accomplishments of the WCTU in particular. The literature review begins by addressing the changing roles of women within society. It also includes a section about the meaning of quilts in order to provide context for the WCTU quilts within this exhibition.

Women’s Changing Roles in Society, 1837-1929

This section analyzes the roles that women played within American society. An understanding of these roles is essential to the interpretation of quilts and material culture, and possibly doubly important when looking at quilts that were made for a particular cause. Women have filled countless roles within American society. However, these roles have evolved and changed as society as a whole has altered its opinion of women and what they can and should undertake and involve themselves in. This section focuses on the evolution of women’s roles during the heyday of the WCTU, beginning in the Victorian Era and continuing through the Progressive Era.

The Victorian Era, 1837 – 1901

Named after Queen Victoria of England, who dominated the nineteenth century as the longest reigning monarch, the Victorian Era was a time that focused on the sanctity of home and family, with a woman at the heart of it. It was a time of phenomenal industrialization, urbanization, and modernization, and a time when woman’s primary role was conventionally understood to be within the home. Nancy Cott states in her seminal work, The Bonds of Womanhood: ‘Woman’s Sphere in New England, 1780-1835, that “the usefulness, scope, and justification of women’s education were linked to their ‘stations’ of daughter, sister, wife, mother”. All of a woman’s education and upbringing was directed toward the goal of one day
becoming a wife and mother. As a young girl she was trained in proper etiquette, needlework, and playing a musical instrument.\textsuperscript{3} A girl’s education was completed primarily in the home, although some girls may have attended boarding schools or common schools, which were the precursor of public schools today.\textsuperscript{4} In addition to her education, another important aspect to a young girl’s life was her religious upbringing. Young women were encouraged to spend time in prayer and read their Bible daily, as it was believed to produce a moral and gentle nature that would one day lead them to heaven.\textsuperscript{5} Their religious training and accomplishments were viewed as direct indicators of how good a woman’s character was.\textsuperscript{6}

The ideal Victorian home was a representation of comfort and morality, with a woman at its center. She was the “gatekeeper to all that was good and beautiful in the world”.\textsuperscript{7} Her position was to manage all of the daily tasks of the home, but she was also expected to be the moral center and guide for her family. This social mentality existed for the majority of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century. Cott states that the early “…domestic literature connoted that the chief aim of women’s vocation was the rearing of moral, trustworthy, and statesmanlike citizens”.\textsuperscript{8} To be a mother was the highest calling a woman could achieve, and she was expected to be in charge of her children’s moral upbringing. As a wife, she was expected to be fully devoted to her husband, and to be the good influence. Carl Degler notes in his book, At Odds that, “Her presence provided emotional support, nurturance, and encouragement, if only that he learned thereby of his importance to another human being”.\textsuperscript{9}

Many families of the period, however, were not able to achieve the Victorian ideal and survive on the income of one wage earner. During the late 19\textsuperscript{th} century and early 20\textsuperscript{th} century, America was flooded with immigrants, most of whom were exceptionally poor. Often the man’s income was not sufficient for a family to survive; therefore, others within the household had to seek work. Married women generally were discouraged from and, in many instances, were
prohibited from working outside of the home. Consequently, many married women would take on and care for boarders, or take in piecework or laundry in order to contribute financially to the household. Frequently, children would have to work to help support the family. Unmarried daughters often found work in the manufacturing industry, finding jobs in the garment district, textile mills, tobacco factories, canneries, packing plants, or commercial laundries. Both the need and the opportunity for women to enter the work force continued to increase as more occupations became generally acceptable for women. For many families during this era, the wife and mother was forced to become a wage earner, despite the social pressures against this role.

The Progressive Era, 1890 -1929

Towards the end of the Victorian Era, a number of significant changes in the social and economic spheres began to take place across the United States. This era became known as the Progressive Era. Dominated by reform movements, urbanization, a steady increase of immigration, and the growth of American business, the Progressive Era was a period of great change. Businesses steadily grew, but were accompanied by growing complaints concerning working conditions within the poorer, working classes. During this time, the American government began to step in to help regulate big business, while offering protection to the working classes.

The Progressive Era heralded significant changes for women. While women were still primarily relegated to the home, an increasing number of jobs outside of the home became acceptable; these included clerical positions and jobs within department stores. Higher education became more common and acceptable as well. In the mid-1800s women were finally permitted to attend all-female colleges, or co-institutions that were previously male only. An increasing number of women in the Progressive Era saw the benefits of achieving a higher
education. This opportunity allowed ambitious women to become doctors, journalists, or lawyers.\textsuperscript{13}

A popular activity for women in the Progressive Era was to join one or more of the countless reform movements. The Progressive Era was rife with these societies or clubs, filled predominantly with middle class women, who worked to rectify a particular social ill. Each society or club tended to champion one specific cause, however they had the “moral support of all others”; meaning one society would condone the efforts made by other reform organizations.\textsuperscript{14} The hope was that this would increase public support for both organizations. For example, although the WCTU’s primary goal was temperance, they also supported women’s suffrage. Joan Mandle, in her book \textit{Women and Social Change in America}, suggests women’s involvement in these reform movement clubs was one of the first signs of women’s changing roles within society and the ensuing feminist movements.\textsuperscript{15}

These societies were unquestionably responsible for achieving improvements in working conditions, education, and sanitary conditions, among others. Their efforts directly influenced the men who had the privilege and power to legislate the changes. In 1919 women’s reform efforts saw success in the passage of the 18\textsuperscript{th} amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which outlawed the sale of alcohol, and the subsequent passing of the 19\textsuperscript{th} amendment, which granted women the vote.\textsuperscript{16}

In the 1920s towards the end of the Progressive Era, reform movements dwindled as entertainment and leisure became more important to the younger generation. The new modern woman, known as the flapper, became an icon of the 1920s. She represented youth and individualism, was daring in her choice of clothing and hairstyles, and partook in behaviors such as smoking and drinking that were previously seen as a man’s prerogative and unseemly for a
woman. These young women were often employed in clerical positions or within the retail sector.\textsuperscript{17}

Nancy Woloch, however, argues in \textit{Women and the American Experience} that the flapper was not the sole New Woman of the 1920s, but rather she was chiefly a “symbol of liberated aspirations”.\textsuperscript{18} Instead, Woloch proposes there were several variations of the New Woman. They included women who sought to combine family and career, the college student with goals of marriage rather than reform, and the “post-suffrage feminist”.\textsuperscript{19} Despite the dwindling amount of support for the reform movements, there remained a stronghold of women who continued to actively support and lobby for social causes. Carrie Chapman Catt and the National American Women Suffrage Association became the League of Women Voters, which petitioned for the Equal Rights Amendment to the constitution, and continued to empower women voters everywhere.\textsuperscript{20}

The Progressive Era was an interesting period of change, particularly for women. Reformers of this era challenged the status quo, and achieved significant strides in the efforts of the women’s movement to help women become equal members in the public sphere.

\textbf{The Meanings of Quilts}

In order to properly contextualize this online exhibition, it is helpful to explore the reasons why women, past and present, made quilts. Specifically, why do they so often make quilts for someone other than themselves? Beverly Gordon’s framework for the analysis of textiles as set forth in her book, \textit{Textiles: The Whole Story: Uses, Meanings, Significance}, was used for examining the possible meanings of quilts within the context of quilting for a cause.

Quilts hold special meaning to each individual. Often the collective consciousness of quilters can be seen, but it is also important to discern the individual meanings. Marsha MacDowell says it best in her article, \textit{Quilts and Their Stories: Revealing a Hidden History},
“Through these commonly-told stories connected to quilting, we gain a wider glimpse into what life must have been like for these women...”21 Each quilt represents a tale of how a quilt offers comfort, serves as a form of communication, or symbolically represents something to the quilter. They tell stories of lives lived.

Research has been done to record the numerous meanings of quilts in many different contexts, including quilting for cathartic effects or for the friendships and community building that develops around quilters. One such study presents a conceptual framework for examining textiles. Beverly Gordon's book, *Textiles: the Whole Story: Uses, Meanings, Significance* combined with her paper based on the research for her book, *The Fiber of Our Lives: A Conceptual Framework for Looking at Textiles' Meanings*, looks at textiles broadly and presents a framework for identifying meanings associated with them. Her overarching concepts were developed by looking at every culture, "by examining language, metaphor, and myth," and examining how each culture values textiles within its society, including important events and daily use.22 Several concepts within her framework are significant to this study, and will be explored in the following paragraphs.

The first concept posited by Beverly Gordon is that textiles provide comfort to humans. This includes comfort to the body and the home, as well as the psyche.23 Quilts provide warmth on a bed and help make a house feel like a cozy home. Just as a bulky sweater can keep a person warm on a cold winter evening, quilts can warm the body. Women sought to give their family members comfort at home and when leaving for war. They also made quilts to offer what little comfort they could to the wounded lying in hospitals. And, they made friendship quilts to provide psychic comfort to someone who was moving away, by giving them something to remember their friends and family in their lives. As Gordon notes, the spiritual and emotional protection of individuals is essential, just as is physical protection. For example, "young children
bond with their baby blankets; the cloth becomes associated with - actually seems to hold the energy of - the comfort and safety of peaceful sleep, protective parents, and perhaps even the contentment of nursing".  

Quiltmaking can provide comfort to the quilter through the process of quiltmaking, and for some quiltmaking can be a cathartic experience. Sewing was a method of keeping oneself occupied and in this way provided psychological and emotional comfort. Nancy Armstrong’s study of quilts made during and after the Gulf War demonstrated how quiltmaking contributed to a comforting, and sometimes cathartic experience for the quilters. These quilts were most often an expression of the quilters' views and emotions, whether they were expressions of patriotism, anti-war sentiments, or mourning. Catharsis was said to be experienced by 48% of the interviewees while working on their quilt, while 22% said that it was not encountered. Studies such as Armstrong’s support the notion that quilting can be cathartic, or provide psychological comfort to those doing the sewing. In many situations women found relief when working on their quilts; some found them hard to put down until they were finished. This concept of quilting as a form of catharsis, or comfort, even permeates fictional literature. A passage from a recent novel includes a description of how women heal through their work, and alludes to the bond that quilters feel toward other women (a subject that will be discussed later):

To sew is to pray. Men don't understand this. They see the whole, but they don’t see the stitches. They don’t see the creator in the work of the needle. We mend. We women turn things inside out and set things right. We salvage what we can of human garments and piece the rest into blankets. Sometimes our stitches stutter and slow. Only a woman's eye can tell. Other times, the tension in the stitches might be too tight because of the tears, but only we know what emotion went into the making. Only women can hear the prayer."

Four Souls by Louise Erdrich
The second concept suggested by Gordon is that “textiles help us to communicate and learn, add beauty and stimulation to our days, and make our lives richer”. Through cloth it is possible to convey stories, feelings, opinions, and much more. Quilt history is rife with examples of quilters using cloth as a means to communicate their views of the world; there are quilts that are expressions of support for social causes as well as expressions of political or religious views. These women “naturally turned to the medium they knew best – sewing on cloth to get their message across”. Lynne Bassett, in her article A Dull Business Alone: Cooperative Quilting in New England, 1750-1850, states that quilts were made as a way to communicate opinions while acting as fundraisers for anti-slavery fairs. A letter in 1839 from Mary Avery White to her daughter mentions, “Caroline and myself assisted in quilting the bed quilt at the Hall for the Antislavery cause”. Women found a way to communicate their opinions through their needlework.

The third of Beverly Gordon’s concepts is the idea that "textiles play a symbolic role for those left behind". Wearing black while in mourning or holding on to a quilt made by a grandmother are ways that meaning is expressed and associated with textiles. Recent studies have shown how quilting has become a coping mechanism for dealing with grief, anger, or confusion. These emotions often relate to the loss of a loved one, something people around the world can relate to. In times of hardship or intense loss, one of the common coping methods is to keep oneself busy, thus occupying one’s mind with other thoughts. As one woman noted in a letter during the Civil War, “Martha, you must not sew too hard, yet I know when you are employed at something you are most happy”. Nancy Monson, in her blog, described quilting as a way to "keep my hands, heart, and mind busy". As an example, Shaw documents a quilt in his book, American Quilts: the Democratic Art 1780-2007, that according to oral history was made by a grieving wife with her mourning clothes. A coffin poses as the central medallion, along with
The quiltmaker conveys her sense of loss through the morbid imagery in her quilt, expressing her emotions through an unusual quilt. Quiltmaking has been a means to express emotions and cope with stressful situations such as death.

The final meaning presented in Gordon's conceptual framework is that creating textiles helps create community. The sense of community that quilting creates is the concept that best relates to this proposed online exhibition. The concept of quilting creating a community is prevalent throughout American history in numerous contexts. As Gordon states, "we interact with others; we need to feel a sense of belonging and love. Cloth is central in our lives as social beings". Cloth is something that everyone can relate to, from the clothing one wears, to the blanket one sleeps under at night. Therefore, meaning can be found in cloth through a variety of contexts, by linking people together into one shared story. As Gordon states, “people bond easily with one another when they are engaged in shared work”, such as making a quilt together. This bond can be a means to identify with a group. The making of cloth and items from cloth, like quilts, promotes fellowship and respect.

The concept of a strong community forming around women quilters dates back generations. A gathering of women with the intent to quilt away an afternoon together, known as a quilting bee, was the original form of a quilting community. A quilting bee was a time for women to come together and share life while sewing. They were often an extension of the church community, but were also made up of women who shared unique bonds other than religion. A diary entry from the mid-19th century shows that newly immigrated women formed their own group in Ohio:
A new American women’s gathering is coming into use around here now. Six, seven or eight neighbors visit, all at one house, in the afternoon and make quilts of matched patches sewed together. We sit on chairs and benches around a wooden form, talking, complaining, and trading advice, troubles, and homesickness. The quilts are bright and useful. It is good medicine for all the visitors.

Liwwat Boke, Mercer County, Ohio c. 1850

These bees offered an opportunity for women to socialize, obtain help with a project, or simply listen to the latest news. It was a place where they found community and support despite what other circumstances they may find themselves in. Modern day quilt guilds, although generally much larger than a quilting bee, function similarly. Women attend guild meetings not only to learn new techniques, but to make friends who will understand and encourage them in their creative pursuits and in life. Women would, and still do, "seek to enhance their own skills as well as finding camaraderie and support among friends", as Johnson and Wilson state in their article within the *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal*.

Another type of quilting community is the organization that is formed with the single purpose of helping others. Gordon asserts, “The very act of textile-making could itself be a way to express solidarity with a national or larger entity” There are groups that are formed to auction donated quilts to raise money for a specific cause. One such group has been meeting in Priest Lake, Idaho, since the early 1990s. Each year they collectively create one quilt that is auctioned off in order to raise money for various local causes. These quilts have been wildly successful. Other organizations, such as Project Linus, accept donated quilts, or blankets, and distribute them to sick and traumatized children to help them cope and recover. Partnerships also benefit those in need. For example, Quilts for Hope, a partnership between Hancock Fabrics and St. Jude’s Hospital specializes in sponsoring a fabric line that is intended to be used in quilts that are in return donated to children at St Jude’s Hospital.
Contemporary quilters and crafters continue the tradition of not only creating quilts, just as those before them did, but also continue banding together to form their own unique communities as later sections of this paper illustrate. They support one another, but also set out to create a change, and attempt to make a difference in some small way in someone else’s life. This “role of community in textile handcrafts continues to be a vital factor in the perpetuation” of the craft itself.  

The sense of community is a vital factor in philanthropic quilting, and will continue to remain an integral aspect of this exhibit.

Gordon’s framework offers a way to understand why the women of the WCTU used quilts to express support for their cause. Gordon’s model was highly influential in developing a way of categorizing each WCTU quilt, and a way of organizing the exhibition.

Historically, there have been three overarching types of causes for which women quilted: 1) religious and social causes, 2) war efforts, and 3) health or medical-related causes. The primary emphasis of this project is on social causes for which women quilted. However, the other two types of causes bear mentioning because they exemplify the meanings posited by Gordon, and help to provide an understanding as to why women quilt for someone other than themselves. Therefore, the next three sections will describe these three broad categories of causes.

**Quilting in Support of Religious Organizations and Social Causes**

*Religious Organizations*

At least since the mid-nineteenth century, church-going women have been among the strongest advocates of making quilts to support a variety of religious organizations and social causes. More often than not these quilts were used as a fundraising tool within these religious institutions. The goal was to raise money for a particular need within the church, to give as a gift, or to commemorate a particular event. The most popular of these being quilts that raised
funds for the church in some way, whether it was a new building, or repairs, a minister’s salary, or other such projects. These quilts could often bring in a significant sum of money toward the fundraising goal. For example, one quilt brought in almost half the cost of a new church building. 50

Women discovered that these fundraiser quilts provided a way for them to use their needlework skills. Dorothy Cozart adeptly noted the skills of these women in her article, The Role and Look of Fundraising Quilts 1850-1930 where she wrote:

“These women had the needle skills, they had the organization, they loved their churches, and they could produce fundraising quilts so quickly that their husbands had not time to protest until it was too late”. 51

The most popular form of these fundraiser quilts were signature quilts. In order to raise money women’s church groups generally solicited a small fee for the privilege of having one’s name inscribed or embroidered on the quilt. Popular patterns for these signature quilts included Dresden Plate, Double Irish Chain, Glorified 9-patch, Crown of Thorns, Friendship Ring, Album block, Chimney Sweep, and Sunburst. The quilts would later be auctioned off to raise additional funds.

Today, quilts are still used in this manner; although, stylistically they have changed. A multitude of organizations exist for the sole purpose of benefiting a chosen cause through quiltmaking, yet each one is truly unique. There are organizations that auction off quilts to raise money for research, organizations that give a quilt to a needy child, and organizations that send quilts to victims of natural disasters. Stylistically, most groups provide basic guidelines, but leave the design details up to the individual, creating an extremely diverse palette of quilts. These
modern day church groups use this same time honored fundraising tradition of our foremothers, creating a link between past and present.

Social Causes

Social causes are the issues that a person or group supports in an effort to fight injustices within a society. The particular social causes that attract support have evolved and changed over time as society has changed. During the 19th century there were several prominent causes that women began to involve themselves in. At this time the culturally accepted place for a woman was centered in the home; however, social activities and charity work that related to the church were also regarded as acceptable pursuits. For many years women participated in a variety of church benevolence and social activities, but by the 1830s they had found a new route to public life - the avenue of reform. Nancy Woloch describes women’s 19th century societal restrictions best, “Benevolence and reform were not merely the most appealing routes to public life for such women but the only ones”.52 Starting in the 1830s, women started to move out of their domestic sphere and into society through social reform. One example was the abolition movement, which was especially popular among Northern women. Within seven years of the initial publication of the Liberator, an abolitionist newspaper printed in 1831, over 100 different aid societies had formed.53

The formation of reform organizations increased through the end of the 19th and into the early 20th centuries. During the Progressive Era, reform organizations were exceptionally prolific. Each organization typically championed one cause, but would lend support to other causes. The three major social reform causes of the 19th century were abolition, temperance, and suffrage; however, the temperance movement utilized quilts and quiltmaking as an aid to its cause more abundantly than did the abolition and suffrage movements. For this reason, temperance will be discussed.
Temperance (meaning complete abstinence to many) was seen as an important cause by countless women in the 19th century because of the adverse effects that alcohol had on families. Scientific studies of the day were discovering the negative effects that alcohol had on the human body, and how these physical ailments and addictions then negatively influenced crime, poverty, and death rates in the nation. These cumulative negative effects, in turn, adversely affected the family unit. This was one of the primary arguments for temperance. The supporters of the temperance movement argued that better living conditions and better family life would be possible if alcohol was no longer legal. According to the Gospel of the Kingdom magazine, a periodical in the early 20th century, the best way to achieve temperance was to eliminate the “environmental factors”, such as poverty and dangerous working conditions that drove someone to drink, and replace them with better working and living conditions.

In her book, The Women’s Movements in the United States and Britain: 1790’s to the 1920’s, Christine Bolt describes the temperance movement as one that crossed class and political lines; rich or poor, conservative or liberal, it didn’t matter – all were welcome to join the quest. Posing a contrast in his book, Prohibition and the Progressive Movement, James Timberlake asserts that prohibition (or temperance) was primarily championed by women within the American middle-class, but opposed by many “urban-labor-immigrant” groups. Yet, the movement was able to achieve success because middle class women held more political sway than did poorer, working class women. It is possible to conclude from these two accounts that the temperance movement was dominated and championed primarily by middle class women. Although it is clear that a number of women of the lower classes also were members of temperance organizations.
Whether members of a temperance organization or not, many women of the 19th century had seen the destructive effects that alcoholism had on families. When drunk, husbands and fathers often became abusive, or spent what little money the family had on the next round of drinks. Women and children had very few rights in situations like these, leaving them in dire circumstances at times. Finally, women decided to fight the injustices they were facing. During this period women were seen as the moral foundation of the home, but there were few opportunities for them to express an opinion publicly, much less engage in the political process for reform. However, those brave enough, banded together to fight alcohol consumption and other vices that were seen as harmful to a peaceful family life. Joining reform clubs was one way for women to voice their concerns in the public arena, and they also found friendship and an opportunity to pursue other interests through these organization.  

In the late 19th century one women’s club stood out as the primary advocate for temperance reform, the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU). The WCTU originated in Ohio, and officially incorporated in 1874, electing Annie Wittenmyer as its first President. The original support and strength of this organization was found in the Midwest; however, it wasn’t long before it became a nationwide organization, and eventually the largest women’s organization in the United States. By 1883, there were 42 states with local chapters; by 1892 there were over 200,000 members. Members of the WCTU would meet in prayer groups before venturing to local saloons to ask the proprietors to stop serving alcohol to men. They advocated their cause at local fairs, conventions, and church meetings. Women held gatherings in their parlors and handed out promotional literature. The WCTU also promoted the scientific understanding of the harm of alcohol to children through the production of school textbooks. These textbooks were later criticized for inaccuracies and exaggerations by those who studied the effects of alcohol.
WCTU was forced to revise the textbooks, but not forced to discontinue their use. On Election Day, women of the WCTU tried to influence those voting by having a presence at the polls.

In addition to their stance on prohibition, the WCTU strove to “Do Everything” by fighting against numerous social ills within American society. The WCTU diligently fought for multiple human rights issues including, but not limited to, women’s suffrage, child labor reform, and prison reform. Their hard work finally achieved success in 1919 with the passing of the 18th amendment, which prohibited the sale of alcohol. This constitutional amendment would later be repealed in the 1930s, a bitterly disappointing outcome for WCTU members.

After the WCTU helped pass the 18th amendment, it turned its focus to other causes. Although its heyday had passed, and the organization no longer garnered the same level of support or held the same political sway, it continued to operate and battle other social causes. In the 1920s it focused on the enforcement of prohibition, racial issues, electing women into public office, the Americanization of immigrants, and the observance of the Sabbath. These issues championed by the WCTU evolved and changed with the time. Today the WCTU supports the fight against drug and alcohol abuse and gambling.

Frances Willard – The Face of the WCTU

Frances Willard’s story is important to discuss because her leadership was essential to the impact of the WCTU on Progressive Era society. It was her drive and vision that helped to launch the WCTU into one of the largest and most influential reform societies of its time. From 1879 until her death in 1898, Willard, the fearless leader of the WCTU, became a household name. Her fame was unsurpassed by any other American woman of her day. Upon her death she was eulogized by the New York Independent as follows: “No woman’s name is better known in the English speaking world than that of Miss Willard, save that of England’s great queen...” Through her sheer determination and hard work, Willard was able to lead the WCTU and its
advocacy for temperance into a national movement. She sought to mobilize women by bringing them out of their homes to defend their rights and interests. However, Willard also understood the importance of women’s traditional roles. She praised women’s role as the moral center of their homes, and argued that the public sphere was an extension of the life at home. She proclaimed, “womanliness first – afterwards what you will,” and felt that “women must use their special virtues to uplift the public sphere and imbue politics and citizenship with the righteousness and purity so peculiarly their own”. It was this connection to the basic framework of her society that allowed her to gain such a large following and catapulted her to one of the most prominent women of her time.

Frances Willard was born near Rochester, New York, in 1839, but eventually moved to a farm in Wisconsin. In addition to their studies at home, Frances and her sister attended a college in Milwaukee and a ladies seminary in Evanston, Illinois. Their parents followed their daughters’ move to Illinois in 1858. Education played an important role in the woman Frances would become. After she completed her education, but prior to her involvement with and ascent to the presidency of the WCTU, Willard became a teacher and taught at several schools. During this time she developed life-long friendships with other women – many of whom would become influential women themselves. One of her friends and fellow teacher, Kate Jackson, spent two years traveling Europe and parts of Russia and the Middle East with Willard because they both felt travel was a necessary part of their education. Upon her return, Willard accepted the post as Dean of the Ladies College at Northwestern University. All of these life experiences would prepare Willard to play an active role in the battle for women’s rights – and ultimately temperance.

Willard’s involvement in the temperance movement began locally in Chicago where she gave speeches in churches and gained local popularity for her oratory skills. In early 1874 Willard
was elected president of the Chicago chapter of the WCTU, which she willingly accepted. In November of that year she was offered the national presidency of the WCTU, but declined accepting instead the position of secretary.  

Throughout her life, Willard had been concerned by the injustices and inequalities that women faced. In the 1870s, the crusade for equality of women merged with the temperance movement. Willard was determined to be a part of the temperance movement, which made the transition from her post as Dean of the Ladies College at Northwestern University to working full-time for the temperance movement a logical step. However, this transition was made based on faith that God would provide financially for her and her widowed mother, as temperance work paid less than a position in education.

In 1879 Frances Willard accepted the position as the second President of the national WCTU. During her presidency, Willard travelled extensively all over the United States visiting local chapters of the WCTU, holding meetings and giving speeches. One of her great skills was public speaking; it was one of things that propelled her into the presidency of the WCTU. Willard was also a prolific writer. She wrote several books including her own memoirs, as well as countless magazine and newspaper articles. Willard had big plans for the WCTU, but she was wise enough to move slowly enough to bring along her constituency. Often members of the organization were willing to take on additional issues before Willard thought the membership was ready. She knew the importance of working with a broad base. She advocated the use of all tactics such as “lobbying the petition, moral suasion, gospel temperance, work with children, and publications” in order to attain the WCTU’s goals. Over time the WCTU took on labor reform, advocated for kindergartens, woman’s suffrage, and other social reform issues.

Although Willard did not live to see the passage of the 18th amendment, her leadership certainly helped the WCTU achieve success. Willard’s strong views and steadfast aims to
improve the lives of women will forever be an integral component of life in America around the turn of the twentieth century.

**WCTU Quilts**

Quilts made by WCTU members were meant to be used in a variety of ways. Many WCTU quilts were made as fundraisers. Names were embroidered or inked onto a quilt block after the supporter paid a small fee; often the quilt in turn was auctioned off to raise additional funds. Beverly Gordon stated, “‘signature quilts’ both represent and bond communities by featuring names of participating members. These could function at times almost as a local archive, and indeed have been used to track given church congregations or similar groups. Group solidarity was multiplied when as was often the case, the finished textile was raffled off to raise money for the organization or its cause”. In this way these quilts are an extremely interesting form of communication and record, as several hundred signatures could be included on one quilt. The WCTU’s national journal, the *Union Signal*, noted instances such as this:

“Among the many elegant ‘arrivals’ noted at the National Woman’s Christian Temperance Union Pavilion, is a costly and beautiful quilt on which the WCTU of Mount Vernon, N.Y., has realized a large sum of money toward building ‘Willard Hall’—a headquarters with reading, concert, meeting rooms, etc., for its work. Ten cent subscriptions were asked, and no larger sum given. The money was sent from all parts of the United States to Mrs. John Lockwood, President of the W.C.T.U. of Mount Vernon, N.Y. A box for dimes has been placed beside the glass case in which this quilt hangs, by Mrs. Sarah Hornby, of Cincinnati, the efficient local superintendent of the W.C.T.U. booth at the Exposition, and it is hoped that all interested will deposit a token of their interest in the Temperance cause. The quilt is well worthy of examination, on its own merits. Much of it is hand-painted and elegantly embroidered. It contains a piece of the dress worn by Mrs. Lucy Webb Hayes and Mrs. James A. Garfield at the inauguration of their husbands as Presidents. The quilt has also emblems and souvenirs of various leaders in the temperance work.

As one leaves this beautiful spot and as a last lingering thought—"Praise ye the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul." Figure 1. April issue of *Union Signal*, the WCTU periodical, describing the use of a quilt as a fundraising tool.
Another use of quilts by the WCTU was for decorating meeting rooms and fair booths. Dangelas, in her article, *The Cultural Significance of the Block Island Woman’s Christian Temperance Union Quilt of 1931*, noted that even the leader of the WCTU saw the importance of using textiles in these public contexts as a form of decoration: “Frances E. Willard, the single most influential leader of the national WCTU, recommended women use decorations such as banners and flags at conventions, meetings, and booths at fairs in order to make the atmosphere of an unfamiliar situation more welcoming – ‘an interior as cozy and delightful as a parlor’.” 78 The quilts used in these booths created a sense of comfort and familiarity for fair-goers, while beautifying the booth. By doing this, the WCTU booths attracted the attention of the passerby, while simultaneously putting them at ease with something as familiar as a quilt. Examples of this idea can be viewed in the exhibition through the images of fair booths.

Quilts made to support the temperance cause were also displayed to communicate other cultural and religious views, drawing attention from passersby and reminding them indirectly of the temperance cause. 79 Messages such as “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the World”, “To the Cross I Cling” and “Look unto me and be ye saved” were among other inscriptions. 80 Creating these quilts allowed women to use their creative voice to express opinions and tout sayings and slogans that were important to them and to the cause.

The WCTU also used quilts as gifts. Women would give gifts as going away presents to outgoing WCTU officers or supportive ministers, or to commemorate special occasions such as significant service to the organization. Quilts would have been a natural gift idea for WCTU members. In some WCTU records these gifts were recorded, although it is not always clear as to the specific reason for the gift. One record that does explicitly state the reason behind the gift was included in records at the Frances E. Willard Archives:
“Mrs. M. J. Barber of South Norwalk had planned a gift for Mrs. Cornelia B. Forbes (then State President). She sent to all the Unions asking them to make and embroider a block for a silk quilt. These were collected and put together with border and lining and beautifully finished by Mrs. E. A. Blake and Miss Gabriel of East Bridgeport, who on this reception afternoon, brought in the quilt to be presented by Mrs. L. H. Washington of Essex with an original poem.”

Notes from the state convention report, 1887

The patterns and styles of WCTU quilts varied as well as the uses. WCTU quilts ranged from the popular styles such as Crazy quilts, to the more traditional pieced block patterns, to the unique, one-of-a-kind designs. They are representative of the breadth of available patterns and the diversity of women’s creativity. Crazy quilts, signature quilts, and an assortment of pieced, repeating block style quilts are the predominate types of WCTU quilts.

The Crazy quilt became exceedingly popular after the Centennial Exposition in 1876. The quilt was comprised of what appeared at first glance to be a random assortment of fabrics, trims, and embellishments that generally exuded a modern appearance combined with the Victorian ideal of extravagance. These Crazy quilts represented the high style in the period – full of silks and elaborate embellishments. In addition some wool Crazy quilt interpretations of these high style silk quilts were made. Even within a limited selection of quilts, a diversity of taste and style is represented. Interestingly, there were also numerous mentions of Crazy quilts in the Union Signal. One example was found in the February 11, 1886, issue of the Union Signal, “A dear WCTU worker, now one of the shut-in ones because of over-work, was advised to do ‘crazy patchwork’…” (See Figure 2).
The Crazy quilt was in fact a very popular fad from 1880 to 1900, placing their rise and fall from popularity during the height of the WCTU’s crusade for temperance. Due to the period of their popularity, the use of Crazy quilts to show support for the WCTU, as well as their inclusion in the Union Signal, was not surprising.

Signature quilts were another popular style among the WCTU-connected quilts. Dorothy Cozart states in her article ‘The Role and Look of Fundraising Quilts 1850-1930’ that “Signature quilts were by far the most popular fundraisers from the 1860s through the 1930s”, and one of the best methods. This style was certainly utilized by WCTU members. The intriguing aspect to these quilts is the diversity of styles. The Crusade quilt, in the Frances E. Willard Archives Collection (See Figure 3), has over 3000 signatures, which represent an Ohio community of women advocating temperance in the early days of the WCTU. The quilt also recognizes one of the WCTU’s founding mothers, Eliza Thompson, to whom the quilt was given. The women’s names are signed on silk blocks that were sewn together.
The Frances E. Willard Archives collection holds another signature quilt with connections to the WCTU. The quilt was made of silks and taffetas in the Shoo Fly pattern by members of the Connecticut WCTU (See Figure 4).\textsuperscript{84} The quilt is inscribed with the names of Connecticut leaders in addition to members of the local chapters, dated approximately 1887. In a further show of support, the acronym, WCTU, is boldly embroidered into one of the blocks.\textsuperscript{85} According to an archive record, the quilt was presented to Frances Willard. In contrast to these silk signature quilts, most signature quilts of the period were made out of cotton fabrics. A signature quilt from Troy, Maine, possesses embroidered names on flags, creating a quilt replete with patriotic symbolism (See Figure 5). This quilt also resides in the Frances E. Willard Archives collection.\textsuperscript{86}
Figure 4. Shoo Fly Quilt made by members of Connecticut WCTU. Image courtesy of Pat Ferrero’s Hearts and Hands, p. 15.

Figure 5. Flag Signature Quilt made by members of the Troy, Maine WCTU. Quilt courtesy of Frances E. Willard Archives. Image courtesy of A. Lensch

A quilt from the New York State Museum also follows the patriotic color scheme, but includes biblical messages along with signatures (See Figure 6). The combined patriotic and biblical symbolism suggests a desire for a strong nation with strong Christian values. A simpler design is found in the Block Island signature quilt located in the Block Island Historical Society in Rhode Island. The quilt was embroidered with many names on a white ground with red sashing surrounding the blocks (See Figure 7).
An album quilt located in the Frances E. Willard Archives also provides a unique example of a signature quilt, use of biblical messages, and strong temperance sayings and motifs (See Figure 8). This quilt is probably made by multiple people due to the range of workmanship and design styles. Multiple signatures are also found on this quilt of women from several different locations, such as: “W. T. Smith Lexington, Kentucky,” and “Pata S. Cerane Newark, New Jersey”. It is possible that this quilt was made at a convention where women from a variety of
locations would have congregated together to make this quilt. In addition, biblical messages include phrases such as “To the Cross I Cling” and “In God We Trust”. However, the quilt also possesses sayings such as “Tremble King Alcohol” and “Drink and Die”, which are overtly against the consumption of alcohol. This is unlike the other identified WCTU quilts in this project.

Not all WCTU quilts were located through published images. A written record in the Frances Willard Archives from 1984 mentioned a silk quilt made in 1887 as a gift for one of the state WCTU presidents, Cornelia Forbes (no image available). Silk blocks with signatures that were printed, signed or embroidered from all the local Unions were included. The quilt is further described as having “forty-nine blocks with nine two-inch squares within each block”. Black and maroon velvet borders surround the silk blocks. These rich-looking fabrics are in sharp contrast to the cottons used in several of the other signature quilts.

Another signature quilt from the late 19th century constructed in a variation of the Bear Paw pattern was published in a 2010 issue of Quilt Mania Magazine (See Figure 9). Eli Leon, author of the article, states that the quilt was made in Onondaga County, New York, in 1878 – not long after the founding of the WCTU, and features the signatures of the members of the local chapter of the WCTU. The Bear Paw pattern was published in The Ladies Art Company catalog.
in 1895, and was entitled the WCTUnion block [sic]. The center of the block has a space presumably for a signature, indicating support – financial or otherwise - and in the four corners are what appear to be mini-bear paws.92 All of these signature quilts are strikingly different, yet the commonality between them is the way in which they communicate support through the signatures on the quilt.

![Figure 9. Signature Bear Paw Quilt. Made by Members of the Onondaga, NY, WCTU in 1878. Image courtesy of Quilt Mania Magazine.](image)

Not all quilts with temperance messages or associations are overtly connected to the WCTU organization. For example, quilts made in a blue and white color scheme are sometimes associated with the WCTU, because blue and white were the official colors of the WCTU.93 However, this assumption that a blue and white quilt indicated a quiltmaker’s support for the WCTU must be carefully examined and questioned because indigo blue prints were exceedingly popular with quilters during the last quarter of the 19th century and into the early 20th century, since the color was beautiful and colorfast. Brackman, in *American Quilts in a Modern Age, 1890-1940*, notes that there were significant advances in indigo dyeing and printing technology, which led to cheaper fabrics in addition to a wider variety of designs.94 For these reasons
quilters opted to use these blue fabrics. As for the blue and white combination, Roderick Kiracofe asserts in his book *The American Quilt*, it is “more likely to be that quiltmakers simply found the combination pleasing” rather than choosing blue and white as a way of showing support to the WCTU.\(^5\) To date, I have been unable to locate a statement printed in a WCTU publication advising members to make quilts in a blue and white color scheme to show support for the organization and the temperance cause or in a letter or diary by a WCTU member suggesting that quilts were made in a blue and white color scheme to show support for the organization.

Some quilt patterns possessed names that alluded to temperance, such as Temperance Tree or Temperance T. According to Barbara Brackman, the Temperance Tree quilt block first appeared in the November 29, 1894, issue of the *Ohio Farmer* periodical (See Figure 10).\(^6\) Interestingly, the *Ohio Farmer* periodical advertisement encouraged readers to make this pattern and offered possible color options, (none were blue and white). Furthermore, it did not mention making this pattern to show support for temperance or the WCTU. Variations of this pattern appeared in the 1890s and later in publications in the 1920s and beyond. The Centennial Tree pattern was published in *Hearth and Home* magazine which began printing in 1895, and as the Weeping Willow in an 1896 version of *Orange Judd Farmer*. Other popular names for this tree pattern were Tree of Paradise, Tree of Life, and Pine Tree. Many of these patterns were featured in *Needlecraft Magazine* in the 1930s, syndicated columns mostly in the 1920s and 1930s (See Figure 11 for a quilt made in the Temperance Tree pattern).\(^7\)
Temperance T, Crossed T’s, T-block, Capital T, T-Square, Imperial T, or Double T, all refer to a quilt pattern where the primary motif is in fact a ‘T’. Brackman in her *Encyclopedia of Pieced Patterns* traced the origin of the pattern to the *Orange Judd Farmer* periodical on April 18, 1896, under the name T Quilt. Most versions of this pattern appear in syndicated newspaper columns during the 1920s and 1930s. A different variation appeared in the *Ladies Art Catalog* as early as 1895 under the names of Mixed T or T Quartette. This pattern positions all T’s facing in
the same direction, rather than piecing the base of the T’s towards each other. Interestingly, Brackman does not document a quilt pattern under the name of Temperance T. In conclusion, despite the obvious allusions, it is highly unlikely that either the Temperance T or the Temperance Tree patterns were ever specifically promoted by pattern companies and periodicals as a means of showing support for temperance.

Both the Temperance Tree and the Temperance T patterns were available during the height of the WCTU, making it possible for WCTU members to use these quilt patterns as a means of showing support for the temperance cause. However, variations of both of these patterns appeared under numerous other names simultaneously. The original sources of these temperance-themed patterns do not suggest a connection to the temperance cause. The association of the Temperance Tree and Temperance T patterns with the temperance cause would have been dependent on the quiltmaker’s individual opinions. Therefore, it is impossible to know whether or not a quilt in one of the ‘T’ patterns was made to show support for the
WCTU or temperance cause. (See Figure 12 for a quilt made in the Temperance T pattern, and Figure 13 for a quilt made in a Crossed T pattern.)

The Drunkard’s Path pattern is another pattern that has been associated with the temperance movement and the WCTU by some writers and quilt historians. Recent scholarship, however, has questioned those assumptions. Wilene Smith in a 2011 essay published on the Quilt Index asks the question, “Were Drunkard’s Path Quilts Meant to Have a Connection to the WCTU?” Her response to this is, no, they do not. Smith has been unable to locate a direct reference that advocates the use of a Drunkard’s Path quilt to support the temperance cause. Nor has she been able to link any Drunkard’s Path quilt, save a red and white one, directly linked to the WCTU through provenance. The quilt is currently held in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art’s collection (See Figure 14).}

Figure 12. Temperance T quilt made by Marie Jane Forrythe Newton of Nebraska. Courtesy of Private Collection.
Figure 13. Crossed T’s quilt possibly made in Western Pennsylvania, 1880-1900. Courtesy of the IQSCM, 1997.007.0379.

Figure 14. Red and white Drunkard’s Path made by the Union Springs WCTU in New York, 1896. Image courtesy of Los Angeles County Museum of Art.
Xenia Cord, respected independent scholar, argues persuasively that she “has always wondered why a movement interested in eradicating alcohol and its attendant abuses would choose a pattern called ‘Drunkard’s Path’ anyway. It seems a lot of effort to make a quilt that appears to promote drunkenness. There must have been other named configurations that would have suited their outreach better”.  

Another respected scholar, Virginia Gunn, states that the Drunkard’s Path pattern was familiar by the 1890s, but by several other names. The title Drunkard’s Path was probably more well-known after the turn of the century. Interestingly, she relates an anecdote where mothers did not want their children sleeping under a quilt entitled Drunkard’s Path, and so they renamed it Turkey Tracks. She too questions whether or not the Drunkard’s Path pattern in a blue and white color scheme was much used by supporters of temperance (See Figure 15 for a blue and white Drunkard’s Path quilt).

![Figure 15. Blue and white Drunkard’s Path quilt. No known provenance. Image courtesy of Julie Silber Collection](image-url)
On the other hand, Julie Silber, a well-known California quilt dealer, asserts that the Drunkard’s Path pattern may have been associated with the WCTU and temperance. She states that she has seen many blue and white Drunkard’s Path quilts, many of which date to the end of the 19th century. In *Hearts & Hands*, Silber features a blue and white Drunkard’s Path quilt with a caption that reads, “Drunkard’s Path quilts show up in great numbers at the end of the nineteenth century (sometimes with WCTU signatures and inscriptions), suggesting a humor and wit not usually associated with the high moral tone of the WCTU. Often these quilts are blue and white, the official colors of the organization”. However, she acknowledges that none of the blue and white Drunkard’s Path quilts she has seen had an explicit relationship to the WCTU.

Barbara Brackman posits in a 1985 article in *Quilt World Omnibook* that “Drunkard’s Path is probably a temperance pattern”. She also documents the Drunkard’s Path pattern in her book *Encyclopedia of Pieced Quilt Patterns*. The first reference to the name Drunkard’s Path was in the Ladies Art Company catalog, in 1895 where they published the rippling circular pattern. Even before the Drunkard’s Path name was published, this pattern appeared in the *Farm and Home Magazine* in 1888 as the Wanderer’s Path in the Wilderness. Other names appeared over the years in a variety of syndicated newspaper columns and magazines. Names included Wonder of the World, Robbing Peter to Pay Paul, Solomon’s Puzzle, Drunkard’s Trail, Old Maid’s Puzzle, Endless Trail, Crooked Path, Country Cousin, World’s Wonder, Boston Trail, and The Pumpkin Vine.

Consequently, there is no conclusive evidence that the Drunkard’s Path pattern was ever widely used by women to indicate their support for the temperance movement. The widely presumed connection between the Drunkard’s Path pattern and temperance appears to be an interesting piece of folklore, but since only one Drunkard’s Path quilt with an explicitly WCTU
connection has been located and published, and that one is in a red and white color scheme, the connection of the pattern to temperance seems doubtful. Only the quiltmaker would be able to reveal if there was a connection to the temperance movement in the quilt.

Another pattern found in a WCTU-connected quilt is the Bear’s Paw pattern. This pattern was used in a blue and white quilt with WCTU boldly emblazoned across the center (See Figure 16). No evidence was located in print media where the editors suggested this particular pattern should be made to show support for the temperance cause. Instead, it likely was simply a new pattern that appealed to this maker who chose to show her support for the organization through her inclusion of the ‘W’, ‘C’, ‘T’, and ‘U’ letters. Brackman traces the pattern to 1897 when it was published by the Ladies Art Company. The Bear’s Paw pattern has also gone by other names including Bear Foot, Duck’s Foot in the Mud, Cat’s Paw, and even Tea Leaf Design – most of them appearing after the turn of the 20th century.

Figure 16. WCTU Bear Paw quilt without any known provenance. Image courtesy of Julie Silber Collection
A few published sources have mentioned several other patterns such as the Goblet or Water Glass as possibly having been used to convey support for the temperance cause, but all of them are very tenuous connections. For example, Barbara Brackman dates the Goblet or Water Glass pattern to the 1930s, where a contributor to the *Kansas City Star* links the pattern to the temperance movement.\textsuperscript{108} Searches of periodicals from 1870-1920 did not reveal any mention of this pattern as a way to convey temperance support.\textsuperscript{109} Consequently, it appears highly unlikely that this pattern was ever made to indicate support for the WCTU or the temperance movement.

These styles and patterns create a unique assortment of quilts that are either directly, coincidentally, or implicitly associated with the temperance movement and possibly the WCTU. The Crazy quilt and signature quilt style are highly visible in the group of WCTU quilts included in this online exhibition project. WCTU members also used some of the newer, pieced block patterns that were available during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries even though the patterns themselves did not particularly convey support for the temperance cause.

**Quilting in Support of War Efforts**

Over the last 150 years American men and women have felt the call of duty to defend their nation, as well as the rights of others around the world. There is significant recent scholarship of the role that women played during wartime, beginning with the Civil War in the 1860s. This section will discuss the resourceful way in which women used quilts to support various war efforts.

*Civil War 1861-1865*

When the Civil War erupted in 1861, those at home worked to establish over 20,000 soldiers’ aid societies to raise money and provide supplies for the war effort; over two-thirds of these societies were in the North.\textsuperscript{110} The U.S. Sanitary Commission (USSC) was the primary
Northern relief work organization. Women donated their family heirloom quilts to supply bedding for soldiers. In addition, they quickly and efficiently produced additional quilts, sheets, blankets, shirts, and pants, which were shipped to the nearest USSC agency to be distributed. The USSC also organized Sanitary Fairs beginning in late 1863, raising an additional $4,500,000 for the cause. These fairs allowed women to once again take up their fancy work, since the proceeds of these fairs went to the wartime cause. It is estimated that Northern women contributed $25,000,000 worth of supplies through the Sanitary Commission by the end of the Civil War.

In contrast, Southern aid societies were formed out of existing church groups, rather than under a new umbrella organization, and took on the name of their cities, such as the Ladies' Aid Association of Greenville, South Carolina. Southern women also gathered treasured heirlooms, including quilts, household goods, and money to donate to Confederate soldiers. However, due to their primarily agricultural economy, the South was ill-equipped to handle the physical demands of war. Without the manufacturing ability of the North, white and black women alike were forced to produce their own yarn and cloth. This resulted in ‘Confederate goods’, or blankets, dresses, and other items necessary for the home or the front line, which were made of hand-woven material or repurposed from existing household linens.

The industriousness of the ladies aid societies produced numerous quilts for the Southern cause. Laurel Horton notes in her article, South Carolina Quilts and the Civil War, the Ladies Defense Association raised approximately $30,000 for gunboats in a similar manner as other societies, by organizing bazaars and auctions. In Alabama, at least six quilts were donated to the gunboat cause. Many times these quilts were bought, only to be immediately auctioned off again in order to raise more funds. Three gunboats were appropriately dubbed the “Ladies Gunboats” in response to their significant effort and contribution. Because the efforts of
Southern women were not organized under a national umbrella organization, the total monetary value of their contributions is much more difficult to estimate. To date, no estimated value for their contributions has been located in a published source.

**World War I, 1914-1918**

When the United States officially entered the war in 1917, the membership of the Red Cross increased from 22,000 people to 280,000 in a matter of months, with local chapters springing up throughout the country.\(^\text{118}\) This number would eventually rise to over 22,000,000 members.\(^\text{119}\) Overall, the Red Cross made significant contributions to the war effort. Final numbers totaled more than $400 million in monetary donations and supplies, which included quilts.\(^\text{120}\) In fact, many of the quilts made throughout the duration of WWI were made to support the American Red Cross. Quilts made as fundraisers were usually done in redwork on a white ground. Solicited signatures were embroidered for a small fee, often in a wheel formation. This style of quilt was heavily promoted in periodicals and magazines. Instructions on how to make them appeared in *Modern Priscilla, Ladies Home Journal, Women’s Home Companion, and Harper’s Bazaar*. The magazine editors encouraged women to make these quilts to support their soldiers, the war effort, and the Red Cross.\(^\text{121}\) The finished quilt was then auctioned off, with proceeds going towards the war effort. The head of the War Council for the American National Red Cross, Henry Pomeroy Davidson, expressed it best, “[the Red Cross] showed one asset – an asset that overbalanced all: the good-will of the American people.”\(^\text{122}\)

**World War II, 1939-1945**

December 7, 1941, brought World War II to the American home front. Women were accepted into the Navy as part of the Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVES), and into the Army as part of the Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps (WAACs). These groups of women were part of intelligence, communications, medical, aviation, and other
teams. On the homefront women took on manufacturing jobs and other roles that were traditionally held by men. In order to ration supplies, women were strongly encouraged to remake and reuse what they already had, which included clothing and other home textiles. This mentality of working with what you have was remembered by many from the Great Depression in the 1930's. This may have made the war time rationing easier to bear.

Just as their earlier counterparts had during the American Civil War and World War I, women found strength in numbers. They frequently banded together in groups to work on a quilt; although some chose to work alone. They formed community organizations in order to support their troops. The Red Cross remained in the forefront, but other organizations such as the American Legion and Women’s Society of Christian Service became popular. Most of the members were wives and mothers of soldiers. Quilts were made as fundraisers, just as they had been for World War I; many quilts were made for the Red Cross and other organizations. Many quilts were made to express support for the cause such as Victory quilts.

**Gulf War, 1990-1991**

The quilts made during the Gulf War era were different than those made during previous wars. While the majority of quilts made during the Civil War and World War I were given to soldiers or auctioned off to raise money, the quilts made during the Gulf War were more a response to the conflict or an expression of general support for the troops, rather than for a soldier’s physical comfort. The quilts made during the Gulf War were less about providing the troops with warm blankets, and more about expressing how the quilters themselves felt about this conflict. A study of quilters during the Gulf War showed that many made quilts that they considered patriotic, commemorative, or even pro- or anti-war. These quilts were created as a means of expressing and communicating women’s feelings and views of the war; they were never intended to monetarily support the war effort in any way. This in part, is due to the fact
that the military was able to supply all necessary equipment to the soldiers, and quilts were no longer needed as they were during the Civil War. For the first time, quilts were seen as a response to the war in the Middle East, rather than as a means of support.

_Afghan Wars, 2001 - Present_

Since 2001, the United States has been fighting in the Middle East. Once again, women turned to quiltmaking in the absence of their loved ones. Numerous groups were formed – mainly by women, but also some by men. Two examples are highlighted in this section including Quilts of Valor and Home of the Brave Quilt Project. There are several others, but these two organizations are the most prolific, and showcase how the mutual desire to support U.S. troops through quiltmaking can manifest itself in two very distinct organizations.

Quilts of Valor is an organization started by Catherine Roberts, the mother of a soldier. After her son left to serve in the Middle East, she began looking for a way to honor returning veterans who were either wounded or affected by the war in some way. She wanted to show them how much we appreciated their “service, sacrifice, and valor”. Thus Quilts of Valor was born. Since then Quilts of Valor has grown from one woman’s form of expression to a nationwide undertaking. Run entirely by volunteers, Quilts of Valor matches up those who prefer piecing to those who prefer quilting; making a team effort out of the making of a quilt. The finished product is then presented to returning soldiers.

Another example, the Home of the Brave Quilt Project, began in 2004. The Home of the Brave Quilt Project originated in California, where the Citrus Belt Quilters were searching for a way to honor the families of fallen soldiers. Uniquely, all of the quilts that are made for this organization are based on existing Sanitary Commission quilts made during the Civil War. Quilts are made in the same patterns and use Civil War reproduction fabrics. In this way they create a connection with those that came before them. The principal coordinator, Don Beld, helped to
create an organization that quickly grew to a nationwide effort. Quilts were also distributed to the families of service members who may not have been killed in combat, but nevertheless served their country. As of the middle of 2010, the Home of the Brave Quilt Project had given over 3,700 quilts.  \(^{131}\)

The similarities of these organizations lay in the fact that the women and men, who were involved, largely were driven by a sense of patriotism. During a time of war, they were able to rally around one another, finding strength in numbers. They found their own community of support while their husbands, sons, and neighbors were on the battlefield. However, subtle differences do exist between each of these organizations. It is possible to see the lines of traditional gender roles blurring, and the art of quiltmaking crossing the gender lines. In modern groups, such as the Home of the Brave Quilt Project, men are quilt makers, organizers, and guild members. The second difference is the reasons for making the quilts. During the Civil War and WWI, soldiers desperately needed blankets for comfort and protection. However, manufacturing became cheaper and more efficient; it was no longer necessary to quilt in order to provide soldiers with warm bedding, but rather became a way to honor those who served and their families. Wartime quilting also became a means to express how the individual quilter felt about the war. During World War II, many quilts embodied patriotism. One of the most popular trends was to take the “V for Victory” slogan and place it on a quilt. Fabrics, including silk, were printed with popular slogans like “V for Victory”, and “Remember Pearl Harbor”.  \(^{132}\) Quilts from the Gulf War era used a variety of symbolism, from patriotic symbols, to the color yellow, red poppies, and religious symbols; all of which help to portray what the quilter was feeling at the time.  \(^{133}\)
Quilting in Support of Medical Causes

This section highlights groups past and present that have used quilts to raise awareness for a particular illness or to offer comfort to someone who is sick. Currently, there are numerous organizations that aim to provide support or comfort to those who are critically ill. Each organization is unique, and specializes in one illness or medical condition. Some organizations focus on auctioning quilts that help raise funds for research, while others focus on providing a quilt to comfort or show solidarity to a person who has a particular disease. A Google search returns over four million hits for “quilting for a medical cause organization”. A few key, representative examples of these types of organizations are described in this section.

The NAMES Project AIDS Quilt

The AIDS Quilt is unlike anything else in the history of quilting. It has received national attention on numerous occasions, and intriguingly was orchestrated, designed, and assembled by many people who do not consider themselves quilters.

According to Charles Morris III, to the people who created this quilt, it represents one thing above all else, love for those who succumbed to this particular disease. People would create a panel, which was approximately the size of a grave; they would often transcend the notion of quilting and make something more like a collage, where a wide variety of personal objects were incorporated into a panel. This act of making the panel was a way of openly grieving. Those who were personally affected by AIDS formed their own community, relying on one another for support.

While the AIDS quilt was partially about creating a way to mourn together, it was also about making a political statement. Funding was desperately needed for research and care of afflicted individuals. The quilt was supposed to be a testament to this growing problem, bringing it to national attention. On October 11, 1987, the quilt was displayed for the first time on the
National Mall in Washington D.C., effectively covering it. The response to this demonstration was overwhelming; letters swarmed the organizers, and the national press even picked up on the story. Since that moment, blocks have been added and portions have been displayed in other parts of the country. The quilt grew over the intervening 25 years. During the end of July 2012, 48,000 blocks were displayed in over 50 locations throughout Washington D.C. The AIDS Quilt clearly continues to communicate its important message nearly 25 years after it was first displayed.136

Other Medically-Motivated Organizations

Today there are numerous philanthropic organizations that use the art of quiltmaking as their way to show support and raise awareness for medical causes. Several organizations were selected out of an extensive list as examples of these types of organizations. They are discussed here.

The Alzheimer’s Art Quilt Initiative began in 2006, when Ami Simms wanted to find a way to raise money for Alzheimer’s research after her mother was diagnosed. This project has grown significantly and has raised approximately $735,000 for research. Monthly online auctions feature art quilts that are no larger than 9” x 12” on the AAQI website: www.alzquilts.org. They currently also support a traveling exhibit that list names of Alzheimer’s victims; this helps to raise awareness about this disease.137

Project Linus strives to provide critically-ill children a handmade blanket, afghan, or quilt. The goal is to provide every child with a sense of security and comfort. Project Linus began in 1995, after Karen Loukes was inspired by an article about the security a child with cancer received from a blanket. Loukes decided to create handmade blankets for children in her local children’s hospital, and Project Linus was born. Today, Project Linus has chapters all over the United States. The various chapters donate thousands of blankets, afghans, and quilts to
children who are sick or neglected or abused in some way. Since 1995, over 4 million blankets have been donated.¹³⁸

Similar to Project Linus, Quilts for Kids also seeks quilts for extremely sick or abused children. Linda Arye had a vision to use discontinued fabric that was being disposed of and turn it into quilts that would be given to children in need. Since that time Linda has been able to obtain sponsorship from Proctor and Gamble’s Downy Touch of Comfort Program, as well as support from Robert Kauffman fabrics, and partnerships with Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals. Arye and her team have been able to transform this small venture into an international organization.¹³⁹

While each of these organizations, and the dozens of others not included here, are unique, they all have several similarities. These contemporary organizations have all started as the brainchild of one person wanting to make a difference in the life of another. Each one selected quiltmaking as the medium for making a handmade blanket of some sort, and solicited the help of family and friends. As Gordon, Johnson, and Wilson have all previously noted, the role of community is an essential aspect of the quilting world. Therefore, it is no surprise that local organizations gathered support from other communities and eventually grew to be national ventures. Women and men around the world have joined together into larger communities that strive to provide comfort, raise awareness, or help raise money for a worthy cause.
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH & EXHIBITION DEVELOPMENT

Curatorial Research Approach

The initial step in the curatorial process for this online exhibition was to establish a specific theme. The quilts and quiltmaking activities sparked by the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union was selected because of the WCTU’s long and influential history and because it is an intriguing component of the larger quilting for a cause phenomenon. The WCTU, and the quilts made to communicate support and raise funds for the organization permeated an influential era of American social history, which is particularly fascinating to this curator. By focusing on a single organization -- the WCTU -- a more effective and cohesive exhibit was organized.

The quilts chosen for this online exhibition are affiliated with the WCTU through inscriptions, or by a provenance that directly connects a quilt to the WCTU or its members. A small number of quilts with an indirect or assumed connection to the WCTU also were included.

The search for quilts related to the WCTU involved 1) scouring the numerous publications resulting from the state quilt documentation projects, 2) visiting the Frances E. Willard Archives in Evanston, Illinois, and searching their collections for references to quilts as well as examining WCTU-connected quilts in their collections, 3) searching the International Quilt Study Center & Museum’s online collection, and 4) searching digital archives such as the Quilt Index. WCTU-connected quilts were located in the Frances E. Willard Archives, the International Quilt Study Center’s collection, several state historical societies’ collections, state quilt project publications, other museum collections, and private collections.

In order to ascertain if the editors of women’s periodicals of the period encouraged women to make quilts to support the temperance cause, I conducted a search of two popular
periodicals of the time. The first periodical was *Godey’s Ladies Book*, which is now online and includes issues of the entire run from 1830 to 1898. I searched the entire digital archive using the following search terms: quilt, WCTU, and temperance. This proved unfruitful. I also examined the *Modern Priscilla* magazines held in the UNL Libraries collections. I searched through three issues from 1904, two issues from 1905, one issue from 1906, two from 1910, and four from 1912-1913. This was the extent of the UNL Libraries holdings between 1870 and 1920 – the scope of this project. Nothing was found in this periodical either.

Ultimately research diverged into two different paths: 1) quilts that had a direct link to the WCTU – either through inscriptions or provenance, and 2) quilts that had an assumed connection to the WCTU or the temperance movement. Ultimately, thirteen quilts that possessed a direct connection to the WCTU were located. These quilts and their sources are listed in Figure 17.

A corresponding table is located in Figure 18 to show which quilts were previously presumed to have a link to the WCTU, but in fact do not. There were a total of seven quilts. I also made a fairly exhaustive search of state quilt documentation project books and other books that I thought might contain a WCTU connected quilt. Unfortunately, my search was frequently unsuccessful. To save others from making the same fruitless search, I have included an endnote with a list of books with no WCTU connected quilts in them.

Quilts with a WCTU connection varied in style. Four of the identified quilts were of the Crazy quilt style. This was not surprising due to the popularity of Crazy quilts during the height of membership in the WCTU. Since signature quilts were a popular format for fundraising quilts between 1870 and 1920, it was not surprising that six quilts associated with the WCTU were made in that format. On the other hand, I located only one quilt made in the WCTUnion block [sic] pattern.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quilt Description/Title</th>
<th>Collection/Source</th>
<th>Citation</th>
<th>In Exhibition – Y or N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frances Willard Archives Crazy</td>
<td>Frances Willard Archives</td>
<td>“Crazy Quilt”. Frances E. Willard Archives. Evanston, Illinois.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signature – Flag</td>
<td>Frances Willard Archives</td>
<td>“Flag Signature Quilt”. Frances E. Willard Archives. Evanston, Illinois.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Album</td>
<td>Frances Willard Archives</td>
<td>“Album Quilt”. Frances E. Willard Archives. Evanston, Illinois.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block Island Signature</td>
<td>Block Island Historical Society Published in: Down by the Old Mill Stream, 2000; Uncoverings, 2003</td>
<td>Linda Welters, and Margaret Ordonez, Down by the Old Mill Stream, (Kent: Kent State University Press, 2000), 275-278.</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WCTU Bear Paw</td>
<td>Private: Julie Silber</td>
<td>Julie Silber Collection</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red and White Drunkard’s Path</td>
<td>LACMA Published in: For Purpose &amp; Pleasure, 1995</td>
<td>Los Angeles County Museum of Art, M.86.134.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 17. Table of all quilts located with a WCTU connection, their sources, and if they are included in the online exhibition.
Figure 18: Quilts WITHOUT a Direct Link to the WCTU

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quilt Description/Title</th>
<th>Collection/Source</th>
<th>Citation</th>
<th>In Exhibition – Y or N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crossed T’s</td>
<td>IQSCM</td>
<td>International Quilt Study Center and Museum, 1997.007.0379</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue and white Drunkard’s Path</td>
<td>Private: Julie Silber</td>
<td>Julie Silber Collection</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue and white Drunkard’s Path</td>
<td>Michigan State University Museum</td>
<td><em>Quilts from the Albert and Merry Silber Collection</em>, 1988</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temperance Tree with Inscriptions</td>
<td>Michigan State University Museum</td>
<td>Michigan State University Museum, 2001:158.1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 18. Table of all quilts located that do not have a direct connection to the WCTU, their sources, and if they are included in the online exhibition.

Given the popularity of pieced block quilts and the WCTUnion pattern block’s explicit association with the WCTU, it is somewhat surprising that few quilts in this pattern turned up in my search of sources.

Online Exhibition Development and Design

The unique advantage of an online exhibition is the opportunity to feature quilts from a variety of sources, as well as ones that are too fragile for display. It is also a great opportunity to include quilts that are housed in other collections and to collaborate with other institutions.
Because there are no shipping expenses, this allows the inclusion of a wider range of possibilities.

An interpretive plan was developed according to an IQSCM format, as is standard practice at the IQSCM (See Appendix A). An interpretive plan is a document that details the specifics aims of the exhibition. This plan includes overarching themes, “hooks” that will draw the attention of the visitor, and the specific objects that are to be included within the exhibit. It also details resources and includes a proposed exhibition design. This document helped to focus and organize the exhibition project.

The *Crusading Quilts* online exhibition was organized thematically. Two particular themes emerged as to why women quilt for a cause. The first theme centered on the idea that quilts act as a form of communication. The second theme, which emerged from research, was that women form communities around their quiltmaking traditions. Therefore, the exhibition was divided into two broad categories titled ‘Clever Communication’ and ‘Creating Communities’.

Each of the sections was further divided into two sub-categories. The ‘Clever Communication’ theme details how quilts are used as tools of communication, and historically have been used as a means of declaring support for a particular cause. One sub-category discusses the quilts that blatantly signify support for the temperance cause – ‘Undeniable Support’. These quilts generally have some sort of inscription on them that illustrates this. The other sub-category, ‘Questionable Connections’, addresses the questions surrounding the conjecture that certain types of quilts or patterns were made specifically for this cause.

The ‘Creating Communities’ category includes quilts that were made by groups of women, and the role that quilts play in women’s lives. This category is then broken down into two sub categories: ‘Faithful Leaders’ and ‘Determined Members’. ‘Faithful leaders’ addresses
the women, who were at the forefront of the crusade for temperance, and the quilts associated with them. The ‘Determined Members’ sub-category focuses on quilts that were made by known members of the WCTU or were indicative of how members used quilts to further their cause.

A final collection of eleven quilts was selected from the complete list of identified WCTU quilts (as seen in Figures 17 and 18). The final decision was based on how well each quilt reflected an aspect of the WCTU story, the overall aesthetics of the quilt, and whether or not the owner of the quilt was willing to grant permission for the quilt image to be included in this online exhibition.

The Wordpress site includes an image of each of the selected quilts. Each quilt is accompanied by a brief description of the quilt, which includes an explanation of how it reflects the history of the WCTU and the quilting for a cause phenomenon. In order to reinforce and augment the didactic labels, images of selected ephemera are included alongside the quilt image. The ephemera include photos of WCTU members and events, magazine advertisements, and other relevant materials. This approach helps paint a comprehensive picture of the quilts, the women who made them, and the WCTU.

The Wordpress website design was kept simple and neutral, so as not to detract from the quilts exhibited. Six headers were created from various quilts selected for the exhibition. The header resides at the top of the screen, and randomly changes as visitors move from page to page (See Figure 19). Individual pages were created for each category and sub-category for easy navigation and understanding (See Figure 20). In order to easily navigate the website I wanted to add navigational buttons (such as “next” and “previous”) to the bottom of each page. Unfortunately, Wordpress Support informed me that this particular feature was not possible to
incorporate. However, I found an alternative method of incorporating links specific to individual pages of the website. These are included at the bottom of each page to help with navigation.

Figure 19. Screen shot of Crusading Quilts Home Page.

Figure 20. Screen shot of the sub-category ‘Undeniable Support’, and the quilts that represent this category.
The exhibition design also used the gallery feature offered by Wordpress. This allows multiple images to be uploaded together, as well as having the ability to make the image larger. The images of quilts were uploaded using the gallery feature, allowing the visitor the ability to closely examine each quilt on his/her computer screen (See Figure 21).

![Figure 21. Screenshot of the zoomed in view of each quilt.](image)

The images themselves also bear mentioning. High resolution images were available for nine of the eleven quilts. However, the quilts located in the Frances E. Willard Archives collection that had not been previously published elsewhere did not have high resolution images on file. Several options were discussed with the staff at the Archives as to the possibilities of photographing and thereby attaining a high resolution image of each quilt. Unfortunately, none of those options proved feasible. The best option was to take photographs of the individual quilts when I visited the Frances E. Willard Archives in Evanston, Illinois, or to hire a professional photographer to do so. The Archives is located in Frances Willard’s home; thus the largest space available is the top of a bed, which is where the snapshots were taken when I visited in December 2012. This was not an ideal situation for capturing good images of the quilt, but it was
the only option I was granted by the Frances E. Willard Archives. Nevertheless, it provided me experience in working with other institutions and the restraints they face.

In addition to developing an online exhibition, I explored the feasibility of an exhibition of quilts for the Beavers Terrace Gallery at the IQSCM. There were not enough quilts connected to the WCTU within the IQSCM’s collection to make a physical display in the Beavers Terrace Gallery a feasible option. There were only two such quilts. Therefore, this idea was abandoned.

Once the online exhibition (now available at http://crusadingquilts.wordpress.com/) is incorporated into the IQSCM’s World Quilts site, Google Analytics will be employed as a means of tracking the traffic to the online exhibition. Through Google Analytics Custom Reports it is possible to track new versus returning visitors, the frequency and number of visitors, as well as how long each individual spends on the site. The account will be set up in connection to the exhibition website. This information will be highly useful to determine if this online exhibition project is accessed and used by the public, or if visitation is limited. The information may be useful in terms of future student projects. Until then, Wordpress is equipped with a wide range of tools to track visitation and comments to the website. They track visitation, terms used in internet searches, and if the page is referred to anyone. These tools are currently set up and available under the administration page.


Plante, xi.

Plante, 11

Plante, 35.

Cott, 94.


Woloch, 146-151.


Rosenbloom, 18.


Woloch, 242.

Woloch, 242.


Gordon, 4.

Gordon, 5.


Armstrong, 9-44.


Johnson & Wilson, 122.


60 Ferrero, Hedges, & Silber, 15.
61 Bolt, 170.
63 Timberlake, 48-49.
64 Bolt, 171.
66 Bolt, 258.
70 Bordin, 8-9.
71 Bordin, 15-25.
72 Bordin, 44-55.
73 Leeman, 11-12.
74 Bordin, 69-73.
75 Bordin, 130.
76 Gordon, Textiles The Whole Story, 125.
77 Image was taken from the Union Signal April issue, page 8. The year was cut off when photocopying, but all issues that were examined were between 1879 and 1920 – the run of the Union Signal that was relevant to this project.
78 Sarah Rose Dangelas, "The Cultural Significance of the Block Island Woman's Christian Temperance Union Quilt of 1931," Uncoverings, 24 (2003): 49-74. [Journal online]; accessed on 10 Aug 2012; available from http://0-web.ebscohost.com.library.unl.edu/ehost/detail?vid=3&hid=15&sid=b010561b-3d5b-4cab-bb0d-7c5b229c6386@sessionmgr13&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZS5sb2NhbGluZ3MtbmFtZT0wMjMwMjIwMDA2MzIwMTU5MjQzNjE1MzA%3D%3D.
79 Dangelas, 49-74
80 The Bible passages found on the following WCTU quilts tout sayings for “good Christian living”, and not temperance specific. Rather they express many of the cornerstones of the Christian faith. The WCTU was not affiliated with any particular church. However, there was a strong connection to the Methodist church. Frances Willard was a devout Methodist woman, as well as many other well-known leaders within the temperance movement. Nancy Hardesty, "The Best Temperance Organization in the Land": Southern Methodists and the W.C.T.U. in Georgia," Methodist History, 28, no. 3 (1990): 187-194.
1st quote is from the Schenectady WCTU quilt, New York State Museum, as seen in Atkins, page 78. 2nd quote is from WCTU Album quilt located at the Willard Archives. “WCTU Album”. Frances E. Willard Memorial Library and Archives. Evanston, Illinois. 3rd quote is for the Mary Willard Crazy quilt located in the International Quilt Study Center and Museum’s Collection. Willard, Mary. Crazy. c.1880-1892. From International Quilt Study Center & Museum.
81 1887 Quilt”, Frances E. Willard Memorial Library and Archives, Evanston, Illinois.
82 Union Signal, February 11, 1886.
83 Cozart, 88.
84 Images of this quilt were published in both Ferrero’s Hearts & Hands and Atkins' Shared Threads.
The exact origin of this quilt was unknown. The only clue was from the center inscription read, “The Crusader Monthly Twelve Troy WCTU”. The original assumption was that this quilt was either from Troy, New York or Troy, Maine. From the quilt I had written down several names, which I thought may prove useful for further research, and I was right. A sampling of the names inscribed on the quilt included: “Albien P Hatch, Lydia Noble, Adelcia S Johnston, Fred Wysic, Dr. Wm McLaughlin, L.M.N. Stevens, Lillian Pendleton, Geo. A Woods”, among many others. Through Ancestry.com I began basic genealogical research by selecting either New York or Maine and searching for who I thought may be most easily found – Dr. Wm. McLaughlin. However, this proved unsuccessful. Eventually, I located an Annual Report of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union of Maine from 1906. This record indicated that Mrs. Lillian M.N. Stevens was the state President, Adelaide S. Johnston held the position of State Treasurer, as well as common surnames, such as Reynolds, Weymouth, and Hatch. While not absolute, I feel I can say with confidence, this quilt came from Maine, rather than New York. For further information turn to: Maine WCTU, 32nd Annual Report of the WCTU of Maine, (Rockland: Courier-Gazette Press, 1906).


"1887 Quilt”, Frances E. Willard Memorial Library and Archives, Evanston, Illinois.


Ibid.

Ladies Art Company, Quilt Patterns Patchwork and Applique, (St. Louis: Ladies Art Company, ), 8-10; The pattern is identified as Brackman #1666, found in Barbara Brackman, Encyclopedia of Pieced Quilt Patterns, (Paducah: American Quilter’s Society, 1993), 210.


Barbara Brackman, “American Adaptation: Block-Style Quilts”, in American Quilts in the Modern Age, 1870-1940, eds. Marin Hanson and Patricia Crews. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 47.

Kiracofe, The American Quilt, 128.

This information was located through Brackman’s Encyclopedia of Pieced Quilt Patterns, 110-111. However, the original source was located, which appears in the Figure 3 of the Appendix. Original source: "Patchwork: Beautiful and Useful.” Ohio Farmer, November 29, 1894, 435.

Brackman, Encyclopedia of Pieced Quilt Patterns, 110-111.

The T-block, T Quilt, and Four T’s are all found under Brackman number #2650. The Capital T pattern is found under the Brackman number #2649. Brackman, Encyclopedia of Pieced Quilt Patterns, 324.

The Mixed T or T Quartette blocks are referenced as Brackman #3274. Brackman, Encyclopedia of Pieced Quilt Patterns, 394.


Xenia Cord, in email to author, February 16, 2013.

Virginia Gunn, in email to author, March 17, 2013.

Ferrero, Hedges, & Silber, 84; Julie Silber, in email to Dr. Crews, March 2013.

Ferrero, Hedges, & Silber, 84.

Julie Silber, in an email to Dr. Crews, March 8, 2013.

Barbara Brackman. "Patterns to Ponder”. Quilt World Omnibook, Summer 1985, 6.

All pattern names can be found under Brackman ##1461a. Brackman, Encyclopedia of Pieced Quilt Patterns, 190.

Brackman, “Patterns to Ponder,” 6.
I searched the *Union Signal* journal, and the available *Modern Priscilla* periodicals and *Godey's Ladies Book*.


Ferrero, Hedges, & Silber, 73.

Gunn, 95-124.


Ferrero, Hedges, & Silber, 79.

ibid.

ibid.

Horton, 53-69.


Davidson, 20.


Davidson, 9


Reich, 44-59.

Reich, 129 & 138-140.

Reich, 152.

Armstrong, 9-44.


Reich, 11.

Armstrong, 18-21.


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--- ---. "Patterns to Ponder." Quilt World Omnibook, summer 1985, 6-7.


*Members of the national W.C.T.U. committee which founded the Grace Dodge Hotel for women in Washington, D.C., who are on tour of the completed hotel, which has been in operation for several weeks.* Photograph. March 1, 1922. From Library of Congress: *Prints and Photographs Online Catalog*. http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/96510572/ (accessed March 9, 2013).


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WCTU. The Union Signal, 1879-1920.


Exhibition Interpretive Plan
Crusading Quilts

Curator: Amanda Lensch

Exhibition Content:

Core idea (written into and intro label): Quilts have often been used as a creative way to express commitment and compassion for a particular cause – in this case, the social issue of temperance.

- The primary combatant for temperance was the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, which was established in 1874. This organization grew to one of the largest women’s organizations in the U.S. in the late 19th c., making a dramatic impact on the world around them.
- One of the ways the WCTU advocated their cause was through quilts. Quilts made for the WCTU were made to adorn booths, fundraising tools, or propaganda.
- Individual women were able to express their opinions to affect change

Themes:

- Introductory Theme (to grab attention): One of the many reasons why women quilt is in order to support a particular cause.
- Primary themes: (based on Gordon)
  - The quilts are a form of Communication that convey ideas and support for this particular cause
    - Sub theme: Myth – While it is generally thought certain quilts were made to support the WCTU, there is no direct connection
    - Sub theme: Realities – Some quilts were outwardly supportive
  - They help Create Communities of women who are all advocating for the same cause.
    - Sub theme: Leadership-
    - Sub theme: Membership -

“Hooks”:

- Social Issues of late 19th c = women’s suffrage, prohibition, labor reform; Social Issues of 21st century = Abortion, Gay Marriage, Gun control. Throughout history there are always social issues that take precedence. Each issue generally forms a coalition that will argue for/against the issue at hand, and it is these organizations that cause society to change.
- Contemporary counterparts, SADD and MADD, fight to end drunk driving.
- The New Prohibition seeks to strengthen the legislation concerning alcohol consumption. An aggregate formed of well-known organizations support this idea. They are taking a similar stance as those who fought against Tabaco use. [http://thenewprohibition.com/]
Exhibition objects and didactics:

- 12-15 images of full size quilts with a link to the source
- At least 3 WCTU images (1 booth, 1 Frances, 1)
- Ephemera
- Exhibition introduction label
- Didactic label for each theme
- Quilt labels for each quilt
- Didactic with special focus on Frances Willard?

Points of Alignment with IQSCM Mission and Strategic Goals:
Goals:
- Increased online exhibitions – targeting a different primary audience
- Fits into larger IQSCM digital project

Resources:
- Will need funding for the use of images of quilts from other collections.

Interpretive Planning

Interpretive Strategy:
- Appeal to those who are interested in quilt history/scholarship as well as hobbyists
- Appeal to individuals who are interested in the different manifestations of quilting for a cause
- Appeal to individuals who are interested in the Progressive Era, and women’s involvement in society during this era
- This exhibit will serve audiences that are unable/choose not to travel to the physical museum as well as individuals who prefer to use a digital medium.

Exhibition Design:
- Exhibition design will be closely linked to that of the larger digital project – History of Quilting in the Western World
- Initial page introduces topic of quilting for a cause, followed by the WCTU specifically, before branching into pages which discuss the themes and the specific quilts that relate to those themes.
Landing Page: Introduction

"Down with the Demon Rum!"
"Tremble King Alcohol!"
"Drink and Die!"

Clever sayings and sentiments such as these found their way onto quilts as a new generation of women took up their needles and thread to support a cause they believed in.

At the end of the 19th century excessive alcohol consumption had become a hot-button social issue, especially for women. The destructive effects of alcohol had galvanized women, to fight to preserve of their homes and families. At the forefront of this crusade was the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU).

Members of this organization turned to quiltmaking as a way to express their support for the temperance movement. Through these quilts we see examples of a community of like-minded mothers, daughters, sisters, and friends who zealously joined the crusade for temperance.

Figure 1. "Tremble King Alcohol"; Taken from WCTU Album Quilt; Courtesy of Frances E. Willard Archives

Figure 2. "Drink and Die"; Taken from WCTU Album Quilt; Courtesy of Frances E. Willard Archives
**Landing Page: Temperance and the WCTU**

Quilting for a cause is a tradition that dates back to the mid-nineteenth century. Historically, women made quilts as a way to create something beautiful or useful, but they also sometimes used them as a means to express their opinions or to show their support for a cause or organization. Through quilts women found they could communicate ideas and offer their personal support to a particular cause. Often, through these quiltmaking efforts women gained a sense of community with their fellow quilters. These communal efforts produced quilts that supported war efforts, as well as social and medical causes. Even with significant societal changes over the past one hundred and fifty years, this is a quiltmaking tradition that continues today.

*Crusading Quilts: Social Reform and the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union* features historical quilts that are related to the social reform cause of temperance. Made between 1870 and 1920, many of them are linked to the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), an organization that sought to address a variety of social reform issues. Although temperance was the WCTU’s primary focus, the issues of child labor, public health, and sanitation also were advocated for as a way to make society, as well as the home, a better place.

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, temperance became an emotional political issue. Many observers argued that a multitude of social ills stemmed from the abuse of alcohol. Scientific studies of the day touted the negative effects of alcohol and demonstrated how alcoholism contributed to crime, poverty, and increasing death rates in the nation; this in turn negatively affected the family unit. For these reasons women became involved in the temperance movement. A host of pro-temperance organizations urged Congress to ban the production, sale, and transportation of alcohol. These efforts led to the ratification of the 18th amendment to the U.S. Constitution, otherwise known as “Prohibition”, which remained in effect until 1933.

The leading temperance organization of the period was the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, founded in 1874 by a group of reform minded women in Ohio. The organization held prayer groups and advocated their cause at fairs, conventions, and church meetings. The organization took a conservative approach to reform. The WCTU felt that by simply bringing women out of their homes and into the public sphere, they (as the more “naturally moral” of the sexes) would help uplift society. This ‘softer’ approach helped the WCTU grow into one of the largest women’s organizations of its era - boasting over 200,000 members in 1892.

*Figure 3. WCTU Fair Booth 2, Unknown Location, Unknown Date; Courtesy of Frances E. Willard Archives*

*Figure 4. The Down Hill Road; Courtesy of the Library of Congress*
Landing Page: Creating Communities

From historic quilting bees to contemporary quilt guilds, quilts and quiltmaking have been used for generations as a way to bring people together and create a sense of community. Identity, fellowship, and camaraderie were found in communal quiltmaking activities. Members of these groups supported each other, and sometimes set out to promote a change, to make a difference in someone else’s life. The collective effort was a vital factor in the success of philanthropic quilting. Many early groups formed within the church, as it was the center of women’s social activities. Yet, over time, women in a multitude of diverse community organizations created quilts to serve a specific purpose.

The WCTU was one such community. Women sought to gain support for temperance through a variety of joint efforts. This included working at the local, state, or national level, making flags, banners or quilts, and giving speeches. The WCTU community was expansive, yet Frances Willard strenuously promoted another type of community. Through her leadership, “Do Everything” became a popular WCTU slogan dictating that all social issues were connected, and allies must be formed if the war against the myriad social ills was to be won. This approach prepared the WCTU to take on other social reform causes, including women’s suffrage and child labor reform. The work of these noteworthy leaders and the dedicated members created a force to be reckoned with that continues its crusade today.

Figure 5. Members of the National chapter of WCTU, 1922, Washington D.C. Courtesy of the Library of Congress
Faithful Leaders

The leadership of the WCTU was the heart of the temperance reform organization. Between 1874 and 1920 several spirited women led the WCTU campaign that supported the 1919 passage of the 18th amendment (otherwise known as Prohibition). Annie Wittenmyer, Frances Willard, Lillian Stevens, and Anna Gordon were the first four presidents, respectively, of the WCTU. These remarkable women traveled across the country giving speeches, building membership, and garnering financial support. Through their efforts they brought women out of their homes and into the public sphere, which helped bring together a new community of women. Although we do not know of any quilts made specifically by these WCTU leaders, we know of a few quilts that are attributed to their circle of family and friends.

Annie Wittenmyer was elected the first National President of the WCTU in 1874. During her five years in this position she edited the WCTU journal, educated children on temperance, and helped the WCTU establish over 1,000 individual Unions (chapters). Her work set the stage for Frances Willard, the most renowned and charismatic leader of the WCTU.

Frances Willard ascended to the Presidency in 1879, and propelled the WCTU to the national stage. Known for her oratory skills, she traveled the country promoting the temperance cause, drawing crowds wherever she went. She understood that “no force is adequate except the ‘allied forces.’” when championing social reform. Therefore, she strove to present a united front by advocating for a variety of reform causes, including women’s suffrage. Willard also understood a woman’s traditional role was within the home. Rather than expecting women to adopt more radical political ideas, she urged women to support and stand up for their traditional beliefs and values in the public sphere. By doing this, they would help to promote a better home life, which was one of the primary goals of the temperance movement. It was through advocating for a variety of social issues, a multifaceted approach of tactics, combined with the understanding of the traditional roles of women, that Willard was able to propel the WCTU to prominence. Willard’s influential reign as President ended with her death in 1898.

Lillian Stevens was the third National President of the WCTU. She had risen through the ranks of the Maine organization, and in 1878 was elected State President. She held this position until her death in 1914 – including throughout her time as national president. Stevens was an advocate for education and prison reform in addition to temperance.

Anna Gordon was the fourth national president when the WCTU achieved its major goal - the ratification of the 18th amendment in 1919, which declared the prohibition of alcohol. Gordon had been working for the temperance cause since her early twenties, traveling extensively with her close friend Frances Willard, and acting as her personal secretary. After Willard’s death, Gordon continued working for the WCTU, eventually being promoted to President after the death of Lillian Stevens in 1914. Through her leadership, the WCTU continued to push for political support of temperance, and after the ratification of the 18th amendment, the enforcement of temperance. Gordon remained as President until 1922.
The many names, states, and dates embroidered on this quilt show the collaborative nature of the WCTU – each person, each chapter was part of a larger whole. Several of the names are recognizable, such as F. E. Willard ILL and Mrs. Hayes, possibly the First Lady, who was known as Lemonade Lucy due to her own efforts for the temperance cause. The center diamond has four inscriptions: “IWCTU”, “Anna Groot”, “Laura C. Cochran”, and “Clara Hoffman”, the State President of the Missouri WCTU in 1893. Commemorating leaders’ by including their names on quilts was a popular way to show support and appreciation for the leaders of the WCTU.

This particular Crazy quilt was probably made by a WCTU member. The embroidery appears to have been completed by one woman, as it all looks exceptionally uniform. It is possible that this quilt was made to commemorate an event or to honor someone. Quilts were frequently made as gifts for fellow WCTU members and leaders. Or perhaps it was made as a means of showing solidarity and support for a cause they all believed in.
Mary Willard, the maker of this quilt, was the mother of Frances Willard, the most influential leader of the WCTU. Mother and daughter were exceedingly close, living in the family home, Rest Cottage, in Evanston, Illinois, along with other female companions or family members. As Frances’ mother, Mary Willard played a significant role in shaping the values and beliefs of her daughter. As her teacher, Mary encouraged Frances to read and journal, while never pressuring her to learn traditional female skills, such as sewing. Frances took this advice to heart, as she was an avid journaler throughout her life. She refused to sew anything except one lone sampler, which she completed as a child. Both mother and daughter were devout Methodists. The 26 Bible verses cross-stitched on this quilt serve as a gentle reminder of the scripture that helped shape their lives.

This quilt adheres to late 19th century quiltmaking trends when Crazy quilts rose in popularity during the last twenty years of the 19th century. Made of wools instead of high style silks, this Crazy quilt features a wide range of floral embroidery accompanied by a multitude of embroidery stitches along each seam line. The most unique aspect of Mary Willard’s quilt is the cross-stitched bible verses, with one additional inscription at the base of the quilt which reads:

*Made for Frances Willard by her mother Mary T. H. Willard*

This exceptional crazy quilt was most likely a treasured gift, communicating the love and support of mother to daughter. Throughout her tenure as WCTU President, Frances continually notes her reliance on support from her mother in her writings.
Determined Members

The WCTU offered women a socially acceptable place to form friendships, work toward a common goal, voice their opinions and show support for temperance and other social reforms during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Similar to other American social reform movements of the era, WCTU members were predominately white, middle-class women. These women typically had the financial security that allowed them to participate in these pursuits as well as a higher degree of political sway with their husbands, fathers, and brothers. WCTU members participated in meetings, signed petitions, spread the word at fairs, raised money, and sought to educate children on temperance reform. Some women supported the WCTU without ever leaving their homes – by making quilts to be used as fundraisers. The quilts in this section represent some of those quilts that were made collectively by a particular group of WCTU members, as a sign of their mutual support.
The Crusade Quilt is possibly one of the first quilts made by a WCTU supporter, and one of the most well-known. This piece has 3000 signatures of Ohio women, representing their pledge to the temperance cause as well as commemorating the work of their renowned temperance leader, Eliza Thompson. In 1873, prior to the founding of the WCTU, a band of Ohio women started out on a crusade to improve their lives at home by eradicating liquor. The crusaders began praying in or near saloons and asking the owners to stop serving alcohol. These crusades led to the formation of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union in Ohio in 1874. A few years later the ‘original crusaders’ decided to create this quilt, which was presented to Thomson at the 1878 WCTU national convention by Frances Willard herself.

The predominantly silk quilt is comprised of 77 blocks, with the inscribed signatures on one side, and colorful, decorative fabrics and pieced blocks on the other. Uniquely, this quilt contained a hidden note in the center square, to be opened in 1976 – one hundred years later. It reads as follows:

Hillsboro, Ohio 1876

After having transcribed for the ladies the names the record bears it occurred to me that I would write this note thinking that in the far off future the patch might be opened and enclose it, the ladies knowing nothing of what is written. When this shall be opened all perhaps who now people ____ our ___ happy land (save for the cause of intemperance) will be in the dust. Noble women often have watched them on the coldest of days of winter when denied the privilege of admittance to saloons, to ask those who sold the accursed stuff to sell no more, knelt on the cold pavement in front of these places to ask God to change the hearts of these wicked men, ____ whose drinking cursed their homes.

When one hundred years shall have passed and the patch is opened in the year, 1976, -let Hillsboro be remembered as the birthplace of the Crusade and may the names of Mrs. Thompson, Mrs. McDowell, and all whose name this record bears live forever.

L. Detwiler
How this quilt came to the Willard Archives is undocumented; yet this signature quilt clearly conveys the maker’s support for the WCTU. The center of the quilt proclaims *The Crusader Monthly Twelve Troy WCTU*. The *Crusader Monthly* was a popular periodical published by the WCTU, which helped keep the local and national Unions informed.

The embroidered names represent members of the Maine WCTU community, including Adelaide S. Johnson, Mrs. George Woods, and LMN Stevens, Maine’s State President, as well as the WCTU’s 3rd National President. Interestingly, there are also men’s signatures on this quilt, including Dr. Wm. McLaughlin, Fred Wysick, and Geo. Woods. Did their wives *persuade* them to have their names included? Or, did these men strongly support the cause and willingly participate. We can only wonder. The names are embroidered in place of stars in the flags as well as in the white stars in the alternating red squares. This pattern is unique, and clearly links patriotism to the work of the WCTU.
This quilt was possibly made as a fundraiser for the WCTU by the women of the Schenectady, New York, chapter. In addition to the signatures, verses from the Bible’s New Testament appear on the quilt in ink. These biblical inscriptions convey a woman’s devoutness and her role as the moral and religious center of her home. In combination with the signatures, the Bible verses show women’s solidarity and mutual support for a cause, as well as their piousness, an important societal expectation for women of the period.

In order to raise money, a small fee would have been required in order for each name to be inscribed on the quilt – usually a modest fee of around 10 cents per name. Many quilts were later auctioned off to raise additional funds. This practice was very common in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, making it a natural fundraising method for WCTU members to employ.
Women frequently use one of their greatest skills – quiltmaking - when they desire to communicate a message or show support for a cause. They stitch messages, either obvious or obscure, into their quilts as a way to promote their ideas or opinions. Thus quilts developed into a clever form of communication with diverse and unique messages. A few quilters declared their support boldly across the front of their quilt, leaving no question as to what organization or cause they championed. These quilts often incorporate additional sayings and mottos to promote their beliefs. Other quilters proclaimed their support in a more subtle manner through their pattern choices, color schemes, and design decisions.

Figure 11. WCTU Fair Booth; Courtesy of the Frances E. Willard Archives
Undeniable Support

Quilts that communicate plainly their maker’s support for the WCTU were diverse in style and pattern, and were made by women from chapters all across the United States. Some followed the quiltmaking trends of the era, choosing to make a quilt in the popular Crazy quilt style. Others opted to make a quilt in one of the many pieced block patterns found in periodicals. Other quilters used their creative license by altering a pattern to make it their own. Some quilts were collaborative, soliciting blocks from different people or chapters from around the country. Techniques and materials varied. Typically, the embroidery, applique, or inked inscription on the front of the quilt showed the connection to the WCTU. The inscriptions themselves varied – some quilts visibly advocated support for the WCTU, while other quilts included signatures that suggest the collective support of a community for the cause. Through these inscriptions it is possible to learn the names of individual families or communities who supported temperance as well as the larger social issue. The quilts featured in this section are examples of this type of quilt – ones that expressly indicate their undeniable support.
Very little is known about this album quilt other than what is visible in the embroidered inscriptions on the blocks. The quilt features a wide variety of WCTU slogans and symbols, elaborately embroidered. The large WCTU acronym in the center clearly marks it as a quilt made to show support for this organization. Other blocks include evocative sayings such as “Tremble King Alcohol”, “In God We Trust”, and “Drink and Die”. Masonic symbols, lyrics to popular temperance songs, and even the golden rule are included. The blocks representing different fraternal and masonic organizations communicate an effort to collaborate between organizations. Several of the blocks also possess names and locations from around the country, suggesting this piece may have been made at a convention where a number of women could easily have contributed.
The most striking feature of this quilt is the bold display of the letters W, C, T, and U across the center of the quilt. These letters clearly communicate support for the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union. This quilt might have been made to display at fairs or conventions to promote the cause.

This quilt features blocks constructed in the Bear Paw pattern for all but the four corner blocks. The Bear Paw pattern appeared in the Ladies Art Company Catalog in 1897, and later in a newspaper column - by Ruth Finely in 1929. Interestingly, this piece uses four different corner blocks; the reason for this is unknown.
The direct link of Mrs. Daniels’ quilt to the temperance movement is through the inscription, “Abstain from Strong Drink”, which is embroidered on the center of the quilt. The words suggest her support of temperance, while the remaining inscriptions all commemorate Civil War heroes and events.

It has often been assumed that certain quilt patterns convey indirectly a quiltmaker’s support for the temperance cause. Mrs. Daniels chose one of these patterns - a tree pattern that was sometimes called the Temperance Tree. The earliest known reference to the Temperance Tree pattern was in the November 29, 1894 issue of the Ohio Farmer periodical. Yet in this advertisement there was no suggestion to the reader that this pattern be used to convey support for the temperance cause. The question remains as to how this pattern gained its puzzling name. However, it is unlikely that Mrs. Daniels referred to her quilt by the Temperance Tree name, because the inscription placed directly opposite of the “Abstain from Strong Drink” inscription reads Liberty Tree. This name is even less common for the pattern commonly called Pine Tree or Tree of Paradise. The name may be a subtle reference to the predominately patriotic symbolism of her other inscriptions.
The WCTU of Union Springs made this quilt in 1896. What name the group called this pattern is unknown, although it is commonly called Drunkard’s Path or Robbing Peter to Pay Paul today. The group did not make it in the blue and white color scheme associated with the WCTU. Instead they made it in red and white with redwork embroidery. Along the outermost red border WCTU is clearly embroidered. The body of the quilt is filled with the embroidered names of Union Springs WCTU members. This quilt boldly declares its support for the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union. Not through its pattern name, but through its inscriptions.
**Questionable Connections**

Quilts always communicate to us. The question is, what specifically are they communicating? The answer to this question could be very different for each person. Yet, when discussing the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union and quilts, there are several patterns that frequently are mentioned as patterns associated with WCTU and temperance – Drunkard’s Path, Temperance Tree, and Temperance T. Some late 20th century writers assumed that these patterns were used by WCTU members and supporters as a way to indicate their support for the temperance cause. Evidence for this assumption has never been documented. These patterns were certainly available to quilters through catalogs and periodicals of the period, and many quilts in these patterns are found in public and private collections today. However, there is no evidence that these quilt patterns were ever made to convey support for the WCTU or temperance. Some quilts made in these patterns include inscriptions that clearly communicate a direct relation to the WCTU, but without the inscription no evidence in print publications or diary entries have been found suggesting that these patterns were used and broadly understood to communicate support for temperance. Research into the origin of the pattern names failed to reveal conclusive evidence that any quilts in these patterns were related to the WCTU. This section presents examples of quilts in these patterns - where a connection to the temperance has been assumed by some, but for which there is no supporting evidence.
“Election is over and don't know whether the women got the vote or not. If they do they will do away with liquor and saloons. That would be one good thing and they never will when men vote for there are too many that drink.” – Taken from a letter from Marie Newton.

This nine patch T-block pattern appears to be inspired by a pattern in one of the early editions of the Ladies Art Company Catalog where a block is comprised of 4 T’s. The pattern name that appeared in the catalog was either Mixed T or T Quartette, without any mention of temperance. Rather than following the catalog pattern, Newton adapted it to her own taste. Marie Newton may very well have equated the T’s in her T-quilt with temperance.

It is unknown if this Nebraska quilter was a WCTU member, but she appears to be an advocate of temperance as well as women’s suffrage. Her involvement in such organizations may have been limited as she lived on the Nebraska plains with her family. Yet, her quilt presents a creative way to possibly communicate her support for temperance.
During the last quarter of the twentieth century, some writers associated the Drunkard’s Path pattern with the WCTU and temperance suggesting quiltmakers did so with a sense of humor. However, recent scholarship calls this connection into question, arguing that women would not want to use a pattern associated with drunkenness.

Like most other quilt patterns, the Drunkard’s Path pattern appeared in late 19th century periodicals under a variety of names including Wanderer’s Path in the Wilderness, Robbing Peter to Pay Paul, Solomon’s Puzzle, and Drunkard’s Trail. A quiltmaker could have referred to her quilt by any one of these names, completely altering the presumed associations of contemporary viewers. While it is possible quilts in the Drunkard’s Path pattern were used as propaganda for temperance reform, conclusive evidence has not been found to support this assertion by some writers.

Another interesting characteristic is the color scheme. It has been asserted that because blue and white were the WCTU official colors, quilts in these colors were made to support this organization. Yet blue and white was an exceedingly popular color combination in the late 19th century. It is possible, and even likely, that the blue and white color scheme combined with this new pattern was not a planned social reform statement, but simply a popular pattern and color combination that appealed to the maker.
Little is known about this Crossed T’s quilt from the IQSCM collection. While not directly attributed to the WCTU, or a member of the WCTU, it is an excellent example of this T-block pattern. Occasionally referred to as the Temperance T, this pattern represents another way quilt block names are perceived as a form of communication.

Versions of this pattern were available from the Ladies Art Company, often described as Capital T, in 1895 if not earlier. Other names for this pattern include Four T Square, Imperial T, and Double T, most of which appear in syndicated newspaper columns in the 1920s and beyond. While this quilt and this pattern are not directly linked to the temperance cause, it is easy to see how this pattern could be associated with one of the largest social reform movements of the era.