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Uncoverings: The Research Papers of the American Quilt Study Group, Volume 8 (1987)

Laurel Horton
American Quilt Study Group

Sally Jeter Garoutte
American Quilt Study Group

Cuesta Benberry
American Quilt Study Group

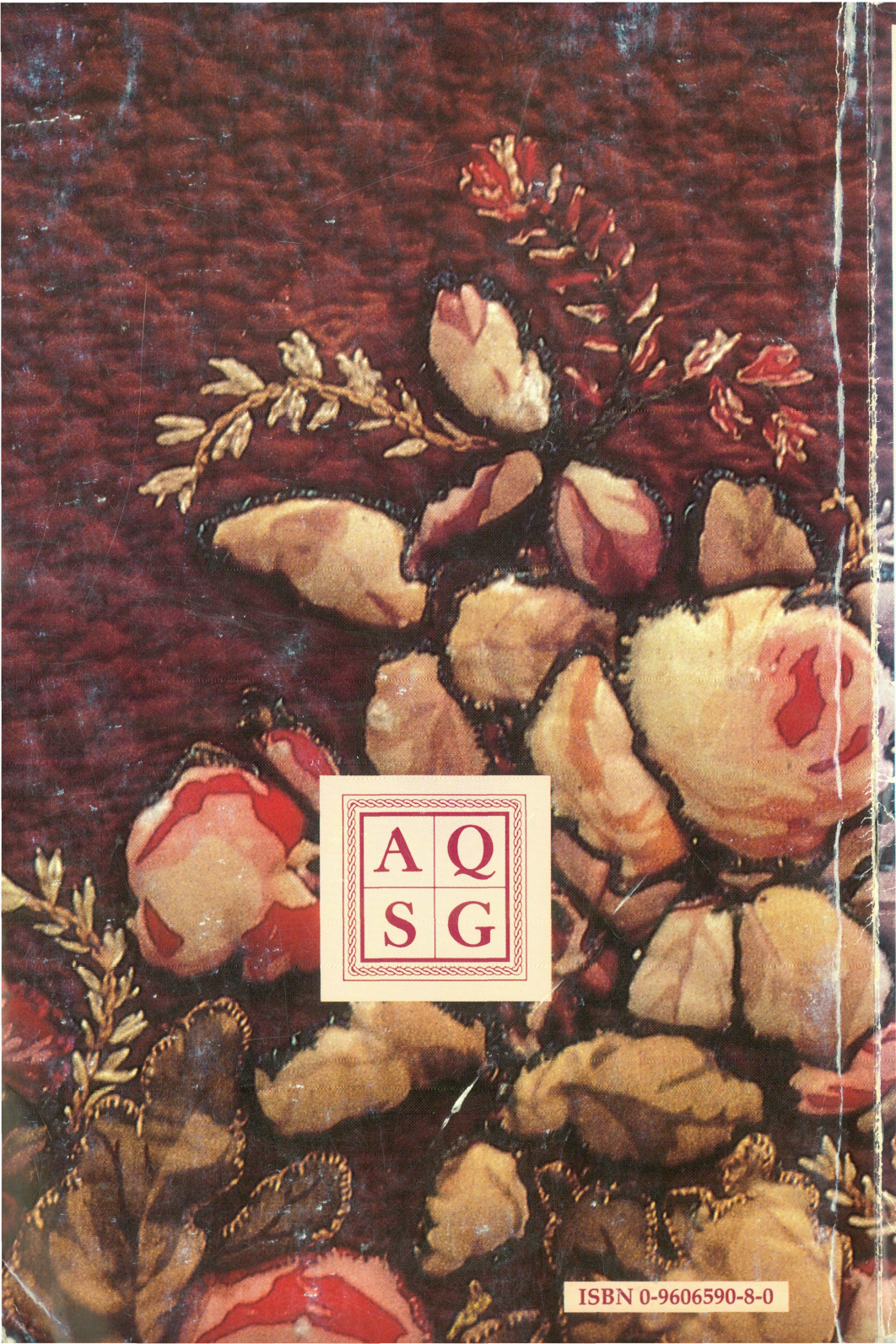
Bryding Adams Henley

Annette Gero

See next page for additional authors

Authors

Laurel Horton, Sally Jeter Garoutte, Cuesta Benberry, Bryding Adams Henley, Annette Gero, Jan Murphy, Colleen Hall-Patton, Merikay Waldvogel, Jane Przybysz, Virginia Gunn, Ruth Roberson, Barbara Brackman, and Joanna Smith



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Volume 8 of the
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Edited by
Laurel Horton and
Sally Garoutte

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Cover photo: Alabama gunboat quilt by Martha Jane Singleton Hatter

Contents

Sally Jeter Garoutte
(1925–1989)

It does appear that Sally Garoutte, a founder of the American Quilt Study Group and its first Executive Director, was destined to become one of the late twentieth century's premier quilt researchers and historians. Possessed of a towering intellect, an incisive questioning mind, and an insatiable desire for accurate information based on proven fact, Sally had qualities eminently suited for concentrated research. In the early 1970s, she made numerous trips around the country visiting quiltmakers, quilt collectors, quilt cooperatives, quilt exhibitions, historical societies, antique shops, libraries, and art, textile, and old house museums, always gathering data for her rapidly expanding files.

During Sally's initial visit to St. Louis, I recall being impressed both by her huge notebook of textile samples and photographs and by the clarity of her thinking. I remember most vividly a conversation we had. Early in the present quilt revival there was much discussion of the resemblance of pieced quilts to trendy Op Art. Sally earnestly questioned, "How can that be? Quilts came *first*. So Op Art resembles quilts, not vice versa." She never changed. Popular ideas and generally accepted concepts were never too sacred to escape Sally Garoutte's close scrutiny and examination.

Sally's writings, based on her investigative studies, are a significant legacy that have brought new insights to quilt history. Largely due to her research, we now know, despite long-held beliefs, that crazy quilts were not the first type of quilts made in colonial America. Sally's discrete classifications of the various types of crazy quilts have been so widely accepted that the theories have almost become a part of the public domain. Several authors have subsequently used the classifications, apparently unaware that Sally was the original author.

Her pioneering work on Marseilles quilt history is quite often cited as the sole authoritative reference on that topic. The first article that *Quilter's Newsletter Magazine* published on Seminole patchwork was written by Sally in 1974. Her discovery of a Log Cabin-type wrapping on an ancient Egyptian mummy confirmed that design's ancient antecedents. Sally's *Quilters' Journal* interviews with Marguerite Ickis and Georgianna Brown Harbeson introduced our generation to those illustrious women, who had only been known to us as authors' names engraved on books. Perhaps her most valuable work was a series of penetrating essays on textile history that are monuments to her expertise in research and writing.

In addition to her writings, Sally's highly professional and exacting editing of *Uncoverings* has brought to those slim volumes critical acclaim as the finest examples of quilt scholarship being published today. Writing research papers for *Uncoverings* fostered an entire cadre of excellent quilt historians in the 1980s. Sally's role has been a large one in the acknowledgment of quilt history as a scholarly discipline, rather than merely the interweaving of quaint, charming, and slightly condescending tales of little old ladies sewing scraps.

We can describe versatile Sally Garoutte in many ways: textile expert, printmaker, researcher, quilt historian, quiltmaker, quilt collector, author, editor, archivist, feminist, and civil rights activist. Without doubt, she was all she needed to be to guide the American Quilt Study Group to its present prominent position.

We mourn her loss, and celebrate her life.

Cuesta Benberry

Preface

The essays in this volume contribute to our growing understanding of the importance of quilts and quiltmaking in human life. One of the recurrent themes here is the motivations of quiltmakers, both past and present. Three essays discuss the creation of quilts as patriotic responses to nineteenth-century events, including commemorative quilts inspired by the Australian Centennial Celebration, and gunboat and linsey quilts sparked by the American Civil War. Two other authors address aspects of contemporary quiltmaking, from a comparison of two quilt groups in southern California to the hoopla surrounding a national contest.

Quiltmakers everywhere are intrigued by the little-known origins of the patterns they use. Although pattern research is not an easy task, two essayists have compiled supporting evidence on the early development of particular designs: one, the popular yo-yo; the other, an unusual pattern found only within a small region.

Another theme of this volume is the nature of quilt research itself. One paper describes the inclusion of quilts in an early published folklore collection, while another describes a recent, successful state documentation project. In response to requests for information on conducting research, a panel of four participants discussed their approaches at the 1987 Seminar, and those presentations are included in this volume.

Many people have noted that there are as many different ways of making quilts as there are quiltmakers. Perhaps it is also safe to say that there are as many different approaches to quilt research as there are researchers. Each investigator brings to the work a different set of tools and experiences that guide and influence the direction of study. In spite of the different approaches, careful researchers share a dedication to accuracy.

The authors of this volume hope that our work will inspire and encourage others as we have been inspired and encouraged by the work of Sally Garoutte.

Alabama Gunboat Quilts

Bryding Adams Henley

In mid-February of 1862 an article entitled "A Southern Woman" appeared in the *Mobile Register and Advertiser*. The female author appealed to the patriotism of southern women and particularly those of Alabama, to make contributions for an Alabama gunboat to defend the city of Mobile. Even though the author had a "house full of children," she made a proposition to contribute her five dollars "earned by her needle." Further, she stated that "were she a man, she would be in the harness of the soldier and grasping the firelock in some expectant camp; being a woman, she has but her prayers, . . . and her noble thoughts to lay upon the altar of love of her dear country." [1] Thus began the inspiration for a statewide campaign in Alabama for the women's gunboat fund.

Alabama, however, was not the only state where women were raising money for gunboats. The first of these societies appeared in New Orleans late in 1861, and from there the idea spread to the February appeal in Alabama.[2] The *Charleston Daily Courier* of March 1, 1862, printed a letter from a lady of Summerville, South Carolina suggesting contributions,[3] and on March 14, 1862, the *Georgia Daily Enquirer* proposed that the South Carolina lady's suggestion be followed in Georgia.[4] Within a week, twelve Georgia cities had organizations and were forwarding the funds to Savannah.[5]

On March 17, 1862, the *Richmond (Virginia) Daily Dispatch* appealed for funds for a gunboat citing inspiration from the women of South Carolina and Georgia.[6] The women of Williamsburg responded by forming a society as reported on March 28, 1862,[7] and by

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Bryding A. Henley, Birmingham Museum of Art, 2000 8th Avenue, N., Birmingham AL 35222

April 4th the Ladies Defense Association of Richmond was formed.[8]

The exact sum of funds raised by these organizations is not known, but at least $30,000 was raised in Charleston and Richmond. The *Charleston*, *Fredericksburg*, and *Georgia* were the three gunboats which were actually called "Ladies Gunboats." The *Georgia* is currently being excavated and researched by the Coastal Heritage Society of Savannah and the United Daughters of the Confederacy.[9]

Newspapers throughout the Confederacy reported with great fervor the contributions toward the gunboats from early March through mid-summer of 1862.[10] Communities developed rivalries, and even states competed for the greatest contributions. An Alabama newspaper urged, "we would state that the women of Georgia and South Carolina are also engaged in the same noble work . . . and unless the women of Alabama bestir themselves their sisters will snatch from them the honor of having the first of the women's gunboats built and ready for service." [11]

Research in extant Alabama newspapers reveals the overwhelming effort of the ladies of this state to secure the funds for a gunboat. Notices of contributions appear from February 18 through May 23, 1862, in the *Mobile Register and Advertiser*, the *Weekly Montgomery Advertiser*, the *Alabama Beacon* of Greensboro, and the *Selma Morning Reporter*. Individuals held concerts and dinners and contributed everything from actual funds to objects to be raffled at bazaars and fairs. However, naval disasters suffered by the Confederate forces in the spring of 1862 fueled public dissatisfaction. With the increasing ineffectiveness and loss of the blockade gunboats, contributions declined by 1863.

The *Mobile Register and Advertiser* should be given the credit for instigating the Alabama effort as reported on Februrary 18, 1862:

> Who speaks next. Let us hear from town and country, from village and hamlet, mountain and plain of our great state. . . . We call upon the women of the interior to take the matter in hand. . . . If the response is general and the one feeling is enkindled from the Promethena spark struck from the mind of "A Southern Woman" it will be easy to organize. . . . The cause is a noble one, the effort is sublime, and the moral effect will reach far beyond the deadly projectiles which the contemplated gunboat can send. If the women take it up with a will, there is no such word as fail.

The *Weekly Montgomery Advertiser* of February 26, 1862, reported a similar appeal. "We commend it to our noble women, who have already done so much to clothe our brave troops with wool and to soothe and tend them when sick. The women of the south wield an influence in the struggle for her independence, which is impossible to estimate. They should exert it." Indeed, contributions did come from throughout the state including thirty-six cities.[12]

Money was contributed in small donations ranging from one dollar to $303.95 by women, children, and slaves.[13] Others who could not give money gave objects, quite often precious to them due not only to their sentimental, but also to their monetary value. Objects given to the cause included a bell, a kettle, brass andirons, a fender, a lamp, oak timbers, a breast pin, gold pencils, a lead pipe, gold thimbles, peafowl flybrushes, a map, jewelery, a decorative pin cushion, a silver cup, a silver fish knife, wine, butter, paintings, a silver goblet and waiter, cotton, quilts, and even a sewing machine. Concerning the sewing machine the lady wrote: "I have no money nor valuables, my only treasures being my children and I cannot offer them to my country for they are daughters. I have a sewing machine, though, which I offer to be disposed of for the benefit of the fund." [14] The paper replied: "This patriotic offer affords another proof of the deep hold our case has taken upon the affections of our noble women. We advise our correspondent to hold on to her sewing machine for the present." [15]

By April 4th the *Mobile Register and Advertiser* reported a total of $2,246.25 with another $1,500 to $2,000 expected. Still the total cost of the gunboat was estimated to be $80,000. All of this outpour of patriotism for a gunboat came to an end in late May when the *Alabama Beacon* and *Selma Reporter* reported: "In view of the probability that Mobile will fall into the hands of the enemy, and the project for building the women's gunboat for the defense of the State will be either abandoned or indefinitely postponed . . . it has been proposed . . . that the gunboat fund be applied in providing Hospitals and in procuring hospital stores for the use of the sick and wounded in our armies." [16] Thus the project came to an end with the funds applied toward hospital supplies.

Of particular interest to this study were the donation and raffling of six quilts for the benefit of the Women's Gunboat Fund. From

Whistler, Alabama on March 30, 1862, a lady, M.D. Resor, wrote to the *Mobile Register and Advertiser*: "Messrs. Editors: This unholy war has bereaved me of my husband, leaving myself and little son dependent upon my father, who is in very limited circumstances. I have no money, and I wish to contribute something to the ladies gunboat; so if you will dispose of this quilt, as you see proper, for the gunboat, you will oblige me." [17] In Eutaw, Alabama, on April 19, 1862, $108.00 was raised from the "Raffle of a fine silk quilt. It was made by a patriotic young lady of Demopolis, Miss C——." [18] Oddly enough, the "Miss C" did not want her name used.

In Greensboro, Alabama, recorded in the *Alabama Beacon*, "Two very handsome quilts have been left with Col Chadwick . . . to be raffled off,—the proceeds to be applied to the Women's Gunboat Fund. One is the handiwork of ladies residing in the Havanna neighborhood,—the other was made by Miss Josephine Bayall." [19]

Unfortunately, the whereabouts of the four above-mentioned quilts is unknown; however, two quilts recorded in the *Alabama Beacon* are now in the collections of the First White House of the Confederacy in Montgomery, Alabama and the Birmingham Museum of Art. These two quilts plus a crib quilt, also at the First White House of the Confederacy, were the impetus for this study. All three quilts were made by the same hand and the same fabric was used in both of the larger quilts. The *Alabama Beacon* on April 4, 1862, tells their story:

> A widow* of our town of Greensboro, who had two sons in the army, had made two quilts of most rare and beautiful workmanship; the proceeds from the sale of which she proposes to devote to the building of the gunboat. One of the quilts was placed in my charge on my visit to Marion, Perry County, on Thursday last. At a public meeting there, I offered the same for sale to the highest bidder. It was bid off for the sum of one hundred dollars!—Their money was immediately contributed by the persons present, and the quilt replaced in my hands to be resold for the same patriotic object.
>
> Yours respectfully,
>
> J. J. Hutchinson
>
> *The lady referred to, is Mrs. Hatter. That quilt or the other contributed by her, has been sold in Tuscaloosa for $400.00 – ED.

One week later the *Alabama Beacon* reported again on the status of these quilts.

> You noticed the sale of a quilt at Marion, made and presented by a lady of Greensboro as a contribution to the ladies' gunboat fund. The quilt . . . returned to me with a request to sell it again . . . was bought by a gentleman of Tuscaloosa for $100 – thus making $200 realized. . . . I have the pleasure to state, the same lady has placed in my hands another quilt of still richer workmanship, devoted to the same object. . . . Offered for sale in Tuscaloosa . . . it was first bought by the contributions of several citizens for $115, who directed me to sell it to a larger company I expected to address, in the same place, that day, and devote the proceeds of the sale to providing for the families of absent soldiers. At this second sale in this city, the sum of $500 was realized, and the quilt again presented to the gunboat enterprise. Last night, at Summerfield, in your county, I offered the quilt for sale again, . . . the sum of $250 was bid for the same, . . . The sale of that object is expected to come off, in Selma, tomorrow, 3rd of April.
>
> Yours,
>
> J. J. Hutchinson[20]

In essence Mrs. Hatter of Greensboro offered two quilts for sale with the proceeds going to the gunboat fund. Quilt A, most probably the one at the Birmingham Museum of Art, was sold at Marion and Tuscaloosa for $100 each sale. Quilt B, more elaborate and probably the one now owned by the First White House of the Confederacy, was sold four times, twice in Tuscaloosa for $115 and $500; in Summerfield for $250, and in Selma, the price unknown.

Quilt A descended in the Hatter family with the history that it and two other quilts were auctioned off to support the Confederacy. "A wealthy Texan bought the quilt and then gave it back to Martha Hatter. Martha then decided she would honor her own mother, Elinor Singleton, by leaving the quilt to be passed down to future Elinors in the family."[21] Indeed this quilt was purchased by the Birmingham Museum of Art in 1985 from Elinor Wesley Weinberg Stickland with partial funds from The Quilt Conservancy.

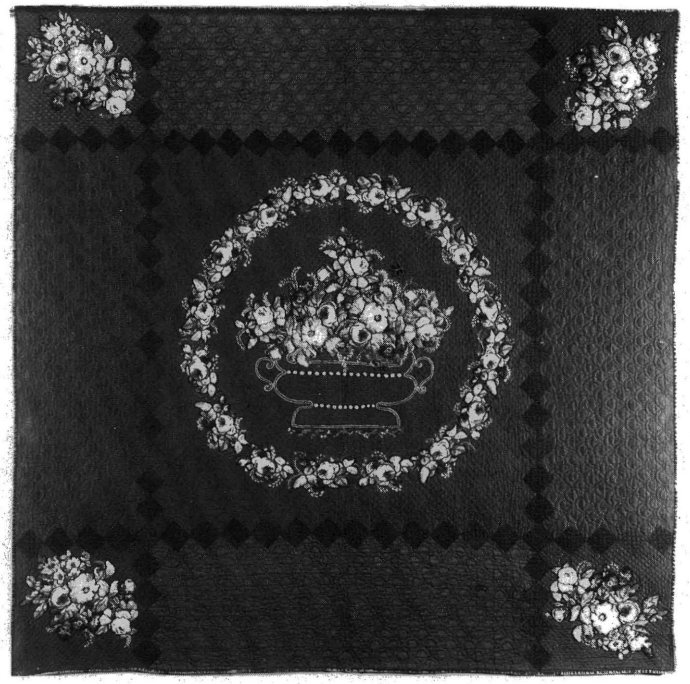

Figure 1. Gunboat Quilt A, Martha Jane Hatter, ca. 1861. Collection of the Birmingham Museum of Art.

Quilt B, owned by the First White House of the Confederacy, was a gift of Mrs. Mary Hutchinson Jones in 1928. She was the daughter of Alfred H. Hutchinson and granddaughter of the J. J. Hutchinson who auctioned the quilts and reported the event to the newspaper. He must have kept the quilt for his family or have been given the quilt by Mrs. Hatter.[22]

The crib quilt now also in the collection of the First White House of the Confederacy was a gift in 1979 of Panthea Mary Reid Fischer and her mother, Nell Marshall Reid (Mrs. John Reid). It was made for Panthea Coleman Baltzell by the great-grandmother and grandmother of the donors listed above. They are direct descendents of Colonel William Henley Bullock and his first wife, Panthea Coleman Birchett Bullock. Martha Jane Hatter was the second wife of Colonel Bullock.[23]

Some controversy has arisen between the descendents of the Hatter family and the Bullock family as to which Mrs. Bullock, the first or the second, actually produced these three quilts. It is the contention of this author that they were made by the second Mrs. Bullock, Martha Jane Singleton Hatter Bullock, as the quilts were auctioned off in March of 1862 and as reported, made and contributed by a widow, Mrs. Hatter. Martha Jane Hatter's first husband was Richard B. Hatter who died on February 14, 1849. She married Colonel William Henley Bullock (1797–1870) on July 30, 1863.[24] Strong family oral history in the Hatter family tells the story of Quilt A being made by Martha Hatter Bullock. She died in 1896 and related the story to her daughter who died in 1960 and to her granddaughter who is still living. The first Mrs. Bullock died on October 19, 1860, and the crib quilt was made for her future granddaughter, Panthea Coleman, born in 1861. Thus it is concluded that Martha Jane Hatter Bullock also made the crib quilt.

Finally a brief analysis of the technique of the three quilts is pertinent to this study.

> Quilt A is sixty-six inches square, obviously conceived not as a bedquilt but as a showcase for her considerable needlework skills. The main feature of the quilt is an embroidered basket with appliqued flowers surrounded by an embroidered wreath. The appliqued flowers are individually cut from printed cretonnes then heavily stuffed and embroidered. Most of the flowers are attached with a buttonhole stitch, sometimes in dark thread which outlines the design visually. Two tiny strawberries, completely three-dimensional, stuffed and embroidered, are attached to the flower basket on the quilt surface. The basket itself is outlined in a split-stitch and decorated with button-like embroidered circles. Such highly-detailed beauty is unusual even for very fine chintz applique quilts of the mid-nineteenth century. Yet another feature sets this quilt apart from others of its era. The framed center motif is applied not to a piece of fine domestic but to a background of chocolate-brown silk taffeta.[25]

Silk was just coming into its own as a quilt fabric in the mid-nineteenth century. American ladies' magazines in the 1850s and 1860s began to publish articles on making template-pieced quilts from silks.[26]

Some quilts from the Charleston, South Carolina area from the 1870s are pieced from squares of silk remnants. However, the use of silk as a background fabric must be, if not unprecedented, quite rare.

A grouping of small dark blue taffetta squares lined up corner to corner forms a frame around the central design. Instead of being pieced into the brown taffetta as one might suppose from viewing the quilt at a distance, the squares are applied over the seamed brown surface with a visible whip-stitch. In the corners of the quilt stand four additional floral bouquets, also stuffed and embellished with embroidery.

The quilting is very fine. The center area is covered by a fine crosshatch of diagonal lines. The outer areas are quilted in double clamshells. The quilt is backed with a medium-brown polished cotton and bound with blue tafetta.

Martha Hatter's handiwork has held up remarkably well. The silks, while fragile, are only slightly fraying, except for the binding which shows some breakage of the fibers. There is apparently some dye change in the printed cottons, as the present blues and tans were probably greens and reds originally.

This quilt combines the framed-center floral-applique format of the early nineteenth century with the use of silk, characteristic of the late nineteenth century. While it links two temporally separate non-utilitarian styles of quiltmaking, it ignores all that came between, that is, repeated block styles of applique and piece work with the predominant use of red, green, and yellow, and the influence of English-style template piecing. If Martha Jane Hatter was following a trend rather than creating her own style other examples have not come to light.[27]

Quilt B is in every way as important historically as Quilt A, yet its technical virtuosity and attention to detail are even more outstanding. The appliqued floral bouquets in the corner of Quilt A are taken from the same fabric as the fabric surrounding the outer edges of Quilt B. There are twenty-one bouquets, stuffed and embroidered, framing the edge. Quilt B also has a large embroidered basket in the center with heavily stuffed appliqued flowers and four three-dimensionally stuffed strawberries. These flowers and a flower wreath surrounding the center basket were cut from the same fabric used in the border. Nine birds and four butterflies are appliqued on or are around the central basket.

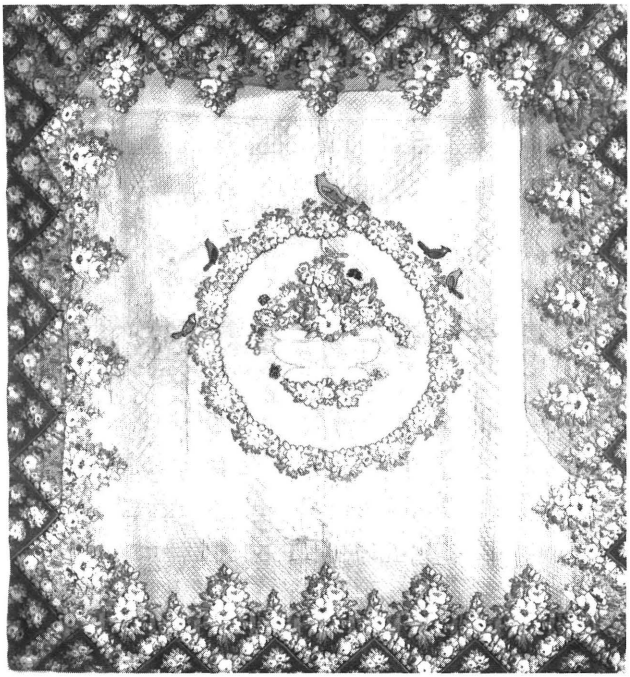

Figure 2. Gunboat Quilt B, Martha Jane Hatter, ca. 1861. Collection of the First White House Association, Montgomery, Alabama.

The quilt is quilted in a small diamond pattern above the outer floral applique. There are four corner blocks each with four inner blocks of alternating hanging diamond and clamshell quilting. Filling in among these four large blocks are a double diagonal crosshatch forming framed diamonds. A small block quilted with hanging diamonds extends to the center wreath from each corner block. The area within the floral wreath itself is quilted in a small-scale diagonal crosshatch. The quilt measures 71 x 68 inches, and the fabric is cotton throughout.

The crib quilt measures 37 x 31 1/2 inches. Depicted in its center is a basket of flowers, cut from printed floral chintz fabric and carefully appliqued, with a surrounding appliqued floral wreath. Although not as heavily stuffed as the two larger quilts, the flowers throughout are

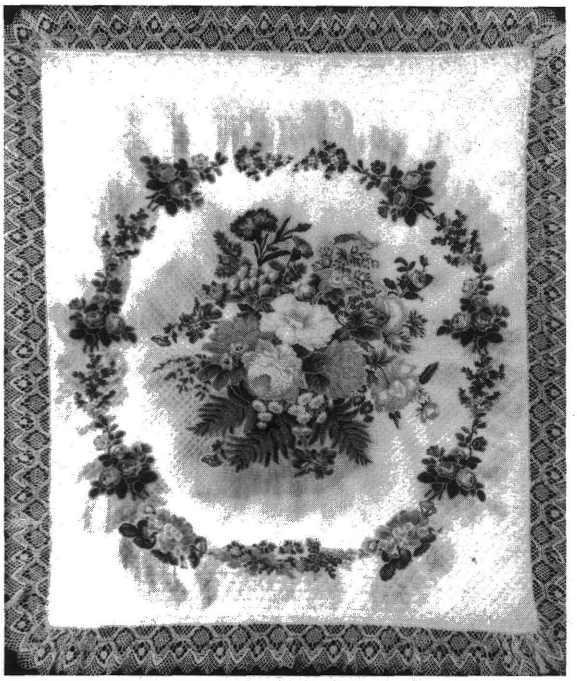

Figure 3. Crib Quilt, Martha Jane Hatter, ca. 1861. Collection of the First White House Association, Montgomery, Alabama

outlined by embroidery. A basket is depicted by quilting beneath the center floral spray. Inside the floral wreath is small crosshatch quilting, and outside the wreath is large crosshatch quilting. Each corner is quilted in a fishscale pattern within a block. The background of the quilt is a plain ecru muslin.

In summary these three quilts have provided a most interesting window into the efforts made by southern women for their homeland during the War Between the States. It is indeed amazing and wonderful that these quilts have survived, much less that they are in very good condition and are exceptional examples with or without their history. Further, we are most fortunate that they are in public museums where they can be enjoyed by many people. It is hoped that through future quilt research as part of the Alabama Quilt Survey, other quilts which

were mentioned in the old newspapers examined during the course of this research may be located and connected with their history. These quilts prove that with continued cooperative efforts among the quilt projects throughout the United States, more quality quilts and their histories will be known and made available for study and public viewing.

Notes and References

1. *Mobile Advertiser and Register,* February 17, 1862, 29:271.
2. William N. Still, Jr., *Iron Afloat: The Story of the Confederate Armorclads* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1971), 85.
3. *Ibid.*, 85.
4. *Ibid.*, 86.
5. *Ibid.*, 86.
6. *Ibid.*, 86.
7. *Ibid.*, 86.
8. *Ibid.*, 86.
9. Correspondence of May 5, 1987 and telephone conversation of May 15, 1987 with Tim Callahan, Coastal Heritage Society, Old Fort Jackson, Savannah, Georgia. He is currently researching information on the C.S.S. *Georgia* which is submerged in the Savannah River at Old Fort Jackson. The Society and the United Daughters of the Confederacy of Georgia are planning to raise the vessel.
10. *Mobile Advertiser and Register:* March 7, 1862, 29:287. March 13, 1862, 29: 292. March 18, 1862, 29:296. March 19, 1862, 29:297. March 21, 1862, 29:299. March 22, 1862, 29:300. March 25, 1862, 29:302. March 26, 1862, 29:303. April 3, 1862, 30:3. April 4, 1862, 30:4. April 5, 1862, 30:5. April 6, 1862, 30:6. April 8, 1862, 30:7. April 24, 1862, 30:21. April 29, 1862, 30:25.

    Weekly Montgomery Advertiser: February 26, 1862, 28:23. March 22, 1862, 28:26. April 15, 1862, 28:29.

    Alabama Beacon (Greensboro): March 7, 1862, 6:8. March 14, 1862, 6:9. March 21, 1862, 6:10. April 4, 1862, 6:12. April 11, 1862, 6:13. April 25, 1862, 6:15. May 23, 1862, 6:19.

    Selma Morning Reporter: March 10, 1862, 4:7. March 19, 1862, 4:16. April 10, 1862, 4:135. April 21, 1862, 4:144. May 13, 1862, 4:163. May 14, 1862, 4:164. May 15, 1862, 4:165. May 16, 1862, 4:166.

11. *Alabama Beacon*, March 21, 1862.
12. The cities from which contributions were received included the following: Benton, Black Bend, Blakeley, Brewersville, Buena Vista, Cahaba, Camden, Citronelle, Clinton, Columbiana, Dayton, Demopolis, Eutaw, Evergreen, Fayetteville, Ft. Gaines, Forts, Gainesville, Greensboro, Jackson, King's Landing, Kymulga, Linden, Livingston, Locust Laws, Marion, Montgomery, Pikeville, Prairie Bluff, Selma, Sidney, Summerfield, Sumterville, Tomkinsville, Tuskegee, Yellow Bluff.
13. *Montgomery Daily Advertiser*, April 15, 1862.
14. *Mobile Advertiser and Register*, March 13, 1862.
15. *Mobile Advertiser and Register*, March 21, 1862.
16. *Selma Reporter*, May 16, 1862, and Alabama Beacon, May 23, 1862.
17. *Mobile Register and Advertiser*, April 6, 1862.
18. *Mobile Register and Advertiser*, April 24, 1862.
19. *Alabama Beacon*, April 25, 1862.
20. *Alabama Beacon*, April 11, 1862.
21. Birmingham Museum of Art Accession File # 1985.209. Information and correspondence from Elinor Strickland.
22. Joseph Johnston Hutchinson (1810–1869) was a Methodist minister for Summerfield, Alabama. The Alabama Census of 1850, Dallas County, lists a "Rev. Joseph Johnston Hutchinson, born in Georgia, age 40 years, and a Methodist minister with seven children." Marion Elias Lazenby, *History of Methodism in Alabama and West Florida* (North Alabama Conference and Alabama–West Florida Conference of the Methodist Church, 1960), 295.
23. Birmingham Museum of Art Accession File # 1985.209. Information and correspondence to and from Mrs. John Reid and Mrs. John H. Napier III. Telephone conversation with Mrs. John Reid and the author on September 7, 1987.
24. Marriage Records. Greene County, Courthouse, Eutaw, Alabama.
25. This description was taken from an unpublished report by Laurel Horton sent to the author in a letter of April 21, 1986. This report and letter are in the Birmingham Museum of Art Accession File #1985.209. The author is most appreciative of Ms. Horton for the use of this description as well as aiding in the final disposition of this quilt to the Birmingham Museum of Art.
26. Virginia Gunn, "Victorian Silk Template Patchwork in American Periodicals, 1850–1875," *Uncoverings 1983*, ed. Sally Garoutte (Mill Valley, Calif.: American Quilt Study Group, 1984),9.
27. Horton letter and report.

Acknowledgments

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Australian Patriotic Quilts of the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries

Annette Gero

Our quilting heritage in Australia is very British. No matter how hard we try to illuminate the Australian Patriotic quilt—except in a few rare instances—the British Heritage is still there. Right from the beginning, when the English Quaker prison reformer, Elizabeth Fry, taught the women in Newgate Prison to make patchwork as occupational therapy during their transportation to the colony, the discipline of English patchwork and quilting was adhered to. In a letter dated 1832 to Reverend Marsden, the first chaplain of the colony, Elizabeth Fry enquires of the female convicts: "How have the women made their counterpanes, as to the neatness of the work and the taste displayed by them?" [1] Although Australia started as a British penal colony in 1788, by the early 1830s there were also many women in the colony who were wives of government officials, emancipationists, and immigrant free settlers, and it was these women of the colony who had the time and means for patchwork decorative art.

These "ladies" had the qualification of birth and a superior rank by virtue of their husbands' position in the colony and were called "fair," "gentle," "cultivated," and "intelligent." These women were not without occupations however. They ran the households (with three or four servants) and included in the household occupations was needlework. "Taste" (as described by Elizabeth Fry) was the type of needlework which was fashionable in England at the time—including patchwork quilts.

Annette Gero, 4 Rangers Road, Cremorne, N.S.W. 2090, Australia

Whether, in these early years, pattern books travelled across the seas to the colony, or whether quilts which arrived as household belongings were merely copied, can only be surmised, but obviously most immigrant women communicated with the family they left behind. As Lucy Frost describes in her novel, *No Place for a Nervous Lady: Voices from the Australian Bush:*

> [There is] something about the peculiar psychological effects of growing into adulthood on one side of the globe and then taking up life in what must by definition be a strange environment tens of thousands of miles away from "home." Once a life is sliced into two segments by such a move, it feels almost as though one were a fictional character who had got oneself into two different novels. A human desire for unity, for an integrated personality, may make a woman yearn to merge the two novels into a single continuous narrative.[2]

These women were rather like the early painters in Australia, who painted English trees into the landscape instead of the rugged, untidy eucalyptus, and it was these same women who waited anxiously for English seedlings to arrive, to recreate an English garden in the harsh Australian bushland. And, although the Australian decorative arts (pottery, furniture, silver) began to show indigenous symbols such as kangaroos and emus and native flowers as early as the 1840s,[3] the upper class Australian quiltmakers remained firmly rooted to their English origins. The importance of doing what their relatives were doing in England at the same time cannot be overstressed. Thus, until the latter part of the nineteenth century, they made an abundance of hexagon, tumbling blocks, and central medallion quilts.

In 1844, Annabella Boswell describes in her diary finishing a patchwork table cover of silks in a **Tumbling Block** or **Baby Block** design. In 1847, she reports "We are threatened with two conflicting manias, one for fancywork, the other for the Polka."[4] The tumbling block pattern in silk was extremely popular. It was pieced over templates and was the same technique as the American women were using at this time.[5] One quilt from this period, made in Melbourne, contains paper templates cut from etchings of koalas and opossums.[6] The thought of expressing the koala on the front of the quilt would not have occurred to the women quilters until much later.

The attitude began to change by the late 1880s. There had been a vast migration of people to Australia in the 1850–1860s because of the gold rush, and by the late nineteenth century Australia had acquired great wealth. There was the beginning of a tremendous feeling of national identity as over half the population was Australian born. And it was at this point that "patriotic" quilts began to appear.

One definition of "patriotic" in *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* is "marked by devotion to the wellbeing or interests of one's country."[7] My definition of a patriotic quilt is one in which the maker expressed her allegiance to the colony of Australia by deliberately placing on the front of her quilt symbols that affirm national identity—whether a reaffirmation of her allegiance to British Australia, or simply the inclusion of symbols of either Australia's indigenous flora and fauna or of her colonial surroundings.

Perhaps the first record we have of patchwork which bears no relationship to the pattern books supplied from England[8] were opossum and platypus skin patchwork rugs made by the women of New South Wales, which were displayed by the Australian courts at the Philadelphia 1876 Centennial Exposition[9] and the 1893 Chicago World's Columbian Exposition. This kind of skin rug was first made by the Aborigines. Early explorers were interested to find parties of Aborigines in possession of small rugs made of opossum skin and sewed together with sinews, and the rugs became trade items between the natives and the white settlers. It became fashionable for late nineteenth century women to make these skin patchworks also, and they continued to be made up until the 1940s.

The earliest quilts found to date which reflect some patriotism are two which were made in celebration of Queen Victoria's Jubilee (celebrating fifty years of reign) in 1887. The first contains a backing of fabric printed for the Jubilee, and the second shows the maker's patriotism by the inclusion of Australian motifs, while she reaffirms her allegiance to England and Queen Victoria.

The first quilt is that of Mary Ann Bruton which was started in the Victorian gold fields in 1873 and completed in 1887 (the year of Queen Victoria's Jubilee). The pattern appears to be her own, a variation of a medallion design with tiny squares in the center and five successive borders of diamonds and triangles in various combinations.

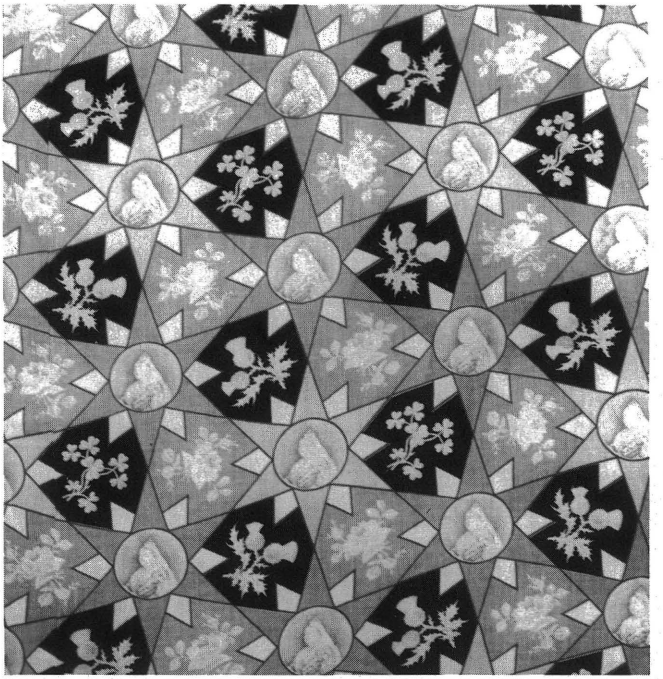

Figure 1. Detail of backing fabric from Mary Ann Bruton's quilt, printed with a cameo of Queen Victoria together with the rose, the shamrock, and the thistle, ca.1887. Collection of Marjorie Bruton, granddaughter of the quiltmaker.

Mary Ann Bruton was a dressmaker, and the small prints of cotton in the center of her quilt are those materials which were left over from dressmaking and were pieced by the template method. She started the quilt in 1873, the year her second son was born, "patching the tiny pieces by hand whilst rocking his cradle with her foot." There was no electricity and the quilt was pieced by the light of a kerosene lamp.[10]

Mary Ann Bruton did not complete her quilt until 1887 when she purchased the fabric for the back of the quilt. The extraordinary part of the quilt is this fabric chosen for the backing, which is a cotton print produced for Queen Victoria's Jubilee in 1887, printed with the rose (for England), the shamrock (Ireland), and the thistle (Scotland), together with a cameo of Queen Victoria. (Note that the leek for

Figure 2. Embroidered and applique medallion quilt, ca.1887–1890, 88" x 90". Collection of Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart, Tasmania.

Wales is not represented.) The choice of fabric shows the maker's patriotism to the British Australia of that time. This is possibly the only surviving example of this material in Australia, although a similar fabric has been identified in an English quilt.[11] The finished quilt was not stuffed or quilted but is held together by the binding.

The quilt was first exhibited and won two first prizes at the Kerang District Agricultural Fair of 1888. It must have been regarded as an extraordinary piece of women's fancywork because it won first prize for the next nine years from 1889–1897.[12]

Mrs. Bruton's Jubilee quilt is a simple country quilt, but the second Jubilee quilt is a sophisticated masterpiece which also combines the British background and the colonial environment, and was made in the city of Hobart, Tasmania. Hobart was a well-developed city in the

1880s, full of grand stone buildings. The woman who made this quilt obviously had access to the latest women's magazines from England, as all the quilting fads current at the time are included. However, it is most notable for its Colonial motifs. The many Australian motifs on the quilt include a wall envelope containing an embroidered letter which says "Mrs. Blyth, Formby" (the name for West Devonport before 1890) with the postmark "HO" for Hobart (Tasmania). Another wall envelope contains a ticket to the Grand Match—an England versus Australia cricket match—with a kangaroo looking victorious and a British lion holding a cricket bat! Many colonial flags are embroidered throughout the quilt, in particular those for Tasmania, Victoria, and New South Wales. The flags have been dated pre-1890. The center of the quilt shows the Prince of Wales feathers, and the outer border contains very intricate embroidered fans, depicting the craze for Japanese fans and oriental decorative arts. There are embroidered Kate Greenaway figures and a symbol for the Isle of Man which says "Queen Victoria Jubilee, 1887."

The following year, 1888, was Australia's Centennial. Two exhibitions were held to celebrate the event, the great Centennial International Exhibition in Melbourne, and the Exhibition of Women's Industries and Centenary Fair in Sydney.[13] Although quilts are recorded in the catalogs of these exhibitions, none have materialized so far for us to document. One can only surmise whether, one hundred years after the settlement of the colony, the entrants were inspired to include patriotic symbols on their quilts.

One woman, Nina Alice Read, was part of the great Centennial Exhibition in Melbourne in 1888 in that she exhibited a Connelly sewing machine (Wilcox and Gibb, London). In her diary she says:

> In the first week I cleared nearly £80. [The money was made by embroidering names on silk handkerchiefs at the Exhibition.] Singers, Beales and reporters were very interested. They had never seen this work done before or seen a sewing machine like it.[14]

Nina Alice Read came to Australia from London on the *Arizaba* in December 1887, at the age of 21. At the Exhibition she met Frank Pigott Webb, a maker of finely engraved and etched glassware, whom she married in 1888. Webb exhibited and won many first class awards for his work, which covered a variety of Australian themes: foliage,

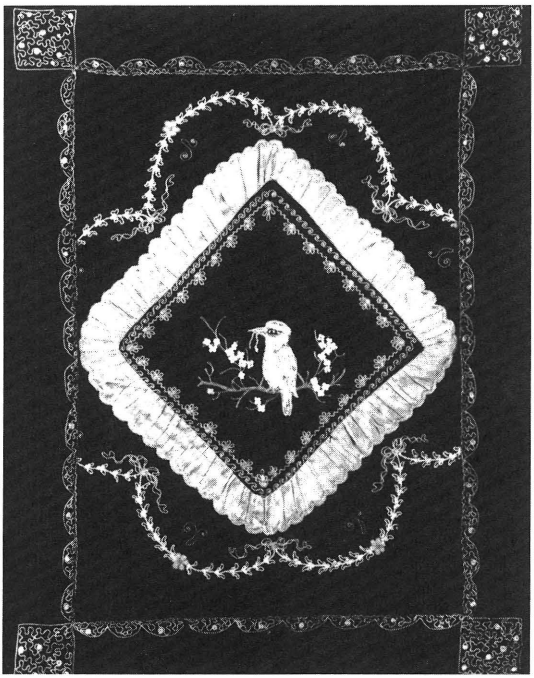

Figure 3. Kookaburra quilt made by Nina Alice Read, late nineteenth century, black and pink satin with embroidery, 50" x 62". Collection of Wendy Lowe, granddaughter of the maker.

native flora and fauna, and which included vases engraved with a kookaburra holding a snake in its beak.[15] In 1894, the couple occupied various premises in the city of Sydney, and Nina supplemented their earnings with fancywork done both by hand and on the Connelly machine. Nina Alice Read made seven quilts, and one of the quilts which survives contains an embroidered kookaburra in the center with a snake in its mouth, surrounded by pink fabric and pink and green embroidery.

The back of the quilt was black and cream silk patchwork, and it was stuffed with feathers and quilted by machine. At last, Australian women were putting their Australian motifs on the front rather than the back of their quilts!

Figure 4. Sampler quilt of the Village of Westbury made by a member of the Hampson family, Westbury, Tasmania, ca.1900–1903, 69" x 88". Collection of Genevieve Fitzpatrick.

Perhaps one of the most delightful quilts with Australian motifs which survives is one composed of fifty-two individual blocks of pictorial scenes depicting life in the village of Westbury, Tasmania. It is pieced, appliqued, and embroidered. Amongst the blocks are "Bobs" the kangaroo, an emu, three colonial houses of Westbury (one belonging to "H.G.J. Drew, Westbury"), a block which shows a candle and an oil lamp labeled "Light in the house" and a multitude of blocks depicting the farm animals, all with their pet names: cows, horses, dogs, pigs, ducks, chickens, and other birds. Children ride horses and a bicycle.

The center block depicts Queen Victoria (in Elizabethan costume) and a multitude of Victorian sayings and proverbs. It was obviously made for a raffle as one block states "Good luck to the

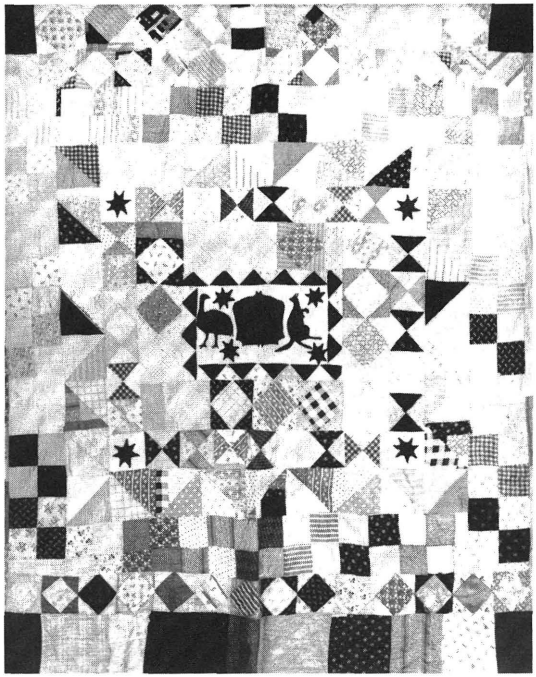

Figure 5. Medallion quilt with central coat of arms by Mrs. Brown of Bowning, New South Wales, ca. 1890–1900, pieced and appliqued cottons, 72" x 90". Collection of Leigh Taumoefolau.

winner of this [quilt], October 11th 1902." A second date embroidered on the quilt is "January 1903." Another block says "Victoria the Good, 1900." Queen Victoria died on January 10, 1901. It is not known if this quilt was made in allegiance to her, to celebrate Federation in 1901 (see below), or just to celebrate life at that time. The quilt is backed with flannel squares which are machine pieced. The top and back are attached only by the binding.

In 1901, Federation occurred after a long political struggle, and the separate colonies in Australia were joined into one nation—the Commonwealth of Australia. Although an Australian coat of arms was not officially granted until 1908, many earlier items of Australian decorative art incorporate the makers' own versions of an Australian coat of arms. One such example is a quilt which was found in the

possession of the Swann sisters who lived at Elizabeth Farm in Sydney, New South Wales.

The Swann Quilt is a medallion quilt made from salesmen's samples of the late nineteenth century. In the center of the quilt there is a red applique coat of arms with the emu and kangaroo facing outwards but looking inwards. It is different from the official version of 1908 in which both animals face inward. The earliest medal with this particular unofficial coat of arms was struck in 1853 to celebrate the cessation of transportation in Tasmania,[16] but the coat of arms on the Swann Quilt, dated through numismatic origins, is most likely to be from around 1890,[17] (about the same time the fight for Federation gained momentum). This unofficial coat of arms pattern was still in use in 1929 as a crochet d'oyley pattern designed by Playfair and published in the *Australian Woman's Mirror*.[18]

The quilt was made by "Grannie" Brown of Bowning, NSW. Margaret, the eldest Swann sister, was the one member of the Swann family who was extremely interested in Australian history and was actively involved in the civic and social activities of the period. She became a school teacher and later a headmistress and, in 1896, was the President of the Women's Suffrage League. Margaret wrote many articles on Australian history and together with her father carried a great interest in the political battle for Federation. Thus the quilt was made by a close family friend, "Grannie" Brown, and presented to her.

After Federation, quilts became much more patriotic and coats of arms and "Advance Australia Fair" appear on several quilts.[19] The most noticeable are a series of four unbacked quilts made by an unknown woman who signed her quilts "MJH." These quilts were made in the early twentieth century. The final quilt, her funeral or final farewell quilt, is dated 1924. The first quilt has "Advance Australia Fair" embroidered in the center and is medallion style. The center of the quilt also contains two aboriginals, one carrying a spear and a boomerang, and the other with a small child on its back. There is also an emu, a kangaroo, and a kookaburra with a snake in its mouth. A second medallion at the bottom of the quilt contains native birds and insects. The quilt is appliqued scraps and appears to be entirely her own design.

Whoever MJH was, she was very aware of life around her. Her

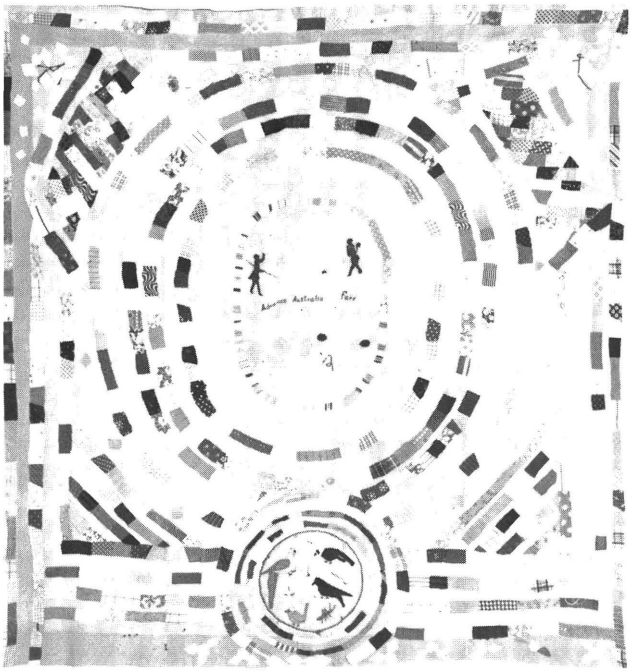

Figure 6. Advance Australia Fair quilt, early twentieth century, made by MJH, applique and embroidery, 65" x 61". Collection of the Australian National Gallery, Canberra.

final quilt shows time passing away by a huge clock, her farewell to the world "God bless you all. Good bye," and is signed "MJH. aged 84 yrs. 1924."

The last two Australian patriotic quilts also symbolize death, but in the form of war. The first quilt is a signature quilt made by Mrs. Hansen and her friends during World War I. Mrs. Hansen's son, Captain Stewart Murray Hansen, fought during World War I with the 14th Battalion in Gallipoli (Turkey) and France. Captain Hansen recorded the signatures of his fellow soldiers and nurses on cotton squares which were used as wrapping around food parcels sent to the troops by the Red Cross and his mother. The squares, signed in pencil, were sent back to Australia where they were embroidered in red silk by his mother, bordered by narrow strips of red material, and pieced

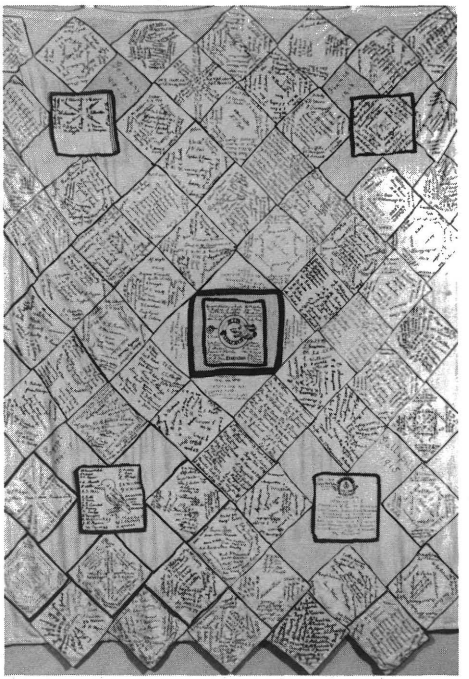

Figure 7. Signature quilt made by Mrs. Hansen and friends, ca.1914–1919, Williamstown, Victoria, 66" x 89". Collection of the Williamstown Historical Society, Victoria.

together to make the quilt. The blocks were sewn onto a backing sheet, and there are several blocks with motifs, such as a kookaburra, a cannon, a dog, a map of Australia, the Victoria Cross, and a flower. Captain Hansen was killed in France on his twenty-fifth birthday. The quilt is a permanent record of men and women who served in World War I, many of whom never returned, as well as being a magnificent piece of patriotic folk craft.

Red and white signature quilts appeared to be popular during both the world wars, encouraged by the Red Cross, either to raise money for the troops or as a record of some particular event.[20] The Australian quilts which have survived from both world wars are similar in concept to those made in America,[21] and Canada,[22] and, presumably, England (although none appear to be documented yet). Those quilts

which were made abroad were probably embroidered on muslin, which surrounded the outside of food packages, or from plain cotton sent to the troops or to war camps. In a booklet entitled "What Red Cross Does for Prisoners of War," instruction for senders in Australia included sending "coloured silks and cottons, plain linen or canvas for embroidering." [23]

The final quilts in this story are a series of three made from scrap material by the Australian and English civilian women and nurses who were interned in Changi prison (Singapore) from 1942 to 1944. In order to inform the outside world and, in particular, their relatives in both countries, that they were alive, each woman made several signed blocks which were incorporated into three quilts of sixty-six blocks each. In an attempt to ensure that two quilts would reach the Australian and English Red Cross Societies respectively, the third quilt was made and presented to the Japanese Red Cross. An embroidered message was placed on the back of each quilt. The one intended to reach the Australian Red Cross stated the following:

> Presented by the women of Changi Internment Camp 1942 to the wounded Australian soldiers with our sympathy for their suffering.
>
> It is our wish that on the cessation of hostilities that this quilt be presented to the Australian Red Cross Society.
>
> It is advisable to dry clean this quilt.

The quilt destined for the Japanese Red Cross and the British Red Cross had similar messages except substitution with the words "Japanese" and "British" and the inclusion of the camp number 2602. It was hoped that if one quilt was given to the Japanese, the other two would have a greater chance of survival. The quilts provided a short list of those women who were still alive in Changi. The blocks on the quilt intended for the Japanese were mainly flowers and pleasant scenes with some oriental flavor. However, the quilts designated for "home" depicted more of the true conditions in the prison and the women's patriotism to their countries. There is a block with a map of Australia with a kangaroo in the center, surrounded by a ship and an airplane; the Changi prison walls; several Changi cells; and a "V" for victory. As well there are blocks showing memories from home—flowers in the garden and in vases, birds, real food, fishing by a river, frisking

lambs, and the cottages of home. Many of the women who made these squares did not survive. But the quilts did reach their destinations.[24]

Although many old Australian quilts have been documented over the past few years, patriotic quilts, those quilts which reflect indigenous symbols or aspects of the social or political events of the time, appear to be relatively rare. Thus, those patriotic quilts which have been left to us are important to our heritage both historically and visually.

Notes and References

1. Marsden Files, State Library of New South Wales, MS A1992: 551.
2. Lucy Frost, *No Place for a Nervous Lady: Voices from the Australian Bush* (Victoria, Australia, Penguin, 1984), 4.
3. Terence Lane, *The Kangaroo in the Decorative Arts*, exhibition catalog (Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria, 1979).
4. Morton Herman, *Annabella Boswell's Journal* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1981), 89, 125.
5. Virginia Gunn, "Victorian Silk Template Patchwork in American Periodicals, 1850–1875," in *Uncoverings 1983*, ed. Sally Garoutte (Mill Valley, Calif.: American Quilt Study Group, 1984), 9–25.
6. Silk **Tumbling Block** quilt owned by the Embroiderers Guild of Victoria, Melbourne, reference number 382.
7. *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 3rd ed., s.v."patriotic."
8. Many English women's magazines have been found in Australia, and it is highly likely that these were among the sources of needlework and patchwork patterns for women in the nineteenth century, e.g., *The Girls Own Paper* (first published London, 1878) which sold for one penny a copy. These papers were also bound and sold as *The Girls Own Annual*. Several copies, which I own, were gifts each year to Nellie Denbow McLeod on her seventh, eighth, and ninth birthday from Granny and Grandfather (signed Wellington, New South Wales). Patterns were also taken from *The Stitchery Annual* (London) which was the collection of quarterly supplements to *The Girls Own Paper and Woman's Magazine*. The two volumes of *Cassells Household Guide* (London, 1875), 1: 337, and 2: 3, 24 gave instructions for patchwork, as did *Caulfeild's Dictionary of Needlework* (London, 1885), pages 6, 379–385, 414. *Weldon's Fancy-*

work Series (London) was also available in Australia throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As well, Australian-published books of the nineteenth century gave instructions for patchwork, such as the *Universal Self Instructor* (Sydney: McNeil and Coffee, 1883), *The Australian Enquiry Book of Household and General Information* (Sydney: Kangaroo Press, 1894), and *Dawn Magazine* ,ed. Louise Lawson (Sydney), which was called the Australian women's journal and mouthpiece, published from 1885–1905. All these publications contained patterns for English-style patchwork.

9. Frank Leslie, *Illustrated Historical Register of the Centennial Exposition, 1876* (New York: Paddington Press, 1974), 259.
10. Letter from Marjorie Bruton, granddaughter of the quiltmaker, January 30, 1985.
11. A similar fabric is shown on a commemorative English quilt in June Field, *Creative Patchwork* (London: Pan Books, 1976), 45.
12. The ten prizewinning certificates (from 1888–1897) are in the collection of Marjorie Bruton, granddaughter of the quiltmaker.
13. *Official Record of the Centennial International Exhibition Melbourne, 1888–1889* (Melbourne: Sands and McDougal, 1890); and *Catalogue of the Exhibition of Women's Industries* (Sydney, 1888).
14. Unpublished diary of Nina Alice Read, collection of her granddaughter, Wendy Lowe.
15. Frank Webb is recorded as one of Sydney's colonial craftsmen. One vase with a kookaburra is currently in the collection of the Nambucca District Historical Society Museum, New South Wales.
16. L. J. Carlisle, *Australian Commemorative Medals and Medalets from 1788* (Sydney: B & C Press, 1983), 5.
17. Ibid., 5–69.
18. Featured in *The D'Oyley Show: An Exhibition of Women's Domestic Fancywork* (Sydney: D'Oyley Publications, Everywoman Press, Chippendale, 1979), 22.
19. In the nineteenth century it was quite common for the words "Advance Australia" to appear under the unofficial coat of arms, particularly on medals, and as crests on furniture and silver. "Advance Australia Fair" is a patriotic song composed in the mid-nineteenth century.
20. Nine additional red and white signature quilts are in the collection of the Victorian Division of the Red Cross Society in Melbourne, Victoria.
21. Several American Red Cross quilts are mentioned in Nancy J. Rowley, "Red Cross Quilts for the Great War," *Uncoverings 1982,* ed. Sally Garoutte (Mill Valley, Calif., American Quilt Study Group, 1983), 43.

22. Some Canadian World War I and II quilts are recorded in Mary Conroy, *300 Years of Canada's Quilts* (Toronto: Griffin House, 1976), 83–4, 94–5; and Sandra Morton Weizman and Elyse Eliot-Los, *Alberta Quilts* (Edmonton: Paperworks Press, 1984), 10, 13, 18.
23. The Australian Red Cross Society, *What Red Cross Does for Prisoners of War* (July 1943).
24. The Australian and the Japanese quilts are now in the possession of the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, and the English quilt is owned by the British Red Cross Society, Guildford, Surrey, United Kingdom.

Design Influences on an Unnamed Regional Pattern with Descriptive Catalog of Known Examples

Jan Murphy

Euphemia Evalina Mills was born in Iredell County, North Carolina, in 1837, the ninth of ten children born to William Mills and Elizabeth DeArmon Mills. Her granddaughter remembers Euphemia's girlhood home (no longer standing) as a two-story frame house with a wing in back and "flowers everywhere."[1] The family was one of many who farmed the sizeable piedmont "plantations" as farms were called. These early plantations were largely self-sufficient in producing the articles needed for daily life, and this certainly included clothing construction and quilts. At the crossroads store in present-day Shinnsville, North Carolina, (the area formerly called the "Mills Settlement,") the storekeeper will tell you, "They say to this day that when the Mills girls came to church, heads would turn to see what they were wearing as they were such fine seamstresses."[2] From the dressmaking scraps and from newly purchased fabrics, Euphemia pieced quilts and made one very lovely applique quilt. She married late, following the War Between the States. In 1872 she died in childbirth, and her husband of two years, John Allison, took the surviving twin of her first pregnancy and went to live with her family where maiden aunts helped to raise the child. John packed up all of Euphemia's quilts and unquilted tops in a trunk and there they have remained, now in the loving care of her granddaughter. Family tradition says that her beautiful applique quilt was made before the Civil War, and indeed the fabrics, style, and "look" are of that time. This quilt in red and

Jan Murphy, 213 Edgewood Road, Statesville N.C. 28677

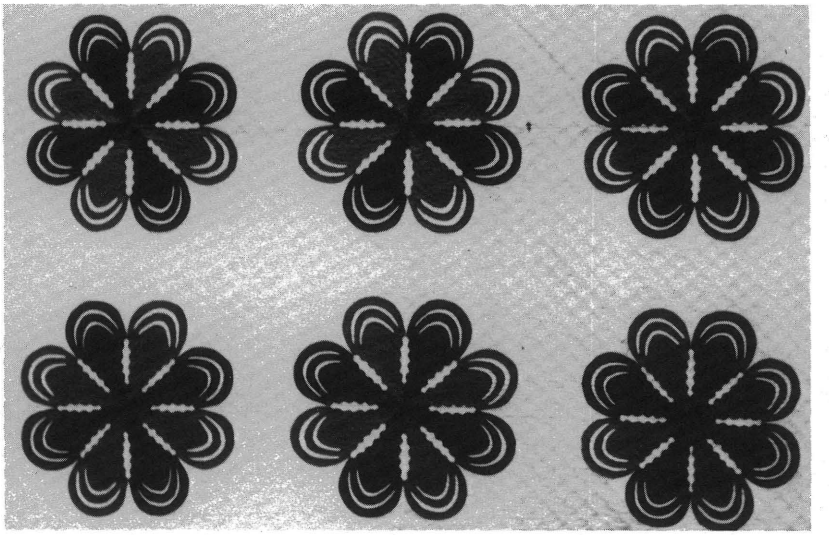

Figure 1. Detail of quilt made by Euphemia Mills Allison, Iredell County, North Carolina, ca. 1860.

green with nine large squares of appliqued medallions and elegant double clamshell quilting is the one which sparked my interest in the unnamed pattern, when I saw it displayed in a local show in December 1985.

I had seen one other quilt of the design a few weeks earlier, in November 1985, during the first month of the North Carolina Quilt Project. When this fine quilt, made by Margaret Emma Poovey (1850–1925) of Lincoln County, and dated January 1877, was presented for documentation we were unable to identify the pattern. Later, at home, I combed my books and magazines as I was sure I had seen the design. There it was, in the Fall 1984 issue of *Ladies Circle Patchwork Quilts* in an article about the South Carolina Quilt History Project. And there it was—UNNAMED, so the search was on!

None of the examples in the search came with a name which might give a clue to the origin of the design, so I began to look instead at the elements which would have influenced its development. These elements would have been the ethnic groups in the area, the general

decorative styles of the period, and the quilting techniques of the period. One of the intriguing aspects of this quilt pattern is that it appears to have sprung from the piedmont area of the Carolinas and to have been made ONLY there. One late (1880) version was made in Missouri and a variation has been found in Texas. For the sake of discussion, it will be called **medallion applique** which describes the shape and the technique used to create it.

Euphemia's father, William Mills, had come to North Carolina in 1794, when his parents, Charles Nathaniel and Elizabeth Rial Mills, led a party of seven families (with their household goods and slaves) from St. Mary's County, Maryland[3] into the beautiful rolling land between the Yadkin and Catawba Rivers. This was the land upon which Charles' older brother, John, had fought the troops of Cornwallis, and John had praised the land to his brother and the others. Thus the Mills family and their friends joined the tide of settlers into the Western sections of the Carolinas which had begun over fifty years earlier.

The first to come had been the Germans from Pennsylvania who followed the Great Wagon Road (site of the older Indian trade routes) from present-day New York through Pennsylvania and the Valley of Virginia, across the Blue Ridge near Roanoke, Virginia, and thence into the piedmont counties of North and South Carolina. The Germans were followed by the Ulster Scots, English, and a scattering of other nationalities.[4]

The Mills Settlement represented another element coming into the area: those of English ancestry who had settled the coastal areas beginning in the seventeenth century. As the population grew and land became more costly (and, after 150 years of tobacco farming, less productive) the younger sons and their families began to move south and west. In 1795, when Charles Nathaniel Mills purchased 600 acres in Iredell County, he and his friends brought to their farms their heritage of English farming skills, their customs, and their religion. They established the first congregation of the Episcopal Church in the county, and for a time they shared the use of a log church with the Lutherans and Presbyterians who had come before them. The English settlements along the coast relied on the labor of African slaves, and migrants to the piedmont brought their slaves with them. Thus we see

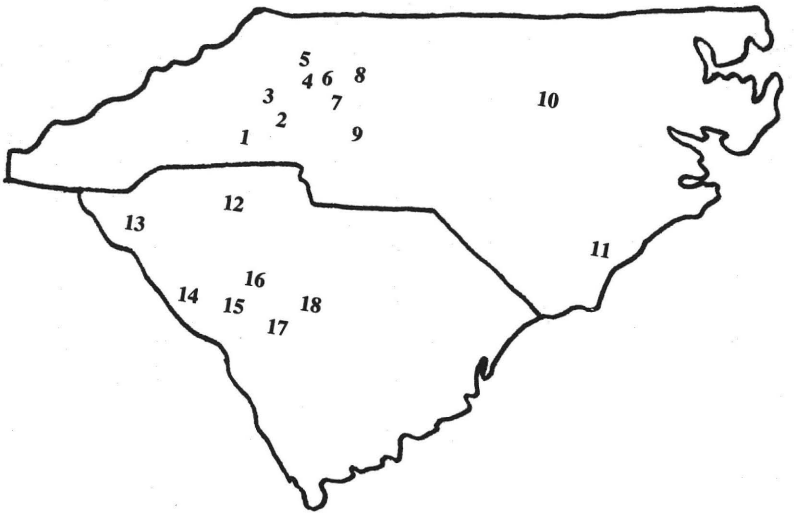

Figure 2. Map of North Carolina and South Carolina showing where known examples of medallion applique quilts were made.

1. Cleveland Co. (1)
2. Gaston Co. (1)
3. Lincoln Co. (1)
4. Catawba Co. (1)
5. Wilkes Co. (1)
6. Alexander Co. (1)
7. Iredell County (1)(possible 2)
8. Forsyth Co. (?) 1
9. Cabarrus Co. (?) 1
10. Raleigh, NC
11. Wilmington (1)
12. Spartanburg Co. (1)
13. Oconee Co. (1)
14. Abbeville Co. (2)
15. Saluda Co. (1)
16. Newberry Co. (1)
17. Lexington Co. (6)(2 possible)
18. Columbia, SC

the coming together of the major ethnic groups which settled the piedmont Carolinas: German, Ulster Scots, English, and African.

In their introduction to *Carolina Folk*, George D. Terry and Lynn Robertson Myers state: "Cultural tradition and popular taste are strong elements in the formation of folk art."[5] During the period which produced the **medallion applique** quilts, the use of medallion shapes abounded in popular culture, and these shapes are frequently found in architecture, woven coverlets, carpets, lace, crochet, other textiles, glassware, and furniture; indeed they are found almost any place one finds decorative arts.

Two architectural elements significant to this study are the various medallions and the "swag and tassel" (or "bow") which one frequently sees translated into quilts. Medallions usually consist of plumes, feathers, acanthus leaves, or even tobacco leaves radiating from the center, forming a circular or "medallion" shape. Swags are sometimes depicted as feathers, or fruit with a bow or tassel at the joining of each swag. These two motifs were very popular during the Georgian, Federal, and Greek Revival periods and are seen throughout the homes and public buildings of the Carolinas and elsewhere. Some of these buildings were designed by architect Robert Mills (no relation to Euphemia) who, after receiving his training under James Hoban, Thomas Jefferson, and Benjamin Latrobe, returned to South Carolina where as State Architect and Engineer he was responsible for designing and building many of the fine public and private structures of the early nineteenth century.[6] Many other buildings were built by master carpenter/builders who used English "builders' manuals" or such books as *The American Builder's Companion* by Asher Benjamin.[7] In these manuals the craftsmen (many of whom were immigrants from Ireland and England) could find professional designs for woodwork, decorative plaster, and other elegant interior details desired by the owners of prosperous small plantations as well as coastal mansions. Perhaps some quilter saw a plumed medallion in her husband's *Builder's Companion* or in the manual used by an itinerant tradesman as he produced the finishing details for her new home. Indeed, such a ceiling medallion (ca. 1850) is found in the Johnson-Neel House, Iredell County, North Carolina, a few miles from Euphemia's home.[8]

The same motifs found in architecture are found in many textiles such as jacquard coverlets, carpets, lace, crochet, and especially in the great English and continental whitework whole-cloth quilts with their feathers, plumes, circles, medallions, and swags.

The years immediately before the Civil War, when Euphemia Mills and her contemporaries began to make their **medallion applique** quilts, were a time of great development all over the rapidly growing and still new United States. These women living on piedmont plantations saw the coming of the first local newspapers and other periodicals, the first publicly supported schools and the founding of

many new colleges.[9] And they participated, in their unique way, in the period which produced the very height of the great American applique quilts (including the beautiful and intricate Baltimore Album quilts) all of which reflect the general styles and fashions of the period.

From the beginnings of quiltmaking in America, the influence of Old World skills and designs was evident: English "framed center style" influenced both pieced and *broderie perse* quilts and was translated by the Amish into the "diamond in a square." Feather designs from the north of England appeared in many variations in America and are strongly associated with the Pennsylvania German folk design elements such as hearts, tulips, and the fylfot, which proliferate in American quilts. Also from the Germans, quiltmakers adapted the tradition of "scherenschnitte," a process of folding and cutting paper into intricate designs. In the nineteenth century this technique was adapted to produce a great variety of motifs.

The **medallion applique** can be produced by folding and cutting, and several of the examples found were indeed cut from one piece of fabric. Others, with alternating colors, could have been folded and cut from two different colors, such as red and green, cut apart and rejoined to form the alternating red/green pattern. The variety of the execution of this pattern indicates its origin as a "folk" pattern rather than one which was published. No early published source has been found, and no early example has come with a name.

The great period of album quilts of Baltimore, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York is also the period when in the south, in one small area—the counties lying between the coastal plain and the Blue Ridge Mountains of North and South Carolina—this unique applique design appeared. When one considers that the elements of ethnic mix and popular style were not unique to the Carolina piedmont, it is even more mysterious that the **medallion applique** appeared *only* there. This pattern was used mainly by women of the plantations and in one case by a slave woman on a plantation in Gaston County, North Carolina (See Catalog, Part I #13). Perhaps the pattern spread from one county fair to another or from friend to friend, relative to relative. Perhaps itinerant peddlars, craftsmen, or shoemakers disseminated the design in their travels. The **medallion applique** appears to have been simply a regional fashion, popular for about forty years, then

fading with the coming of commercial designs and the rise in popularity of the crazy quilt as an expression of fancy work.

The **medallion applique** has much in common with the very popular **Prince's Feather** (or **Princess Feather, Star and Plume**) which appeared earlier and enjoyed widespread popularity from England to New England and the south for over a hundred years. If the **medallion applique** was ever meant to be representational of any object, it is most likely the plume (or feather). After seeing many examples of the design personally and through slides, my feeling is that the design is simply itself—that it is not meant to be a feather, lotus, or any literal object, but simply a medallion-shaped decorative motif.[10]

Perhaps in the future we will find a quilt of this pattern clearly labeled with the pattern name. Failing that, if at some time a name should be given to this design, I suggest that **Carolina Medallion** would be appropriate as this suggests both the location of apparent origin and the shape of the motif.

Catalog

The information for listings in Part I of the Catalog was gathered by the author through interviews and/or correspondence with quilt owners or from the published sources noted.

The information in Part II is from the South Carolina Quilt History Project, courtesy of Laurel Horton and the McKissick Museum, University of South Carolina, Columbia, S.C.

Explanation of terms used in Catalog:

Lobes: The individual segments of the motif.

Slots: The curved openings near top of each lobe.

Serration: The indentations present along the tops and/or sides of lobes in some examples.

Pieced center: Some examples with alternating colors have centers formed by the points of the lobes and these points are *pieced* together, as is an eight-pointed star, then the whole is appliqued to the foundation fabric.

Catalog – Part I

1. North Carolina, Iredell County ca. 1860
   Euphemia Evalina Mills Allison (1837–1872)
   Red/green; green border
   Alternating colors; 8 lobes, serrated sides, smooth tops, 2 slots; center pieced.
   9 blocks (26½"x 26½") 86" x 94"

2. North Carolina, Catawba County ca. 1880
   Harriet Propst Whisnant (?) (1850–?, married 1868)
   Brownish-red (dark); sawtooth sashing of same fabric
   Cut from one piece; 8 lobes, serrated sides, smooth tops, 2 slots; solid center
   9 blocks (24") 74" x 74"

3. North Carolina, county unknown ca. 1880
   Maker unknown (found Farmstead Antiques, Davie County, North Carolina)
   Maroon on bright yellow (backing home-dyed walnut)
   Appliqued by hand and machine; cut from one piece; 8 lobes, smooth sides, smooth tops, 2 slots; open center.
   9 blocks (20½" x 21½") 82" x 66"

4. South Carolina, Lexington County ca. 1860
   Maker unknown
   Red/green; narrow red/green sashing
   Alternating colors; 8 lobes, smooth sides, serrated tops, 1 slot; center pieced.
   9 blocks 82" x 82" (approximately)

5. North Carolina, Wilkes County ca. 1850
   Margaret Jeanette McLean (1833–1919)
   Red; narrow red sashing; narrow red border
   Cut from one piece; 8 lobes, serrated sides, smooth tops, 2 slots; 5 teardrop cut-outs in center.
   9 blocks (21½"x 21½") 70" x 70"

6. Possibly South Carolina ca. 1850
Inscribed "H. J. Ross" (Owner descendent of Ross-Smith-Akers families of South Carolina and Virginia.)
Red; red/white sashing and border made of pieced diamonds.
One piece; 8 lobes, serrated sides, smooth tops, 2 slots; center solid, formed by cut-away part.(Information from Memorial Hall Museum; Deerfield, Massachusetts)
9 blocks 87" x 88"

7. North Carolina, Lincoln County January 23, 1887
Margaret Emma Poovey (1850–1925) (signed and dated)
Red/green; 2" single red sashing
Alternating, applique tulip corner each block; 8 lobes, serrated sides and tops, 2 slots; center open circle with green, then red figures.
9 blocks (27" x 27") 87" x 85"

8. North Carolina, Alexander County ca. 1880
Anna Watts Eckerd (1828–?)
Green/tan (fugitive red); green sashing, narrow red binding
Alternating; 6 lobes, serrated side and smooth tops, 2 slots; center pieced.
9 blocks (20½" x 20½") 75" x 75"

9. North Carolina, Cabarrus County(?), or Virginia ca. 1870
Maker unknown (Ancestors of owner were from North Carolina and Virginia.)
Red; border swag cut from one piece
Cut from one piece; 8 lobes, serrated sides, smooth tops, 2 slots; center a cut-out open "star" with eight points.
9 blocks 95" x 95"

10. North Carolina, Forsyth County (?) ca. 1880
Maker unknown
Red/tan
Alternating; 8 lobes, serrated all around, 2 slots; center pieced flower applique where blocks meet.
Number of blocks unknown overall size unknown

11. North Carolina, Cleveland County ca. 1870
Roxanna Jones Hamrick (1854–1936)
Brownish red/dark green
Alternating; 6 lobes, serrated sides, smooth tops, 2 slots; center pieced.
6 whole blocks, 3 half blocks overall size unknown

12. South Carolina, county unknown nineteenth century
Sally Simmons Martin
Narrow red sashing; green corner blocks
Alternating; 8 lobes, smooth sides, serrated tops, one slot; center pieced.
9 blocks overall size unknown

13. North Carolina, Gaston County ca. 1850
Unknown slave
Dark blue on white
Cut from one piece; 8 lobes, serrated sides, smooth tops, 2 slots; round center formed by cut-away part.(Information courtesy Cuesta Benberry)
Number of blocks unknown overall size unknown

14. Texas ca. 1900
Annie Dallom Weinert (1853–1946)
Green/brown
Alternating lobes with "javelins," 4 lobes, serrated sides, smooth tops, 2 slots; center yellow circle.
9 blocks (21" x 21") 74" x 69"

15. North Carolina, Iredell County (?)
Photograph in *Statesville Record & Landmark*, January 19, 1966, 9.
Displayed at a DAR meeting. To date, unable to locate owner. Color unknown (black & white photo); Approximately 3" sashing and border; 8 lobes, serrated sides, smooth tops, 3 slots.
Number of blocks unknown overall size unknown

16. Missouri, county unknown ca. 1880
Maker unknown
Red
Cut from one piece; 6 lobes, serrated sides, smooth tops, 2 slots; (heavily quilted with feathers, feathered wreaths, and close diagonal quilting.)
Number of blocks unknown overall size unknown

17. Canada, (old label reads: From a house in Ontario) ca.1850
Maker unknown
Green on white, one large medallion with 8 lobes in center with applique border.
Length 210cm. (Information courtesy Royal Ontario Museum)

Catalog – Part II

1. South Carolina, Saluda County ca. 1862
   Friendship Quilt by Marilla Rider Wyse and group for Allen Malancthon Wyse.
   Album with three blocks of medallion (all are red/green alternating)
   a. 12 lobes; 1 slot plus open center of lobe; round yellow center.
   b. 8 lobes; 2 slots, serrated sides, smooth top; round yellow center; yellow under slots.
   c. 8 lobes; 3 slots, serrated edges, round tops; center pieced.

2. South Carolina, Abbeville County ca. 1864
   Martha Clark McCaslan Lindsay (1842–1920)
   Green on white; green border
   8 lobes, smooth edges, serrated tops, 1 slot; pieced center.
   9 blocks (approximately 15") 92" x 86"

3. South Carolina, Abbeville County ca. 1870
   Mary Elmira Tribble McAdams (1840–1917)
   Album: 2 of 9 blocks are medallion
   Red/green; swag and tulip border
   Alternating; 8 lobes, smooth sides, serrated tops, 1 slot; center pieced.
   9 blocks, (approximately 25½") 88" x 88"

4. South Carolina, Lexington County (?) ca. 1870
   Temborah Rauch
   Red/faded green/ narrow red print sash; wide print border
   Alternating; 8 lobes, serrated all around, 2 slots, yellow under slots of red lobes; center pieced.
   9 blocks size unknown

5. South Carolina, Lexington County ca. 1870
   Mary Clark Smith (?–1900)
   Orange/green; red/brown sash and border; scalloped edge; white binding
   Alternating; 8 lobes, smooth all around, 2 slots; center pieced.
   9 blocks size unknown

6. South Carolina, Lexington County ca. 1870
Group album quilt for wedding of Mary Cummins Derrik and J. Silas McCarthy
Green/brownish red
Alternating; 8 lobes, serrated all around, 2 slots; green center with little points out to each lobe.
One block of album 90" x 72"

7. South Carolina, Lexington County ca. 1880
Eudocia Hendrix
Red/green solids; red/green/white triple border
Alternating; 8 lobes touching, serrated all around, 2 slots; pieced center.
Number of blocks unknown 75" x 75"

8. South Carolina, Lexington County ca. 1880
Shelley & Ida Ellison album quilt
Green; single green sash and border
6 lobes not touching, 1 slot, serrated all around.
One block of 20" album (approximately 14") 86" x 70"

9. South Carolina, Lexington County ca. 1885
Louisa Ritchie Craft (1841–1910)
Red/green; wide single border of print stripe
Alternating; 8 lobes touching, smooth all around, 2 slots; center pieced.
9 blocks 101" x 95"

10. South Carolina, Oconee County ca. 1880
Thode family
Red/green; triple sash and border of green and white
Alternating; 8 lobes touching, smooth sides, serrated top, 1 slot; center pieced.
9 blocks 87" x 84"

11. South Carolina, county unknown ca. 1880
Maker unknown
Red solid/green print; cording between blocks, narrow red border added later.
Alternating; 6 lobes, detached, serrated edges, smooth tops, 2 slots, center pieced.
25 blocks (approximately 14½"x 14½") 76" x 73"

12. South Carolina, Spartanburg county ca. 1890
Mary Elizabeth Tuck (1855 – ?)
Red and white; 5 lattice strips and corner block forming checkerboard; double border
One piece; 8 lobes detached, smooth all around, 2 slots; center round, formed by cut-away.
9 blocks 86" x 80"

13. South Carolina, Newberry County ca. 1870
Sarah Catherine Neel
Fugitive red/green; single 14" print border
Alternating, 8 lobes, serrated all around, 2 slots; center pieced.
9 blocks 97" x 95"

14. North Carolina, (New Hanover County) ca. 1880
Alcaine Elizabeth McCollough Ellison (1850 – ?)
Red/green; print border
Alternating; 8 lobes touching, serrated all around, 2 slots; center pieced.
9 blocks size unknown

Notes and References

1. Interviews with Emma Kennerly Boyd, September 5, 1986, January 16, 1987; Mamie Houston, *The Mills Family in America* (Mooresville, N.C., unpublished manuscript, 1953).
2. Interview with Mr. and Mrs. Shinn, Shinn's Store, September 6, 1986.
3. St. Mary's County lies between the Potomac and Patuxent Rivers in Southern Maryland and was the site of the first landing, in 1634, of English settlers and first capital of Maryland.
4. For an excellent concise history of these migrations see Ralph Lee Smith, *The Story of the Dulcimer* (Crying Creek Publications, 1986).
5. George D. Terry and Lynn Robertson Myers, "Introduction," *Carolina Folk: The Cradle of a Southern Tradition* (Columbia, S.C.: McKissick Museum, 1985), vi.

6. Blanche Marsh, *Robert Mills: Architect in South Carolina* (Columbia: R. L. Bryan, 1970). The Irishman, James Hoban, had lived in Charleston and later designed buildings in the new Federal City, including the Capitol and the White House. Mills worked as a draftsman for Hoban on these projects.
7. Asher Benjamin, *The American Builder's Companion* (1827; reprint, New York: Dover, 1967).
8. *Iredell County Landmarks: A Pictorial History of Iredell County*, published by the Iredell County American Revolution Bicentennial Commission, ca. 1976, reprint 1982, p. 55.
9. H. G. Jones, ed., *North Carolina Illustrated.* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983), 50–328.
10. For another opinion, see *Ladies Circle Patchwork Quilts* (July 1988), 4.

Appendix

The **medallion applique** and related designs in print:

1. Bishop, Robert, William Secord, and Judith Reiter Weissman: *Quilts, Coverlets, Ruggs and Samplers*. New York: Chanticleer Press, 1982.

   p. 169 **Snowflake,** Ohio, ca. 1865, a blue on white 8-lobed figure, heavily quilted with feathered wreaths, etc.
2. Conroy, Mary. *Canada's Quilts*. Toronto, Canada: Griffin Press Ltd., 1976.

   p. 57, a quilt having one large central motif similar to the **medallion applique.** An old label attached to this green on white quilt reads: "from a house in Wingham, Ontario."
3. Horton, Laurel. "Downhome and Uptown: A Patchwork of Carolina Textiles." *Carolina Folk: The Cradle of a Southern Tradition*, ed. George D. Terry and Lynn Robertson Myers. Columbia: McKissick Museum, 1985.

   p. 48, **Medallion applique** (see Catalog Part II, #2).
4. Merriam, Mary and Suzanne L. Flynt. *Quilts: A Loan Exhibition at Memorial Hall Museum.* Deerfield, Mass.: Pocumtack Valley Memorial Association, 1985.

   p. 9, fig. 9, **Snowflake**, ca. 1840.

   p. 8, fig. 6, cutwork, ca. 1850, figure and border very similar to many jacquard coverlets.
5. *Ladies Circle Patchwork Quilts* (Fall 1984): 12, 13. Examples from the South Carolina Quilt History Project. Patterns similar to the **medallion**

applique; *Ladies Circle Patchwork Quilts* (Winter 1982): 10, shows a medallion-shaped figure in nine blocks plus a swag border by Elizabeth Foster (b. 1806); *Ladies Circle Patchwork Quilts* (Fall 1983): 30, nineteenth century quilt.

6. Texas Heritage Quilt Society. *Texas Quilts–Texas Treasures*. Paducah, Ky.: American Quilter's Society, 1986.

   p. 84 a quilt made by Annie Dallom Weinert, ca. 1900, using the lobe form of **medallion applique** with crossed javelins.

7. Kirkpatrick, Erma Hughes. "Garden Variety Applique." *North Carolina Quilts*, ed. Ruth Haislip Roberson. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988.

   p. 87, pl. 3–19 *Cucumber* by Nancy Shaffner (1834-1906).

   p. 90, pl. 3–21 medallion applique by Emma Poovey, signed and dated 1877.

Quilt Patterns in the Frank C. Brown Collection

Laurel Horton

The Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore, in seven volumes, represents the most extensive published survey of the verbal lore of any state, the result of nearly 40 years work by over 650 contributors.[1] The collection and publication of folklore was a primary objective of the North Carolina Folklore Society, which was founded in 1912. Under the direction of Professor Brown, a member of the faculty of Trinity College (now Duke University), the North Carolina Folklore Society began in 1913 to compile what they hoped would be a complete collection of the disappearing folklore in the state.

Frank C. Brown, a Professor of English at Trinity and Secretary-Treasurer of the North Carolina Folklore Society for its first thirty years, was a tireless folklore collector. He spent his summers traveling through the state, especially in the mountains, recording the voices of his informants using the latest technology available to him. While folklorists of his day were primarily interested in collecting the "classic" English ballads, Brown collected, and urged others to include, anything of possible value. As the organizer of the North Carolina Folklore Society's annual meeting, as a frequent performer of programs of folksongs for groups, and as a classroom teacher, he continually urged others to collect and submit materials for his growing collection.

Originally the Society planned to publish a small volume by Christmas of 1914, but the publication was postponed repeatedly during the ensuing years. Meanwhile the collection continued to

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Laurel Horton, 302 East South Third Street, Seneca SC 29678

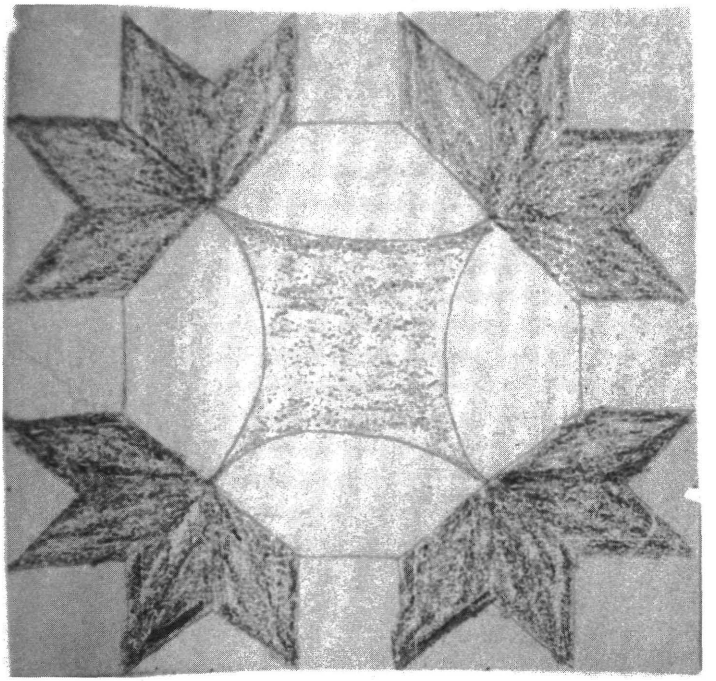

Figure 1. Clara Hearne submitted a crayon drawing for the quilt pattern "Four Hands Around," in yellow and green. The pattern was redrawn and attached to a sheet of standard size paper so that it could be filed in the category "6f," under "Housewifery: designs for quilting, lacemaking, sewing, knitting."

grow, as a result of Brown's own collecting and the submissions of Society members, students, and others all over the state. Dr. Brown managed to stall off contributors who variously requested or demanded to know when they might expect to see the publication, maintaining a tight personal control on the manuscript materials.

By the 1940s, the project had amassed some 54,000 individual items, some handwritten on scraps of paper, others compiled into notebooks. Frank C. Brown supervised the typing, in triplicate, of copies of all the items and organized the items into general categories, but his great enthusiasm for collecting did not extend to editing. At the time of Dr. Brown's death in 1943, the monumental task of editing the vast collection for publication still remained. Brown's colleague

and former student, Newman Ivey White, assumed the responsibility for the collection and assembled an editorial board of well-known scholars to edit the individual volumes. White supervised the work of the editors until his death in 1948 when Paull Franklin Baum took over. The first volume appeared in 1952, and the seventh and last in 1964. Though many of the original contributors did not live to see the results of their efforts, the *Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore* is still in print and remains an important resource and comparative tool for folklorists throughout the country.

Volume I of the published Brown Collection is subdivided into genres: games and rhymes, beliefs and customs, riddles, proverbs, speech, and tales and legends. The brief section on Beliefs and Customs includes a list of sixty-five quilt pattern names, arranged alphabetically, with the names of the contributors and brief bibliographic footnotes. Volumes VI and VII also include a number of popular beliefs or superstitions about sewing and making quilts.

Having known about these brief quilt references for a number of years, I began to wonder in what form the pattern names had been collected, and I speculated that contributors might have included drawings along with the pattern names. I visited the Manuscript Collection at Duke University's Perkins Library which houses the original contributions, typewritten copies, several levels of mimeographed book manuscripts, and all of the correspondence from contributors and editors.

The card catalog indicated that quilt materials were included in category "6f" ("6" indicating the general category of "Housewifery," and "f" the subcategory of "designs for quilting, lacemaking, sewing, knitting"). Within the folders of original contributions there are not only drawings of patterns but also actual cloth quilt blocks labeled with the pattern names.[2] Since the quilt patterns seem to be the only examples of material culture reported in the published volumes, I began to pursue questions of how the blocks came to be contributed and how they were treated prior to publication.

Volume I lists the names of six contributors of quilt and coverlet patterns: Kate S. Russell, Clara Hearne, Elsie Doxey, Nilla Lancaster, Jessie Hauser, and Frank C. Brown.[3] According to an alphabetical list of contributors to the collection[4] all five of the women were school-

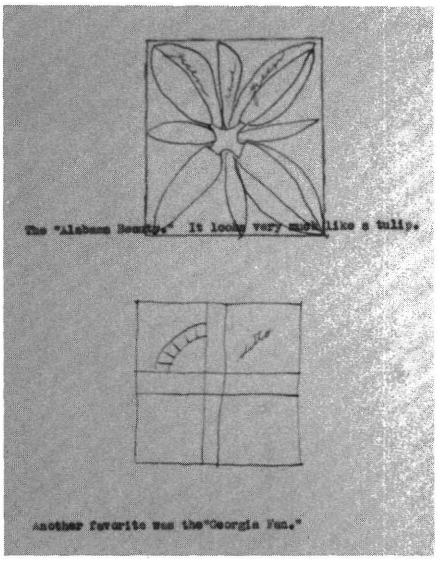

Figure 2. The submissions Alabama Beauty and Georgia Fan were redrawn onto standard paper, but in the process the contributor's name was lost. Alabama Beauty, described as looking "very much like a tulip," and in colors of red and green, appears to be a locally known applique design, similar to other nineteenth century applique quilt patterns. The person who redrew the Georgia Fan entered the word "ditto" into a blank block to indicate repetition of the design. Unfamiliar with cataloging visual representations, the editors used devices associated with writing and print.

teachers who had been in Brown's folklore class in the summer of 1923. According to the summer school catalog that year "all applicants for admission must have completed a high school course" or apply with an elementary certificate and two or more years teaching experience. "The courses are designed to meet the needs of teachers who desire professional training and further academic instruction."[5]

One of the available courses that summer was "The Ballad and Other Folklore," taught by Frank C. Brown. The catalog description reads as follows:

> This course consists of an extensive study of the ballad and other ancient and modern folksongs and of the other fifteen kinds of folklore as found in North Carolina and other sections of

> America. Much of the material used in the course is in manuscript form, and still other material studied is that collected by the class during the year: thus the student gets training in collection and classifying songs and other forms of folklore. Each student is assisted in developing some subject pertaining, if possible, to conditions in his native county or section.[6]

Some information can be pieced together from the list of contributors and from the college catalog. Clara Hearne lived in Pittsboro and, later, Roanoke Rapids, where she was the principal of Central School. She submitted a total of 642 items to the collection including at least eleven quilt patterns. The finding aids list a letter from Hearne to Brown dated October 20, 1923, which includes the comment, "I enjoyed my work in summer school and appreciate the grade you gave me," [7] but the letter has been missing within the collection for some time. Kate Sue Russell of Roxboro submitted 537 items including twenty-two quilt designs. Elsie Doxey, of Poplar Branch, and later Thomasville, submitted 495 items including three quilt patterns. Mrs. Nilla Pate Lancaster, of Goldsboro, contributed at least five quilt patterns among her 354 items. Jessie Eugenia Hauser, of Pfafftown, a regular Trinity student, is credited with one quilt pattern among her six items. While the Duke University Alumni Office has no information on summer school students, office records indicate that Hauser, a white female, graduated in 1925 and died sometime before May 1968.[8]

For some reason five young women in Brown's class that summer recognized the folkloric value of quilt patterns. Perhaps as schoolteachers they had visited in homes of their students and admired the quilts they saw there. Their interest seems to have centered on the design of each pattern and its name. They submitted no entire quilts, nor even drawings which would indicate how the pattern blocks were put together. In some cases the blocks seem to have been removed from unquilted tops. In other cases the cloth blocks may have served as pattern references, to remind the maker how the pieces go together.[9] The contributors made no mention of the quilting designs or stitches. In several of their drawings they noted what colors had been used and whether plain or patterned fabric formed the original.

The patterns seem to have been contributed, not during the 1923

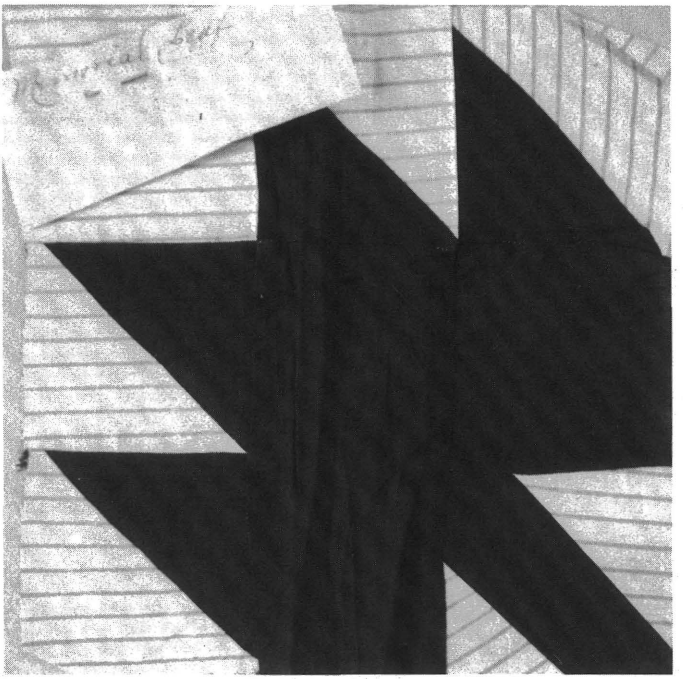

Figure 3. An unnamed contributor sent in this block, which is labeled Memorial Leaf. The editors searched their references by title and were unable to locate it. However, if they had checked the pictures in their books, they would have found it as the well-known Maple Leaf.

summer session, but later, after the women had returned to their teaching jobs in smaller cities and towns in the piedmont or coastal plain of North Carolina. The cloth blocks are constructed of fabrics of the period 1910–1925; however, Kate Russell continued to send newspaper clippings offering quilt patterns from mail order sources into the 1930s.[10]

The quilt designs obviously caused editorial difficulties for Brown and his successors. All the other contributions to the collection were either in written form or sound recordings from which the words and music could be transcribed. There were no rules set up for the submission and categorizing of visual materials. To his credit, there is no indication that Brown discouraged the contributions of quilt

patterns, nor did he nor his successors consider "suppressing" them. Instead he categorized them and assigned each a number, just as he did for each proverb or riddle.

Someone, perhaps Paul Brewster, who edited the Beliefs and Customs section of Volume I, then approached the quilt patterns in a scholarly manner. He located the bibliographic materials available at that time and searched the pattern names. His primary resource books included those by Ruth Finley, Hall and Kretsinger, Allen Eaton, and Marie Webster.[11] Arranging the pattern names in alphabetical order must have seemed logical; since the editors were compiling a collection of verbal lore they reduced the quilt patterns to their verbal components and treated them similarly to other verbal contributions. The proverbs, for example, are listed alphabetically by keyword, including under the word "quilt" the single phrase, "split the quilt," as a metaphor for divorce (V.I, p. 464). The editors most likely did not consider printing line drawings or photographs of the patterns; the only illustrations in the published volumes are woodcuts commissioned from artist Clare Leighton, artworks intended to evoke the spirit of the work, not to illustrate specific items.

Relying only on the pattern name in searching bibliographic references led to several problems for the editors. Two blocks, to which are pinned the label "design tag lost," are not represented at all in print. A search for analogs to a block labeled **Memorial Leaf** yielded nothing, but had the editor known to search visually for similar patterns, he would have found the pattern a popular one most often called **Maple Leaf**. In other cases references were included to different patterns of the same name, as in confusing pictorial and pressed-strip blocks both called **Log Cabin**. Reviewing the published list alongside the original submissions indicates that the editor was a verbally-oriented person dealing with materials very much outside his area of expertise. Because items in the collection generally were treated as isolated entities (quilt blocks) rather than as parts of a larger tradition (such as entire quilts made and used within families) the male editors may never have considered asking for advice or assistance from women in the community.

The patterns that probably gave the editors the most difficulty are Kate Russell's newspaper clippings. In the 1920s and 1930s a number

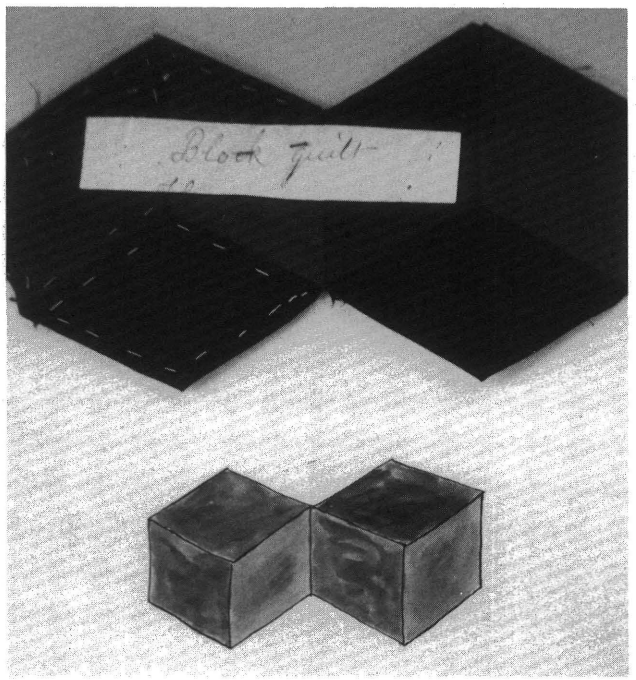

Figure 4. Two joined modules of the Tumbling Blocks pattern constructed over paper templates are labeled "Block quilt." An editor reproduced the blocks in colored inks which approximate the red and black of the original, but he was unable to locate the pattern by name in published references. Consequently, this piece was not included in the published list.

of syndicated columns in newspapers and magazines offered needlework patterns for sale by mail order.[13] One of the most widely distributed companies in the 1930s which is still in operation was Old Chelsea Station Needlecraft Service.[14] Patterns from this company were offered under various names, including Alice Brooks and Laura Wheeler. While occasionally these pattern companies reprinted a traditional pattern, usually under a new name, the majority of their offerings were new creations by paid designers.

Kate Russell, teaching in Roxboro, North Carolina, either clipped out Laura Wheeler columns herself or perhaps collected them from a quiltmaker in her area. While the dates and newspaper names were

trimmed off, the reverse of one clipping shows its date to be 1933. At some point an editor took all twenty or so of the submitted columns and placed them in a large folder labeled "Not of folk origin?" Yet by the time Volume I was printed most of the Wheeler designs, including **Old Fashioned Nosegay**, and **Golden Stairs** were listed along with more traditional patterns such as **Fan**, **Star**, and **Basket**. In an obvious attempt to eliminate those he thought might be of dubious folk origin, the editor eliminated eight published designs including **Cowboy's Star, Dutch Windmill,** and **Forest Trail**.

Clearly, the editor wished to include as much as possible but to exclude non-folk items. In dealing with the influence of print sources his situation was similar to that of the editors of the ballad and folksong volumes faced with the influence of phonograph records. The editor of Volume I may have felt that the influence of published sources on quilt patterns was a minor one of recent occurrence; however, an examination of the sixty-five submitted patterns indicates that at least twenty-four of the most "traditional" patterns are identical to those published by the Ladies Art Company beginning about 1889. This company was perhaps the first mail order pattern service and is particularly noteworthy because it, in fact, collected traditional patterns in current circulation and reprinted them, usually under traditional names.[15] Thus, for quilts of certain patterns made in the twentieth century, it may be difficult to determine whether the pattern sources are traditional or the Ladies Art Company. Editors, unfamiliar with quilts in any form, trying to separate the traditional and popular patterns, could not begin to imagine the full complexity of the situation in which they found themselves.

Frank C. Brown himself is listed as the contributor for thirteen patterns. Searching backward through the files from typescript to notes, I found the documentation for his contributions, such as it is. (Brown was not known for recording the details of his field research.) On a five by seven slip of paper he wrote "Names of quilt patterns" followed by the thirteen names, all apparently jotted down quickly at the same time.[16] In a description of Professor Brown's collecting habits in the introduction to the published collection Newman I. White indicates that this undocumented slip of paper is one of many: "The collection contains a number of items in his hand hastily

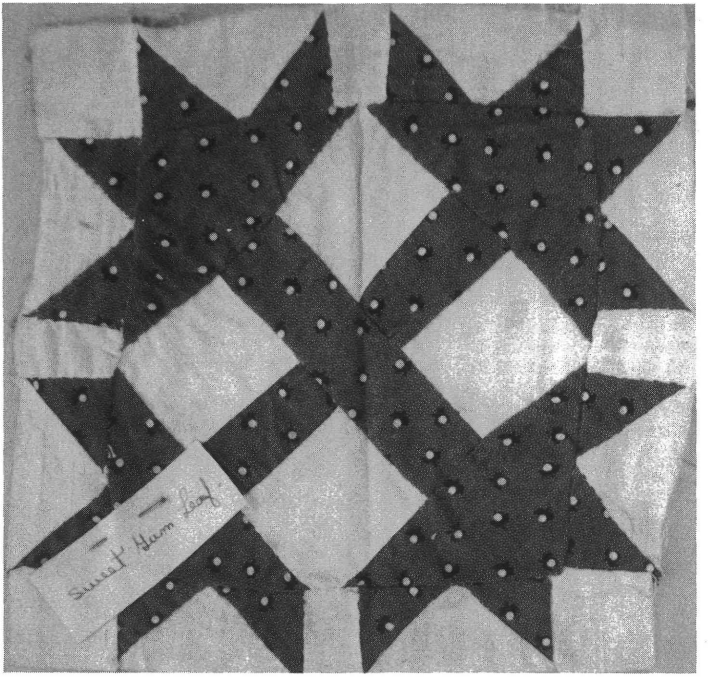

Figure 5. An unknown contributor sent in a block called Sweet Gum Leaf. A similar Ladies Art Company pattern is called the "Lily Quilt Pattern." The sweet gum is a common North Carolina tree sometimes represented in embroidered quilts. West Coast residents know it by its species name "liquidambar."

penciled on old envelopes, cards, or pages from desk memorandum pads that were evedently taken down on the fly, without anticipation or previous plan." [17] There is no indication where, when, or from whom Brown collected these names. I suspect he either recalled them from his own memory, or perhaps noted them as someone else recited them. In addition to familiar names such as **Wild Goose Chase** and **Log Cabin**, he included some mysteries such as **Strangers** and **Widow's Troubles**. These names do not appear in known reference books; they may indeed be localized quilt patterns, or possibly, names for woven coverlets.

Immediately following the quilt pattern names in Volume I is an interesting list of recipes for dyeing fabric, including instructions from

Zilpah Frisbie of McDowell County for "a good dye for quilt linings" made "by boiling the material in a mixture of pure red clay and water."[18]

Volumes VI and VII, *Popular Beliefs and Superstitions*, edited by belief specialist Wayland Hand, include superstitions concerning sewing generally and a few specific references to quilts and quiltmaking. Under death beliefs is included the following anonymous contribution: "If anyone starts to piece a bed quilt in the form of a star, someone in their family will die before it is finished," (#5133). Under "Domestic Pursuits" are included Clara Hearne's contribution from Roanoke Rapids that "It is bad luck to begin a quilt on Friday," (#3277) and, from Durham County, "It is bad luck to borrow a needle from somebody," (#3293).

On the happier side are a number of beliefs involving love and marriage: "Make a new bed quilt, shake it out the front door, and the first person who enters will be the one you will marry," (#4360) from Greensboro; "After finishing a quilt, the first one over whom it is thrown will be married first," (#4361) from Wilson County; "If somebody wraps you in a new quilt, you will get married within a year," (#4362); and finally, "A girl who begins piecing a bedquilt will not marry until she finishes it," (#4624). There are also many examples of superstitions regarding finding pins; typically the finder can expect good luck if the point of the pin is toward her when she picks it up, (#3309–3345). Perhaps as significant as the presence of these beliefs is the absence of some that have been considered universal. No one collected any mention of a woman making twelve or thirteen quilts before marriage, of divining the next young person to be married by placing a cat in the center of a new quilt, or of making a deliberate mistake as a symbol of humility or imperfection. If these beliefs were popular in North Carolina during the early twentieth century, they escaped the dragnet of Brown's collectors.

Quilting bees are mentioned briefly along with other communal work activities such as apple peelings, corn shuckings, and log rollings. Most contributors indicated that these events were things of the past, though Gertrude Allen Vaught reported them still "quite common" in her area.[19]

Not all of the material submitted by contributors appeared in the

published work. In 1970–1971, Duke student Charles Bond compiled "A Tabulation of Unpublished Items in the Manuscripts of the Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore."[20] Bond mentions that several "swatches of quilt patterns" were not included, probably a reference to those labeled "design tag lost." The most curious omission was one of the items compiled by playwright Paul Green and his wife Elizabeth, who turned over their entire manuscript of folk beliefs to Frank C. Brown:

> Of interest are descriptions of holidays and get-togethers in slave times. They emphasize the "privileges" of slaves on special occasions. One such description of a slave women's quilting bee reports the practice of "trusting" or enwrapping the first man in from the fields in the newly made quilt. This custom seems to have been performed as a minor rite of sexual entrapment, a reward for the women's day long labor. There followed a feast for all consisting of chicken stew (stolen wings) coffee and dumplings.[21]

In addition to the outdated racist assumption that slaves must have stolen chicken for their stew, one notes the irony that when white quiltmakers wrap someone in a new quilt is a sign of impending marriage, but when blacks do it it signifies sexual entrapment.

For a student of quiltmaking history the Brown Collection seems to offer few leads for future research. There is no information about the makers of the blocks, only the scantest hints of where the blocks were made, and very little about the place of quilts in daily life.

However, as correlative material on early-twentieth-century quiltmaking, the information in the files is fascinating and might yield insights beyond the present exploration. Furthermore, tracing the treatment of the patterns through the intricacies of the manuscript collection into the published work is an informative exploration into the minds of early-twentieth-century folklorists, both amateur and academic. At a time when most folklorists were concentrating their collecting efforts on the more prestigious ballads and on the expressive culture of male occupations, the contributors and editors of this work collected and annotated an incredible variety of materials of a domestic nature. According to White, Professor Brown repeatedly made clear his point of view to his audiences:

> The term folklore may be said to include in its definition everything which makes up the body of knowledge and of material things possessed by the simple illiterate people, created by them, and inherited from past generations.... All legends and stories, songs, sayings, games, toys, cures, charms, implements of war or of the chase, designs of lace, carpets, rugs, quilts go to make up the body of folklore, which originated with the folk and which belongs to them.[22]

Recognizing the importance of quilts as folklore, Brown and his followers strove to make a place for them along with verbal and musical lore in order to present a more accurate, and complete, collection of North Carolina folklore. While only six of the 650 contributors to the *Brown Collection* were involved in locating 65 quilt patterns, this work probably represents the earliest example of detailed study of quilts by folklorists.

Appendix: Quilt patterns in the *Frank C. Brown Collection*

Pattern Name	*Format*	*Probable Source*
Alabama Beauty	ink drawing	traditional applique
Basket	drawing	LAC #305
Basket	cloth block	LAC #58
Basket of Broachee	cloth block	unknown
Bear's Paw	cloth block	LAC #357 or traditional
Bird of Paradise	name	traditional
Broken Chain	name	unknown
Brunswick Star	name	LAC #21
Buzzard's Roost	name	traditional (Brackman 3219)
Capital T	crayon drawing	LAC #84
Catch Me If You Can	cloth block	traditional
Cherokee Rose	name	unknown
Cross	name	unknown (LAC #407?)
Diamond	cloth block	LAC #49
Fan	pencil drawing	LAC #296 or traditional
Flying Bat	name	LAC #44
Forbidden Fruit	name	LAC #224
Four Hands Around	crayon drawing	LAC #402
Friendship Basket	clipping	Laura Wheeler #511
Georgia Fan	ink drawing	traditional
Golden Stairs	clipping	Laura Wheeler #528
Hen and Chickens	name	LAC or traditional

Hidden Flower	clipping	Laura Wheeler #540
Irish Chain	crayon drawing	traditional
Jacob's Ladder	ink drawing	traditional
Lady Finger	crayon drawing	unknown (Brackman 2680)
Lazy Girl	cloth block	traditional
Log Cabin	cloth block	unknown (Brackman 864)
Log Cabin	name	traditional
Love Knot	pencil drawing	traditional
Lover's Knot	pencil drawing	traditional
Memorial Leaf	cloth block	traditional
Missouri Trouble	name	unknown (Brackman 4085?)
Monkey Wrench	crayon drawing	traditional
Morning Star	clipping	Laura Wheeler #545
Odds and Ends	name	LAC
Old Fashioned Garland	clipping	Laura Wheeler #500
Old Fashioned Nosegay	clipping	Laura Wheeler #486
Old Woman's Puzzle	cut red paper	traditional (LAC #10)
Palm	clipping	Laura Wheeler #469
Patience	name	LAC #90
Rising Sun	name	traditional or LAC #177
Road to Oklahoma	cut red paper	LAC #239
Rolling Stone	cloth block	LAC
Rose of Sharon	paper pattern	traditional
Rose Star	clipping	Laura Wheeler #534
Saw Tooth	ink drawing	traditional border
Snake Trail	name	traditional or LAC #504
Snowball	name	Wheeler or woven coverlet
Spider Web	clipping	Laura Wheeler #509
Star	cloth blocks	traditional
Star of Bethlehem	cut red paper	unknown (Brackman 3655)
Star of the East	name	traditional
Strangers	name	traditional
Sunflower	cloth block	unknown
Sweet Gum Leaf	cloth block	traditional
Tree of Paradise	name	LAC #260
Tulip	crayon drawing	Laura Wheeler #508
Tulip Block	crayon drawing	traditional
Washington Pavement	clipping	Laura Wheeler #457
Wheel of Fortune	clipping	Laura Wheeler #517
Widow's Troubles	name	unknown
Wild Goose Chase	name	traditional or LAC #94
Wild Rose	crayon drawing	traditional (?)
World's Fair	clipping	Laura Wheeler #507

Notes and References

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16. Brown Papers, Box 54.
17. *Brown Collection*, I, 21.
18. *Brown Collection*, I, 266.
19. *Brown Collection*, I, 243.

20. Brown Papers, Box 126, 3.
21. Brown Papers, Box 126, 2–3.
22. White, "Introduction," *Brown Collection*, I, 7.

Innovation Among Southern California Quilters: An Anthropological Perspective

Colleen R. Hall-Patton

This paper will discuss changes in quilting in a modern urban setting. I used a comparative anthropological approach to view quilting within the context of other worldwide ethnic arts. Quilting is a traditional art form that, like other aspects of culture, is subject to change. Changes have occurred not only in technology, but also in communication, professionalization, and individual reasons for quilting. I will also examine art revivals and how innovation affects and may help perpetuate them.

By examining a small part of a culture, it is possible to see changes that may be reflections of changes in the overall culture. Anthropologists theorize that art forms such as quilting are particularly sensitive to such changes. Through the study of two different quilt groups, we can see what changes have occurred and what caused them.

Anthropological literature concerning art contains few studies of the modernization of folk art. William Bascom has pointed out that the arts are a focal point for the study of change, internal innovations and individual creativity.[1] Art, on a cross-cultural level, is defined as "any embellishment of ordinary living that is achieved with competence and has describable form."[2] It is not the purpose of this paper to distinguish between "art" and "craft." That difference is not recognized in many other cultures and is important here only if made by the quilters themselves. H.G. Barnett, in his extensive study *Innovation*, defines innovation as "any thought, behavior or thing that is new because it is qualitatively different from existing norms."[3] This em-

Colleen Hall-Patton, 1257 S. 16th Street, Grover City CA 93433.

phasis on qualitative, rather than quantitative features lets us see both recombinations of existing parts and additions of new things as innovative. An example of the recombinative style of innovation is a quilt where the quilting, setting, and block patterns are derived from three different quilts. Innovation is often perceived as "good" in our society. In this paper innovation, or the lack of it, is an observation, not a value judgement.

The two groups of quiltmakers included in this study were chosen for their anticipated contrast. The Salvation Army Day Home League of Santa Ana, California, consists of six quilters, with quilting experience of fifteen to over seventy years. They are part of a larger Salvation Army church group who work on crafts projects for a Christmas boutique and as gifts for nursing home residents. This group was the only one of its kind identified at the beginning of the study. The Day Home League was chosen as a base group from which to judge how much change has occurred. Of course, changes have occurred within this group also; however, they were as close to a traditional quilting group as could be located.

The second group is the South Bay Quilt Guild of Torrance, California. It has slightly over one hundred members, ranging in age from the mid-twenties to over seventy-five. Several other guilds existed in the vicinity, but were unavailable for this research because new members, including researchers, were not allowed. Fieldwork was conducted from January to August 1985 at regular meetings of each group and through personal interviews and questionnaires completed by members of each group.

I studied differences in training, professionalism, communication, technology, and personal reasons for quilting. One theory on change and innovation suggests that groups whose members have varied backgrounds and/or increased forms of communication bring together different influences and viewpoints, thereby encouraging innovation.[4] I compared regional origins, age, education, paid employment, and modes of communication.

Since World War II, there has been massive population growth in the Los Angeles area. From primarily agricultural land, the area has become heavily urbanized with large suburban housing areas within a seventy-five mile radius of downtown Los Angeles. Both of the quilt

groups are in the suburbs, and have memberships which reflect the impact of migration into this area.

In the Day Home League, one of the six members is a native Californian, three are from the midwest, and one each is from the northeast and south. They all have lived in California for at least ten years. In the South Bay Quilt Guild (SBQG), a quarter of the members were born in California, and almost all of those are in the youngest (26–50) age group. Of the non-native Californians, the geographic origins are similar to the Day Home League by percentage (42 per cent from the midwest, 14 per cent from the west, 16 per cent from the east, 19 per cent from the south). Thus the membership of both groups is composed of people from throughout the United States, but predominantly from the midwest. Therefore, regional origins are not an area of difference between the groups.

The members of the Salvation Army Day Home League (DHL) ranged in age from seventy-four to ninety-three years of age at the time of the study. The SBQG age range was late twenties to over seventy-five. (Table 1) Life histories of quiltmakers imply that quilting was traditionally taught to adolescents and young adults.[5] However, these groups are not represented in the Guild's membership. Women seem to join the Guild after they are already established on their life paths of family and/or career. Guild members' ages cover a span of over fifty years while the DHL span is less than twenty. However, the age ranges alone do not appear to account for the differences between the groups.

Table 1

Ages of quiltmakers in 1985

Ages	0–25	26–50	51–75	76+	Unknown
SADHL	0	0	1	5	0
SBQG	0	28	26	3	3

Three members of the Guild overlap in age with the DHL group. The pattern of education, employment, years of experience quilting, and methods of learning quilting of these three are the same as other Guild members and dramatically different from that of the Day Home League quilters.

In all areas, the DHL is more homogeneous than the Guild. Only one DHL member had formal education beyond high school. All were widowed and were either retired or had always been homemakers. They all had at least fifteen years experience quilting and were mainly self-taught or learned from family members. While only one DHL member had used more than one method of learning quilting, Guild members averaged 1.75 ways.

Table 2
Method of instruction

How learned	SBQG (by age group)				SADHL
	26–50	51–75	76+	Unknown	
self taught	15	11	1	1	4
classes	15	17	3	2	0
how-to books	10	12	2	0	1
family	3	7	1	1	2
friend	4	0	0	0	0
total response/ # of people	47/28	47/26	7/3	4/3	7/6

Guild members demonstrate a dramatic shift to learning quilting from classes and how-to books rather than from family or being self-taught. (Table 2) This does not mean that the personal, direct touch has been lost in teaching quilting, but that informal methods have been replaced by formal methods, and family members have been replaced by professionals as teachers.

However, almost two-thirds of both Guild and DHL respondents noted family influence in their decision to begin quilting. One SBQG member recalled:

> My grandma taught me to quilt in self-defense to keep me out of her sewing box when I was around five or six. I still have the sewing basket she gave me for my birthday that year. I can also remember sitting under or behind the Christmas tree making that year's gifts. Another memory is sewing or embroidering or quilting or knitting instead of my homework. Now I have a little son, and I've quilted in front of him daily from the beginning of his days. I hope the colors and patterns and textures will inspire his little imagination in the future. In fact, the only solid item he eats is batting. He hates real food.

B., a DHL member, began quilting when she was 28. As she recalled:

> My mother was a seamstress and all three of my sisters could sew beautifully, but I never learned. My mother-in-law taught me and I've been quilting ever since. She decided all three daughters-in-law should learn how to quilt, so she brought out her quilting frame, set it up with a quilt and sat us daughters-in-law down to quilt.

Table 3
Quilt show attendance in last year

	SBQG (by age group)				SADHL
# of shows	26–50	51–75	76+	Unknown	
0	0	5	0	0	6
1–3	12	7	0	1	0
4–6	12	10	3	2	0
7+	4	3	0	0	0

A second theory in innovation states that change is more likely to occur when there are advocates for change.[6] Teachers, how-to books, quilt magazines, and quilt shows all display new ideas and methods. DHL members did not subscribe to any quilt magazines, nor did they attend or have any interest in attending any of the numerous quilt shows held yearly in their area.

The Guild has institutionalized its communication network through its newsletter, which serves as a forum for informing members of classes, quilt shows, and exhibits. They have a "Show and Tell" session and guest speakers as regularly scheduled parts of each meeting, sponsor small sewing circles where members can work and talk together, and run a small lending library of quilt-related books. The Guild sponsors an annual quilt show, a yearly fashion show, and sponsors bus trips to other quilt shows several times a year. The Guild also belongs to the Southern California Council of Quilt Guilds, a forum for communication among representatives of fourteen member guilds encompassing almost twenty-four hundred quilters. (It has since grown to thirty-one guilds representing about thirty-six hundred quilters.) H.G. Barnett notes that the complexity of individual knowledge is more important than group complexity for innovation.[7]

The proliferation of different methods for acquiring knowledge encourages Guild members to obtain a wide breadth of knowledge.

Quilt shows are an integral part of being a quilter for SBQG members. Fifty-five of sixty had attended at least one show in the last year, while no Day Home League members had done so. (Table 3) Most Guild members attended an average of three to six shows a year. Quilt shows are seen as a major source of information and as an affirmation of the worth of what Guild members are doing. (Table 4) As one member said, "I like seeing an assortment of ideas and colors. It's always inspiring, and I go home recharged."

In all, Guild members seek, and the Guild strives to provide, greater channels of communication for accumulating knowledge. In contrast, the Day Home League quilters are without a large knowledge base for change because they have few channels through which to be exposed to new ideas, nor do they perceive a need for them.

Table 4
Reasons given for attending shows (SBQG)

	# times mentioned
see new ideas for patterns and colors	26
see others' work	16
merchant malls/quilt shops	13
aesthetics: appreciation of creativity, beauty of work and quality quilting	10
to see quilts	7
inspiration	4

Culture Change

There are many theories on what happens within a culture when it changes rapidly. Many of these postulated changes have been noted in other societies, and I found a number of them among quilters. Roy Sieber theorizes that a broadened range of standards becomes acceptable while a culture is in transition. This broadened choice changes the commitment to traditional styles and motifs while lowering critical standards.[8]

This can certainly be seen with SBQG quilters. Although the acme of quilting for most is still a traditional, hand-quilted bedquilt,

conformity has been replaced by variety. The group as a whole is more widely accepting of innovations such as machine quilting, novel patterns and material use, and non-traditional quilts such as wallhangings and miniatures.

Table 5
Types of qults made

	SBQG (by age group)					SADHL
	26–50	51–75	76+	unknown	total	
crib	23	23	1	2	49	5
full	23	24	3	3	53	6
wallhangings	17	15	1	3	37	1
clothing	15	15	2	1	33	0
other	7	5	1	0	13	0

Bedcoverings continue to be the most popular quilted object made. (Table 5) Full-size quilts are slightly more popular than crib quilts in both groups. While only one member of DHL had made a wallhanging, over half of SBQG members had made wallhangings (37 of 60) or clothing (33 of 60). Another twenty-five percent of the Guild members had made other miscellaneous items. Crib quilts and wallhangings were popular as presents and as items which could be finished quickly. Speed of completion also allowed greater experimentation with patterns and color. Small quilts give a quilter a sense of accomplishment without a vast expenditure of time. Wallhangings are the type of quilt made most often by the youngest age group of the Guild, where seventeen of twenty-six work outside the home, nine full-time. (Table 6) In contrast, only eleven Guild members in the 51–75 age group are employed, four as full-time workers.

Besides a broadened range of objects made, variations in materials, workmanship, and technology have also expanded within the Guild. While DHL members use only full-sized frames, SBQG members use frames, hoops, and pin basting. Tying is an acceptable short cut in both groups, but only SBQG members consider using machine quilting and "in the ditch" quilting, which is quilting in the seam line instead of one-quarter inch away.

Salvation Army quilters have expanded their material usage to

Table 6
Type of project done most often

	SBQG (by age group)					SADHL
	26–50	51–75	76+	unknown	total	
crib	7	7	1	0	15	0
full	8	11	1	1	21	4
wallhangings	11	2	0	1	14	0
clothing	4	1	1	0	6	0
other	2	0	0	0	2	0
no response	0	5	0	1	6	2

include polyester batting, double-knit and polyester blend fabrics, and bedsheets as quilt backings. Double-knit fabrics and bedsheet backings are less acceptable to Guild members. For Guild quilters, clothing and wallhangings may include almost any historic or ethnic textile. These include "found" objects and leftovers such as ribbons, lace, old buttons, Hmong embroidery, Cuna molas, or kimono fragments. Bedcoverings evidence a conservative trend towards using only 100 per cent cotton fabric, although polyester batting is the norm. This conservation seems to be based on a search for "heirloom" quality and is also part of the 1980s trend toward using only natural fibers.

Changes in the intended destination for an object greatly influence changes in ethnic arts worldwide. Items aimed for the tourist or export market are often made in miniature using standard or simplified patterns or shapes. Such changes are not seen in objects made for indigenous use. The market has had its influence on quilters also, although they have remained consumers rather than producers.

Wallhangings are examples of change through miniaturization. Other examples of change through miniaturization can be seen in southwestern Indian pottery, baskets, and rugs, African woodcarving, and Amazon Basin Indian pottery.[9] The influence towards miniaturization in other ethnic arts usually has been related to changes in purpose from utilitarian objects to tourist souvenirs. Miniaturization not only speeds completion but reduces objects to a size suitable for packing in a suitcase. Miniaturization also reflects a change in application from a useful object, such as a water jug, to a decorative

piece. Wallhangings, miniature quilts, and clothing demonstrate this change in purpose and an emphasis on reduced construction time.

Standard patchwork and quilting patterns have existed since the nineteenth century. Pattern marketing is one of the most common areas of market influence. Standard design books and classes for log cabin, curved piecing, and Seminole patchwork produce quilts of similar design. **Dresden Plate, Double Wedding Ring,** and **Grandmother's Flower Garden** quilts from the 1930s are similar because of the wide distribution of standardized patterns. Many of today's patterns use "fast piecing" methods for traditional patterns. It is the method, not the pattern that differentiates them from patterns of the 1930s.

Maori and Eskimo carving designed for the western market, Guatemalan weaving used for purses, and Cuna blouses (molas) separated into discrete panels for use as wallhangings reflect the influence of new markets and a change in purpose. Mass marketing demands have fueled design simplification, standardization, and miniaturization in ethnic arts.

Among Guild quilters, the change in perception of quilts from utilitarian bedcoverings to purely decorative art demonstrates a similar change in purpose. DHL quilters demonstrate simplification in cases in which the process of making a quilt has been reduced to the almost final stage of the quilting itself. DHL quilters have not experimented with quilted clothing or other small items. Time is not a consideration in choice of form. As one DHL quilter said, "We have to do something, so we might as well do this." Since they begin with a completed, marked top, the choice of form is not theirs, but their preference is for a traditional, useful, full-size quilt.

Guild quilters are concerned with saving time and efficiently using available time. This fuels their methodology of simplification, standardization, and miniaturization. Guild quilters use fast piecing methods, "in the ditch" and machine quilting, and concentrate on smaller pieces like clothing, crib quilts, and wallhangings.

Alan Merriam theorizes that some types of art are more susceptible to change than others.[10] In the Guild, quilted clothing is a new form of quilting without pre-set standards. The most experimentation occurs in clothing, while bedquilts follow more traditional lines.

Having an area where new ideas may be tested with little influence from past traditions allows for changes which may eventually expand to traditional forms.

Another change in purpose seen in quilting is in quilts made as art rather than for utility. The most common forms of this are wallhangings and miniatures. Quilts are a recognized medium for contemporary artists, and quilts compete in the art market with other art forms such as painting and sculpture. No members of DHL utilize their quilting this way. The one person in South Bay Quilter's Guild who is approaching this position is trained in art. Mentally aligning quilting with other fine arts encourages Guild quilters to emphasize creativity and individuality. Guild members are aware of "art quilts" through books, magazines, and exhibits. Art quilts are not an influence for DHL quilters.

Guild members have remained consumers rather than producers. Sixteen of the sixty respondents consider themselves professionals in sewing as teachers, seamstresses, and quilt shop owners, but not as quilt designers or quilters. Only one member quilts professionally. No DHL quilter considers herself a professional.

There are several levels of participation which may lead to professional involvement. One is exhibiting one's work, which thirty-two Guild members had done. Twelve of these had won prizes. Two DHL members had exhibited work, though none had won prizes. A second level is selling one's individual work, which twelve Guild members and two DHL members had done. The strongest correlation between self-defined professionalism and other activities occurs with having one's work published. Eight Guild members have had work published, six of whom consider themselves professionals. No DHL members have had their work published.

South Bay Guild quilts are made for use and appreciation primarily by family, friends, and other quilters. The Guild embodies many traditional values of quilting while incorporating innovative methods of training, organization, and technology use. Innovation is a major factor in the continuing viability of quilting for new Guild quilters.

DHL quilters mainly quilt tops for people who own them but do not wish to quilt them. For the most part, a top is quilted for an anonymous person who is paying for the work to be done, or it is made

for the Christmas boutique to go to an unknown buyer. The quilters may never know who gets their quilts, let alone whether their work is appreciated.

The Day Home League emphasizes friendship and service as major reasons for membership. The weekly meetings are an important social activity in the women's week. Social interaction is the primary reason for belonging to the Day Home League, but not the prime reason for being a quilter. DHL quilters are motivated by the pleasure of creating something useful and aesthetically pleasing. By doing so, the women demonstrate that they are still contributing members of society.

An incident which occurred during the research period exemplifies the feeling of the DHL quilters about their work. A new quilter joined the group; her work was not considered acceptable by the other quilters. The DHL quilters gently forced her out of the quilting area and into another activity. In subsequent questioning, the quilters commented that this had happened before. Follow-up research sheds further light on the DHL quilters' motivation. As some quilters left, new quilters joined the group. Their quilting was considered inferior by some members studied for this paper, who then left the quilting group but continued to attend the Day Home League.

Revivals

The popularity of quilting in the 1970s and 1980s follows a pattern of quilting revivals in the United States; 1970 is used as a convenient beginning of the current revival. All of the Day Home League quilters began quilting before this time (from 1908 to the early 1960s). The woman quilting longest in the same age group (75+) in the South Bay Quilt Guild had begun quilting in 1978. Of the sixty respondents, only nine had begun quilting before 1970.

The present quilt revival, like previous ones, has involved a search for roots, for a place in history—past and future. Some reasons given by Guild members for beginning quilting include: "I've always liked quilts and wished they were in my family's tradition. They weren't." "I love old things and quilts belong with them. Also, my grandmother was a quilter and my earliest memory of her is at the quilting frame." "It . . . makes me feel very connected to quilters in the

past." "I'm very interested in the history of women in America." "They give me the feeling of leaving something behind me that my grandchildren can remember me by." "I'm leaving a bit of myself for my children." "Quilting really gives me a sense of my roots as a woman. So much is wound up in the quilts I do and see—both of people I know and places I've been."

These views are echoed in writings from past revivals. In 1894, the *Ladies Home Journal* noted: "Of late months everything which could be recognized as old-fashioned is the new fashion. . . . The decree has gone forth that a revival of patchwork quilts is at hand.[11] In 1931 Ruby McKim wrote in *101 Patchwork Patterns*: "Through all the changing fads . . . our quilts have always been with us. . . . They offer ties to the pioneers and salvage beauty and usefulness from coarse waste materials. This wholesome revival of quiltmaking which is so thoroughly sweeping the country is more than a fad, it is the very soul of American art and dignity." [12]

Charles Amsden, in discussing the revival of Navajo weaving, said the essential idea was "to temper the present with a moderate draft of the past, not an ouster of the modern and a reinstatement of old forms and methods." [13] Navajo rugs are recognized as a distinctly American national heritage, like Maori art in New Zealand and Cuna molas in Panama. These art forms have come to signify the nations within which the groups live to the larger world in general. In a search for a unique heritage, they offer a symbol to outside groups as well as to their own members. Similarly, quilts have been exhibited in Europe and Japan as a traditional American art form. This recognition feeds back into the revival as further impetus for its continuation.

Views of quilting have changed as the current quilting revival has gained momentum. In 1985, Bonnie Leman and Marie Shirer published results of a reader questionnaire concerning perceived differences in comparison to the 1930s revival. The readers' views reflect changes similar to the ones found in my research. They include an emphasis on creativity, increased modes of communication, and use of time-saving methods.

One reader commented, "Whereas the last 'boom' in quilting was during a depression, I feel this one relies on a stable economy to insure financial freedom for people to attend classes and symposiums; to

encourage continuing sales of books, fabrics, patterns, etc., and to have money available to purchase quilts designed as bedcoverings or art objects." [14] While I did not specifically research socio-economic levels, it was apparent that most Guild members had at least average incomes; quilting was not viewed as a money-saving activity. Day Home League quilters—older and living on fixed incomes—quilted in a manner that required time, but very little money. None of them quilted at home, usually citing the clutter involved and lack of space as barriers.

What is the likely future of the current quilting revival? Voluntary associations, such as the two studied here, often share common interests not widely held in the rest of society. The groups have developed common aesthetics often unknown and unappreciated by the general public. The continuance of all revivals seems to be dependent on outside forces. By definition, the craft's original purpose has been supplanted, or it could not have declined in the first place. Ethnic art revivals such as Pueblo pottery, Eskimo carving, and Navajo weaving are dependent upon an outside market. Quilting, while usually performed for personal reasons, is dependent on larger social and aesthetic movements. As long as the search for "roots" continues, and folk art and country decorating remain popular, the quilting revival will continue.

Summary

I began this research expecting creativity to be a dominant factor in the enjoyment of quilting by women of both groups. After some weeks it became obvious that, while DHL women had a keen appreciation for the aesthetics of their craft, innovation and creativity were not critical to their enjoyment of quilting. I had not envisioned people enjoying something because it was aesthetically pleasing without involving innovation or creativity. While social interaction is the primary reason for belonging to Day Home League, quilting specifically adds an aspect of pleasure in doing something useful and of service to others while practicing a skill at which they excel. At an age where many of their peers are in nursing homes and wholly dependent on others, quilting reinforces their self-images as contributing members of society. For Guild members, quilting fulfills multiple goals: it

is creative, relaxing, useful, and challenging. For some it is also a tie to their national and family heritage, and a link to future generations as well.

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Southern Linsey Quilts of the Nineteenth Century

Merikay Waldvogel

Every quilt, no matter how ragged it may be, carries important threads of history. The southern pieced linsey quilt is just such a quilt. Coarse, heavy, and often tattered and dirty, these quilts today lie forgotten in garages, barns, and outbuildings of southern farms. Yet these quilts contain fabrics whose manufacture was seen as a patriotic measure to circumvent British trade restrictions during colonial times and to provide bedding and clothing to soldiers and families in the blockaded South during the Civil War. The fact that southern women after the Civil War followed their instincts of thrift and resourcefulness by using linsey blankets and garments in quilts became a final act of preservation of an important fabric. Little did they know that economic conditions would never again dictate the need for the fabric called linsey.[1]

The southern linsey quilt is related in name only to linsey-woolsey quilts made during the colonial period. The whole cloth linsey-woolsey quilts are formal in their design and construction. The shiny surface cloth (correctly known as calimanco) of indigo, red, or green sets off the intricate feather and floral quilting patterns. The linings are generally of coarser fabric. Florence Montgomery believes some might have been imported already quilted.[2]

The name "linsey-woolsey" has confused people for many years. It suggests a fabric composed of linen and wool. When fibers from the linsey-woolseys at the Shelburne Museum were studied under a microscope, they were determined to be 100 per cent worsted wool in

Merikay Waldvogel, 1501 Whitower Road, Knoxville TN 37919

a twill or satin weave. The linings are also 100 per cent wool, but not worsted, and the weave was plain. The worsted yarn and/or the glazing may give the appearance of linen fabric in the quilt top, but otherwise researchers have not solved the mystery of the name "linsey-woolsey."[3]

Southern pieced linsey quilts contain quilt blocks and quilting designs which are among the simplest known. Many are simple **Bar** and **String** pieced quilts. As such southern pieced linsey quilts have not received much study by quilt historians. For textile and costume curators, the quilts may prove to be an important resource of data on home manufacture of textiles.

When a Knox County, Tennessee, woman told me the name of the fabric in her wool quilt was linsey, I doubted it because the fabric did not appear to contain linen. Later, when the fabric was determined to be a cotton-wool mix, the mystery was not solved but further complicated. Why was this fabric not called "cottonsy-woolsey"?

It is possible the name "linsey" persisted long after the fabric composition changed because it came to be associated with an inexpensive plain weave fabric produced in the parish of Linsey in Suffolk, England.[4] Linsey's cloth was orginally made of linen and wool—two products readily available on English farms. In the American colonies, the cloth was also made of linen and wool, but when stronger mill-spun cotton thread became available, colonists switched from a linen warp to a cotton warp.

Leaving the unsolved mystery of the name to others, I have chosen to concentrate instead on the history of the fabric, especially on its economic and political significance to the people of this country. The changes in the production of linsey closely parallel the forces, both positive and negative, which impacted American families.

The first pieced linsey quilt I saw, a **Sixteen Patch**, was at the home of a seventy-year-old woman who grew up in Sevierville, Tennessee. She told me her great-great-grandmother Margaret Burdine Connatser of Sevier County, Tennessee, had made it in the late 1800s. She said the quilt was made of fabrics from women's dresses and men's garments. Most of the fabric was called "linsey." She remembered sleeping under the quilt as a child. Some winter nights the snow fell through the cracks in the roof over her head; the layer closest to

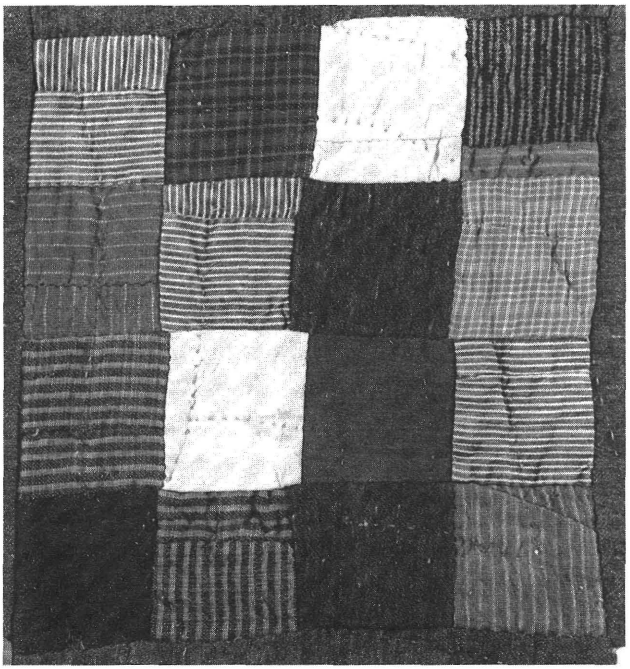

Figure 1. Detail of Sixteen Patch linsey quilt block, ca. 1870. Made by Margaret Burdine Connatser of Sevier County, Tennessee. Most of the striped and checked fabric is linsey. The thin blue and white striped fabric is a 100 per cent cotton fabric called "hickory shirting" locally. Collection of the author.

her body was a feather comforter, but on top of that was the heavy linsey quilt. The quilt served three purposes: it kept her warm, it kept her dry and it weighted down the feather comforter which was prone to falling off in the middle of the night. She did not care for the quilt; it was coarse, it had raveled edges, and the dark colors were not to her liking.[5]

In 1982 a linsey quilt called **Kentucky Sun** was featured on the cover of *Kentucky Quilts, 1800–1900* produced by the Kentucky Quilt Project.[6] While the author, Jonathan Holstein, was intrigued by the "extraordinary" pieced design of this Kentucky linsey quilt, I was intrigued by the fabric. The quilt contained coarse naturally-dyed

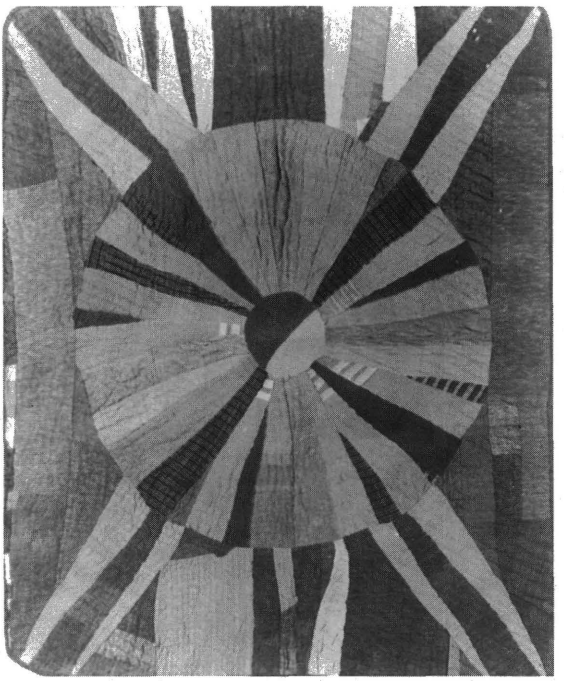

Figure 2. Kentucky Sun linsey quilt, ca. 1880. Made by Nancy Miller Grider of Russell County, Kentucky. Courtesy of the Kentucky Quilt Project.

striped and checked fabrics similar to those in the **Sixteen Patch** linsey quilt. Holstein pointed out:

> The material is a type not often used, made of wool weft on a cotton warp, but is not one of the linsey-woolsey cotton and wool cloths seen in late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century American quilts. These design and construction characteristics may indicate that the quilt represents a regional type rather than a single, creative insight.[7]

A **Nine Diamond** linsey quilt found during the Quilts of Tennessee survey had been on the floor of a deserted log cabin in Knox County, Tennessee.[8] Others have covered tobacco in wagons and machinery in barns. These cast-off quilts were not the ones proudly brought to quilt documentation days in Tennessee.

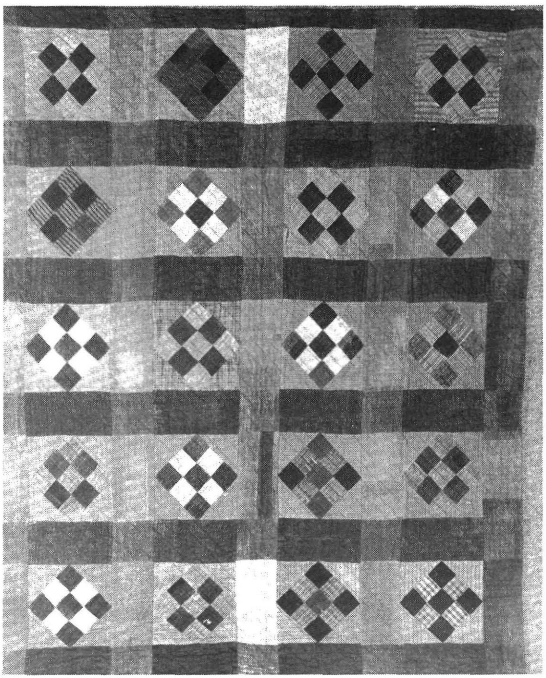

Figure 3. Nine Diamond linsey quilt, ca. 1870, found in Knox County, Tennessee. Maker unknown. Collection of Jerry Ledbetter. Photo courtesy of the Hunter Museum of Art, Chattanooga.

Therefore, we began to specifically ask for linsey quilts in publicity about quilt documentation days. Eventually, we documented three other pieced linsey quilts and three whole-cloth linsey quilts. On a visit to the Blair Farm of Roane County, I examined several linsey quilts, linsey garments, and remnants of linsey cloth.[9] I have since studied other pieced linsey quilts from Tennessee, Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, and Missouri.

The following published sources include discussions and photographs of pieced linsey quilts: *Keep Me Warm One Night*, a book on early handweaving in Eastern Canada, by Harold and Dorothy Burnham,[10] *Traditional Quilts and Bedcoverings* by Ruth McKendry,[11] *The Pieced Quilt: An American Design Tradition* by Jonathan Holstein,[12]

Figure 4. Linsey balmoral petticoat woven and sewn by Sarah Dougherty in mid-twentieth century for museum's interpretive program. Collection of the John Crockett Tavern and Pioneer Museum of Morristown, Tennessee.

America's Quilts and Coverlets by Carleton Safford and Robert Bishop,[13] *Quilts in America* by Patsy and Myron Orlofsky,[14] and *A People and Their Quilts* by John Rice Irwin.[15] Besides these few references, very little information exists about pieced linsey quilts, especially those made in the South during the mid- to late-nineteenth century.

An important reference to a linsey quilt appears in *Marthy Lou's Kiverlid: A Sketch of Mountain Life* written in 1937 in East Tennessee. The young girl in the story, Marthy Lou, reports on a weekend visit with her grandmother. "I made two linsy quilts out o' squares o' linsy dresses an' some o' Granny's balmoral petticoats an' padded 'em with wool bats." [16] This fictional reference is further evidence of a regional type of quilt called a "linsey quilt" distinct from the colonial linsey-woolseys.

Construction of Linsey Quilts

Of the southern linsey quilts studied, all contain a plainweave fabric of a wool weft and a cotton warp.[17] Dyed wool thread was carried back and forth on a shuttle through a web of long white cotton threads tied to a simple two-harness loom. The plain two-harness weaving limited the design of linsey to stripes, checks, and solids. In the striped and solid pieces, the white cotton warp threads appear as small white specks. The design limitation and the unusual combination of cotton and wool gave linsey its distinctive look and feel.

Linsey had much to commend it—it could be made with resources available on the farm, it could be made quickly, it was strong, and it was cheap. However, it was coarse and stiff, and it raveled easily. The raveling problem limited the size and type of quilt blocks one could make from linsey. The quilt pieces are rarely curved and never appliqued. The coarseness and thickness of the cloth limited the quilting stitch length and the quilting designs. Only the following pieced patterns have been found in linsey quilts: **Bar, One Patch, Nine Patch, Sixteen Patch, Streak of Lightning,** and **String.** The quilting designs are limited to fans, diamonds, or straight diagonal lines, with four to six stitches per inch.

Ruth McKendry includes in her book a group of Canadian quilts she calls "handwoven quilts" which appear to be similar to linsey quilts. The striped and checked fabrics are like those in southern linsey quilts, and the blocks and quilting patterns are also as simple. She dates the Canadian handwoven quilts from the third and fourth quarters of the nineteenth century. She points out that these quilts are most common in the areas settled by Scots, but they also appear in German areas.[18]

A similar type of thick woolen quilt, called a "hap," was made in central Pennsylvania during the nineteenth century.[19] Haps, like the southern pieced linsey quilts, do not often find themselves at the center of attention. Both are heavy, simply constructed, and made of recycled textiles. Jeannette Lasansky suggests that "they are rarely illustrated . . . because they do not fit into the present concept of what is salable, collectable, and therefore showable." [20] These rough quilts are valuable for many reasons, the most important being the record they hold of the many textiles whose history ended when the influ-

ences of the industrial revolution finally reached the interior of the United States.

Dating Southern Linsey Quilts

No linsey quilt found includes an inscribed date, and rarely are linsey quilts mentioned in women's letters and diaries. On the other hand, evidence of linsey fabric appears often in early travel accounts, in store records and advertisements, in estate inventories, and even in slave narratives.

According to Sadye Tune Wilson, a Tennesse weaving historian who wrote *Of Coverlets: The Legacies, The Weavers*, linsey was woven with a cotton warp and wool weft "after machine-spun cotton became available in [Tennessee] around the 1820s. There were many small cotton gin operations for those who grew their own cotton in a community." According to Wilson, the same is true for coverlets. "Finding linen in a coverlet is very rare because most coverlets [in this area] were done after the 1820s." When asked to date linsey quilts she estimated linsey quilts were made from dress and suit scraps woven after 1850.[21]

Another technological advance aids in dating southern linsey quilts. By the 1870s the sewing machine was not uncommon in Tennessee homes. An advertisment for the Wheeler and Wilson Sewing Machine in the fall of 1871 boasted "1500 sold in East Tennessee in last 18 months."[22] The lack of machine sewing on most linsey quilts probably means that they were made before about 1880.

Comparing pieced linsey quilts to other quilts made during the period of 1820–1880, one sees the most similarities with quilts made during the 1870s. In the mid-1800s, appliqued motifs of pink, red, and green on a white background, or pieced baskets or stars on a white background were common. Delicately quilted vines, vases, and flowers filled the white areas. Women had the fabric and the time to make non-utilitarian quilts. Quilts made in the 1860s and 1870s, during and after the Civil War, reflect the need to make warm bedding quickly. Quilt blocks are larger, quilting stitches are longer, and quilting patterns typically include fans, diamonds, and parallel lines. Pieced linsey quilts fit perfectly this description of utilitarian quilts. They are very warm, very easy to produce, and the materials are inexpensive.

Another method of dating linsey quilts is to review the lives of the makers. Of the linsey quilts studied, five were attributed to women who were adults in the last half of the nineteenth century. Mary Blair and her three daughters lived in Roane County, Tennessee during that time. The Blair Family collection of nineteenth century artifacts is particularly important to dating linsey quilts because so many different types of objects remain intact. Dozens of skeins of machine-spun cotton thread, coverlets of cotton warp and wool weft, weaving drafts and spinning and carding tools are evidence of home manufacture of cloth, but the cotton warp thread was probably spun at a local factory.

The collection includes many linsey garments: dresses, petticoats,[23] and a man's jacket. None of these linsey items contains a fabric with a linen-wool mix. All of the garment fabric is a cotton-wool mix. Of the sewing scraps, bedding, lengths of cloth, and linsey quilts studied, only one length of cloth has a linen warp, but the weft is cotton. Printed materials in the Blair collection include a 1873 store receipt for various fabrics, an 1882 letter from a relative in Arkansas mentioning the use of linsey to line a jeans jacket, and a steamboat bill of lading for a sewing machine dated 1878. Since none of the Blair quilts contains evidence of machine sewing, the linsey garment fabric in the quilts probably pre-dates 1878, but, of course, the quilts could have been constructed without machine stitching after 1878. I believe that most linsey quilts were constructed in the quarter century following the end of the Civil War. As women had a choice of fabrics to buy and as linsey garments were discarded, some women recycled the linsey fabric in their quilts. This fact is borne out in analyzing the Blair collection.[24]

Estate sale records reveal the value of linsey quilts. A preliminary review of estate sale records (1792–1874) in Knox County, Tennessee, revealed only one linsey quilt. The estate sale inventory of John Kirk (dated July 1864) includes "one quilt linsey" which sold for $1.00. For purposes of comparison, three counterpanes sold for $4.25, $5.00 and $5.75.[25]

The Greene County, Tennessee, will of Rebecca Hicks, dated 1890, states "To my son, James—one feather bed, three best calico quilts, one blanket, one linsey quilt, two sheets new domestic ones,

two pillows and $5 cash." [26]

Linsey quilts were not often mentioned in women's diaries, but women's studies scholar, Elaine Hedges, located a series of diary entries that do mention weaving, sewing, and linsey quilts.[27] Nancy Holeman of Callaway County, Missouri, born 1806, kept a diary from 1869 to 1877 recording weather, daily chores, visitors, and happenings. On April 19, 1869 she wrote "I am about to begin to piece a Lincy quilt . . . it is raining." On October 18 "A cold cloudy day . . . I finished a new sheat and pieced a middle for a lincy quilt." During early 1870 Holeman records the progress of quilting her quilt on a frame: January 11, "Rain about all Day. I put my Lincy quilt." January 12, "we got out the quilt." January 25, 1870, "I finished my Lincy quilt." March 26, "Cloudy. I put a border on my lincy quilt." Later in 1870 Nancy Holeman described a female relative who came often to quilt: November 17, "Nina put in a Lincy quilt;" November 18, "[Penninnah] "got out the Lincy quilt;" and November 26, "Peninnah finished the Comfort. Kitty and I hemed it." [28]

The entries are particularly valuable because they describe the process of making a linsey quilt and the length of time needed to quilt one. More importantly, they date the type of quilt as one being made in 1870. The November 26 entry, in which the word "Comfort" is used instead of "Lincy quilt," suggests that the terms may have been interchangeable.

The History of Linsey Fabric

Southern pieced linsey quilts represent the end of the long, important, but confusing history of a fabric called linsey-woolsey. Weaving traditions brought from England were important in the production of sufficient clothing and bedding in America, but, more importantly, weaving also enabled the colonists to maintain a certain degree of economic independence from England.

A Mr. Denton living in New York in 1670, reported on the home manufacture of linsey-woolsey:

> They sowe store of Flax, which they make every one Cloth of for their own wearing, as also woolen cloth, and Linsey-woolsey, and had they more Tradesmen among them, they would in a little time live without the help of any other Countrey for their clothing." [29]

England saw the colonies as a vast marketplace for its own expanding textile industry and, therefore, took drastic steps to limit the establishment of textile manufacturing in the colonies—even the home manufacture of textiles. The case of the spinning machine invented by Hargreaves in 1764 serves as an example. The spinning machine was a major labor-saving invention, and the English wished to maintain a monopoly on the manufacture and use of this device. American colonists constructed a wooden model in England, then cut it into pieces and shipped it to America, where it was reassembled in Philadelphia.[30]

During the eighteenth century colonial women felt encouraged to make their own cloth rather than import cloth from England. A New England preacher was quoted as saying

"Wear none but your own country linen. Of economy boast. Let your pride be the most to show cloaths of your own make and spinning." [31] Weaving one's own cloth was patriotic. A visitor to New York commented upon the clothing he saw in that city:

> Their petticoats of linsey-woolsey, were striped with gorgeous dyes. . . . they were all of their own manufacture, of which circumstance, as may well be supposed, they were not a little vain. The gentle-men of those days, were well content to figure in their linsey-woolsey coats—domestic made, and bedecked with an abundance of large brass buttons.[32]

When the Revolutionary War began, direct textile trade with England ceased. Households were asked to furnish cloth for soldiers' uniforms, but there were two and one-half million citizens to be clothed as well. According to Rolla Milton Tryon:

> The fact that the people had within their own homes the means of supplying their needs for wearing apparel was one of the big factors which enabled them to continue their struggle to a successful termination.[33]

After the Revolutionary War, textile trade with England resumed so that by the mid-1800s, quiltmakers in the South were able to use fabrics imported from the British Empire. When William Grasty took over a general store in Mount Airy, Virginia, in 1838, the following items were among the dry goods listed in the inventory, including

both domestic and imported fabrics: bobbinet, lawn, muslin, jaconet, gingham, cambric, pongee, oriental gauze, blue satin, linen, calico, flannel, osnaburg, bombazett, silk, velvet, sarcenet, vesting, linsey, and cassimere.[34]

The American textile industry grew rapidly after independence. With the invention of the cotton gin by Eli Whitney, cotton mills became commonplace in towns first in the North and later in the South.

On December 17, 1791 John Hague advertised in the *Knoxville Gazette* for weavers to work in his establishment in the town of Manchester in the Mero District (Middle Tennessee):

> The subscriber has his machines in order for carding spinning and weaving, and is in want of a good number of GOOD WEAVERS. The greatest encouragement will be given to such as are acquainted with the weaving of velvets, corduroys, and calicoes.[35]

Textiles often appeared in lists of goods needed for sale and exchange. On December 17, 1791, in the *Knoxville Gazette*, Summerville and Ore announced the opening of their store on German Creek

> where they have a large and general assortment of well-chosen goods from the markets of Philadelphia and Baltimore, which they are determined to sell on the most reasonable terms that goods have been sold for in the western country, for cash. The highest price will be allowed for good linsey, seven hundred linen, bees-wax, bear-skins, deerskins, fur skins, of all kinds, rye, corn and oats.[36]

On February 28, 1793 John Sommerville & Co. advertised in the *Knoxville Gazette:*

> Wanted to purchase, a quantity of linsey, seven hundred linen, and public securities of every denomination, that are or may be issued for the protection of the Territory." [37]

On December 26, 1796 the *Knoxville Gazette* itself advertised for linsey as a means to settle debts:

> Those persons who are indebted to the printer, for the *Knoxville Gazette*, or its former establishment, are informed, that the following articles will be received in discharge of their respective arrearages, if delivered on or before the first day of January next, viz—beef, pork, corn, flour, linsey, country linen and fire wood.[38]

The value of linsey is further evident in the fact that lengths of linsey cloth often appear in estate sale inventories along with bedsteads and bedding. In the June 1859 Knox County settlement of the estate of Catherine McHaffie, 13 yards of linsey sold for $6.11.[39]

The April 1864 settlement in Knox County of the estate of Sarah Lovelace listed 1 1/4 yards of linsey at 35 cents per yard, three meal sacks for $2.00, 2 1/2 yards of janes at $1.60 per yard, and 3 yards of check linsey at $1.60 per yard.[40]

The April 1865 Knox County settlement of the estate of William Davis listed 13 1/2 yards of linsey for $7.89 and 15 1/2 yards of gingham for $3.80.[41]

Slaves were clothed in linsey and other home-manufactured textiles. Linsey was one of the cheapest textiles available, and the raw materials were present on most southern farms. Slaves worked in loom houses and sewing houses making clothing for themselves and other slaves. Interviews of surviving ex-slaves recorded by workers of the Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration in the 1930s provide a rich resource of information on the domestic lives of southerners in the nineteenth century. The former slaves recalled their memories of home activities, food, and clothing. Several subjects mentioned home manufacture of cloth and homespun fabrics such as linsey. Robert Shepherd, age 91, of Athens, Georgia reported the following:

> De cloth for most all of de clothes was made at home. Marse Joe raised lots of sheep and de wool was used to make cloth for de winter clothes. Us had a great long loom house where some of de slaves didn't do nothin' but weave cloth. Some carded bats, some done de spinnin', and dere was more of 'em to do de sewin'.[42]

James Lucas, of Natchez, Mississippi, was 104 years old when he was interviewed in 1937 about his life as a slave:

> When I got big enough to wait round at de Big House and got to town, I wore clean rough clothes. De pants was white linsey-woolsey and de shirts was rough white cotton what was wove at de plantation. In de winter de sewin' womens made us heavy clothes and knit wool socks for us. De womens wore linsey-woolsey dresses and long leggin's like de soldiers wear.[43]

Susan Snow, age 87, of Meridian, Mississippi, reported similar memories:

> Dey made all de niggers' clothes on de place. Homespun, dey called it. Dey had spinnin' wheels and cards and looms at de Big House. All de women spinned in de winter time.[44]

Morris Sheppard, age 85, of Fort Gibson, Oklahoma, referred to a "stripedy" cloth which might have been linsey:

> Everything was stripedy 'cause Mammy like to make it fancy. She dye with copperas and walnut and wild indigo and things like dat, and made pretty cloth. I wore a stripedy shirt till I was about eleven years old.[45]

And the "checkedy" cloth which Martha Colquitt, age 85, of Athens, Georgia, remembered might also have been linsey:

> [Grandma] worked in de loom house and wove cloth all de time. She wove de checkedy cloth for de slaves clothes.... She made heaps of cloth.... She brought her featherbed with her from Virginny, and she used to piece up a heap of quilts out of our old clothes and any kinds of scraps she could get a hold of.[46]

Charles Davenport, age 100, of Natchez, Mississippi, remembered fondly quilts in his childhood:

> I growed up in de quarters.... Us had blankets and quilts filled with home raised wool and I just loved layin' in de big fat featherbed a-hearin' de rain patter on de roof.[47]

Domestic life in the South changed drastically when the Civil War broke out; sea ports were blockaded, and trade along the roadways leading north and south was stopped. While men went to war by the thousands, women proudly returned to their looms. Textiles were as important as guns and bullets to the Confederate cause. An appeal for clothing for soldiers appeared in the *Knoxville Daily Register* on April 22, 1862, requesting the following items: Gray cassimere pants, shirts, homemade shoes, long boots for cavalry, heavy grained boots for infantry, brown flannel overshirts, linsey overshirts.[48]

Wives, sisters and mothers shouldered the burden of making uniforms, bedding, and tents for the war effort while facing major changes in their domestic lives. In the years preceding the war, women

had discussed which sewing machines to buy, and which mantua-maker to hire to cut a fancy dress. They could choose from a wide variety of fabrics imported through the great seaports of the South, such as Charleston and New Orleans. With the blockade in place, women found themselves facing a serious textile and clothing shortage.

In some parts of the South, textile mills and carding factories were targets of military offensives. The factories that remained open apparently charged high prices for goods and services. One Georgia woman discussed the situation in a letter to her mother:

> I wish we could spin by magic. It would assist us very much if we were near a carding factory. I am told there are plenty around this place, but I do not know what they charge per pound. What do you think of yarn selling for thirty to thirty-five a bunch in Marietta?[49]

The situation was especially serious for those women who had many slaves. Mary S. Mallard whose family's letters make up the massive volume *The Children of Pride* wrote the following in 1864:

> Mr. Mallard wrote Mr. Quarterman last night to give out the osnaburgs to the people [the servants]. I think there will be enough for all of the people at Arcadia. I am very glad we happened to have it on hand, for it would be difficult to get it at this time. Roswell factory is threatened, but I hope it will not be destroyed, for it would be a great loss.[50]

Out came the looms, spinning wheels and cards. However, in 1863 in Arcadia, Georgia, Mary Jones wrote to her son that cotton cards were not to be found:

> Mr. Russell, to whom we sent nine sheep skins to be exchanged for cotton cards some four months since, writes that they are not to be had. Can they now be had in Savannah? And at what price?[51]

By 1864, Loudon County, Tennessee, was under military occupation by Union troops. A Loudon County resident, Mary Jane Reynolds, was angered because she had to take an oath to the Union every time she made a purchase at her local general store. In letters to her husband, she reported on the shopping practices of the day.

> March 13, 1864: I went down the other day and bought some dark calico for Mother, Lizzie and I. I would have gotten a balmoral

but they were very common and they asked four dollars for them. Do you think that goods will continue to get higher. They did not require me to take the oath.

March 1864: We are pretty quiet now. Mrs. Franklin is here, came last night. Had been to Loudon to pick out some calico for Mr. Kline to buy [for her]. That is the way the ladies get out of taking the oath, but Andersons sell to almost anyone.

April 1, 1864: They say they are not near so particular about selling goods as they were at first there. They asked a person if they were loyal now they ask them if they will trade.[52]

Some women seemed to make the most of the situation and even staged parties. Lucy Virginia French writes in 1861 that she was "sewing, made the skirt of a new plaid linsey dress for myself for our Homespun party." [53]

A Georgia woman described a friend's "confederate" dress to her mother in a letter. "She has a black linsey dress that she dyed herself, and it is a beautiful black. She seems to have succeeded remarkably well with her experiments." [54]

One of the more poignant statements about the Civil War was stitched on a pillow by a Tennessee woman, Mary High Prince, in 1910:

Hoorah! for the home spun
dresses we southern ladies
wore in time of the war.
Ev'ry piece here.
Sad memories it brings
back to me.
For our hearts was weary
and restless.
And our life was full of care.
The burden laid up on us
seemed greater than we could bear.[55]

Although the pillow cover is made of scraps of checked, handwoven, all-cotton fabric reminiscent of linsey, and not linsey itself, the statement expresses the sentiments of women who made many sacrifices during the Civil War.

Soon after the end of the Civil War, northerners turned their attention to modernizing their major cities. Products from newly-built factories streamed into all areas of the country as transportation systems expanded. Cloth production in homes and small mills declined in importance. Sewing machines and plows replaced bedsteads and bedding as the items on the top of estate inventory lists. Officials at a Knoxville fair continued for several years to offer a prize of $2.00 for the best eight yards of home linsey,[56] but for the most part the weaving of linsey had died out by 1900.

For some women linsey fabric elicited bitter memories—memories of a time of sacrifice for battles that were lost—and for that reason they may have quickly given up the home weaving of linsey as soon as they were able. However, the general demise of linsey was more likely due to the expansion of transportation systems, especially the railroad, and the return to active commerce after the Civil War. With the return of peace time, women once again faced a myriad of choices when shopping for fabrics, and the sewing machine was touted as the ultimate timesaver, bringing the age of weaving homespun and linsey to an end.

Linsey quilts are a record of the fabrics and garments made necessary by the politics and economics of slavery, the Civil War, and Reconstruction in the inland South. Since the 1870s, women in this country have faced similar times of economic and political distress with a spirit of resourcefulness. However, the need has never been so great that it required home manufacture of fabrics such as linsey. Linsey quilts represent a unique response to particular circumstances in nineteenth century America. This fact alone makes the study of linsey quilts and quilts like them important.

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16. Rebecca Dougherty Hyatt, *Marthy Lou's Kiverlid: A Sketch of Mountain Life* (Morristown, Tenn.: Morristown Printing, 1937), 109. A balmoral petticoat is a striped or figured woolen petticoat worn beneath a skirt looped up in front.
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22. Advertisement in *Premium List and Rules and Regulations of the Eastern Division Fair for East Tennessee, October 10–14, 1871*, 35, in McClung Collection, Lawson McGhee Library, Knoxville.
23. Mary Browning referred to the garments as petticoats. They are similar to modern-day gathered skirts. Like the balmoral petticoat pictured in Figure 4, the fabric is woven in stripes which encircle the bottom border of the skirt.
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Competing Cultural Values at The Great American Quilt Festival

Jane Przybysz

In the summer of 1985, I received a flyer in the mail announcing The Great American Quilt Festival—officially billed as "a Museum of American Folk Art event presented by 3M/Scotchgard (registered mark)brand products in honor of the Statue of Liberty Centennial."[1] Actually the flyer was an entry form for the quilt contest being held in conjunction with the festival. Sums of $20,000 and $7,500, respectively, were offered for the first and second prize-winning quilts. Explaining the unusually large cash award offered for the prize-winning quilt, Museum of American Folk Art Director Robert Bishop said, ". . .people with art education. . . see making a quilt the same as making a work of art. They expect top prices for their art. That's why our top prize is $20,000."[2] In 1986, $20,000 was actually 20% less than the median annual household income; but it was twice the median wage earnings for all working women.[3] Understandably, many women receiving notice of this contest would have eagerly read on.

Contest rules specified that all entries had to "conform to the theme 'Liberty, Freedom, and the Heritage of America in honor of the Statue of Liberty Centennial.'"[4] Considering that no women were invited to attend the official ceremony at which the Statue of Liberty was unveiled and that, while men sat at Miss Liberty's feet congratulating themselves on having successfully mounted this female symbol of liberty, Susan B. Anthony and sister suffragettes were in a boat circling Bedloe's Island shouting from a megaphone that if you'd let Miss Liberty down off her pedestal, she wouldn't have the right to vote

Jane Przybysz, 214 Riverside Drive, #411, New York NY 10025

in France or America, there was more than a little irony in asking women to make a quilt along the lines of this theme.[5] And even if she happened not to be aware of these historical facts, any woman trying to support herself and/or her family would know from experience what newspapers are reporting—that working women are still only making sixty-one cents for every man's dollar and that the government continues to be slow in responding to working women's need for affordable, quality daycare facilities. Such women would be likely to think twice before devoting the time it takes to make a quilt to celebrate Liberty, Freedom, and the Heritage of America in honor of the Statue of Liberty Centennial.

Also, the idea of requiring an artist to conform to a theme seemed problematic. While it is difficult to imagine, say, the Museum of Modern Art sponsoring an abstract expressionist painting contest, it is even more difficult imagining such painters being required to conform to a theme, much less a blatantly patriotic theme. Although there are many theories about what the artist's role in society is, should, or might be, one does not generally think of artists being defined by their ability to make art which conforms to specific themes promoted by cultural institutions and multinational corporations—unless, of course, they are avowedly commercial artists.

In addition to requiring a theme, contest rules specified that "quilts must be from an original design or a totally original use/interpretation of traditional patterns." Since no two quilts are ever exactly alike, all quilts are—in some sense—"original." But this rule declared that being original only with regard to choice of fabric texture, fabric color, and three-dimensional quilting design was somehow not original enough. Overlooking what makes quilts different from paintings—the inherently sculptural and sensual nature of the medium—this rule was privileging originality in the visual surface design of the quilt.

Quilts also had to be the work of one person only; they had to measure 72 x 72 inches; and all quilting, and any applique or embroidery had to be done by hand. This emphasis on the work being a solo effort and on it being made in the shape of a square seemed to indicate—as did the size of the cash award—that the Museum and 3M were trying to encourage and promote a notion of quilts as art made

by artists, not as bedcovers made by quilters. But to do all the work herself, by hand, a quilter would necessarily have to devote three months to a year working full-time to complete the project. Could the relatively few quilters who make a living as artists afford to spend that much time and energy on a quilt that was so theme- and size-specific? If the quilt happened not to win, what would she do with it? The size would make it unsuitable as a bedcover and how many people have furnishings to match or wall space large enough to accommodate a 72"x 72" patriotic quilt? Of course, there is always the chance she might find a corporation, museum, or governmental agency to buy the quilt, but would they pay anywhere close to $20,000, considering that a high quality antique quilt can still be purchased for $1,500? Thus, while seeming to address the quilter as artist, these rules did not reflect an understanding of the economic realities quilters face in trying to make a living from their art.

And if, on the one hand, these rules did not take into consideration the potential concerns of professional quilters, they also ignored the plain fact that most non-professional quilters still seem to make quilts to use and display on beds. And many of them quilt their tops with family, friends, or in the context of local guilds. So one has to wonder: What kind of quilter did the Museum and 3M expect would enter their contest?

Next came the requirement that with your entry form you had to submit a proof-of-purchase seal from any Scotchgard product, and agree that, if yours was one of the fifty-two state winners, it would be "Scotchgarded" (sprayed with a solution of trichloroethane, carbon dioxide propellent, and fluoroaliphatic resin that, when applied to fabric, repels dirt and water). And last, but not least, there was the part where you signed away your rights to your original design and/or quilt:

> If my quilt is judged as a winning entry in the Great American Quilt Contest, I understand that my signature gives the Museum of American Folk Art and 3M/Scotchgard the right to use my original pattern in any advertising and/or promotional materials. I understand if my quilt is selected as a semi-finalist, I will be notified by mail where to send it for final judging. Furthermore, I understand that if my quilt is one of the first- or second-place winning quilts, the quilt becomes the property of 3M to donate to the Musuem of American

Folk Art, displayed as part of the "Scotchgard Collection of Contemporary Quilts." If my quilt is one of the 52 preliminary winners, I understand my quilt will be on tour for a minimum of three years. I will regain possession of my quilt following this tour period.

From these rules, it would seem that the Museum of American Folk Art and 3M Company were seeking to attract quilters—the vast majority of whom are women—who wanted to think of themselves as artists, but were "artists" who didn't mind being told what to make their art about, "artists" who didn't mind being told how to make their art, "artists" who were willing to purchase and use certain products to have their work considered art, "artists" who would allow their work to be Scotchgarded (something no reputable conservator would allow), and "artists" who—unconcerned with the reality of needing to earn a living—would happily sign away rights to their designs and let the Museum and 3M use their art—free of charge—for a minimum of three years.

Months later, the following announcement appeared in the November/December 1985 *Quilter's Newsletter Magazine*: "The plan to Scotchgard all of the winning quilts has been scotched. The 3M Company thoughtfully waived that requirement."[6] Apparently, either so few women had entered or so many women had complained that contest rules were being amended. This was the first public indication that there were quilters (besides myself) whose idea of quilts, quilters, and quiltmaking practice did not entirely fit with that being promoted by the Museum and 3M.

As the Festival time approached, I visited the Museum of American Folk Art to see "Liberties With Liberty," an exhibition funded by Xerox Corporation that the Museum had planned in conjunction with the Festival. Presumably, this exhibition was to provide a historical context in which the festival as a whole and the fifty-two contest-winning quilts as "expressions of liberty" might be understood.

Taking liberties with liberty. Taking liberties with the Statue of Liberty. Taking liberties with images of women. The title of the show inspired such musings and seemed to promise that the Museum was undertaking a survey of the conscious manipulation of images of liberty and, hence, images of women. Yet it was hard to imagine the

Museum taking on so politically charged a topic, especially since the idea for the contest and festival had begun as a marketing concept designed to take advantage of—to take liberties with—the Statue of Liberty Centennial celebration and the current revival in quiltmaking among mostly white, middle-class women.[7]

As it turned out, the exhibition was a melange of engravings, political cartoons, watercolors, needlework, ironworks, sculpture, and advertisements, all of which had but one thing in common: each supposedly depicted the continent known as America, the Colonies, or Liberty as a woman.[8] By describing and discussing two of these works, my aim is to give the reader some idea of the nature and range of objects in the exhibition, to question how these objects were presented to the public, and offer one possible explanation as to why—contrary to the Museum's expectations—this exhibit along with the Festival did not result in a significant increase in museum membership.[9]

The needlework picture listed as "Indian Princess with Two Pilgrims," number thirty in the exhibition catalog, depicts a woman "fashionably garbed in the style of the day" in a rich pink gown, who visually dominates the picture as a whole, as well as the two Pilgrims who appear with her.[10] She is shown out-of-doors, amidst an abundance of animal and vegetable life, at some distance from the house portrayed in the background. A feathered headdress is shown, not on top of the woman's head, but floating somewhat oddly behind and slightly below it. Where the headdress should logically appear, the foliage of a tree has been stitched. It thus seems as if the needleworker stitched in the foliage first, and then decided to add the headdress—perhaps as an afterthought.

The picture is dated ca. 1750, and the artist is unknown. Nancy Jo Fox, curator of the show and author of the exhibition catalog, writes that this "charming needlework picture" was "most probably the efforts of a Colonial schoolgirl," and that "the Indian Princess has lost much of the ethnic character of her mother, the Indian Queen."[11] Since much of the work of artists who have not received formal training in the western art tradition appears "naive" or childlike in light of that tradition, why Fox attributes the picture to the work of a girl is not clear. Also, while the figure of the Indian Princess does

appear in other media of the time, she is usually accompanied by a number of emblems besides the headdress that identify her as such: tomahawk, rattlesnakes and wild animals. In this case, no other emblems appear, and there is nothing in her clothing or about her skin color that clearly mark her as an Indian Princess. She might just as easily be interpreted as a well-to-do girl or woman "playing Indian woman," appropriating an emblem of the Indian woman for herself. If one considers the political and economic decision-making power wielded by women in some American Indian tribes, and then imagines a girl (or woman?) perhaps depicting herself "playing Indian woman," the possible meanings or implications of this needlework picture are intriguing. At the very least, the work would seem to raise questions about how Colonial girls and women perceived and related to Indian women.

There is also some question as to how this work qualifies as the work of a folk or popular artist, which in turn raises issues regarding the meaning and use of the terms "folk" and "popular."[12] The piece is executed with wool and silk threads on linen, and betrays some knowledge of high fashion and of the convention of perspective in art. Can we assume that the girl or woman who made this picture—who had access to what were conceivably scarce and expensive materials in 1750, who had time to stitch a decorative picture, and thus was probably of a class of people who had paintings from which to learn things like perspective—was simply one of the "folk"? What is gained and what is lost if we fail to distinguish, in cases where the distinction is possible to make, the work of relatively privileged women from that of women who had no servants to nurse the children and cook the meals? Certainly it is easier to imagine a wealthy woman having time to "play" at being an Indian woman than it is to conceive of a poor woman eking out time between working the fields and tending to the immediate needs of a farm family to express her "patriotism" by creating a needlework portrait of an Indian Princess. Thus it would seem that, by not making this distinction, we risk undermining our ability to pose possible meanings of any given work of art.

The point of this lengthy discussion of the "Indian Princess" is that the way the work is interpreted for the viewer leaves many questions about the specific visual content of the piece—its contra-

dictions and implications—unaddressed. As "folk art," the work can be characterized as "charming," and left at that. End of analysis. After all, that's how most people are accustomed to thinking of "folk art"—as something quaint and charming. Unfortunately, such adjectives do little to further our understanding of what a work like the "Indian Princess" might have meant to the woman who made it or the people who viewed it. More often than not, adjectives like "quaint" and "charming" succeed only in evoking a nostalgia for a simpler life at a simpler time that was never simple.

The second work in the show I would like to discuss appears as number ninety-two in the book documenting the exhibition and is a 1982 greeting card designed by Hudson Talbott for Bloomingdales, showing the Statue of Liberty as "a conscientious housewife in a white ruffled apron . . . carefully removing a juicy pie from her oven, while being avidly watched by New York Skyscrapers, hungry for Mom's apple pie."[13] Unlike the needlework picture—which was one of a handful of works in the exhibition showing how women have depicted liberty and/or images of women—this piece was one of many works in the show exemplifying how men have exoticized women as Indian Queens, romanticized them as Goddesses of Liberty, or trivialized them as Mom and apple pie as a means of selling everything from greeting cards, cigars, and carriages to ideas of free trade, liberty, and America. In addition to the fact that the card depicts the World Trade Towers, and the Chrysler and Empire State Buildings as peeping Toms, peering in through an apartment window at Mom and apple pie as the objects of male desire, the idea that the work of a commercial artist, hired by Bloomingdales to make cards for sale, should be grouped together with a needlework picture made by a woman for her home is disturbing. And again, the idea that the spirit of "the people" or "the folk" is represented in this work seems problematic. Can what Bloomingdales commissions and sells as greeting cards be said to represent the spirit of "the people"?

In her discussion of these works in the exhibition catalog, Mary Jo Fox—like most museum curators—seems to adopt what Pierre Bourdieu describes in his book, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, as an "aesthetic disposition." An "aesthetic disposition," he explains, is a way of seeing cultural objects that denies

their very different social functions and, instead, directs attention to questions of form, technique, and visual styles.[14] While not actually denying the different social functions of the objects in this exhibition, Fox would characterize this show as "a celebration of the changing images of the female symbol of America through the eyes of the folk and popular artist," and focus mainly on tracking the changing formal qualities of the representations of the female symbol of America.[15] But by not specifying who—male or female, rich or poor—was doing the changing, at what time, and in what particular context, she blurs rather than clarifies the very different social functions of the objects in the exhibition, and effectively skirts many of the socio-political issues the exhibition raises.

Towards the end of her introductory essay in *Liberties with Liberty*, Fox does lament what she terms the "unharnessed commerical spirit" that results in "tasteless kitsch" so unlike the "folk art of considerable charm . . . inspired by honest patriotism and the 'loving hands of home.'"[16] But in what category does the Talbot greeting card fit? Is the card an example of "tasteful" kitsch that is the product of a "harnessed" commercial spirit? If so, in what sense does Bloomingdales harness its commercialism? And who finds it tasteful? The same male gaze that would find the scantily clad "Pin-up as Liberty" that is also in the exhibition "tasteful"? Is it surprising that women might not be enthusiastic about supporting a cultural institution that presents a pin-up poster which objectifies women as sexual objects and a greeting card which trivializes women's role as mothers in the same context as a needlework picture created by a girl or woman for her home?

The "aesthetic disposition" that seemed to characterize the organization and presentation of objects in the "Liberties with Liberty" exhibition became visible as an ordering principle in the Festival lecture series, quilt displays, and the book the Museum of American Folk Art published documenting the festival and contest. The lecture series opened with an hour and a half lecture by quilt collector and art historian Jonathan Holstein discussing the history of quilts in terms of design motifs, genres, and styles, and closed with a symposium entitled "Quilts in Women's Lives," featuring six women quilt scholars and/or quilters (Sandi Fox, Dr. Gladys-Marie Fry, Erma Kirkpa-

trick, Penny McMorris, Ruth Roberson, and Dr. Judith Reiter Weissman), each of whom was allotted only twenty minutes to discuss when, how, and where quilts have functioned in women's lives.[17] That the women on the panel were not allowed to present their material in the kind of depth that an hour and a half or even an hour time slot would have permitted, undermined the effectiveness of their presentations and seemed to trivialize the nature of their subject matter.

Upon entering Pier 92, located at 52nd Street and the Hudson River, where the bulk of festival was staged, again an "aesthetic disposition" was clearly at work both in the way the various quilt displays had been arranged in space and in the way they were presented to festival goers. At the front of the exhibition hall, spanning the width of the hall in relatively spacious quarters were the two antique quilt exhibitions—"Made in the U.S.A." and "Continuity and Change"—curated by the Museum of American Folk Art. The brief texts presented for the viewer on placards alongside the exhibits drew attention to the quilts' aesthetic qualities, regional characteristics and/or their value as documents of American history. When appropriate—as with the Amish quilts—the aesthetic qualities of the quilts were explained as reflecting or being representative of larger cultural aesthetics. But never was any mention made of the different social and economic conditions under which women lived at particular times in particular cultures or how quilts might have functioned in their lives.

There were nine other quilt exhibitions at the festival—"Small Sensations" funded by Judi Boisson Quilts, Inc., of Southampton, New York, Westport, Connecticut, and New York City; "The Quilts Fantastic;" "Laura Ashley Quilts;" "So Proudly We Hail," conceived and coordinated by Donna Wilder of Fairfield Processing; "From Sea to Shining Sea" organized by The National Needlework Association; an exhibition of Hawaiian quilts; "The Lone Star" exhibit of quilts organized by the American/International Quilt Association; the "Teachers' Quilts;" and the exhibition of the contest-winning quilts. It is instructive to examine the hierarchy of organizations and people made visible in how these exhibits were arranged in festival space. For the purposes of this paper, however, I will discuss only one of these

exhibitions—that of the Festival Contest-winning quilts.

If you read the festival space from front to back and left to right, the contest-winning quilts were given the least visibility of all quilt exhibits at the Festival. All were displayed in the far right aisle, with the forty-nine state winners' quilts hung at the rear of the aisle and the two grand prize-winning quilts—separated from the others—in the front half of the right aisle. It is not clear who, if anyone, actually curated this exhibit. But whoever did or didn't, neglected to include the name each quilter had given her work on the label listing her name and the state she came from. This was the case for all but the two grand prize-winning quilts. It is important to note that in exhibits of antique quilts where the maker of the quilt is often anonymous and certainly dead, at least the generic names of the quilt patterns are listed on exhibition labels, whereas here the quilters were known, alive and well, but the names they gave their quilts—names that in some cases would have clarified what "patriotism" meant to them—were not listed.

Because of its power to extend the Great American Quilt Festival in time and space, and thereby shape how people in the future think about the meaning of this festival and the meaning of the contest-winning quilts, it is perhaps most important to look at the book published by E. P. Dutton in association with the Museum: *All Flags Flying: Patriotic Quilts As Expressions of Liberty*. The book consists mostly of photographs of quilts. The first half of the book presents photos of antique and more contemporary quilts as "precedents" for the fifty-one prize-winning "expressions of liberty" that appear in the second half of the book.

In order to create precedents for the "expressions of liberty," the book groups together any quilt that depicts an American flag or a bird resembling an eagle, and any quilt containing commercially manufactured commemorative handkerchiefs or scraps of commemorative fabric and calls it "patriotic." So that for the sake of defining a genre of quilts—the patriotic quilt—the book collapses all differences between quilts seeming to commemorate someone's death, quilts that may have been made for loved ones who happened to have served in the armed forces, quilts made to record and preserve the signatures of particular people, quilts made as going away presents for friends, quilts

made to protest the governmental policies of its times, and quilts made for reasons we'll never know.

Two examples demonstrate what I find so disturbing here. The caption to quilt number ten reads:

> Applique and embroidered cotton quilt, made by L. W., dated 1844, Pennsylvania. 75" x 67". The bold blue eagles hold arrows that look more like knitting needles and stiff olive branches with no olives. Although it was a feminine fashion at the time to inscribe one's name and date in mirror writing, it does seem idiosyncratic, to say the least, that the maker of this quilt went to the trouble to letter each of the five banners with *E Pluribus Unum* in reverse. She also added some rather young and gleeful birds, hearts, and new moons, and filled all the blank spaces with stars, in this case having nothing to do with the number of states in the Union.[18]

The author of this caption never considered that 1) the quilter may have intentionally stitched knitting needles in place of arrows; 2) the quilter may have placed the eagles in a sea of eight-point, not traditionally "American" five-point stars, having nothing to do with the number of states in the union as a way of decontextualizing and re-contextualizing the American eagle; 3) the quilter may have used the mirror writing—not idiosyncratically, but consciously—as means of engaging the viewer as an active participant in the creative process, since to read the lettering, the viewer would have to hold the quilt up to the mirror and simultaneously see herself performing this action; or 4) the quilter might have used the mirror writing to cleverly refer to herself as the person who—*E Pluribus Unum*—out of many pieces of fabric, makes one quilt. If, unlike the caption writer—who implies that what we see in this quilt is the result of incompetent needlework and idiosyncracy, we imagine that what we see is what the quilter intended, this quilt resonates with possible meanings—some potentially unpatriotic—that the caption, as written, overlooks. By replacing arrows with knitting needles, it is possible that this quilter was suggesting that Americans consider amending one of their national emblems.[19]

The caption to quilt number 27 reads:

> Pieced cotton quilt, Ocean Waves, 1876, New York State. 80"x68". At first glance it is hard to determine that this attractive

quilt of traditional design has a patriotic theme. Only with a close look can the Centennial prints dated 1776–1876 be detected.[20]

Below the photo of the whole quilt is an enlarged detail intended to show us the Centennial print. Even in the detail, the print is only barely visible. There is, however, a scrap of fabric with moon crescents very clearly printed on its surface. Should we perhaps invent another genre of quilts—the astrological quilt—and group together any quilt showing moons, stars, or the sun?

The point I'm trying to make is that one cannot attribute a particular meaning to a cultural object by calling attention to one image that appears on the object. If Picasso were to construct a collage that included a flag, or a piece of commercially produced commemorative fabric, no one would automatically conclude that Picasso had made a "patriotic" collage. Anyone trying to interpret the work would consider how the flag or piece of fabric was contextualized in the work as a whole, as well as for what or whom Picasso made the collage.

Reading the quilt contest rules, seeing the "Liberties with Liberty," exhibition, seeing how quilts were presented in the festival space, and reading *All Flags Flying: American Patriotic Quilts As Expressions of Liberty*—all left one with the impression that the Great American Quilt Festival was less about quilts or the Statue of Liberty and more about how 3M and the Museum used quilts and a somewhat confused image of the quilter as artist/patriotic homemaker to sell Scotchgard products, and to sell a way of thinking about cultural objects that obscures more than it clarifies what they might have meant to the people who made and used them. By sponsoring the festival, the Museum and 3M were also able to promote images of themselves as guardians of American culture and values.

But what did this festival mean to the people who attended, and especially to the women who had entered the contest? The day before the festival officially opened, there was a press luncheon. The contest winners who, on short notice, had been able to make the luncheon had been asked to stand by their quilts in case anyone had questions. That's where I found them.

Georgia Winner: Barbara Thurman Butler

A former high school art teacher who is presently a full-time mother, Barbara Butler said that even before she heard about the contest, she'd been thinking of making a quilt about the Statue of Liberty, because it was seeing quilts at the time of the 1976 Bicentennial that first inspired her to quilt. Since her quilt was fairly literal in its representation of the Statue of LIberty surrounded by immigrants, presided over by the Manhattan skyline silhouetted against an American flag, she did not try to explain what it meant. She did say that the really special thing about making this quilt was hearing the stories it evoked in other people, stories of people emigrating. Then she pointed out that the initials embroidered in the stars of the flag are of presidents who passed important immigration laws.

She "has no idea" what she's going to do with this quilt when she gets it back since she "has no place for it." She said she'll probably pack it away with the other Statue of Liberty memorabilia she's been collecting. Then maybe ten years from now her kids will *really* appreciate it.

Apart from the joy she derives from the pride her children take in saying, "My mom did this," Butler said she quilts to relax and stay sane. She said she needs something to say, "This is me, this is my thing and something that doesn't have to be redone tomorrow." Most things women do, she claimed, don't have lasting value. But a quilt, she said, "lasts and no matter what it looks like, it always means something to the person who made it and the person who receives it."[21]

As she was assuring me that she doesn't make quilts to sell and has no plans to do so, another state winner approached with a copy of *All Flags Flying* and asked Butler to autograph the photo of her quilt.

Texas Winner: Anita Murphy

Anita Murphy introduced herself as the founder of the Golden Triangle Quilt Guild in Beaumont, Texas, and as one of nine women who founded the Texas Heritage Quilt Society, an organization dedicated to the documentation and conservation of quilts in Texas. "It's amazing," she said, "how many women don't know their grandmother's names and how many stories you get from quilt owners about family feuds over quilts. Many people won't let you document their

quilt unless you promise not to publish who actually has it in their possession."

She lamented the fact that "plenty of people have no one. . . . A lot of older women call up to say they're afraid their quilts will get bundled up and sent to Goodwill." She said her organization aims to protect these women from antique dealers who might try to catch an old woman down on her luck and buy the quilt for pennies. She added that the Society has made it a policy that no Society member may accept a quilt for themselves from these desperate women who call in. Quilts can only be accepted for the Society's archives.[22]

As we stood there talking, another state winner walked up to us and asked Murphy to sign a piece of fabric that would later become part of a quilt. Murphy whipped out some pieces of fabric herself. She, too, was making an autograph quilt and was collecting signatures. Even I was included in this ritual.

The two quilters then started to complain to one another about not being given complimentary copies of *All Flags Flying*. Considering they'd signed away all photographic rights to their quilts, they thought they should at least get a free copy of the book.

Later I learned that each quilter was to be given five complimentary copies of the book several months after the Festival, when a second shipment of them had arrived. Only two thousand copies of the book had been printed in time for the Festival, and the Museum wanted to be able to sell, not give these away.[23] So apparently there had been some misunderstanding or breakdown in communication between the Museum and the quilters.

Vermont Winner: Ione Bissonnette

Like Butler, Ione Bissonette said she'd been planning this quilt before she knew of the contest. A full-time nurse, she claimed that she entered the contest because she figured that if she did, she could call herself a quilter. When I asked about the meaning of her quilt—since it in no way seemed to refer to a patriotic theme—she commented about the prescribed theme being "corny" and leading to some corny quilts. But to her mind, there are two kinds of patriotism: the rah-rah, artificial-sounding one and the one she expresses in which liberty is about seeking a solution to the threat of nuclear war and ecological

disaster. When I told her that I would not have guessed her intent from just looking at her quilt, she said, "It's too bad that 3M didn't put the quilt's title or the personal statement I wrote to accompany the quilt in the exhibition." She explained that the title of her piece was "Peace Piece: Can Liberty Exist Without A Planet?" "The central female figure is making an Indian mudra gesture of supplication, while the birds in the air scream cries of warning and the fish silently flee an impending nuclear disaster."

When asked why she quilts, Bissonnette replied, "It's my sanity and insanity. . . . It's very centering. . . . It's something that no one else can control in your life. Plus, it's a form of expression that's accessible."

No, she doesn't make quilts to sell because, she claimed, "Your consciousness is different when you make a quilt to sell. Maybe that's why there's something magical about the objects that come out of people's lives," she says, referring to the antique quilts on sale at the festival. "Look at the old and the new Amish quilts. You'll see a different headspace in the new ones made to sell." [24]

At this point, Mariellen Fons, Iowa state winner, came over to say that she's planning to put together a newsletter for contest winners that she will mail out annually, on February 14th, the day they all learned they were winners. Would Bissonette be willing to send her a paragraph about herself once a year to put in the newsletter?

All of a sudden it was 6 P.M. The luncheon had started at one. The conversations I'd had with three quilters had taken all afternoon, mostly because they had been filled with stories: stories about the first quilt they ever made; stories about how the children had cut holes in quilts while "trying to copy Mom"; stories about quilts rescued at flea markets; stories about the people they'd made quilts for. I hadn't rushed anyone because I'd assumed all the contest winners would be around and visible at various times during the next four days.

But I was wrong. Except for the awards ceremony Friday morning, which I missed because it wasn't on the official calendar of events, at no other time were these quilters made visible, publicly acknowledged, or otherwise brought together.

Two days later, I noticed an incredibly animated woman going up and down the long line of women waiting to use the bathroom. She

turned out to be Ruth Carol Coombe, the Washington state winner who was also gathering signatures for a quilt she would make at a later date. When I finally got a chance to talk to her, the first thing she said was how exciting it was to have signatures from Japan, Denmark, and Australia. A full-time nurse, Coombe was very frank about why she entered this contest: "With $20,000, I figured, hey, I can get a new bathroom." But even as a state winner, she said she knew she'd get the free round-trip plane fare to New York that was part of the preliminary winner's prize package, so she'd be able to visit her mother who lives on the east coast.

About her quilt, she said, "It's a cheap thrill . . . that's not a knock . . .it's just that it's very graphic, very bold, geometric, and graphic, mine is, and it's not from anybody to somebody . . . so some poor lady slaved away and made this thing and gave it to 3M. . . .Usually it's I made this for me forever, or I made this for a niece who deserves that sort of thing."

Coombe makes quilts because "as well as enjoying the creative process and the relaxation it affords, and the whole tactile sense of color, just the whole experience, it's the fellowship—that's the whole reason for doing it, I think . . .'cause people who quilt alone are missing a great deal."

In this sense, she says, the Museum and 3M "missed the whole point. . . . They know nothing about quilters at all and nothing about quilting tradition. You know, it's so much sharing and giving, and they're not sharing a thing and they're giving less. They're anti-the entire reason most people quilt. . . . They aren't quilters. . . . They haven't experienced it. . . . Without that, it becomes paint-by-number kinds of stuff. . . . It just becomes something people do in garrets somewhere."[25]

Later the same day, I was trying to find out who had designed the festival pin 3M was selling. I posed this question to Don Hollinger, a 3M executive, and he responded not with an answer, but a story of how a woman at the 1985 Houston Quilt Festival had unabashedly approached a 3M public relations representative at the 3M booth advertising the Great American Quilt Festival, to recommend that 3M produce a festival pin. Pin-swapping, she said, had become quite the rage among quilters. Hours later, a woman selling festival pins and

posters stopped me and asked, "Have you seen her, the lady with all the pins?" I hadn't, so she went on to explain to me how this pin lady was responsible for the very existence of pins at the festival. I say *pins* because, as it turned out, both 3M and the Museum each had independently produced an official Festival pin.

Shortly thereafter, I spotted her: an energetic-looking woman whose left shoulder was plastered with all different kinds of pins. I approached her, asking if she were the infamous pin lady, and laughing, she introduced herself as Barbara Gillette of Santa Monica, California. She explained how quilt guilds make up their own pins and then they give them to visiting teachers, trade them with members of other guilds, and sometimes sell them to the general public to raise money for a particular cause. "It's just sort of you get to know people," she said. "People come up and talk to you, you talk to them. You always say, have you got something to trade? I'm zoned in on everybody's shoulder . . . that's the way you do it. It's different. It doesn't cost much. You can make a little quilt and display them."[26]

Talking with Barbara Gillette suddenly made it clear how women were using this event to achieve their own ends. The pin-swapping, the autographing of the books, the signature collecting, the newsletter—all were activities unanticipated and unplanned for by the Museum and 3M. They were all forms of what anthropologists refer to as "ritual exchange"—a means by which members of a community affirm their relationship as theoretical equals in the community.[27] These activities also seemed to affirm the power of relationship and relationship as power. And like quiltmaking, each exchange created a context in which narratives might be generated: narratives that women use to frame themselves as people who are capable of making things happen; as people having the power to create and shape reality; narratives in which quilts might be the way to fund the long-awaited bathroom renovation; narratives in which—for one state winner—a "patriotic" quilt becomes "matriotic," a salute to mom for teaching you how to sew; and, most importantly, narratives in which quiltmaking is a means of gaining some control over your life.

This is not to say, of course, that none of the quilters who entered the contest or who attended the festival were using the festival for commercial purposes—to promote themselves as quilt teachers or

professional quilters. Business cards were also among the things women exchanged at the event. And this is not to say that quilters don't value or want other people to appreciate the aesthetic aspect of what they do. It is to emphasize that—for many women who quilt—quilts are much more than aesthetic objects exhibiting certain formal characteristics and/or design motifs. It is to emphasize that being a quilter can mean, not only being an artist/"patriotic" homemaker, but claiming an identity other than "homemaker," and feeling part of a community that extends beyond the borders of these United States. It is to emphasize that quiltmaking, more than making visually pleasing aesthetic objects for public consumption, can be both a way of centering the self and of affirming one's connection to people in the past, the present, and future.

Quilt festivals are public occasions when festival sponsors and participants negotiate and present the meaning of quilts and quiltmaking as a cultural activity. Embedded in quilt contest rules, how quilts are displayed in festival space, the order and time allocated to events on the festival program, and materials documenting the event are ways of thinking about quilts, quilters, and quiltmaking. In the case of the Great American Quilt Festival, festival sponsors—3M and the Museum of American Folk Art—seemed to present an idea of quilts as aesthetic objects to be hung on the wall and valued for the aesthetic qualities of their visual surface design and as documents of American history as it has been constructed by men. The image of the contemporary quilter promoted by festival sponsors seemed confused. On the one hand, she is an artist who makes art to sell; on the other hand, she is a patriotic homemaker who is a compliant consumer of 3M's products and the required festival theme. Contest rules seemed to promote a notion of quiltmaking as something people do, working by themselves, to express their patriotism. The festival's focus on quilts as patriotic documents of American history seemed to imply that quiltmaking is often a patriotic activity.

Through the stories they told and the forms of ritual exchange they engaged in at the festival, festival-goers seemed to articulate a different way of thinking about quilts, quilters, and quiltmaking as a cultural activity. They seemed to value quilts not only as art, but as art connected to life, art that is to be touched as well as seen, art you

can sleep under, art that is about the power of relationship and relationship as power. Contest-winning quilters who'd made "patriotic" quilts discussed their work less in terms of patriotism and more in terms of their personal lives. The image of the quilter that festival-goers seemed to project was one of a woman seeking to exert some control over her life, who lives by an ethic of sharing and caring, and who—as a quilter—lays claim to an identity that is in some sense larger than that of the patriotic housewife. Quiltmaking, for these women, seems to function in different ways in different contexts. Quilting alone can be a form of meditation. Quilting with other people can be a way of experiencing a sense of community that transcends national borders.

Notes and References

1. Some variation of this quotation appeared in all promotional materials sent out by the Museum of American Folk Art.
2. "He mixes folk art and big business," *Minneapolis Star & Tribune*, 4 April 1985.
3. U. S. Census Bureau statistics for 1986 indicate that the median household income was $24, 897; the median earnings for all working women was $10,016; and the median earnings for all working men was $18,782.
4. All subsequent references to the contest rules are quoted from the official entry form I received in the mail. A copy of the official entry form is on record in the public relations files of the Museum of American Folk Art.
5. Barbara A. Babcock, "The Lady's In Trouble: A Feminist Re-Vision of Liberty, Her Progeny and Performances," a paper presented at the 1987 Annual Meeting of the American Folklore Society, Albuquerque, New Mexico, October 21–25, 1987.
6. Bonnie Leman, "The Needle's Eye," *Quilter's Newsletter Magazine* 177 (November/December 1985): 4.
7. Robert Bishop, "Introduction," *All Flags Flying: American Patriotic Quilts as Expressions of Liberty*, Robert Bishop and Carter Houck, eds. (New York: E. P. Dutton in association with the Museum of American Folk Art, 1986), 1.
8. There was one painting of a poster in the exhibit—number eighty-seven in Fox's *Liberties with Liberty*—that depicted a man dressed as the female symbol of liberty.

9. Interview with Robert Bishop, Museum of American Folk Art, New York, New York, 15 July 1987.
10. Nancy Jo Fox, "Liberties with Liberty: The Changing of an American Symbol," *Clarion* (Winter 1986): 39.
11. Ibid.
12. The terms "folk" and "folklore" were invented in the mid-nineteenth century by British antiquaries and German philologists to describe the people and culture of the lower classes—mostly peasants—whose expressive and material cultures were fast being transformed by the industrial revolution. While art institutions today might define "folk art" as the cultural artifacts of people who are untrained in and/or unfamiliar with the conventions of western "high art" tradition, this notion of "folk art" simply masks the fact that access to the knowledge of these conventions was and continues to be largely a matter of class. Hence, to classify all women needleworkers as "folk" and all women's needlework as "folk art" obscures the fact that women needleworkers in different classes use needlework in different ways and in different contexts. Some women needleworkers in the past may very well have been familiar with and attempted to use/manipulate the conventions of the "high art" tradition; some women may have been manipulated by these conventions. In other words, "folk art" is a politically charged term that is presented by many cultural institutions as politically neutral. It is a term that often muddies rather than clarifies the socio-historical and political dimensions of the material culture produced by people of subordinate classes, races, and gender. For further discussion of these issues see: Charles Keil, "Who Needs the Folk?" *Journal of the Folklore Institute*, 15: 3 (September-December 1978): 263–69.
13. Nancy Jo Fox, *Liberties with Liberty: The Fascinating History of America's Proudest Symbol* (New York: E. P. Dutton in association with the Museum of American Folk Art), 70.
14. Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984), 30.
15. Fox, "Liberties with Liberty: the Changing of an American Symbol," 39.
16. Fox, *Liberties with Liberty*, 16.
17. The allocation of time to different events can be seen on the official festival program of events, a copy of which is on file at the Museum of American Folk Art.

18. Bishop and Houck, *All Flags Flying,* 18.
19. I realize that the several interpretations I offer of the mirror lettering on the quilt seem farfetched. Some readers may think I'm reading too much into the work, or attributing too sophisticated an intention to the quilter. But I do this intentionally in order to model a way of thinking about quilts that is playfully bold in its attempt to imagine why a woman might have made a quilt a particular way in a specific social context. I do not offer these interpretations of the mirror writing as definitive or even likely. I simply present them as possible interpretations that I—as a quilter who thinks of quiltmaking as a way of acting in the world—can imagine. Sally Garoutte, in editing this paper, also suggested that perhaps the author of the caption was working with a reversed photo and not the quilt itself, in which case the caption writer's comments as well as mine regarding the mirror writing would be irrelevant.
20. Bishop and Houck, 32.
21. Interview with Barbara Thurman Butler, the Great American Quilt Festival, New York, New York, 23 April 1986.
22. Interview with Anita Murphy, the Great American Quilt Festival, New York, New York, 23 April 1986.
23. Interview with Robert Bishop, Museum of American Folk Art, New York, New York, 15 July 1986.
24. Interview with Ione Bissonnette, the Great American Quilt Festival, New York, New York, 23 April 1986.
25. Interview with Ruth Carol Coombe, the Great American Quilt Festival, New York, New York, 26 April 1986.
26. Interview with Barbara Gillette, the Great American Quilt Festival, New York, New York, 27 April 1987.
27. Alessandro Falassi, "Festival: Definition and Morphology," in *Time Out of Time: Essays on the Festival,* ed. Alessandro Falassi (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987), 5.

Yo-Yo or Bed-of-Roses Quilts: Nineteenth-Century Origins

Virginia Gunn

What prompts people to make yo-yo quilts? Why do we call them quilts when they are not quilted? Most of us would probably agree with the anonymous writer in the September 1879 issue of *Art Amateur* that "a quilt means, properly speaking, something quilted — i.e., wadded and sewn down."[1] Historically the term "bedquilt" has sometimes been used to describe a bed-size decorative work that cannot really be classified as a true quilt. The embroidered crazy quilt is a case in point. The familiar yo-yo quilt, so-named during the yo-yo craze of the early 1930s, is another example.

This research project explores relationships between fashionable ornamental fancy-work techniques and quiltmaking by tracing the evolution of the yo-yo or bed-of-roses "quilt," a type of bedcovering usually called a quilt even though it is not a three-layered quilted textile. For the purposes of this paper, the yo-yo technique refers to making circular motifs by cutting fabric circles, turning under the edge of each with a small running stitch, and drawing up the stitching to create a two-layered disk with a small hole in the center of the top layer. These disks or wheels are usually joined with an overhand stitch to form a lacy fabric of circular motifs. They can also be stitched to a background fabric for a textured effect in applique.

In the 1930s this technique was usually carried out in a variety of small calico prints. (Figure 1.) The commercialization of quilting and the widespread distribution of pattern books, kits, templates, and fabric assortments shaped the yo-yo quilt into a ubiquitous stereotype

Virginia Gunn, 819 Quinby Avenue, Wooster OH 44691

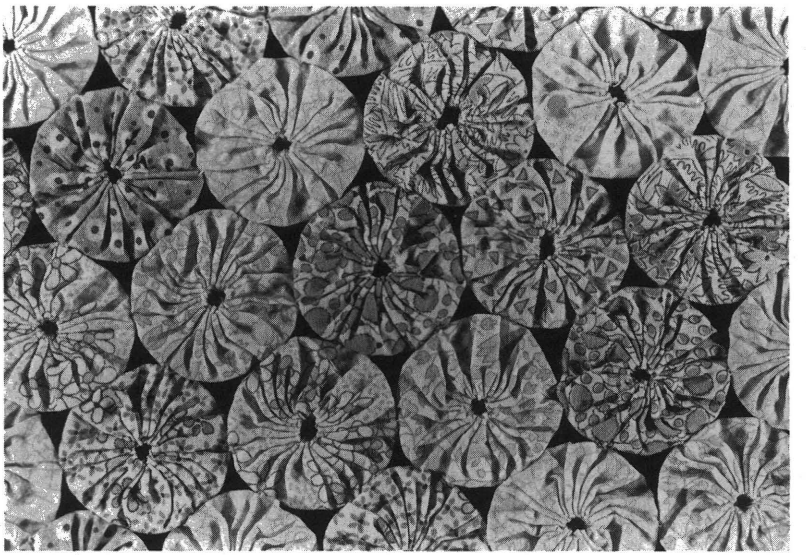


Figure 1. Small yo-yo circles of cotton print fabric form this diamond-shaped centerpiece made in the 1930s. Author's collection. Photograph by Joe Benes.

that has led people to believe that if you have seen one yo-yo quilt, you have seen them all. However, analysis of data from women's periodicals, photographs, and artifacts indicates that this technique had early-nineteenth-century roots. Several variations and interpretations developed over a century of time.

In the early-nineteenth century, dressmakers often manipulated fabric to make creative self-trims for garments. An elegant silk Spencer jacket from the 1820s in the collection of the University of Akron has six variations of self-fabric trim.[2] As white cotton fabric, braids, tapes, and threads became widely available, seamstresses creatively used them to fashion new types of trims and laces. In addition to making knitted, crocheted, and tatted laces, they formed laces and trims by folding white cotton fabric, tapes, or braids. A pair of drawers in my collection, probably made in the 1830s, features an insertion of tape lace on each leg. The maker folded flat tape into points to give a rickrack effect and then inserted this trim into each

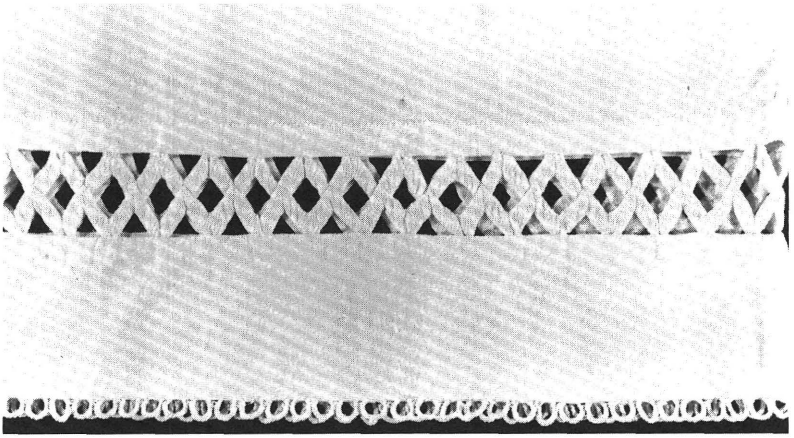


Figure 2. This photograph shows the folded trim inserted in the legs of a pair of handmade drawers, probably made in the 1830s. The insertion is made from flat white cotton tape folded to form points. Author's collection. Photograph by Joe Benes.

leg of the drawers for decoration. (Figure 2.) The Moravian Museum at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania owns a child's dress with the yoke and neckline highlighted with insertion formed from circular fabric motifs.[3] These fabric or tape lace insertions continued to be made and used for decades. The September 1857 issue of *Godey's Lady's Book* discusses making trimmings for children's clothing and states that tape work

> is quickly made, and forms a neat and useful trimming for drawers, &c. The tape . . . is folded to form a succession of vandykes; and at every fold a stitch is taken to secure it. Two or more rows are sewed together at the points. Sometimes wheels are made in this way; and, after having a fancy stitch worked on each they are united together. The former sort of pattern is, however, the prettiest.[4]

By employing such techniques, fashion-conscious women on limited budgets had alternatives to the expensive lace trims and insertions appearing on the garments and household textiles of the wealthy.

In the 1850s, French fashion leaders, eager to promote the French luxury industries, used lace fabrics for elegant dresses, shawls, curtains, and household textiles. The Empress Eugenie, in her flounced lace skirts, helped set the fashionable ideal.[5] The highly desirable traditional hand-made needle and bobbin laces became prohibitively expensive to all but the well-to-do. Even *Scientific American* quoted an English article stating that in 1859 "the demand for rich laces is constantly increasing, outrunning the supply, thus appreciating the prices; and consequently the genuine article can only be worn by the wealthy."[6]

By the early 1860s American ladies' magazines offered needlework patterns for lacy fabrics, as well as insertion, formed from tape work, or a combination of tape work and muslin cutwork. These appear to be time-consuming but economical substitutes for lace fabrics imported from the Continent. For example, the May 1861 issue of *Peterson's Magazine* carried directions for a "sofa-pillow in muslin and tape" by English needleworker Mrs. Warren. The identical pattern appears as a "patchwork" design in the December issue of *Godey's Lady's Book*.[7] Instructions for creating a tape and muslin cutwork fabric also appear in the February 1861 issue of *Frank Leslie's Monthly Magazine*. The editors consider the design suitable for either a "tidy, bed quilt or toilet cover."[8] The November 1861 issue of *Leslie's* contains an engraved illustration for a "cake basket doyley, in tapework." Flat tape is gathered to form rounds. The centers of the rounds are filled with wheelspokes worked in buttonhole embroidery stitches. The rounds are grouped to form designs. *Leslie's* editor notes that this "style of work is susceptible of many other variations" and could be used for "doyleys, tidies and many other purposes." She also states that "we have had tapework trimmings so long, it is almost strange that only quite recently has the same material been employed for other ornamental articles."[9] In addition to being economical, crocheted, tape, and fabric laces had the further advantage of being practical, sturdy, and more easily cared for than traditional laces. The labor of washing fine lace was considered an art and "when very fine, or the pattern intricate, an entire day will be spent upon one yard of lace."[10]

In the mid-nineteenth century full-blown sculptural moss roses

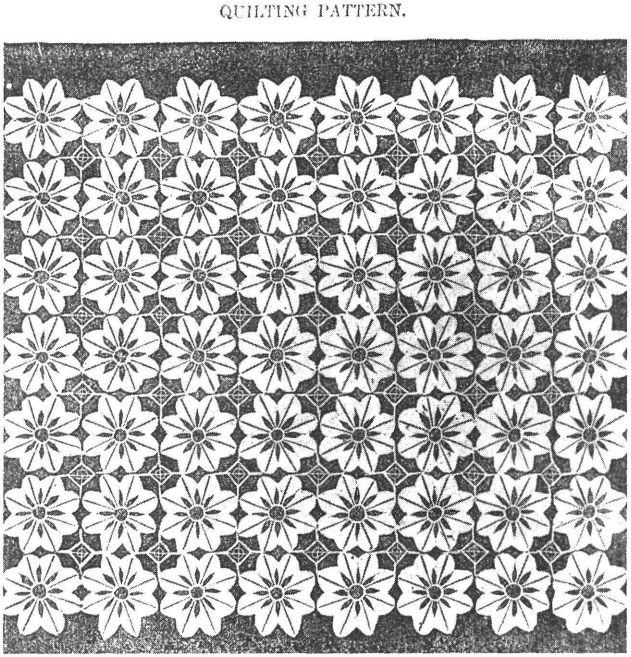


Figure 3. This engraving entitled "quilting pattern" appeared in the August 1865 issue of *Godey's Lady's Book*. No directions were given but it looks like a lacy fabric formed by gathering tape, serpentine braid, or fabric into rosettes which are joined and then decorated with embroidery stitches.

and camellias reigned as the favored flower symbols. They appeared in needlework and ornamental work and as decoration on costume.[11] Fabrics or accessories made from repeated circle designs had high appeal in the 1860s. Abstract circular needlework motifs could be said to resemble roses. For example, in the July 1859 issue of *Peterson's* needlework editor Jane Weaver offers a "tape insertion: rose pattern."[12] The popular circular motifs could be formed in a variety of ways. The October 1857 issue of *Godey's* contains an engraving of a "tatting tidy" made by joined circular tatted motifs. The April 1864 issue of *Godey's* illustrates a "tidy in crochet" and the June 1865 issue features a fringed "crochet antimacassar," both formed by joining circular crocheted motifs.[13] In October 1858 *Godey's* republished the

English template pattern of repeated oval shapes shown in 1850, calling it a "design for quilting." They featured the same pattern again in September 1861 as "patchwork."[14]

Circular motifs could be combined to make small decorative accessories or larger bedcoverings, often referred to as quilts. The July 1865 issue of *Godey's* gives a circular crochet pattern suitable for a "sofa pillow, or a baby's cot quilt."[15] A lacy "quilting pattern," probably copied from an English publication, appears in the August 1865 issue of *Godey's Lady's Book.*[16] (Figure 3.) Visual interpretation of the pattern, for which no directions are given, suggests a technique involving rosettes made from tape or Vandyke braid (rickrack) with embroidery in the open spaces. Today it may seem that the editors of *Godey's* mislabeled the engraving and offered what appears to be a tape work pattern under the title "quilting pattern" in this August 1865 issue. It is likely, however, that the editors perceived this as an appropriate design for a quilt.

Women have always prized quilts and bedcoverings, looking upon them as ambitious and worthy projects. Small decorative items meet fashion needs, but larger bedcoverings have heirloom qualities. As the editor of *Peterson's* noted in 1891:

> few women who are genuinely fond of the needle get through their lives without a desire to execute some large piece of work that will be appreciated and keep in good condition long after their own busy fingers are at rest. This ambition, naturally enough, takes different forms with different people. Some confine their energies to the production of a patchwork quilt, others aim at crochet, others at knitting.[17]

Nineteenth-century women sometimes employed the term "quilt" generically to include any beautifully designed and crafted bedcovering, ornamental as well as practical. They seemed aware of the contradictions in terminology and classification of techniques which still plague us today, but they sometimes used the term "quilt" fairly loosely. For example, the Ohio State Fair had categories for both fancy-worked quilts and knitted quilts as well as patchwork, white, worsted, and silk quilts during the 1870s.[18]

Quilts also defied easy classification because they contained both

practical and ornamental features and therefore crossed the dividing line between plain work and fancy work used when classifying needlework in the nineteenth century. Women utilized the running stitch, back stitch, hemming stitch, and overhand stitch essential to the "plain work" of mending and making garments and household textiles in the patchwork, applique, and quilting processes. In the 1870s, needlework author S. Annie Frost felt that silk and cotton quilts should probably be categorized "more under the head of plain than fancy needlework."[19] However, Frost included the topic of patchwork in her *Ladies' Guide to Needle Work and Embroidery* for she also knew that some quilts fell within the realm of fancy-work definitions.

Victorian "ladies" with leisure time practiced a variety of decorative fancy-work and ornamental work. They earned admiration by creating hand-made touches for their homes. Since non-essential fancy work had higher status than plain work, women understandably chose to include various fashionable techniques into large bedcoverings which they sometimes called quilts. The worktable editor of *Godey's* undoubtedly knew that tape-work lace techniques would be acceptable alternatives to traditional quilting patterns for some of the magazine's readers.

To date, I have not found specific printed mid-nineteenth-century directions for making the circular motifs using the yo-yo fabric technique instead of gathered tape methods. However, it seems safe to assume that some women used this method of forming the rosettes for the lacy fabrics they saw illustrated in periodicals because they added gathered fabric "roses" or flowers to some of the traditional appliqued quilts made at this time.[20] When *Peterson's Magazine* gave clearly illustrated directions for making the so-called yo-yo technique in December 1885, author Helen Marion Burnside stated that the technique is "now but rarely seen, though once very popular."[21]

In the decades following the Civil War, repeated circular motifs declined somewhat in popularity as stylish designs began to reflect a combination of English aesthetic and Japanese asymmetrical influences. However the Art Needlework/Decorative Art Movement, set into momentum by the 1876 Centennial Exhibition, helped revive

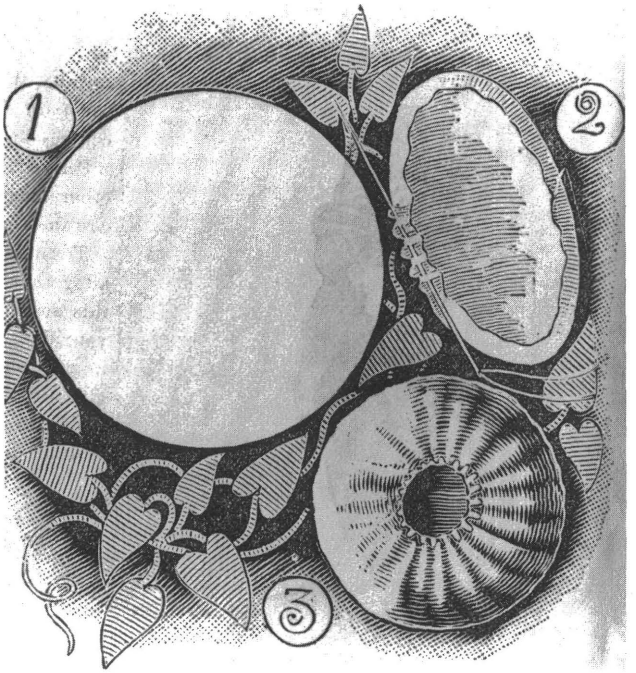


Figure 4. This engraved illustration of the "best way" to form fabric disks accompanied an article "New Fancy-Work for Ladies" by Helen Marion Burnside in the December 1885 issue of *Peterson's Magazine*.

interest in crafts, including lace-making. In the 1880s, middle-class women consumed large amounts of machine-made lace to trim household textiles and clothing. The old hand-made needlework laces remained "too costly and elaborate" for most people, but the perfection of machine-made lace in dress widths put lace clothes and accessories within the price range of more women. Artistically-inclined women, seeking alternatives to mass-produced laces, again made laces with tape work, darned net, drawn work, crochet, macrame, and other fairly quick techniques.[22]

The *Art Amateur* noted that patterns of old Venetian, rose, raised, or bone point laces could provide inspiration for modern hand-made laces, but "these laces must not be merely imitated." Instead they

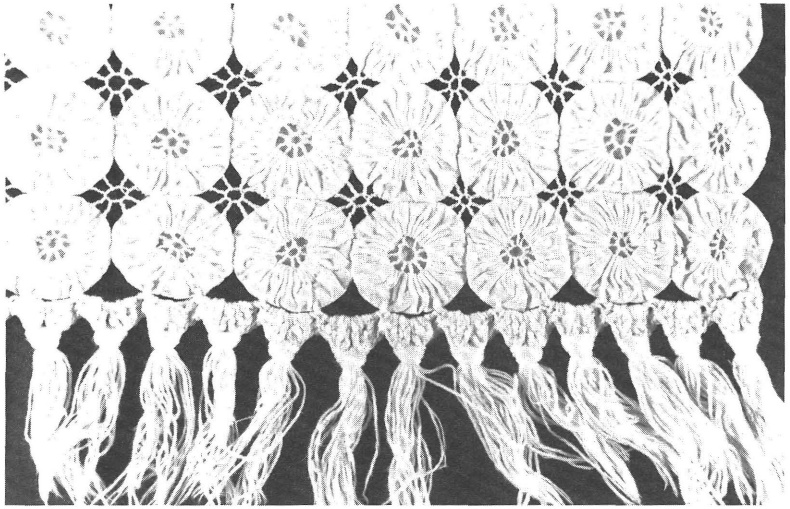
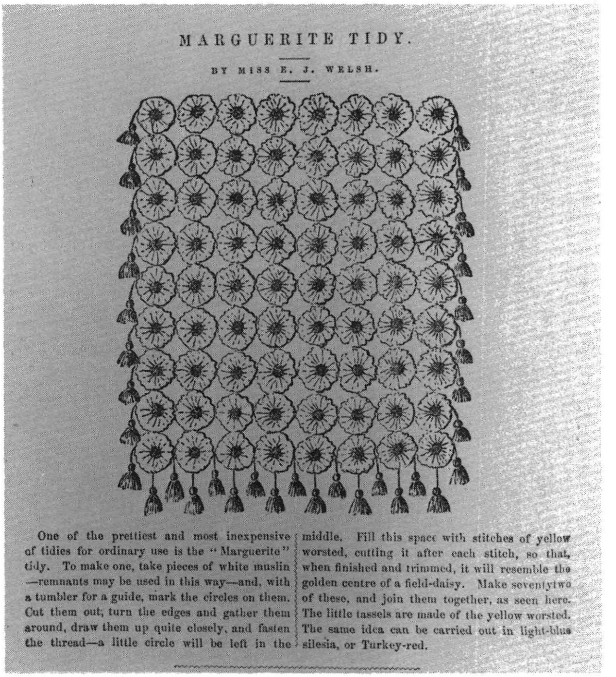


Figure 5. This shows a portion of a tablescarf, probably made in the 1880s, formed from fabric disks made and decorated in the manner suggested in Burnside's December 1885 article in *Peterson's Magazine*. Author's collection. Photograph by Joe Benes.

should be carefully studied and then adapted, considerably enlarged, and simplified. Modern lace work "should be easy—not a monument of patient industry, into which as much work as possible is put, nor a sampler of various stitches and curious devices, but a clear and facile carrying out of the original idea, easy to be comprehended, and producing a good effect at a moderate distance."[23]

The yo-yo technique, reintroduced by Burnside in the December 1885 *Peterson's* as a "new fancy-work for ladies," certainly met these qualifications for desirable modern lace work. The simple and rather large design produced a good effect at a distance and the directions were easy to comprehend and execute. The engraved diagrams for the unnamed fancy-work technique clearly illustrate the yo-yo method of gathering fabric circles to form flat disks that could be "so multiplied as to make a large ottoman-cover, or even a counterpane, down to an antimacassar."[24] (Figure 4.) Surviving textiles and photographs suggest that some women followed Burnside's directions for making


MARGUERITE TIDY.

BY MISS E. J. WELSH.

One of the prettiest and most inexpensive of tidies for ordinary use is the "Marguerite" tidy. To make one, take pieces of white muslin —remnants may be used in this way—and, with a tumbler for a guide, mark the circles on them. Cut them out, turn the edges and gather them around, draw them up quite closely, and fasten the thread—a little circle will be left in the middle. Fill this space with stitches of yellow worsted, cutting it after each stitch, so that, when finished and trimmed, it will resemble the golden centre of a field-daisy. Make seventy-two of these, and join them together, as seen here. The little tassels are made of the yellow worsted. The same idea can be carried out in light-blue silesia, or Turkey-red.

Figure 6. This engraving of a "marguerite tidy" appeared in the January 1888 issue of *Peterson's Magazine*. The center spaces of the gathered white muslin circles are filled with yellow worsted stitches to "resemble the golden centre of a field-daisy."

this type of lace work. (Figure 5.) Burnside's references to parish districts, village cottages, and white calico suggest an English origin for her article. She tells of discovering the technique on an antimacassar owned by a lady who had received it as a gift from an "old inhabitant" of a cottage in the village. The use of white calico scraps enriched by lacy stitching created a "rich effect" from a distance and Burnside described it as "giving the idea of raised white roses on lace."[25]

However, by the 1880s, lilies, sunflowers, and daisies had displaced roses as popular symbolic flowers. Therefore, in the January 1888 issue of *Peterson's Magazine* the circular yo-yo technique is said to resemble marguerites or field-daisies rather than roses. The little

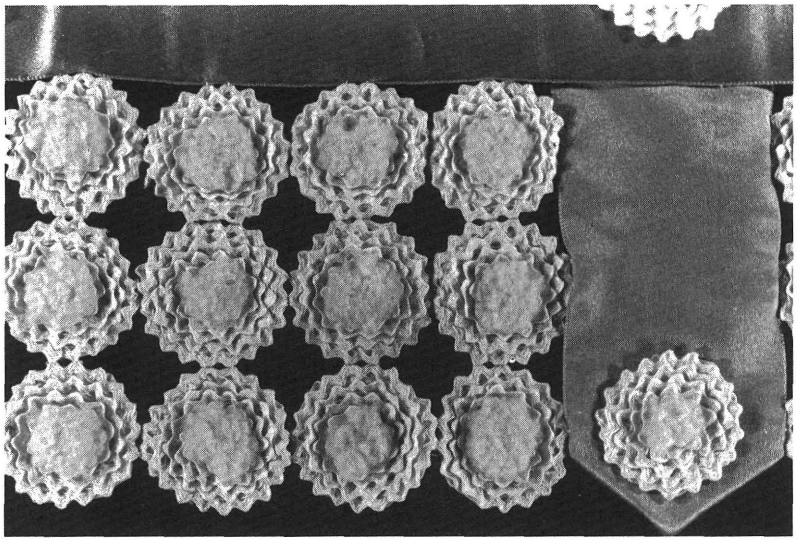


Figure 7. The daisies in this small decorative centerpiece, probably made in the 1890s, are formed from white rickrack attached to muslin circles. They have yellow worsted centers. The flowers are arranged around red satin ribbon. Author's collection. Photograph by Joe Benes.

gathered-fabric disks in Miss E. J. Welsh's "Marguerite tidy" pattern have center fillings of yellow worsted yarn to enhance the daisy effect.[26] (Figure 6.) In *Needle-craft: Artistic and Practical*, the editors of Butterick report that "among pretty specimens of home fancy-work the tidy known as 'The Marguerite' is particularly noticeable."[27]

In the 1880s, as in the 1860s, there were alternative methods for making the desirable circular flower shapes used in novelty lace work. Butterick's directions call for making the little daisies from gathered serpentine braid (rickrack) rather than fabric circles. If the points of rosettes were joined thoroughly and substantially, Butterick felt the finished article could be "pretty roughly treated."[28] Some women combined rosettes with colored silk ribbon to form novel lace effects.[29] (Figure 7.) Butterick's book also features a darned net tidy decorated with rosettes formed from flat linen braid. The editors feel these motifs are "much more easily made than those called 'daisy'

rosettes, and are fully as pretty in effect."[30]

English needlework authors Sophia Frances Anne Caulfeild and Blanche C. Saward illustrate a tape work rosette in their 1882 *Dictionary of Needlework*. They state that tape work is "a modern work." Their rosettes are formed by gathering broad or binding tape into circles and joining these with crochet or tatting to form "antimacassars, mats, or other drawing-room ornaments."[31] Saward and Caulfeild state that rosettes can also be made entirely of tape, or from Vandyke braid. The open portions between rosettes can be filled in with embroidered lace stitches.

In the late-nineteenth century, women continued to experiment with manipulating fabric. Biscuit or puff quilts could be made by pleating a larger square to a foundation square and adding stuffing to create a raised effect. Women found imaginative uses for the yo-yo technique. An 1890s child's wool comforter in my collection features large yo-yo motifs applied to the background squares for an inexpensive textured effect.

In the early-twentieth century, women became more open about their use of beauty aids and make-up. Magazines suggested utilizing the yo-yo technique to make silk powder bags for novel little Christmas gifts or bazaar items. Directions called for turning under the edge of a circle of embroidered silk and stitching to form a casing for a ribbon that would draw the circle into a tiny bag. Lined with chamois, the small bag was "fitted with a little powder puff."[32] Not only did it hold a little puff, but it also resembled a puff or small circular flower.

In the 1910s and 1920s exotic boudoir settings, inspired by the Russian Ballet's production of Scheherazade in Paris, vied with "colonial revival" as the favored bedroom decoration theme. Women who wished to create a French boudoir effect could gather small circles of ribbon or of pastel taffeta or organdy into little puffs and use them to decorate "boudoir pillows."[33] When the little pastel puffs were lined up in traditionally symmetrical rows, they reminded women of the French "bon-bon" fondant candies lined up in a box. Naming this old technique a "bon-bon" technique gave it new chic qualities.[34]

Women who preferred old-fashioned decor appliqued the little puffs to background fabrics to form "colonial" designs. Favorites included colonial baskets of flowers formed from yo-yo or flower puffs

and colonial ladies in gardens of tiny yo-yo flowers.[35] These motifs often appear on decorative pillows. However, some women incorporated yo-yo flowers into their traditional quilts, just as they had done in the nineteenth century. For example, Cora Ellen Hoag Keeler of Bentonville, Arkansas, made a striking **Lone Star** variation quilt. She surrounded her pink, green, and white lone star center with an elaborate inner border of appliqued yo-yo flowers and leaves.[36]

The interest in colonial revival decor helped to revive interest in making cotton patchwork and appliqued quilts. In the 1930s, quilt entrepreneurs, eager to take advantage of this new fashion, exploited the yo-yo technique in several ways. The Home Art Company of Chicago offered kits for "flower puff" quilt blocks, for a flower puff pillow, for a lace flower quilt, and for a geranium bedspread. All the flowers were formed of small circular yo-yo puffs attached to the blocks or whole-cloth muslin backgrounds. The kits contained stamped blocks, bedspread or quilt backgrounds, cut circles for the puffs, and all necessary patches or fabrics for completing the flower puff quilt block or quilt.[37]

While women used yo-yo puffs for appliqued flowers on quilts, they also formed quilts of circular disks joined in the traditional lacy manner. By 1930, the yo-yo technique was sometimes introduced as a colonial heirloom pattern. In the Spring 1932 issue of *McCall's Decorative Arts and Needlework*, the editors offered instructions for "another old-time quilt revival."[38] The disk-shaped design of rosettes looks very similar to the one *Peterson's* offered in 1885, but in this case the disks are formed from bias strips of unbleached muslin folded and shirred to form flat wheels. The centers of the wheels are filled with yellow French knots for a flower effect. *McCall's* editors suggest that calicos can be substituted for the muslin. The Winter 1932–1933 issue of *McCall's Needlework* offers directions for a pillow of calico or gingham circles and also for curtain tie-backs featuring flowers formed from gathered disks with French knot centers added. *McCall's* editors suggest tracing around a water glass to get a circle pattern.[39]

In 1932, the W. L. M. Company, Inc., of St. Louis, Missouri, issued "Grandmother Clark's Accurately Cut Out Fibre Diagrams" which included a four-inch circular cardboard disk template to be used for a "yo-yo, puff or bed of roses quilt."[40] The Virginia Snow

Studios in Elgin, Illinois, included the technique in their 1930s catalogs featuring "Grandma Dexter's" applique and patchwork designs. They offered kits for pillows to be made in white cambric combined with fancy prints or plain colored lawns. They noted that what they called a "yo-yo" pillow could also be called a "colonial heirloom" or "powder puff" pillow.[41] By the end of the 1930s, the term "yo-yo", the trademark for a popular disk-shaped toy manipulated by a cord, became the favorite name for this circular pattern.[42]

Louise Fowler Roote, who began drafting quilt patterns for *Capper's Weekly* in December 1927, includes a yo-yo quilt in her booklet *Kate's Blue Ribbon Quilts*, issued in response to reader queries for old patterns printed in Kate Marchbank's "Heart of the Home" column in the 1920s and 1930s. Roote remembers this design originating during the yo-yo craze of the early thirties.[43] While Roote offers no alternative name for this design, she does suggest using odds and ends from the scrap bag and tacking a small yellow disk inside the fabric circle before drawing it up to form a bright plain center that will give the yo-yo quilt a flower appearance.

While modern women liked the catchy yo-yo label, they continued to think of the little calico circles as flowers, sometimes arranging them between solid color rosettes for a "flower garden" effect. The majority of 1930s yo-yo quilts incorporate scraps of the inexpensive calico prints women also used for dresses. The commercialization of quiltmaking encouraged similar interpretations of yo-yo quilts across the country. Gradually most people forgot about the historical roots of the yo-yo quilt and discarded alternative names for this technique.

Needlework techniques move in and out of fashion, but are rarely completely forgotten. Instead, they simmer on the back burner until such times as they seem appropriate ways to interpret stylish designs. For over a century, the yo-yo technique enjoyed periods of popularity. Depending on the era, it could resemble a rose, a marguerite or daisy, a flower puff, a powder puff, a bon-bon, or a yo-yo. Women used it on everything from curtain tie-backs, to table scarves, to bedcoverings.

Material culture artifacts, including the yo-yo quilt, mirror culture. An analysis of the "visible proofs" of the yo-yo quilt roots offer us insights into the complexities of quiltmaking. This case study suggests that there may often be a close relationship between the

fashionable ornamental techniques featured in women's periodicals and the methods women select to incorporate in their quiltmaking projects. It also demonstrates that there has been a long tradition of making "quilts" that are not, "properly speaking, something quilted."[44]

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4. "How to Cut and Contrive Children's Clothes," *Godey's Lady's Book* (September 1857): 267.
5. Patricia Wardle, *Victorian Lace* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1969), 44, 50–51.
6. "Laces and Embroideries," *Scientific American* (August 20, 1859): 20. This article was taken from *Sharpe's London Magazine*.
7. Mrs. Warren, "For a Sofa-Pillow in Muslin and Tape," *Peterson's Magazine* (May 1861): 423; "Patchwork," *Godey's Lady's Book* (December 1861): 518.
8. "Tidy, Bed Quilt or Toilet Cover," *Frank Leslie's Monthly Magazine* (February 1861): 182, 192.
9. "Cake Basket Doyley, In Tapework," *Frank Leslie's Monthly Magazine* (November 1861): 465, 470–71.
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12. Mrs. Jane Weaver, "Tape Insertion: Rose Pattern," *Peterson's Magazine* (July 1859): 63–64.

13. "Tatting Tidy," *Godey's Lady's Book* (October 1857): unnumbered page with blue engraving; "A Tidy in Crochet," *Godey's Lady's Book* (April 1864): unnumbered page with blue engraving; "Crochet Antimacassar," *Godey's Lady's Book* (June 1865): 543–44, plate printed in blue in front.
14. "Design for Quilting," *Godey's Lady's Book* (October 1858): 361; "Patchwork," *Godey's Lady's Book* (September 1861): 187; "Patchwork–No. 7," *Godey's Lady's Book* (April 1850): 285.
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16. "Quilting Pattern," *Godey's Lady's Book* (August 1865): 168.
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18. For example, see *Thirtieth Annual Report of the Ohio State Board of Agriculture...for the Year 1875* (Columbus: Nevins & Myers, State Printers, 1876), 35–36.
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21. Helen Marion Burnside, "New Fancy-Work for Ladies," *Peterson's Magazine* (December 1885): 546.
22. Wardle, 39–40.
23. "Decorative Lace Work," *Art Amateur* (August 1880): 79.
24. Burnside, 546–47.
25. Ibid.
26. Miss E. J. Welsh, "Maguerite Tidy," *Peterson's Magazine* (January 1888): 92.
27. "Marguerite Tidy and Sections Composing It" in *Needle-Craft: Artistic and Practical* (New York: Butterick Publishing Co., 1889), 244, 246–47.
28. Ibid., 247.
29. See for example: Jennie C. Kratt, "Novel and Pretty Silk Lace," *American Agriculturist* (July 17, 1897): 70. The wheels in this lace are crocheted.

30. "Tidy of Darned Net and Braid Rosettes" in *Needle-Craft: Artistic and Practical*, 85–88, esp. 88.
31. Sophia Frances Anne Caulfeild and Blanche C. Saward, *The Dictionary of Needlework* (New York: Arno Press, 1972, a facsimile of the 1882 edition), 474.
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33. I have a pastel organdy "bon-bon" boudoir pillow in my collection. Thanks to Bets Ramsey for sharing a triangular-shaped green organdy pillow covered with gathered rosettes in small prints. For boudoir pillows and accessories trimmed with ribbon "wheel fancies" see *The Ribbon Art Book I*, no. 1 (New York: Ribbon Art Publishing Co., Spring 1923): 44, 46.
34. The Orlofskys state that yo-yo spreads are sometimes called bon-bon spreads. See Patsy and Myron Orlofsky, *Quilts in America* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974), 225–226.
35. See for example: Thomas K. Woodard and Blanche Greenstein, *Crib Quilts and Other Small Wonders* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1981), Plate 144, 77. Thanks to Jeannette Lasansky for sharing her yo-yo colonial basket pillow.
36. This quilt is illustrated in Marianne Woods, *Stitches in Time: A Legacy of Ozark Quilts* (Rogers, Arkansas: Rogers Historical Museum, 1986), 31. Thanks to Merikay Waldvogel for sharing photographs of Tennesee quilt tops, ca. 1930, featuring yo-yo flowers in the appliqued motifs.
37. "Sweet Memories Stay with Handmade Quilts—Latest Flower Puff Designs," in *10th Anniversary Stamped Goods Sale—Book 15* (Chicago: Home Art Co., 1934), 8. This is an art needlework catalog.
38. "Another Old-Time Quilt Revival," in *McCall's Decorative Arts and Needlework* (Spring 1932): 53.
39. "Christmas Gifts—No. 16, Pillow of Calico Circles and No. 17, Kitchen Curtain Tie-backs" in *McCall's Needlework* (Winter 1932–1933): 17, 50, 54.
40. "Cutting Diagram 'B'," in *Grandmother Clark's Accurately Cut Out Fibre Diagrams*, (St. Louis: W. L. M. Clark, 1932). This is a set of eight cardboard templates for making quilt designs.
41. "Yo-Yo Pillows" and "Colonial Heirloom Pillow" in *Grandma Dexter Applique and Patchwork Designs—Book No. 36A*, (Elgin, Ill.: Virginia Snow Studios, n.d.), unnumbered page and 21; "Heirloom Pillow," in *Grandma Dexter New Applique and Patchwork Designs—Book No. 36 B*, (Elgin, Ill.: Virginia Snow Studios, n.d.), 20.

42. The twentieth-century craze for yo-yos was said to have been started in Chicago by Donald F. Duncan in 1926. The yo-yo name is a trademark belonging to firms within the Dunbee Combex Marx Group. Their version was first marketed in the United States by Louis Marx in 1929. See Adrian Room, *Dictionary of Trade Name Origins* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), 191. The toy is actually a very old one. See D. W. Gould, *The Top: Universal Toy, Enduring Pastime* (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1973), 98–109.
43. Louise Fowler Roote, "The Yo-Yo Quilt," *Kate's Blue Ribbon Quilts* (n. p.: Capper's Weekly, n.d.), 16.
44. "Objects for Needlework Decoration," *Art Amateur* (September 1879): 86. This material culture case study uses "visible proofs" to attempt to understand relations between human ideas and design over time. For further discussion of other possibilities see Simon J. Bronner, "'Visible Proofs': Material Culture Study in American Folkloristics," *American Quarterly* 35 (1983): 316–338.

The North Carolina Quilt Project: Organization and Orchestration

Ruth Haislip Roberson

Between November 1985, and December 1986, the North Carolina Quilt Project documented more than 10,000 quilts. That number is not used as a way to measure the satisfaction we feel about our work. That number *is* important to us because it reflects the interest of the citizens of our state in quilt documentation.

This paper is an account of our experiences. It will not provide a formula into which others can plug people, documents, and dollars, to achieve a specific result. My hope is that as others read our story, they will think of ways in which our experiences can be shaped to their particular needs and resources.

Those of us who organized and orchestrated the North Carolina Quilt Project had a lot to learn. We learned and worked in the same way that quiltmakers have traditionally learned and worked. We admired what others had accomplished, and we learned specific techniques from them. Then we looked for ways to express our own creativity in response to our particular set of circumstances. And then we asked our friends to help us put it all together. This process worked well for us and I recommend it for others.

Origins and Design

The design for the North Carolina Quilt Project began in the fall of 1983 when the Forsyth Piecers and Quilters guild of Winston-Salem gave me a planning grant and asked me to look into the possibility of a quilt project similar to the Kentucky Quilt Project.

Ruth Haislip Roberson, 3406 Ogburn Court, Durham NC 27705

The charge did not require that a project be a result of the "looking into."

"North Carolina Country Quilts," an exhibition at the Ackland Art Museum in 1978 foreshadowed the North Carolina Quilt Project. That exhibition was the result of research by three students at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: Joyce Joines Newman and Laurel Horton in Folklore and Mary Ann Emmons in Anthropology. That research, focusing on quilting traditions in three areas of the state, was the first serious quilt documentation in North Carolina, and, as far as I have been able to determine, in the country. It has been a special pleasure for the North Carolina Quilt Project that both Joyce Newman and Laurel Horton have been involved with our work.

I asked four quiltmakers from different parts of the state to serve with me on a steering committee: Kay Clemens of Greenville, Kathy Sullivan of Raleigh, Sue McCarter of Charlotte, and Karen Pervier of Winston-Salem.

The exploration and planning of that group led to the organization of the North Carolina Quilt Project as a nonprofit corporation with tax-exempt status in early 1985. The steering committee then became the board of directors with the addition of Martha Battle to represent the North Carolina Museum of History and Annie Teich to represent the North Carolina Quilt Symposium, Inc. The steering committee obtained the support of these two groups.

The North Carolina Museum of History agreed to (1) allow a staff member, Martha Battle, to spend some of her work time with the project, (2) mount an exhibition of quilts from the project, and (3) store all the information we collected and allow it to be used for research.

The North Carolina Quilt Symposium, Inc., gave generous and crucial financial help early in our work. This group has had a large influence on the life of quiltmaking in North Carolina. Over the last nine years quiltmakers have come to the annual symposiums for workshops, lectures, exhibitions, and a great good time. Out of these experiences have come a strong network of quiltmakers across the state. All of the members of our board of directors have served on the board of the North Carolina Quilt Symposium, Inc., so there are close ties between the two organizations.

The Durham Arts Council provided office space for us in downtown Durham. Our staff included the director, a coordinator of quilt documentation days (Shirley Willis), and a documentation coordinator (Kathy Sullivan). Assisting Kathy with the huge job of organizing and filing information from the documentation days was Mary Scroggs.

Because our staff was limited and the response to our project was much greater than we had expected, the lines between our responsibilities blurred, and everybody pitched in to do what was needed. Shirley Willis also served as our office manager. For several months Anne Kimzey, a student in the folklore curriculum at the University of North Carolina, worked part-time with us. Volunteers from the Durham-Orange Quilters Guild and from the Piedmont Quilters Guild in Greensboro also worked with us in our office.

Scope and Limits

The excitement generated by the Kentucky Quilt Project has resulted in many efforts to document quilts in different states and regions. Each project limits the area, time span, and details of documentation in keeping with its goals.

As the steering committee of the North Carolina Quilt Project talked about goals, we decided that we wanted to know the kinds of quilts that had been made in our state over the years and the circumstances under which they had been made. We also wanted to learn about the lives of the quiltmakers as well as about the quilts.

We decided to gather information through a series of Quilt Documentation Days: days in various communities when we asked residents to bring in quilts to be documented. Our documentation was recorded on a three-page written form (consisting of a one-page interview with the quilt owner and two pages of a physical description of the quilt), a color slide, and a black-and-white print.

To get the broad picture of quiltmaking we wanted, we decided to document all kinds of quilts brought in, and in the order that they came in. To include quilts whose makers are still alive and could be interviewed, we chose 1976 as the cutoff date. We included quilts made in other states, planning to share that information in the future.

We planned that the information we collected would be used to produce a book and an exhibition. After use by the Project, the

information will be permanently stored at the North Carolina Museum of History in Raleigh. After guidelines for its use are set up, it will be available for research. Folklorists Laurel Horton, Joyce Newman, Daniel Patterson, and Terry Zug, were all helpful to us in making these decisions.

We decided on a statewide survey for two reasons. First, there is a strong network of quiltmakers in the state, with at least twenty-five guilds from the seashore to the mountains. We knew that those quiltmakers would be interested in the project and would want their parts of the state to be included. The involvement of the guilds would be crucial to our work.

Second, for a variety of reasons, there is a strong interest in quiltmaking in North Carolina. I have already mentioned "North Carolina Country Quilts" and the influence of the North Carolina Quilt Symposium, Inc. Georgia Bonesteel's "Lap Quilting" program on UNC-TV began in 1979 and has been from the very beginning an important influence in the life of quiltmaking in our state.

Another influence has been three quilting events at the National Humanities Center in the Research Triangle Park: "Bits of Fabric and Scraps of Time" in 1983, "Cold Night Beauties" in 1984, and "A Garden of Quilts" in 1985. Funded in part by the North Carolina Humanities Committee, these exhibitions and accompanying programs aimed to reflect the creative activity of quiltmaking in North Carolina, to present some aspects of the social and cultural history in which that creativity has taken place, and to generate discussions about the values and meanings of this activity which has been kept alive by generations of North Carolina women. Those events, attracted large and lively audiences. We learned that there are many levels on which people respond to quilts and quiltmaking.

Because North Carolina is a large state, we decided to conduct our survey by dividing the state into seven regions and asking a quiltmaker to serve as coordinator for each of those regions. The North Carolina Quilt Project owes a great debt of gratitude to those seven women: Hazel Lewis, Kay Bryant, Erma Kirkpatrick, LaVerne Domach, Sarah Woodring, Shirley Klennon, and Juanita Metcalf. As individuals, they are as different as women can be. As a group they are alike in their willingness to sign on for the unknown, their sense of responsibility,

their sensitivity in dealing with people, and their generosity.

The regional coordinator planned the documentation days that took place within her region, in cooperation with the project office in Durham. The board of directors set up procedures so that certain standards of quality and consistency would be maintained. We tried to write those procedures so that regional coordinators had as much freedom as possible in planning the days within her region.

We used a professional photographer and a trained documenter at each day. When a day was scheduled, the office in Durham arranged for a photographer and a documenter for that day. Each coordinator had a core of trained volunteers to work with her. Looking back, I marvel at that giant cooperative effort that resulted in seventy-five Quilt Documentation Days over a period of fourteen months. When the final history of the North Carolina Quilt Project is written, it will have to be recorded that the regional coordinators were the moving force behind that documentation.

Consultants

Our project got much good help from consultants. Consultants are great because they come in for a limited time, spend an intense time with your group, bombard you with information and ideas, then leave. Your group can absorb and process their presentations, and use any parts (or none) of their suggestions.

The first money spent with the grant from the Forsyth Piecers and Quilters was used to bring Katy Christopherson to North Carolina to talk with us about the possibility of a quilt project. Katy's vision combined with her experience was enormously helpful in the early stages of planning. Laurel Horton's training as a folklorist and her work in South Carolina helped us make some of the basic decisions about our goals and the scope and limits of our documentation. Anne Johnston, Arts Consultant, gave us valuable information about the organization and operation of arts groups.

Barbara Brackman spent two wonderful days with us. The workshop she did for us on dating quilts was especially useful, because we had already been through some Quilt Documentation Days and had specific questions. For that workshop we brought in our board of

directors, all of the regional coordinators, and some of the volunteers who had been working as documenters.

Fundraising

Fundraising is difficult and frustrating. Our earliest support came from guilds—the Forsyth Piecers and Quilters Guild who gave the initial grant "to look into the possibility," and the Greenville Quilters Guild who gave a large donation in the planning stages—and from the North Carolina Quilt Symposium, Inc. The Project is deeply grateful to the members of those groups who were willing to make donations while we were organizing and writing grants for other funding. Other guilds have given donations in varying amounts, some more than once.

Because we used folklorist guidelines, we have had good support from the Folklife section of our state Arts Council. We also had a grant from the Visual Arts section of the North Carolina Arts Council. Our largest grant came from the Folk Arts section of the National Endowment for the Arts. The Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation in North Carolina gave money to help match that grant.

We also have had donations from individuals. At Quilt Documentation Days we had forms explaining the Project and asking for donations in memory or in honor of quiltmakers. Sometimes there would be a way the audience could make a cash contribution. We did not push hard on donations at Quilt Documentation Days because we did not want to be misunderstood as charging for documentation.

Another source of individual donations has been from those working with the Project. They know first-hand the importance of our work. There is a special pleasure in donations that come from those who have already given great gifts of time and energy.

We had a good response to letters sent out for a specific purpose: the purchase of a computer. In December 1986, we wrote a short letter stating our needs and asking for donations. The letter was sent to individuals we thought would be interested, and we had a very high percentage of responses. I asked some friends who knew about our work to send out some of those letters, along with a personal note in support of the request. That way we had donations from some who might never have known about the Project otherwise.

We did not get any funding from businesses, although we did get some in-kind donations of furniture from Burroughs-Wellcome. The mechanics of dealing with the public response to our work kept us all so busy that there was little time for the concentration that is required for appealing to businesses. Fundraising is hard, long-term, and uncertain.

Suggestions

There are ways in which it seems that our experiences can be useful to other groups.

First, there are some basic decisions that will shape the work of a quilt project. How much information do you want about quilts? Will you document quiltmakers as well as quilts? How wide an area do you want to cover? What year will be your cutoff date? What will you do with the information you collect? Will it be used for a book? For an exhibition? Will it be available for research by others?

These questions should be carefully considered in light of the quiltmaking climate in which you are operating, the base of volunteer help available, and the level of fundraising you are willing to do. Once you decide on your basic goals, the following suggestions may be helpful.

Talk a lot about what you want to do. Talk with the group interested in the idea. Talk with other individuals or groups with whom you plan to work. Talk with your family, with your friends, and even with strangers. It can be especially interesting and helpful to get reactions from folks other than quiltmakers and from those who do not know you well.

Ask for help. There is much help available, but you will have to look for it. Read books, look for professional help, and learn about other quilt projects. A telephone call or a visit to a quilt project director may get a better response than a letter.

Use consultants. They are great for the reasons already mentioned. All the consultants we used are highly recommended. Your state or local Arts Council can recommend consultants in various areas.

Look for workshops on fundraising, organizational management, money management, etc. These will also put you in touch with others

who have some of the same problems as your group.

Go to folks in your community. I looked for and talked with women who were involved in similar activities. Janice Palmer, Director of Cultural Services at Duke University Hospital, was helpful with suggestions for fundraising. She also became interested in our work. She sent out some of the letters requesting funds for a computer, which brought in several donations.

Anne Moore, chair of the board of the Volunteer Services Bureau in Durham, helped me with policies and procedures for a board of directors. Besides the actual information I got in these interviews, I also got practice in articulating what the North Carolina Quilt Project was doing, so another person in our community knew about our work.

Get professional help when needed. It's worth paying for the security you will feel about legal and financial matters. We used a lawyer to help form our nonprofit corporation and apply for tax-exempt status. We used a CPA to oversee our handling of money.

Go slowly. I believe this is very important. It was two years from the time we received the grant to "look into the possibility" until our first Quilt Documentation Day. As you move along, be willing to respond to your particular circumstances as they become clearer—and often change.

Develop a base of workers who are excited about this exciting work. Whatever amount of time an enthusiastic worker gives will be more valuable than endless hours by someone who is only marginally interested.

Let volunteers do what they do well and what they like to do. Let everyone know that their contributions are important parts of the total picture. It is a heady and satisfying experience to work together to produce this body of information. It could never be accomplished by the total of each person working separately.

Document your work. Keep good records for your project's history and for those who will come to you for advice on how to organize and carry out a quilt project.

Finally, no matter what decisions you make, no matter the variations of details, remember that we are performing an important

public service by uncovering this information about the cultural and women's history of our areas.

Because both textiles and human memory are fragile, there is a sense of urgency about this work. Because it *is* important, please do not let the sense of urgency keep you from working thoughtfully, carefully, and with consistently high standards.

Summary

An important facet of quiltmaking always has been our longing to create something beautiful and lasting for those we love who live after us. I see the work we are doing as our legacy in that same spirit. We can never know all of the ways in which the information we are collecting and preserving will be used—nor the ways in which its use will touch other lives. We can, however, anticipate that promise in the sense of kinship we feel with women from the past as we see their quilts and hear their stories.

Panel: How I Do Research

At the 1987 AQSG Seminar four quilt researchers formed a panel to discuss their research methodologies. Virginia Gunn, Barbara Brackman, and Laurel Horton presented information on individual research strategies, while Joanna Smith addressed the use of computers to record and retrieve data generated by quilt research projects. These presentations demonstrate some of the many possible approaches to the study of quiltmaking and are intended to encourage others considering similar avenues of inquiry.

Library Research: Reflections and Advice

Virginia Gunn

I define research as the disciplined search for answers to questions. The first necessary ingredient is simple curiosity. While I have always been curious and have headed naturally to the encyclopedia or the library in an effort to learn more, I eventually, like most textiles/costume historians, began to ask questions not yet answered in secondary sources. I found that if I wanted to know the answers, I would have to dig deeper.

My own inclinations often lead me to ask questions about the nineteenth century, making library research necessary. Textile information is so widespread and the research base so underdeveloped that you can begin at your own doorstep until you have the time, money, and/or energy to travel half-way around the world. Local libraries or historical agencies usually have runs of regional or national magazines as well as census records and early newspapers. City offices have such items as city and county records and estate inventories. Think creatively about all the primary sources that might be available within a few miles of your home.

Most quilt history researchers are women. They usually develop their own survival strategies to work research around other activities

and constraints in their busy lives. When my two children were very small, I asked questions that could be answered using the local newspapers at the public library near home. I eventually completed a study on nineteenth-century photography and costume in Wayne County, Ohio. I could run over to the library after the boys were tucked in bed, leaving my husband in charge of the fort, and work two hours on the microfilm reader before closing time. Once involved in my intriguing project, I took my four-year-old to the library story-hour and then found I could work an hour longer at the microfilm reader with him on my lap if I let him push the button to make copies fairly often.

My children eventually learned to entertain themselves in a library. However, when I identify an article as potentially useful, I still quit reading it immediately and photocopy it, a habit I picked up when library time was at a premium. Then I work through the article later, comfortably ensconced at home on the sofa or at my desk with a cup of coffee handy. Experience has shown that I usually err by not copying something that looked only marginally useful to my current topic rather than by copying too much. When I compared the cost of photocopying to the cost and hassle of acquiring a sitter, I decided that copy costs were a great bargain. (Note: Be sure to see if the article you are copying is continued in a back section, or you will find yourself needing another trip to the library to finish the story.)

When I go through old newspapers, periodicals, and books I try to do it rather thoroughly. I do not rely heavily on indexes, for I have found that information I find wonderful was seldom considered important enough to index. I collect information for projects other than the one that brought me to the library that day. If interested in a time period, one is almost always fascinated by more than one aspect of it. I have found it profitable to keep several topics on the back burner and collect information for all at one time.

Many early primary sources have now been transferred to microfilm. People have different tolerance levels when working with microfilm readers. When you notice your attention wandering as you work through great material, or when you begin to move the pages faster than you can read, you have probably reached your limit and need to stop and return later. One lasts longer on a reader with

adjustable print size, with a screen that reveals a large section of the paper at one time placed at a correct level for your eyes, and with a conveniently-placed movement control that can go both very slow and reasonably fast. Unfortunately, many microfilm readers lack these desirable features. I ask for a printer/reader because I like to print as I go rather than moving to a separate printer. Be sure to ask the librarian for help if the first copy is not clear. These machines are temperamental. Also be sure to label each copy with correct source, date, page information or you will be in trouble when you begin to write your footnotes later.

At home I work through the information I have collected and mount articles on standard typing paper to be stored in three-ring notebooks on my bookshelves. In the top right-hand corner of the paper I list the source, date, and page number of each article. I underline key passages I want to find quickly and make notes, comments, and questions in the margins. I file the articles chronologically by date, for that is the way I remember things best. I will remember that something appeared in a lady's magazine in the early 1880s, for example. I then go to that section and can usually locate what I want fairly rapidly. By having data filed in notebooks, I can easily remove pages that I want to use in a particular project. I can sort them into different categories and then refile them by date again when I am finished. People remember things differently, so all must form their own categories for retrieval. No system is foolproof or perfect. Do what works best for you.

Eventually, the material I am working through close to home is missing something I need, and this leads me to sources not available locally. I use interlibrary loan and computer search systems, such as the OCLC (Online Computer Library Center trade-mark), that allow me to locate nearby libraries and agencies that contain needed documents. I keep a list of things I want to look up when I have a day to travel elsewhere or when a family trip or meeting takes me near a library or society that has the material I need. It may be weeks or even years before I can conveniently get there. Quilt researchers are very nice about looking up a bit of information for one another, but you cannot expect someone to look through five years of an obscure farm periodical for you.

Historians need to sift through most material for themselves. Teams of researchers are of little help. Besides, searching is the fun part. Like anything worthwhile, there is work involved and you do get tired and often dirty (dusty old books!), but the rewards of the search are exhilarating to those who like this type of thing. Eventually, some researchers begin to think of library archives in distant cities as wonderful vacation sites! They search for places nearby that would be of interest to their family members.

Library research often sends the searcher back to the outside world in the quest to have all questions answered. For example, my study of nineteenth-century costume and photographers began in the local library but eventually led me to flea markets, antique shows and shops, the state historical society, and private homes. Finding answers to one question usually raises new questions.

We need to remember too that the joy of discovery is only half the battle. Once the data is collected we have to carefully synthesize, organize, and analyze it. Then we have to let the information talk to us and tell us what it will. Finally we must work to write up our conclusions to share with others. The writing will probably take less time than the gathering process, but it may seem at least twice as hard. The rewards of recovering quilt history include the wonderful friends you make and share with along your research path. That path begins with your first curiosity and continues until the answers to your questions form a particular piece of historical writing for others to criticize, enjoy, and build on.

Research on Quilt Patterns and Style
Barbara Brackman

One of the obvious questions about quilt patterns is "What is this pattern called?" My major interest from 1970 until 1984 or so was to record the names of pieced quilt patterns. My initial task was to develop a cross-reference list among all the easily accessible quilt books, the half dozen or so classics from the first half of the twentieth century like Finley, Hall, and McKim and the dozens and dozens of books published in the 1970s. My initial task (like Judy Rehmel, Yvonne Khin and Jinny Beyer who were doing the same things at the

same time) was to develop a system for classifying the patterns by design and then to give each design a number so it could be found, even if one didn't know any names for the pattern. In my system a basic **Nine Patch** is 1601, a **Chimney Sweep** is 3265.

I realized after a year or two that the books I was indexing were in themselves indexes to earlier published sources. Most of the writers had obtained pattern names from earlier, more obscure sources, particularly from periodicals, such as farm magazines, women's magazines, and newspapers so I began going directly to the earlier sources. I found by reading whole runs of such periodicals that those published in the years 1890–1900 and 1925–1940 were most likely to contain quilt patterns, and that regional farm magazines were an excellent source for pattern names that often never appeared in a later source. Magazines like *Orange Judd Farmer* and *Wallace's Farmer* at the turn of the century and *Dakota Farmer* and *Oklahoma Farmer and Stockman* in the 1920s published many unique patterns and/or names. A few of these magazines are still printing, but most had fairly short runs and left few traces.

I do not know of a reference that lists all the regional farm magazines published in the United States, although the *Agricultural Index,* which indexes farm magazines by subject each year, and the *Union List of Serials*, which is an index to periodicals held by U.S. libraries, list large numbers of them. I initially made an index card on every agricultural magazine in both these sources and set out to examine them for quilt patterns. I have not yet met that goal and probably never will. Finding library holdings for complete runs of the magazines is difficult. The best bet is the libraries of agricultural colleges in the region, which usually have the original magazines in the stacks, so reading microfilms is not necessary, which I consider a plus since reading microfilm gives me motion-sickness. However, the fact that few are microfilmed means that borrowing films through interlibrary loan is not feasible, so it's necessary to find a library with the actual periodicals.

When I travel I schedule time in libraries that might have agricultural periodicals, and I usually begin by examining the list of holdings at the periodical desk. I often find farm magazines which are not in my list obtained from the *Union List of Serials* and the

Agricultural Index, giving me some insight into the limitations of those sources. I then leaf through the magazines, pinpointing the turn-of-the-century and Depression decades because if a magazine is going to have any significant number of quilt patterns they will usually have them in those decades. The quilt patterns generally appear in the housewife's section of the farm magazines and in the needlework sections of the ladies' magazines. My method has been to copy the pieced patterns in chronological order and take notes on names, sources and any stories connected with the design. I later add new names to my index card for each pattern, and make new index cards for novel designs. I rarely photocopy since I haven't room to store the photocopies.

At some point in the early 1980s I realized I would not get this task done, and the value of finding yet one more name for pattern #2138 began to seem of less importance than the fact that much of what I was reading about the ages of the patterns seemed to be inaccurate.

I then switched my question from "What is the name of the pattern?" to "How old is the pattern?" Reading about patterns was not telling me how old the patterns were. Since the published information only began in the 1890s and the quilts were obviously older than that I decided to look at the quilts. I began a new line of indexing, first going through the books I'd indexed a decade earlier but looking this time at photographs of actual quilts, and cross-referencing the design according to age. I published the initial results in *Uncoverings 1983*, a list of the pieced patterns I found in quilts attributed to the years between 1750 and 1825.

I soon realized that using attributed dates was not a good idea, since so many were innacurately attributed. I had seen so many quilts that I began to get a "feeling" that a date was wrong, based on the style of the quilt. I decided that I would take a new line, indexing only quilts that actually had the date inscribed on them, and, besides looking at pattern I would look at the more elusive qualities of style—color scheme, block arrangement, fabric scale, and technique—to see if I could be more objective in my "feelings" about style. Referencing any one item on more than one point meant "megathousands" of index cards, but fortunately they had invented the personal computer by this point so I painfully taught myself to use DBase II and began a data base

of date-inscribed quilts made before 1950. I find pictures of these quilts in books and magazines, and I see the actual quilts in museum collections, quilt shows, and antique shops. I index each quilt on about twenty different style, pattern, or maker characteristics. For example, I have a list of nineteen color schemes. A red and white quilt is coded "c" under the color scheme category. I now have about 700 quilts in the data base and can list them chronogically on any parameter, thus getting an idea of when red and white quilts were popular, or when chintz borders or quilts with the schoolhouse design (#864) were made. I have found that about five to ten per cent of any collection of quilts will be date-inscribed; therefore I could expect to look at 7,000 to 14,000 quilts to find 700 with the dates inscribed.

Seven hundred quilts is enough to draw many preliminary conclusions about how style characteristics have changed, but we will soon have information on a much larger sample of date-inscribed quilts when the data from the various state quilt projects become available for researchers. They are gathering far more information than a single individual could hope to do. Now I am waiting for the projects to organize their data bases and I hope I can get access to their lists of date-inscribed quilts and their slides (or, if I wait long enough—their laser disks). It may be that in a few years I can enter data on 5,000 date-inscribed quilts and get a far clearer picture of how style and pattern in quilts has developed.

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Local History Research and Folklore Fieldwork

Laurel Horton

My approach to research comes from a combination of my two fields of graduate study, library science and folklore. The former training has given me research skills in written records, and the latter defines the subjects which I study, helps me maintain humanistic insights, and provides me with a different set of research skills.

I examine quilts as material objects of human culture. I search them for characteristics that reveal clues about circumstances of their creation and their creators. These include physical properties such as thickness of batting, the presence or absence of machine sewing, physical size, and types of fibers and fabrics; and also aesthetic properties such as pattern and color choice, arrangement of design ele-

ments, and the level of needlework skill. The sum of these descriptive parts provides information about such things as the intended function of particular quilt, the economic circumstances of the maker's family, and aesthetics of the maker's community.

In my research I often focus on a group of quilts that share certain characteristics. For instance, I often look at quilts made in a particular region or compare two groups of quilts from different places or made by different ethnic groups. It is not enough for me just to identify the regional characteristics of quilts or to describe the ways the quilts differ; I want to know why and how these distinct traditions came to be. In exploring the quilts of a particular region I start asking questions: What was the context within which these quilts were made and used? What groups of people first settled the region? When did they arrive? Where did they come from? What were the textile traditions in their former home? What cultural influences did they experience? What fabrics were available to them, and which ones did they choose for their quilts? What was the economic and agricultural base of the area? Where were the centers of trade and manufacture?

I confess that as a youthful student I was bored by history. I have not taken a course in American history since sleeping through one in high school. Asking questions about quilts, however, has awakened a hunger that causes me now to devour historical materials in search of tidbits that will increase my understanding of such subjects as women's lives, household and commercial textile manufacture, and commercial trade routes. I usually start with general regional histories of an area then try to find more local materials, either in published or manuscript form. Archival research, which usually involves searching sparsely indexed primary materials such as letters and diaries, is painstaking and time-consuming, but the rewards are gratifying. A single diary entry, such as "Today I bought calico for my tulip quilt," can be trusted to be accurate for that writer in a particular time and place. Such information is much more valuable than a sweeping generalization in a history book, such as "Early settlers grew or made everything they needed."

One of the goals of my library research is to examine generalizations and stereotypes and test them against actual historical findings. My research since 1976 has focused on the Southern Appalachian

mountain region and the South in general. Negative stereotypes abound for both areas which cloud a much more complicated and compelling reality.

I end up doing a lot of reading that has little or nothing to do with quilts. Most published history books focus on famous men and political events, but I look most closely at chapters that describe geography, early settlement, agriculture and commerce, and social life and customs. Over time the growing interest in women's history and social history is providing more information about the lives and concerns of everyday people, including women and their quilts.

It's unlikely that I would find historical records that mention a particular surviving quilt. Instead, I find evidence that helps me recreate the context of the place and time in which the quilt was created. The picture I draw may not be complete, but I know the few lines that I have reconstructed are accurately placed. Additional research, mine or by others, can fill out the sketch.

Because so much of American quilt information is not found in libraries and archives, I also conduct what folkklorists call "field research." Others might call it "going out and talking to people," and they express envy for a job that encourages this sort of activity.

The basic premise behind folklore fieldwork is that there exists a body of information, shared by a group of people such as a family or community. Much of this information is not recorded in written sources; it exists in oral tradition or in the form of customs practiced by the members of the group. The information is passed along from one person to another, such as from mother to daughter, or by observation, as a child watches an adult making biscuits, milking a cow, or making quilts.

Folklorists begin with an idea of the kind of traditional information they wish to collect, for instance, traditional names for quilting designs, then they identify the subjects, sometimes called "informants," who are likely to have this knowledge, in this case, quilters who have learned to quilt from family or community. Folklorists use the oral interview as a primary research tool.* By asking the right questions folklorists learn not only specific facts, but also the value system of the subject's community. For example, a researcher might document not only the existence of the **Rose of Sharon** pattern, but

also the fact that it was traditional as a wedding quilt.

Folklorists try to avoid letting their own preconceptions get in the way of the information they seek. The phrasing of questions can be crucial. For instance, a popular quilting design in southern quilts consists of a series of concentric arcs. Some quilters call this "fan" quilting, others know it as "shell" or "elbow" quilting. To learn the local name for the technique, the folklorist might point to an example or draw a picture, and ask "What do you call this type of quilting?" This question may elicit only the local name for the technique, but it may also bring forth a discussion of when the technique is appropriate and from whom is was learned. A less-skilled interviewer who asked, "Do you ever do 'fan' quilting?" might get a very different response.

Folklorists assume that there may be more than one "right" answer to a question. We are less concerned with identifying the "correct" name for a particular pattern than learning the variant names actually used by quiltmakers.

Quilt research can take so many different forms that no one person can adequately explore all of them. I rely on the work of other researchers for information on other regions, on pattern development, and on specific needlework techniques. I try to stay current with new research and cite those references in my writing rather than to unnecessarily retrace their research trails. American quiltmaking and related traditions form such a broad and complex area of study that even dozens of serious researchers will not soon provide answers to all the questions. The nature of the subject of quilts and quiltmakers is such that any researcher anywhere can focus on the quiltmaking traditions of her own area and, with care, compile results that are specific, accurate, and important as pieces of the larger picture.

*See Laurel Horton, "The Oral Interview in Quilt Research" Technical Guide #2 (San Francisco, Calif.: American Quilt Study Group, 1988).

The Role of the Computer in Quilt Documentation Projects

Joanna Smith

The 1970s witnessed two important developments that have put quilt researchers in an historically unique position. First, the quilting revival of the 1970s, centering around the American Bicentennial, kindled a new interest in old quilts that had been tucked away in closets and attics. At the same time, technological advances in computer development meant that computers were no longer restricted to corporate or academic environments. While computers grew more powerful,their physical size and price tags shrank, making them more widely available.

The renewed interest in quilts continues and has lead to many state and regional quilt documentation projects that are collecting large bodies of quilt information. Thousands of quilts have been brought out of closets and attics to be studied, documented, and photographed. Of these thousands, a few will appear in shows and in books. The vast majority, after their brief appearances, will probably be returned to their storage spaces and will remain as they were before the wave of quilt documentation passed through their communities. Picturing one of those quilts in its drawer or box, one would think that nothing had changed. But things have changed dramatically, because we now have descriptive information which we never had before about those thousands of quilts. The North Carolina Quilt Project alone has collected data and slides of 10,000 quilts.

This is a tremendous amount of information. It can be easily stored on note cards or sheets of paper, but finding it again is another matter. As the amount of data grows so does the difficulty in finding it. At some point, note cards and paper become untenable as means of storing and recalling large bodies of information. Around that same point, computers emerge as efficient mechanisms for storing and retrieving those same large bodies of data. So we need to think about how we can use computers to our advantage.

The first question we need to ask is "When should we start thinking about putting our data in the computer?" The answer is, "You should know what data will be entered in the computer before you

hold your first quilt documentation day." This point is very important and bears repeating. Decisions about computerizing data should be made when the documentation form is designed. Information cannot be retrieved from the computer if it was not recorded when the quilt was documented. For example, in order to perform a computer search for any quilts that were made with feed sacks, the documentation form must have provided a place where that information was recorded.

The need to think about computerized data so early in a project is also apparent when one considers the multiple functions the documentation form serves. First, it is the primary data collection instrument. It is the form the volunteers will use to record the quilt information. It should elicit the information precisely and without ambiguity, and it should be easy to use by volunteers who have no experience in data collection. It should be designed so that the same information is recorded regardless of who records it. For example, when a quilt's colors are recorded, the documentor will select from a predetermined and finite list of colors rather than rely on her own color vocabulary. If a quilt is green it will be recorded as "green" rather than "jade" or "emerald" or "avocado."

Secondly, it can be the form from which the data entry personnel will enter the data into the computer. If the documentation form is designed with foresight, it may be possible to enter the quilt information into the computer directly from the form. However, the information must be recorded exactly as it will be entered. This is done by precoding the form.

There are excellent examples of precoded forms all around us; registration forms, appliance warranty cards, and charge account applications are good examples. Any form that provides small boxes for the letters of names and addresses or for multiple choices has been designed so that the data can be entered into the computer directly from the form. Study these from a design perspective and think about how their designs can be incorporated into a quilt documentation form. Collect forms and advice from other quilt projects; learn from their mistakes.

Not only will our forms improve with experience but they will acquire some degree of standardization, which is a very important consideration. The best advice I ever received on designing forms was,

"Don't design them. Buy or steal them."

If the quilt documentation phase of a project has been completed using uncoded documentation forms, the information may be prepared for data entry by abstracting information from the documentation forms onto coding forms. The data can then be entered from the coding forms. This is the approach the North Carolina project has taken.

Project coders transcribe items such as the quilt identification number, the quiltmaker's first, middle, maiden, and last names into boxes, one letter or character per box. Wherever possible, items are categorized. For example, batting can be classified as one of the following: cotton, wool, polyester, a blanket, another quilt, none, other, and unknown. Next to each category is the code that will be entered into the computer: C for cotton, W for wool, P for polyester, etc. The coder circles the appropriate code and the code is entered in the computer. When the computer retrieves the information, it will translate the one character code back into English first.

There are some guidelines to follow when coding the data. As a rule, a blank should not be used as a valid code. Subsequently, it is important that the categories for an item be exhaustive, allowing for all possible responses. That is why the three categories "other," "none," and "unknown" are included.

The "other" category provides a code for the occasional odd batting material that is inevitably reported. If the quilt has no batting, that fact should be recorded rather than leaving the item blank. If batting was not recorded on the documentation form, then "unknown" should be coded rather than leaving it blank. If the coder neglects to circle the batting code, the result is a blank. Without the "other," "none," and "unknown" categories, a blank could mean (1) the batting was a material that could not be categorized or (2) the quilt had no batting or (3) the quilt might have had batting but it wasn't recorded by the documentor or (4) the quilt had batting and that information was recorded by the documentor but the coder failed to transcribe. it. The net result is a meaningless code. Therefore, a blank should not be used as a valid code.

Many decisions must be made when information is transcribed to the coding forms. Those decisions should be made by the coders

according to rules they have agreed upon so that the same decision will be made regardless of who makes it. The persons who key the data into the computer should not make any decisions. They should enter exactly what is on the coding form and not make any changes. This guarantees that a correct decision will not be subsequently changed. It is also easier to standardize the decision-making if it is restricted to a defined group.

It is important that there be a free-flowing exchange of information among documentation projects. That information includes not only the quilt data that is being collected but also the methodological lessons that we have learned along the way. For example, documentors often express the date a quilt was made as a range of years: 1880s, circa 1880, or 1880–1900. However, the date field of a data base will only accept a four-digit year. The North Carolina project was seeking a solution when Laurel Horton of the South Carolina project suggested a system that she had seen used by the Allen Textile Collection at the University of Wisconsin: record two date fields, the earliest possible and latest possible. This is an excellent solution for quilt dates that can only be estimated, and an excellent example of the sharing of such solutions among the many groups working on similar projects. We will all benefit from such collaboration.

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The American Quilt Study Group is a nonprofit organization devoted to the finding and dissemination of the history of quiltmaking as a significant American art. AQSG encourages and supports research into the history of quilts, quiltmaking, quiltmakers, and the textiles and materials of quilts. Membership and participation are open to all interested persons. For further information, send to the American Quilt Study Group, 833 Market Street, Suite 620, San Francisco CA 94103.