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Uncoverings: The Research Papers of the American Quilt Study Group, Volume 30 (2009)

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Preface

The American Quilt Study Group returns to its California birthplace for the thirtieth annual seminar. Although the official anniversary celebration will come next year, the 2009 seminar in San Jose offers an opportunity to look back at the individuals, events, and ideas that led to the founding of the American Quilt Study Group and the first volume of *Uncoverings.*

In the 1970s, Sally Garoutte was one of a small number of individuals who were interested in the history of quilts and quiltmaking. As she traveled around the country, visiting museums and archives, Sally became aware that there were few published—or unpublished—sources of reliable information available among the popular books on quilting. She also noticed that the majority of the curators, librarians, and archivists whose assistance she sought did not take her research interests seriously. She realized that even if she conducted research and wrote up the results, finding a journal that would publish her work would be difficult. Sally's experiences led her to envision an organization that would encourage people to conduct research on quilt-related subjects, to provide an opportunity for this research to be shared orally at an annual seminar, and to publish these research findings in an annual journal.

The first Seminar of the American Quilt Study Group was held in 1980, near Sally's home in Mill Valley, California. As Sally recalled in her preface to *Uncoverings 1980,*

> We did not then know whether there was enough serious interest among American women in their own indigenous art to call forth the effort of research necessary to make up a program of papers. This book is the best sort of evidence that such interest indeed exists. It introduces the public as well as quilt lovers to the idea that the history of quilts and quiltmaking is an important part of our heritage subject to serious study. The American Quilt Study Group hopes that this volume is the first of many.

Sally's vision was both ambitious and audacious, and transforming it into reality required new skills. She learned how to establish and operate a national nonprofit organization, and she taught herself to edit and publish a journal. Later, when computers replaced typewriters, Sally took classes to learn the new technology. But Sally's contribution to the field of quilt research went far beyond the nuts and bolts of the organization. Through personal example and her interactions with others, she embodied the two aims that come together in AQSG's mission statement.

The first aim was a commitment to high standards for scholarship. Sally knew that proper documentation and accurate interpretation were essential, both in developing a body of reliable data and in demonstrating its value to the public. The second aim, essential at a time when quilt study was virtually absent in academic settings, was to empower people—particularly women—to conduct original research. These two aims do not co-exist comfortably; in fact, some critics have argued that it is impossible for untrained researchers to produce respectable scholarly results.

Sally's gift was to see both aims as possible. She recognized that it would take time to establish both the scholars and the scholarship, and she started with the resources available to her. For the first seminar, Sally cajoled her friends and colleagues to express their quilt-related knowledge as oral presentations; and, afterward, she worked with them to convert these papers into published articles. Since that first year, AQSG has continued to maintain a delicate balance between the two aims, and this volume is no exception.

Each of the articles herein began with a question in the mind

of a "quilt lover." Looking at a quilt, two quilts, a number of quilts, an intriguing pattern, or a company, each author followed the threads to see where they led. And the results of their research and their interpretations become worthy additions to the growing body of respectable scholarship on the many aspects of quiltmaking.

Peggy Derrick and Linda McShannock started with the realization that two quilts in different museums were remarkably similar. Starting with only the information provided by donors, Derrick and McShannock used multiple sources to trace the quilts and their makers back to Norway. Their article not only documents the two quilts, but it also places them within the context of quilting in eighteenth-century Europe.

For many years, collectors and researchers of twentieth-century quilts and quilt patterns have puzzled over the elusive Rainbow designs. Sharon Pinka has compiled data on Rainbow designs, the company's operations, and William Pinch, the "Maker of Pretty Quilt Blocks." Pinka offers a checklist of characteristics useful in identifying quilts made from Rainbow designs.

Jane Amelon began with the remarkable story of a quilt made by a group of battered women imprisoned for killing or injuring their abusers. When displayed publicly, the quilt succeeded in bringing justice for these women after all official attempts had failed. Amelon looks at various ways to examine the rhetorical properties of quilts and shows how the imprisoned women conveyed a powerfully persuasive message through their quilt.

One of the biggest gaps in our understanding of nineteenth-century quilts concerns the history of cotton batting. Linda Pumphrey, associated with Mountain Mist® batting for twenty years, consulted a wide range of primary and secondary sources to compile a narrative of the early history of the Stearns & Foster Company. Her article provides the first documentation of the production and marketing of batting in the nineteenth century.

Mary Fitzgerald became intrigued with a group of twentieth-century patchwork designs which use small squares of different colors to create a pictorial image. Her interest led to a survey of examples of geometric pictorial patchwork, stretching from the

early-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century. As part of her research, she examined the published instructions accompanying commercial patterns and studied the process of constructing quilts using twenty-first-century tools.

This thirtieth volume of *Uncoverings* also includes a special presentation. We are pleased to include the text of Virginia Gunn's keynote address from the 2008 seminar, which includes reflections on her participation in AQSG, and, in particular, the centrality of the study of history to what we do.

Sally Garoutte, who died in 1989, edited the first seven volumes of *Uncoverings,* which included four of her own research papers. Her work as researcher, editor, and mentor set an example for those of us who follow. I think Sally would be pleased, though probably not surprised, to see that a "serious interest" in quilt research has spread among women and men, in America and beyond. As it turned out, *Uncoverings 1980* was indeed "the first of many" volumes, evidence that many people have come to recognize that "the history of quilts and quiltmaking is an important part of our heritage," worthy of serious study.

Two Norwegian Silk Quilts in America

Peggy Derrick and Linda McShannock

Two nearly identical wholecloth silk quilts brought to America in the nineteenth century by Norwegian immigrants now reside in Midwestern museums. We examined these quilts as material culture artifacts in an attempt to explain the probable relationship between them. Beginning with information provided by the donors of the quilts, we conducted genealogical research on the two families and their descendants. This investigation led us to connections between the two families and confirmed the upper-class status of these families in Norway. To place these two quilts in a larger context, we researched upper-class Norwegian society and its relationship to the decorative fashion trends of eighteenth-century Europe. Materials, construction, style, design, motifs, and aesthetic properties reveal these two quilts to be both characteristically Norwegian and examples of a larger western European tradition of wholecloth silk quilts.

Two nearly identical, wholecloth silk quilts reside in museums in the upper Midwestern United States: one is at the Minnesota Historical Society, in St. Paul, Minnesota, the other in the collection of Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum, in Decorah, Iowa.[1] Norwegian immigrants brought the quilts to this country in the nineteenth century, but though they are nearly identical, the individuals who inherited and donated them to the respective museums were neither related nor acquainted. Quilts brought to America by Norwegian immigrants are quite rare, and that there

should be two so similar in material, style, and appearance is remarkable indeed. Our research focuses on the relationship of these two quilts to each other and to the larger European tradition of wholecloth silk quilts.

Between 1825 and 1930, approximately 860,000 Norwegians immigrated to the United States.[2] The majority left the Norwegian countryside as a result of economic pressures; the rural population had grown beyond what the meager farmland of Norway could support.[3] Rural Norwegian women practiced a number of textile traditions, including spinning, weaving, knitting, and embroidery. They were responsible for producing clothing and bedding for their families, from flax they grew and sheep they raised themselves.[4] Traditional Norwegian bed coverings did not include patchwork quilts, but were primarily woven wool coverlets in a variety of decorative weaves with regional variations:

> The åklæ (pl. åklær) is the traditional bed covering of Norway. Women wove them in their farm homes from the wool of the native spelsau sheep. The average size of åklær, 5 by 6 feet, relates to the dimensions of Norway's corner beds and the width of the looms.[5]

Leaving behind these traditions, Norwegian women arriving in America quickly learned to piece quilts in traditional American patterns, such as Log Cabin and Blazing Star, and they enthusiastically joined in the late-nineteenth century fad for crazy quilts.[6] Some families sent quilts to their relatives back in Norway.[7]

Given the presumed absence of patchwork quilts among pre-emigration Norwegian textile traditions, the existence of two quilts brought to America by Norwegian immigrants appears anomalous. Compounding the puzzle, the two quilts are almost identical in design. At the same time, they are distinctly different from the quilts usually seen in the central United States, where quilting and patchwork are practically synonymous. The Norwegian-made quilts are wholecloth, that is, the top of each quilt is constructed of lengths of a single solid-colored fabric; the ornamentation depends entirely on the effect of the quilting designs stitched on the surface.

The family history for one of the quilts indicates that it was made in the late eighteenth century; the family that owned the other claims theirs dates from the 1840s. Consequently, one of our goals was to try to attribute reliable dates for the creation of both artifacts. We wished to establish the Norwegian context for these quilts, explore possible connections between them, and understand their place within the larger European tradition of wholecloth quilts. In addition, we were also interested in the significance of the two quilts' survival in the United States.

Quilting Traditions in Europe before 1700

Quilting—for clothing, bed coverings, and padded armor—came to Europe from Asia. Some researchers assert that quilting arrived in Europe during the time of the Roman Empire, between approximately 100 BC and AD 476.[8] More substantial evidence suggests that quilted textiles were among the Asian luxury goods that returning Crusaders brought with them from the Middle East at the end of the eleventh century.[9]

Costly and rare, quilted bedcovers were available only to royalty and the very wealthy.[10] The oldest surviving European quilts are two "Tristan" quilts, made in Sicily around 1400. Made of linen, these wholecloth textiles illustrate the popular medieval legend of Tristan in pictures and text executed in quilting.[11] These two quilts are thought to have been made as a gift for a wedding in Sicily in 1395.[12] Recent research suggests that the two quilts may actually be fragments of a single large quilt later remade into at least two smaller ones.[13] Physical evidence from the two quilts is supported by references to the fashion among powerful noble families of the late middle ages for beds of enormous size, displayed as status symbols and never intended for sleeping.[14]

A group of about a dozen early-seventeenth-century wholecloth silk quilts is evidence of the international trade in luxury goods. These textile masterpieces have been designated Indo-Portuguese,

although their actual origin is unknown and a topic of current research.[15] They are made of solid-colored silk, with raised areas that accentuate the dense, intricately quilted designs.[16]

The designs on these quilts are reminiscent of embroidered Indian quilts of the seventeenth century, with a round center medallion framed by multiple borders, yet their individual motifs are unique. The example in the collection of Winterthur Museum, like many others in this group, is dominated by a central medallion with a seventeenth-century Portuguese ship under full sail on a sea of undulating, quilted ocean waves. The rest of the surface is filled with human figures, fanciful animals, exotic foliage, and repeated decorative motifs. Some examples from this group portray hunters on horseback with firearms, their dogs, and their prey or European soldiers and exotic, turbaned figures. They strongly suggest the world of the eastern Mediterranean, with its convergence of European and Eastern politics and cultures, and design elements that express Europe's new role in the era of exploration.[17]

The French city of Marseilles was a crucial entry point for Eastern textiles into Western Europe as early as 1218.[18] From its advantageous location on the Mediterranean coast, Marseilles developed into the center of trade between Europe and India and China. By the fifteenth century Marseilles was not only importing textiles, but also had developed a thriving industry of its own, manufacturing quilted goods.[19] Marseilles quilts and quilted fabrics became highly fashionable for clothing and bedding and were exported in great quantities to the rest of Europe and its colonies. In 1680, some five to six thousand women were employed in Marseilles ateliers producing needlework for sale in France and export abroad.[20]

From 1686 to 1759, the French government established non-importation laws, designed to protect France's traditional textile industries from outside competition. Due to its economic importance, however, Marseilles was exempted from some of these laws, and the port city continued to produce and export textiles, including wholecloth silk bedquilts, to the rest of the world.[21]

Textiles formed the bulk of the goods that circulated in the

growing world trade. Quilted textiles, whether produced in workshops in the south of France or by seamstresses in their own homes, were limited to the upper ranks of society.[22] Evidence from surviving textiles, combined with research in historic documents, particularly property inventories and wills, show that, by the sixteenth century, bedquilts frequently appeared in the inventoried property of the British well-to-do, including wealthy merchants, but were absent among the material possessions of the middling and poorer sorts.[23] A study of sixteenth-century inventories in the Netherlands produced similar findings. Researcher An Moonen found that quilts appeared first among the Dutch royal family: "as the [sixteenth] century progresses, quilts are more often mentioned, although at first only in the residences of the House of Orange. It is not until several decades later that we find quilts among the wealthy middle ranks."[24] The gradual spread of quilts from royalty to the upper ranks coincided with increased trade and the development of the quilting industry in Europe.

Eighteenth-Century Silk Wholecloth Quilts in Europe

European society in the eighteenth century was characterized by expanding economies, an increase in consumer goods, and a rising standard of living. These developments were driven by international trade and technological improvements in manufacturing and transportation. Textiles formed a central component of both these developments, with an influx of exotic silks and cottons from the Orient and the production of woolen, silk, and cotton fabrics by European factories. The availability and variety of woven and printed fabrics brought the prices down, making them affordable to a larger segment of the population. Gradually, these popular textiles became more commonplace in homes throughout Europe and its colonies.[25]

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, quilted bed covers and clothing were highly popular and fashionable. The most elegant of these bedquilts were of wholecloth silk. In some areas,

including the New England colonies, quilts made from glazed wool were popular, particularly in the mid-eighteenth century.[26] Quilts were available through a variety of sources: some were imported from India and China; others were made professionally in workshops in Europe, especially in Marseilles, but also in London and other commercial centers. Still other quilts were made in the homes of the well-to-do, by women with leisure time, sometimes with the help of their servants.

By the sixteenth century, in England, a large number of businesses offered quilts and quilted clothing.[27] Quilted clothing was produced in London by a variety of tradesmen, including "mercers, linen-drapers, haberdashers, or milliners," while quilted bedcovers were produced in furniture workshops by upholsterers.[28] Surviving business correspondence from 1735 provides evidence of a gentleman's order for quilted bed furnishings for his mother from an upholsterer who had a large quantity of ready-made quilted designs from which customers could choose.[29] These businesses not only supplied wealthy British customers but colonists as well. Lynn Bassett has found a range of imported quilts in a study of Massachusetts quilts. While "calico" and "India quilts" appear on lists of sales and were coveted luxury items, the preponderance of quilts imported into the colonies were silk and wool (calamanco) wholecloth quilts made in England by professionals associated with the upholstery trades.[30]

Quiltmaking in Europe prior to the nineteenth century is just beginning to be studied in depth. We know that quilts were produced in factories and workshops, imported from the East, and made in the home; but the lack of reliable data makes it difficult to determine the origin of a particular surviving quilt. The furnishings of a single household might include quilts and other textiles from multiple sources. Evidence of distinctive local and regional patterns of textile acquisition and use complicates attempts to establish maps or timetables for the adoption, spread, and decline of textile styles. Questions concerning who made quilts, why they were made, and how techniques and designs circulated within and between geographic areas offer unlimited opportunities for further research.

Wholecloth Silk Quilts in Scandinavia

Sweden and Norway lie at the northernmost edge of Europe, but their long history of sea-faring exploration, ample coastline, and accessible seaports have connected them to the rest of the world since prehistoric times. As in the rest of Europe, wealthy households in Scandinavia embraced the fashion for silk wholecloth quilts during the eighteenth century. Material artifacts, written documents, and period illustrations provide evidence of both the importation and domestic manufacture of quilted clothing and bed covers in Sweden and Norway. Pioneering research efforts on Scandinavian quilts have tended to focus on patchwork of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and earlier wholecloth quilts are only beginning to receive attention.[31]

A period illustration from Sweden suggests that quilting was an activity in wealthy Scandinavian households in the eighteenth century. Dating from 1797, the watercolor shows two women and a man working at a quilting frame in the drawing room of Bishop Lindbloom.[32] The room is large and finely appointed, with a chandelier, high ceilings, and large windows. In this domestic scene, a child on a nearby settee reads while an older man smokes a pipe. The prominent location of the activity in the drawing room suggests that the quilters were members of the Bishop's family, as servants or hired professionals would have worked in a less formal part of the house. The presence of the man working at the quilting frame raises interesting questions. He may represent a family member or a suitor or he may have been a professional pattern drawer, laying out the design for the quilters to follow. Very little is known about the role of professionals who came to the home to draft the pattern for others to follow or to oversee the quilting. Researcher Aase Sjovold found evidence of a long-standing tradition of hired professionals, including embroiderers, who provided patterns for quilting as well as embroidery and who participated in their execution.[33]

A diary entry from 1798 also documents quiltmaking activity in a well-to-do Swedish home. Hedda Klinckowström, a young

woman, wrote about the sewing preparations for her wedding day, complaining that she was expected to help in the needlework:

> But here the preparations are already well underway, there is sewing and weaving everywhere one goes in the house—the wedding quilt was put up last Monday and there are fittings and deliberations all day long. . . . It is warm and insufferable up in the large weaving room, where the quilting frame has been set up—the flies are buzzing in the windows and Miss Stafva talks a blue streak, nagging and scolding the maids who sit there sewing. She turns to me incessantly—"Does my lady think this looks good?—or perhaps we ought to make the oak leaves around the edge somewhat smaller?" I do not care one bit about how large the oak leaves turn out or how narrow the pleats on the bridegroom's shirt, which Grandmother thinks I should make myself "otherwise there will be no happiness."[34]

The young diarist's attitude towards sewing serves as a reminder that we should not romanticize the production of objects like wedding quilts, but, more importantly, it is also a reminder that textiles produced in the home, including quilts, were not necessarily made entirely by the women of the house. In this narrative, the housemaids are doing the quilting, under the direction of "Miss Stafva," who speaks to the young mistress deferentially, as to someone of higher social standing, and who was probably hired to direct the making of the wedding quilt.

In a study of Norwegian embroidery traditions, Sjovold followed local tradition by including quilting as a category of embroidery. Her description of patterns drawn on the lower, or bottom, piece of material, and the use of a running stitch or backstitch to sew through multiple layers from the back side certainly refers to quilting, rather than embroidery.[35] Sjovold's description of the production and use of embroidered and quilted items in Norway in the eighteenth century fits precisely with the descriptions we have found of quilted items and quilted lengths of fabric available for sale in England, France, and the Netherlands.

> The Norwegian art of embroidery reached its high point in the eighteenth century, influenced by imported textiles. For example, France

> exported lengths of silk upon which the front pieces of men's vests were already embroidered; the fabric needed only to be cut out, fitted, backed, lined, and sewn. The appearance and use of this kind of partially made apparel increased steadily during the course of the period. Silk materials and clothes decorated and embroidered in the East also found their way to Norway. These featured patterns that were suited to the European taste.[36]

At the same time that quilted bedcovers and clothing, worked by professionals and artisans in the trades, were being imported into Norway, embroidery and quilting were being produced in well-to-do homes. According to Sjovold, the education of young women from the upper ranks included decorative needlework as well as drawing.[37]

These descriptions of quiltmaking in Norway and neighboring Sweden mirror what is known about the practice in well-to-do homes elsewhere in Europe. Styles and innovations may have arrived later than in Paris and London, and new influences in coastal towns may not have reached beyond the economic elite, but wholecloth silk quilts were among the textiles acquired and made by households in Norway and Sweden in the eighteenth century. Known surviving examples are rare, but at least two of those quilts were brought to America by Norwegian immigrants, where they serve as clues to the European roots of what we mistakenly call an American tradition.

Two Norwegian Quilts in America

The quilt in the collection of the Minnesota Historical Society was donated by Marie Thomsen in 1964, and is known as the Thomsen quilt (plate 1). The donor inherited this quilt from her father, Tolleif Thomsen (1864–1950), who immigrated to America with his parents in 1882. According to Thomsen family history, the quilt had been passed down in the family for five generations.

Anna Smith Holkesvik donated the quilt in the collection of Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum in 1976 (plate 2).

The donor's father, Dr. Axel Christian Rosenkrands Smith (1844–1917), immigrated in 1873, bringing the Smith family quilt with him. According to the donor, the quilt was the work of her paternal grandmother, Catherine Elizabeth Krog Smith (1819–1846).

The Thomsen quilt measures 83 by 78 inches, and the Smith quilt is 95 by 93 inches. The tops of both quilts are of plain weave silk fabrics, firmly woven, with a very slight rib noticeable under low magnification, which identifies them as warp-reps, or taffetas.[38] The fabrics, which might be further identified as lutestring, an iridescent taffeta with a high sheen, are consistent with the silk fabrics of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries produced throughout Europe.[39] The fabrics in the quilts are distinguished primarily by color. The Thomsen quilt was originally a vivid green; although the quilt shows little evidence of wear, the color has faded unevenly over time. This is consistent with pre-synthetic greens, which, in the eighteenth century, could be produced only by overdying with blue and yellow vegetable dyes.[40] The Smith quilt is yellow silk. The center of the quilt is faded, while the sides are still bright, suggesting that the quilt was displayed on a bed exposed to sunlight.

Each quilt is backed with a block-printed, plain-woven cotton fabric (plates 3 and 4). The two fabrics are similar in weight, texture, and quality. The block prints, though not identical, are similar in style and manufacture, small in scale and with visible misprints. The Thomsen quilt is backed with undyed cotton, printed in red flowers joined with a small, black meandering vine. The backing on the Smith quilt is printed with flowers in a diamond latticework on a white ground. The edges of the printing block are plainly visible on both fabrics. These printed cotton backings bear a strong resemblance to block printed cottons produced in Persia specifically for linings and backings.[41] They also resemble early European cotton prints found in aprons, short gowns, and other inexpensive goods.[42]

Both quilts are filled with thick cotton batting, and all stitching was done by hand. Each was quilted with a low-twist silk thread

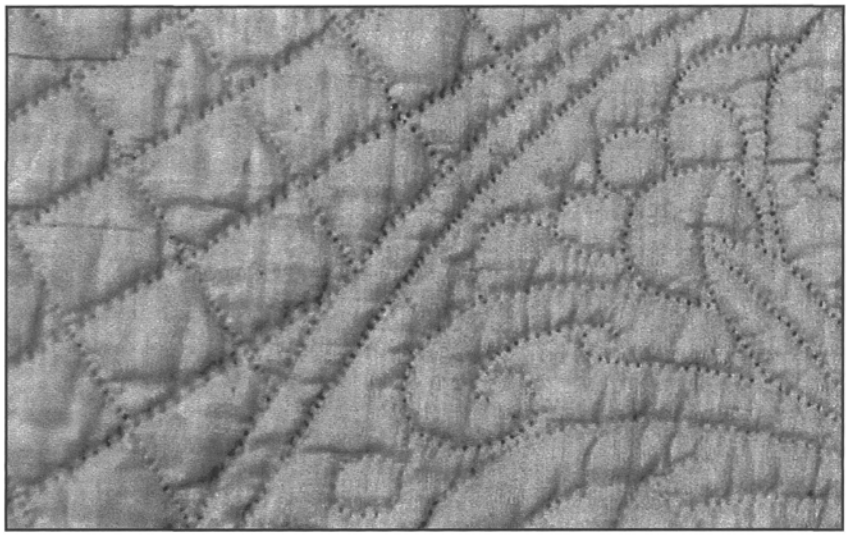


Figure 1. Detail of quilted backstitch on the Smith quilt.
Courtesy of Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum, LC2405

matching the color of the quilt top. Instead of the running stitch familiar to American quilters, these quilts are quilted with a backstitch. The stitch is distinct and identical on both quilts: on the top the stitches are very small and evenly spaced, while on the back the longer, overlapping stitches are visible (fig. 1). The thick batting in these two quilts required the quilter to sew with an up and down stabbing motion, one stitch at a time: this may be the reason why the stitches on the top, though small and even, have spaces between them instead of being tightly packed, as is normally seen with the backstitch.[43] The backstitch produces a sturdy seam resistant to unraveling. The seams of handsewn clothing were typically backstitched; and, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, quilted garments, such as petticoats and men's waistcoats, were embellished with backstitched motifs.[44]

The two quilts are hemmed with a knife-edge finish; that is, the raw edges of top and backing are carefully folded in and sewn, so that neither fabric is visible on the opposite side. On both quilts, a decorative half-inch-wide, woven silk ribbon is stitched to the outer edges (fig. 2). Similar silk ribbon trim adorned hats, shoes, and

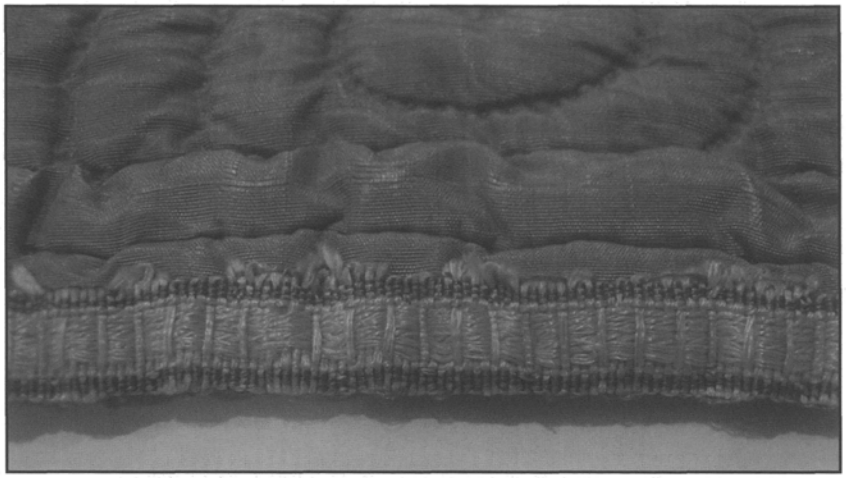


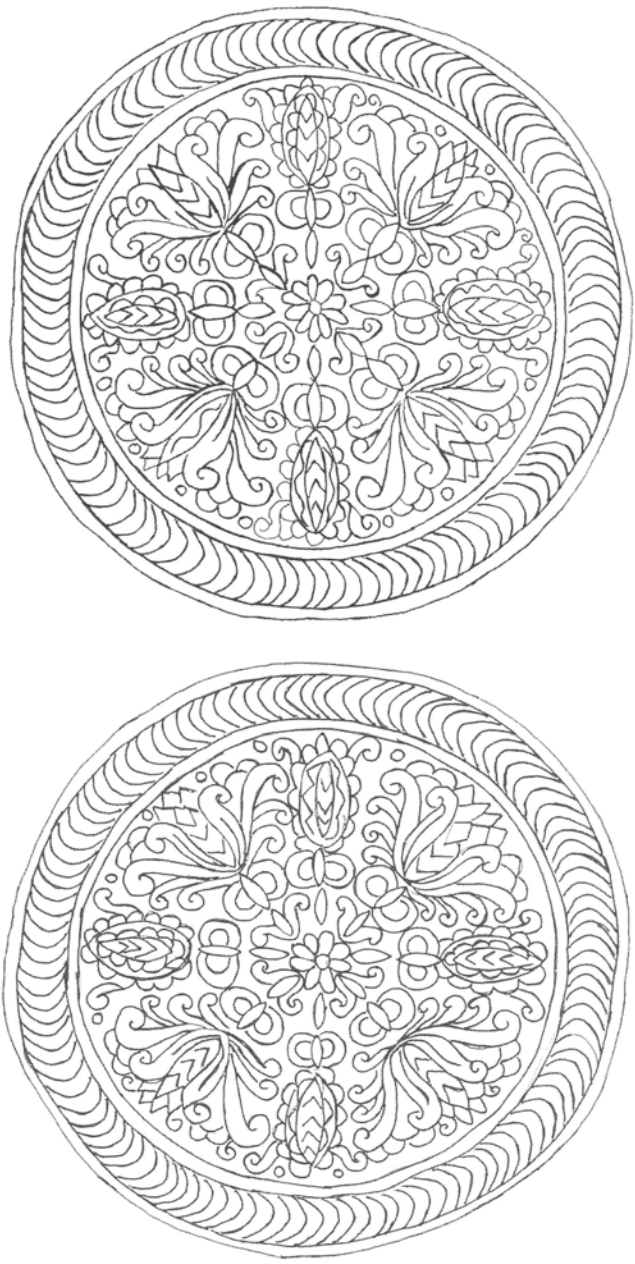
Figure 2. Woven ribbon trim on Thomsen quilt. The woven picotage along the outside edge has worn off.
Courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society Collection, 64.73

garters in the eighteenth century.[45] The white ribbon trim on the Smith quilt is applied to all four edges; while the ribbon trim on the Thomsen quilt is ecru, edged with a narrow stripe of dark green, but present on only three sides. The fourth edge may have been trimmed with ribbon that was later removed. In both quilts, two adjacent corners have been cut out to accommodate bedposts.

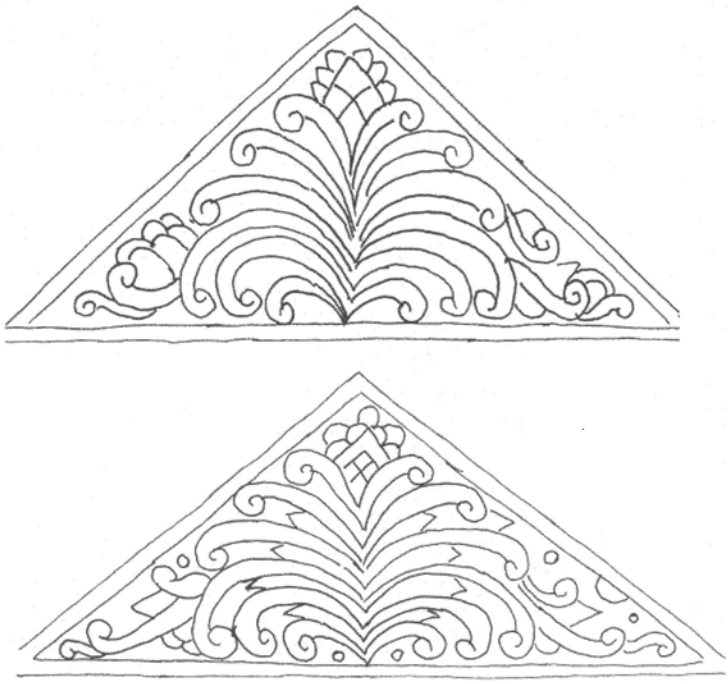
The Quilt Designs

The quilts were designed in a center-medallion format, typical of eighteenth-century wholecloth quilts. Half- and quarter-medallions fill the corners and edges of the background, and this central field is framed by multiple borders, alternating narrow and wide. The overall format is reminiscent of Persian carpets and Indian painted cottons and reflects the influence of Indian and Persian textiles on Europe.[46]

The center medallion consists of a large circle containing a symmetrical design of a center rosette with four large tulips alternating with narrow leaf-like motifs (figs. 3a and 3b). The half- and quarter-



Figures 3a and b. Center medallions from the Smith quilt (above) and the Thomsen quilt (below).
Tracings by Peggy Derrick and Judy Calcote



Figures 4a and b. Palmette motifs from the Smith quilt (above) and the Thomsen quilt (below).
Tracings by Peggy Derrick and Judy Calcote

medallions feature foliated palmette patterns. The background quilting is a grid of diamonds.

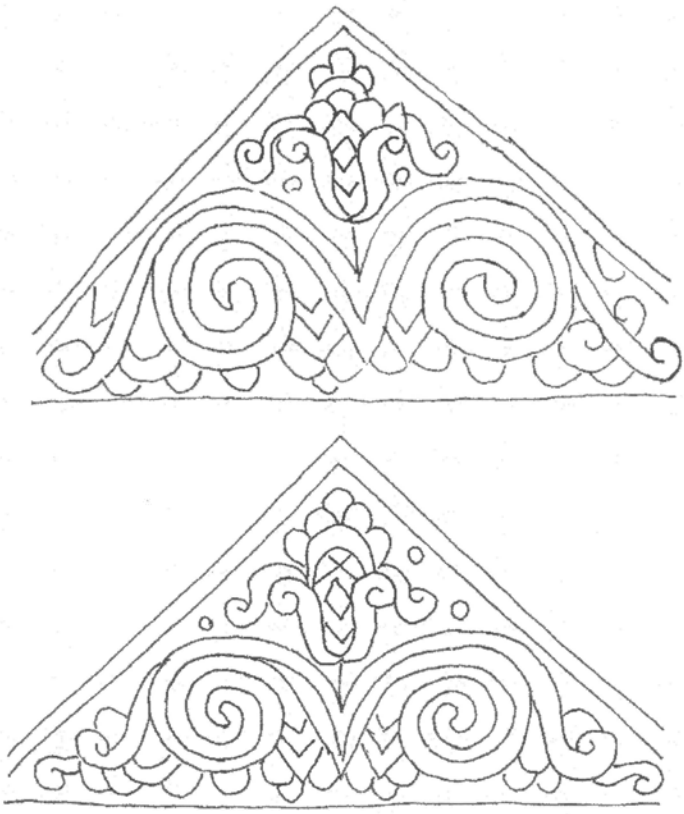
The patterns in the inner borders constitute the main variation between the two quilts: the inner border of the Thomsen quilt features an arabesque flowering vine, while the Smith quilt's inner border is filled by a cable, a familiar quilting design which is more formally recognized as a form of architectural ornamentation known as a guilloche. The wide borders on both quilts are subdivided into large triangles, in which curving palmettes alternate with double spirals topped with a tulip motif, echoing the tulips in the medallion (figs. 4a and 4b). The egg-and-dart, another motif derived from architecture, runs in a narrow strip along the outer side edges of both quilts. An interlocking knot work design appears

Figure 5. "Acroterion," or scrolls-and-palm, from Ernst Rettelbusch, *Handbook of Historic Ornmament*, page 12.

in the two corners that were not cut away to accommodate a four-poster bed.

These quilting designs form a compendium of European decorative motifs, some traditional and some more fashionable at the time they were made. Some are commonly seen on wholecloth quilts throughout Europe, such as the cable/guilloche and the flowering vine. Others, such as the tulip motifs, appear thus far to be unique to Norwegian quilts, as similar designs have not yet been identified among other European quilts. Tulip bulbs were introduced into the Netherlands from the Middle East in the mid-sixteenth century, and the immensely popular flower would have quickly made its way to Norway's cosmopolitan coast.[47]

The full, downward-curving palmette form has not been identified as a quilting motif elsewhere. Although its robust, symmetrical form has a Baroque quality, the palmette, like the guilloche, derives from classic Greek architecture.[48] The double spiral topped by a tulip is based on the Greek acroterion, a scrolls-and-palm design



Figures 6a and b. Scrolls-and-tulip detail from Smith quilt (above) and Thomsen quilt (below).
Tracings by Peggy Derrick and Judy Calcote

often used as a finial on pedestals (fig. 5).[49] On these two quilts the palm in the Greek motif has been replaced with a tulip taken from the medallion design (figs. 6a and 6b). Just as the palmette has been exaggerated, with more fronds than normal, the scrolls are formed from large, tightly wound spirals with more turnings than in the original motifs.

The rediscovery of Greek art and architecture led to the widespread popularity of neoclassical influences in the mid-eighteenth century.[50] The presence of neoclassic motifs in the two Norwegian quilts suggests an eighteenth-century date. The quilting designs

may have been influenced by those in other media, such as woodcarving. An early Norwegian bed includes carved fan-like shapes similar to the quilted palmettes.[51] Indeed, it is most likely that the neoclassical influences on quilting designs came not directly from an architectural source, but from some intermediary design transmission.

On close inspection, the two Norwegian immigrant quilts are not identical. As mentioned, the Smith quilt has a cable, or guilloche, in its inner border, while the inner border on the Thomsen quilt has a flowering vine. Otherwise, the overall format and the primary designs of the two quilts are so similar that it seems inconceivable that they were not designed by the same person. To try and find that connection we needed to examine the family histories relating to the two quilts.

The Thomsen Family Quilt

Marie Thomsen donated the green silk quilt to the Minnesota Historical Society in 1964. She inherited the quilt from her father, Tolleif Thomsen (1864–1950); it was said to have been handed down in their family for five generations. Tolleif's father, Taulerius Cornelius Thomsen (1832–1909), had first been a seaman, but in 1862, he married Marie Magdelene Olsen (1825–1907) and settled down on the Einstavøll farm owned by her father. They were both from well-to-do, educated families, but being a younger son, with no land of his own, Taulerius eventually decided that America would offer more opportunity for his three sons. In a memoir, Taulerius Tolleif wrote, "both my father and mother had good educations for their time, so they kept me at my books, and I could read quite fluently at the age of seven. Some of my uncles were scholarly men, and they sent me fine reading material which I read with great interest as they came."[52]

In 1882, the Thomsen family immigrated to America. Taulerius was fifty, and his wife Marie, fifty-seven (fig. 7). They were accompanied by Tolleif, age eighteen and his two younger brothers.[53]

Figure 7. Marie and Taulerius Thomsen. Marie's grandmother, Mette Munthe Juel, is believed to have helped make the Thomsen quilt. *Photograph courtesy of Keith Thomsen*

Arriving in northern Minnesota, the Thomsen family homesteaded first in Kandiyohi County and then at Bear Lake in Aiken County. In Tolleif's memoir of the family's pioneer days, he describes the hard work and adventures of the settlers' lives, in a land where they had to make their own roads, cut timber to make log homes, and grub out tree roots before they could plant any crops.

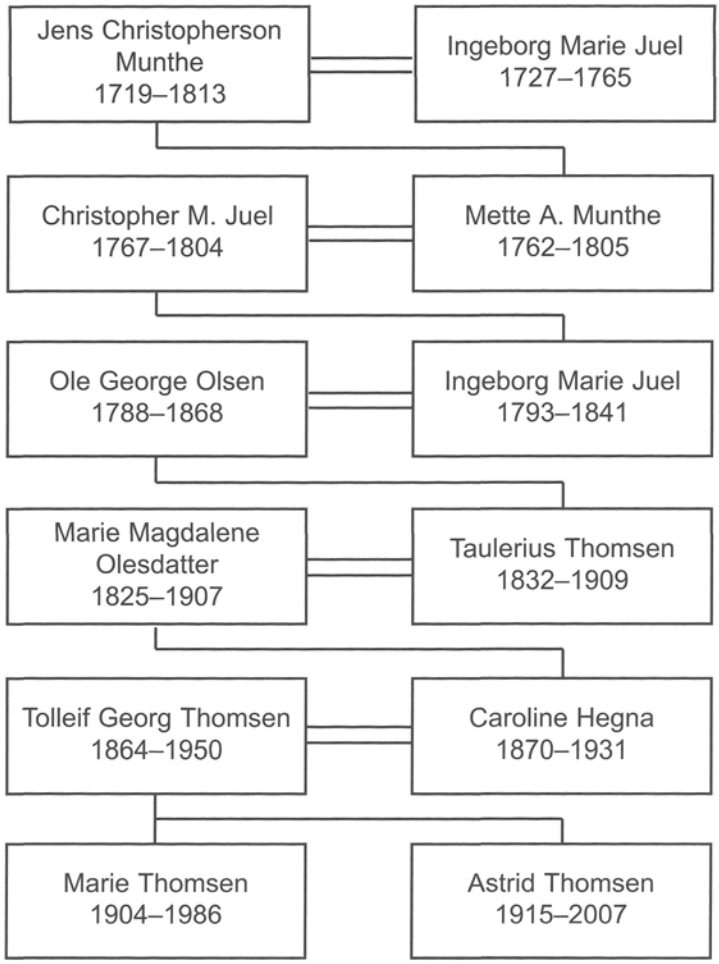


Figure 8. Thomsen family genealogy

Family lore states that the quilt was made by Mette Andrea Christine Munthe (1762–1805) and two of her sisters about 1765. In 1791 Mette married Christopher Andressen Munthe Juel (1767–1804), a pastor at Hjelmeland and later Time, both villages in the Stavanger area (fig. 8).[54] Their daughter, Ingeborg Marie Juel (1793–1841), inherited the quilt and, in turn, passed it down to her daughter Marie, Tolleif's mother, who brought it with her on the journey from Norway.

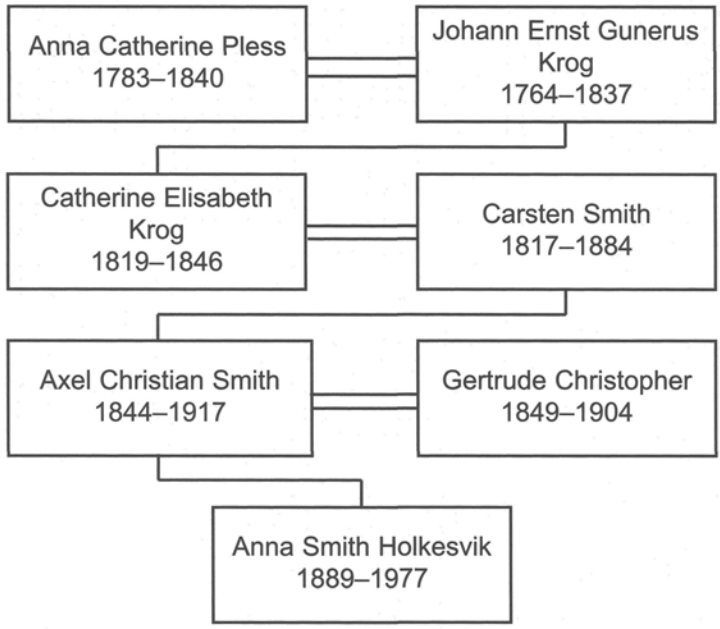


Figure 9. Krog/Smith family chart

The Smith Family Quilt

In 1976, at the age of eighty-seven, Anna Smith Holkesvik (1889–1977) donated to Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum several items she had inherited from her father, Dr. Axel Christian Rosenkrands Smith (1844–1917).[55] Among the donated items was the wholecloth yellow silk quilt, which Holkesvik identified as having been made in Norway by her paternal grandmother, Catherine Elisabeth Krog Smith (1819–1846).[56] Catherine Elisabeth Krog was born in Arendal, Norway, to a well-to-do clergyman and his wife. Her family history shows that her relatives included wealthy sea captains, businessmen, and pastors, with familial connections to Denmark (fig. 9).[57] From 1536 to 1814, Norway was ruled by Denmark, and Danish culture strongly influenced Norwegian society.[58] Norway's upper class therefore had strong cultural ties with Denmark, particularly in the areas of religion and education; the

upper-class men who became priests and civil servants trained and studied in Denmark.

In 1842 Catherine Krog married Carsten Smith (1817–1884), the son of a sea captain. Smith's grandfather was the pastor in Øyestad, not far from Arendal; and Carsten Smith grew up on the *prestegard*, or pastor's farm. At the time of the 1801 census, the family was living on the *prestegard* in a large, comfortable house, and they employed nine servants.[59] Carsten Smith was a military officer and government official: he was a member of the Royal Taxing Commission in Oslo. In the course of his lifetime he served in several civil-servant roles, including district governor (*amtmand*) in Nordland.

Carsten and Catherine Smith lived in Stavanger, where Carsten held a government post. Their two children were born there: Anna, in 1843, and Axel, in 1844. Catherine died in 1846, at the age of twenty-seven, when Axel was two years old. Axel Smith grew up and became a medical doctor. He immigrated to Decorah, Iowa, in 1873 to serve as the first physician at Luther College.[60] As a member of the educated upper class in Norway, he came to America to take a prestigious post at a Lutheran college created to train ministers for the growing Norwegian immigrant community. In 1873, Dr. Smith married Gertrude Christopher, the daughter of Norwegian immigrants. The couple had four children, only two of whom survived to adulthood. His son also became a doctor, and his daughter, Anna, married Julian Holkesvik.[61]

The history of the quilt is undocumented, but it seems likely that Dr. Axel Smith brought it with him when he emigrated in 1873. Leaving Norway as an adult, unaccompanied by other family members, Axel Smith may have brought the quilt with him as a family heirloom, a valued memento of his family and his Norwegian heritage. Alternatively, he may have received it later, perhaps as a result of the distribution of a family estate. Bolstering this argument is the fact that Anna Holkesvik also donated a sewing table said to have belonged to her grandmother, Catherine Krog Smith, and brought to Iowa by her father, Dr. Axel Smith.

Familial and Ethnic Identity

Although extensive genealogies are available for both the Smith and Thomsen families, the only indication for a shared family connection for the two quilts is the frequency of two family names, Juel and Krog. Individuals in both the Thomsen and Smith families moved in the same upper-class circles in Stavanger, as well as in Bergen and Trondheim, which were the largest Norwegian coastal cities and where trade and wealth were concentrated. Both families included parish priests, who at that time represented Norwegian aristocracy and wealth, as well as businessmen and sea captains. And both families had connections with Denmark, including church and school affiliations, reinforcing their positions as part of Norway's ruling class.

For the descendents who emigrated, the silk quilts represented their past in Norway. Marie Thomsen had inherited the green silk quilt from her mother and, while Marie's married life was not one of wealth and comfort, the quilt was both a memento of her own family and a symbol of her connection to past status. According to Thomsen family lore, the green silk quilt never left the trunk in which it came to America, only being taken out briefly to be admired on special occasions. Homesteading in the north woods was a rough life, and winters were very cold. In 1855, another immigrant to Minnesota, Theodore Bost, wrote back to his parents in Switzerland, "It's so cold that the logs . . . make continual crackling noises, and I have great difficulty keeping warm even in my little cabin."[62] But rather than being put to use, the green quilt stayed safely in its trunk, a treasured memory and a souvenir of a life that was past.

Axel Smith, who immigrated as a young man, brought to America mementos of a mother who had died when he was two years old. For him the quilt would have represented another kind of loss, as well as a connection with memories of childhood and family. After the passing of the first generation of immigrants, their descendents in both families had a different relationship with the quilts, just as they had a different relationship with Norway. The

quilts came to represent Norwegian cultural heritage as well as family ties. This is part of the reason that family heirlooms are donated to museums, where these ties are preserved and publicly recognized. An object's preservation in a museum makes available and accessible to future generations their connection to past family members, and to their history and traditions. Tolleif Thomsen's descendents are very proud of their family history and still come to the Minnesota History Center to visit "their" quilt.

While Axel either brought his mother's quilt with him or received it later in life, Tolleif Thomsen arrived in America with his mother and her quilt, which he then inherited after her death. Both men passed their quilts to their daughters, and it was their daughters who gave them to museums.

Purchased or Made in the Home?

Although oral family narratives attribute the quilts to family members, we considered the possibility that they may have been ready-made, imported luxury goods, or that they were made in a commercial workshop in one of Norway's cities, like Bergen or Oslo. According to Linda Eaton, "Quilts, as well as the textiles from which they were made, have always been associated with world trade," and we have established Norway's role as a country of sailors and traders.[63] Eaton refers to advertisements for fabric and quilting in eighteenth-century American newspapers for textiles imported from "Persia, India, Flanders, Turkey, Hamburg, Holland, Russia, Scotland, England, France, and . . . Marseilles."[64] The same goods that were traded in the colonies were certainly available in Norway, and fashions did not take long to arrive by sea from the Continent or Great Britain.

We know that quiltmaking was an activity practiced by upper-class women in Norway during the eighteenth century, and it is certainly possible that members of the Thomsen and Smith families participated in the making of these quilts. What is harder to determine is the role professional quilters or quilt markers may

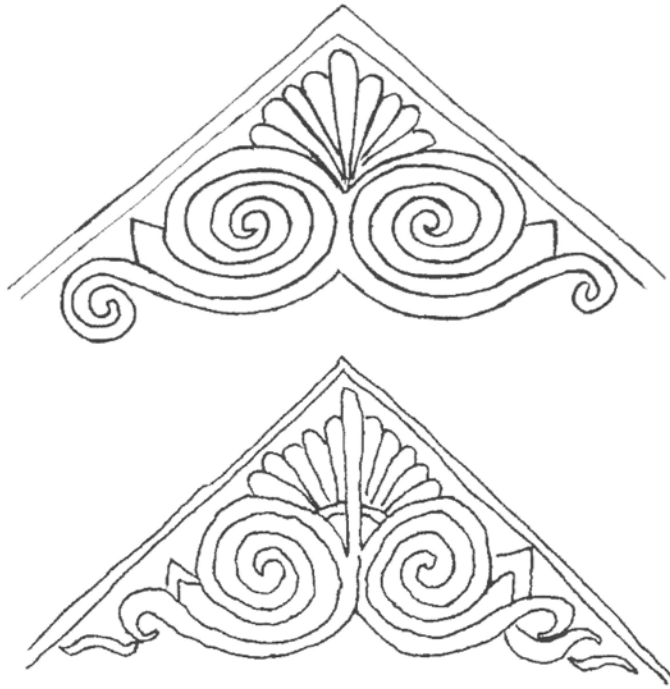
have played in the process of domestic quilt production. As an examination of the genealogies of the two families does not point to a common ancestor who might have served as the maker of both family quilts, we looked for evidence that an outside professional might have designed both quilts. We took a closer look at what is known about Norwegian quiltmaking.

Material Connections in Norway

While the center-medallion format, and quilting motifs such as the cable, egg-and-dart, and flowering vine are typical of eighteenth-century wholecloth quilts, other quilting motifs—the scrolls, palmettes, and center tulip medallions—are uncommon. Joan Foster, following the publication of her book on Norwegian quilts, has located three silk quilts in Norwegian museums that share some similarities with the two immigrant quilts in our study.[65]

Two of the quilts Foster discusses are in the collection of the Bergen Museum in Norway. The first of these has a center panel of red silk damask, set within a wide yellow silk border, and an undyed linen backing.[66] The red center features an unusual Jacobean star motif, and the borders are quilted with alternating scrolls-and-palm and palmettes, similar to the designs on the two immigrant quilts. Of the five quilts identified with similar motifs, this is the only one that is dated and initialed: the date "1742" and the initials "M F" are embroidered at the base of one of the palmettes within the border.

The second of the Bergen Museum quilts has a large central panel of painted silk surrounded by narrow red borders.[67] The central section is painted in the manner of an Indian palampore although its Chinoiserie motifs are unusual; if it was made in India, it was done specifically for the European market. The borders are quilted with scrolls-and-palm and palmettes in the same manner as the other quilts in Norway and the immigrant quilts. Like the two immigrant quilts, this one has cutout corners. The backing of this quilt is pieced from multiple block-printed cottons.



Figures 10a and b. Scrolls-and-palm motifs from quilt in the National Museum of Decorative Arts, Trondheim, Norway, NK395-1899 (above) and the quilt in the Bergen Museum, B 8504 (below).
Tracings by Peggy Derrick, from photographs provided by Joan Foster

The third Norwegian quilt is owned by the National Museum of Decorative Arts, in Trondheim.[68] A wholecloth quilt of yellow silk featuring a center-medallion design, this quilt bears the closest resemblance to the two Norwegian immigrant quilts in American museums. It also has two cutout corners and a two-color, block-printed cotton backing.[69] The quilting motifs on this quilt appear to be similar though not identical to the ones on the immigrant quilts: a center medallion of tulips and leaves, as well as similar outer border motifs.

The three quilts Foster has located in Norway all contain the scrolls-and-palm motif, in the form of two scrolls topped by a symmetrical palm, closely adhering to the classic shape and proportions (figs. 10a and 10b). On the immigrant quilts, the palm above

the scrolls has been replaced with a tulip. None of the quilts Foster discusses is embellished with the woven ribbon trim that is found on the immigrant quilts.

The one factor shared by the two Norwegian immigrant quilts—and the three quilts in Norwegian museums—is the wide outer border with quilting motifs of alternating scrolls-and-palm and palmettes. The center medallion incorporating tulips is found in nearly identical form on the two Norwegian immigrant quilts, and in a variant form on the quilt in the Trondheim museum. Additional research into other Norwegian decorative arts, specifically rosemaling and woodcarving, might reveal evidence of similar designs or regional interpretations of neoclassic motifs.

Exploring the Design Process

To better understand the process by which the designs were created and marked on these two quilts, and to compare their motifs in detail, we decided to trace the designs from each quilt. This allowed us to compare the designs closely without having to remove the quilts from their respective museums. In each case the quilt was covered with a clear protective sheet of Mylar, a strong polyester film, which was then overlaid with another sheet of Mylar onto which we traced the patterns (fig. 11).

We found that the process of slowly tracing the designs by hand led to a deeper understanding of the original construction of the designs, as we began to be more aware of the individual units and their symmetry.[70] We gained a new appreciation for the artist's logic and skill and the economy with which the designs were created.

Tracing the motifs confirmed that these designs were drawn freehand, not transferred using stencils. As our hands followed the contours of the motifs, we realized how cleverly they were based on easily repeated elements. It became obvious that these forms represented the design vocabulary of an individual quilt marker who was repeating something she or he had done many times. The center medallion, for example, could be easily repeated freehand by first

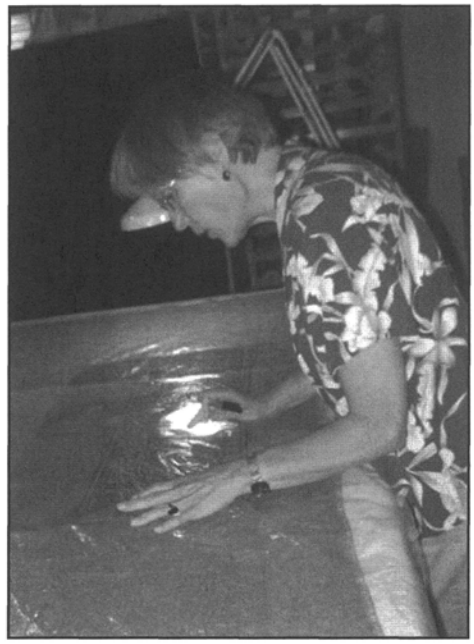


Figure 11. Judy Calcote tracing the Thomsen quilt designs onto Mylar. *Photograph courtesy of Linda McShannock*

laying out the circle and dividing it in quarters and eighths. This then guided the quilt marker in placing first the center rosette, and then the four tulips and alternating four leaves. The result is a design that is surprisingly consistent, even when repeated over and over, with small variations.

When we overlaid the Mylar sheets from the two quilts, our initial impressions were confirmed: even though the designs were basically the same, nothing lined up with the precision one would expect from a stencil. The large triangles in the wide borders, which frame individual motifs, turned out to be completely irregular, with wide variations in size and degree of angle. And small elements within the designs showed more variation than was apparent just by looking at the patterns. Swirls and ornaments were often added to fill in open spaces. The center medallion and the border designs revealed the same freehand drawing process.

The remarkable similarity of quilted designs in these two immigrant quilts in American museums strongly suggests that the same person had a hand in their construction. This theory is supported by other similarities in the fabrics, the quilting stitch, the cutout corners, and the nearly identical ribbon trim. All of these clues further indicate that the two quilts were made during the same time period, and, almost certainly, in the same place. Although the quilted motifs in the three quilts found in Norwegian museums are similar in imagery and layout, the two immigrant quilts clearly form a stylistic subset within a larger tradition.

Rethinking the Dates

According to the oral narratives handed down by the donors' families, these two quilts were made seventy-seven years apart. While theoretically possible, it seems highly unlikely that two such similar quilts were not made in the same period. Changes in fashion strongly influence quilt design, and the upper-class families associated with these quilts would have had an interest in following fashion trends.

When Tolleif Thomsen's daughter donated the green quilt to the Minnesota Historical Society in 1964, she indicated that it was her father, Tolleif, who told her it had been made by his great-grandmother and two of her sisters. Marie quoted him as saying, "This bedspread has been in my mother's family since about 1765. Mother, born 1825, got it from her mother, born about 1790. Her mother and two sisters embroidered it, and one became Ole Bull's grandmother and another Mother's."[71]

Genealogical research indicates that Tolleif was correct about his mother's birth date and that her mother, Ingeborg, was born in 1792; he was also correct that she was "born about 1790." However, Ingeborg's mother, Mette Andrea Munthe, was born in 1762, and she would have been three years old in 1765, far too young to assist in making a quilt. Even her older sister, Anna Margrete Munthe, who "became Ole Bull's grandmother," would have been only

seven.[72] It is possible that the date "about 1765" Tolleif remembered had originally referred to the birth date of his great-grandmother, not the year the quilt was made. This was also the year that the mother of these three sisters died, giving this date added significance to the family.[73]

Since Mette was the sister who got the quilt, it is reasonable to assume that it was made before her wedding in 1791, as quilts were often made in anticipation of marriage.[74] If she did indeed help make the quilt, we have a date range of approximately 1775 (when she would have been thirteen years old) to 1791. The physical evidence of the quilt is consistent with this date range.

When Anna Holkesvik donated the yellow Smith quilt to Vesterheim Museum, she said it had been made in 1842 by her father's mother, Catherine Elizabeth Krog Smith. But Catherine had died in 1846, when Anna's father was only two years old, making it highly improbable that she conveyed the quilt's history directly to her son. It is not clear when he was given the quilt or what he was told about it. Nor do we know exactly what he told his daughter, decades later. We theorize that the Smith's family quilt was made two generations earlier, placing it in the same time period as the Thomsen quilt: the last quarter of the eighteenth century. The family histories that accompany historic objects often ascribe earlier dates than the evidence can support. In this case, however, the quilt appears to be much older than the family history would indicate.

Conclusion

Through our genealogical research we were able to confirm that the ancestors of the individuals who brought these quilts to America lived in the area around Stavanger, Norway, that their families belonged to the same small social class, and that they may have shared a family or parish relationship. The material evidence of the quilts, combined with an analysis of the family stories, leads us to conclude that the two quilts were made in the last quarter of the

eighteenth century and that they were almost certainly drawn by the same experienced designer. Further, these two quilts, together with the three found in Norway, indicate the presence of a distinctive Norwegian expression of the larger eighteenth-century style of wholecloth silk quilts. This small sample offers a beginning point for further research. As additional examples are identified, in Norway and among emigrant communities elsewhere, researchers will develop a clearer understanding of Norwegian quiltmaking overall, as well as distinctive local and regional traditions. These fragments of material culture give us a glimpse of the decorative arts and women's handwork at a time when upper-class women produced or acquired decorative textiles for their homes. These quilts survive as an expression of that time and place. Future discoveries in Norway, and elsewhere in Europe, will help us understand more about these curiously related survivors of Europe's long, but little studied, quilting traditions.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to Joan Foster and the late Helen Kelley, for generously sharing files and images from their research, and to Judy Calcote for her steady hand and careful observations. Blaine Hedberg of the Norwegian American Genealogical Center and Naeseth Library in Madison, Wisconsin, provided valuable genealogical assistance, as did Laurann Gilbertson, Textile Curator at Vesterheim Norwegian American Museum in Decorah, Iowa. We salute Astrid Thomsen and the Thomsen family for maintaining a relationship with "their" quilt.

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8. An Moonen, *Quilts: The Dutch Tradition* (Arnhem: Nederlands Openluchtmuseum, 1992), 10.

9. Dorothy Osler, *Traditional British Quilts* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1987), 82. According to Osler, "the first direct evidence for quilting in Britain relates to its use not for bedquilts but for padded armour."

10. Moonen, *Quilts,* 10. Moonen describes a quilted jacket worn by King João I of Portugal in 1385.

11. Averil Colby, *Quilting* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), 13–17; Sarah Randles, "The Guicciardini Quilts," *Medieval Clothing and Textiles,* vol. 5, ed. Robin Netherton and Gale R. Owen-Crocker (Rochester, NY: Boydell & Brewer, 2009): 99. According to Randles, "Numerous writers have described the quilts as trapunto work, a technique in which small holes are made in the back layer of the quilt and padding is inserted from the rear. However, there is no evidence of cuts on the back of the V&A quilt, and it would have been difficult to insert large pieces of padding between the threads of the ground fabric with a needle. This suggests that the padding might have been placed between the layers of the quilt before they were stitched."

12. The "Tristan" quilts are in the collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, and the Bargello Museum, Florence, Italy. For an image of the quilt in the Victoria and Albert Museum, see: http://collections.vam.ac.uk/objectid/O98183.

13. Randles, "Guicciardini Quilts," 93–128.

14. Ibid., 126–27.

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31. Examples of this research include Foster, *Gamle Tekstiler*; Åsa Wettre, *Old Swedish Quilts* (Loveland, CO: Interweave Press, 1996; originally published as *Gamla svenska lapptäcken* [Sweden: Tiden förlag, 1993]); Birgit Glüsing, *Gammelt dansk Patchwork* (Copenhagen: privately printed, 2003).

32. Wettre, *Swedish Quilts*, 28. The image is also available at: http://www.durantextiles.com/newsletter/documents/news_6de_07.asp.

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34. Wettre, *Swedish Quilts*, 36–37.

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36. Ibid., 7–8.

37. Ibid., 8–9.

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39. Textile conservator Newbie Richardson examined the quilt in the MHS collection on June 2, 2008. She confirmed our identification of the silk fabric as taffeta, suggesting that it might be lutestring. See Florence M. Montgomery,

Textiles in America 1650–1870 (New York: W. W. Norton, 2007), 283–85.

40. For information on pre-synthetic natural dyes see: J. N. Liles, *The Art and Craft of Natural Dyeing* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1990), 145–46; Agustí Nieto-Galan, *Colouring Textiles: A History of Natural Dyestuffs in Industrial Europe* (Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001), 1–30.

41. Jennifer Mary Wearden, *Persian Printed Cottons* (New York: Harry. N. Abrams, 1989).

42. Richardson, personal communication, June 2, 2008.

43. These findings resulted from Peggy Derrick's empirical research into quilting using the backstitch.

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54. To confuse matters, Mette's mother was Ingeborg Marie Juel. These two families intermarried repeatedly, often using the same first names as well.

55. The Smith family name came from a Scottish ancestor who immigrated to Norway in the 1600s.

56. Genealogical information for the Smith and Krog families was compiled from the following sources: church and census records (microfiche), Lassen Collection; *Winneshiek County Biographies* (Decorah, IA: Decorah Genealogy Association, 1996); Johan Carl Louis Lengnick, *Familien Krog* (Copenhagen, 1856).

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63. Eaton, *Quilts in a Material World*, 112.

64. Ibid.

65. Joan Foster, "One Common Border, Two Continents, Three Countries: A Study of a Set of Silk Wholecloth Quilts," *Quilt Studies: The Journal of the British Quilt Study Group*, vol. 10, ed. Hazel Mills, (Peasholme Green: British Quilt Study Group, 2009), 59–88. Detailed information on two additional quilts in private collections in Britain was not available to be included in our study.

66. Bergen Museum collection, University of Bergen, Norway, accession B 8504.

67. Bergen Museum collection, accession B 4518.

68. National Museum of Decorative Arts, Trondheim, Norway: accession NK395-1899.

69. Joan Foster, email messages to authors, 2005–2007.

70. Judy Calcote, an MHS volunteer and quilter, traced the Thomsen quilt; Peggy Derrick traced the Smith quilt.

71. Correspondence attributed to Tolleif Thomsen, museum accession collection file 64.73, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, MN.

72. Ole Bull was a world-famous nineteenth-century Norwegian violinist and folk hero.

73. In McShannock's experience as a curator, the dates ascribed to donated objects are often those associated with significant family events, such as births, deaths, or marriages.

74. Wettre, *Swedish Quilts*, 36–37; Sjøvold,0 *Broderikunst*, 24.

William Pinch and the Rainbow Quilt Block Company

Sharon Fulton Pinka

Quilt block designer William Pinch is virtually unknown outside the Midwest, yet his Rainbow patterns have been identified in quilts all over America. As the embroidered and appliquéd quilts of the 1930s and 1940s emerge from attics and become available through estate sales, quilt collectors and researchers ponder the origin of the distinctive, but unattributed Rainbow designs. The author describes the career of William Bray Pinch and his Rainbow Quilt Block Company of Cleveland, Ohio, and establishes his role in the quilt world. Through analysis of surviving quilts, quilt block designs, advertising ephemera, and photographs, supported by interviews, memorabilia, and correspondence from family members, William Pinch, the self-described "Maker of Pretty Quilt Blocks," emerges as one of the most influential quilt-block designers of the twentieth century.

During the first half of the twentieth century, many needlecraft-supply companies sold patterns and pre-stamped quilt blocks. The availability of commercial embroidery and appliqué patterns, quilt kits, and pre-designed formats encouraged a shift from an emphasis on individual design and technical skill to the replication of existing designs. These companies marketed their products to women, promoting nostalgia, women's needle arts, and traditional values and extolling efficiency and time-saving measures.[1]

The Rainbow Quilt Block Company was founded by William

Bray Pinch in 1925 in Cleveland, Ohio. The company produced pre-stamped blocks to be worked in embroidery, appliqué, or a combination of both.[2] Pinch developed a special printing process, using metal-embossed rollers to mechanically reproduce the color spectrum on muslin squares. The stamped colors indicated the yarns needed for embroidery motifs, and this process led to the company name, Rainbow.[3]

Pinch created approximately a thousand designs between 1925 and 1972. He marketed the company's products through mail order, retail stores, and print advertising. During his long career, he maintained a reputation for high-quality products and appealing designs. This article describes the important role played by William Pinch and the Rainbow Quilt Block Company within the quilt industry during the second quarter of the twentieth century.

The Emergence of the Needlecraft and Quilt Pattern Industry

In the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, the Colonial Revival swept the nation. This movement developed from a convergence of influences related to a nostalgia for the perceived simplicity and virtue of pre-industrial America, and it had a powerful impact on home decorating, as well as historic preservation, architecture, and literature.[4] Decorators strove for a look reminiscent of their ancestors' homes. Though evocative of an earlier era, "colonial" décor actually seemed *new* compared to previous decorating schemes. Designers reintroduced or reinterpreted quilt styles that had been popular in America prior to the Civil War.[5] Companies renamed traditional patterns with colonial associations, such as Martha Washington's Wreath, Grandmother's Flower Garden, and Colonial Basket.[6] Even patterns such as the fan and the pieced tree, designed in the 1870s and 1880s, were marketed as colonial designs.[7]

By the 1920s, *McCall's Needlework and Decorative Arts Catalog* proclaimed, "Old-Time Patchwork Quilts Now in Vogue Stir New Enthusiasm," and asked, "What could be more charming for the

Colonial bedroom than a real patchwork quilt such as great-grandmother used to make?"[8] Women's magazines and quilt-pattern companies created fictional spokeswomen with colonial-sounding names, such as Hope Winslow, Grandma Dexter, and Aunt Martha. These grandmotherly characters appeared in photos and illustrations, conducted correspondence with customers, and promoted their respective companies' patterns and supplies to an audience eager to reinterpret vintage quilts.[9]

Syndicated newspaper columns promoted the trend under such pen names as Nancy Cabot (*Chicago Tribune*, *New York Daily News)*, Laura Wheeler (*Kansas City Star),* and Nancy Page (*Detroit Free Press, Nashville Banner*). Others, such as Eveline Foland, Ruby McKim, and Edna Marie Dunn (*Kansas City Star),* wrote using their own names. These columns provided additional resources for quilt designs by publishing pattern series, sponsoring contests, and offering needlecraft supplies and quilt kits as ways to bolster readership.[10]

Founded in 1889, the earliest successful mail-order quilt-pattern business was the Ladies Art Company of St. Louis, Missouri. Ladies Art offered pre-stamped blocks, patterns, and quilt kits through its mail-order service. Another mail-order business, the W. L. M. Clark Company, sold paper patterns and perforated quilting designs through its *Grandmother Clark's* catalogs. Additional mail-order quilt-related businesses of the 1920s and the 1930s included Hubert Ver Mehren's Home Art Studios, Virginia Snow Studios/Collingbourne Mills, the John C. Michael Company, the Robert Franklin Supply Company, and F. A. Wurzburg & Son.[11]

The needlecraft industry was already well-established by the time William Pinch entered the field. Other quilt-pattern designers generally sold transfers or perforated designs, but Pinch offered only single-use pre-stamped fabric quilt blocks. He also promoted the time-saving option of quilt kits. His success was due, in part, to the use of color in his embroidery blocks, his colorful advertisements in national publications, and his knack for designing popular and appealing graphics. Pinch capitalized on the growth of the mail-order market by printing Rainbow flyers and newsletters and

advertising heavily in *Needlecraft Magazine*, published in Augusta, Maine.[12]

By the 1930s, the Rainbow Quilt Block Company emerged as a prominent player among the many needlecraft businesses producing quilt kits and patterns. Pinch claimed sales of a million nine-inch pre-stamped blocks a year through the combined efforts of the Needlecraft Supply Company of Chicago, the retail stores of Ben Franklin, S. S. Kresge, F. W. Woolworth, and G. C. Murphy, and the catalog outlets of Sears, Roebuck and Montgomery Ward.[13] He estimated that the company supplied 3,200 stores across the country in its peak distribution during the 1930s.[14]

William Bray Pinch

William Pinch was born April 30, 1880, in Cleveland, Ohio, the oldest of five children of Sarah Adelaide (Ferin) and Alpha Warren Pinch. His parents were originally from Oshawa, Ontario, Canada, and William traveled back and forth to Canada throughout his life.[15] In 1890, when he was ten years old, William's family returned to rural Bowmanville, Ontario, Canada. Willie, as he was known by family and friends, quit school before finishing the fourth grade in order to work on the family farm. To compensate for a lack of formal education, he became a life-long voracious reader and educated himself on many subjects.[16] Pinch's daughter, Verna Pinch Niemann, later described how her father's childhood experiences influenced his values:

> [Dad] enjoyed the beauty that surrounded him in the city, and later on [the] farm. [His] father instilled in his family the reverence and fear of God, and an appreciation for nature. At an early age, William had a leaning to the arts, and his mother encouraged him to get away from farm life that he might pursue his dreams in life.[17]

William was variously described as small in stature, "limber and agile," always interested in new things, and as a personable man with an eye for design. Using these talents and with his mother's

Plate 1 (*referred to on page 19*). Thomsen quilt; made by Mette Andrea Christine Munthe, Anna Margrete Munthe, and Marie Sophie Brun Munthe; c. 1790. Silk with cotton backing; backstitch quilted; 83 x 78 in.
Photograph courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society, 64.73

Three sisters made this quilt, possibly for the marriage of Mette Munthe.

Plate 2 (*referred to on page 19*). Smith quilt, unknown maker, c. 1790. Silk with cotton backing; backstitch quilted; 95 x 93 in. (241 x 236 cm.)
Photograph courtesy of Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum, LC2405

Plate 3 (*referred to on page 20*). Detail of Thomsen quilt.
Photograph courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society, 64.73

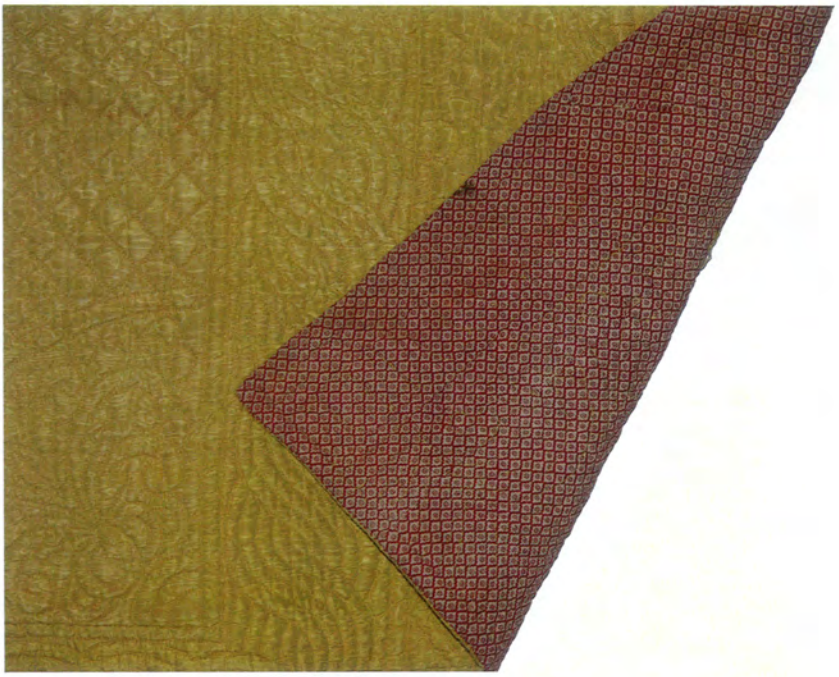


Plate 4 (*referred to on page 20*). Detail of Smith quilt.
Photograph courtesy of Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum, LC2405

Plate 5 (*referred to on page 54*). Floral sampler quilt from Rainbow patterns, unknown maker, c. 1935. Cotton; hand-appliquéed, hand-embroidered, hand-quilted; 78 x 92 in.
Collection of Rose Werner

Plate 6 (*referred to on page* 59). Lady's Head and Bird, unknown maker, store sample of Rainbow pattern #550. Cotton; hand-embroidered; 20 x 20 in.
Collection of Sharon Fulton Pinka

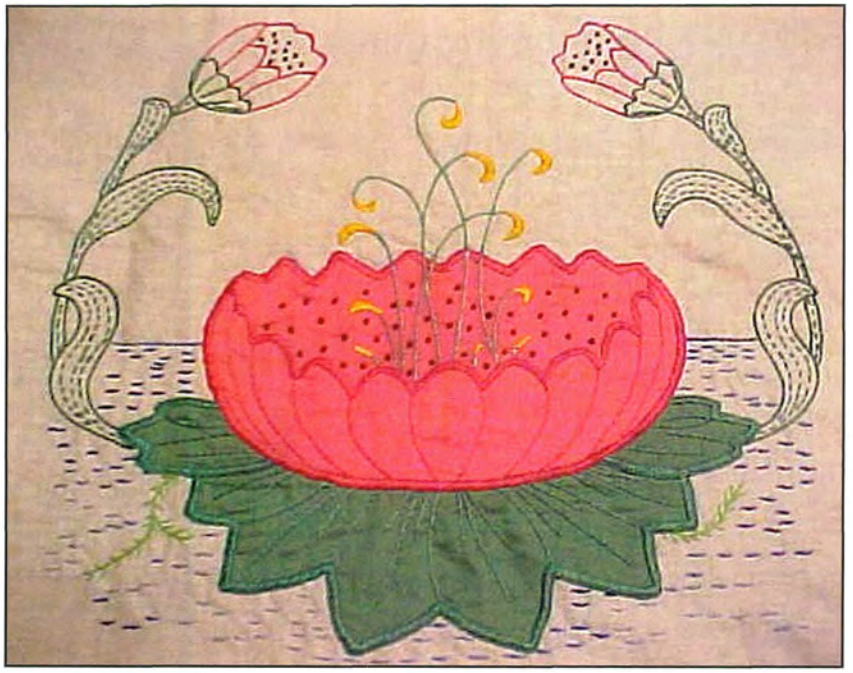


Plate 7 (referred to on page 59). Water Lily block, unknown maker, Clark and Victoria pattern #33 or Rainbow pattern #708. Cotton; hand-appliquéed, hand-embroidered; 18 x 18 in.
Collection of Sharon Fulton Pinka

Plate 8 (*referred to on page 62*). Victory quilt, unknown maker, c. 1945. Cotton; machine-pieced, hand-embroidered, hand-quilted; 75 x 100 in.
Collection of Sue Reich

Plate 9 (referred to on page 67). Floral sampler from Rainbow patterns, made by H. Square, c. 1940. Cotton; machine pieced, hand-appliquéed, hand-embroidered, hand-quilted; 63 1/2 x 79 in.
Collection of Beth Donaldson; photograph by Pearl Yee Wong

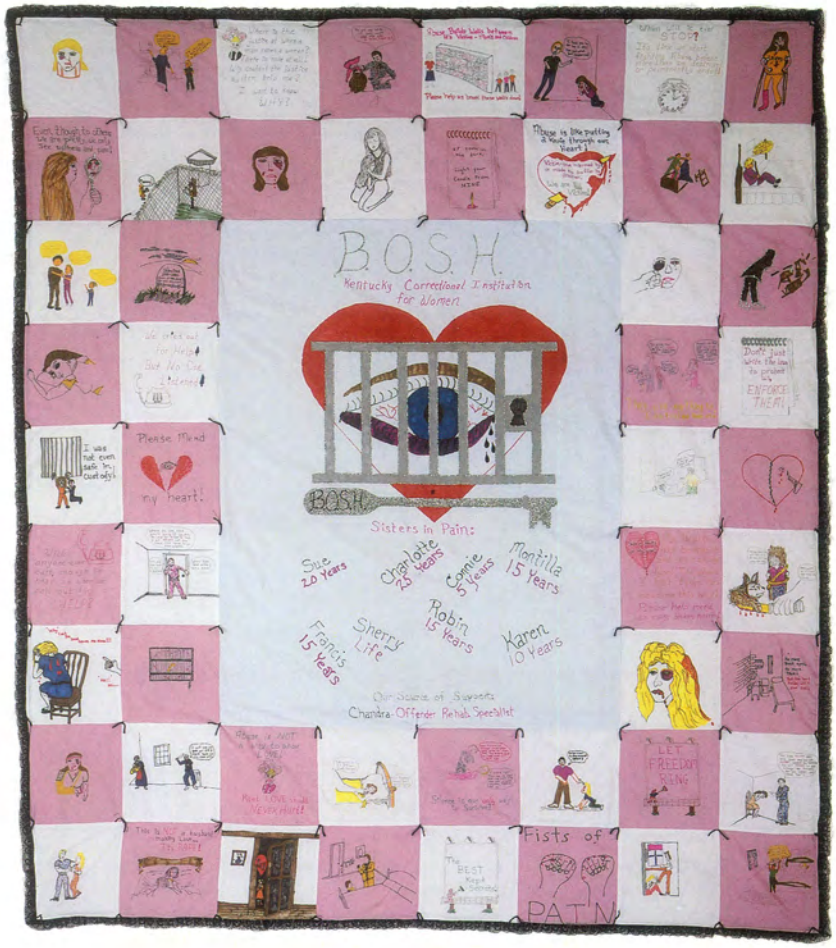


Plate 10 (*referred to on page 77*). B.O.S.H. Prison Quilt, Kentucky Correctional Institute for Women, 1995. 96 x 106 in.
Photograph courtesy of The Kentucky Quilt Project, Inc.

Plate 11 (*referred to on page 78*). "This is not a husband making love," B.O.S.H. Prison Quilt.
Photograph courtesy of The Kentucky Quilt Project, Inc.

Plate 12 (*referred to on page 93*). "Why can't you just leave me alone?" B.O.S.H. Prison Quilt
Photograph courtesy of The Kentucky Quilt Project, Inc.

Plate 13 (*referred to on page 94*). "Blond with black eye and blood," B.O.S.H. Prison Quilt
Photograph courtesy of The Kentucky Quilt Project, Inc.

Plate 14 (*referred to on page 95*). "Heart with gun," B.O.S.H. Prison Quilt
Photograph courtesy of The Kentucky Quilt Project, Inc.

Plate 15 (*referred to on page 95*). "Abuse is like putting a knife thorugh our heart!" B.O.S.H. Prison Quilt
Photograph courtesy of The Kentucky Quilt Project, Inc.

Plate 16 (*referred to on page 97*). "Prisoner with child calling, 'Mommy,'" B.O.S.H. Prison Quilt
Photograph courtesy of The Kentucky Quilt Project, Inc.

Plate 17 (*referred to on page 137*). Medieval Hoseman, unknown maker, c. 1810–1830. Cotton, pieced; 91 x 93 in.
Photograph courtesy of International Quilt Study Center, 2005.053.0004*

*The International Quilt Study Center & Museum is located at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The museum houses the largest publically held quilt collection in the world. The 3,000-plus quilts date from the early 1700s to the present and represent more than twenty-five countries. The Center also offers a unique masters degree in Textile History with a Quilt Studies emphasis. For more information visit www.quiltstudy.org

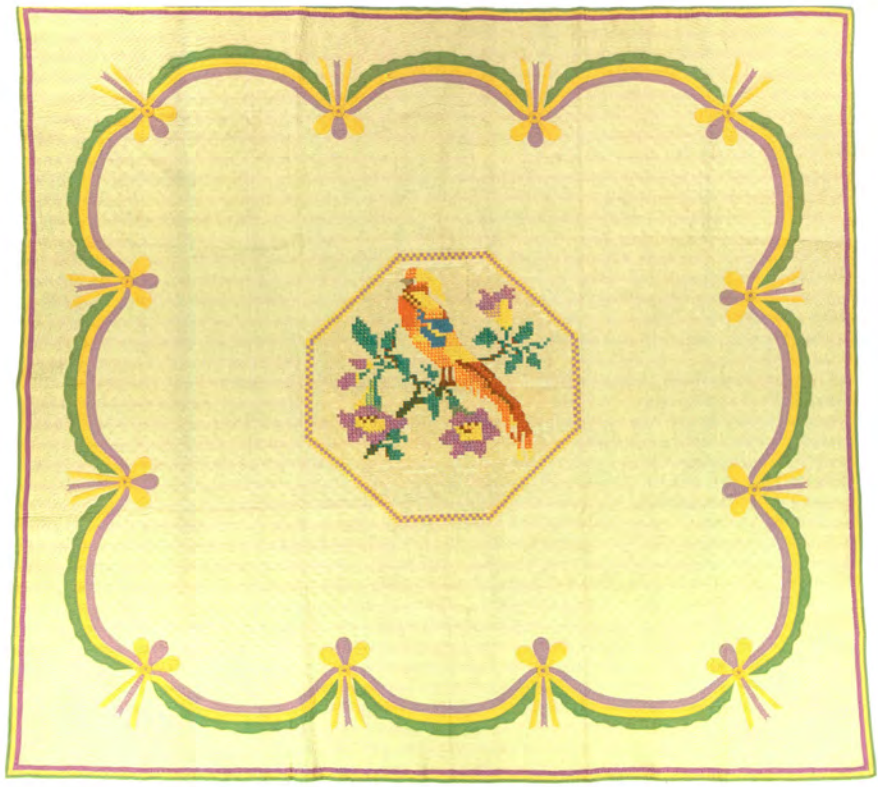


Plate 18 (*referred to on page 146*). Bird of Paradise, made by Grace McCance Snyder, 1943–1944. Cotton, pieced and hand-quilted.
Collection of Jo Morphew

Plate 19 (*referred to on page 152*). Heirloom Basket, Mary Fitzgerald, 2009. Cotton, machine pieced and quilted; 90 x 98 in.
Collection of Mary Fitzgerald

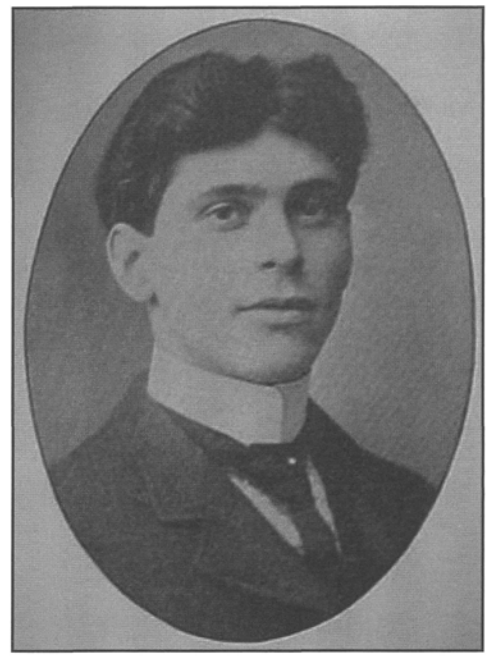


Figure 1. William Pinch, c. 1910.
Courtesy of Randy Niemann

help, at age nineteen he found a job retouching photographs as an apprentice to photographer Herbert S. Simpson, in Toronto.[18] After learning the photography trade, Pinch moved to Cleveland sometime around the turn of the century.[19] He operated the William Pinch Photography Studio for many years, first at 226 Superior Avenue NW, and later at West 25th Street (fig. 1).[20] In 1911 he was awarded two patents, one for an "Automatic Switch-Operating Mechanism" (used to time the length of photographic exposures), and a second for a "Design for a Scene for Photographic Foregrounds." With the second application, Pinch included a drawing of a chick towing a small wagon carrying a large cracked egg. When a child's photo was inserted behind the scene, the child appeared to be sitting in the egg itself.[21]

During his early years, Pinch became very health conscious. He later attributed his long, active life to a diet consisting mostly of fruits, nuts, and vegetables. He also studied vitosophy, the practice of interpreting human temperament and character from outward appearance, especially the face. Pinch often said it was this study

that helped him understand people he met and worked with in business and life. According to his daughter Verna, "it ultimately changed William's life greatly, which caused him to write and publish a book, *Rapid Character Reading by the Science of Vitosophy*."[22]

In 1924 he met and married Signe Ingeborg Dahlman (1906–1992). A native of Lynn, Massachusetts, the eighteen-year-old bride was twenty-six years younger than Pinch. Their only child, Verna Rose, was born two years later, in 1926.[23] The Pinch family remained in Cleveland for the next forty-five years as Pinch's career shifted from photographer to quilt-block designer and entrepreneur.

The Early Development of the Rainbow Company, 1920–1925

Sometime around 1920, Pinch decided to enter the quilt-design industry. A friend recalled in a 1972 interview, "He told me that one day he noticed his mother doing some embroidery and inquired about it. After looking over her design, he thought he could make nicer designs and told her so. That was fifty years ago and the beginning of Rainbow quilt blocks."[24] Verna said that her father's ideas often came from wallpaper designs.[25]

In 1921 Pinch joined the Clark Art Embroidery Company. Founded by Ralph Clark, the company marketed its products through mail order and the "Art Embroidered Patch Quilt" catalog. The company designed embroidery and appliqué patterns, as well as aprons, dresser scarves, and tablecloths.[26] Tapping into the popularity of the Colonial Revival, the Clark Company offered quilt kits, noting, "The oldest American families, from Colonial and Pre-Revolutionary times, cherish quaint appliqué quilts of various designs. Truly, these quilts make precious heirlooms."[27]

In 1922 Pinch became Clark's partner in their next venture, the Victoria Art Manufacturing Company, also known as Victoria Quilt Blocks.[28] Pinch's background in design and Clark's experience as a salesman helped launch their embroidery-pattern business. By 1924 the Victoria Art Manufacturing Company operated

out of Pinch's Cleveland home, a newly-built two-story house.[29] Pinch described Victoria products as being produced in a "clean, sunny factory by automatic machinery stamping on a fine grade of white muslin. The stamping is uniform. The designs are pleasing and artistic."[30]

Pinch and Clark produced at least sixteen themed series, each consisting of twelve different blocks. The themes included circus animals, months of the year, kittens, fairies, birds, and baskets. The stamped designs were available as nine-, twelve-, and eighteen-inch blocks and were advertised at a cost of $1.06 to $1.20 for a set. Individual stamped nine-inch blocks were priced at two for five cents.[31] With each order, Pinch included his brochure, "18 Pretty Ways of Setting Quilt Blocks Together."[32] In the company newsletter, Pinch noted, "We maintain the largest variety of quilt block designs to be found anywhere, and we believe that our output ranks first in the world. Quilt blocks are our specialty and we don't stamp anything else—therefore—you can be assured of quality."[33]

In addition to mail-order sales, the company offered some of its designs through the Boyd Manufacturing and Import Company in Cleveland; the latter included at least three series of nine-inch blocks entitled Nursery Rhyme, Sunbonnet Babies, and Flowers.[34] In a promotional letter sent to prospective customers, Pinch described the virtues of his own company's products compared with those of his unnamed competitors. The Victoria blocks, he noted, "are not stamped by hand, and are free of hand stamping defects such as double stamping or blur, uncentered designs, too strong or too weak stamping."[35]

The Production of Rainbow Blocks, 1925–1941

In 1925 Pinch bought out Clark's share of the business and renamed the company the Rainbow Quilt Block Company.[36] To facilitate faster block production, he visited similar businesses in Cleveland to observe their automated methods and incorporated that knowledge into the design of new stamping machines. Using

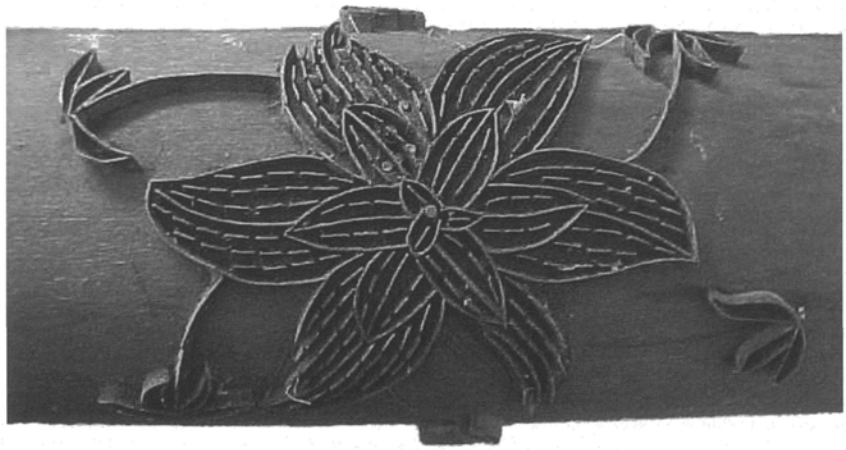


Figure 2. Pinch's early printing methods used large wooden rollers embedded with metal forms in the shape of each pattern.
Courtesy of Randy Niemann

angle iron for the frame and structure, and electric motors, pulleys, and chains for the drive mechanism, Pinch developed stamping machines which reproduced the different colors needed to embroider the blocks.[37]

Three different machines of similar design produced the nine-, twelve-, and eighteen-inch blocks. Early versions printed the designs using large wooden rollers, embedded with metal outlines (fig. 2), while later iterations printed through perforated paper patterns in wooden frames.[38] With the framed patterns held in place, a felt pad inked each pattern on the fabric in a process similar to silk-screening, producing newly-stamped blocks at a rate of eighty-four per minute in up to five colors.[39] The stamped fabric was then moved to the next station, where it was cut to size and stacked for packaging and shipping. A mechanized cutter, used in the clothing industry, could slice through fifty to seventy-five layers of the continuous-roll fabric at a time.[40]

To house his new machinery, Pinch added another two-story wooden building, which served as his factory for the next forty-six years. The 2,500-square-foot building included office and shipping space, a machine shop, design and photography studios, and the main manufacturing area.[41] Verna recalled, "The business and his

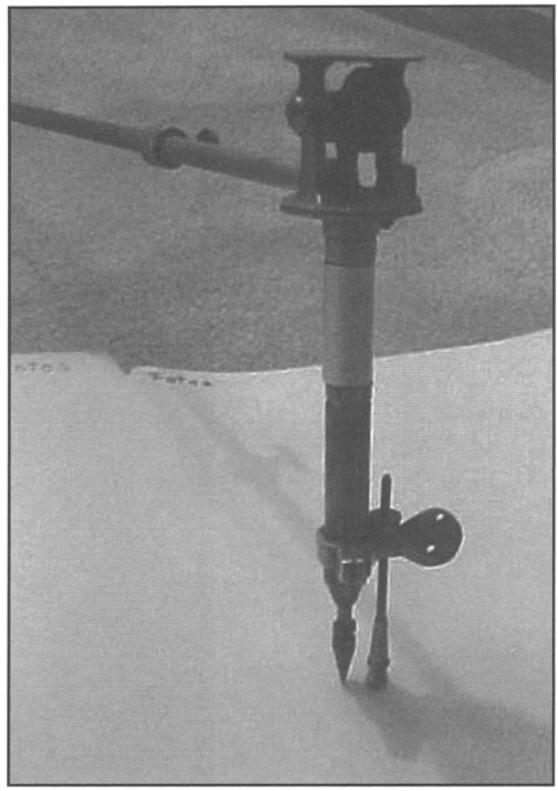


Figure 3. Pinch's motorized perforator punched holes in the paper pattern for ink transfer to the cloth blocks.
Courtesy of Randy Niemann

daughter were born the same year [1926], so I truly grew up with quilts."[42]

The company's machine shop housed the equipment Pinch developed to build the automated machinery in the Rainbow factory. Recycled and reconfigured parts included a large lathe driven by an old Ford automobile transmission and a specially designed motorized hacksaw. First installed in the 1920s, these mechanical inventions continued to produce Rainbow blocks into the 1950s. Pinch's grandson, Randy Niemann, later recalled that the experience of being in his grandfather's factory was "like visiting a museum."[43]

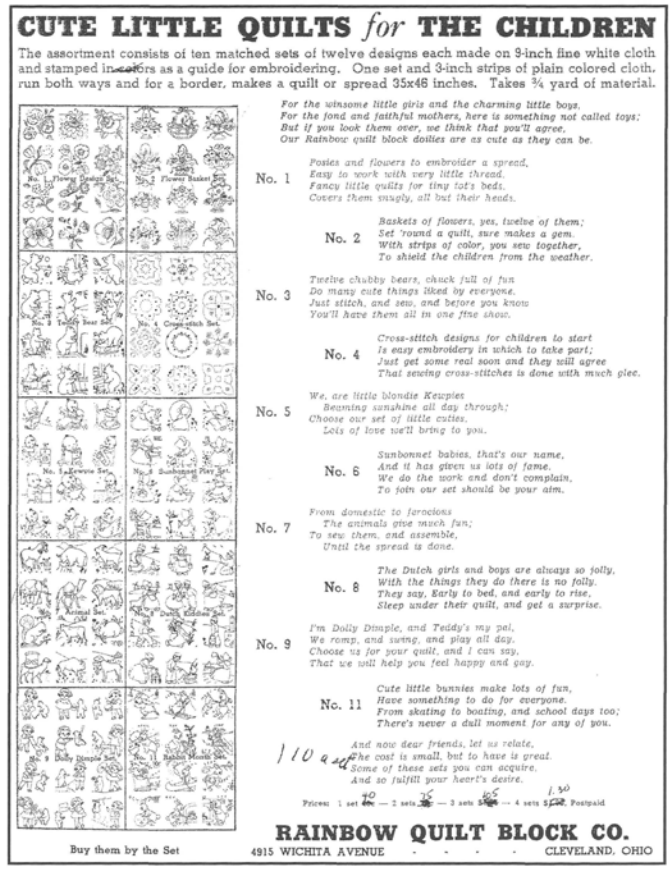
Designs for Rainbow Blocks, 1925–1941

The process of producing a new pattern began when Pinch sketched a design on tracing paper at his light table, then transferred that graphic onto heavier paper. With a motorized perforator of his own design, he punched holes into the pattern for ink transfer to the cloth blocks (fig. 3). Many of Pinch's designs included dolls, animals, birds, ladies, Dutch children, and others that he called "conventional motifs." His most distinctive creations, however, were his floral arrangements, which became particularly associated with the Rainbow aesthetic, described as "lovely designs with a free-flowing form and good balance" (plate 5).[44]

By 1931 Rainbow offered appliqué blocks for the same price as embroidery designs, reflecting the renewed popularity of appliqué quilts. The style, which declined during the first decade of the twentieth century, was revived in the 1920s and flourished in the 1930s.[45] New Rainbow appliqué designs in 1932 included Sunbonnet Girl, Wild Rose, Pansy, Butterfly, Colonial Lady—"quaint and demure in her colonial hoop-skirt"—and Romper Boy—"toddling and roguish."[46] In contrast with the rainbow colors of the embroidery designs, the appliqué blocks were stamped with blue or black ink.

A Rainbow flyer, "Cute Little Quilts for The Children," featured ten themed sets of twelve embroidery designs for forty cents each. The sets included Flower Design, Flower Basket, Teddy Bear, Cross-stitch, Kewpie, Sunbonnet Play, Animals, Dutch Kiddies, Dolly Dimple, and Rabbit Months (fig. 4). The flyer's poetic sentiments were designed to appeal to customers looking for just the right quilt for a particular child:

> For the winsome little girls and the charming little boys,
> For the fond and faithful mothers, here is something not called toys;
> Fancy little quilts for tiny tots' beds
> Covers them snugly, all but their heads.



CUTE LITTLE QUILTS *for* THE CHILDREN

The assortment consists of ten matched sets of twelve designs each made on 9-inch fine white cloth and stamped in colors as a guide for embroidering. One set and 3-inch strips of plain colored cloth, run both ways and for a border, makes a quilt or spread 35x46 inches. Takes ¾ yard of material.

For the winsome little girls and the charming little boys,
For the fond and faithful mothers, here is something not called toys;
But if you look them over, we think that you'll agree,
Our Rainbow quilt block doilies are as cute as they can be.

No. 1 — *Posies and flowers to embroider a spread,*
Easy to work with very little thread.
Fancy little quilts for tiny tot's beds,
Covers them snugly, all but their heads.

No. 2 — *Baskets of flowers, yes, twelve of them;*
Set 'round a quilt, sure makes a gem.
With strips of color, you sew together,
To shield the children from the weather.

No. 3 — *Twelve chubby bears, chuck full of fun*
Do many cute things liked by everyone.
Just stitch, and sew, and before you know
You'll have them all in one fine show.

No. 4 — *Cross-stitch designs for children to start*
Is easy embroidery in which to take part;
Just get some real soon and they will agree
That sewing cross-stitches is done with much glee.

No. 5 — *We, are little blondie Kewpies*
Beaming sunshine all day through;
Choose our set of little cuties,
Lots of love we'll bring to you.

No. 6 — *Sunbonnet babies, that's our name,*
And it has given us lots of fame.
We do the work and don't complain,
To join our set should be your aim.

No. 7 — *From domestic to ferocious*
The animals give much fun;
To sew them, and assemble,
Until the spread is done.

No. 8 — *The Dutch girls and boys are always so jolly,*
With the things they do there is no folly.
They say, Early to bed, and early to rise,
Sleep under their quilt, and get a surprise.

No. 9 — *I'm Dolly Dimple, and Teddy's my pal,*
We romp, and swing, and play all day.
Choose us for your quilt, and I can say,
That we will help you feel happy and gay.

No. 11 — *Cute little bunnies make lots of fun,*
Have something to do for everyone.
From skating to boating, and school days too;
There's never a dull moment for any of you.

And now dear friends, let us relate,
The cost is small, but to have is great.
Some of these sets you can acquire,
And so fulfill your heart's desire.

Prices: 1 set 40 — 2 sets 75 — 3 sets 1.05 — 4 sets 1.30 Postpaid

RAINBOW QUILT BLOCK CO.

Buy them by the Set — 4915 WICHITA AVENUE - - - - CLEVELAND, OHIO

Figure 4. "Cute Little Quilts for the Children," Rainbow sales flyer, c. 1930.
Courtesy of Randy Niemann.

The children's sets proved popular, evidenced by the number of surviving examples among baby quilts made in the 1930s. The ad closed with these encouraging words:

> And now dear friends, let us relate,
> The cost is small, but to have is great.
> Some of these sets you can acquire,
> And so fulfill your heart's desire.[47]

Rainbow's Panel Kits, 1925–1941

In addition to sets of blocks, Rainbow also produced kits for full-sized quilts in panel form. Designs for baby quilts, called "coverlets," were printed on white cloth panels measuring 36 by 45 inches. Customers could order baby coverlets in a variety of themes: "flowers and birds," "bubbles and guardian fairies," "bunnies in monthly occupations," and "Teddyville, full of funny busy teddies." The sales flyer stated, "No quilting necessary, just finish by adding a border of any width and color desired."[48]

Pinch designed his full-sized "Modern Travel Quilt for Boys" as square-yard panels. He set the central design, a large ship, on point. Two smaller ships and two airplanes, stamped on triangular panels, served to frame the center. The pattern included a rectangular pillow bolster depicting a car and a fishing boat.[49]

"The United States Quilt," one of Pinch's most ambitious projects, appeared in a 1935 *Needlecraft Magazine* ad and cost $3.98. Designed as a U.S. map, each eighteen-inch block was printed with several states, which were then surrounded by additional blocks with designs of rose sprays, the Capitol, the White House, and the Liberty Bell. The customer could further embellish the quilt by embroidering fifty-one butterflies, scattered over the states in a profusion of "harmonious colors" (fig. 5).[50] Apparently, the United States Quilt did not sell well, as it did not appear in subsequent Rainbow flyers. Quilt researcher Cuesta Benberry later inquired about the quilt after seeing the *Needlecraft Magazine* advertisement. Pinch sent her a drawing made from the original perforated pattern, and asked, "Is this part of the one you want? I thought them too expensive when I made them. Put them aside and forgot them for over 20 years." Benberry purchased the complete quilt kit from Pinch around 1967 for $7.15.[51]

The Marketing of Rainbow Products, 1925–1941

Rainbow advertised in various needlework publications from the mid-1920s through the 1930s, most frequently in *Needlecraft*

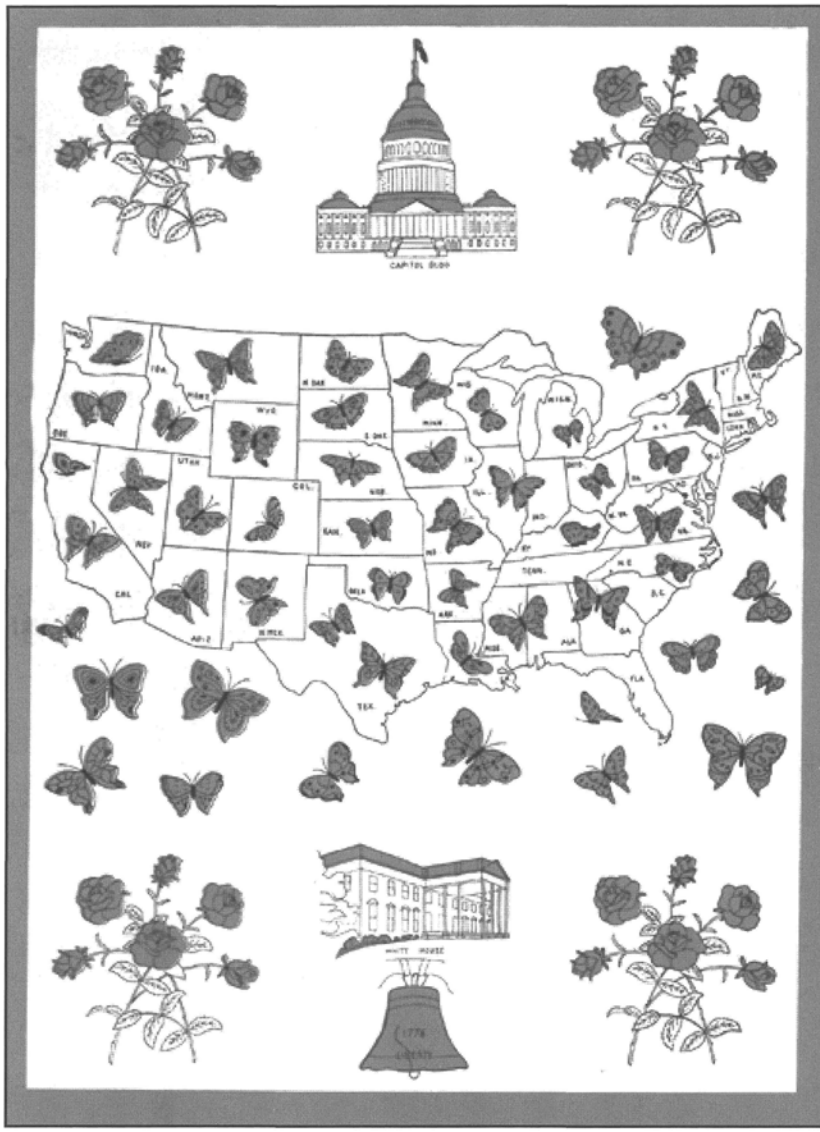


Figure 5. United States Quilt, Rainbow pattern #1079
Advertisement in Needlecraft Magazine, *February, 1935.*

Magazine, whose circulation often exceeded 800,000.[52] Many Rainbow ads featured art-nouveau-style embroidery and appliqué designs printed in full color. Customers could purchase Rainbow quilt kits with different combinations of blocks, pre-cut pieces, pre-

stamped appliqué and/or embroidery designs, floss, thread, quilt binding, and backing fabric. According to quilt researcher Xenia Cord, "In the 20th century, quilt kits were an innovation. Offered as an opportunity to return to the needlework skills of our 'colonial foremothers,' kits promised an easy format that was attractive, appeared to assure success, and did not require the selection and purchase of quantities of fabric."[53]

A 1930 *Needlecraft Magazine* ad emphasized the Rainbow marketing strategy of selling blocks in sets: "We offer you these blocks in lots of one dozen of a design. We cannot break dozens and besides you do not want to mix designs in one quilt."[54] This philosophy later changed, possibly due to customers' desire to mix different patterns in the same quilt. Some quilters undoubtedly traded their duplicate blocks to add variety to their selections.

Needlecraft Magazine occasionally offered Rainbow products as subscription premiums.[55] Many magazines used these techniques, often called club raisers, to increase their circulation. For soliciting a certain number of subscriptions, the reader received a free subscription, special reward, or discounted product advertised in the magazine. *Good Stories* magazine (printed by the *Needlecraft Magazine* parent company) offered its readers a Rainbow incentive: for every seven subscriptions sold in 1937 (at twenty-six cents each), they would receive forty-eight muslin embroidery blocks stamped with the states' names and flowers.[56] The magazine thus increased its circulation, the readers received compensation for their sales efforts, and Rainbow products reached new customers.[57] In a similar marketing strategy, Rainbow sometimes offered discounts to mail-order customers if they submitted names and addresses of prospective customers: "If you will send us three or more names of ladies whom you know have embroidered quilt blocks or would like to, we will give to you in appreciation of your effort, a reduction from the regular price."[58]

To promote retail sales, Pinch occasionally sent worked—already embroidered or appliquéed—models to large department stores to show how the finished item would look. Samples ranged from simple nine-inch blocks to full-sized quilt tops. Stores sometimes

returned those models to Pinch, who later sold at least one, "Lady's Head and Bird," to Benberry in 1964 for her quilt collection (plate 6).[59]

Pinch recycled many of his earlier Clark and Victoria patterns as Rainbow products, although the identification numbers were sometimes changed (plate 7). The names associated with Rainbow patterns through the years have been a source of confusion. According to pattern collector Rose Lea Alboum:

> The quilt blocks were not assigned names [by Pinch], having only numbers to identify each design for ordering purposes. The total range of his numbering system is from one, through, I believe, nine hundred and forty. Names which eventually were given to these blocks were thought of by quilt enthusiasts who used information of descriptions in leaflets or chose names which best described the blocks. Thus the same block might be known by several different names.[60]

Identifying a Rainbow pattern can be difficult, especially after the blocks are finished and set into a quilt, with the pattern number no longer visible. Unfinished appliqué design panels, however, often retain the company name and copyright date hidden among the printed leaves, blossoms, and figures, which aids in identification (fig. 6).

Rainbow continued to produce new designs and to expand its customer base, thus ensuring a stable income for Rainbow employees. Pinch credited his relatives with helping him build and maintain his machinery, as well as run the thriving mail-order business.[61] During the height of production in the 1930s, Pinch employed not only a secretary, but his brother, Warren, and nephews Ted, Orel, and Gerald.[62] According to his daughter, Verna, "At one time, his crew consisted of eight people. Even though the country was in a depression, business was good."[63] Rainbow's bright pastel fabrics, attractive floral and figural patterns, and colorful brochures formed the core of the company's success. Reflecting on the somewhat surprising popularity of quilting in a time of economic hardship, quilt researcher Merikay Waldvogel remarked, "If you read magazines of the 1920s and 1930s, especially women's magazines, you would

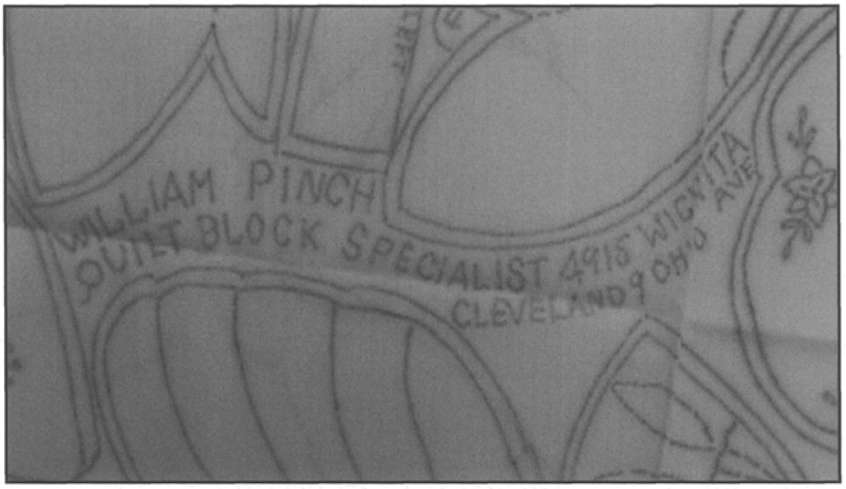


Figure 6. Identification stamp, "William Pinch Quilt Block Specialist," printed on margins of appliqué fabric.
Colonial Ladies, Rainbow pattern #400.
Cuesta Benberry Collection, Great Lakes Quilt Center, Michigan State University Museum

never know the country was experiencing an economic depression. People do not want to read about hard times; they do not want to be reminded of them. Obviously, products do not sell when associated with hard times."[64]

The Rainbow Company during World War II

The advent of World War II in 1941 brought many changes to the country and to the Rainbow customer base. Many stay-at-home women suddenly found themselves working in factories to support the war effort, reducing the leisure hours available for needlework. Brightly colored fabrics became popular for clothing, curtains, and bedcovers, and embroidered quilts fell out of favor. Elaine Steck, Pinch's next-door neighbor, remarked, "Women didn't do embroidery—they went to war!"[65] Fabric manufacturers converted their products to serve the war effort, thus reducing the availability of fabric for home use. Newspapers limited the number of quilt-

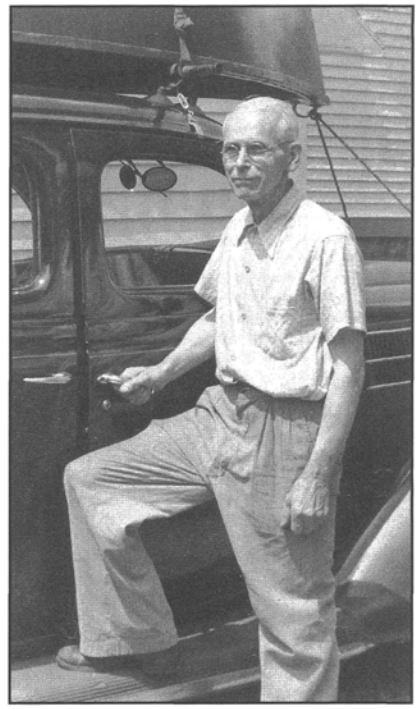


Figure 7. William Pinch, c. 1940.
Courtesy of Randy Niemann

related features they printed, and paper shortages put some pattern companies out of business. All of these factors contributed to a decline in the popularity of quiltmaking.[66]

Needlecraft Magazine, Pinch's primary advertising medium, abruptly ceased publication in 1941, leaving him with just his mail-order sales and store orders. There are no records of Pinch's activities during the war years, although, as required, he registered for the draft in 1942.[67] By then, William Pinch was sixty-two years old (fig. 7). He may well have welcomed semi-retirement to help his wife, Signe, thirty-seven, raise their sixteen-year-old daughter, Verna.

During the war years, Pinch reintroduced an earlier 1930s design, the Victory Quilt: "Surely every quilt-making patriotic person would like to have one of these beautiful Victory quilts as a future memento of the faith in our victory of the greatest war in history." The six-block design featured outline-embroidered blocks with large flower-covered Vs formed by the words *LIBERTY* and

FREEDOM, and small patriotic images of the American flag, star of hope, dove, scales of justice, rainbow, and the word *VICTORY*.[68] Rainbow offered this pattern in a color brochure showing the twelve-block quilt set with red sashing and white and blue borders. In a letter to Cuesta Benberry, Pinch wrote, "The Rainbow Victory quilt was such a good seller after the late war that when my 5000 first printing of circulars ran out, my patterns were [also] worn out."[69] Rainbow continued to produce this design through the 1960s (plate 8).

The Rainbow Company as a Solo Operation, 1950–1971

After World War II, Pinch operated his business alone and sold the blocks directly to mail-order customers.[70] Pinch later recalled the changes during this period in a letter to Cuesta Benberry:

> Forty years ago I began making up 9 inch blocks for stores. These sold in nearly every dry goods store where presented. As time went on many designs were replaced with new ones and the older ones side tracked or discarded. Since World War II all color printing ended and stores cancelled and I am alone stamping by hand all blocks except 18" Double Wedding Ring blocks, which are made in a machine.

He signed his letter with the epithet, "85 ½ years old and very alive and well."[71] Pinch offered no reason for discontinuing the color printing process. Perhaps he found himself unable to handle or maintain the machinery alone.

By the late 1950s, Pinch was once again creating new patterns, often for custom orders. A series of letters in 1960, from Pinch to Mrs. E. W. Healy of St. Petersburg, Florida, reveals his continuing desire to please his customers and provide original quilts, sometimes deviating from his usual block format. Pinch worked for several months on an original design for a Saint Patrick quilt. He wrote to Mrs. Healy:

> This has been one of the hardest designs I ever had to do, and had I realized the amount of time required to make it, I might never have

> started it. To reproduce a facial expression for art needlework is a difficult proposition and if I had not had 20 years experience in professional photography I could not have made this one. Pattern making is always expensive. I have so many new patterns to draw, perforate, trace with black lines, to photograph, to make engravings, write up the designs or explain them, so a printer can make circulars to send to the ladies.[72]

Pinch continued to distribute brochures through the 1960s, offering new or re-worked designs. He even offered to stamp designs on customers' own fabric: "You can get any of these blocks at half price by sending me your own cloth and I will furnish the appliqué."[73] Since Pinch no longer used the equipment to stamp in color, he stamped the designs in black ink during this period. Cuesta Benberry recalled the smell of the ink: "One could tell the kits were freshly stamped because often when they came in the mail, the odor of kerosene was still quite strong. Mr. Pinch would warn [me] not to be alarmed, just air out the kits a couple of days, and the odor would disappear."[74]

Round Robins and the Canadian Rainbow Branch, 1950–1971

Customers who wanted full-sized Rainbow patterns ordered them in fabric form or bought them in the yard-goods departments of local stores. During the 1950s and 1960s, paper versions of quilt patterns circulated informally through the mail among networks of pattern collectors called Round Robins. According to Alboum, "Women copied their blocks onto tissue paper and eagerly exchanged with others in hopes of expanding their own collections."[75] Some participants were not actually quiltmakers, but viewed the pattern-collecting as an end in itself. Round Robins helped maintain and renew interest in the Rainbow designs, even after the company no longer advertised in magazines but relied solely on brochures and newsletters.[76]

Round Robins helped to expand the scope of Rainbow designs, and they also produced a secondary market for patterns in paper

form. Several other mail-order businesses advertised Rainbow blocks while the company was still in operation. These pirated copies were sometimes poor-quality duplicates of the originals. Mary Conroy, writing in *Canada Quilts,* expressed her dismay with the practices of unscrupulous companies:

> Perhaps a word of warning might be in order here: quilters should remember that the designs created by Mr. Pinch . . . are protected by copyright and while it is permissible to trade with others to build up your collection of Rainbow quilt patterns, it is not "cricket" nor honest, to copy them for resale. . . . It is sad to see the travesties of the original designs that are peddled by some pattern dealers and collectors as "Rainbow" designs. . . . You are very likely to get a distorted, mutilated copy which bears little resemblance to the original.[77]

At some point, Pinch gave fifty stencils to his youngest brother, Norman Wilbur, who lived in Bowmanville, Ontario. Norman opened a Canadian branch of the Rainbow Company on a limited basis. Pinch often visited the area where he maintained a summer lodge and used his vacations to contact established customers. Grandson Randy Niemann remembers accompanying his grandfather on these trips to deliver new blocks to "his ladies."[78]

When Norman died in 1968, Irene Gow of Whitby, Ontario, bought the Canadian branch and ran it as a hobby for many years.[79] In 1972 she circulated a list of available patterns, each with a small sketch, and offered to stamp twelve blocks of the customer's own material with the selected design for $2.50. Like the original Rainbow patterns, these designs were only available as pre-stamped blocks.[80]

The Rainbow Company in the Second Generation

In 1971 Pinch marked the fiftieth anniversary of his career in the quilt-block business. From his mid-life start at age forty-one in 1921, he watched his small company grow and flourish by offering a variety of quilt designs and quality products. The company

survived the ebb and flow of quilting popularity, and customer interest resurged in the 1960s. At age ninety-one, Pinch still worked in the old factory, producing limited numbers of pre-stamped quilt blocks by hand. He continued to supply his mail-order customers and stores until his death on January 12, 1972.[81] He was survived by his wife Signe, sixty-five, and daughter, Verna Rose Niemann, forty-four. Verna described her father's later years: "He loved life and his work, regretting that there was so much more to do, but so little time left to do it in his last years."[82]

In 1973 Verna and her husband, Claus, cleaned out her father's factory, discarding much of the machinery and equipment.[83] They moved the remainder to their home in Lauderdale-by-the-Sea, Florida, and opened a combination quilt shop and mail-order business, renamed Rainbow Quilts. Like her father in his later years, Verna hand-stamped the quilt blocks by wiping an inked pad across the original perforated paper patterns.[84] Verna chose to print only the most popular of her father's designs: "The all-time favorite is still the cross-stitch Double Wedding Ring, with Oriental Poppy and the Butterflies Garden coming in a close second." She limited the business to what she could comfortably handle by herself, and marketed her service through her quilt shop and in small classified ads in quilting magazines (fig. 8).[85]

Verna also strove to ensure that others properly credited her father's designs as Rainbow originals. In 1987 she contacted the House of White Birches publishing company concerning two Sunbonnet patterns that had been featured in one of their publications without proper acknowledgment. The editor promised to remedy the oversight in a later issue.[86] Verna described another copyright violation: "Several years ago our Butterfly and Roses design was featured in *Better Homes and Gardens Magazine* and they were selling the copied pattern to their readers! Again, no credit was given to the origin other than to say this was found stashed away in someone's attic, a lovely example of the 1930s designs."[87]

As one of the few pioneer quilt companies still in operation, Rainbow Quilts moved several times in Florida. In 1979 the business relocated to Plantation; by 1987, to Delray Beach; and, finally,

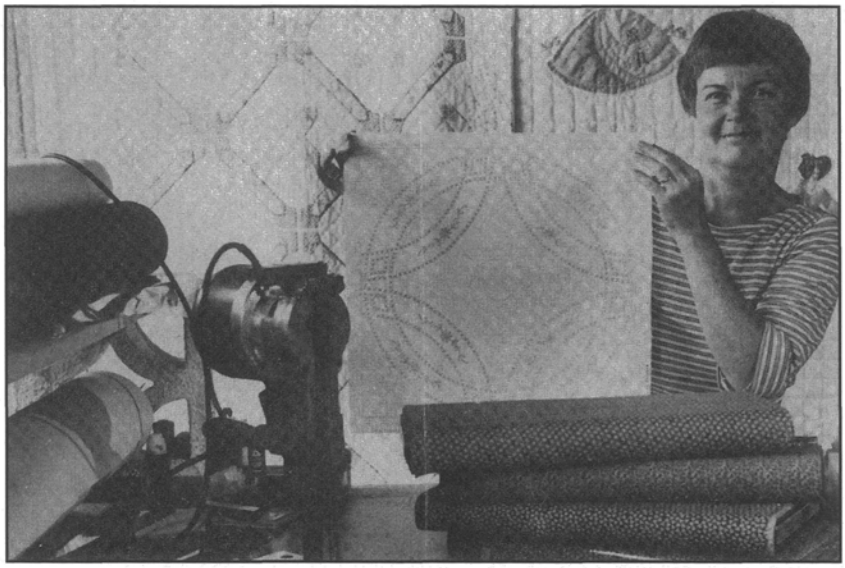


Figure 8. Verna Niemann with Double Wedding Ring block, Rainbow pattern #700, in 1979.
Courtesy of Randy Niemann

to Naples in the late 1980s. In 1979 Verna Niemann expressed her goal: "My fondest dream is that one day I will create a series of my own designs."[88] During the 1980s, Verna realized her wish with the creation of her own seven-block Hawaiian appliqué series, featuring deep tropical colors on twenty-four-inch blocks. Her delicate, distinctive designs ranged from the familiar patterns of the pineapple, iris, tulip, fleur de lis, and live oak to the unusual breadfruit tree and *ukelei* palm.[89]

In 1991 Verna and Claus Niemann closed their Naples location, thus ending over seventy years of the company's quilt-block business.[90] Verna passed away on Jan. 29, 2008. Before her death she entrusted her son, Randy Niemann, with her personal collection of Rainbow paper patterns, sample quilts, business records and correspondence, advertising catalogs and brochures, and vintage photos and family memorabilia, all of which served as the primary resources for this author's research.

Conclusion

William Pinch was a prolific quilt-block designer, credited as the creator of a thousand patterns, and his work greatly influenced the outline, cross-stitch, appliqué, and embroidery styles of the 1920s and 1930s. Both his Victoria and Rainbow blocks can be found in quilts throughout the country, yet attribution is difficult as the Rainbow name is seldom visible. As a result, his designs have been overlooked by documentation projects, and few Rainbow patterns are properly identified in published quilt surveys.

Pinch may have intentionally downplayed his involvement in the quilt business, a world dominated in the 1930s by female quilt designers. He marketed his products through mail-order catalogs and magazines, but his name never appeared in printed advertisements, only on the order forms and brochures sent directly from his company. Rainbow materials offered no clue that a male designer was responsible for the distinctive and popular patterns.

Many quilt researchers are unaware of the role that the Rainbow Company played in the popularity of quilt kits in the 1920s and 1930s. By revisiting and examining existing quilts, blocks, and ephemera, we may learn to recognize Rainbow designs and identify them as such. With the advent of online quilt indexes, the Rainbow quilts designed by Pinch will undoubtedly become more visible and recognizable. Just as we are learning to identify certain designs as the work of Anne Orr, Marie Webster, or Ruby McKim, we can also become more adept at recognizing a Pinch design. It is this author's hope that William Pinch will finally be recognized as one of the influential quilt-block designers of the twentieth century (plate 9).

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Xenia Cord for her encouragement to chase this Rainbow, her helpful feedback and suggestions, and her limitless list of contacts. My gratitude goes to Randy Niemann for

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APPENDIX: Guidelines for Identifying Rainbow Quilt Block Company Designs

From observation and study, I have compiled the following list of the characteristics of Rainbow Quilt Block Company designs. As these guidelines assist other researchers in identifying quilts made from Rainbow products, we will develop a better understanding of the scope of the company's influence on twentieth-century American quiltmaking.

Designs/Style of Blocks

- Pinch's earlier designs created for the Clark and Victoria companies generally contained more detail than his later Rainbow variations.
- Quilts made from eighteen-inch blocks often featured groups of twelve of the same design.
- Quilts made from nine-inch blocks often included twelve different designs based on a common theme, such as flowers, baskets, cross-stitch motifs, and animals.
- The most common themes for block designs included florals, baskets, and geometrics. Some figural designs, such as the Colonial ladies, showed body shapes but few faces. The New Testament quilt, a group of twelve blocks depicting the life of Jesus, contained the most full-featured figures.
- Line drawings, such as U. S. state outlines, the Capitol, the White House, ships, planes, and cars, were sold as full-size quilt kits, not as individual blocks.
- Rainbow designs were usually art nouveau (fluid) in nature rather than art deco (angular), although Pinch designed some "geometrics" made of angles and straight lines.
- Blocks featured central designs surrounded by open space.

Colors

- Rainbow appliqué designs featured the pastel solids typical of the 1930s: pink, blue, yellow, green, orange, and lilac.
- Rainbow offered some choice of color combinations, such as

Water Lily in yellow or pink, and Oriental Poppies in rose/blue, yellow/orange, or yellow/orchid.

SPECIFIC BLOCKS/QUILT KITS

- Rainbow's Sunbonnet Girl (#325) appears with her hand in her pocket, embroidered flowers and ribbon on her hat, and one foot showing. Romper Boy (#330) sports a bow on his hat, with both feet showing.
- Rainbow offered no whole-cloth stamped quilt kits, other than the 36- by 45-inch baby coverlets.
- With the exceptions of Utah and Ohio, Pinch abbreviated the names of the states in his original state birds/flowers series. He spelled out the names of Hawaii and Alaska when he updated the series in the 1950s.

MARKINGS

- Rainbow identification occasionally appeared on the edges of embroidery blocks. The information, printed in capital letters, included the company name, copyright date, and "Cleveland, Ohio." In appliqué blocks, this information also included Pinch's name and pattern number. This data would subsequently be discarded when customers cut the various shapes apart.
- Pinch sometimes marked a pattern number or series letter on his Rainbow blocks, but left most unidentified. Although he listed numbers and names in brochures and advertisements, there are confusing discrepancies in the numbering system and block names.
- Unlike other companies which sold similar quilt kits, Rainbow did not mark quilting designs on its eighteen-inch pre-stamped blocks. The actual quilting design was left up to the customer. The company did, however, sell spacer blocks labeled "quilting" motifs, to alternate with the embroidered or appliqué squares.
- At least two full-size quilts, the American Beauty Rose and the Columbine Special, were stamped with dots indicating how the completed top should be quilted. These quilts consisted of two center rectangles, two side panels, and two top/bottom panels.

ADVERTISING/MARKETING

- Rainbow did not sell patterns printed on paper, although pattern collectors sometimes circulated hand-drawn paper copies of Rainbow designs through Round Robin exchanges.
- Rainbow did not print catalogs of its own designs, but advertised in newspapers, magazines, the company's sales flyers, and other needlework catalogs.

BLOCK PRODUCTION

- Rainbow stamped its designs on good-quality muslin. From the 1940s through the 1970s, customers could also send their own fabric for printing.
- Prior to 1925 the Clark and Victoria companies hand-stamped their blocks in blue or black ink. Between 1925 and 1945, Rainbow mechanically stamped its embroidery blocks in pastel colors and its appliqué blocks in blue or black ink. After 1945 Pinch hand-stamped all blocks in blue or black ink, except for the Double Wedding Ring design, for which Pinch continued to use a specially designed machine until 1971.
- Rainbow printed several full-size quilt kits as separate panels, usually with a center square set on point. The center square was surrounded with four half-square triangles and topped with a rectangular bolster. Rainbow offered other full-size quilt kits with eighteen-inch embroidered and/or appliqué blocks, providing a diagram or photo that showed how the blocks should be joined.
- The Clark Company and, later, the Victoria Company sold nine-inch "series" blocks from 1920 through 1924. Rainbow continued to produce them from 1925 through 1971. Rainbow shipped its products from 4915 Wichita Ave., Cleveland, Ohio, between 1925 and 1971. Later shipments from Rainbow Quilts came from various Florida addresses.

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The Persuasive Power of a Quilt: A Study of a Women's Prison Project

Jane Amelon

In 1995 women convicted of committing felonies against their abusive partners, were serving sentences at the Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women. As part of their rehabilitation, the women formed the Battered Offenders Self-Help group (B.O.S.H.) and constructed a quilt. Their creation carried such a powerful persuasive message that it was displayed publicly to bring attention to the women's situation. Most significantly, upon viewing the graphic images depicting the experiences of battered women, Kentucky Governor Brereton Jones was moved to tears. He subsequently commuted the sentences of the quilt's makers. The persuasive power of the quilt succeeded where legal briefs had failed. The author discusses a variety of rhetorical studies of quilts, followed by an analysis of how the B.O.S.H. quilt communicated its persuasive message.

> A woman on her knees . . . a man holding a gun to her head . . . the caption "Do you want to die now or later?" A woman tied to a bed . . . a man with a knife to her throat . . . the caption "This is NOT a husband making love . . . It's RAPE!" A little girl in bed . . . a giant hand at her throat . . . the caption "NO PLEASE Daddy! Don't do this again!"

These images, and others equally disturbing, appear on the prison quilt made by the members of the Battered Offenders Self Help (B.O.S.H.) group (plate 10). They depict the very real stories of battered women imprisoned in Kentucky for killing or injuring

their abusers (plate 11). Since the nineteenth century, women have used quilts to express the messages they were unable to voice in public. By examining quilts in terms of rhetoric, we recognize them as a traditional method of persuasion available to women. Through rhetorical analysis, this paper shows how the B.O.S.H. prison quilt functioned as a form of persuasion.

Background

On January 27, 1992, Kentucky Governor Brereton Jones appointed Martha Weinstein to the post of Executive Director, Commission on Women.[1] Weinstein, a feminist, had been active in women's issues her entire adult life. She had first met the governor in 1988 when she unsuccessfully ran for the state legislature.

Settling into her new position, Weinstein found in her office a file labeled "Clemency." That folder prompted her to recall an article she had read a year earlier that reported that the governor of Maryland, William D. Schaefer, had granted clemency to eight women convicted of killing or assaulting their batterers. Ohio's governor, Richard F. Celeste, had also granted clemency to twenty-six women convicted of similar offenses.[2] After reading the article, Weinstein arranged to have lunch with Helen Howard-Hughes, the newly appointed chair of the Parole Board for the state of Kentucky. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Howard-Hughes had previously served in the same position Weinstein currently held, the Executive Director of the Commission on Women. During that time, Howard-Hughes had received a federal grant to research domestic violence victims in Kentucky. In 1993 her research remained the only data on domestic violence in Kentucky.

Marsha Weinstein and Helen Howard-Hughes met at Flynn's, a restaurant in Frankfort, Kentucky. At this meeting, the two women decided to use their positions of power to help vulnerable women who not only had been victimized by their husbands and boyfriends, but also further abused by the judicial system. During their meeting, Weinstein and Howard-Hughes discussed the recent

passage of Kentucky House Bill 256. The bill required the courts to consider the history of domestic violence when determining if the defendant is entitled to the defense of self-protection. Although signed into law, the Kentucky courts had not implemented this new legislation. Howard-Hughes assured Weinstein she would survey the cases of current inmates to determine who might be affected by this new law.

After reviewing the ways other states had organized clemency for convicted battered women, Weinstein and Howard-Hughes developed their plan of action. Weinstein first approached the Governor's General Counsel, Mike Alexander, asking him to outline the steps necessary to expedite a governor's clemency for the women inmates. Alexander informed her that the governor's policy was not to pardon anyone until he or she had been released from prison for ten years. A more formidable obstacle to her efforts was the prevailing attitude of what she later referred to as "the good ol' boy network," that women who were too stupid to remove themselves from abusive relationships probably deserved their battering.[3] Aware that current laws beneficial to battered women were being ignored and that the state government lacked an understanding of domestic violence, Weinstein realized that she needed a back door approach in order to effect change.

As Weinstein and Howard-Hughes investigated the issues of imprisoned women at the state level, an employee at the Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women (KCIW) initiated a program to help the women. On May 16, 1994, her first day as a rehabilitation counselor at KCIW, Chandra McElroy sent a memorandum to all prisoners inviting them to participate in a new self-help group for battered women. To be eligible, the women needed to satisfy three points: 1) they must have been convicted of murder or a related crime to their abusive partner; 2) they must take responsibility for their actions; and 3) they must admit what happened and what they had done. On August 8, 1994, twelve women attended the first meeting of the Battered Offender's Self-Help (B.O.S.H.) group.[4]

McElroy soon realized that she and the B.O.S.H. group needed to learn about domestic violence. On December 2, 1994, McElroy

sent a request for general information about domestic violence to various agencies in the state.[5] She was looking for facts and statistics about domestic violence, signs to look for in individuals who may be abusive, and characteristics of abused women. McElroy later recalled, "I wanted the women to feel empowered and feel as if they were taking an active role in learning about themselves."[6] Weinstein received one of these letters, contacted McElroy, and set up a meeting. Weinstein, accompanied by Sherry Currens, the Director of the Kentucky Domestic Violence Association, arrived at KCIW on April 3, 1995. They were met by KCIW warden, Betty Kassulke, who surprised them with her assertion that the convicted women had no business being in prison as they were trying only to defend themselves.[7]

The three women discussed their frustrations in dealing with Kentucky law. For example, the libel law in Kentucky forbids defendants to make derogatory statements about a deceased individual, effectively stifling evidence needed to defend abused women. Additionally, many defense attorneys considered domestic abuse a motive for murder; consequently, the battering the women sustained was never admitted into evidence. Even with new laws and guidelines, a debate emerged questioning the law: Are victims of domestic abuse being sent the message they will not be held accountable for their actions? Consequently, pardons relevant to domestic abuse sought by the Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy from 1992 to 1995 did not make it past the Parole Board.[8] Weinstein, Howard-Hughes, and Currens all voiced frustration and concern that their own voices were lost in the legal framework. Three powerful women in Kentucky, struggling to work within the system, recognized the obstructions to the battered women's freedom and their unsuccessful efforts in achieving justice for the women.

After the meeting with the warden, Weinstein and Currens met with McElroy and the B.O.S.H. group. At first, the inmates were very quiet. As they grew more comfortable, they began to speak, expressing a desire to prevent other battered women from suffering the same abuse and eventual incarceration as they had. As the

meeting drew to a close, an inmate named Rachel said, "No one cares about us, and we have no voice."[9] The word voice reminded Weinstein of something she had once heard. Speaking to a meeting of Jewish women, Shelly Zegart had described the role quilts have played throughout history in giving women a voice. Zegart, a well-known quilt collector and curator, had used the example of nineteenth-century women who expressed their support of the temperance movement through their quilts.[10] Through needlework, an activity deeply embedded in the women's sphere of home and family, women had expressed their ideas in a non-threatening manner. Weinstein suggested that the inmates make a quilt with pictures telling their stories.

The Process

The B.O.S.H. Group embraced the idea, recognizing that they could use the quilt as a way to educate the public. They also recognized that the process of making a quilt could be therapeutic. McElroy saw the project as an opportunity to "help bring the women closer and increase their self-esteem."[11] Unable to leave the prison, the group asked McElroy to purchase pink and white fabric for their quilt. Not really knowing what was needed, McElroy purchased markers and pink and white sheets from the local Wal-Mart, using funds supplied by the prison. Two inmates, Sherry Pollard and Karen Stout, had some quilting experience, so they told McElroy to purchase the batting, the backing fabric, and the yarn for tying. McElroy purchased blue yarn and lace because the women "wanted the quilt to be attractive."[12]

On April 13, 1995, less than two weeks after the project's conception, the women met to begin work on their quilt.[13] McElroy later recalled that, since no one had ever listened to the women's stories of domestic violence; "the women wanted this quilt to represent everything they had been through."[14] When given the materials, "they took off with the idea and worked on the quilt in all of their spare time together."[15] Some of the women drew the actual

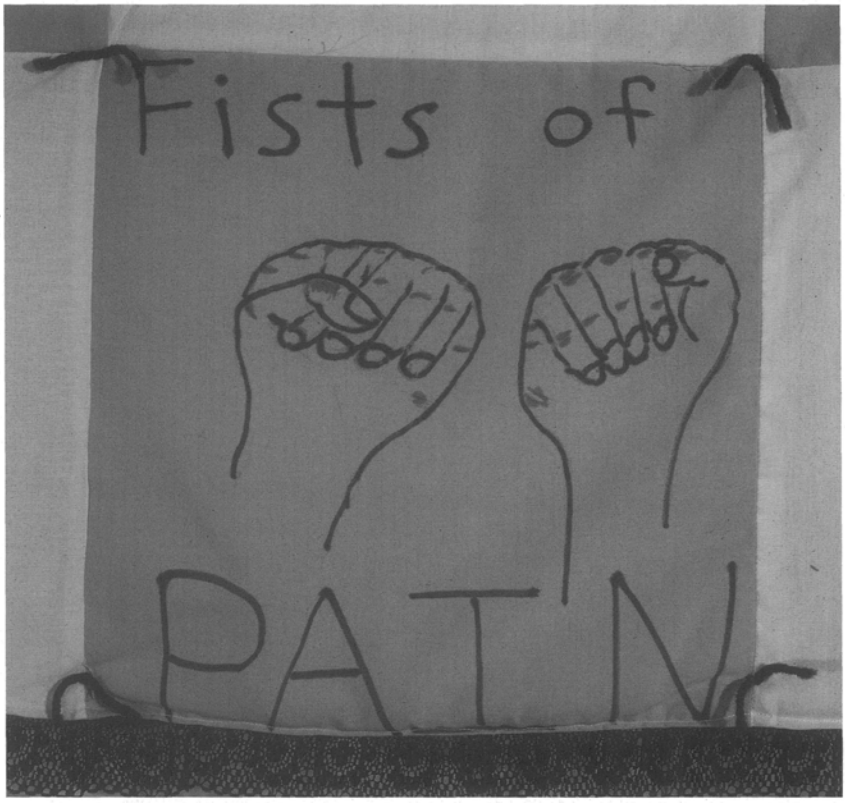

Figure 1. "Fists of Pain," B.O.S.H. prison quilt.
Courtesy of The Kentucky Quilt Project, Inc.

pictures for their own quilt blocks, but others could not. Some women could draw their own quilt blocks, but needed help in coloring in the images of their story. They often found it just too difficult to relive these horrid memories. The women worked on each other's quilt blocks, passing them around for others to complete. As McElroy explained, "They could look at the other person's, but they couldn't look at their own."[16]

Each woman completed five or six quilt blocks depicting aspects of her life of abuse. When their quilt blocks were completed, the women typically asked someone else to keep them; it was simply too frightening to have those images close by (fig. 1). So this

cadre of women shared the responsibility of protecting their friends from the horrors of the images of their lives.

For the large square in the center of the quilt, the group recruited the artistic talents of another female inmate. From the group's suggestions, this inmate drew the tearing eye behind the bars with a key underneath. The group later adopted this image as their logo for a T-shirt.

McElroy recalled the night the B.O.S.H. group came together to arrange the finished blocks for their quilt: "Nobody was speaking. Everybody was crying. Very emotional. [It was the] first time they had brought all of their squares and placed them all out."[17] As the culmination of the group's efforts to translate their emotional memories into tangible, visible, and material form, this event proved to be a powerful catharsis for the women.

Stout and Pollard, the experienced quilters, took responsibility for sewing the odd-sized blocks together to complete the quilt top. They added blue lace to the outer edge and showed the other women how to fasten the layers together with yarn knots. The B.O.S.H. group completed the quilt during a period of about three weeks.

Weinstein recalls that when she first saw the quilt, her immediate reaction was disappointment. The quilt was not beautiful, nor did it express the traditional qualities associated with quilts, of softness, warmth, and comfort. But almost simultaneously, Weinstein recognized the powerful message the quilt embodied. The quilters' stories were heart-wrenching, and the symbolic images on the quilt collectively had their effect on Weinstein. The process of making the quilt also provided therapeutic benefits to the creators.

Quiltmaking as Therapy

The women who participated in the B.O.S.H. group were not the first to recognize the therapeutic value of the quiltmaking process. Individual women have found solace in needlework for some two hundred years. In the first half of the twentieth century,

psychiatrist Dr. William Rush Dunton observed that quilting could soothe the nervous nature of women preoccupied with worry over "wrongs or slights which may be real."[18] The physical process of constructing the blocks gave the individual women a sense of purpose and satisfaction in creating something outside of themselves. Today, certified art therapists commonly use quilting to treat victims of domestic violence. According to the American Art Therapy Association, quilting as a form of art therapy allows conflicted individuals a method of self-expression that assists in the resolution of conflicts and elevates self-esteem.[19]

But the therapeutic benefit to the B.O.S.H. group making the quilt went beyond that of a typical group quilt. The women used the quilt to tell their stories of domestic violence, many for the first time. Working within a group, the women could see that their experiences were not isolated events, but part of a larger pattern of violence against women.[20] According to McElroy, "the quilt had a lot to do with rebuilding their self-confidence. . . . The women could not speak of their abuse. But once they got to putting their stories into the quilt blocks, their emotions started flowing."[21] According to McElroy, the women experienced guilt and remorse for killing their abusers. Working on the quilt helped them begin to forgive themselves. If the quilt had done nothing else for the women but to facilitate the process of rebuilding self-esteem and self-confidence, the project would have been a success. But, as it happened, their quilt yielded even greater benefits.

Quiltmaking as Education

The women in the B.O.S.H. group originally undertook the quiltmaking project in order to educate the general public about domestic violence. With this in mind, Weinstein suggested that the quilt be displayed at the State Fair, in Louisville, in August 1995. Unaware of the graphic nature of the quilt's imagery, the fair officials readily agreed to display it.[22]

The B.O.S.H. group sent a press release to local news media to publicize the display of the quilt and bring public attention to the issue of domestic violence: "We, as a Group, have put together a quilt. Each one of us has created squares depicting scenes from our lives. The scenes will always remain, not only on the quilt, but forever in our minds. We lived these scenes."[23] They received responses from three Louisville television channels: WAVE 3, WHAS 11, and WDRB 41.[24] As a result of this coverage, the quilt became a major focal point of the fair.

McElroy attended the fair every day to observe people's reactions to the quilt. The line to view the quilt was always very long; when people passed in front of the quilt, they adopted a somber and reverent attitude.[25] Some even cried, whether from compassion or perhaps in recognition of their own experience of abuse.[26] Warden Betty Kassulke also attended the fair and reported public reaction to the quilt: "It wasn't a quilt in the traditional sense of the word. But the wording, the tears, the way it really depicted their pain and their abuse, it was an emotional experience for people."[27] Fair officials estimated that more people saw the B.O.S.H. prison quilt than any other exhibit in the history of the fair. Clearly, the quilt was fulfilling the group's goal in promoting public awareness of domestic violence. But the quilt produced another result that had a profound impact on the women in the B.O.S.H. group.

Quiltmaking as Persuasion

On August 26, 1995, the seventy-fifth anniversary of the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, the Kentucky Commission of Women sponsored a suffrage celebration at the State Fair, with Governor Brereton Jones as their keynote guest speaker. After his speech, Weinstein took the opportunity to show the B.O.S.H. quilt to the governor and Mrs. Jones. Upon seeing the quilt, Governor Jones reacted strongly. He later described the experience he shared with his wife:

> Libby and I were in attendance at the state fair, and were walking through the exhibits like any normal fairgoer would, and we went through the section of the handmade quilts. And, of course, there were some lovely, lovely quilts there and some great workmanship on them, and we were admiring that. And then all of a sudden [we] came upon this quilt that just sort of jumped out at us because instead of having beautiful flowers or an historical scene depicted or, or something that was going to be very pleasing to the eye, it was depicting violence and murder and blood, and I thought, what in the world is this? And they said it was made by a group of women, . . . that they were incarcerated for committing crimes and they were speaking out as to why they committed those crimes because they had been abused. And of course, my reaction to it was, well, if they were abused and it was self-defense, what are they doing in prison?[28]

The quilt had communicated the concept that the women had acted, not from unprovoked aggression, but to defend themselves and their children from further battering. After viewing the quilt, the governor turned to Weinstein and said, "We have got to see about getting these women out of prison before I leave office." Weinstein responded, "Governor, Helen Howard-Hughes and the Parole Board have already begun to review their cases." He replied, "Good, this is one thing that we can take care of."[29]

By September 12, 1995, the Kentucky Parole Board had completed their review of the women's cases.[30] In November 1995 Marguerite Neill Thomas, the Assistant Public Advocate for the Commonwealth of Kentucky, recommended that additional women be added to the list. At Weinstein's urging, the governor reviewed the cases of these women.[31] With the graphic images of the quilt still in his mind, Jones granted clemency to all but one of the B.O.S.H. group, just before leaving office on December 11, 1995.[32] Two years later, the governor reiterated how the experience of seeing the quilt had affected him: "Without the quilt, in honesty, I doubt [the women's parole] would have happened, because [the quilt] made [their plight] very clear. . . . The quilt was so easy to focus on. Many things in our society—if they're visual and right there in front of you—you grab them. If they're not visual, and if they're not readily attainable in a busy day, you may or may not be

able to focus on them."[33] Weinstein and others had tried for years to argue that the women committed their crimes in self-defense. The visual message of the quilt succeeded where verbal and written argument had failed.

The story of the B.O.S.H. quilt proves that it visually communicates a powerful message. To explain how quilts communicate is one aspect of this study. A second aspect is to understand how people make sense of their world. Both of these aspects can be addressed through a rhetorical analysis of the quilt.

Rhetoric in Everyday Life

Rhetoric can be defined as a type of persuasion symbolically apparent in different texts or artifacts.[34] Most of us recognize rhetoric as a key element of political speeches. For example, the speeches of President Barack Obama are generally acknowledged as very persuasive and eloquently phrased. The effect of his speeches on audiences is evidence of the power of rhetoric.

Not only words, but also images and objects can perform a rhetorical function. For example, photographs can be analyzed for their power to persuade.[35] Images of the World Trade Towers wreathed in billowing black smoke not only provoke a strong emotional response among viewers, but those pictures also are credited with increased numbers of volunteers for military service.[36] Quilts, too, can function as rhetoric. Although female quilters had long recognized quilts as a woman's voice, only recently have rhetoricians done the same. Recognizing women's stances, voices or points of view that have historically been ignored allows the wisdom, understanding, and knowledge of our foremothers to penetrate our culture. To recognize quilting as a legitimate form of rhetoric promotes a unity in our culture and clarifies our culture's value judgments. Researchers have identified a number of ways that quilts have functioned as rhetoric. Each of the following case studies demonstrates a different approach to examining our culture and our values using quilts.

The Secession Quilt

Jemima Ann Cook of Fairfield County, South Carolina, created what is now called the Secession Quilt, in 1860.[37] She embellished her wholecloth linen quilt with stuffed and corded images. The central design shows Lady Liberty riding on an eagle's back. In addition to the floral images typical of wholecloth quilts, Cook also included images and texts of political significance. Mary Rose Williams, now a professor of communication technologies, included this quilt in her study of quilts as protest rhetoric for her dissertation.[38] An examination of the Secession quilt in Williams' study demonstrates how she has applied rhetorical analysis in her interpretation: "Cook could not express her support for unity openly; therefore, she found a way to couch her message within the folds of the quilt. Beneath the names of Southern politicians and the South Carolina state seal lies this woman's true message—a plea to keep the Union intact."[39]

Williams analyzes the rhetoric of the quilt as Cook's covert protest strategy to express her desire that South Carolina not secede from the Union. Cook's husband, a plantation owner, later served as a general in the Coast Artillery of the Confederate States of America, so Jemima Cook's choice of rhetoric was a respectable method for the wife of a plantation owner to challenge a war.

Although the central design is an eagle with the word "Secession" embroidered under it, the way Cook depicts the Union in other symbols on the quilt suggests her desire to maintain the Union intact. In so doing she has depicted the government of 1860 in a positive light. Her neutrality is, perhaps, best realized with an examination of the balance of words embroidered on the quilt. Not only are senators from South Carolina referenced, but "Washington" and "E Pluribus Unum" are embroidered; thus, she has not only established common ground but ambiguity with the contrasting symbols. According to Williams, the confrontational and symbolic support of the Union contained in Cook's quilt satisfies the criteria for protest rhetoric.

The Crusade Quilt

The Crusade Quilt was made in 1876 to celebrate the women's temperance movement in Ohio. The silk squares contain the inked signatures of more than three thousand women and the mottoes of many Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) state auxiliaries.[40] The quilt was presented at a national WCTU convention in Baltimore in 1877.[41] Mrs. Lathrop of Michigan observed at the convention that the quilt represented "women's patience in matters of detail—a quality that had been valuable in temperance reform."[42] Other participants, however, saw the quilt as a vehicle of oppression, the yoke that harnessed women to the home. Amid the controversy, Frances Willard, a suffragist, argued that the quilt should be a symbol of women's social protest.[43]

Sue Carter, a professor of rhetoric, analyzed the persuasive properties of the Crusade Quilt using the properties of *epideictic* rhetoric.[44] Epideictic rhetoric typically is used for ceremonial display, embodies the values of the group, and also suggests a more idealized image of the rhetors, that is, the speakers. Carter examines the way the quilt functioned at the convention. First, it was displayed prominently on stage at the front of the convention hall, a form of ceremonial display inherent in epideictic rhetoric. Second, the quilt firmly placed traditional home values in the forefront, thus, embodying and affirming those values. Third, Carter argues, the quilt's visionary quality was an attempt to construct an idealized image of female reformers.[45] The quilt symbolically represented what Willard stated as the most important work of the WCTU: "reconstructing the ideal of womanhood."[46] Carter also interprets Willard's metaphor of women: "mothering," through the quilt, the nation, which is in crisis.[47] According to Carter, the presentation of the Crusade Quilt is an example of how epideictic rhetoric can simultaneously juxtapose and resolve two contradictory elements. In this case, the WCTU's prominent display of the quilt transformed it from a lowly symbol of women's traditional role into a banner for active social change.

"I Remember Momma" Quilt

At age twenty-two, Janette Miller made a quilt to memorialize her mother, Cora Miller, who had died in 1902. Miller's quilt consists of fabric from forty-one garments that had been worn by Janette Miller and her mother over a period of three decades. Miller also kept a scrapbook that identifies the fabrics and their use.[48] For her essay that explores this quilt, "I Remember Momma: Material Rhetoric, Mnemonic Activity, and One Woman's Turn-of-the-Twentieth-Century Quilt," Liz Rohan, a professor of rhetoric, applies an epistemological approach.[49] She suggests that Miller's quilt can be analyzed with regard to how memory is made, how that memory persuades, and how memory is important in and of itself.[50]

First, Rohan analyzes how the quilt assists in recalling prior experiences. Applying nineteenth-century mourning rituals and mnemonic devices, Rohan examines Miller's method of remembering her mother.[51] In reviewing the scrapbook, Rohan examines how Miller's description of each piece of clothing stimulated her memories. For example, Miller described one piece as a "Dark brown (chocolate)[d]ress I had when I went over to play with Gracie Waters. [I] Swung in her hammock and watched the dress trail behind because it was longer than usual."[52] In this case, the fabric swatch stimulated Miller's memory.

Second, the memory of her mother persuaded the daughter to make a quilt, illustrating the values of the mother and now the daughter. A traditional verse that appeared on mourning quilts in the nineteenth century, "When this you see, remember me," (although not on this quilt), echoes the interface between the mother and the daughter via the quilt.[53] At the turn of the century, quilting was deemed by some as an out-dated activity; therefore, for the daughter to quilt illustrates the power the mother's memory had over the daughter. The daughter was persuaded to adopt rituals from the previous generation: the generation that quilted and valued the physical properties of the fabric as a keepsake. The generation of the daughter valued photographs and store-bought items

rather than home crafts.[54]

And third, Rohan cites Miller's diary to show how memory is important in and of itself: "I haven't a memory . . . [yet] I enjoy bringing up old times"[55] In this quotation, Miller freely admits to a poor memory; consequently, a memory aid satisfies Miller's need to remember her mother. Her father moved from the family home shortly after the mother's death and soon remarried, so it was incumbent on the daughter to keep her mother's memory alive. Rohan argues that Miller's strong connection with family was the reason she made the mnemonic aid, the quilt. Further, Rohan suggests that the quilt is an example of a rhetorical canon.

Scandalous Sue Quilt

Knowing that Karen Horvath longed for a Sunbonnet Sue quilt, the members of the Bee There quilting qroup in Austin, Texas, made such a quilt for her surprise birthday gift in 1984.[56] Instead of the standard image of a chubby little girl in profile, the members made nine variations that depicted female figures, each with an identifying bonnet, in an act of scandalous behavior. Sue is shown burning her bra, dancing a can-can, reading "dirty" books, drinking a martini, skinny-dipping, smoking, kissing Overall Bill in the backseat of a car, taking a shower with Overall Bill, and getting married as a pregnant bride. The blocks were made in good humor and with a sense of playful fun.

Linda Pershing posits in her article, "'She Really Wanted to Be Her Own Woman': Scandalous Sunbonnet Sue," that quilts can be the rhetorical vehicle for quilt-makers to confront accepted social standards and persuade others to join in non-compliance.[57] The conclusions from such an analysis are enlightening as they provide "both a 'safe' and critical commentary on social and gender-specific norms."[58] Pershing believes the quilt exemplifies the quilters' uncertainty about the role of women in the 1980s.[59] Furthermore, Pershing believes the women illustrated their creativity through the making of this quilt, yet contested cultural norms.

Analysis: Properties of the B.O.S.H Quilt

I believe all of these studies are enlightening, yet they have limitations. All examine various aspects of rhetoric, but as yet no one has applied a neo-classical rhetorical approach to a quilt in order to explain how it persuades, and to understand how people make sense of their world through the artifact. I believe that applying a neo-classical rhetorical approach to the B.O.S.H. quilt will demonstrate the usefulness of the rhetorical approach in analyzing how quilts communicate cultural messages.

The B.O.S.H. quilt consists of fifty-two blocks, each approximately eight-inches square, and a center block, 24 inches by 40 inches. The white and pink cotton squares are arranged checkerboard-style around the larger center. The images and text on the blocks are drawn with markers (some of which have blurred to become almost illegible). The batting is a lofty polyester, and a white, twin-size, cotton sheet functions as the backing. The layers are tied together with royal blue acrylic yarn in the junctions where the blocks meet. The quilt is edged with a royal blue lace ruffle. The entire quilt measures approximately 72 by 64 inches.

In structure, this is an album quilt, in that it contains blocks made in a group. But there the similarity ends, and the graphic nature of the images takes over. The blocks are joined without sashing strips or borders to frame them, so the viewer initially responds to the quilt in its entirety. The visual composition of the quilt is structured, then, along the dimensions of a framed-center quilt.[60]

The economics of the quilting materials also affect the overall image. The members of the quilting group did not have money of their own. They could not shop for themselves. They lacked the power to make their own decisions regarding fabric. McElroy shopped for inexpensive fabric to stretch her prison budget. The use of the cheapest and lowest quality of materials suggests that the women and their work were not valuable enough to deserve better.

Only the pink and white blocks have ties in the corner; the large center block is left unquilted. After time, the center block's batting will bunch and distort the image. The corner ties become

part of the background; they blend in and become lost, much like the abuse victims blended into their communities and became lost in the legal protection and justice systems. The seam allowances were pressed open in dressmaker fashion, therein exposing the thread and weakening the durability of the quilt. Just like their construction of the quilt, the battered women inadvertently weakened themselves by remaining with their abusers.

Analysis: Color as an Element

The pink and white colors of the quilt's fabrics are flat and lack modulation; the lives of the women who made the quilt were flat, without interests or careers, focused on survival, day by day. The colors seem ironic in this context. In Western culture, white often represents purity and innocence, as in christening dresses and bridal gowns. Pink is frequently associated with the innocence of childhood. Infant girls are identified by pink clothing, and small girls seem to favor pink party dresses. Some researchers have found that pink has been found to be a relaxing color in the treatment of hostile and aggressive individuals.[61] Thus, the offenders have used soft colors that seem to emphasize the child-like helplessness they felt as victims, while ironically representing the innocence that was denied them and their children. The royal blue of the yarn ties and lace edging offers little contrast with the predominant colors. The powerlessness associated with the soft colors evokes an emotional response of pity and a desire to nurture among typical viewers.

The most striking color of the quilt is the red in the pictorial details. The large, center square depicts a red heart, to which the red details in the smaller blocks are visually linked. The women used red markers to depict blood, as in dripping from the nose or mouth, seeping from cuts, or in blood-shot eyes. The images of hearts and blood symbolize life, a life that is being threatened through various acts of violence. The bright color red initially attracts viewers to the quilt, but, on closer inspection, the red details and their negative associations repulse the viewer (plate 12).

Analysis: The Center Image as a Symbolic Element

The center image of the quilt provides a stark symbolic image that combines four elements—a heart, an eye, prison bars, and a key—that together express the inner emotional state of the imprisoned women. Compared with the smaller, more specific images that surround it, the central image is a static, generalized representation of the women's life in prison. The first image, the heart, is widely recognized as a symbol of the spiritual, emotional, and moral attitudes of an individual person. Here, the heart is imprisoned, suggesting that the potential for actualizing these essential human attributes has been blocked. Images of hearts most often represent love; however, the hearts on this quilt depict the physical and emotional violence inflicted on the individual's life and soul

One of the most frequent—and therefore significant—motifs depicted on the center medallion of the quilt is the human eye. Eyes represent both the site of violence—blackened by injury—and the sight of the women—observing what is done to them. Typically, the eye appears in a close-up view of the face of a victimized woman. This becomes a transactive element as the blood-shot or blackened eye pierces the viewer (plate 13).[62] In the large central image, an eye is superimposed on the heart. This eye is blood-shot, crying; a purple shadow below suggests bruising. The large eye stares out at the viewer in what might have been a threatening way, were it not for the superimposed prison bars.

These prison bars, the physical boundaries keeping these women from freedom, emphasize the isolation and powerlessness of the prisoner. The placement in the center medallion establishes the ultimate significance and importance of the bars. The bars now are physical, but the bars have been symbolically in place for many years prior to prison for most of the B.O.S.H. women.

Beneath the eye is a key, given a central place because the B.O.S.H. group members felt that "this quilt was the key to their healing."[63] The key is painted with gold glitter, emphasizing the high value attributed to the image and its meaning. Though important, the key is not visually prominent and blends into the back-

ground. The key also symbolizes, both to the group and to the viewers, a release from prison. The women seem to have recognized intuitively that a more prominently visible key would give the idea of release more emphasis than was warranted.

Analysis: Eight-Inch Block Images as Symbolic Elements

The eight-inch blocks contain significant elements as well: hearts, eyes, guns/knives, women being raped, and children. The smaller quilt blocks depict broken or cracked hearts, as in a knife piercing a cracked heart. A heart pierced by a weapon symbolizes betrayal in love, often through infidelity (plate 14). Pierced or broken hearts may also indicate a certain cynicism about the possibilities or trivialization of romance and true love. All of the B.O.S.H. women felt betrayed in love. The graphic violence in these images evokes strong feelings of revulsion and pity for the victims.

Eyes are also an important element in the smaller squares. In most of the smaller quilt squares, the women eye the viewer through their blood-shot eyes (fig. 2). In one image, the woman's eyes are closed, as if to block out the reality of violence as she hugs a small child. The men perpetrating the violence toward the women in the quilt squares are never shown facing the audience. The viewer never sees their eyes as their gaze is always directed at the woman; thus, the abusers are non-transactive.[64]

About a quarter of the images in the quilt include weapons, typically a knife or gun. These weapons are wielded by powerful men toward smaller, defenseless women. One block shows a small, defenseless brown dog sliced open with a knife while a helpless woman tied to a tree fearfully watches. Other blocks show hearts pierced by bullets or a knife, violent images that invert that of the arrow-pierced heart in a valentine (plate 15). Many of the guns are shown pointed to the head of a woman.

In western culture, knives and guns are associated with the activities of men, whether involved in criminal acts of violence or the socially sanctioned practice of hunting. In this quilt, knives and

Figure 2. "Broken Heart with 'Please Mend My Heart,'"
B.O.S.H. prison quilt.
Courtesy of the Kentucky Quilt Project, Inc.

guns represent both actual violence against individual women and the symbolic domination of men over vulnerable women. The image of a knife/gun, blood-letting, and death are all firmly intertwined. The ability to spill blood, the very essence of life, is an extraordinarily powerful image and a very potent symbol. Both guns and knives are phallic and most assuredly one of the sources of their dreaded sexual abuse. At its most primal level, guns and knives represent Death. The helpless women fear death will occur at the hand of their attacker. In fact, most of the women revealed

that they were relieved to be imprisoned since they assuredly would have been killed.

Children are depicted in many of the quilt squares. The children are always defenseless, innocent, small, and never central to the block's image. Only two blocks show a woman consoling or being consoled by a child. Many times the child is aligned with the man-attacker and not, as expected, next to the woman. In one block, a woman is surrounded by a fence, while the child, outside the fence, cries, "Mommy!" (plate 16). The fence represents the woman's inability to reach her child, whether before or during the mother's imprisonment. One block, drawn in black on white fabric, shows a young mother, eyes closed, on her knees, embracing a child. Ultimately, the frequency of an obviously helpless, innocent individual on the quilt blocks forces the observer of the quilt to frame the entire quilt in the mode of helpless innocence.

Five of the blocks on the quilt depict women being raped. Shown tied up or chained to a bed, tree, or door, the women are invariably rendered defenseless. Often the woman is naked, but the attacker is clothed. No one viewing the quilt could escape a physical reaction of revulsion to these dehumanizing images. The man strips away the woman's self-esteem. Forced nakedness is a universal indicator of exploitation and domination; thus, she is raped of her power; she is helpless. All of the women in B.O.S.H. had little, if any, self-esteem and felt completely helpless.

Rhetorical Analysis of the B.O.S.H Quilt

The story of the B.O.S.H. quilt proves that it communicated a powerful persuasive message. The analysis of properties and elements of the quilt provides the explanation of how the quilt persuaded. A rhetorical analysis of a quilt looks deeper to examine how a quilt persuades and to understand how people make sense of their world. We can explore a quilt's rhetoric by asking three basic questions: 1) How do the quilter's cultural perspectives affect the message being communicated? 2) How do current/historical

events affect the quilt's message? and 3) How do the politics of the era affect the viewer(s) when seeing the quilt? These three questions form the basic structure of the rhetorical triangle, one of the primary elements of neo-classical rhetorical analysis, as I have applied it in this study.[65]

First, how does the quilter's cultural perspective affect the message being communicated? The quilters of the B.O.S.H. group were battered women with little to no self-esteem or feeling of worth. The majority of the women had believed that there was no escape from the abuse of either their batterer or the justice system which appeared unfair to these women. Consequently, the quilters expressed their perspective through several aspects of the quilt. They designed images that graphically portrayed highly charged emotional episodes of abuse. The selected colors conveyed the innocence and helplessness of their situation. The stories and symbolic elements depicted in the blocks create the emotional effect consistent with the quilters' battered spirit. The construction of the quilt, like the women themselves, affirms weakness. These elements combine to saturate the viewer with the message.

Second, how do current/historical events affect the quilt's message? The quilt was displayed at the state fair during the seventy-fifth anniversary of women's suffrage. The atmosphere of such an event would draw a crowd predominately sympathetic to women and their causes. It is reported that the crowd when observing the quilt was silent and reverent, thus giving greater credibility and respect to the persuasive message of the quilt. Another current event augmenting the quilt's message is the fact that other battered women convicted of crimes against their abuser had been granted clemency in other states. Additionally, Jones was leaving office in a few months, so any political repercussions would be minimal if and when he acted upon the quilt's message. And last, quilts are seen as non-threatening objects, so a quilt would be able to relay a subaltern voice without any negativity. All of these elements promoted, and even amplified the quilt's powerful message.

And third, how do the politics of the era affect the viewer(s) seeing the quilt? Some blocks in the quilt indicate the judicial system's

further abuse of the battered women. That message strongly affects the viewers who see themselves as ethical people who want to help the weak and powerless. The quilt effectively establishes the women as weak and powerless, and the ethical viewer as a potential agent of change. Consequently, the viewer is aligned with the realization that the system is not just and that "something needs to be done to help these women." Thus, the ethical governor is placed in a situation in which he must assist these abused women, and the climate is conducive for his advocating clemency.

Domestic violence continues to occur in families regardless of race, education, or economic situation. In my research, I discovered that family members of the abused women were aware of the abuse, but did not know what to do, so they did nothing. Thus, domestic violence continues. In California, alone, eleven thousand women who have survived domestic violence are currently imprisoned.[66] In fact, 80 to 85 percent of women imprisoned in the United States attribute their incarceration to their association with their batterer.[67]

The quilters, their quilt's message, and the politics of the time all came together to effect a change, a change that would have an immense impact on the lives of many people. For these women, change has occurred. No longer would a B.O.S.H. woman be on her knees with a gun to her head; no longer would another be tied to a bed as she was attacked at knifepoint; no longer would the little girl experience a rape by her father; no longer are the B.O.S.H. women imprisoned. The B.O.S.H. women's voices had been heard through the rhetorical power of their quilt.

* * *

If you suspect that you or someone you know might be in an abusive relationship, please call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE (7233), 1-800-787-3224 (TTY) or your local domestic violence center.

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The Stearns & Foster Company, 1846–1900: The Inside Story

Linda M. Pumphrey

The Stearns & Foster Company revolutionized the cotton wadding and batting industry during the second half of the nineteenth century. The company achieved success through innovative product development and by forming business alliances to influence and control the market, emerging as the industry leader in the twentieth century. This study examines internal company documents of the Stearns & Foster Company's first fifty years within the context of late-nineteenth-century United States industrial history. This research provides a rare glimpse into the internal operations and business activities of the Stearns and Foster Company during a pivotal era of American history.

The defining characteristic of a quilt is the layer of batting between two layers of cloth, held in place by stitches. Batting is a soft, bulky assembly of fibers, usually carded or opened. The word *quilt* derives from the Latin *culcita*, meaning "a sack filled with feathers, wool, hair, etc."[1] Batting gives quilts their warmth, definition, and resilience. Although central to the quiltmaking process, very little information is available about the development of batting. Textiles have been a vital part of American industry for over two hundred years, but the volumes of research on the subject contain almost no mention of batting. This study of the development of the Stearns & Foster Company attempts to address this lack of

information, describing the company's place within the bustling industrial climate of nineteenth-century Cincinnati, Ohio.

The Cotton Industry in Ohio

Textiles formed a vital component of manufacture and trade in the newly formed United States in the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. As the population swelled westward beyond the thirteen original colonies, the new settlers established trade routes along navigable rivers and built local mills. The Ohio River served as a major artery for migration and trade between eastern cities and the developing settlements in the Midwest. The town of Cincinnati, founded in 1788, grew rapidly to become the major trade and manufacturing center for the region.

The textile industry established itself early in Ohio, which achieved statehood in 1803. Just seven years later, the 1810 U.S. Census listed "31 looms and 230 spinning wheels in Cincinnati, producing 2,967 yards of cotton, 2,093 of linen, 735 of wool, and 685 mixed."[2] By 1821 Colerain Mills, on Toad Creek, a tributary of the Great Miami River, bought cotton from Cincinnati cotton brokers and sold quantities of cotton batting in the Cincinnati Market.[3]

Eastern cotton batting and wadding mills transported goods to the interior states. Wadding, similar to batting but with greater resiliency and uniformity, was produced and sold almost exclusively to other manufacturers for use in the production of padded clothing, fur coats, carriage upholstery, and other finished goods. The following newspaper advertisement from 1837 is typical of the period:

> K. Townsend & Co. have just received from New York and elsewhere, a fresh supply of new and seasonable GOODS, which they offer for sale cheap for Cash or the Produce of the country. . . . Among their Goods lately received are the following . . . Cotton batts, white and black Wadding, etc. etc.[4]

Textile mills in Pennsylvania produced batting for the western market by 1840, as shown in an advertisement for a Pittsburg mill published in the *Cincinnati Daily Gazette* on February 21, 1840:

> The Proprietors of the Hope Cotton Factory, inform their customers and the dealers in their line, that their factory continues in full operation, and that they have opened a Warehouse at the corner of Market and Front (or Levee) street, Pittsburg, for the general transaction of all business in their line, and provided with a choice stock of . . . Candlewick, coverlet yarn, carpet chain, cotton twine, and batting on hand, or made to order at reduced prices.[5]

On September 17, 1846, an advertisement in the *Cincinnati Daily Gazette* announced the establishment of a local Cincinnati company:

> Wadding—The subscribers are now constantly supplied with Glazed Cotton Wadding: white and colored, and of both common and extra thickness, which will be sold at Eastern prices. It is packed in bales of 40 doz. for safe transportation to any part of the Union; manufactured by Russell and Stearns, Cincinnati, who have recently erected additional machinery, and are now prepared to supply the whole western demand.[6]

By 1849 this company's official name had become the Stearns & Foster Company.[7] The main office was located on West Pearl Street in Cincinnati, and the original mill was located at northwest corner of Clay and Liberty Street, where it remained until 1896.[8]

The foregoing overview, drawn from contemporary newspapers and secondary sources, establishes the company and its products in the context of Cincinnati in the 1840s. For many companies of the period, such data are all that remain. Stearns & Foster survived well into the twentieth century; however, only a few documents from before the 1870s have survived. Executive meeting minutes, records kept by the plant supervisor, and accounting ledgers of the 1870s, 1880s, and 1890s, as well as company oral and written history provide additional—though still incomplete— data of the company's internal operations. The compilation of information from multiple sources results in a clearer picture of the company's

activities in the nineteenth century. In 1970 the Stearns & Foster Company recounted the story of its origin in a self-published marketing pamphlet:

> Thinking men seeking to find one another . . . and that is just how it went with George Stearns and Seth Foster. Neither of them were from these parts. Whatever it was that brought them to Cincinnati drew them together and after a while they became pretty good friends.
>
> It didn't take long before they figured that the two of them together knew more than one knew alone so they threw in and set out to make a new batting that would hold together and unroll easier. They did it.[9]

This marketing editorial highlights a key element of the company's success story, the creative partnership between the company founders, but additional research helps to bring the two men to life.

The Men behind the Company

George Sullivan Stearns was born May 17, 1816, in Billerica, Massachusetts (fig. 1).[10] He was a direct descendant of Isaac Stearns, who emigrated from England, arriving April 8, 1630, in Watertown, Massachusetts.[11] George's grandfather, Captain Edward Stearns, grandson of Isaac Stearns, fought at the battle of Concord in 1775, during the American Revolution.[12] Captain Abner Stearns, George's father, operated a woolen mill and a spinning jenny of seventy-two spindles in the Billerica area.[13] Abner Stearns had developed a reputation for ingenuity and authored patents for dyeing silk and splitting leather.[14] He also formed the Trinitarian Congregational society of Bedford and Church in Bedford, Massachusetts.[15]

George was raised in a socially prominent New England family with strong religious convictions, which influenced him during his entire life.[16] He attended public school and briefly enrolled at the Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts. In 1834, at age eighteen, he moved to Alton, Illinois, where he worked in the lumber

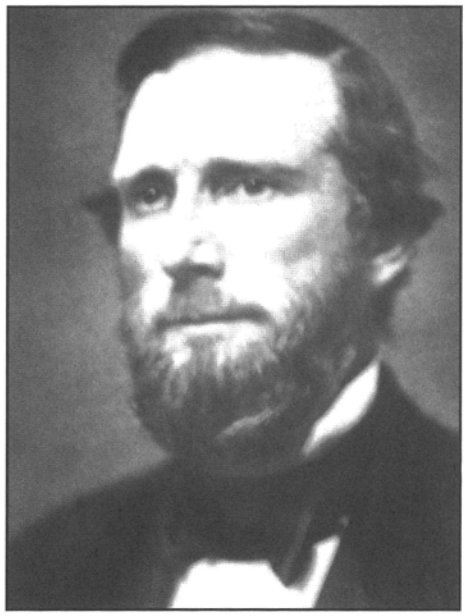

Figure 1. George Sullivan Stearns, c. 1870.
Courtesy of the author

business.[17] George was the first member of his family to leave New England for the west.[18]

By March 26, 1840, Stearns had moved to Cincinnati, Ohio, where he placed the following advertisement:

> Silk Worm Eggs. 20 ounces of Silk Worm Eggs, comprising the White Sulphur Mammoth and Two Crop variety raised in the city . . . for sale low by the undersigned, who will make arrangements for the supply of Mulberry leaves for the Worms through the summer, to such as wish to engage in the business on either a large or a limited scale.[19]

He lived with John Brook Russell, his half-brother and editor of the *Cincinnati Daily Gazette*.[20] Another boarder in the house, Edwin Shepard, became Stearns's partner in the company Shepard & Stearns Printers, which existed from approximately 1840 to 1843. In addition to his printing business, Stearns experimented in the manufacture of printers' ink. From 1845 to 1851, he operated the George S. Stearns Company, producing five hundred pounds

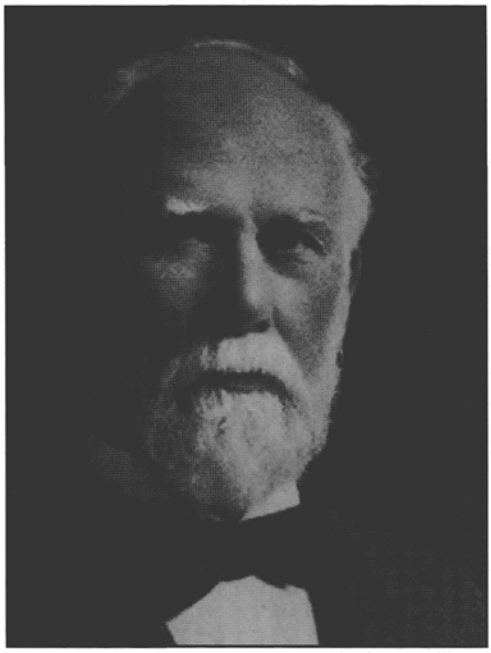

Figure 2. Seth Cutter Foster, c. 1870.
Courtesy the author

of ink a day, amounting to the yearly sales of $8,000.[21] Like his father, Stearns was a staunch pillar of his church. Through his membership in the First Congregational Church in Cincinnati, he met and befriended his future partner Seth C. Foster.[22]

Seth Cutter Foster was born on October 6, 1823, on a farm on Woolper Creek, in Boone County, Kentucky (fig. 2). Unlike the aristocratic George Stearns, Foster came from a family of modest means. His father, Samuel, had emigrated from England as a young man and established a farm in northern Kentucky. Samuel married Susanna Cutter, the daughter of Seth Cutter, who had arrived in Boone County around 1780.[23]

In 1839, at the age of sixteen, Foster moved to Cincinnati. He got a job sweeping floors and running errands at a grocery store operated by Albert and Henry Lewis.[24] Through his work at the store, he became acquainted with Dr. Joseph Ray, a local educator, who suggested that Foster attend night school at the local Woodward High School. Foster followed this suggestion and learned bookkeeping.[25]

The Formation of the Company

The early name of the company, Russell & Stearns, indicates a partnership between George Stearns and his half-brother John B. Russell that lasted from approximately 1846 to 1849. In 1846 Stearns sent for his younger brother, Henry Augustus Stearns, to work in the company.[26] Henry ran the cotton mill while George continued with his ink business.

In 1846 Seth Foster worked as clerk in a dry goods company, selling cotton goods.[27] Foster approached Stearns, his fellow church member, and suggested that he could expand the market for the cotton goods manufactured by Russell & Stearns. According to one source, "Seth wanted to know why someone could not manufacture a batting that would not stretch or tear."[28] They decided to experiment. Generations of the families and the company have told and retold of the early collaboration between the two men. In an article in the *Cincinnati Post* on April 4, 1978, E. Foster Stearns, a great-grandson of George Stearns, described the experiment:

> It was George's idea to make a paste to bind the cotton together. He and Seth went to work. They made a paste and stuck the cotton together on top of a large marble table. When they finished, the cotton was stuck to the tabletop.
>
> "Too thick", said George or maybe it was Seth. So it was back to the drawing board and when they finished experimenting, they had a thin paste to bind the cotton.[29]

The marble table used for their batting experiments was the same surface used to mix dye pigments with alcohol to make printer's ink for the George S. Stearns Company. The results of this rudimentary batting experiment proved promising. Foster invested $1,500 in cash, and Stearns contributed an equivalent value in tools and equipment.[30]

On August 17, 1848, an advertisement in the *Cincinnati Daily Gazette* described the company's production capabilities:

> COTTON WADDING. – The subscribers have enlarged their factory, so as to enable them to answer all orders in future without delay, and

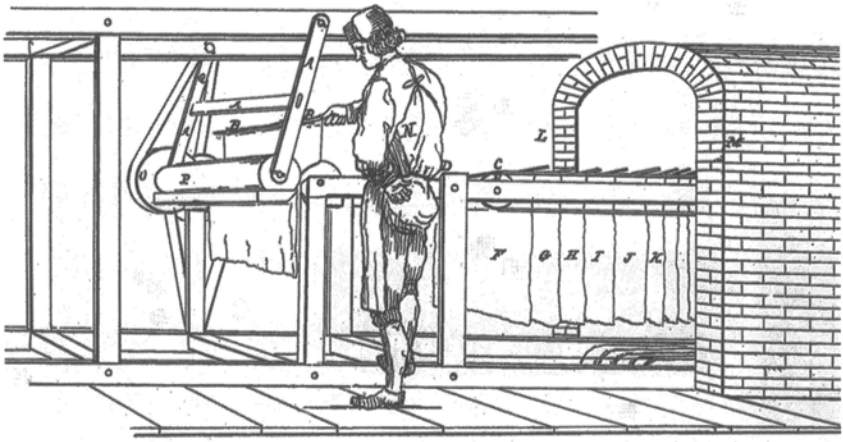

Figure 3. Image from the original patent for manufacturing cotton wadding. *Collection of the author*

> have increased their machinery sufficient to supply the whole demand for Wadding, both Black and White, in this market. They have also made great improvements in the color and glazing, and are now accumulating a large stock made wholly of good Cotton . . . which are equal in all respects to any made in the East, to which they invite the attention of dealers. It will be sold at all times at Eastern manufactures' prices. Orders left promptly with J.B. Russell, at Gazette Office, promptly attended to.[31]

On September 19, 1848, Henry Stearns, George's brother, received a patent for a "new and improved Mode of Manufacturing Cotton Wadding (fig. 3)."[32] The patent claimed that the new method set the sizing immediately and "causes it to dry equally on the sheet, which improves the wadding for all useful purposes."[33] Witnesses to the patent were George Stearns and John Russell.[34] The company gave the name Glazene to this method of sizing and used this term widely in future marketing.[35]

At the same time, Stearns & Foster sought a better way to produce the carded cotton web of the batting. They discovered that a machine used to grind powders for printers' ink, with the addition of a textile card and "textile clothing," such as a wire covering on the rolls, could straighten and align cotton fibers into a smooth

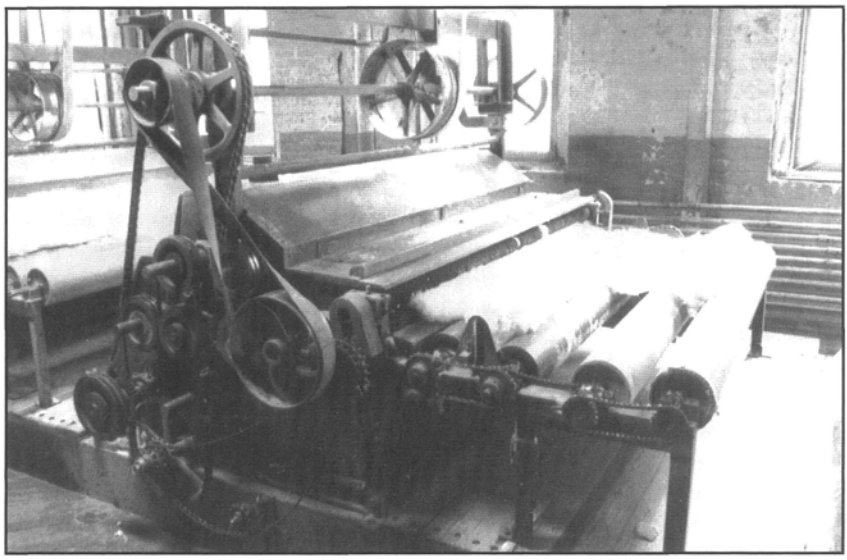

Figure 4. Textile cards, Stearns & Foster Company, c. 1900.
Courtesy of Charles Mason

web onto a conveyor belt passing beneath the cards (fig. 4).[36]

No mill records and few financial records survive from the first decade of the company, but other sources indicate that the company faced difficulties. Fires were a constant threat, as both the cotton fiber itself and the cotton dust produced during manufacturing are highly flammable. Early cotton mills were lit with gas and heated with wood-burning stoves. The Stearns & Foster cotton manufacturing business shared the same building as their ink production facility, and the proximity of the cotton to the alcohol used to make ink multiplied the risk. Fire destroyed the plant twice before 1850; but both times, it was rebuilt.[37]

Fires were not the only threat. In 1847, one year after the company was founded, the Ohio River flooded, inflicting severe losses on businesses near the river, including Stearns & Foster.[38] In 1850 a cholera epidemic paralyzed the city, causing thousands to flee and resulting in the deaths of more than 4 percent of the population.[39] Seth Foster's first wife died during the epidemic. At this time, Henry Augustus Stearns sold his interest in the company to his brother George, and relocated to California.[40]

In spite of these setbacks, Stearns & Foster continued to grow. In 1851 the company employed eleven workers and recorded sales of $25,000, with a margin of 40 percent profit.[41] According to company records, the company sold 2,111 forty-dozen bales of wadding and batting in 1851, an increase of 696 bales over the previous year.[42] Sales continued to grow, and, by 1856, the company sold 5,441 bales, a sales record not exceeded until 1869.[43] Local customers for the company's products included John Shillito & Company, retailer of dry goods and carpeting; and the Crane & Breed Casket Company, who used cotton wadding to upholster caskets. Distant customers during the early years included J. V. Farwell & Company of Chicago, a wholesaler of dry goods.[44]

The Stearns & Foster Company benefitted from its Cincinnati location. In 1850 editor Horace Greeley, described the city in the New York *Tribune*:

> It requires no keenness of observation to perceive that Cincinnati is destined to become the focus and mart for the grandest circle of manufacturing thrift on this continent. Her delightful climate; her unequaled and ever-increasing facilities for cheap and rapid commercial intercourse with all parts of the country and the world; her enterprising and energetic population; her own elastic and exulting youth; are all elements which predict and insure her electric progress to giant greatness. I doubt if there is another spot on the earth where food, fuel, cotton, or timber, iron, can all be concentrated so cheaply—that is, at so moderate a cost of human labor in production and bringing them together—as here.[45]

Cincinnati's' role as the commercial hub of the developing Midwest continued throughout the 1850s. Wholesale manufacturers prospered, supplying country stores in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Kentucky with goods comparable in quality and variety to factories in the East. Canals extended the river trade into the interior.[46] By the early 1850s, rail lines radiated outward from Cincinnati, providing rapid and convenient delivery of goods to retailers throughout the region.[47] By 1859 the Ohio and Mississippi Railroad advertised passenger tickets to St Louis, Missouri, extending the reach of the city and its products to new markets farther west.[48]

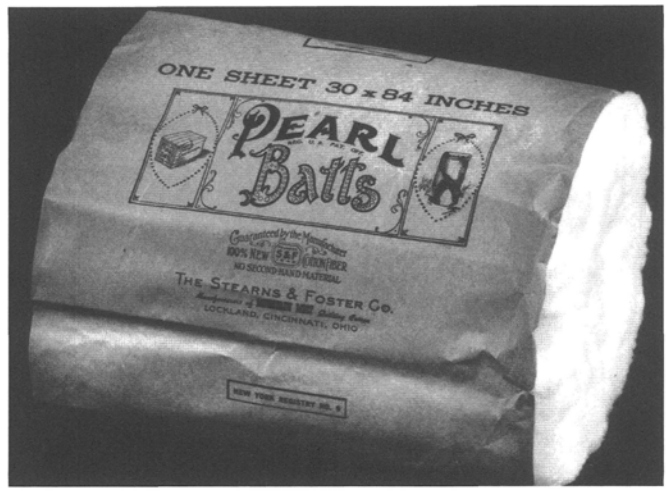

Figure 5. "Pearl Batts" was one of the early brand names used by Stearns & Foster, c. 1880.
Courtesy of Mountain Mist

Stearns & Foster Company was not the only cotton manufacturer in Cincinnati area. The 1859 city directory also listed Covington Cotton Factory, R. Buchanan & Sons, and Gould & Wells. Gould & Wells were "dealers in cotton and cotton goods, manufacturers of cotton cordage, seamless bags, twine yarns, colored and white carpet warp . . . and batting."[49] A few miles north of the city, the Hamilton Cotton Factory produced batting, twine, carpet, chain, and wicking.[50]

Originally, Stearns & Foster labeled their batting with homey names having personal associations, including "Boone," the birthplace of Seth Foster; "Governor," for a machine part patented by George Stearns; "Clay," the street where the plant was located; and "Pearl," the street location of the main office (fig. 5).[51] The company also chose brand names with religious associations, such as "Cardinal," "Crosier," and "Miter," reflecting George's faith. These personal brand names given to early products were not part of a marketing strategy. Instead, they functioned as internal designations to distinguish different formulations. More than likely, the products went to market with generic names. During the mid-nineteenth century, marketing consisted mainly of establishing contact

with wholesalers and storekeepers and earning their trust. According to one source, "national brands were few in number, and national advertising was almost unknown."[52]

Unrest and Civil War

During the years before the outbreak of the Civil War, Cincinnati's mood was "heated by the political unrest, anxiety and alarm by the threatening attitude of the Southern states."[53] The city's growth had been "largely the result of Southern trade; her business connections with the South, by river and rail were extensive and valuable."[54] Commercial relationships—enhanced by intermarriages, friendships, and common interests—created strong connections between Cincinnati and the South. The people of Cincinnati regarded slavery with "passive tolerance rather than that of active approval."[55] According to one source, "anti-slavery speakers had scarcely been tolerated, and anti-slavery meetings were a dangerous experiment."[56]

The national debate over slavery had a direct impact on the Stearns & Foster Company. The partners faced a conflict between their personal religious beliefs and their business's dependency on cotton produced by enslaved labor in Southern states. In 1838 the Congregational Church to which the pair belonged passed a resolution: "Resolved, That no candidate applying for admission to the fellowship of this church will be received by the session who either holds slaves or openly avows his belief that the holding or using men as property is agreeable to God."[57] Descendants later recalled family stories of George Stearns "helping the fugitive slaves in times before the war."[58] Seth Foster had voted for James C. Birney, the abolition candidate for President in 1840 and 1844.[59]

Abolitionist Levi Coffin promoted the production of "free-labor" cotton, grown by small-scale southern farmers who either could not afford or chose not to own slaves. In order to insure the supply of cotton to the factories, the Philadelphia Free Labor Association and Levi Coffin purchased a cotton gin, later called the

"Abolition Gin," and shipped it to William McCray near Holly Springs, Mississippi, to process the cotton.[60] Levi Coffin then supplied the cotton to Stearns & Foster Company to manufacture "free labor" batting and wadding, which Coffin then sold in his Cincinnati dry goods store and distributed to other retailers.[61]

Despite Cincinnati's close relationship with the South, attitudes shifted when southern states seceded and the Civil War began. Cincinnati was the "largest and richest city of a northern State upon the border of a slave State."[62] The only other Union cities so close to the South were Washington D.C. and St. Louis, Missouri.[63] "The first note of war from the East threw Cincinnati into a spasm of alarm. Her great warehouses, her foundries and machine shops, her rich moneyed institutions, were all a tempting prize to the Confederates."[64] Kentucky, a border state, was so divided that it neither seceded nor declared itself part of the Union. The proximity of the violence and the vulnerability of Cincinnati's exposed riverfront caused concern to the city's residents. "One of the first effects of the war was to completely stagnate the city commercially and industrially."[65] Southern customers vanished and shipments to the South declined, and the city's manufacturers turned to supplying goods for the Northern army, such as clothing, food, and rifles. Stearns & Foster sales declined during the first two years of the War, and then rebounded to exceed the pre-War volume (table 1). Two factors caused the increase in sales: first, nearly 80 percent of the company's production capacity supported the war effort; and, second, Crane & Breed, a key early customer, experienced increased sales of caskets during the War.[66]

The sourcing of cotton fiber for the continued existence of the company was paramount during the Civil War. Company literature later recounted oral claims that George Stearns' previous business relationship with the Church of the Latter Day Saints enabled the company to buy western cotton from the Mormons. Two decades earlier, in 1840, the Shepard & Stearns printing company had printed the *Book of Mormon* and other tracts for the Church of Latter Day Saints.[67] No records survive to corroborate the company's purchase of Mormon cotton.

Year	Bales
1857	4,395
1858	3,933
1859	4,314
1860	5,164
1861	3,668
1862	2,561
1863	4,520
1864	4,728
1865	5,306

Table 1. Stearns & Foster Company's Sales Numbers, in bales, 1857–1865

During the war, the company most likely obtained the bulk of its cotton from public sales. The Union army confiscated cotton bales from southern plantations and turned them over to the U.S. Marshall's office, who sold the cotton at public landings at various locations along the Ohio River.[68] Advertisements for the sales of this confiscated cotton appeared routinely in the Cincinnati *Daily Commercial* newspaper during the War years.

At the end of the war, Stearns & Foster, as well as the other manufacturers of Cincinnati, turned their focus from supplying goods for the War effort to producing consumer goods. The businesses of Cincinnati "encountered many difficulties" in adapting themselves to the post-War economic system.[69] With the ruin of the South, the city lost her Southern trade and her antebellum prosperity. While cities to the north, away from the immediate impact of the War, grew and prospered, Cincinnati's businesses suffered greatly. The blockade of southern ports and restrictions on river transport had encouraged dependence on rail transport to move goods from east to west. Although Cincinnati's businesses depended on both the Ohio River and a well-established system of railroad lines, other Midwest cities, chiefly Chicago and St. Louis, emerged as the major railroad centers after the War. "The great railroad lines which ran from east to west left Cincinnati practically

'sidetracked.'"[70] The advantages of Stearns & Foster's location in the "Queen City of the West" had diminished.

During the decades following the Civil War, the business environment in the United States entered a period of profound growth and change. Technological developments in transportation and communication enabled small companies serving regional markets to transform themselves into complex corporations serving a national market.[71] Stearns & Foster faced competition, not just from other local and regional cotton mills but also from mills throughout the country.

The "Pool" Years 1870- 1906

Changes in the American legal system accompanied industrial growth. According to one source, "the basic laws governing large organizations were remade," which, in turn, influenced political values.[72] The interplay of legal, political, and economic changes favored the development of large organizations, centralizing wealth and power. Society perceived large companies as more efficient in meeting the needs of the expanding population. Eventually, abuses of power would force the government to pass anti-trust laws regulating the activities of large corporations, but the growth of American industry was initially welcomed as the engine of economic recovery.

The Stearns & Foster Company took advantage of the new business-friendly attitudes and policies of the nation. As the national economy recovered from the War, the company prospered. By 1869, sales set a new record of 5,689 bales.[73] Concurrent with the favorable business climate, three internal developments came together during the 1870s to propel the company forward. First, the second generation joined the management team; second, the company established an effective partnership to enhance the sales and marketing of the batting business; and, third, the company formed a partnership with an eastern cotton mill to control and eliminate competitors, and to increase marketing opportunities.

In 1871 Edwin R. Stearns, George's son, joined the company.[74]

In the years that followed, both of Edwin's brothers, William S. Stearns and George H. Stearns; along with Seth C. Foster's twin sons, Joseph C. Foster and William R. Foster, also became active participants in the company founded by their fathers.[75] The second generation, having grown up with an awareness of the company's successes and challenges, reinforced the values of the family business and guided the company into the twentieth century.

During the early-nineteenth century, the partnership model had predominated among American businesses. As the scale and scope of businesses expanded after the Civil War, larger companies elected to structure themselves as corporations. Advantages of such a move included the ability to raise capital beyond the individual resources of the partners. Additional capital meant more control—the ability to buy out competitors, swamping the market and preventing entry of competitors.[76] The Stearns & Foster Company, initially operated as a business partnership, formally incorporated on August 17, 1882. The stock for the reconfigured company was subscribed as follows: George S. Stearns, $102,000; Seth C. Foster, $102,000; Edwin R. Stearns, $102,000; William S. Stearns, $43,800; and George H. Stearns, $200; for a total value of $350,000. Officers for the new corporation were George S. Stearns, president; E.R. Stearns, secretary; and S.C. Foster, treasurer.[77]

By the 1890s the responsibility for the company had shifted from the founders to the second generation. On November 24, 1889, George Stearns died at his residence in Wyoming, Ohio, at the age of seventy-four.[78] His obituary reflected, "Now death comes to break this old firm, the oldest in the city, and the last we think of the firms that had an existence back to 1850. . . . Mr. Stearns did not rust out either, he loved honorable labor and he died in the harness."[79]

The second key factor during this era involved the company's response to the post-War business environment, as regional marketing patterns merged to form a national market, "in which a small number of firms realized scales of economy to an unprecedented degree by their distribution from coast to coast and border to border."[80] Stearns & Foster realized that forming a partnership with

a distribution company would allow them to expand their markets more effectively than continuing to distribute their products themselves. In 1872, Stearns & Foster established a partnership with Putnam Hooker & Company to serve as the sole distributor of their batting, forming a relationship that would last for fifty-seven years.[81] Putnam Hooker & Company was described as "actively engaged in the business of Cotton Goods, Commission Merchants and in the sales of cotton yarns, cotton batting, cotton and other fibres."[82] Putnam Hooker originally directed their marketing and merchandising efforts for Stearns & Fosters' batting and wadding toward southern and western markets, but their efforts later extended also to the east. The partnership introduced Stearns & Foster's batting products to a wider market and provided the increased income that allowed the company to expand production and increase sales. The partnership with Putnam Hooker Company was vital to Stearns & Foster's success in the cotton batting during the late-nineteenth century.

The third factor in the company's success during this era arose from family connections. Henry Stearns, George's younger brother, had managed the cotton mill for Stearns & Foster before setting out for California in 1850. Henry returned from his adventures in 1853 and remained with the company until 1857, when he left to explore various business enterprises on his own. In 1860 Henry went to work for the Union Wadding Company, in Pawtucket, Rhode Island.[83] According to an internal company document, Stearns & Foster allowed Henry to set up his own business east of the Alleghenies (where he could never cause a problem by competing).[84] At the time that Henry joined Union Wadding, the business was comparatively small. However, with the knowledge Henry had gained at Stearns & Foster, his personal skill, and the energy of the partners, the Union Wadding business grew.[85] In 1872 Henry Stearns became a partner in Union Wadding with the financial backing from his brother George.[86] With a loan of $1,500 from Stearns & Foster, Henry invested further in Union Wadding in December of 1874.[87]

On January 1, 1879, Stearns & Foster Company and Union

Wadding Company formed a partnership, described in company records as a "pool."[88] In this era of growth, companies formed pools, more commonly called cartels, as a strategy for gaining control of the market for their products. Stearns & Foster and Union Wadding formed their pool with the intent to buy out or otherwise control their wadding and batting competitors. From the beginning, both companies saw the pool as a long-term effort. Lyman Goff, an officer of Union Wadding Company, acknowledged the commitment, saying, "once begun there was no way to do but to continue it for all time."[89]

These three developments during the 1870s set the stage for the company's business activities and growth during the 1880s. Company records for this decade show that the pool formed by the Stearns & Foster Company and Union Wadding Company actively pursued the goal of controlling the market by taking over their competitors. The first purchase of the pool was the Reading Mill, in Reading, Pennsylvania, in January 1880. The purchase price was $13,500.[90] In 1883 alone, the pool purchased Sorrel Wadding Mill in Sorrel, Canada, for $25,000; Stephentown Mill in Stephentown, New York, for $8,000; and William C. Hough & Company in Essex, Connecticut, for $37,500.[91]

The management team felt the objectives of the pool were being achieved, as evidenced in the executive minutes from January 20, 1885:

> It will be found that our total outlay in the last six years has been $30,065.70. While this seems a very large sum, where it is considered that in these 6 years, our sales of wadding have been 150,512 bales, it will be seen that its amounts to only $.20 on each bale of wadding sold. The advances in price we have been enabled to secure, has doubtless alone amounted to much more than this. And when we also consider that by the removal of this competition, our sales must have considerably increased, it will be seen that the money has not been expended unprofitably.[92]

Executive-meeting minutes state that the pool not only eliminated competitors by purchasing the companies, but they also paid key individuals to not re-enter the wadding and batting business,

which further narrowed the playing field. In 1896, executive minutes refer to this practice in describing the activities of a potential competitor: "Camp has however been very active in endeavors to procure capital during the year, and it has cost us considerable to keep men who had formerly been engaged in the business, out of his way."[93]

The partnership of the two companies did not always run smoothly. In 1884 the pool started a new factory, the Dominion Wadding Company, in Montreal, Canada, paying $4,076 for land, and $9,746 for machinery.[94] This venture caused much discord between the two companies. Stearns felt that Union Wadding unduly delayed the building of the mill. Union Wadding already operated a very large and profitable trade in Montreal, and, as long as the plant was not completed, Stearns did not share in the profits. In addition, Stearns & Foster was not getting a return on their investment in land and machinery. Stearns' company records stated, "We feel that their motives in making the delay are open to very strong suspicion."[95] By 1886 the minutes indicated that the disagreement had been resolved: "After a stormy time with U.W.Co, and their refusal to buy our interests in Canada at a fair price, an amicable arrangement was finally arrived at and the building of the new mill at Montreal was actively begun in May 1885."[96]

During 1888 the pool purchased two more competitors for a total of $58,750: the Cowperthwait (or Camp Mill) in Hohokus, New Jersey, and the Bishop Mill in Boston, Massachusetts.[97] Company records recorded that the heavy costs of fighting their competitors resulted in only a modest increase to their wadding business. Their batting business, however, had increased greatly. Sales of batting through Putnam Hooker & Company more than tripled over a period of seven years, from $71,220 in 1882, to $233,745 in 1889.[98] By 1889 company assets totaled $755,296, compared with $350,000 in 1882, the year the company incorporated.[99]

Further notes from the executive meeting of Jan. 15, 1889, indicate that the relationship between the pool partners continued to be rocky, though mutually beneficial:

> On the 17th of Mch, 1888, we also concluded a lasting peace with Union Wadding Co., and put an end to the vexatious contention of the past, by making a pool with them to last for 10 years. The value of this to both concerns can hardly be overestimated. . . . The year has therefore been a much eventful one, and we have reason for congratulation that it has ended so satisfactory.[100]

In addition to buying competitors in the cotton manufacturing business, the two companies shared manufacturing processes, another advantage characteristic of a pool. In 1883 Stearns' mill supervisor noted that the company shared "all the particulars about our way of making glaze" with Henry Stearns.[101] The glazing process is what made the Stearns' batting and wadding unfold and handle more easily for quilters, making it more desirable than other battings in the market place. The decision to share this key manufacturing process with Union Wadding was not taken lightly, and it was made only after approval by Seth Foster.

In 1889, in further efforts to control the market, the pool purchased certain batting patents from Willard I. Lewis of Walpole, Massachusetts, for $5,000.[102] Under this contract, Mr. Lewis agreed not to engage in or assist others in the manufacturing of batting. Prior to this deal, Stearns & Foster had learned that one of their competitors, the American Cotton Seed & Oil Company wanted to hire Mr. Lewis and obtain his patents. By purchasing these patents themselves, the pool impeded the efforts of American Cotton Seed & Oil from expanding into the batting business.[103]

Innovation and Improvement

While the Stearns & Foster management team directed most of their energies toward the partnership, they did not ignore innovation and improvements to their manufacturing facilities. In 1880 the company started planning a new mill in Lockland, Ohio.[104] The new plant would be adjacent to the Lockport Lumber Company, another business owned by George Stearns and Seth Foster (fig. 6).[105] The plant's location on the Miami-Erie Canal provided

Figure 6. The Stearns & Foster plant, c. 1900.
Courtesy of Charles Mason

access for bringing in raw materials—cotton, cotton linters, and coal—shipped by barges trolling the Mississippi and Ohio rivers and for conveying finished goods to markets. The canal also supplied water for the production process and a sprinkler system in case of fire (fig. 7).

In 1886 William S. Stearns, a member of the second generation of company management, developed a new method of bleaching, which, according to company records, "has added materially to the profits on batting and which bids fair to be very successful."[106] Until this time, the cotton batting offered by Stearns had retained its natural off-white color. By bleaching the cotton, the company could use lower grades of cotton fiber in their products, as the bleaching process camouflaged twigs, leaves, seeds, and other debris. Soon after the introduction of this process, the majority of the batts sold by Stearns were bleached. The company touted the bleached battings with brand names such as Snowy Owl, Lily White, Snow White, and Snow Flake.

By the final decade of the nineteenth century, Stearns & Foster faced no strong competition. The activities of the pool had effectively eliminated other major players. Executive minutes from

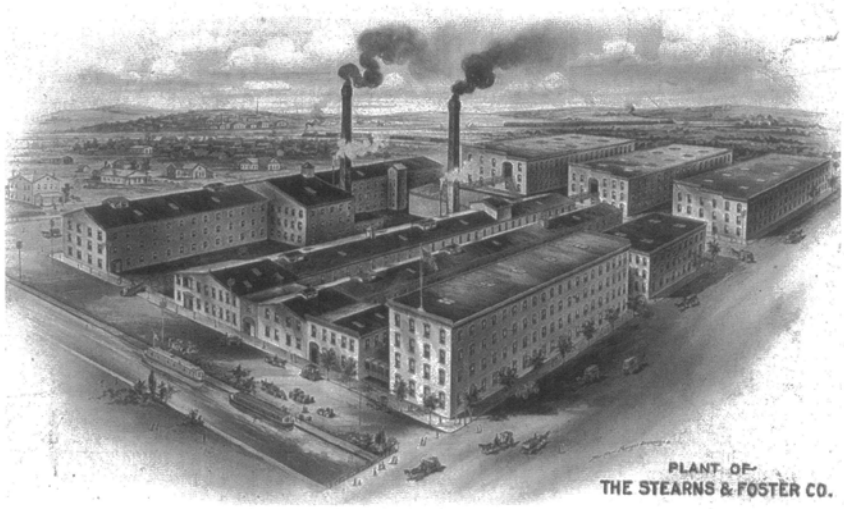

Figure 7. The Stearns & Foster plant, c. 1880.
Courtesy of Charles Mason

November 17, 1891, remarked upon the company's success:

> The year has been a prosperous one, in large measure owing to the fact that we had no outside competition and no extraordinary expenditures to charge off for preventing competition. Our books are entirely clear of all such accounts. We have also got good prices on our Batting for the entire time, and full prices on our wadding."[107]

The same records indicate a decline in the batting business: "The sales were down to 63,091 bales compared to 66,084 of the year before. Unusually warm weather was attributed to the fall off in sales, but due to the better pricing achieved, the money value of the batting business was positive."[108]

The following year proved to be the company's most prosperous year to date, due to increases in the sales of wadding, a considerable increase in batting sales, and a decrease in the cost of raw materials.[109] For 1892, sales of batting through Putnam Hooker & Company were 87,428 bales, worth $460,424; compared with 63,091 bales, worth $362,251 the previous year.[110] The company responded to their increased business by constructing an additional batting building, completed in 1893 at a cost of $51,166.[111]

The Panic of 1893 in the United States resulted in widespread bank failures, unemployment, and falling prices for farm products. Although raw cotton was cheaper, the company had financial concerns. According to the minutes of the stockholders meeting that year, the company feared for the safety of their bank balances, which usually ranged from $45,000 to $70,000.[112]

Despite the depressed business environment, the quality of their batting had improved considerably, and the resulting increased sales required Stearns & Foster's bleaching production to operate at full capacity. At the same time, the pool continued to buy out their competition. Early in 1894, Stearns was forced to lower their batting prices in order to compete with the Sayles Mill of Pawtucket, Rhode Island. For a purchase price of $75,000, the Sayles Mill was "stopped and the machinery was turned over" to the pool.[113] Stearns felt that they were

> exceedingly fortunate in getting rid of this competition, even at such a price. The parties had large capital, had succeeded in making very good wadding, were pleased with the results already obtained, and were preparing to make all kinds of wadding. They were very loath to give up the business. Had the purchase not been made we would in a year or two have lost a great deal more than the cost of the purchase.[114]

At the conclusion of 1894, Seth C. Foster presented the following resolution: "Whereas; the dividends we have paid in the last year in spite of the general business depression is a marked indication of the staying quality of our business. Both the batting and wadding business has become quite complicated, requiring about 100 brands in the batting and 50 brands in the wadding."[115]

In 1895 the company set records for production. Batting output for the year totaled 118,667 bales, an average of 10,000 bales a month, or 400 bales a day.[116] This level of production taxed company resources, requiring it to operate close to maximum capability. Actual dollar sales for batting totaled $379,073 for the year.[117] Higher volume resulted in decreased production costs, and Stearns

& Foster passed on the savings to their wholesale customers. By establishing a low price for their batting, the company made it difficult for competitors to undersell their products.

By 1896 the Stearns & Foster Company had been in the cotton manufacturing business for fifty years. The treasurer's year-end report for 1896 expressed confidence in the company's ability to weather the continuing depression and to compete successfully with new companies entering the market:

> The past year has been a marked contrast to the year proceeding and has been in many ways an eventful one in the history of our business. It has demonstrated the fact that the business rest[s] on a comparatively firmer basis than we had heretofore considered it and that it is able to hold its own in times of serious depression. While the profits seem small in comparison with those of the previous year —being less than one half— we feel that the stockholders are more than gratified with the showing made.[118]

The company expressed the feeling "that no advance in prices would be politic in a time of such terrible business depression."[119] The depression had a direct impact on the total profits for 1896, which totaled only $108,778, compared with $520,300 the year before. Batting sales dipped to their lowest point since 1891, at 69,289 bales valued at $259,248, a decrease of over 31 percent.[120]

Facing depressed sales, the management of the company nonetheless positioned itself for the future. Improvements in batting production allowed the company to double output without a loss in quality (fig. 8). The cost of this improvement amounted to about fifty dollars per production line.[121] Increased production allowed the company to meet upswings in the business without adding new streams and new buildings to house the production lines.

Also in 1896, the company took steps to consolidate the business in one location. All production and warehousing activities were moved to the Lockland mill. The original City Mill "turned its last wheels for the last time on Saturday April 4, 1896, after an almost steady run for 50 years."[122]

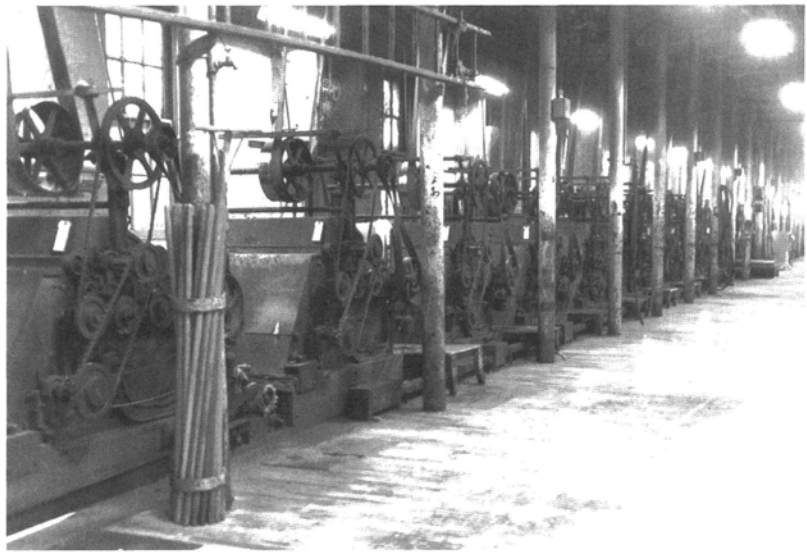

Figure 8. The Stearns & Foster batting line, c. 1880.
Courtesy of Charles Mason

Stearns & Foster had originally sold their batting in burlap-covered bales. By the mid-1870s the company had switched to individual paper wrappers. This popular innovation allowed wholesale customers to label battings with their own brands for distribution to dry goods and department stores. In 1896 the company investigated the purchase of a printer offered by Kidder Manufacturing Company of Boston, in order to print batting wrappers in-house.[123] On February 11, 1898, Stearns ordered the printing press and, by the end of that year, they had printed 3,519,430 wrappers.[124]

At the end of the nineteenth century, Joseph C. Foster, executive director, reported the value of the Stearns & Foster Company to be $856,327.[125] The company employed 143 people.[126] In a little over fifty years, the exuberance of the beginning years had given way to the maturity of experience, but the company's dedication to innovation and promotion never faltered. The strength and resourcefulness needed to survive the difficulties of the pre-Civil War era prepared the company founders to develop the skills required to compete in the competitive post-War business

environment. The success of the company's business strategies combined with the personal qualities of the founders and their sons produced a strong organization. As the Stearns & Foster Company moved into the twentieth century, they had positioned themselves as the dominant firm in the cotton wadding and batting business.

Conclusion

The Stearns & Foster Company existed from 1846 until 1983, when the last remaining family members sold the business.[127] The survival of company records is due largely to the longevity of the company. Numerous cotton-manufacturing companies have come and gone over a period of two centuries. Their names turn up in city directories and newspaper advertisements, but few records survive. The ledgers, account books, meeting minutes, correspondence, and employment records associated with a defunct business are typically discarded as worthless. Surviving records of a nineteenth-century company are rare, but they are often the only window available to researchers into a company's internal motivations, activities, and reflections. This study of the founding and early history of the Stearns & Foster Company provides a rare glimpse into the otherwise unknown history of the development and marketing of a product that is central to American quiltmaking. By bringing attention to this company and its competitors, the author hopes to promote a greater understanding of the influence of industrial and business practices on the products available to quiltmakers. Although the Stearns & Foster Company no longer exists, the brand names of their products, including Mountain Mist® and White Rose® batting continue to be recognized among quiltmakers worldwide.[128]

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52. Richard S. Tedlow, *New and Improved: The Story of Mass Marketing in America* (New York: Basic Books, 1990), 5.

53. *Leading Manufacturers,* 28.

54. Henry A. Ford and Kate B. Ford, *History of Cincinnati, Ohio* (Cleveland: L. A. Williams, 1881), 106.

55. Lewis Alexander Leonard, *Greater Cincinnati and Its People, A History,* vol. 2 (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1927), 540.

56. *History of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, Ohio, Their Past and Present,* (Cincinnati: S. B. Nelson, 1894), 344.

57. Goss, *Cincinnati, the Queen City,* vol. 1, 546.

58. William Goodell Frost, letter to Evans F. Stearns, Jr., January 30, 1933, photocopy in collection of author. Frost was President Emeritus of Berea College, Berea, Kentucky; Evan F. Stearns was the grandson of George S. Stearns. The letter primarily concerns Edwin Stearns, Evan's father, but includes the following sentence: "I think, too, that he had some stories to tell about his father [George] helping fugitive slaves in the times before the war."

59. Goss, *Cincinnati the Queen City,* vol. 3, 515.

60. Levi Coffin, *Reminiscences of Levi Coffin, the Reputed President of the Underground Railroad* (Cincinnati: Western Tract Society, 1876), 276–77.

61. Ibid., 277.

62. Ford and Ford, *History of Cincinnati,* 106.

63. Goss, *Cincinnati the Queen City,* vol. 1, 205.

64. Leonard, *Greater Cincinnati,* vol. 1, 541.

65. Ellis Merton Coulter, *The Cincinnati Southern Railroad and the Struggle for Southern Commerce, 1865–1872* (Chicago: American Historical Society, 1922), 18.

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86. Richard M. Bayles, ed., *History of Providence County*, vol. 2 (New York: W.W. Preston, 1891), 113–17; Elizabeth J. Johnson, James L. Wheaton, and Susan L. Reed, *Images of America: Pawtucket* (Dover, NH: Arcadia Publishing, 1995), 15–17.

87. E. R. Stearns, Stearns & Foster Company executive director meetings minutes, January 20, 1885, 16.

88. E. R. Stearns, minutes, February 29, 1884, 42.

89. Edwin R. Stearns and Joseph C. Foster, letter to the Stearns & Foster Company, October 26, 1893; collection of author.

90. E. R. Stearns, minutes, January 20, 1885, 19.

91. E. R. Stearns, minutes, February 29, 1884, 10.

92. E. R. Stearns, minutes, January 20, 1885, 19.

93. E. R. Stearns, minutes, January 19, 1886, 29.

94. E. R. Stearns, minutes, January 20, 1885, 21.

95. Ibid.

96. E. R. Stearns, minutes, January 19, 1886, 30. Stearns's total expenditure for the Montreal mill was $49,579.85.

97. E. R. Stearns, minutes, January 15, 1889, 42.

98. Sales Records, 67–68.

99. E. R. Stearns, minutes, January 15, 1889, 44.

100. Ibid, 42.

101. Memoranda & Diary of 1883, Lockland wadding mill book, Stearns & Foster Company, 10; collection of author.

102. Willard I. Lewis, "Cotton Batting Machine," U.S. Patent 1386,143, issued July 29, 1888; Agreement between Union Wadding Company, Pawtucket Rhode Island, and the Stearns & Foster Company, Cincinnati, Ohio and Willard I.

Lewis of Walpole, County of Norfolk and State of Massachusetts; collection of author.

103. E. R. Stearns, minutes, January 15, 1889, 48.

104. Lockland wadding mill book, 1.

105. Internal Stearns & Foster Company's written history.

106. E. R. Stearns, minutes, January 28, 1879, 33.

107. Joseph C. Foster, Stearns & Foster Company executive director meetings minutes, November 17, 1891, 56–57; collection of author.

108. Ibid.

109. J. C. Foster, minutes, November 15, 1892, 64.

110. Ibid.

111. J. C. Foster, minutes, November 21, 1893, 72.

112. Ibid.

113. Ibid., 74.

114. Ibid.

115. J. C. Foster, minutes, November 19, 1895, 83.

116. Ibid., 86.

117. Sales records, 69.

118. J. C. Foster, minutes, November 17, 1896, 93.

119. Ibid., 95

120. Ibid., 94.

121. Ibid., 98.

122. Ibid., 95.

123. Mill record book No.2, The Stearns & Foster Company, 43; collection of author.

124. In the 1930s, this internal printing capability proved fortuitous, as the company printed patchwork patterns on its Mountain Mist® brand labels as a marketing strategy.

125. J. C. Foster, minutes, November 21, 1899, 118.

126. Ibid.

127. In 1983 the Stearns & Foster Company was purchased by Ohio Mattress, Cleveland, Ohio. In 1985 the non-woven division of Ohio Mattress was purchased by Morley Thompson and established as the Stearns Technical Textiles Company. In 2003 the Mountain Mist division of the Stearns Technical Textiles Company was sold to Leggett & Platt. In 2008 the Mountain Mist product line, along with the Polyesters Fibers Division of Leggett & Platt, was sold to Empire Investments Holdings and established as Polyester Fibers, LLC.

128. Mountain Mist® and White Rose® registered trademarks are now owned by Polyester Fibers, LLC.

The Development of Geometric Pictorial Patchwork, 1800–1950

Mary Reecy Fitzgerald

The trajectory of American patchwork through the nineteenth century generally follows a succession of traditional styles and techniques, including such forms as chintz appliqué, mosaic template piecing, and crazy patchwork. The numerous surviving examples of these styles suggest a timeline in which each style emerged, evolved, and gained popularity. Concurrent with these well-known, popular traditions, a less common style of geometric pictorial patchwork also developed by the early nineteenth century and continued into the twentieth century. Constructed of small geometric modules, typically squares or hexagons, this style depends on the selection and placement of colored fabric to produce a pictorial image. Surviving examples of geometric pictorial patchwork appear as individual, idiosyncratic creations outside contemporaneous popular traditions. These pictorial patchworks attest that the style occurred sporadically in the nineteenth century and the first quarter of the twentieth century. Starting in the late 1920s and continuing through the 1940s, commercial pattern companies included geometric pictorial patchwork among their designs. This study traces the translation of a distinctive patchwork style into commercial designs, and then offers an analysis of published instructions accompanying the patterns and the author's attempt to follow them.

American quilt history is frequently presented as a timeline showing the periods of popularity for particular patchwork and quilting styles.[1] Styles such as white wholecloth bedcovers, mosaic-

pieced patchwork, and album quilts developed in response to particular economic, technological, political, and social developments in American history. In addition to these identifiable trends, other styles and techniques appeared that are not associated with particular times and places, and are not represented on such timelines. One style that does not fit neatly into a particular social context, political era or technological timeframe is geometric pictorial patchwork. This technique is characterized by the repetition of a single geometric shape—most often a square—cut from selected fabrics to create a pictorial image. Though this technique never achieved widespread popularity, examples of geometric pictorial patchwork survive from throughout the nineteenth century, and mid-twentieth-century designers adapted the technique for commercial patterns.

This study of geometric pictorial patchwork begins with a brief overview of known nineteenth- and early–twentieth-century examples, listed in an appendix to this article, followed by a more detailed examination of published designs offered by commercial pattern companies during the 1930s. I then focus on two companies, Anne Orr Studios and the Stearns & Foster Company, both of which included geometric pictorial patchwork among their pattern offerings. I examine the different strategies these companies adopted in designing and marketing these patterns to consumers. My research on these published designs included a hands-on component; that is, I constructed one entire quilt and the geometric-patchwork portions of two other quilts, following the instructions included with the commercial patterns. This combination of historical and empirical research led to observations on the historical development of geometric pictorial patchwork and to an analysis of the influence of twentieth-century pattern designers.

Geometric Pictorial Patchwork in the Nineteenth Century

Geometric pictorial patchwork is related to techniques practiced in Europe over several centuries.[2] Averil Colby describes a coverlet, dated 1847, pieced of one-inch squares "made in the

manner of a cross-stitch sampler," with an alphabet bordered by pictorial motifs.[3] Related nineteenth-century American traditions include alphabets and/or inscriptions of pieced letters.[4] Other one-patch quilts produced designs that are geometric rather than pictorial, such as the distinctive Bowmansville Star, which is particular to one town in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.[5] During the fourth quarter of the nineteenth century, quiltmakers pieced small squares—one inch or smaller—from a variety of printed fabrics to create "postage-stamp" patchwork quilts. Although the makers occasion-ally imposed some order to arranging the fabrics, such as alternating light and dark colors, these quilts generally do not produce a secondary visual image.[6] Numerous examples of these one-patch geometric designs and other complex arrangements of very small geometric fabric pieces survive from the nineteenth century, but, thus far, only three pictorial examples have been identified from this period.

The earliest known example of geometric pictorial patchwork is a piece called the Medieval Horseman, (cover and plate 17), attributed to the period 1810–1830.[7] The unquilted patchwork consists of over 30,000 half-inch squares, some of them pieced from triangles. The individual squares were whip-stitched (over-sewn), with or without paper templates, in the mosaic style of patchwork predominant in the British Isles in the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. This pictorial patchwork, which measures 91 by 83 inches, also incorporates details worked in inlay and appliqué. The figures of the horse and a rider carrying a banner are depicted using a variety of printed and plain cotton fabrics. The image was most likely copied from another source, perhaps a published illustration or art work. The provenance of this patchwork, including the identity, location, and circumstances of the maker, is unknown.

The second oldest known pictorial patchwork quilt dates from the second half of the nineteenth century. Found in New England with no provenance, it features a house and a large tree within an abstracted landscape. Variously described as House in the Country or An American Home, the printed fabrics date from the 1870s.[8] A third pictorial patchwork portrays a European house with attached

stone wall, arched gate, and landscape. The image was created using three-quarter-inch squares cut from various silk fabrics. Its landscape orientation, suggests that it was created as a work of art rather than as a bedcovering. Although it was found in California, the provenance of this quilt is unknown.[9]

Nineteenth-century examples of geometric pictorial patchwork appear to have been designed and created by individual needlewomen rather than replicated from earlier patchwork quilts. The makers, however, may well have used existing graphic illustrations as inspiration or models for their patchwork. The complexity of the Medieval Horseman, in particular, suggests that the maker interpreted an engraving or other illustration, and a diligent researcher familiar with early-nineteenth-century prints might be able to identify a specific source. The vague outlines of the House quilt, on the other hand, complicates the search for a pictorial source. One possible design source may be patterns for Berlin work, a form of counted needlework created from a chart, using wool yarn on a canvas background; the technique was popular during much of the nineteenth century.[10]

Twentieth-Century Examples

During the early twentieth century, the Colonial Revival movement rekindled an interest in quiltmaking and other "colonial" crafts. Marie Webster and other entrepreneurial designers emerged to supply patchwork patterns to consumers. By the 1920s a number of companies offered a variety of old favorites, new interpretations of familiar patterns, and innovative and original designs. They advertised their offerings in women's magazines, newspapers, and in brochures and catalogs.[11]

It was a common practice for magazines to market patterns for the quilts pictured or described in their pages. The accompanying articles contained minimal information about construction, but they typically extolled the beauty, utility, or old-fashioned charm of the quilt. The pattern instructions by Florence La Ganke Harris

and Anne Orr promoted hand sewing as an important element of quiltmaking, linking the seamstress with her real or imagined colonial ancestors.The magazines commonly provided an address for customers to order the full instructions for a nominal fee. This method of advertising and selling patterns provided the opportunity for quilters anywhere in the United States to purchase the same quilt pattern. Evidence that this method was successful is widespread; quilts made from these patterns have been discovered in diverse regions of the country.

For instance, a quilt consisting of twelve geometric pictorial blacks pieced in a Rose design was found in the estate of a Minnesota woman named Lydia Papke.[12] The pattern, Old Fashioned Rose, was published in *The Work Basket* in 1941.[13] Another geometric pictoral patchwork named Rosy Wreath was printed in the same issue of the magazine. Old Fashioned Rose was made of one-inch squares while Rosy Wreath was made of two-inch squares. The piecer of Old Fashioned Rose used the border presented with Rosy Wreath to complete her quilt.

While many quilters took advantage of the availability of commercial patterns, a few ambitious quiltmakers continued the nineteenth-century practice of creating quilts from large numbers of small fabric pieces. The makers often recorded the number of pieces they used, which suggests a desire for public recognition and the use of patchwork as a competitive practice. One such maker was Charles Pratt, who constructed several geometric pictorial patchworks between 1911 and 1933, including Ninety and Nine, and Ruth and Naomi.[14] Each of his quilts was designed as a picture, sewn in one-inch squares of silk fabrics. Born in Manchester, England in 1851, Pratt worked as a carpet designer and later used similar skills to design his quilts.[15] He may have been influenced by the biblical themes and brilliant colors of Berlin work patterns, although by the twentieth century, illustrations in Sunday school tracts, commonly used throughout the United States, provided a ready source for sacred themes and images.

In 1933 Emma Andres used one-inch squares of solid red and white fabrics to construct Lady at the Spinning Wheel, inspired by

the work of Charles Pratt and based on a cross-stitch pattern. Andres altered the pattern by adding a cat near the lady's feet.[16] Lady at the Spinning Wheel is similar to the silhouettes of women in two filet crochet patterns published by Anne Orr.[17] Andres later made a second geometric pictorial patchwork, a copy of Charles Pratt's Ninety and Nine, using half-inch squares.[18]

Using solid and printed cotton fabrics, Myrtle Mae Fortner designed the Matterhorn, a geometric pictorial patchwork, in 1934.[19] Inspired by photographs taken by her niece on a trip to Switzerland, Fortner first reproduced the image of the Matterhorn as a painting. Later she translated the same image in fabric, producing the fabric masterpiece that is now included among the one hundred best quilts of the twentieth century.[20]

Lucettia May Sharp Young, of Lynn, Massachusetts, completed an unusual geometric patchwork design of 33,148 pieces about 1930.[21] She proudly recorded her initials and the number of pieces in the quilt on a cloth tape attached to the reverse of the unquilted patchwork. The piece contains fifty-six blocks composed of three-quarter-inch cotton squares. Although not strictly a pictorial design, the highly unusual coverlet makes use of small squares of a variety of fabrics to create an intricately designed and carefully crafted visual image.[22]

Anne Orr's Contributions to Geometric Pictorial Patchwork

The first known commercial pattern for geometric pictorial patchwork was published in Anne Orr's needlework column, in the September 1929 issue of *Good Housekeeping* magazine. One of the most influential needlework designers of the early-twentieth century, Orr sold her patterns through her business, Anne Orr Studios. Her designs were first published in *Southern Woman's Magazine* from 1913 to 1918, and she contributed a needlework column for *Good Housekeeping* from 1919 until her retirement in 1940.[23] Orr's design for Quaint Nursery Quilt consisted of block designs for six different animals constructed from small fabric

squares.[24] The following year, her column featured a design called Cubistic Babies. The design consisted of two blocks, with the figures of a girl and boy constructed from small squares; however, the illustration showed only the individual blocks, without indicating how to place them within a quilt.[25]

Between 1931 and 1939, Orr published designs for a total of fifteen geometric pictorial patchwork quilts in her *Good Housekeeping* column.[26] During this period, geometric pictorial patchwork formed only a small portion of her published quilt designs; however, this small segment was significant. Orr's use of particular design elements in combination makes her geometric pictorial designs distinctive and identifiable. These elements include half-inch or one-inch squares; fabrics in solid, pastel colors; and borders as integral components of the design. Unlike earlier examples of geometric pictorial patchwork, which were constructed entirely of small geometric units, Orr's designs featured isolated images in blocks, or in combination with conventional borders and strips of unpieced fabric. One design, the Lincoln Quilt, was illustrated with a wide border of appliquéd swags, while the Marie Antoinette design featured a border that suggested a fringed trim which softened the edge of the quilt. All of these features contribute to the distinctive elements that epitomize an Anne Orr quilt.

Orr described this style of patchwork as cross-stitch.[27] Her needlework career earlier had included designing cross-stitch patterns, as well as designs for filet crochet, tatting, and other embroidery. Patterns for filet crochet and cross-stitch designs were typically laid out on a grid of small squares, similar to graph paper. When Orr introduced her new patchwork designs, it would have been natural for her to relate them to the familiar cross-stitch grid.

In the 1930s Anne Orr's columns in *Good Housekeeping* and her own business, Anne Orr Studios, featured full-color illustrations of some of her quilt designs. Also, Orr accompanied her geometric pictorial patchwork with full-color charts of the pieced portion of the quilt. These charts typically showed various types of flowers, and baskets with flowers, ribbons and bows. The colored charts are reminiscent of the hand-painted charts produced for Berlin work

patterns in the nineteenth century. Orr's colored charts simplified the visualization and the piecing of the proposed quilt.

In February 1943, Anne Orr's column in *Better Homes and Gardens Magazine* contained Sail Ho, a pattern for a child's quilt. The sailboats were pieced of individual squares and then appliquéed to the blocks. The quilt was designed with four rows of three sailboats, sashing, and two borders.[28] This design signaled a departure from her previous geometric pictorial patchwork designs, which were entirely pieced.

In 1945 the Lockport Batting Company distributed a pattern booklet as a strategy to market their batting. Anne Orr served as the editor for this booklet, which contained several of the geometric pictorial patchwork designs that she had published earlier in *Good Housekeeping*. These included An Initialed Quilt, Heirloom Basket, Star Flower, Oval Wreath, Debutante's Pride, and Quaint Pieced Quilt.[29]

Mountain Mist Patterns for Geometric Pictorial Patchwork

In one of the most successful marketing strategies for quilt-related products, the Stearns & Foster Company printed patchwork patterns on the paper wrappers of their Mountain Mist brand batting. Of the seventy-nine Mountain Mist patterns available during the 1930s, three were designs for geometric pictorial patchwork designs. The first of these, Cross-Stitch Garden, appeared on a Mountain Mist batting wrapper in 1933. Cross-Stitch Garden was designed by Margaret Hayes, whose sister, Ruth Hayes, wrote the instructions printed on the pattern sheet. Cross-Stitch Garden features a central image of a small, oval lily pond surrounded by a dense wreath of flowers. The wreath is, in turn, situated within a rectangle, flanked on the sides and both ends by smaller geometric floral motifs. The geometric patchwork images are formed from one-inch squares, with occasional triangles to soften the right angles. The pattern did not include an image of the finished quilt, only a black-and-white chart using symbols to indicate the place-

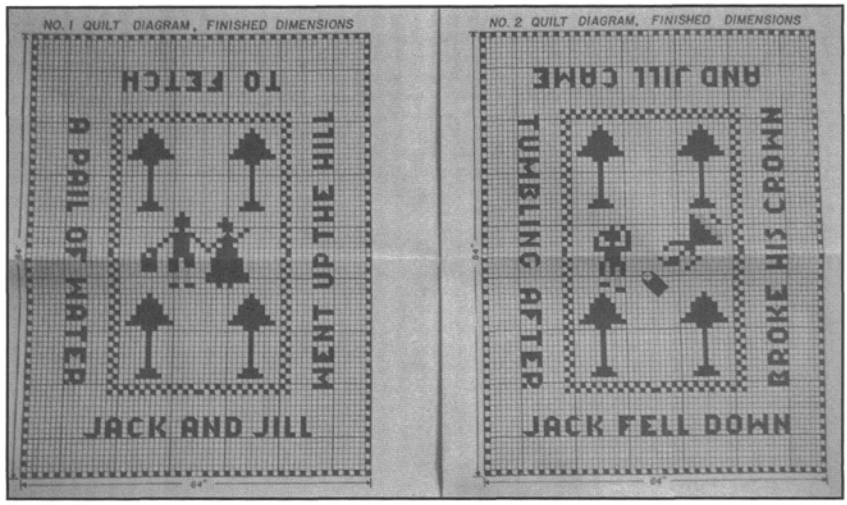

Figure 1. Detail of diagram for Jack and Jill pattern, from Mountain Mist® batting wrapper. Reprinted by permission of Polyester Fibers, LLC. *Collection of the author*

ment of different colored fabrics. When the pattern was re-issued in the Mountain Mist *Blue Book* in 1936, a color picture of the quilt was included.

Also in 1936, Mountain Mist published a second geometric pictorial patchwork pattern, Jack and Jill (fig. 1). The instruction sheet for this children's design included patterns for two blocks on the same sheet: one shows the children going up the hill; the other shows them tumbling down. The images of the children are constructed from large squares, rendering the children very much like stick figures. The text of the nursery rhyme is pieced on each of the two scenes as the border.

In 1937, Mountain Mist published a third geometric pictorial patchwork design, called Roses are Red. This pattern is composed of four elements: twelve geometric floral blocks, fourteen geometric bowknot blocks, twenty-four unpieced solid blocks, and a border of one-inch squares. Four rows of the floral blocks alternate with five rows of the solid blocks, all set on point. The bows are arranged as a border, inside the outer row of one-inch squares at the edge of the quilt.

Although the number of Mountain Mist geometric pictorial patchwork designs is small, it indicates the desire of the company to offer quilts that would appeal to the tastes of all quilters. Each of the three patterns takes a different approach to quilt design. Cross-Stitch Garden is composed of an isolated pieced section surrounded by plain space, similar to the style of Anne Orr. The Jack and Jill quilt covers the entire surface with naive figures, with the pieced words of the rhyme as a border. Roses Are Red is designed in the block style. Taken together, they show the broad range of quilt styles available to the quilter of this era.

Geometric Pictorial Patchwork, 1935–1950

Anne Orr and Mountain Mist were not the only sources for geometric pictorial patchwork patterns during this period. Florence La Ganke Harris and Marion Dyers produced a design called Great Grandmamma's Posies, published in *Country Gentleman* in 1940.[30] This design features ten bouquets positioned around an open rectangular center. An undulating ribbon of squares connects the bouquets. The design actually includes two versions of the bouquet: the six blocks at the ends and sides are aligned with the rectangular whole, while the four, larger corner blocks are oriented on the diagonal. Posies resembles Anne Orr's geometric pictorials, but certain distinctive elements, including the addition of a diagonal block variation, the presence of details pieced with smaller squares, and a very different pieced border treatment, indicate the work of a designer other than Anne Orr.

In 1936 Rosella Nordmeier Nusbaum made a small child's quilt featuring baskets constructed entirely of hexagons in pastel colors that cover the entire surface. Nusbaum made this quilt for the sick child of a neighbor, and she and the child's mother, Susan Cervenka, quilted it.[31] The baskets, common in Colonial Revival patterns, are very similar to Anne Orr offerings in cross-stitch patterns.

While commercial pattern companies were designing and sell-

ing patterns for geometric pictorial patchwork, individuals continued to create their own original designs. A small, whimsical quilt called Cow, constructed by an unknown quilter in Arkansas, depicts six cows, using only a few well-placed dark squares against a light ground to suggest the location of the ears, muzzle, neck, hooves, back, and tail.[32] Although it is possible that this quilt was made from a published design, perhaps one in a farm magazine, neither the Cow nor any similar designs have been discovered.

A typing assignment led Georgia Myers Kenworthy to create her geometric pictorial patchwork. Using letters on the keyboard, Kenworthy arranged them to form the image of a peacock. The typed letters on the paper formed the grid that became her pattern. To make sure that all of the fabric squares used in her patchwork picture were exactly on grain, Kenworthy pulled threads both on the warp and the weft to identify the grain lines. The process of translating the Peacock design into fabric took twenty-four years.[33] Kenworthy's design is similar to a peacock graphed by Anne Orr, even to the shading on the bird's back, but Kenworthy's peacock has a more flamboyant tail.[34]

An unknown quilter in Maine constructed a quilt of six Donkey blocks, using an arrangement of squares, triangles, and rectangles. The soft blue donkeys, accented with brown features, are pieced with a tan background.[35] This donkey pattern was published in the *Kansas City Star* in 1931.[36] Folklorist Mary Washington Clark described a Mule quilt, made by Chloe Meador during the second quarter of the twentieth century in south-central Kentucky. Her cotton quilt is described as "whole-quilt design made up of small squares . . . of dark material to achieve a remarkable likeness to a mule." This quilt may have been made as a tribute to the maker's grandson who was nicknamed Mule as a child. This grandson used the quilt on his bed.[37]

Although motivations for quiltmaking are many and varied, one recurring impetus involves competition. One of the ways that quiltmakers have attracted public attention is by making patchwork quilts with an unusually large number of pieces. Some of these quilts were exceptional in both needlework and design. One of the

most celebrated quiltmakers of the twentieth century, Grace McCance Snyder, completed two geometric pictorial patchwork quilts. The first, Flower Basket Petit Point, completed in 1943, consisted of 85,789 pieces. The second, Bird of Paradise, was completed in 1944 (plate 18). For the center medallion, Snyder used tiny triangles to create the flamboyant bird, copied from a china bowl.[38] Snyder's work expresses the primary values of twentieth-century quiltmaking—elegant design and fine needlework—carried to extreme; and her most memorable quilts are perhaps her two examples of geometric pictorial patchwork.

Empirical Research

In order to develop a better understanding of the process of geometric pictorial patchwork in the twentieth century, I decided to undertake an empirical study. This approach was inspired by the work of Elizabeth Barber, an archeologist and linguist, who, as part of her research, attempted to replicate the construction of ancient textiles. Barber asserted, "the process of recreating ancient artifacts step by step can shed light on the lives and habits of the original craft workers that no amount of armchair theorizing can give."[39]

I started this study because I wanted to experience first-hand the process of piecing a quilt with tiny pieces to create a pictorial image. As a quilter, I knew that I would gain insight and understanding through the construction process that would be unattainable otherwise. Since I had completed cross-stitch pictures, I wanted to see if piecing similar pictures would bring the same satisfaction as the rhythmic needlework in cross-stitch. I wondered if the large scale of the resulting picture would be as satisfactory as the smaller embroidered images, or if the image would become too large and ungainly to appreciate. I had never seen an actual geometric pictorial patchwork, only pictures.

To select patterns for my first experiments, I studied the Anne Orr designs offered in the Lockport book. The Initial quilt was too plain, and the Star Flower, Debutante's Pride, and Quaint Pieced

Quilt were too similar to a block pieced quilt. I decided that Heirloom Basket and The Oval Wreath appeared to be the most interesting, and, in the end, I chose Heirloom Basket because it was more intricate. Anne Orr designed her patterns using small squares throughout, even in the solid-color background. For comparison, I chose two Mountain Mist patterns, Roses Are Red and Cross-Stitch Garden, which were designed substituting long rectangles for individual contiguous squares of the same color. I found the pattern for Heirloom Basket, in two different sources, a Dover reprint of a booklet, *Anne Orr's' Charted Designs,* and the *Lockport Pattern Book: Anne Orr Quilts.*[40] For the two Mountain Mist designs, I used the patterns printed on the company's batting wrappers.

In my experiments with geometric patchwork from commercial patterns, I decided to use the construction process as a way of analyzing the instructions accompanying the commercial patterns. I wanted to determine if the modern seamstress has enough knowledge of the basics of sewing terminology to complete these quilts from the abbreviated instructions typically included with the pattern.[41] Instructions for all forms of needlework assumed that practitioners were experienced and knowledgeable, so it was not necessary during the 1930s to provide a great deal of detail in order for the instructions to be understood and the project to be successfully completed. Although the sewing machine had been in general use since the middle of the nineteenth century, the tremendous influence of the Colonial Revival had elevated the value of hand sewing as a desirable skill of the women of the colonial period to be emulated by the woman of the early twentieth century.[42]

I started my study by reading the published instructions accompanying each of the four patterns. Each set began with a paragraph describing the quilt, followed by a numbered list of instructions. All the sets suggested measuring the bed on which the quilt was to be used and adjusting the quilt size, if necessary. Instructions for the two Heirloom Baskets gave no indication of how to make this adjustment, while instructions for the two Mountain Mist patterns suggested adjusting the borders. All four sets recommended washing the fabric before use, expressing concerns about the stability of

dyes and shrinkage of cotton fabrics.

I saw immediately that I needed to make decisions involving technology. One way to conduct this experiment would be to use only the tools and techniques available to a quilter at the time the patterns were originally published. While recognizing that the process of piecing small fabric squares by machine produces very different results than by hand, I also saw that there was no way I could truly recreate the experience of a period quiltmaker. After considering my goals for this project in the context of my daily life, I made the decision to try to follow the instructions using tools available in the twenty-first century.

I used a number of implements that were unavailable to quilters in the 1930s and 1940s: the rotary cutter, cutting mat, and acrylic rulers. The instructions, of course, took for granted that quilters would be cutting out cardboard templates with scissors. There were specific instructions for the making of the template, a pattern the exact size and shape of each piece needed in the quilt construction. Quilters were variously instructed to make the template by tracing the pattern in the instructions on thin paper, cutting it out, and pasting it to a piece of cardboard or blotting paper or by tracing it on the smooth side of a piece of fine sandpaper. Whichever method was used, the quilter was encouraged to make several patterns since they would lose shape as the pattern was traced multiple times for the numerous pieces required in a geometric pictorial patchwork. Since I was cutting the pieces with a rotary cutter, there was no need for a template. After I completed a detailed examination of each instruction sheet to find similarities and differences, I was ready to begin construction of the quilt and pieced samples.

Heirloom Basket

The first patchwork design I pieced was the Heirloom Basket. As I had two published sources for this pattern, I wanted to know if the two versions produced exact duplicates of the original Anne

Orr Studios pattern. I decided to make one full-sized quilt while comparing the instructions for the Dover Basket with those for the Lockport Basket. Both sets of Heirloom Basket instructions included printed color design charts and images of the completed quilts. The color chart helped in visualizing the finished quilt top; however, the printed grid was so small that I had difficulty differentiating among the light, medium, and dark values of the various colors. The quilt is designed with a center medallion of a pieced basket of flowers. Above the basket on the pillow area, or sham, is a spray of pieced flowers tied with a blue ribbon. Both sets of instructions specified the colors to be used. The basket was to be made of three shades of tan, and flowers were three shades of rose, two of lavender, and one of gray. Additional flowers and the bows were depicted in three shades of blue. The background areas were solid eggshell color, framed on four sides with a wide appliqué border of blue.

Shopping for the specified fabrics proved challenging. I had difficulty finding gradations of tan and rose that were in the same hue. In retrospect, the three shades of tan I selected were too far apart in value. More disturbing, when I began cutting the squares, I discovered the list of required fabrics had inadvertently omitted three shades of green, requiring a return trip to the fabric store.

The instructions for the Dover Basket did not provide details for cutting the fabric strips for the borders, such as pattern placement on the length of fabric or the length of the pieces. If the quilter followed the instructions in the order given, she risked not having a long enough piece for the borders. Drawing on previous experience, when I began cutting the squares for my quilt, I cut all eggshell and light blue squares from the lengthwise grain in order to allow pieces the full length of the yardage for the long border pieces.

The instructions for the Lockport Basket specified the use of a square template measuring 1 1/8 inches to produce a finished square measuring 3/4 inch. When I measured the template, I found I needed individual 1 1/4-inch squares for the pieced basket.

Patterns for both baskets instructed that the quilt be pieced in

grid sections to maintain organization, avoid confusion, and "to enjoy seeing the blocks take shape step by step." Each grid section consisted of ten strips of ten squares each, for a total of one hundred squares. This tip made it easier to maintain the order of the pieces.

As I cut and sewed the squares, I neither made an exact count of the number of pieces I cut nor counted the number needed to complete the basket. My reasoning was that if I cut the entire one-eighth yard, quarter yard or half yard of fabric required according to the pattern directions, I would have enough squares to complete the pieced basket. This proved to be fairly accurate.

I found the process of piecing the tiny squares surprisingly cathartic. The repetition and rhythm of the piecing process proved as soothing as the repetition and rhythm of knitting, embroidery, or crocheting. Though the need for organizing and remembering engaged the mind, the process fostered a relaxed attitude that continued to have an influence later during more energetic mental and physical activities. The instructions stated that the quilter would enjoy seeing the blocks take shape step by step, and I found this to be true. In fact, I found myself becoming compulsive about completing each grid and connecting it to the one before (fig. 2).

The number of pieces was not relevant to me until I described my activities to a friend, who responded, "Oh, my goodness! How many tiny pieces is that?" Out of curiosity, I calculated that the finished quilt would consist of 3,575 pieces for the center basket pieced section, and 833 for the sham, for a total of 4,408 pieces. I found that while these numbers are not important to me, viewers of the finished quilt are always interested in the numbers.

As I completed piecing the basket, I became aware of that my basket was coming out larger than specified in the instructions. According to the instructions, the basket portion of the quilt should measure 24 1/2 inches wide, but my basket measured 38 3/4 inches. I reacted emotionally to the possibility that I might have used the wrong template for the squares. I reexamined the instructions and found I had followed them correctly. The quilt pictured in the instructions did not have the same dimensions as the

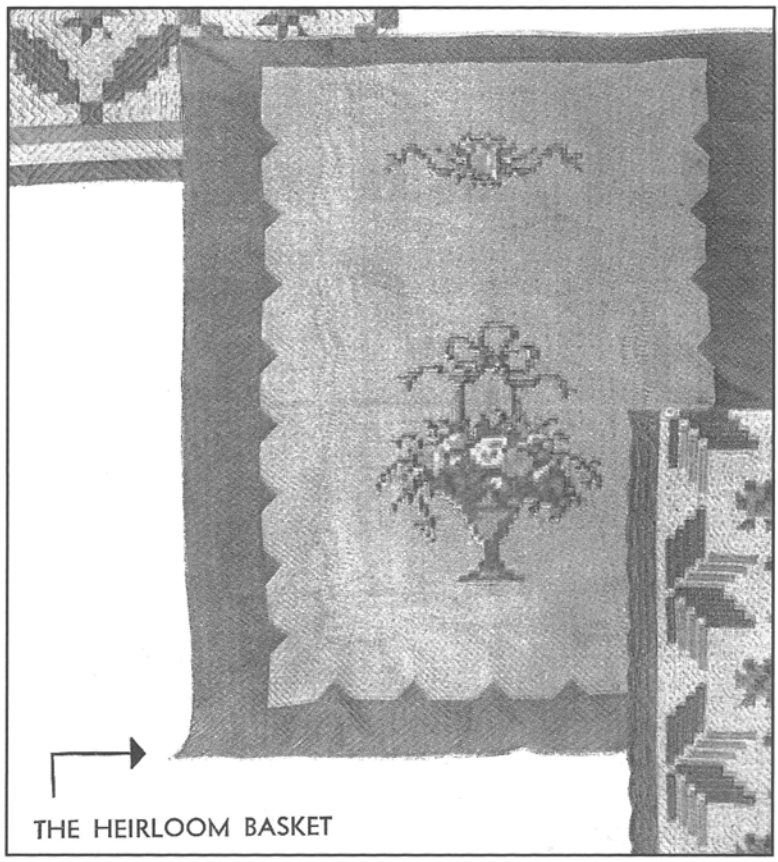

Figure 2. Heirloom Basket, from *Good Housekeeping*, January 1935, page 56.
Courtesy, H. M. Briggs Library, South Dakota State University, Brookings, SD

quilt for which the instructions were written. If I had continued to construct the quilt with the dimensions for borders and inserts as the instructions stated, my quilt would have measured 118 by 97 1/4 inches. Since I did not want a quilt this size (even larger than a king-size bedquilt), I reduced the widths of the borders and inserts so my finished quilt measured 96 by 79 inches, an appropriate size for a queen-size bed. In addition, since machine quilting is billed by the quilted square inch and the intricacy of the quilted pattern, the price of quilting Heirloom Basket would have

increased by 150 percent. I completed my quilt by adjusting the widths of the inset pieces and the borders to my desired dimensions.

The instructions for both Baskets suggest that "the whole top should be marked before it is put in the frame" by tracing the quilting lines lightly with a hard lead pencil or scratching the lines with a needle. The latter method produces a very temporary mark, appropriate only for marking as one goes. The instructions, however, do not differentiate between the two marking methods. Because my purpose in making this quilt involved a study of the patchwork process, I decided to have my quilt machine-quilted rather than quilting it by hand. I gave the quilter copies of the quilting patterns and instructions so that she could approximate the quilting designs suggested by Orr. After Diane Bunkers, the machine quilter, completed the quilting process, I added a double-folded binding that matched the blue in the border strip. I felt the satisfaction of a project completed successfully and pride of accomplishment (plate 19).

Roses Are Red

For my second project, I examined the Roses Are Red (hereafter referred to as Roses), using the instructions printed on the Mountain Mist batting wrapper (fig. 3).[43] The instructions included a description of the finished quilt blocks:

> Of course the roses don't have to be red. In the original *Mountain Mist* quilt of this design, they are made in two shades of pink, with rose centers, and a lovely hyacinth shade of blue toning to suggest fragrant violets. This same blue is used to form the quaint bows in the block that are placed around the joined flower blocks to form a border.

Instead of making an entire quilt, I decided to make only a small piece consisting of four blocks, enough to let me experience the way the blocks go together.

The instructions for the Roses pattern included a diagram of

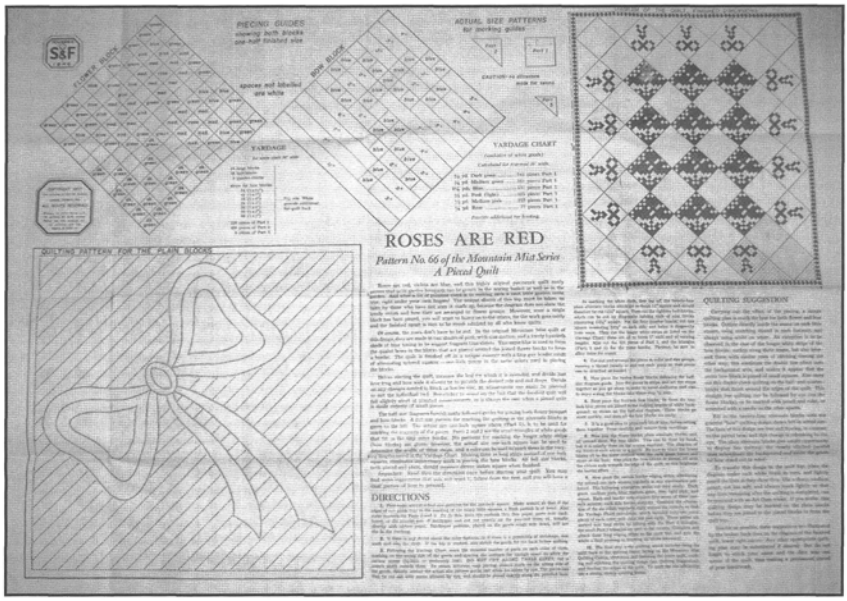

Figure 3. Roses Are Red, diagram and piecing guide, from Mountain Mist® batting wrapper. Reprinted by permission of Polyester Fibers, LLC. *Collection of the author*

the finished patchwork, but they lacked a photo. Acknowledging this absence, the instructions offer instead the following word picture:

> The unique charm of this top must be taken on faith by those who have not seen it made up, because the diagram does not show the lovely colors and how they are arranged in flower groups. However, once a single block has been pieced, you will want to hurry on to the others, for the work goes easily and the finished result is sure to be much admired by all who know quilts.

During the 1930s, Mountain Mist consistently illustrated their patterns with monochromatic charts. The different colors were represented by symbols, similar to those in patterns for crochet and cross-stitch embroidery. During this early period, Mountain Mist wrappers pictured a number of quilt blocks, including an image of

the quilt pattern on the inside of the batting wrapper. In 1938 Stearns & Foster published a pamphlet with an image of each of their patterns, including Roses, "in full color to better portray the outstanding beauty of our designs." This pamphlet allowed the company to provide an image of the finished quilt for the consumer without incurring the costs of printing color images on their batting wrappers. The original wrapper patterns also contained fabric color samples to guide the quilter.

The instructions were straightforward and easily understood with one exception: Roses instructions suggested that the quilter cut the large border strips first and use the left-over fabric to cut the one-inch squares. This would use the fabric to best advantage and avoid waste. Although the instructions specified the exact dimensions of the border strips, later instructions included the following afterthought: "Outer borders are mitered so be sure to leave enough length for mitered corners." A quilter reading and implementing each instruction in order would have dutifully cut border strips without allowing extra length to create the forty-five degree mitered corners.

The instructions for cutting the squares were confusing to this contemporary quilter. Step one states "First make several actual size patterns for the one-inch square;" and step three says to place the templates on the wrong side of the fabric and trace them "spacing the outlines far enough apart to allow for narrow seams one-fourth inch or preferably less." The instructions then emphatically admonish, "DO NOT CUT ALONG THESE LINES; cut a seam's width outside them." The practice of marking the finished size of each piece, then judging the seam allowance "by eye" while cutting them apart, is a traditional technique among quilters who piece by hand. They match the marked lines rather than the edges of the fabric. As a machine-piecer, I realized that my use of the rotary cutter made my experience very different from that of the majority of quiltmakers of the 1930s, since I used the edge of the cut fabric to gauge the seam rather than the seam line marked by pencil. To make this pattern using the rotary cutter and sewing machine, I cut 1 1/4-inch strips of fabric, then cut the strips into squares.

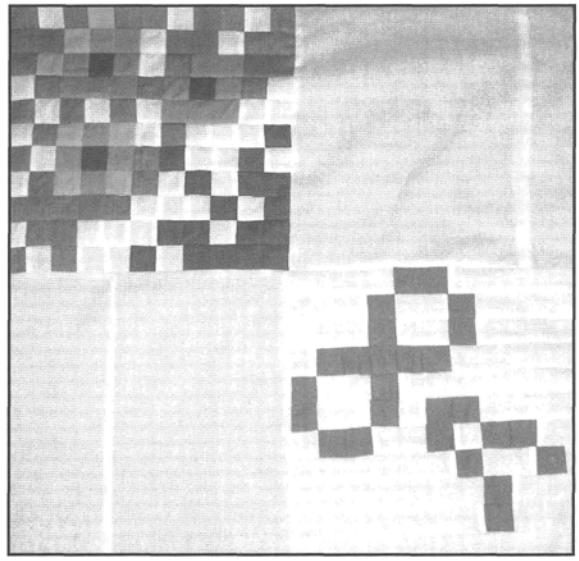

Figure 4. Roses Are Red, 2008, pieced by Mary Fitzgerald.

The instructions for the Roses pattern included a valuable suggestion for organizing the fabric squares while piecing the quilt: the maker should run a thread through the stack of squares of each color and size, removing pieces as they are needed. Although the instructions did not remind the maker to first make a knot to keep the pieces from slipping off the thread, a hand-piecer would have knotted the thread automatically.

The instructions further suggested that each strip be attached to its neighbor before beginning to piece the next strip in order to maintain organization while piecing and "to enjoy seeing the blocks take shape step by step." This was a valuable suggestion, as I sometimes inadvertently reversed a strip while handling the pieces. By following this instruction, I was able to check each strip against the growing section of patchwork and reduced the possibility of piecing incorrectly (fig. 4).

In sewing together the squares for the Roses pattern, I found that the larger size of the squares made the process go more quickly than piecing the Basket. However, as I joined the sections, I realized that this advantage in construction produced a design that was

less well defined and less pleasing. The Roses pattern also instructed the maker to substitute long strips instead of small adjacent squares of the same color. While the use of these long rectangles saved fabric and thread, it complicated the construction process. Instead of simply picking up the next square, I frequently found that I needed to consult the diagram to determine the specific length of each strip. As a result, the substitution of rectangular strips for rows of same-color squares did not save much time, and I found the physical process of piecing each Roses block to be more demanding than the meditative state I experienced sewing the Baskets. Further, the indistinct design that emerged from the finished Roses blocks did not provide me with the same degree of satisfaction I experienced from my first experiment.

Cross-Stitch Garden

The third geometric pictorial patchwork pattern I examined and constructed was Cross-Stitch Garden, also by Mountain Mist (fig. 5).[44] The basic pattern instructions and explanations were very similar to those for Roses, including a similar disclaimer about quilt visualization: "No diagram can give the full impact of the finished quilt's beautiful blending of colors to create a floral garden with a pool of white water lilies." Guidelines for preparing templates, washing and marking fabric, and cutting pieces were identical to those for Roses.

I purchased fabric in most of the colors recommended: white for water lilies, three shades of green for leaves, two shades of blue for flowers, two shades of rose, two shades of lavender for flowers, and one yellow for flower centers. The image of the quilt in the Mountain Mist pamphlet seemed very green to me, so I substituted light blue for the pond instead of the specified green. The construction of this quilt was complicated by the placement of triangles in the center of the pond in order to create the illusion of curved water lily petals. I found the most efficient method for me to develop a rhythm constructing this quilt was to complete all of the

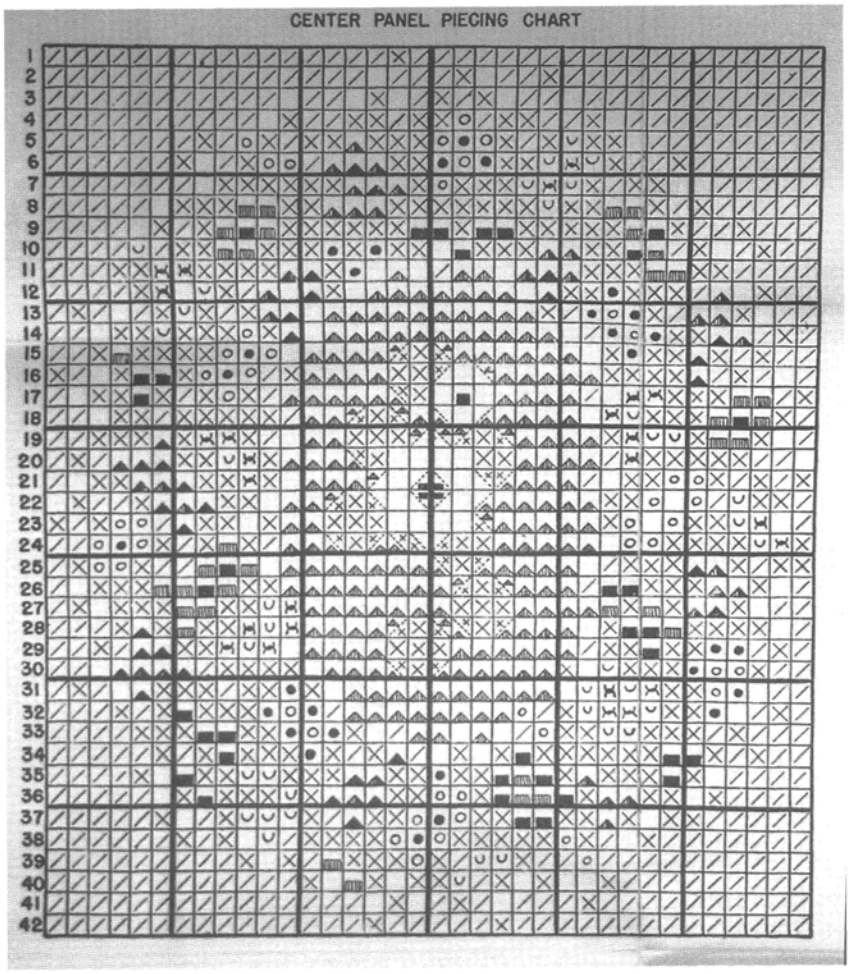

Figure 5. Cross-Stitch Garden, color chart, from Mountain Mist® batting wrapper. Reprinted by permission of Polyester Fiber, LLC. *Collection of the author*

half-square triangles first so I could treat them like squares in the piecing process. Instead of constructing an entire quilt, I made only the central portion of the Cross-Stitch Garden (figs. 6 and 7). The process, as expected, was similar to that for Roses are Red, and my reaction to the finished patchwork image was also similar. The size of the squares resulted in a bulky, indistinct image that offered limited satisfaction.

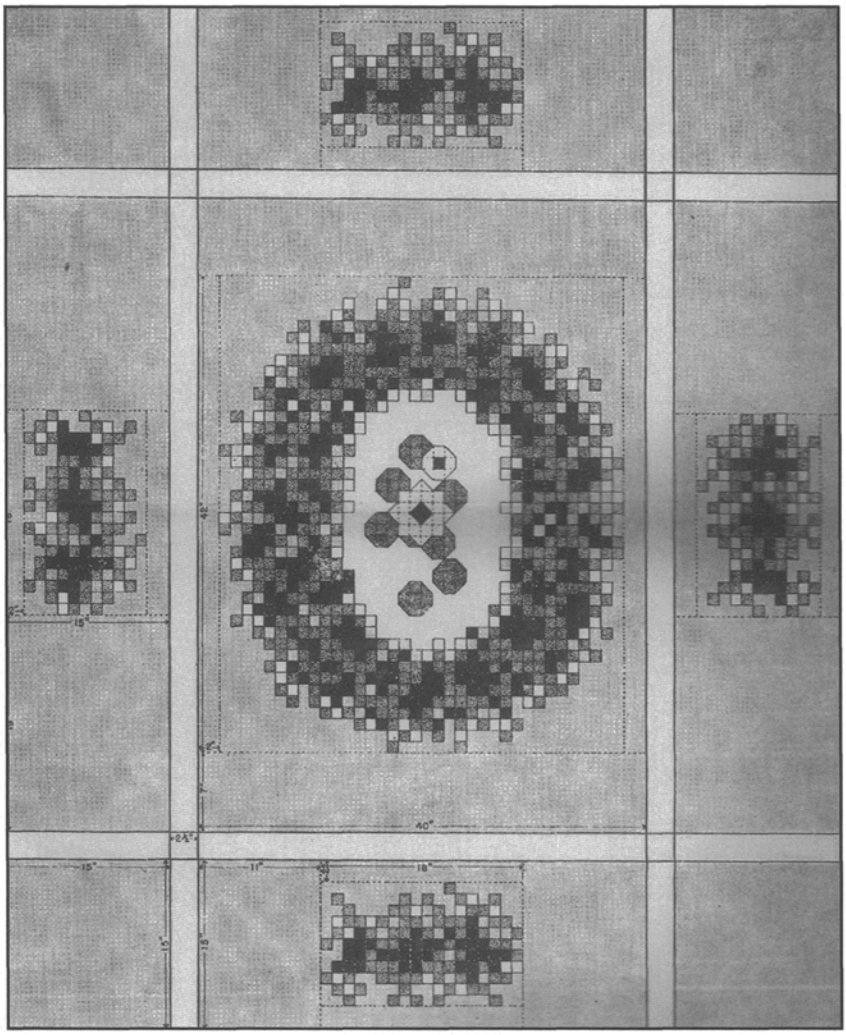

Figure 6. Cross-stitch Garden, piecing diagram from Mountain Mist® batting wrapper. Reprinted by permission of Polyester Fibers, LLC. *Collection of the author*

Conclusion

Geometric pictorial patchwork is a distinctive style that emerged from various European influences in the early-nineteenth century. Surviving examples are rare, suggesting that they may have appeared spontaneously rather than sharing a single inspirational

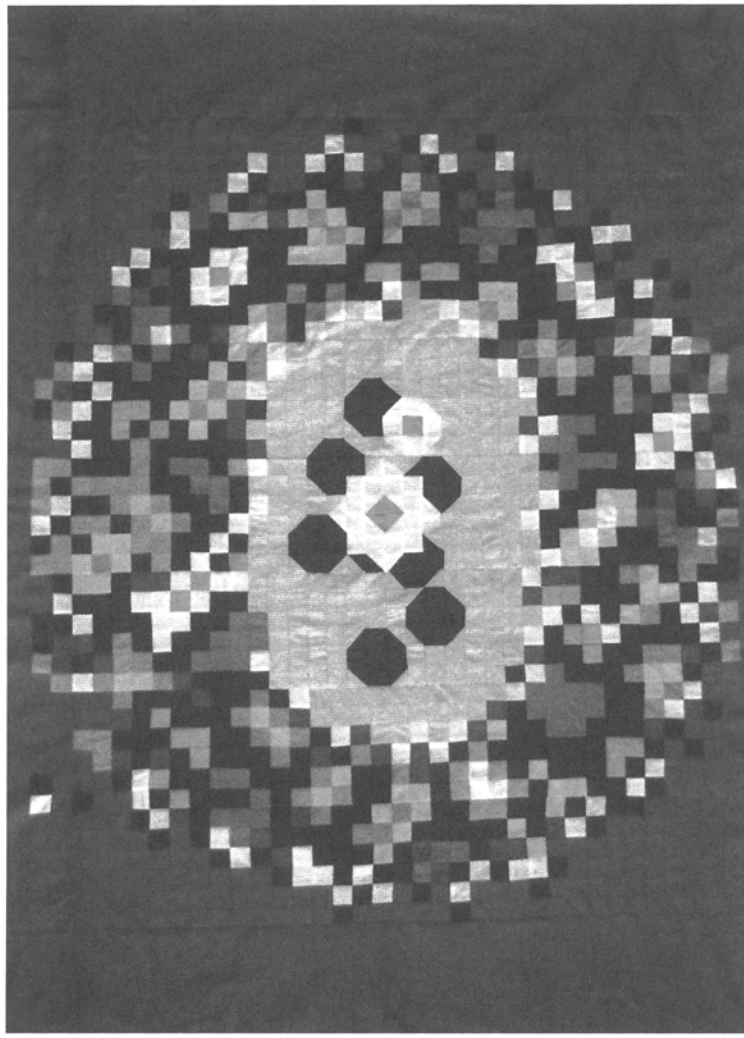

Figure 7. Cross-stitch Garden, 2009, pieced by Mary Fitzgerald.

source. The makers of these nineteenth-century quilts probably adapted designs from other sources, such as patterns for Berlin work or other needlework techniques, or published illustrations.

During the early-twentieth century, individual quilters expanded the range of geometric pictorial patchwork. These quilters would have been familiar with the non-pictorial postage-stamp patchwork, which had been popular during the late-nineteenth century, and

they seem to have recognized the inherent pictorial possibilities of using small fabric squares. Inspired by cross-stitch designs, popular illustrations, or original ideas, they created geometric pictorial patchwork quilts as individual expressions. Although the style never achieved the popularity of crazy patchwork or charm quilts, the appearance of these unique patchworks attracted the attention of professional pattern designers by the 1930s. The number and variety of commercial patterns for geometric pictorial patchwork flourished between 1930 and 1950.

As a result of my experiments in making geometric pictorial patchwork from published instructions, I found that they generally provided enough detail for consistent results, even for a twenty-first-century quilter. When actually following the instructions, I made a number of observations: the instructions assumed quilters to be familiar with basic sewing terms and procedures commonly used in quilting; inconsistencies on the same instruction sheet suggest that the instructions were written by more than one person and were not tested after the final rewrite of the instructions; and differences in the instructions for the Dover Basket and the Lockport Basket indicate that the they were revised, probably to address some of the inconsistencies I experienced.

I found the repetitive process of constructing geometric pictorial patchwork to be calming. I developed a great respect for the piecers of these quilts, particularly of those with large numbers of pieces. From my hands-on experiments, I found that I could not always follow the instructions without changing something, usually in response to my personal preferences. My experience suggests to me that discrepancies between published patterns and the surviving quilts made from them might result from errors in the instructions, from misinterpreting the instructions, from personal preference, or from some combination of these factors. By the time I had completed one full quilt and two smaller samples, I felt confined by the patterns I had selected. I experienced a desire to experiment with my own design to create an individual geometric pictorial patchwork quilt as the nineteenth-century quilters did. Overall, I found the empirical part of my study to be highly

valuable in analyzing the commercial quilt instructions. I gained insights about the construction process that would be impossible to observe from simply examining a quilt. As a result of my experience, I think that the development of guidelines for planning and analyzing hands-on studies of construction methods might help other researchers add empirical data to their available study tools.

My study of geometric pictorial patchwork started from an interest in the variety of commercial patterns of the twentieth century. My fascination grew to include all known examples of the style, both individual and commercial designs. From the present sample, it is clear that nineteenth-century examples resulted from the work of individual quiltmakers, outside the mainstream of patchwork styles. Although some quiltmakers continued this practice into the twentieth century, the majority of examples reflected the use of professionally designed commercial patterns. Examination of museum collections, private collections, and the results of state quilt-documentation projects may reveal additional examples of geometric pictorial patchwork quilts. As these quilts add to the knowledge base, researchers will, no doubt, continue to refine our understanding of this idiosyncratic and intriguing style.

APPENDIX: Identified Nineteenth- and Early–Twentieth-Century Examples of Geometric Pictorial Patchwork

Name	Quilter	Place Made	Date Made	Owner of Quilt	Reference
Medieval Horseman	Unknown	Unknown	1810–1830	International Quilt Study Center (IQSC)[1]	acc. 2005.053.0004
An American Home	Unknown	New England	c. 1870	IQSC	acc. 2003.003.0170
Pieces and Pixels	Unknown	Unknown	19th century	San JoseMuseum of Quilts and Textiles	(new accession)
Liberty or Death[2]	Charles Pratt	Philadelphia, PA	1920	Unknown	
Cows: Pieced Pictorial Patchwork[3]	Unknown	Arkansas	1920	Shelly Zegart's Quilts, Louisville, KY	
Rock of Ages[4]	Charles Pratt	Philadelphia, PA	1923	Unknown	
Penn's Treaty[5]	Charles Pratt	Philadelphia, PA	1926	Unknown	
Ninety and Nine[6]	Charles Pratt	Philadelphia, PA	1927	Unknown	
Lamb of Peace[7]	Charles Pratt	Philadelphia, PA	1929	Unknown	
Quaint Nursery Quilt[8]			1929		Anne Orr published design
Ruth and Naomi	Charles Pratt	Philadelphia, PA	1930	IQSC	acc. 2005.020.0001

1. University of Nebraska-Lincoln.
2. Barbara Brackman, "Record Breaking Quilts," *Quilter's Journal*, vol. 5, no. 3:5.
3. Dennis Duke and Deborah Harding, eds., *America's Glorious Quilts* (Westport, CT: Hugh Lauter Levin, 1987), 48.
4. Brackman, "Record Breaking Quilts."
5. Ibid.
6. "Charles Pratt," *Quilter's Journal*, vol. 3, no. 3 (Fall 1980): 56.
7. Brackman, "Record Breaking Quilts."
8. Anne Orr, "Needlework for the Children's Room," *Good Housekeeping* (September 1929): 83.

Politcal Donkey Quilt[9]	Unknown	probably Maine	1930	Betsy Telford, Rocky Mountain Quilts	
Cubistic Babies[10]			1930		Anne Orr published design
Original Postage Stamp[11]	Lucettia May Sharp Young	Lyon, MA	1930	Peabody-Essex Museum	acc. 124251
Postage Stamp Flower Basket	Sarabelle Jackman Patterson	Grand Rapids, MI	1931	Michigan State University Museum	acc. 87.0187
Flower Basket	Pieced by Emma Brown; quilted by Kathryn Frazier	Louisville, KY	1931	Nellie V. Brown	
Dresden[12]	Unknown	Unknown	1932	IQSC	Anne Orr design; acc. 1997.007.0771
French Wreath	Unknown	possibly Michigan	c. 1932	IQSC	acc. 1997.007.0097
Cross-Stitch Garden[13]			1933		design by Margaret Hayes for Stearns & Foster
Lincoln Quilt[14]			1933		Anne Orr published design
One in Cross-Stitch[15]			1933		Anne Orr published design

9. Rocky Mountain Quilts, York Village Maine; www.rockmountainquilts.com.
10. Anne Orr, "Christmas Gifts to Make and Buy," *Good Housekeeping* (December 1930): 73.
11. Lynne Zacek Bassett, ed., *Massachusetts Quilts: Our Common Wealth* (Lebanon, NH: University Press of New England, 2009), 296.
12. Ann Orr, "New Quilts with Rugs to Match," *Good Housekeeping* (June 1932): 52.
13. Merikay Waldvogel, "The Origins of Mountain Mist Patterns," *Uncoverings 1995*, ed. Virginia Gunn (San Francisco, American Quilt Study Group, 1995): 135–36.
14. Ann Orr, "Quilt Making in Old and New Designs," *Good Housekeeping*, (January 1933): 56.
15. Ibid., 56.

Lady at the Spinning Wheel[16]	Emma Andres	Prescott, AZ	1933	Joyce Gross Collection, Center for Americam History, University of Texas at Austin	acc. 2008.013
Rose and Irish Chain[17]			1933		Published design
Early American Wreath[18]			1934		Anne Orr published design
Dainty Quiilt for a Child[19]			1934		Anne Orr publisehd design
Matterhorn	Myrtle M. Fortner	Unknown	1934	Denver Art Museum	acc. 1967.89
Star Flower[20]			1935		Anne Orr published design
Oval Wreath[21]			1935		Anne Orr published design
Debutante's Pride[22]			1935		Anne Orr published design
Heirloom Basket[23]	Pieced by Elizabeth Bates Greer; quilted by Dolly Mae Long	Lancaster, KY	1935	Owned by Dr. Don Graham in 1990	Anne Orr published design
Marie Antoinette[24]			1936		Anne Orr published design
Jack and Jill[25]			1936		Stearns & Foster design

16. Merikay Waldvogel and Barbara Brackman, *Patchwork Souvenirs of the 1933 World's Fair* (Nashville: Rutledge Hill Press, 1993), 23.
17. "Make a Patchwork Quilt for Pleasure or Profit this Summer," *Woman's World* (August 1933): 20.
18. Anne Orr, "Pieced and Appliqued Quilts and Spreads," *Good Housekeeping* (January 1934): 55.
19. Ibid., 140.
20. Anne Orr, "Color and Style Invade the Linen Closet," *Good Housekeeping* (January 1935): 56–57.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Merikay Waldvogel, "The Marketing of Anne Orr's Quilt," *Uncoverings 1990*, ed. Laurel Horton (San Fransicso: American Quilt Study Group, 1990), 8.
24. Anne Orr, "Enchanting–for Chaise," *Good Housekeeping* (January 1936): 58.
25. Waldvogel, "Mountain Mist. Patterns."

Hexagon Baskets[26]	Rosella Nordmeier Nusbaum	Unknown	1936	Mary Roth Cervenka Zweber	
Roses Are Red[27]			1937		Stearns & Foster design
Floral Initial[28]			1938		Anne Orr published design
Pieced Quilt in Gros-Point Effect[29]			1938		Anne Orr published design
Quaint Quilt[30]			1939		Anne Orr published design
Bowknot[31]			1939		Anne Orr published design
Colorful Pieced Quilt[32]			1939		Anne Orr published design
Great Grandmamma's Posies[33]	Unknown	Unknown	1940	Dr. H. L. Durrett	
Old Fashioned Rose[34]	Lydia Papke	Unknown	1941	Margaret Traxler	
Rosy Wreath[35]			1941		Published pattern
Cross-Stitch Bouquet			1940–50		Pattern sheet sold by Lockpart Cotton Batting Co., 1940–1950

26. Minnesota Quilt Project, *Minnesota Quilts: Creating Connections with Our Past* (Stuillwater, MN: Voyageur Press, 2005), 55.
27. Waldvogel, "Mountain Mist Patterns."
28. Anne Orr, "Everybody's Doing Needlework," *Good Housekeeping* (January 1939): 61.
29. Anne Orr, "Easy to Make," *Good Housekeeping* (July 1938): 178.
30. Orr, "Needlework."
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
33. Merikay Waldvogel, *Soft Covers for Hard Times: Quiltmaking and the Great Depression* (Nashville, Rutledge HIll Press, 1990), 36.
34. Minnesota Quilt Project, *Minnesota Quilts*, 179.
35. "Old Fashioned Rose and Rosy Wreath Quilts," *Aunt Martha's Work Basket: Home and Needlecraft for Pleasure and Profit*, vol. 6, no. 4 (n.d.): 6 and centerfold.

Flower Basket Petit Point[36]	Grace McCance Snyder	Sutherland, NE	1942–43	Nebraska State Historical Society	acc. 7828-8
Bird of Paradise[37]	Grace McCance Snyder	Sutherland, NE	1943–44	Jo Yost Morphew Collection	
Sail Ho[38]			1943		Anne Orr published design
Peacock[39]	Georgia Myers Kenworthy	IA, TX, FL	1943–58	Georgia Myers Kenworthy	
Mule Quilt[40]	Cloe Meador	Unknown	possibly 1930–50	Unknown	

36. Patricia Cox Crews and Ronald C. Nagle, *Nebraska Quilts and Quiltmakers* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), 79.
37. "Grace McCance Snyder's Masterpiece Quilts," *Lady's Circle Patchwork Quilts*, issue 93 (January/February 1991): 32.
38. Anne Orr, "Quilt Today for the Warmth, the Fun, the Beauty of It," *Better Homes and Gardens* (January 1943): 46.
39. Charlotte Allen Williams, *Florida Quilts* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1992), 152–53.
40. Mary Washington Clark, *Kentucky Quilts and Their Makers* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1976), 41–42.

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1. Timeline Explorer, International Quilt Study Center, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, www.quiltstudy.org/discover/quilt_explorer/timeline_explorer.html (accessed March 16, 2009); Barbara Brackman, *Clues in the Calico* (McLean, VA: EPM Publications, 1989), 123–64.

2. Related patchwork traditions include intarsia, mosaic, and soldiers' quilts. For intarsia, an inlay process in which shapes are carefully cut from felted wool to create a jigsaw arrangement with pieces exactly fitting together to make a design or image, see *Inlaid Patchwork in Europe from 1500 to the Present* (*Tuchintarsien in Europa von 1500 bis heute*), exhibition catalog, Museum of European Cultures, Berlin, March 19–July 5, 2009. For mosaic patchwork, also called English paper-template piecing (which also makes use of repeated geometric shapes, most often hexagons, diamonds, or squares), see Laurel Horton, "An Elegant Geometry: Tradition, Migration and Variation," in *Mosaic Quilts: Paper Template Piecing in the South Carolina Lowcountry*, exhibition catalog (Greenville, SC: Curious Works Press, 2002), 10. For the quilts made by British soldiers during the late nineteenth century, see the Quilters' Guild, *Quilt Treasures of Great Britain* (Nashville: Rutledge Hill Press, 1995), 170–77.

3. Averil Colby, *Patchwork*, (Newton Center, MA: Charles T. Branford, 1958), 48.

4. Winifred Reddall, "Pieced Lettering on Seven Quilts Dating from 1833 to 1891," *Uncoverings 1980*, ed. by Sally Garoutte (Mill Valley, CA: American Quilt Study Group, 1980), 56–63; Carleton L. Safford and Robert Bishop, *America's Quilts and Coverlets* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1980), 137.

5. Patricia T. Herr, *Quilting Traditions: Pieces from the Past* (Atglen, PA: Schiffer, 2000), 146.

6. For numerous examples of postage-stamp quilts and related designs, see www.quiltindex.org/search.php.

7. International Quilt Study Center collection, #2005.053.0004.

8. International Quilt Study Center collection, #2003.003.0170.

9. Pixels and Pieces, San Jose Museum. As of May 2009, no accession number had been assigned.

10. Lanto Synge, *Antique Needlework* (Dorset, England: Blandford Press, 1982), 133–36.

11. Xenia Cord, "Marketing Quilt Kits in the 1920s and 1930s," in *Uncoverings 1995*, ed. Virginia Gunn (San Francisco: American Quilt Study Group, 1995), 140–43.

12. Minnesota Quilt Project, *Minnesota Quilts: Creating Connections with Our Past* (Stillwater, MN: Voyageur Press, 2005), 179. This publication attributes this quilt to an Anne Orr design. While reminiscent of Anne Orr's later designs for geometric pictorial patchwork, visual evidence points to a designer other than Orr. Specifically, the roses in this quilt fill the block; while Orr's geometric floral patchwork designs tend to be surrounded by white space. The border suggests

a design more typical of filet crochet than the swag, scallop, or multiple-stripe borders Orr designed for quilts. If Orr had designed this quilt, she would have planned the borders so that the patchwork flowed continuously around the corners, in contrast with the unmatched corners in the Papke quilt, The Papke quilt is atributed to about 1920.

13. "'Old Fashioned Rose' and 'Rosy Wreath' Quilts," *The Work Basket*, vol. 6, no. 4 (January 1941): 4, 6, and centerfold.

14. Ninety and Nine is illustrated in Janet Carruth and Laurene Sinema, "Emma Andres and Her Six Grand Old Characters," in *Uncoverings 1990*, ed. Laurel Horton (San Francisco: American Quilt Study Group, 1991), 93; Ruth and Naomi is now in the International Quilt Study Center collection, 2005.020.0001.

15. Pratt's other geometric pictorial patchworks include American Legion, Lamb of Peace, Liberty or Death, Penn's Treaty, and Rock of Ages. "Charles Pratt," *Quilter's Journal* (Fall 1980): 5; Barbara Brackman, "Record Breaking Quilts," *Quilter's Journal*, vol. 5, no. 3:5.

16. Merikay Waldvogel and Barbara Brackman, *Patchwork Souvenirs of the 1933 World's Fair* (Nashville: Rutledge Hill Press, 1993), 22.

17. Anne Orr, "The Enduring Charm of Hand-work," *Good Housekeeping* (June 1926): 79; "Needlework Supplement: Anne Orr Quilting Designs," *Good Housekeeping* (August 1928): 8.

18. Joyce Gross, "Emma Andres," *Quilter's Journal* (Summer 1981): 4.

19. Matterhorn is in the Denver Art Museum collection, Denver, CO.; #1967.89.

20. Mary Leman Austin, ed., *The Twentieth Century's Best American Quilts: Celebrating 100 Years of the Art of Quiltmaking* (Golden, CO: Primedia Special Interest Publications, 1999), 92.

21. Lynne Zacek Bassett, ed., *Massachusetts's Quilts: Our Common Wealth* (Lebanon, NH: University Press of New England, 2009), 296.

22. The shape of this design is similar to a distinctive appliqué pattern found primarily in North and South Carolina. See Jan Murphy, "Design Influences on an Unnamed Regional Pattern," in *Uncoverings 1987*, ed. Laurel Horton and Sally Garoutte (San Francisco, CA: American Quilt Study Group, 1989), 41–55; and Laurel Horton, "Textile Traditions in South Carolina's Dutch Fork," in *Bits and Pieces: Textile Traditions*, ed. Jeannette Lasansky (Lewisburg, PA: Oral Traditions Project, 1991), 76–77.

23. Merikay Waldvogel, "The Marketing of Anne Orr's Quilts," *Uncoverings 1990*, ed. Laurel Horton (San Francisco: American Quilt Study Group, 1990), 7–20.

24. *Good Housekeeping* (September 1929): 83

25. *Good Housekeeping* (December 1930): 73.

26. These patterns included Dresden, French Wreath, Lincoln Quilt, One in Cross-Stitch, Early American Wreath, Dainty Quilt for a Child, Star Flower,

Oval Wreath, Debutante's Pride, Heirloom Basket, Marie Antoinette, Floral Initial, Pieced Quilt in Gros-Point, Quaint Quilt, Bowknot, and Colorful Pieced Quilt.

27. Anne Orr, "Quilt Making In Old and New Designs," *Good Housekeeping* (January 1933): 56.

28. Anne Orr, "Quilt Today for the Warmth, the Fun and the Beauty of It," *Better Homes and Gardens* (February 1943): 467.

29. *Lockport Pattern Book: Anne Orr Quilts*, Lockport Batting Company, 1945.

30. Florence La Ganke Harris and Marion Dyers, "Our Blue Ribbon Quilt," *Country Gentlemen,* (February 1940), 55. In 2001 Katie Dillon documented a quilt of this design for the South Dakota Quilt Documentation Project. For another example, see Merikay Waldvogel, *Soft Covers for Hard Times: Quiltmaking and the Great Depression* (Nashville, TN: Rutledge Hill Press, 1990), 36.

31. Minnesota Quilt Project, *Minnesota Quilts: Creating Connections with Our Past* (Stillwater, MN: Voyageur Press, 2005), 55.

32. Dennis Duke and Deborah Harding, eds., *America's Glorious Quilts* (Westport, CT: Hugh Lauter Levin Associates, 1987), 48.

33, Charlotte Allen Williams, *Florida Quilts* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 1992), 152–53.

34. *Anne Orr's Charted Designs: Over 200 Charted Designs including 100 Motifs in Full Color* (New York: Dover Publications, 1978), 17.

35. Betsy Telford, Rocky Mountain Quilts, Q8337. Accessed 27 March 2009, www.rockymountainquilts.com

36. Barbara Brackman, *Encyclopedia of Pieced Quilt Patterns* (Paducah, Kentucky: American Quilter's Society, 1993), 45; #226.77.

37. Mary Washington Clark, *Kentucky Quilts and Their Makers* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1976), 41–42.

38. Anne Orr published a pattern for a similar bird of paradise in 1942: "Christmas Needlework: Handkerchief, Cross-stitch and Gros-Point for Tapestry," *Good Housekeeping* (November 1942): 62.

39. Elizabeth Barber, *Women's Work: The First 20,000 Thousand Years: Women, Cloth and Society in Early Times* (New York: W. W. Norton. 1994), 23.

40. Anne Orr, *Quilting with Anne Orr,* Dover edition (Toronto: General Publishing Company, 1990); *Lockport Pattern Book: Anne Orr Quilts* (Lockport, NY: The Lockport Cotton Batting Company, 1944).

41. Amy Boyce Osaki, "A 'Truly Feminine Employment,'" *Winterthur Portfolio*, vol. 23, no. 4 (Winter 1988): 225.

42. Marguerite Connolly, "The Disappearance of the Domestic Sewing Machine, 1890–1925," *Winterthur Portfolio,* vol. 34, no. 1 (Spring 1999): 31–37.

43. "Roses Are Red," Mountain Mist Batting Wrapper No. 66 (Cincinnati, Ohio: Stearns & Foster, 1937).

44. "Cross-Stitch Garden," Mountain Mist Batting Wrapper No.42 (Cincinnati, Ohio: Stearns & Foster, 1933).

Reflections on Quilt History: Accomplishments and Challenges

Virginia Gunn

All of us here today have a personal AQSG journey story to tell, whether it is our first trip to an AQSG symposium, or our twenty-fifth, as it is mine.* While I reflect on the accomplishments and challenges of our organization, which is now over a quarter century old, I will sometimes refer to my personal journey. I hope it will inspire you to reflect on your experience with this group and what it means to you.

It took me awhile to discover quilting. My mother taught me to embroider before I started to grade school, and I won blue ribbons for my sewing in the 4-H contests at the county fairs. For eight years during the 1960s, armed with a B.S. in home economics, I taught sewing and textile crafts to hundreds of eighth- and ninth-grade Connecticut girls and adult classes in sewing and crewel embroidery. I also made dozens of dresses for myself, but I never thought of quilting. Each year the Stearns & Foster Company sent me a sample pillow kit packet with a square of Mountain Mist batting, urging me to introduce quilting in the classroom. I carefully saved each packet, but did not respond to their invitation.

I wrote my first paper on quilts in the spring of 1970 while working on a Master of Science degree in Applied Art at Syracuse University. Needing a research paper for a class called "Heritage of

*This essay was presented as the keynote address at the American Quilt Study Guild's 2008 seminar.

American Homes and Home Furnishings," I decided to explore the history of quilts. I read all the books available from the top-notch university library. There were not many, but I found the classics: Webster, Finley, Hall and Kresinger, Peto, Dunton, Ickis, and Robertson.[1] Based on my scientific undergraduate training and with no knowledge of the influence of Colonial Revival literature, I am now happy to say I wisely concluded that Dunton's book offered the most convincing evidence for the statements he made concerning historical chronology.

In 1971 my husband and I, with our new son, moved to Wooster, Ohio. I started a part-time job running the student-originated craft center at the College of Wooster. It was the hippy era. Crafts were in the air. No one in Ohio was interested in crewel embroidery. I taught myself macramé. Two years and another son later, I spotted a small three-sentence ad in the *Journal of Home Economics* for December 1973:

> Immediate teaching positions open in textiles and clothing, housing and home furnishings, and institutional food service. Masters level and experience desired. Salary and rank commensurate with experience. Contact Head of the Department of Home Economics, The University of Akron, Akron, Ohio 44325.[2]

I showed it to my husband, Doug, who urged me to call. I cautioned that if it looked interesting, I might be tempted to try for it. He told me to go for it, and I called. After an interview, Dr. Joyce Sullivan offered me immediate part-time teaching and asked me to apply for a full-time position available for Fall 1974.

One of the classes I inherited at the University of Akron was a fairly new course called Needle Arts. I decided that I needed to include patchwork and appliqué in this class and proceeded to teach myself how to do it. I selected a pattern from the box of *Kansas City Star* patterns I had inherited from Doug's grandmother and quickly discovered that they were not at all accurate! I then copied a design from a family quilt design onto graph paper to create an accurate pattern. Quilts, in my mind, were made from a variety of plain and printed cotton fabrics. The only possible combina-

tion in my fabric stash resulted in an intricate red and white Star block made of sturdy Indian Head cotton. Not totally understanding the process, I pressed the seams open, as one did for dressmaking. The results were not entirely satisfactory, even though I had matched every point perfectly. I decided I needed to consult some expert advice and headed for the Wayne County Public Library. The only how-to book I found on the shelves in 1975 was *Introducing Patchwork* by Alice Timmins, which offered instruction for the English paper-template method.[3] I graphed another Star pattern and whipped together the templates covered with red, white, and blue fabric for a bicentennial pillow. This pillow won a ribbon at the county fair, although friends later told me the judges were all mystified by the method I had used to join the pieces.

I taught piecing and appliqué in the Needle Arts classes at the University of Akron for several decades, but during that time I made only a few small quilts. I needed to concentrate on research toward achieving tenure rather than producing creative works. In my efforts to accurately date American nineteenth-century photographs and costumes, I had discovered that most of the 1970s costume books were heavily based on European sources. I embarked on a project to learn to date American costume by studying images in the issues of *Godey's Lady's Book* and *Peterson's Magazine* from the 1840s to the end of the century. While spending hours going through these books, I also copied everything about quilting and needlework that piqued my interest. This research resulted in several publications related to American costume, and it also reignited my interest in quilt history.

I discovered and subscribed to Joyce Gross's *Quilters' Journal*. There I found Sally Garoutte's stimulating 1978 article on crazy quilts, which she had written with help from her friends Cuesta Benberry, Carol Crabb, and Katy Cristopherson. I noted her statement that the crazy quilt was a well-recognized type by 1882, but "before that year, the documented record is still blank."[4] With my immersion in women's periodicals, I believed I could fill in some of the blanks, and my presentation on "The Origin and Development of the Victorian Crazy Quilt" was accepted for the

American Association of College Professors of Textiles and Clothing (ACPTC) Central Region conference in Minneapolis in October 1982.[5]

As it turned out, 1982 was a significant year for several reasons. That year I decided to work on a Ph.D. in history. I was tenured, but with only a master's degree, I was in no position to move elsewhere if I ever wanted to. Research in the academic clothing and textile field was centered on hard science, which was not possible with the University of Akron's facilities, and on social-psychological research, which involved methods I found constricting for the kinds of problems I wanted to address and the types of questions I was asking. The History Department seemed to support the kind of research that interested me.

I needed colleagues in this new endeavor, and I looked for a group interested in research related to historical textiles. Fortunately, also in 1982, I came across another small, three-sentence advertisement in the *Quilters' Journal* that again changed my life. It read simply:

> THE AMERCAN QUILT STUDY GROUP is involved in the development of the true history of quilts. We publish annually results of research. Send a legal-size SASE for further information. AQSG, 105 Molino Ave. Mill Valley CA 94941.[6]

I decided I would brave a trip to the unknown in California if my abstract on "Victorian Silk Template Patchwork in American Periodicals, 1850–1875" was accepted for presentation.[7] It was accepted and in October, 1983, I arrived at the Santa Sabina Conference Center in San Raphael. There I found a group of wonderful people who were actually passionate about quilts, researching, and learning. In addition, these California people loved to talk and share, as well as drink wine with cheese and crackers. How could it get any better? Quiltmakers stitched as they listened to papers. Researchers took notes, as the papers would not be published until the following year. The presentations were all interesting and stimulating, and I was pleased to learn that I had answered a long-standing question of interest about the original source of

those template designs. While researchers had begun to network, I had been working alone in Ohio, just beginning to meet people like Ricky Clark and Penny McMorris. I was thrilled to discover what appeared to be an inclusive group with high standards of social/cultural history research. I had found a home where I could publish research that excited me.

In 1984 I was invited to serve on the board, which led later to the positions of AQSG president—the first to serve from outside the Bay Area—and editor of *Uncoverings* for a decade. In my first year on the board I volunteered to help redesign the membership brochure. With group effort we changed the purpose slightly. The original mission statement included this description: "A nationwide group interested in the *serious study of the history* of quilts, textiles, and the *women* who have made them." We changed that statement to the following: "A nationwide group dedicated to uncovering the *accurate history of quilts*, textiles, and the **people** who made them" (emphasis added).

I also worked to change a policy statement that originally read: "We feel that there are no automatic experts in the field: that credentials are developed through study and accomplishment, *not through academic position or formal degrees*" (emphasis added). I successfully argued to delete the final phrase. After all, I had a formal degree and an academic position and I wanted to feel included too. We made other subtle changes. AQSG originally welcomed all persons interested in the *history of American quiltmaking*. Soon AQSG welcomed all persons interested in the *history of quiltmaking* (emphasis added). We recognized that quiltmaking had global, not just American, implications.[8]

These changes in policy suited AQSG, a very special group. AQSG emerged as an independent grassroots group, not as a part of a professional, academic organization. Thus, from the beginning, it was more inclusive; one did not have to have specific academic credentials, education, or career to belong. Under the umbrella of history, it welcomed a wide variety of research topics. The publications produced by the fledging organization in its first three years demonstrate the breadth of topics that it would contin-

ue to nurture. The slim blue books of short articles, *Uncoverings 1980, 1981,* and *1982*, contain articles on the following topics: quilt patterns, quiltmakers, sub-cultural groups, specific states, types of quilts, fabrics used in quilts, the whole bedding context, design sources, literature related to quilts, specific quilts, museum collections, fairs and exhibitions, quilt collections, quilts in the context of homes, related textiles, quilts and art, international quilts, the passion for quilting. Anything was fair game and considered worthy if the research was credible, convincing, and well documented, but the central focus was on quilt history.

Charlotte Eckback noted of the first seminar, "Sally's scholarship, Barbara Brackman's sense of humor, and Lucy Hilty's stitches will remain with me forever." Jean Federico, then director and curator of the DAR museum, noted that Joyce Gross and Sally Garoutte were both "wonderful advocates for this study. Joyce being more hands on, organizing quilt shows, getting people to come; and Sally the more scholarly one wanting to make sure there was an opportunity to keep all that great research."[9] All were interested in documenting quilt history. They recognized Sally as the research expert and agreed on Sally's choice of the historical style of documentation for research results. This choice freed the *Uncoverings* articles from the jargon of specific academic specialties developed though formal training, making it easier to be interdisciplinary and inclusive.

Our fabulous new brochure gives the mission statement we have used for the last decade: "AQSG establishes, sustains, and promotes the highest standards for quilt-related studies." You may notice that this captures the open-minded view of the organization, which I fully support, but it no longer puts any particular focus on history. I always remember a sign a colleague kept on his door: "Don't be so open-minded that your brains fall out." I respect all disciplines and I value and use their contributions; but I have a personal preference for history and its established traditions of scholarship. I want to share with you why I believe we should keep history central to our mission. It is always risky to take a stand not everyone agrees with, but I am doing so buoyed by a letter Cuesta

Benberry wrote to me in 1998 after reading the published version of a presentation on history I gave at a conference at the Smithsonian. She complimented me and then said, "You've answered critics of our methodologies by explaining the differences between our goals and theirs, and doing so without denigrating their works, as some have done to ours."[10] Cuesta's observations sum up the arguments I want to emphasize here.

Focus on History

Let's consider why focusing on history was originally a wise choice for our group. Up until the 1970s, most history dealt with the feats of great men. Even the "new social history" focus of the twentieth century put more emphasis on men than women. The women's movement would begin to address this bias, but most historians—including female historians—were trained to concentrate on verbal, written or oral, sources. Very few history scholars used material-culture artifacts as sources for their work, and none were particularly interested in textile arts. While Laurel Thatcher Ulrich and Elizabeth Wayland Barber are deservedly credited for helping to change this, I believe AQSG did also.[11] In 1980, it would have been difficult to find a scholarly journal willing to publish an article on quilt history. Sally Garoutte and her colleagues wanted quilt history to be held to the highest standard, but they also wanted it published and available to interested readers. Rather than trying to influence the editors of existing journals, they decided to take on the task themselves.

Uncoverings 2008 is the twenty-ninth volume of our publication. To date, we have published 219 refereed papers and seventeen additional articles. Thanks to the work of Ricky Clark, the articles we publish are included in eight indexes. This demonstrates that the quality of our published articles is recognized as exemplary and insures that the research will be widely used, not only by all of us, but by graduate students and scholars from numerous disciplines and in numerous career paths. The research we have published has

provided and will continue to form a firm foundation for others to build on.

Just think, four decades ago, all the information published about American quilts would comfortably fit on one shelf. Today, my own quilt-related library fills at least four walls of floor-to-ceiling shelves, and I buy selectively! I focus strictly on history, rather than how-to, even though I recognize clearly that the hundreds of how-to books published since 1970 will be primary source material for analyzing the history of the past forty years, a task I will leave to future scholars.

Members of our organization have played primary roles in helping to build this literature. Articles that made their first appearance in *Uncoverings* often provided the foundation of research that made more popular works valuable. Since the beginning, when the little blue books had minimal room for visual enhancement, AQSG has returned copyright to authors after the initial publication and encouraged them to go farther with their research. Much of this information has later appeared with colored illustrations in popular periodicals or as full-length books. We have also established the forum to encourage all members in numerous other research and publication efforts. Our members, for example, provided leadership on most of the state and regional quilt projects that have made literally thousands of quilt artifacts available as sources to other researchers.

In 1980 finding the sources necessary to do quality work in quilt history was a daunting challenge for researchers. A graduate student in the online History of Quilts class I taught for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, in the summer of 2008, questioned why author Bets Ramsey, in her 1986 *Uncoverings* article, referred to her own personal slide collection to provide the evidence of botanical quilts in Southern collections.[12] Because historians always publish under their full name and cite the full names of people they quote, a practice central to objective historical scholarship, readers know exactly who these people are and can assess how their background impacts their research. Another student, who knew Bets, reminded the class that Bets was a pioneer in gathering

data on Southern quilts, as well as one of the founders of AQSG. Her own slides of quilts that she had personally seen were her concrete evidence that such existed. When AQSG was founded in 1980 there was no internet providing visual access to the thousands of quilts we can see at the touch of a button on the websites of the International Quilt Study Center, the Quilt Index, and well-known museums, as well as those of dealers, individual collectors, and eBay. When Bets's article appeared in 1986, only one state project, Kentucky, had published a book. Several more appeared in 1986 including the Tennessee book by Bets and Merikay Waldvogel.[13] It is hard to remember how difficult it was to locate sources just twenty years ago.

The wealth of information available today, however, offers new challenges to contemporary researchers. Instead of struggling to find any material at all, one is challenged to sort through mountains of material. To do a good job of scholarship today, researchers must read dozens of publications before they can be sure they are making new contributions to knowledge and have taken all evidence into consideration. Scholars are supposed to do their homework to recognize those who came before. Now quilt scholars must do what previous historians have always done—to become familiar with the literature, the secondary works. While today's young scholars will find it much easier to access literature, they have the new challenge of needing to read and digest much before they can position their own study.

What one student called "time travel" is also a necessary part of producing good history. One has to try to understand what it was like to live in and experience the particular era one is studying. Where were people coming from at that time? What were they up against? What were they thinking about? What was life really like in the nineteenth century, before movies, cars, suburban shopping, and central heating? It may be even harder for people who have grown up in the information-explosion age to understand what life and thinking was like before the internet, cell phones, and text messages.

At various times, our historical focus has elicited criticism from

people who expect and favor a more theory-testing approach to research and the more rigid and traditional scientific model for presenting results: review of literature, methods, results, implications. Social scientists often believe that historical methods are less rigorous. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

Each historical study is unique, designed to address a unique research question based on analysis and synthesis of all evidence that can be gathered from sources. Since the primary sources available for each study vary, the methods used to analyze and mine those sources vary with each study. Historians do not spend much time describing their methods because they focus on results and the supporting evidence in the sources, not on how they got the evidence. They are not worried about triangulation, since most use numerous methods to mine the potential of their sources. As historian Elizabeth Wayland Barber urged, in reflecting on her research methods, "The first step, in my experience, is to trick oneself into focusing on every part of the data. *Draw it, count it, map it, chart it,* and if necessary (or possible) *re-create it.*"[14] In other words, use every method or approach you can think of to analyze and synthesize the information from the sources you uncover.

Doing history with objects or artifacts as well as words has called for additional ways of using material-culture sources. E. McClung Fleming's 1974 article, "Artifact Study: A Proposed Model," has been most useful.[15] Fleming called for four levels of artifact study: identification, evaluation, cultural analysis, and interpretation. In the documentation portion, you start with the object and find out everything you can about it. Then you evaluate its construction, rarity, design, etc., by comparing it with other objects of the same category or made during the same era. You do cultural analysis to determine how the artifact was shaped by the culture or how it reflects the culture that created it. And, finally, you explain why the study is of significance or value for people today.

Some try to turn Fleming's advice into a rigid method for linear research, but it is a model, not a method; and it calls for

numerous methods and cyclical research to build cultural analysis on a firm foundation of well-documented artifacts. The model is very well suited to work hand-in-hand with the processes of analysis and synthesis that are central to doing history. Material-culture scholars start with the material—the artifacts—but they work toward understanding people and cultures.

History research is not done until it is written for others to read. With each research effort, the author must decide on the most appropriate way to organize and report the results of this particular study. The presentation needs to put forward the author's overall thesis, results, and conclusions, based on evidence from sources that are clearly cited for others to check. In history's tradition, the material needs to be organized in a logical way and written in language that can be clearly understood by any educated person. Historians believe what Robert Day, a trained biologist, told his fellow scientists:

> You should not write for the half-dozen or so people who are doing exactly your kind of work. You should write for the hundreds of people whose work is only slightly related to yours but who may want or need to know some particular aspect of your work.[16]

Recently I have heard criticism that writing well-documented history is too difficult and tedious and, therefore, not worth the effort. I disagree. Documentation is the heart of the process. The historical researcher is obligated to provide access to the sources of evidence considered in detailed endnotes or footnotes. These references are not placed in the body of the text, where they would interfere with the presentation, but are available to amplify, clarify, or illustrate the statements made in the text. Careful citations are the sign of careful scholarship. They credit those who have gone before, and they help readers to easily locate sources they may want to use or to question. They are gifts to the next researcher, aiding the next level of research, and they are not to be taken lightly. They are central to quality research in history.

History Takes Time

Academics sometimes use the term "pubs" to refer to clever ideas that can be worked up over the course of a semester to get a quick publication. Historical studies are rarely referred to as "pubs." They are usually the result of long and careful study, a lengthy search for every possible source. Historians cannot survey the general populace or their own students when they want to know about something that happened in 1910. They must look for published materials—letters, diaries, objects—any source that may provide clues to address their questions. This usually takes time. In talking about historical analysis at the "What's American about American Quilts?" symposium, held at the Smithsonian Institution in 1995, I shared Elizabeth Wayland Barber's thought-provoking comments on research projects:

> I decided to spend two weeks hunting for data on the degree of sophistication of the weaving technology, to see at least whether people *could* have made ornate textiles back then. I expected to write my findings into a small article, maybe ten pages, suggesting that scholars ought to consider at least the possibility of early textile industries.
>
> But when I began to look, data for ancient textiles lay everywhere, waiting to be picked up. By the end of the two weeks I realized that it would take me at least a summer or two to chase down and organize the leads I had turned up and that I could be writing a 60-page monograph. By the end of two more summers, I knew I was headed for a 200-page book. The "little book" turned into a research project that consumed seventeen years and yielded a 450-page tome covering many times the planned geographical area and time span. It finally appeared in 1991 as *Prehistoric Textiles*, from Princeton University Press.[17]

Historical studies often take time, and those involving quilts are no exception. Just ask people who have published articles how long they worked on their topics.

Historians usually work alone. They must wrestle with the information provided by the sources themselves in order to put all the pieces together, to sort out the contradictions, to decide on the commonalities, to abandon old "working hypotheses," and to form new ones as additional evidence calls for a different interpretation.

How can you send someone else to look at the artifacts or to evaluate and read the sources? You can't. You must see the objects with your own eyes and process the information through your own brain, and always be open to finding new information that you did not expect but that may eventually prove important in the process.

There can be no "negative results" in the final presentation of history. You must keep working until you arrive at a satisfactory thesis. Historian C. V. Wedgwood summed it up: "Ultimately the understanding of the past, in so far as it is achieved at all, has to be independently achieved, by a sustained effort of the imagination working on a personal accumulation of knowledge and experience."[18]

People who write history must be open to revision. It is one of the key elements of the discipline. New information may shed new light on old conclusions. The author writes the article with all the evidence available, but if a new source or new evidence is found, one must see if it supports the original conclusions or calls for revision. This may be done by the original scholar or by a later scholar. It is not surprising that we need revision. Having a study published makes others aware of the topic and of what they might have or know that is related to it. While I worked on my gingham study for a decade, I had never seen *The Gingham Book*, a brochure printed in 1928, that Kathy Murphy so generously sent me from her mother's collection after my presentation in 2007.[19] When I wrote my paper on Civil War quilts in 1984, nothing had been published about quilts donated to the U. S. Sanitary Commission.[20] I thought at the time that all quilts donated through the Sanitary Commission were long gone, but my paper caused people to be aware of such objects. One afternoon, Jan Dodge called from California with the news that she had found a quilt with a Sanitary Commision stamp. I exclaimed, "You did?" "Yes," she replied. "Where did you find it?" I asked. "In a box in my basement," Jan answered. What a surprise. She brought this rare treasure to the next AQSG conference for me to see with my own eyes. The process of revision had begun. Now the information I discovered has become almost common knowledge.

While historians often work alone, they do interface with numerous people. Wonderful surprises can happen to you. Several years ago Xenia Cord called. We had not been in contact for awhile and she asked, "What are you working on now?" I said, "Well, to tell you the truth I have been concentrating on coverlets rather than quilts lately." She then shared, "I have some coverlets in my basement, lent to me by a gentleman down the street for a talk I gave. They're made by a weaver named Hartman." I immediately asked, "Did you say Hartman?" "Yes, Peter Hartman," Xenia responded. Thrilled, I said, "He's one of the weavers I am studying. He worked right here in Wayne County, Ohio." And Xenia had the family's photo album in her basement too!

In my coverlet study, I have learned a lot about the Germanic culture of Pennsylvania and Ohio, and the relationship between bedding, those coverlets, and the beautiful red and green appliqué quilts that emerged in the same era and environment. Quilts exist in context, not in a vacuum. When the quilt made by Elizabeth Hartman and the coverlets woven by her husband Peter Hartman were exhibited at the Wayne County Historical Society in Wooster, the photographs of the couple that Xenia provided added depth to the display.

These interchanges illustrate the importance of networking, so typical of AQSG, and central to the process of history. Historians need friends and colleagues, even as they must do their own work. Historian Lisa Wilson expressed the importance of one's network to the practice of historical scholarship in the preface to one of her books. In addition to thanking her family and friends for their support, she thanked "colleagues on whom I counted for friendship as well as historical insight;" the staff at libraries and archives who "were helpful and generous with material;" colleagues and students who "read and commented on" draft chapters and final manuscript; a graduate mentor who "still finds time to critique my work and bolster my spirits;" and fellow graduate students who remain friends and continue to share their intellectual insights, and can provide tough criticism: "Their comments forced me to think, rework, and defend my findings. I thank them for their friendship

and their honesty." And she conveyed grateful thanks for the insight of her editors who still found other ways to improve the manuscript.[21] This breadth of support helps ensure the best research and is part of the history tradition. I think it is a perfect fit for where our organization wants to be.

As we submit manuscripts for possible acceptance, we need to remember that reviewers should be able to flag potentially worthy articles that still need work, and return them, with useful feedback, for revision and resubmission. Potential authors whose manuscripts are not accepted the first time should not give up. It takes numerous drafts to arrive at polished articles. As I tell my students, Alex Haley did seventeen drafts of the *Roots* manuscript before it became a prize-winning book and later a movie. We need to call on others and also offer help provided to others.

In 2008 Cindy Brick emailed to say that she wanted to send me a copy of her fabulous new book *Crazy Quilts*.[22] I did not know why I deserved such a treat, but told her I would be honored to receive a copy. It arrived with three little sticky notes attached to the front cover on which Cindy wrote: "Virginia—years ago, you encouraged a fellow AQSG member to find out more about crazy origins. I have never forgotten your thoughtful comments, and your scholarship was invaluable. See what you think. I'd value your opinion." Because I was going though a trauma in my life at the time, Cindy did not receive the immediate feedback I should have sent her. But I will say here tonight that she has completed a wonderful, aesthetically delightful contribution to the crazy quilt literature that Sally Garoutte initiated in 1978, and Cindy's comments, of course, warmed my heart. Revisions should not be threatening. They should be celebrated, for they are part of the ongoing historical process as it is meant to work. A person's work benefits from those who came before and will be built on by those who follow.

In a 1985 letter to me, Sally Garoutte wrote, "I'm still amazed that there are new things to be finding out about quilts. It just goes to show how pervasive they have been in American life."[23] Sally also wrote, "Historical research never ends. We come to an understanding of our history only through small steps continually taken. Each

research paper is a small step, and each one is a challenge for someone else to go a little further. The enterprise of quilt history is a continuing process."[24]

Some of us here have lived through a period that is now ripe for historical research, the last four decades of the twentieth century. This is the period we should all be thinking about, one where oral history can really complement published sources. I recently bought two books at a book sale sponsored by the local chapter of the American Association of University Women. One was another copy of the Quilt National 1983 catalog, where quilt artist and juror Michael James wrote:

> When I first became interested in quilts and in making them, I decried the fact that as late as the third quarter of the 20th century quilts were still viewed as "women's pastime," as "needlecraft," as second-rate art. Others joined in berating the chauvinisms that had kept quiltmaking isolated from other modern art forms. With surprising speed we seem to have turned heads and changed attitudes, and in the bargain, I think we've created a monster.
>
> Now, in the 1980s, *all* quilts seem to be art, and *all* quilters are artists. Quilters everywhere are seriously "expressing" themselves with needle and thread, merrily rolling along toward the 21st century as they see themselves creating a new legacy for future generations. I'm inclined to jump off the bandwagon at this point and take a more critical view of the situation. What I encounter as I look around at quitmaking in 1983 is much less innovation than imitation.[25]

Both of these quilting threads, innovation and imitation, identified by Michael played important roles in the impact of quilting during the following decades. They both deserve historians' serious analysis. The second book I bought was about studio artist and furniture maker Wendell Castle. Its authors wrote a call for research that applies perfectly to the art quilt part of the Studio Craft Movement:

> The maturation of the Studio Craft movement in America has created a strong need for scholarship in the field. Although recent publications . . . have begun to address the history of this movement, much

> work is still needed to document the careers of the leading artist-craftsmen as well as the numerous craft fairs, galleries, and exhibitions . . . that have provided exposure for these artists, and the patrons, both public and private, who have had the insight to support the work in spite of resistance from the art world. The history of the movement and its participants also needs to be critically examined within the larger context of twentieth-century art in order to document conclusively the important exchange of ideas that has occurred among contemporary painters, sculptors, architects, and craftsmen.[26]

Members of AQSG and quilt history scholars have accomplished a lot in almost thirty years. Still there is much left to be done. History takes work, but if the topic is meant for you, it is fulfilling, exhilarating work, not drudgery. Women's—and men's—lives are complicated. Many worthwhile things call us, but we hope and plan for time to do our research. We cannot help it; we find it interesting and challenging. And when scholars from other disciplines, who do not understand the value and worth of history, make snide comments, I remember Sally's statement in that short ad run that convinced me to join our organization: "AQSG is involved in the development of the true history of quilts." And then I recall the words of historian C. V. Wedgwood: "All sciences are devoted to the quest for truth; truth can neither be apprehended nor communicated without art. History therefore is an art, like all the other sciences."[27]

My wish is that we will continue to focus on history with a mind open to all quilt-related studies, and that we will continue to build the nurturing network that supports the creation and dissemination of quality history, as times continue to change, as new topics and challenges emerge, and as new generations of scholars join us.

As we all participate in this twenty-ninth gathering of AQSG, may we celebrate the new research papers and the dedication and discipline that went into them, and enjoy the friendship and inspiration that pours forth when we are surrounded by people who are passionate about quilts and their history.

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