

Quilt Heritage

MUSEUM

The Positive Community of Quilting

If you're like me, someone close to you has committed suicide. Psychologists tell us that families of those who end their lives in this manner have a much more difficult time in healing from that event. They think it may have to do with not being given the opportunity to say goodbye.

We also wish there was something we could have said or done to prevent it. Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, experts tell us, the rate of suicide has experienced a hike. While countless businesses have experienced financial devastation during the last year, the isolation from stay-at-home orders has left many individuals feeling lost and disconnected too. The good news is with multiple vaccines there is a light at the end of this tunnel.

As quilters, I think we have all keenly felt the loss of the friendship and community of our quilting associates. We are so fortunate to be involved in a creative endeavor where applauding finished quilts, gathering periodically to share information, taking workshops, giving feedback and providing encouragement are commonplace. Perhaps as we once again start attending all those quilting activities, we will appreciate that sense of positive community even more. Aren't we lucky to be quilters? Keep sharing your passion with others—it might be even more life-changing than you know!



See you at a gathering soon! - Joyce Shoemaker



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The Evan's Family Quilts

By: Diana Cary

In December of 2020, QHM received a donation of eight quilts from the Evans family of Ohio. The quilts donated vary widely in color and style.

The quilt pictured below was a gift to Dr. P.J. Jones of Oneida, Kentucky. Karen Evans is the woman who contacted us to make this generous donation, and Dr. Jones was her husband's great-grandfather. As you can see in the detail photo, the quilt is dated February 17, 1943, and it is thought to have been given as payment for the Dr.'s services. It was made by Nannie Edwards.

The hand-quilting patterns includes feathers. Although the quilt shows evidence of repeated washings, it is in good condition. It will make a nice exhibit piece.

The next quilt from the Evans' collection is a quilt that has hand-appliqued floral wreaths in the blocks. Although the green fabric used for the leaves, stems and border is still vibrant, the pink in the quilt has faded greatly. At one time, it was likely stunning.

The border in this quilt is quite unique. It requires solid technical skills to execute it well, and the maker did. This border is often referred to as an ice cream cone border because that is exactly what it looks like. The border frames this quilt in an appealing manner. Note how creatively the quiltmaker executed the corners of the border.

Although the maker did not label this quilt, it was likely made after 1925.



Gift to Dr. P.J. Jones



Detail of ice cream cone border



Wreath quilt block detail

The Evan's Family Quilts Continued...

Double Irish Chain is the name of the block used in the third quilt donated by the Evans family. This block is an old classic and one of the earliest patterns used. It remained popular during all of the 19th and 20th centuries and is still popular with quilters today. It is thought that the simplicity of the pieces and easy assembly has contributed to its on-going popularity.

Historians are not exactly sure how the Irish Chain block got its name. They tell us this was one few "English" (not Amish) patterns made by the Amish quilters residing in Lancaster County. This pattern can be seen in derivatives including single Irish Chain, double Irish Chain and triple Irish Chain, depending upon how many rows of squares are used to create the colorful diagonal rows. Irish Chain quilts with rows running vertically and horizontally are rare.

This specific quilt is quilted in a cross-hatch pattern. The maker and the date of the quilt were not documented. Additionally, solid fabrics (non-prints) are more difficult to date as solids have always been available to quilters. All that being said, this quilt was also likely made sometime after 1925.



In our next QHM newsletter, we will discuss more of the Evans family quilts.

*Historical notes provided by J. Shoemaker

Needlework... Revisited Popularity

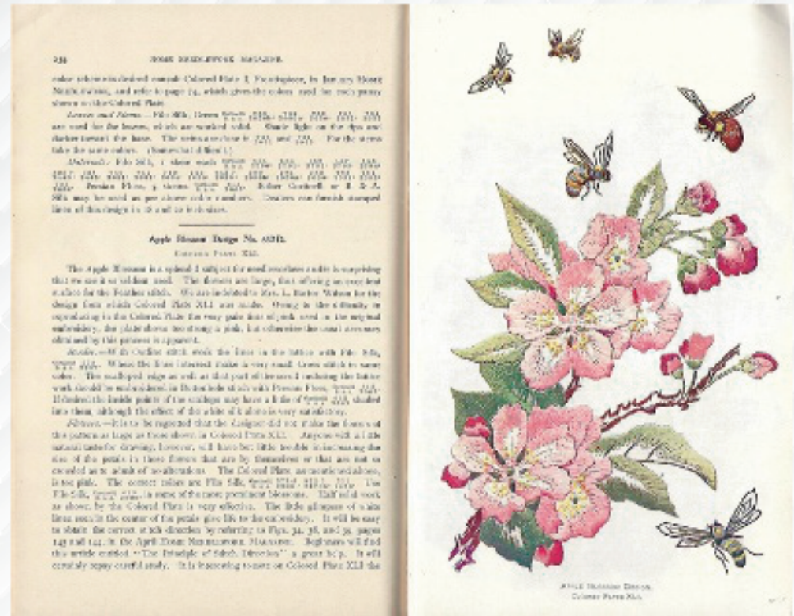
Based on the quilting periodicals that enter American homes today, it is a rare issue indeed that does not include some sort of hand needlework element. It seems that the old adage “there is nothing new but what has once been old” applies.

A recent American Patchwork & Quilting issue included a project with flowers and butterflies calling for hand-embroidered flower detail and butterfly antennas. The Winter issue of Primitive Patchwork featured a wool tablemat with hand-embroidered details in pearl cotton threads. The latest issue of Quilting Arts includes several projects which run the gamut of small hand-quilted projects, motif embroidery embellishment and hand-stitching to create “texture” on cloth.

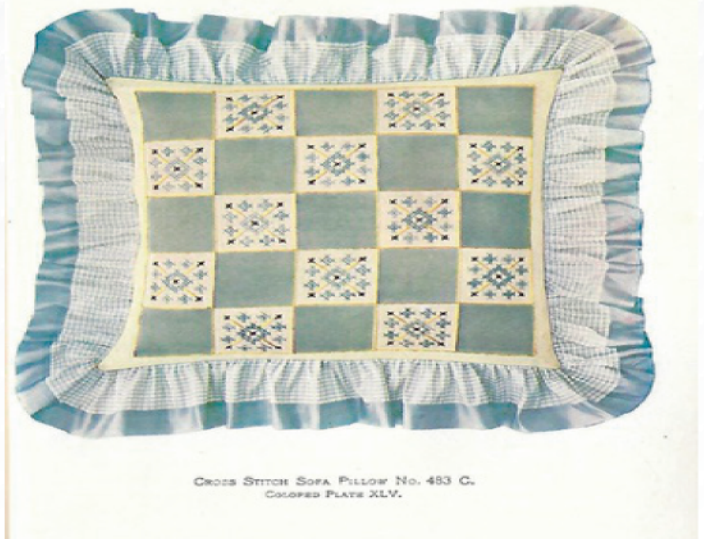
People have been using a myriad of hand-stitches for centuries, quilters among them. The photo below shows the cover of the July 1899 issue of Home Needlework Magazine. This magazine was published four times a year and a year-long subscription cost 25 cents. Some of the articles covered were titled “The Story of Some Famous Laces”, “Centerpieces and Doilies” and “Inexpensive Midsummer Gowns”.



Cover of 1899 Home Needlework Magazine



Article and instructions for Apple Blossom design



CROSS STITCH SOFA PILLOW No. 453 C. COLORED PLATE XLV.

Cross-stitch pillow design

The current re-born popularity of hand-stiches, whether to bind layers of a quilt or to embellish a project, can add an aspect of “specialness.” Quiltmakers universally hope the recipients of their work appreciate the added effort and creativity.

FALL 2021 QUILT AUCTION

The Quilt Heritage Museum Steering Committee members are very busy planning the details of a quilt auction scheduled for the Fall of 2021.

If you've been on our website recently and visited the "Current Events" page, you have undoubtedly seen the array of printed fabric panels displayed there. Volunteers are currently engaged in creating quilts from these beautiful panels. Once a quilter tells us which panel they like, we combine it with at least 3 coordinating fabrics and get it to them (yes, all free of charge).

That volunteer quilter then has until August 1, 2021 to create a quilt which will be part of the quilt auction catalog of quilts. The size and design specifics are largely up to the individual quilter. So, we are expecting some amazing talent to be on parade.

The first quilt turned back into our organization was made by Kathie Phoenix of Idaho Falls. Kathie is and has been an amazing supporter of this organization. As you can see by the photo of her quilt (photo below) that she is truly talented. Thank you, Kathie! We appreciate you!



Red Pickup Quilt by Kathie Phoenix



Red Pickup Quilt piecing detail

We are investigating the possibility of having both a live and an on-line auction simultaneously. Many other aspects of this event are being developed, and details will be forthcoming including the exact date and location of the event.

If you would like to apply your quilting talents by creating a quilt for the auction, we would love to hear from you.

Call or e-mail any of our Committee members and visit our website at www.quiltheritagemuseum.org for more details.

It is important to note that all proceeds of this fundraiser will go to our non-profit organization. All our Steering Committee members and Board of Director members are unpaid volunteers, and we are grateful for them.

We would encourage anyone interested to join the Steering Committee. Let us know if you are interested.

Quilt Block Pattern Sharing: Social Media Pre-Internet

By: Marietta Womack

It was a cold and blustery night in early February. As usual, I had gotten up in the middle of the night and was sitting in my chair in the living room having a drink of water. I was thinking about a mystery quilt I had been trying to find. Where could I look for help in finding it? I last saw it in 2004 at a display of quilts in the Transition Gallery at Idaho State University. As I sat there another mystery presented itself to me. Through the window I could see lights moving around in the neighbor's pasture. Once-in-a-while a figure would move across in front of the lights. Was it ghosts? Maybe it was thieves! Then I remembered. Calving! That was it! I could go back to bed, snuggle under my quilt, and relax even though my original mystery had not been solved. There were no robbers across the street. Our neighbor cattle ranchers were taking care of cows and their babies.

The next day our second grader's teacher mentioned that her mother-in-law (who lives across the road from me) had invited the teacher and her family to spend the weekend; the men were going to be calving and the kids could play while the ladies visited. They only live 12 miles apart but were looking forward to the uncustomary outing. It reminded me of the stories and diary entries that women have written about similar events that took place a century or more ago. People in the newly populated areas of our country often lived several miles apart. An event like a barn raising or calving would be an occasion for families to get together for a few days of work, eating and visiting. They would stay at the house where they were working until the task was finished.

The women would gather inside while the men were working. They would prepare food for the crew and the hostess would show the others her current handwork. Sometimes this might be a new quilt block. If a visitor liked the block and wanted a pattern to use later when she was home, there were no convenient stacks of printer paper nearby to make a drawing. The way to make a copy of the block was to use fabric furnished by the lady of the house and sew a block while the sample was in front of you. Today patterns for blocks are easy to find. They even pop up, unsolicited, on our cell phones.



Even after published patterns were available sharing patterns has continued. During the pandemic virtual communities have found social fulfillment while working on the same projects. Sarah Steiner says of her Instagram quilting experience, "I had no idea so many creative people have accounts and post their quilts. My mom, aunt and I did a sew-along together and it gave us something to talk about other than Covid."

It was not always so easy to get a new idea. It wasn't until the late nineteenth century that quilt block patterns were widely published and readily available. So where did you get a pattern? Maybe from your friends who got it from someone else, etc. In her article, "Pieced Patchwork Quilts: Quilt Block Pattern History," for Womenfolk.com Judy Anne Breneman quotes Karen Alexander: When stacks of blocks are found at an estate sale or in the attic of an old house we tend to think they were pieced to be sewn together into a sampler quilt. This wasn't always the case. These blocks might have been made up as a way to remember quilt block patterns that friends have shared. Sometimes the blocks in such a collection appear to have been quickly dashed together ... Collections of these cloth patterns have been found bundled together with string, stored in a box or even connected with a thread through them as if they were a book or album. A few women carefully labeled each block with its name and credit to the friend who shared it.

The quilt I have been trying to locate is one made using a single red and green applique block made with borrowed fabric, fabric most likely borrowed from the pattern owner. Red and green applique quilts were popular in the last half of the nineteenth century. The big clue that one of the blocks was made with fabric different from all the others is because that one block has green fabric that has not faded. In all the other 11 blocks the green has turned to tan over time. Stella Rubin in *Treasure or Not? Miller's American Quilts*. Octopus Publishing. 2001. says, "green dye introduced in 1875 was particularly unstable and quickly turned to various shades of tan." The reason behind the fading of the green in some of the blocks was because they were of fabric colored with a non-stable dye. The one "sample" block was made with a colorfast dye. So, it can be surmised that the borrower of the pattern who was the maker of the quilt bought her fabric from a source who had a more inferior fabric than the original pattern owner's. I would love to examine this quilt again to see if, as Karen Alexander suggests, the pattern block was indeed made with more hasty stitches than the others or if there is a difference in anything else in the making of the quilt blocks.

I hope there will be one or more of you who have seen or own a similar quilt. If so, please let's get together, perhaps on Zoom, and take a look at them.