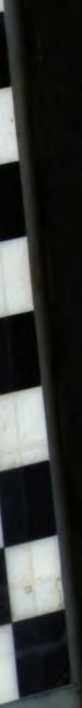




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**A HISTORICAL SURVEY OF A SELECTED GROUP OF PIECED QUILTS
IN THE GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC MUSEUM**

by

Patsy Lee Leaders

A PROBLEM

**Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Quilts have often been "taken for granted". Many people can remember their Grandmothers having quilting bees, but most of today's college age generation have only a vague concept of the work which went into the production of a well designed quilt. Today there are few areas where quilting is still a community interest. At the present it is becoming another lost phase of "Americana".

In the beginning of quilt making in this country it was for utilitarian purposes and was an economic necessity. However, this craft did provide the colonial housewife with a creative outlet. Today quilts are regarded as part of America's folk art heritage.

Occasionally there is a revival of interest in quilt making. In 1915 there was one and during the depression years women made quilts as it was an inexpensive hobby. During the past year there has been another revival of interest in quilts including designers of high fashion clothing to interior design. Usually the quilt revivals result in an improvisation of an old quilt pattern. Therefore it is important that the original quilt patterns be recorded in order that there might be an appreciation of the origin of this craft.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Quilts are considered part of America's folk art. Many museums have received donations of quilts from people in the community. In most instances the donors assumed that people knew about quilts and did not include valuable information about the quilts. As few quilts were signed or dated, it is important that the information be recorded while people are still available to answer questions.

The names of some of the patterns represent a true history of the development of the United States.

Quilts are quite often so commonplace that few think of them as being a valuable legacy. It is hoped by focusing attention on this folk art that an appreciation of the quilts which are in museums and private collections will result. Also that some of the history of the quilts will be recorded.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

<u>Applique</u>	"Laying a smaller patch of cloth on a larger and then hemming or felling down." ¹
<u>Backing</u>	The back of the quilt, usually two widths of fabric sewed together to make it the same size as the top.
<u>Batting</u>	Usually a layer of cotton between the top and back, but other materials were used such as wool or even corn husks.
<u>Binding</u>	Finishing of raw edges of a completed quilt.
<u>Block</u>	"A pattern composed of patches, either pieced or appli- qued." ²
<u>Border</u>	"A band surrounding the quilt proper might be of plain material or itself pieced or appliqued". ³
<u>Counterpane</u>	"Spread used on top of a bedstead". ⁴
<u>Crazy Quilt</u>	Fabrics sewn together without regard for design or uni- formity of shape. Usually of velvets, satins and ribbons.
<u>To Mark</u>	"To trace on the top the design to be quilted". ⁵
<u>To Patch</u>	"To fell down a smaller piece of cloth on a larger, that is to applique". ⁶
<u>To Piece</u>	"To join by means of a sewed seam, often confused with to patch". ⁷
<u>Patch</u>	"Single piece of cloth joined to make a pattern". ⁸
<u>Patchwork Quilt</u>	Pieces of fabric sewn together to form a planned pattern.

1. Ruth E. Finley, Old Patchwork Quilts and the Women Who Made Them, (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1929), p. 41.

2. Margaret E. White, Quilts and Counterpanes in the Newark Museum, (Newark, New Jersey: 1948), p. 10.

3. Finley, Patchwork Quilts, p. 42.

4. White, Newark Quilts, p. 10. 5. Ibid.

6. Finley, Patchwork Quilts, p. 42. 7. Ibid. 8. Ibid.

- Pieced Quilt Same as a patchwork quilt.
- Putting In "The set of fastening to the quilting frames the edges of the back and top between which the fill is evenly spread."¹
- Quilt For the purposes of this paper means three layers" top, fill and backing which are usually held together by a running stitch.
- Quilting "Is sewing in design with a running stitch through the top, fill and back."²
- Quilting Frames were usually homemade The four strips of wood were ordinarily about an inch thick two to four inches wide and some ten to twelve feet in length. Along the edges of these wooden strips an inch width of very heavy cloth such as ticking was securely tacked. To this the edges of the quilt were pinned or sometimes basted.³
- Rolling "meant to turn the two end frames over and over, thus winding up the quilted portions so that the unquilted parts could be reached."⁴
- Snapping the Chalk To mark the lines for the quilting, a string thick with starch or chalk, was fastened across the quilt at the desired angle, and when it was perfectly taunt, it was given a good snap which made it spring down onto the material and leave its mark.⁵
- Set Together "The material as well as the method used for setting the blocks together."⁶
- Taking Out Removing the stitched quilt from the frames.⁷
- Top "Completed patchwork---blocks set and border"⁸

-
1. White, Newark Quilts, p. 11.
 2. Finley, Patchwork Quilts, p. 42.
 3. Ibid., p. 43. 4. Ibid.
 5. Grand Rapids Public Museum, "Patchwork Quilts", leaflet.
 6. Finley, Patchwork Quilts, p. 42.
 7. White, Newark Quilts, p. 11.
 8. Finley, Patchwork Quilts, p. 42.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Quilting is quite old as it is said that the ancient Chinese used quilted cloth to make padded winter clothing.¹ Then in later centuries evidence has been found that men used quilted cloth under their armor as protection.

During Henry VIII's time the finest specimens of needlework were a combination of embroidery and patchwork.² In 1708 the first example of English patchwork is found in Levens Hall near Kendal County of Westmorland. The pieces are imported Indian prints quilted with red thread in a diamond pattern.³

Quilts as we think of them today were first considered in England as part of sets called "bed furniture". A set was composed of: a quilt, bed curtains, canopy and dust ruffles.

During colonial days in this country patchwork and plain quilts were in such general use that they were not mentioned. The best source of information about them is from bills of sale and auction inventories.

1. Delores A. Hinson, Quilting Manual, (New York: Hearthsides Press, 1966), p. 13.

2. Marie D. Webster, Quilts Their Story and How to Make Them, (New York: Tudor Publishing Co., 1915), p. 39.

3. Averil Colby, Patchwork Quilts, (New York: Charles Scribner Sons, 1965), p. 10.

The height of quilt making was from 1830 to 1870.¹

"There is no country in the world where quilting was of such great importance as America."² The fact that we received inspiration from our Dutch and English ancestors has been cited in many works. Usually quilts are classified under our folk art. However, it is interesting to note that in a current handbook on antiques, quilts are listed under "Primitives"³.

Many of the Michigan patterns may have stemmed from New York and New England as many of the early Michigan settlers came by way of the Ohio River from those states.

In the beginning making a quilt was a necessity as the family needed the quilts for warmth in the cold winters. Then, as times became better, quilting became more of a hobby and more elaborate designs were used. In the twentieth century most of the women who quilt do so as a hobby or for decoration in their homes. Quilting in this century has also been used as therapy for the mentally and physically handicapped.⁴

In the early times the quilt tops were usually made in the winter and the quilts were quilted in the warmer weather as the quilting frames required eight feet and heating that space was a luxury.⁵

1. Finley, Patchwork Quilts, p. 31.

2. Mary Symonds and Luisa Preece, Needlework Through the Ages, (London: Hodder and Stoughton Ltd., 1928), p. 313.

3. Ann Kilborn Cole, The Golden Guide to American Antiques, (New York: Golden Press, 1967), p. 119.

4. This was one of the prime reasons for Dr. William Dunton Jr. publishing Old Quilts, (Catonsville, Maryland: by the author, 1946).

5. Hinson, Quilting Manual, p. 140.

Types of Quilts

There were numerous quilt types. Among the memory type were "Friendship Medley" whereby a block was completed by a friend. This is different from a "Friendship Quilt" which is a quilt composed of scraps of material from a friend, but the owner of the quilt was the one who made the quilt block.¹

A popular idea for a party was to give a surprise party to make a "Friendship Medley" quilt. This required the receiver to give a quilting party in return to quilt the top.²

Another type of "Memory quilt" was one made from the pieces of material from the dresses of the deceased.³

A "family" quilt usually took along time as each block had a picture which was dated and signed by its maker. Quite often this quilt had a large block in the center on which the homestead was appliqued.⁴

The "Freedom Quilt" was given to the son on his twenty-first birthday as up to that time he owed his time to his parents. On his twenty-first birthday he was free to do what he wanted. These were seldom made after 1825.⁵

A quilt which was popular for over two hundred years was the Bride's quilt. It was said that a girl had to wait until she was engaged to start a marriage or bride's quilt. On this she could then

1. Priscilla Sawyer Lords and Daniel J. Foley, The Folk Arts and Crafts of New England, (New York: Chilton Books, 1965), p. 129.

2. Finley, Patchwork Quilts, p. 192. 3. Ibid., p. 193.

4. Rose Wilder Lane, Woman's Day Book of American Needlework, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1963), p. 96.

5. Finley, Patchwork Quilts, p. 192.

sew doves, loveknots and hearts. By this time most of the girls had twelve quilt tops assembled.

Patchwork Quilts

Patchwork was originally intended for economy as it was a good way to utilize all the fragments and bits of materials. When this country was first settled every bit of cloth was valuable as it either had to be woven by the housewife or imported. It has been said that patchwork is a "thrifty use of leisure time"¹, as it can be used as "pick up work".

In the beginning it was called "poorman's embroidery"². Then in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries women of all social standing sewed patchwork. Quilting was something which went from the cottage to the manor. Even though it was known in Europe Dunton says: "I am of the opinion it is distinctly an American art"³.

The early American settlers combined the separate arts of patchwork and quilting. Before 1750 not much is known but from 1750 to 1850 many pieced quilts are known to have been made. Lane says: "When you know patchwork patterns you know all American history"⁴.

Patchwork is also a good record of the dress and household furnishing materials of the times as it is directly influenced by changes in taste of fashion. Finley mentions that a scrapbag was hung on the back of a door and that the scrapbag was a combination of old and new.

1. Elizabeth Walls Robertson, American Quilts, (New York: The Studio Publications Inc., 1948), p. 28.

2. Colby, Patchwork Quilts, p. 11.

3. Dunton, Old Quilts, p.7.

4. Lane, Woman's Day Book, p. 78.

This is the reason that one cannot accurately date a quilt from the fabrics as the old was often combined with the new in quilts.¹

Lane says "that true patchwork is designed, it has meaning in every line"². Most people do not start to design until they have all their scraps of material. The more creative take a pattern and improvise upon it to make it represent their personal interests. Patchwork is as varied as the personalities who made it.

The pieces in a pieced quilt are often in the thousands. There is a record of one quilt having over thirty thousand pieces which are one-fourth inch by three-fourths inches in size.³

The "crazy" quilt is another form of pieced quilt. It was usually made from odds and ends of ribbons, satins, velvets and silks. Sometimes centennial ribbons or other dated ribbons were included in this quilt. A suggestion was made in the literature that this might be a way of dating a quilt; but often these ribbons were saved and later incorporated into the quilt; therefore, this is not an accurate method of dating a quilt. The fabrics and ribbons were sewed together and feather stitching was then employed on top of the seam as this was a characteristic of the "crazy" quilt.⁴

The one patch quilts were made of pieces cut into uniform size and shape, but were put together without regard for color and material. The

1. Finley, Old Patchwork Quilts, p. 168.

2. Lane, "Patchwork", Woman's Day, (April, 1961), p. 36.

3. Carrie A. Hall and Rose G. Kretsinger, The Romance of the Patchwork Quilt in America, (Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printer, Ltd., 1935), p. 15.

4. Lord and Foley, Folk Arts, p. 132.

"Hit and Miss" quilt pattern is an example. Next the quilter sorted the colors and arranged them in rows and the "Roman Stripe" pattern developed. A third one patch pattern was called the "Brickwall". This was a rectangular one piece quilt with a checkerboard pattern.¹ The last of the one patch patterns was the "Honeycomb". This was made of hexagon patches sewed together and no attempt was made to arrange the color or patterns.

The two patch pattern followed. This was a square or rectangle cut diagonally in half. Pattern examples would be: "Tree Everlasting", and "Bird in the Air". Perhaps the latter is the original "Flock of Geese" pattern.²

"Roman Square" is an example of one of the most popular of the three patch designs. In this pattern each block was made from three different oblong patches. "The blocks were set together with cross bars of solid color"³. Another three patch design was achieved by "cutting light and dark squares diagonally from the center of one side to each opposite corner and then setting light and dark together"⁴. "Streak O'Lightning", "Zig Zag" and "Rail" are some of the three patch pattern names.

Most of the references referred to the fact that geometry was definitely involved in designing pieced quilts. Finley stated that ninety-nine percent of all the pieced quilts represented plane geometry and that more than half of these were of the four and nine patch variety.⁵

1. Robertson, American Quilts, p. 51.

2. Finley, Patchwork Quilts, p. 50.

3. Ibid. 4. Ibid. 5. Ibid.

The Encyclopedia of Needlework¹ refers to the kaleidoscope of patchwork. This book also agrees with McKim that there are three shapes used in patchwork: squares, triangles and diamonds. McKim also adds stripes.² Examples of a square pattern would be: "Puss In a Corner" and "Double Irish Chain". The triangle could have an appliqued handle and the triangles pieced to form a cakestand, grape, cherry or flower basket.³ The diamond was used in New England for "best quilts" which may be the reason in large collections of quilts one finds more diamond quilts than the square.⁴ Examples of a diamond pattern would be the "Lily", "Tulip" and "Sunflower".

Appliqued Quilts

Applique is said to be a sign of better economic conditions as it is more luxurious to use scraps on top of material.⁵ These were also considered the better quilts which perhaps is the reason, again, that more of these are available today as these were the ones saved to be passed down in the family.

Lane says that pieced and applique can complement each other in the same quilt. She gives two examples of pieced triangles with appliqued flowers and a pieced sunburst center with a "Prince's Feather"

1. Encyclopedia of Needlework, (New York: Hearthside Press Inc., 1963), p. 381.

2. Ruby Short McKim, One Hundred and One Patchwork Patterns, (Independence, Missouri: McKim Studies, 1931), p. 17.

3. Norma F. Hoag, "Quilts and American Folk Art", (Design, March, 1934), p. 18.

4. Finley, Patchwork Quilts, p. 57.

5. Vera P. Guild, Needlecraft, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1959), p. 178.

appliqued.¹ Some quilts also had one block pieced and the other block appliqued,² alternating throughout the quilt.

The colonial women called appliqued quilts Broderie Perse, Persian embroidery, after the Indian palampores which were forbidden to be imported.³

In the eighteenth century the motifs were cut from English chints and the elegant French toiles. By 1850 they used the fabrics in shapes other than those suggested by the prints.⁴

Applique patterns were also drawn from nature and represented the following: Rose, Tulip, Peony, Lily, Sunflower, Oak leaf and some original flower patterns.

Embroidery stitches were sometimes used to highlight the applique. The stitches commonly used were: hemming, blind and buttonhole.

The newest of all American appliqued quilts are from Hawaii. As one would expect these quilts are truly representative of the Island in that they have the strong colors and the designs characteristic of the area. The designs are highly stylized forms of the Island's flowers and foliage, American Quilting has come a long way from the economical pieced work, as the Hawaiian quilts in most instances wastes material.

White Quilts

"Quilting particularly as used in all white designing, became

1. Lane, Woman's Day Book, p. 101.

2. Elizabeth Wells Robertson, "Modern Quilts", Design, (December, 1934), p. 45.

3. Lane, Woman's Day Book, p. 93.

4. McCall's Needlework Treasury, (New York: Random House, 1964), p. 123.

a high form of applied art in the eighteenth century".¹ Many of the all white quilts had a large center medallion with a series of borders around it. The center medallion was of an urn or basket of flowers with an elaborate border of "Princess Feathers".

Design Sources

One of the early design sources was the dower chest as the patterns on them could easily be copied. Dish decorations also provided a good source of inspiration. At a later date magazines provided designs. Patchwork utilized patterns from other crafts as it was said that the traveling weavers who made the double woven coverlets inspired the "Irish Chain" and "Wheel of Fortune" quilt patterns.²

Other quilt patterns are modifications of fundamental patterns so numerous that it is impossible to record every variation.³ They probably all originated with basket weaving patterns.⁴

"Patterns that were passed from Mother to daughter, . . . are truly our American folk art . . . , a traditional design plus a little personality".⁵

1. Georgiana Brown Harbeson, American Needlework, (New York: Bonanza Books, 1938), p. 36.

2. Thomas H. Orasbee, Know Your Heirlooms, (New York: The McBride Company, 1957), p. 116.

3. Finley, Patchwork Quilts, p. 7.

4. Dr. Mary L. Shipley, office, Home Economics Building, Michigan State University, February 18, 1970.

5. Robertson, "Modern Quilts", p. 13.

Quilt Names

Quilt names of American patchwork can be a record of days gone by as this was a craft which was made exclusively in the home for two centuries. Many of the designs have symbolic meanings.¹ "As with other forms of folk art they reflected the political, social and economic affairs of their time".² There is no mistaking: "Whig Rose", "Dolly Madison Star", "Fifty-four Forty or Fight", "Kansas Troubles", "Underground Railroad" and "Trail of the Covered Wagen".

Quilts were also named from the trades and occupations. "The Ships Wheel" or "Mariners Wheel", "The Dusty Miller" and "Barrister's Blocks" are a few examples.

It seemed as though each time a new state was admitted to the Union people designed a new star pattern to commemorate it.³ For example: "Lone Star", "Texas Star" and "California Star". Religious names were also used such as: "Joseph's Coat", "Rose of Sharon" and "Star of Bethelam".

Other names and ideas were taken from flower gardens and recreational activities such as "Swing in the Center", "Climbing Rose", "Eight Hands Round", "Horse Shoe" and "Rambling Rose".

There were others to commemorate historical events, others specific for the geographical areas. "North Carolina Lily", "Union Quilt" and "Yankee Pride" are examples.

1. Finley, Patchwork Quilts, p. 8.

2. Ormsbee, Heirlooms, p. 119.

3. Dorothy Brightbill, Quilting as a Hobby, (New York: Bonanza Books), p. 74.

Many quilts have the same pattern but different names. For example: a quilt made with two tones one of which is very dark and the other very light was called "Jacob's Ladder". This same pattern made with three colors is called "Stepping Stones".¹

Finley has a very good "rule of thumb": "The first rule for a quilt collector is never dispute a name".²

Border patterns

Border patterns are usually in every design except the "Log Cabin", "Crazy Quilt" and the striped quilts. The border pattern should be part of the overall design; however, some quilts are found which appear that the border was added after the quilt was assembled in order to make the quilt larger and the border does not complement the top design. Webster feels that colors in the border should harmonize with the top.³

Signature

In signing and dating a quilt Colby⁴ says that the correct place is the center panel or on the border pattern with the day, month, year of finishing and the full name of the worker.

Color

The early American quilt colors were usually dark red, dark blue, dark green, dark brown, black and dark gray. The dyes which were made in the colonies were orange, yellow, green, blue and butternut brown.

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1. Finley, Patchwork Quilts, p. 7.
 2. Ibid., p. 97
 3. Webster, Quilts, p. 98.
 4. Colby, Quilts, p. 29.

In 1830 quilts of red, green and white were popular. In 1880 Turkey red was imported from Germany and then quilts were made solid red and solid white.

Manganese brown was produced commercially in the United States in 1825. For the next twenty-five years it was a popular color in silks and calicoes.¹ This might explain some of the predominance of brown in the early quilts.

Some quilts were made of typical colors. A "Drunkard's Path" usually was of light blue and white. The "WCTU" was always green and white "Jacob's Ladder" usually was of any blue and white but most often was navy and white. Patterns of a "Bear Track" were of red and white.²

In the 1850's lavender and grays were used. During the Civil War dark flower prints were popular. Knowing when colors were used is another way quilts can be given an approximate date, but this is not an entirely accurate method of dating.

Fabrication

Fabrics

Pure cotton or linen was best for all quilt patterns. Bleached or unbleached calico was used as the background material for applied work and as a lining for all the quilts.³

When the Indian calicoes were forbidden to be imported what calico could be smuggled into this country was often used down to the last scrap. Pieterial prints commemorating scenes in American history were printed

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1. White, Newark Quilts, p. 38.
 2. Hinson, Quilting Manual, p. 137.
 3. Guild, Needlecraft, p. 22.

in England for the American market from 1800.

The most common fabrics used in quilts were: plain and figured calicoes, chambray, chints, cretonne, gingham, longcloth, muslin, nainsook, and percale. In the latter part of the eighteenth century one usually thinks of silks, satins and velvet being used in the "crazy" quilts.

Lining

Coverlets with applied work usually were unlined. Light weight cottons or used sheets were most commonly used as linings on quilts.

Foundation

The foundation was usually of unbleached calico.

Fill

The fill on American quilts may be one way of determining the age. The very early ones were filled with leaves, feathers and even corn husks. These were usually held together by string which was tied.¹

If cotton batting were used and seeds can be seen the quilt might have been made before 1790 which is around the time the cotton gin was invented. However, a good many Southern quilts made before this date do not have seeds as they had their slaves card or pick out the seeds.

Sometimes fleece was used when cotton wasn't available, but this was as the last resort as it was quite undesirable due to the fact that it was difficult to completely wash out the animal oils. When the quilts were warm an odor was prevalent.²

1. Hinson, Quilting Manual, p. 23.

2. Finley, Patchwork Quilts, p. 134.

Several cotton sheets could be used if warmth were desired and these would have to be tied or knotted.¹

Size

In the eighteenth century the quilts were usually nine to twelve feet as they were used on the high beds to cover the stack of feather beds and pillows.² According to Hall and Kretsinger³ the finished quilts were quite often one hundred and eight square feet. Therefore, with today's quilt revival the old quilts can be used on the king sized beds.

After 1812 the three-quarters bed was popular and this produced quilts which are an odd size for today's beds as these quilts are too narrow for the double and king sized beds and too wide for the twin.⁴

Assembling

Sometimes both the top and lining had the edges turned under and were bound together with matching or contrasting band. Occasionally fringe was added to this.

Other times extra material was allowed on the backing and this turned over the top for finishing.⁵ Another method was to cut bias strips double the desired finished width and fold to meet in the center. This

1. Webster, Quilts, p. 110.

2. L.G.G. Ramsey, Editor, The Complete Encyclopedia of Antiques, (New York: Hawthorn Books Inc., 1968), p. 632.

3. Hall and Kretsinger, Patchwork Quilts, p. 16.

4. Finley, Patchwork Quilts, p. 26.

5. Norma F. Hoag, "Lets Make a Quilt", Design, (December, 1933), p. 24.

bias strip was then stitched to the quilt top and whipped stitched to the back.¹

Another way to hold the top and bottom layer together without quilting was to tie yarn or string. The layers could also be joined without quilting by running stitches around the patches or sections.

Quilting

Quilting designs could be divided into geometric patterns: the square, diamond and diagonal lines, and the circle which includes the shell, fan, and rope.² These usually would be background stitches.

The open spaces in the block or corners would have the block type designs such as the "Feather Wreath", the "Clam Shell", the "Wheel of Fortune", the "Pineapple" and the "Weeping Willow". There was also the running type design such as the "Running Vine", "Princess Feather", "Serpent" and the "Ocean Wave".

Other designs used are: Cornucopia, harps, pineapples, stars, peacock fans, oak leaves, birds, starfish, spider web, rosettes and Dove of Peace to name a few.

There were several methods of marking the quilting pattern. If it were just a straight line these could be drawn by various devices. One was the ruler and the other was called "snapping the chalk".

Quilting patterns could be traced on wrapping paper and then the paper machine stitched with the needle unthreaded over the pattern lines. Powder or even ground cinnamon could be sprinkled through the perfora-

1. Phoebe Edwards, The Mountain Mist Blue Book of Quilts, (Cincinnati, Ohio: Stearns and Foster Company), p. 11.

2. Hinson, Quilting Manual, p. 26.

tions.¹ Charcoal was also used to mark the pattern for quilting.²

People vary in their opinion as to whether to use a short or long needle to quilt, but the size seems to be an eight or nine needle. Number fifty or seventy white thread being the thread choice. Dark thread is used on dark cottons. On some old quilts a back stitch or chain stitch is found. Perhaps this is because in England the quilters use a back stitch.³ The majority of the American quilts are quilted with a running stitch.

The design is worked on the top but goes through the three layers (top, filling and back) so that it makes a pattern in low relief on the back.

Quilting bee

Although this paper is devoted entirely to the quilts, mention should be made about the old fashioned quilting bee. As Carlisle says: "No social counterpart in our life today that could compare with the quilting bee of the nineteenth century".⁴ A woman quite often enjoyed a status in her community by her skill with the needle. It was a definite social asset to be known as an expert quilter as one's social prominence was assured.

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1. McCall's Needlework Treasury, p. 136.
 2. Harbeson, Needlework, p. 37.
 3. Dunton, Old Quilts, p. 6.
 4. Lilian Baker Carlisle, Quilts at Shelburne Museum, (Shelburne, Vermont: 1957), p. 111.

Quilts After 1870

Decline

There was a decline in home quilting after 1870. Part of the reason was that machinery produced goods reduced the need for home made items. People also had the income with which to purchase the new machine made merchandise.

Women were able to attend college and to work outside the home. This obviously reduced the time with which they could make things at home. The rise of the garment industry was also said to have reduced the family scrapbag and thus quilt making.

Centralized heating lessened the need for quilts for warmth.

State Fair Competition

Even though quilt making was not popular nationwide, some women were still encouraged to make quilts in order to enter them in the County Fair. This was chiefly as a creative outlet. In various museum collections mention is often made that a quilt won a ribbon in a fair competition.

Current Vogue of Quilts

For several years Sister Parrish (Mrs. Henry Parrish) has used quilts to decorate the homes of her famous clients. She usually uses old patterns in current fashionable colors. Most of her quilting is done by women who live in rural Alabama.¹ The geometric patterns of the old quilts certainly can coordinate with today's decor.

1. Eugenia Sheppard, "The Quilting Bee of Sister Parrish", Woman's Wear Daily, (February 16, 1968), p. 8.

It is interesting to note that Europeans are using our quilts to decorate their homes. In publisher Francois Hebert Steven's library outside Paris an American patchwork quilt was used as a table cover¹ and in their child's room an Empire bed was covered with a "pretty American patchwork quilt".² Mr. David Hicks in his own English manor house used an American patchwork quilt in his wife's bedroom.³

In a recent article in House Beautiful⁴ a reader wanted to know who made patchwork quilts by custom order. The reply stated that a place in North Carolina considered quilting a museum art and made quilts.

There is also a current revival of old quilts and old quilt patterns in fashion. It all "started in Paris with Ives and Mark and their patchwork peasant outfits".⁵ Then by June of that year, Woman's Wear Daily predicted that by fall of 1969 quilting would be a big business item and that all the big design names would be using it. The article March 25, 1969⁶ said that all the fashion people (Gloria Vanderbilt Cooper, Barbara Hutton, Jackie Onassis) were having Adolfo make them quilted clothes. Gloria Cooper bought twenty-five old quilts from a New York antique show. Some she very interestingly placed around her New York home (as a dressing table cover and as a dinner table cloth). But a few she had cut up to make into long hostess dresses

1. Georges and Rosamond Bernier, Editors, The Best in European Decoration. (New York: Reynal and Company, 1963), p. 61.

2. Ibid., p. 60. 3. Ibid., p. 20.

4. Epsie Kinard, "House Beautiful's Address Book", House Beautiful, (September, 1969), p. 46.

5. Woman's Wear Daily, (March 28, 1969), p. 5.

6. Woman's Wear Daily, (March 25, 1969), p. 5.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

In order to study the quilts of the Grand Rapids Museum the writer first consulted the donor's book and eliminated from the study the quilts which were donated by people who are deceased or those quilts which stated that they were donated from the estate of a person as it was hoped that the donor would be able to contribute information about the quilt. The writer later obtained permission from the Museum Director to contact the donors.

The quilts were located in three locked cases. As each quilt was removed from the case, the exact location in the case was noted. The quilt was then unwrapped to be examined for the information which will be covered in Chapter IV.

An attempt was made to identify the quilt pattern by using such references as: Hall and Kretsinger,¹ McKim,² Finley,³ and Carlisle.⁴ In some instances the change in fabrics made the pattern look different from the references. The writer was aided in identification of two quilt patterns by reviewing slides which had been taken for such purposes.

-
1. Hall and Kretsinger, Patchwork Quilts.
 2. McKim, Patchwork Patterns.
 3. Finley, Patchwork Quilts.
 4. Carlisle, Shelburne.

The stitches were counted with a ruler and five to ten measurements taken. On one quilt where the stitching was fine, a magnifying glass aided in establishing whether it was hand or machine stitching. The magnifying glass was also utilized in an attempt to determine whether the patterns had been drawn on for quilting.

Having a pre-typed form was much faster than having a list of points to be noted. A sample of the final form is to be found in Appendix "C".

Several procedures were tried for taking the pictures. In reviewing the literature it was found that quilts were photographed in many instances hanging on clothes lines and the background was clearly visible. Therefore, this writer used skirt hangers to hang the quilts on a storage cabinet in order to have just the quilt pattern photographed. One quilt was too frayed to hang and its picture was taken with the quilt draped over a table.

Lighting was a particular problem. The flash bleached the detail work of the stitching. If it were desirable to record the fine details of quilting one would need a camera with a special attachment.

The writer felt that a personal contact was worthwhile in contacting the donors. However, as one would expect at least two phone calls were needed. The donors needed some time to "recollect" their thoughts about the quilt.

Two of the donors could not be reached by phone so a letter was sent. Four were not listed in the current phone book and letters were sent to their last known address with questions and a self addressed stamped envelope.

CHAPTER IV

SELECTED PIECED QUILTS IN THE GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC MUSEUM

The Grand Rapids Public Museum has a very attractive and informative display of quilts. The museum staff has arranged the exhibit so that they explain the various shapes of material and the type of equipment which was used to construct a quilt. There is a representation of each of the most known types of quilts: pieced, "crazy" (this is also a pieced) and applique.

Mrs. Arthur Vandenberg donated a "crazy quilt" which is of interest to that community's patrons.

The community still has an interest in making quilts as quilt patterns are available in the museum gift shop. Frontier days and the children's craft workshop also create an interest in quilts.

The bulk of the collection is stored in three cases in the workshop area. There are approximately forty-five quilts in this area of which nineteen are pieced, ten are "crazy", two are white, four appliqued and one is embroidered. "Crazy" quilts are really considered a pieced quilt, but in this paper, the writer preferred to place them in a group by themselves.

BIRDS IN THE AIR

A. HISTORY

Quilt Pattern

Finley's¹ "Birds in the Air" identifies this pattern. It has also been called "Flying Birds". Finley goes on to say that this is the original "Flock of Geese" pattern. When one compares this with McCall's² "Birds in the Air", the evolution of this pattern is evident.

In looking at the further development of this pattern in Hall and Kretsinger's³ their "Flock of Geese"⁴ pattern and their "Birds in the Air"⁵ patterns only vaguely resemble the original.

Donor

Mrs. Edward J. Sheridan
1425 Bemis S.E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan
May 7, 1962 gift

Historical Significance

Information was not available.

By Whom Constructed

Information was not available.

Year of Construction

Information was not available.

-
1. Finley, Patchwork Quilts, plate 16.
 2. McCall's, Needlework Treasury, p. 20.
 3. Hall and Kretsinger, Patchwork Quilts.
 4. Ibid., p. 74, #9. 5. Ibid., p. 96, #14.

A. HISTORY (cont.)Location of Construction

Information was not available.

B. TOP

Over all measurement: sixty-four inches by sixty-two and three-fourths inches.

Design

Twenty-two squares across and twenty-two down.

Approximate size of squares are two and three-fourths inches square. Two triangles form the squares, and the tops of the triangles are arranged so that they form rows of diagonal lines across the quilt top.

Looks as if hand sewing were employed.

Some silks were frayed which allowed the writer to see that the silks appear to be sewn to an interfacing like material.

Fabrics

Silk and velvet.

Signature

None.

Border Design

None

C. CONSTRUCTIONQuilting

None

How Edges Completed

A deep rose silk bias tape has been machine stitched on the top and turned under and slip stitched to the backing.

C. CONSTRUCTION (cont.)Backing

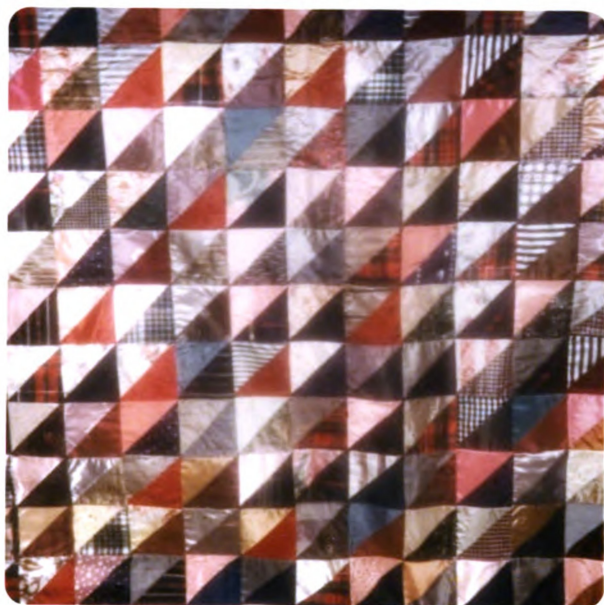
Pink flowers with a watery effect. Appears to be drapery material.

Battin

Can see an interfacing like material. Also must have thin cotton batting.

PLATE I

BIRDS IN THE AIR



Grand Rapids Public Museum #128384

HIT AND MISS I

A. HISTORY

Quilt Pattern

This is a one patch pattern. Finley's¹ "Hit and Miss" pattern identifies this quilt.

Donor

Mrs. Blanche Fox Steerman
1046 Courtney N.E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan
December 17, 1959 gift

Historical Significance

Information was not available due to the recent death of the donor.

By Whom Constructed

Information was not available.

Year of Construction

Information was not available.

Location of Construction

Information was not available.

B. TOP

Overall dimension: sixty-nine inches by seventy-five inches.

Design

White thread used to slip stitch the squares together. Each square is approximately one and three-eighths square.

1. Finley, Patchwork Quilts, plate 14.

B. TOP (cont.)Design (cont.)

Three-fourths of the quilt has different fabrics distributed throughout, but the top five rows have similar fabrics grouped together. It looks as if there were an attempt to form a cross with the following fabrics: red, navy and white stripe and dark blue print.

Fabrics

Cottons, prints, stripes and plain. A few of the two inch squares in the border design have been pieced which shows the worker utilized all scraps of fabrics.

Signature

None

Border Design

This must be a nine patch variation block with two inch square patches (squares vary in size), four corner squares are of the same dark brown fabric. Between the corner squares is a white square which has been divided into three triangles. The center triangle is of a dark print (different from the other prints in the nine patch block). The center square is of a dark print.

The entire nine patch is six inches square.

When each block is joined with the next one the center dark triangles on the side form a diamond shape.

The majority of the triangles match perfectly although a few are slightly askew.

C. CONSTRUCTIONQuiltingBy Whom

Information was not available.

Pattern

Very difficult to determine as black thread was used and the backing pattern has small black dots. It appears to be vertical lines one and one-half inches apart and horizontal lines one inch apart.

C. CONSTRUCTION (cont.)Quilting (cont.)Pattern (cont.)

In the border pattern the triangles are outlined intermittently so that in some instances the relief forms a diamond quilt pattern on the back.

Thread

Black

Stitches

Five to six running stitches per inch. Not always in a straight line.

How Edges Completed

Backing turned under on top and secured with three rows of machine stitching with black thread to form an edge three-eighths inch wide.

Batting

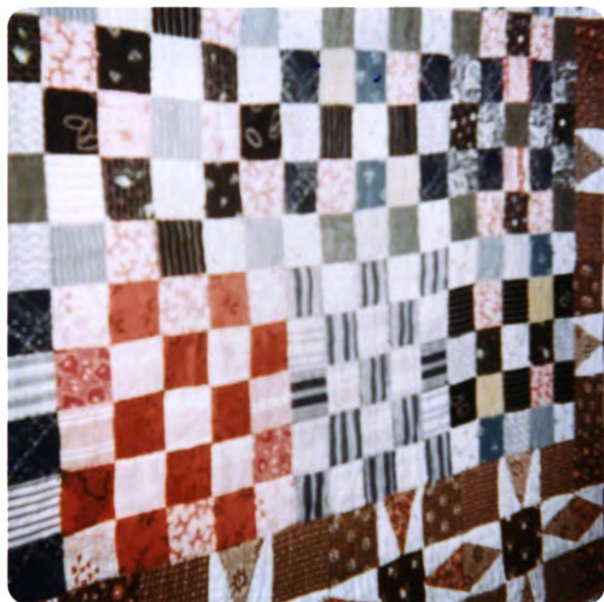
Appears to be thin cotton sheeting.

Backing

A dark cerise cotton with black geometric design which has white dots.

PLATE II

HIT AND MISS I



Grand Rapids Public Museum #125825

HIT AND MISS II

A. HISTORY

Quilt Pattern

This again may be identified with Finley's¹ "Hit and Miss" pattern. Tiny bits of cloth all cut the same size and shape are sewn together without an attempt to form a pattern.²

DONOR

Mrs. Siegel W. Judd
747 San Jose Drive S.E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Historical Significance

Without knowing the chronology of this quilt it has historical significance because the donor is very prominent in Grand Rapids Civic affairs,³ and her husband, whose family owned the quilt, is an outstanding lawyer⁴ in the community.

Mrs. Judd provided the writer with two newspaper articles⁵ and the History of Kent County for 1881⁶ which authenticated the Weedon-Wright-Judd ancestry.

According to Mrs. Judd it seems as though the quilt was made by Mary Weedon from Jamestown, Rhode Island. James and Mary Weedon came to Kent County with their daughter Nancy and built a house which still stands on Alpine Road N.W. Mary Weedon died in 1846 in Walker Township.

-
1. Finley, Patchwork Quilts, plate 14.
 2. Ibid., p. 48.
 3. Z.Z. Lydens, Editor, The Story of Grand Rapids, (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1966), p. 96, 97, 98.
 4. Ibid., p. 414.
 5. Grand Rapids Herald, January 14, 1936 and December 12, 1954.
 6. History of Kent County, 1881, (Chicago: C.C. Chapman Co., n.d.)

A. HISTORY (cont.)Historical Significance (cont.)

Nancy married in 1850 Jeremiah Wright, who was the grandson of Solomon Wright, a Revolutionary soldier who at the age of eighty-five came to Michigan in 1836 with his sons Benjamin and Solomon. Jeremiah was one of the first settlers of Walker Township which in 1846 was renamed Alpine Township when Walker Township was divided into two townships---Walker and Alpine.

Jeremiah and Nancy Wright had a son, Addison Wright, who married Sara Boyer. As they both died when their son Seigel was a baby, he was adopted by Addison's sister Lillian Wright Judd and her husband Edward Judd.

By Whom Constructed

The donor's book lists Nancy Weedon, but Mrs. Judd stated that it was Mary Weedon.

Year of Construction

1830

Location of Construction

Rhode Island

B. TOP

Overall dimension: forty-eight inches by seventy-eight inches.

Design

Each square measures one and one-half inches square. There are forty-three squares across and twenty-five squares down.

Fabric

All cottons. Plain, prints and checks.

Signature

None

Border Design

All around the quilt top is a white cotton border which measures four inches wide. The blue yarn ties give the border a design.

C. CONSTRUCTION**Quilting**

None as this is tied with blue yarn. The yarn has been tied in bows on the top.

How Edges Completed

The top and backing are turned under and are held together by blue yarn which has been blanket stitched three-eighths of an inch deep and with one-fourth inch between each stitch.

Type of Batting

Thick cotton batting.

Backing

White cotton on which red has faded.

PLATE III

HIT AND MISS II



Grand Rapids Public Museum #120897

LOG CABIN VARIATION

A. HISTORY

Quilt Pattern

This quilt pattern is very similar to the "Barn Raising" quilt in the Shelburne Museum¹ collection except the quilt in this study has triangles in the center, and Shelburne's has a square in the center.

The pattern is also very similar to Mathieson's² "Roman Stripe", but again the triangles in the center are different.

Woman's Day³ has a pattern like this quilt which it calls "Roman Stripe".

Hall and Kretsinger⁴ identify a similar pattern as being a one patch, "Roman Stripe" and another one which is similar is called "Log Cabin-Barn Raising".⁵

McKim⁶ states that if the stripes are placed diagonally it is the "Barn Raising" pattern, but the description of the rest of the pattern is not like this quilt.

With all the various opinions in the literature this writer has decided that it would be more accurate at the present to label this quilt a "Log Cabin" variation.

1. Carlisle, Shelburne, p. 26.

2. Elizabeth Laird Mathieson, The Needlework Library, (Cleveland: World Publishing Company, 1949), p. 59.

3. "The Story of American Needlework, #2: Patchwork", Woman's Day, April, 1961.

4. Hall and Kretsinger, Patchwork Quilts, p. 52.

5. Ibid., p. 197.

6. McKim, Patchwork Patterns, p. 110.

A. HISTORY (cont.)Donor

Mrs. Edward J. Sheridan
 1425 Bemis S.E.
 Grand Rapids, Michigan
 May 7, 1962, gift

Historical Significance

Information was not available.

By Whom Constructed

Information was not available

Year of Construction

Information was not available

Location of Construction

Information was not available

B. TOP

Overall dimensions: fifty-three and one-half inches by fifty-five and one-half inches.

Design

Most the squares have two triangles---one in each of two diagonal corners. The rest of the square is composed of five strips seven-eighths inches wide. Although a few squares do have more strips of narrower width.

It appears that the black silk forms the predominate pattern. Also that there is planning in that four of the squares have their triangles meet to form a square center which gives on the idea that it is a derivation of the "Log Cabin" pattern. At the point where the four triangles meet to form a square there is a fringe of red silk thread.

Each square is about five and one-half inches square. The strips vary from seven-eighths to three-fourths inches.

It appears that the strips and backing have been sewed by machine.

Fabrics

Appears to be made primarily of men's ties and men's vest material---silks, taffetas.

B. TOP (cont.)Signature

None

Border Design

None as such

C. CONSTRUCTIONQuilting

None. This is tied at the junction of each square with red strings, which are made into tassels on the top.

How Edges Completed

Gray silk bias fabric is slip stitched on the backing and is turned under on the front where it is held by a feather stitch. Threads of feather stitch are: red, yellow and orange embroidery floss.

Type of Batting

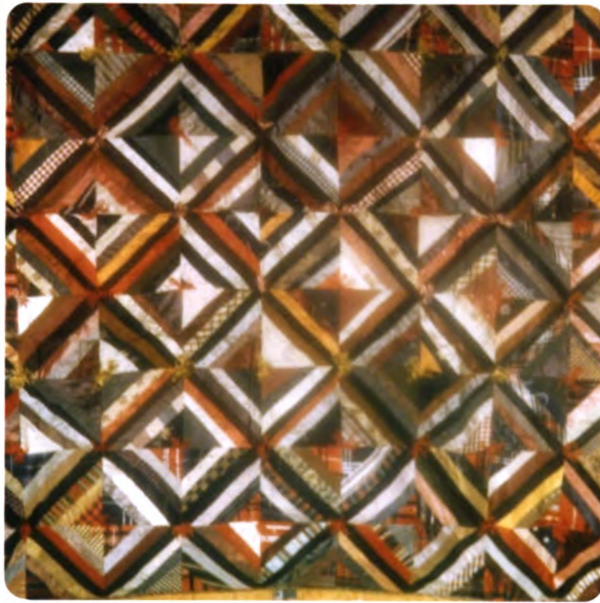
Must be thin cotton sheeting.

Backing

Gray silk stripe. Part of the backing is machine stitched and part is hand sewn by brown thread. There are two colors of gray silk stripe. One is almost a brown gray.

PLATE IV

LOG CABIN VARIATION



Grand Rapids Public Museum #128382

LOG CABIN - COURTHOUSE STEPS

A. HISTORY

Quilt Pattern

According to the Shelburne Museum¹ collection this quilt is the "Log Cabin Court House Steps" pattern.

White² states that this was a favorite way to use up silk scraps. That the different placing of light and dark corners either produced "Straight Furrow", or a "Barn Raising" pattern. Every colonial home had at least one of these geometrically arranged quilt, usually from wool or cotton.³

Donor

Mrs. Chalmers Quaintance
4081 Clearview N.E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan
November, 1962, gift

Historical Significance

The donor remembers this as always being the "brown quilt" in her Grandmother's cottage at Bay View. This was originally a Chautauqua camp. The quilt was either taken to the cottage by the Grandmother or possibly was in the cottage when it was purchased. In either event the quilt was most likely made around Portland, Indiana.

Location

According to Mrs. Quaintance the quilt was made in the Portland, Indiana area.

-
1. Carlisle, Shelburne, p. 28.
 2. White, Newark Quilts, p. 73.
 3. Ibid., p. 73.

A. HISTORY (cont.)By Whom Constructed

Not known

Year of Construction

Circa 1870. Determined by piecing together events with the donor and the fact that the materials appear to be those popular around the 1860's and 70's.

B. TOP

Overall dimensions: seventy-five inches by eighty-four inches.

Design

Looks as if the brown print was intended to be the center of all the "Log Cabin" patches and the worker ran out of fabric about three-fourths of the way through the work.

There are nine "Log Cabin" squares across and eight squares vertically. Each square measures approximately eight and three-fourths inches by eight and one-fourth inches.

This is a typical "Log Cabin" pattern in that it is composed of strips of fabric.

In the center of each square is a yarn decoration resembling a flower or rosette.

In places one can see bright blue thread in a running stitch on the top of the black which was used to hold these pieces together, and brown thread was used on the brown cotton pieces.

Fabric

Mostly dark cotton fabrics. The writer was surprised, though in looking at the slides how the light fabrics appear to dominate.

The fabrics are black prints, browns a few lavender, red check wool, pink and black check wool. A few silks. This might be considered a good scrapbag representation.

Signature

None

B. TOP (cont.)Border Design

The entire border is four and one-half inches wide. Within this measurement are: one and one-fourth inches of brown print; one and one-fourth inches of olive green, beige and lavender check and two inches of blue, light turquoise and charcoal check.

Orange yarn rosettes between the blue check and olive green check; lavender yarn rosettes between the brown strip and the "Log Cabin" squares.

C. CONSTRUCTIONQuiltingBy Whom

Not known

Pattern

None. The top must be attached to a comforter which is used as batting.

How Edges Completed

Bias strips of the following materials: check; brown print; and a blue check form a one-fourth inch edge. This has been slip-stitched on.

Type of Batting

An old comforter.

Backing

Thin tan brown muslin; one little square had been patched with the original tan material and whipstitched on with white thread.

D. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This quilt was in such fragile condition that it was not hung to take the pictures but was placed on a table.

PLATE V

LOG CABIN COURT HOUSE STEPS



Grand Rapids Public Museum #130196

RED WHITE BLUE CIVIL WAR QUILT

A. HISTORY

Quilt Pattern

This is a one patch design and must be in the "family" of Album quilts as there is the one large white patch on which something commemorative could be placed.

Donor

Mrs. Mabel Eloink
1603 Franklin S.E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan
August, 1966, gift

Historical Significance

Civil War. Many quilts were made by Southern women to sell to Northern soldiers.

By Whom Constructed

Not known

Year of Construction

Circa 1865

Location of Construction

Information was not available

B. TOP

Overall dimensions: approximately eighty-one inches square.

Design

The quilt is composed of three inch squares of bright red, on a square which is divided diagonally so that one side is blue and the other white and another solid white square. On first looking at the quilt, it appears that the red squares alternate with the blue and white ones except when they

B. TOP (cont.)Design (cont.)

encounter the large white square which is twelve inches square. At this point the red square is only a triangle. But in studying the quilt one discovers that there is a definite plan. The large white square is surrounded by red triangles and the blue part of the blue and white square is placed so that the blue fits in the red to form a "frame" around the large white square. The plain white three inch squares alternate with the plain red squares in the spaces on the quilt, which are not affected by the large white square pattern arrangement.

There is a total of one hundred sixty-four red squares; ninety-eight red triangles; one hundred forty-two blue triangles; two hundred eight white solid squares. A total of twelve large squares. Twenty-five rows by twenty-five rows.

Fabrics

Cotton: plain bright red, blue and white.

Signature

None

Border Design

None as such. The plain red square does alternate with the blue and white square.

C. CONSTRUCTIONQuiltingBy Whom

Not known

Pattern

A vertical left to right diagonal with the rows approximately one and one-half inches apart. On the horizontal straight lines one and one-half inches apart.

Thread

White

C. CONSTRUCTION (cont.)Quilting (cont.)Size Stitches

Approximately five stitches per inch.

How Edges Completed

The red cotton used in the top has been cut in a bias tape and slip stitched to the top. Then it is whipped stitched to the back of the quilt with a white thread. This forms a five-eighths inch border. The ends are rounded. Five to six stitches per inch used in whip stitching and six stitches per inch in the slip stitches.

Type of Batting

Thin patches of cotton.

Backing

White muslin.

PLATE VI

CIVIL WAR QUILT



Grand Rapids Public Museum #135791

NINE PATCH VARIATION

A. HISTORY

Quilt Pattern

Hall and Kretsinger¹ and White² both illustrate the nine patch variation like this quilt.

Donor

Mrs. Blanche Fox Steerman
1046 Courtney N.E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan
December 17, 1959, gift

Historical Significance

Information was not available due to the recent death of the donor.

By Whom Constructed

Information was not available

Year of Construction

Information was not available

Location of construction

Information was not available

B. TOP

Overall dimension: approximately eighty-three inches by ninety inches.

-
1. Hall and Kretsinger, Patchwork Quilts, p. 48, plate #15.
 2. White, Newark Quilts, p. 17.

E. TOP (cont.)Design

One large square of a red and white print alternates with a pattern block. There are six designs vertically by six horizontally which have the red and white print blocks between.

The squares vary in size, but are approximately eight and one-half inches square.

The pattern blocks are set on the quilt top on the diagonal so they appear to be diamond shaped. The pattern blocks end at the edge so that one-half of a red and white print square forms a triangle between the pattern blocks.

Within the pattern block are the following measurements and patches: each corner square is two inches square, between these are long patches four and one-half inches by two and one-fourth inches, and a large center square which is four and one-half inches square.

Fabrics

Red and white floral chints for big squares between the pattern squares. In the pattern squares are cotton prints, stripes, and some calicoes.

Signature

None

Border Design

The sides have the brown chints floral pattern as a design which is three and one-half inches wide and is the complete length of the quilt. Both ends of the quilt have seven inches of the same drapery material. One end has two red print squares, one seven inches and the other seven and one-half inches in length suggesting that the drapery material was not sufficient for completing the border.

C. CONSTRUCTIONQuiltingBy Whom

Not known

C. CONSTRUCTION (cont.)Quilting (cont.)Pattern

The shell quilting pattern is used on the red and white chints square between the pattern blocks.

The quilting on the pattern block is of straight lines which are similar to Hall and Kretsinger's¹ plaid pattern. There are three sets of vertical double lines across and three sets of the same horizontally. The double lines are about seven-eighths of an inch apart and is about two and one-fourth inches between the pair of lines to the first line of the next pair.

Diagonal lines are quilted on the border. These vary from three-fourths to one inch to one and one-fourth inches apart.

Thread

White

Stitches

Five to seven stitches per inch. Stitches vary in length and are uneven.

How Edges Completed

The backing is brought over and turned under. It is then whipped stitched to the top of the quilt with white thread. This forms an edge about one-fourth of an inch wide.

Type of Batting

Cotton

Backing

Strips of dark green with a white leaf pattern alternate with the red and white chints material.

1. Hall and Kretsinger, Patchwork Quilts, p. 272.

PLATE VII

NINE PATCH VARIATION



Grand Rapids Public Museum #125822

LE MOYNE STAR

A. HISTORY

Quilt Pattern

This star pattern is the foundation of dozens of combinations and variations. It is essentially a diamond produced pattern.¹ All Lily and Tulip designs are based on this famous pattern.²

It was named for Jean Baptiste Le Moyne who founded New Orleans. In the North it was also called "Lemon Star".³ This pattern was more popular after 1803.

McKin⁴ called it an eight pointed star. But most of the other references⁵ called it the "Le Moyne Star".

This writer was amazed to see the same eight pointed star in inlay on an oak chest which had been made in Germany during the late sixteenth century.

Donor

Mrs. Robert W. Irwin
461 Fulton E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan
January, 1956, gift

-
1. Finley, Patchwork Quilts, p. 31.
 2. Hall and Kretsinger, Patchwork Quilts, p. 55.
 3. Carlisle, Shelburne, p. 22.
 4. McKin, Patchwork Patterns, p. 56.
 5. Hall and Kretsinger, Patchwork Quilts, p. 55, #1; Finley Patchwork Quilts, p. 158, diagram 7; Carlisle, Shelburne, p. 22; Brightbill, Quilting, p. 74.
 6. John Gleag, A Social History of Furniture Design from B.C. 1300 to A.D. 1960, (New York: Crown Publisher Inc., 1966), p. 34.

A. HISTORY (cont.)Historical Significance

Information was not available

By Whom Constructed

Information was not available

Year of Construction

Information was not available

Location of Construction

Information was not available

B. TOP

Overall dimensions: seventy-two inches by ninety-four inches.

Design

The pattern blocks consisting of the eight pointed star called the "Le Moyne Star" alternate with a white square which has a quilted pattern. The star blocks measure approximately six and three-fourths inches square.

The overall quilt design consists of one row of three star pattern squares alternating with two quilted squares. The next row has three quilted squares alternating with two star pattern squares. These two rows alternate on the quilt top.

There is a total of twenty-eight star pattern squares and twenty-seven quilted squares on the top.

The stars must have been pieced together and then appliqued by slip stitching to the white block. These stitches vary from eleven to fourteen stitches per inch.

Extreme care and workmanship must be utilized to have the diamond points meet just right in the center of the star. It appears that the worker had difficulty with this technique. The red and green printed star is the best matched of all the stars. Because of the difficulty in matching, it seems as though four diamonds were pieced and then joined with the other four diamonds to form the star. One of the stars looks as if six of the diamonds were pieced and then two other diamonds were added.

B. TOP (cont.)Fabrics

White cotton muslin. The star patterns consist primarily of calico; although a few diamonds do have plain colored cotton fabric.

Signature

None

Border Design

There are two divisions of the border on the sides. The border next to the quilt top is ten and one-half inches and consists of six lines in a cable design¹ in the center of a row of interlocking circles.

The quilted cable and interlocking circle border curves around the corners where on the ends the border is nine inches wide.

On the sides there is also an eight inch border which has straight quilted lines about three-fourths of an inch apart.

C. CONSTRUCTIONQuiltingBy Whom

Not known

Pattern

A running stitch around each diamond's outside edge and then around the outside of the whole star. This forms a star pattern on the back of the quilt which has two lines one-fourth inch apart. In each of the four corners of this pattern block is also quilted a circle about the size of a quarter.

In the white square between the pattern blocks is quilted the square diamond pattern. The lines in this pattern form five-eighths of an inch squares.

Thread

White

1. McCall's Needlework Treasury, p. 117.

C. CONSTRUCTION (cont.)Quilting (cont.)Size Stitches

Five to six per inch. Even stitching and well done.

Raw Edges Completed

Bias tape turned under on top and whipped to back.

Type of Batting

Appears to be cotton sheeting.

Backing

White cotton

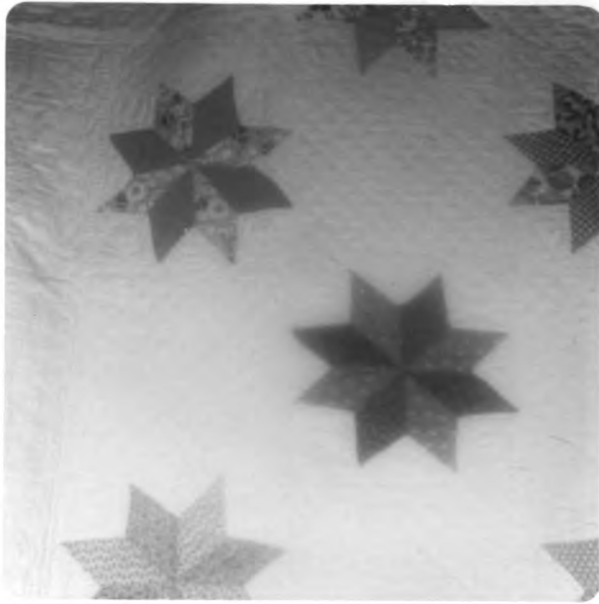
D. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This is part of a pair of quilts donated to the museum. Finding quilts in pairs is not common.¹

1. Colby, Patchwork Quilts, p. 49.

PLATE VIII

LE MOYNE STAR



Grand Rapids Public Museum #121231

HARVEST SUN

A. HISTORY

Quilt Pattern

Hall and Kretsinger¹ call this "Prairie Sun" but also mention that it was known by "Harvest Sun" in the Middle West and as "Ships Wheel" in Maine.

McKim's "Virginia Star"² is similar, but the corners are finished differently.

Mathieson³ calls it "Ships Wheel". Perhaps this author best describes the reasons for the different names:

A star that traveled. This star first appeared in New England. The wives and daughters of seafaring men made it in the shape of a ship's wheel. The design traveled westward . . . In Pennsylvania a farm woman . . . called it "Four Doves in a Window". Further west . . . called the "Harvest Sun".⁴

It has also been called the "Star of Bethlehem", "Lone Star", "Star of the West" and "Rising Sun".⁵

Donor

Mr. and Mrs. Terry L. Hills
911 Henry S.E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan
September 6, 1960, gift

Historical Significance

Information was not available

-
1. Hall and Kretsinger, Patchwork Quilts, p. 63, #6.
 2. McKim, Patchwork Patterns, p. 30.
 3. Mathieson, Needlework Library, p. 61.
 4. Ibid., p. 60.
 5. McCall's Needlework Treasury, p. 118.

A. HISTORY (cont.)By Whom Constructed

Lemira Colton and her Mother just before Miss Colton married Aaron H. Hills, December, 1852.

Year of Construction

1850

Location of Construction

Not known

B. TOP

Overall dimensions: approximately eighty-two inches by seventy-eight inches.

Design

Four "Harvest Sun" patterns across one end with three green calico five and one-half inches square set diamond-wise between them. This row alternates with the next row which has three large green calico squares (eleven and one-half inches square, approximately) with four smaller squares (approximately five and one-half inches square), of green calico which have been set diamond-wise between them.

The diamonds are whipped stitched together.

Fabrics

All are cotton. The stars are of various red prints with the light parts of the star in a brown print and a gray print. Bright green calico prints forms the squares.

Signature

None

Border Design

On all sides there are three long green calico (five and one-half inches by eleven inches) strips between the stars with four green calico triangles in the center of the star. Each corner of the quilt has a green calico square (five and one-half inches square).

C. CONSTRUCTIONQuiltingBy Whom

Not known

Pattern

It appears that one-eighth of an inch inside each diamond of the star a line was quilted around.

Shell pattern on the green triangles of the border. Three circles on corner squares of varying size.

The outside edge of the large calico squares on the border are outlined and then starting at the center of these squares, lines are quilted on the diagonal five-eighths of an inch apart.

Small green calico squares have an oval shape in each corner and the center of the square has curved lines which form a triangle.

Large calico square has diagonal lines quilted all in one direction and the lines are five-eighths of an inch apart.

Thread

Black

Stitches

Six to seven stitches per inch.

How Edges Completed

A dark brown cotton cut into a bias tape has been sewn to the top and turned under and whipped stitched to the back forming a one-fourth of an inch border.

Type of Batting

Thin cotton sheeting

Backing

Brown, tan and gold plaid with beige center and white floral design over this.

PLATE IX

HARVEST SUN



Grand Rapids Public Museum #126699

VARIABLE STAR

A. HISTORY

Quilt Pattern

Quilt Pattern

In the Mountain Mist¹ booklet their pattern "Zig Zag" is similar except it has plain squares in each of the four corners and the quilt in this study has two corners which have the square divided in half forming one white triangle and the other the pumpkin colored triangle. The other two corner squares are the solid pumpkin color. The center square of the Museum's quilt is large and has a star quilted in it. The Mountain Mist one has a large square with a smaller contrasting color square in the center.

The Shelburne Museum² quilt is similar to the quilt in this study and is called "Variable Star". In fact, the quilt in the study could be called a "Variable Star" as it is a derivation from the star pattern.

The Grand Rapids quilt is essentially a four patch category pattern. The difference between this quilt and the Shelburne quilt is that the two diagonal corners have been divided into the triangles and the Shelburne quilt has solid corners. Also the center square is the Grand Rapids quilt is a solid pumpkin color calico print whereas the Shelburne quilt has a square inside the center square. Perhaps the woman who made the Grand Rapids quilt used her own ideas as it appears she was an accomplished seamstress.

Hall and Kretzinger's "Evening Star"³ and "Variable Star", "Lone Star" or "Texas Star" could also have been the inspiration for the quilt pattern except their four corners are solid squares instead of being divided.

-
1. Edwards, Mountain Mist, p. 24.
 2. Carlisle, Shelburne, p. 8.
 3. Hall and Kretzinger, Patchwork Quilts, p. 54, plate #4.
 4. Ibid., p. 56 #8, 9, 10.

A. HISTORY (cont.)Donor

Mr. Robert J. Philip
 Comstock Park, Michigan
 September 15, 1962, gift

Historical Significance

Due to the fact that a letter was returned "unknown", the information was not available.

By Whom Constructed

Information was not available.

Year of Construction

Information was not available.

Location of Construction

Information was not available.

B. TOP

Over all dimensions: approximately seventy-eight inches by eighty-four inches.

Design

The pattern block consists of a pumpkin colored calico center square which has an eight pointed star quilted in the center. This is surrounded by a saw tooth border of the pumpkin colored calico and a plain white cotton. Two of the corners are the solid calico.

There are seven pattern blocks on the horizontal by six pattern blocks on the vertical. These pattern blocks alternate with a white square of the same size which has a "feather circle" pattern quilted on it.

The quilt is planned so that the pattern blocks are set on the top on the diagonal and they appear to be diamond shaped. The pattern square ends at the edge so that one half of the white square forms a diamond square in between the diamond points of the pattern square. In the half of the white diamond, white one has a feather circle, and the alternate one has a star pattern quilted in it.

B. TOP (cont.)Fabrics

Cotton. Pumpkin color print which has a very small green design. Gold calice print is used for the diamonds on the border.

Signature

None

Border Design

Gold calice print diamonds form the border. Quilted around the outside edge of the diamond and a quilted diamond shape in the center of the diamond. One half of a diamond is quilted on the white material which forms half a diamond between the gold calice print.

The border width is four inches and is composed of: thirty-eight diamonds across the bottom; thirty-one complete diamonds and two half (lengthwise) diamonds on the side; thirty-three complete diamonds and one half diamond on the other side; and forty-one complete diamonds across the top.

C. CONSTRUCTIONQuiltingBy Whom

Not known

Pattern

The white squares which alternate with the pattern have the "Feather Circle"¹ with the diamond pattern in the center.

An eight pointed star is quilted in the center of the big pumpkin colored square of the pattern block which is similar to McKim's "Blazing Star".²

"X"'s are quilted in the corner squares of the pattern block.

The white triangle in the corner squares has quilting around the edges.

The quilting in the border design has been described.

C. CONSTRUCTION (cont.)Quilting (cont.)Thread

White

Stitches

Running, seven stitches per inch. On the "Feather Circle" white square are eleven stitches per inch.

How Edges Completed

Top and backing are turned under. It appears that a bias tape has one-eighth of an inch sewed to the top and then it is whipstitched to the backing where it is one-fourth of an inch wide.

Type of Batting

It appears to be thin cotton sheeting.

Type of Backing

White cotton

-
1. McKim, Patchwork Patterns, p. 66.
 2. Ibid., p. 124.

PLATE X

VARIABLE STAR



Grand Rapids Public Museum #129012

BLOCK OR CUBE WORK

A. HISTORY

Quilt Pattern

It is interesting to note that many tables and commodes with marquetry on them from France in the eighteenth century utilized this same pattern.

A more recent historical note is that former President Dwight D. Eisenhower recalled that as a child he cut out diamond patches for his Mother, and then later remembered sleeping under a quilt of this design.¹

There are various names assigned to it by the references. Finley calls it "Box Quilt", "Pandora's Box" and "The Heavenly Steps";² Hall and Kretsinger³ say that it is "Cube Work" or "Baby Blocks" and McKim⁴ calls it "Babys Blocks". Brightbill calls it "Tumbling Blocks" and suggests that this is a good pattern to use for a boy's room.

White⁶ says that it is also called "Tea Chest" and that if care is used in shading the colors of the blocks it can be called "The Heavenly Steps".

Donor

Myra Robinson Studley Heirs, 1950.

Historical Significance

Information was not available.

-
1. Carlisle, Shelburne, p. 23.
 2. Finley, Patchwork Quilts, p. 61
 3. Hall and Kretsinger, Patchwork Quilts, p. 52.
 4. McKim, Patchwork Patterns, p. 115.
 5. Brightbill, Quilting, p. 71.
 6. White, Newark Quilts, p. 33.

A. HISTORY (cont.)By Whom Constructed

Not known

Year of Construction

The Museum label with the quilt states 1840-1900.

Location of Construction

Not known

B. TOP

Overall dimensions: sixty-three inches by sixty-five and one-half inches.

Design

The quilt is illusionary. On first looking at it, it looks as if it were composed of squares. But on a closer look the fabrics are cut into diamond shapes.

It appears that the sewer tried to have a row of identical fabrics in each row of blocks, but in some rows had to fill in with other fabrics.

There are twenty-one to twenty-eight stitches per inch on the blocks.

Fabrics

Silks and taffetas. Black silk diamond on the side of each block. Other fabrics used: green pin stripe, blue silk, brown plaid, purple silk brocade, green silk brocade, red silk brocade, purple stripe, iridescent green and blue silk, fleral stripes, black and blue stripes, purple and green brocade, coffee color silk, green and brown stripe, blue pin stripe, small brown check gingham, brown brocade, royal blue dots on blue background.

Signature

None

Border Design

Along the sides are a half a black diamond. If the pattern material ends on the edge three-fourths of a diamond is placed.

C. CONSTRUCTION

Quilting

By Whom

Not known

Pattern

None in the usual quilting terms. However, the backing is quilted with a navy blue thread. A pair of lines one-half inch apart with one and three-eighths of an inch between both vertical and horizontal lines form thirty-two squares across the back of the quilt. The squares next to the edge do not have a bow in the center, but on the inside rows bows are placed every other row vertically.

Stitches

Sixteen to seventeen stitches per inch.

How Edges Completed

Five eighths of an inch of purple bias ribbon is machine stitched on each side with red thread. This is only done on the top piece.

Fabrics similar to those used in the quilt are folded in triangles to form a "V" which measures one and one-fourth inches from the tip to the edge.

Type of Batting

It appears that cotton sheet batting is held to the backing by the navy thread and bows.

Backing

Bright red soft wool.

PLATE XI

BLOCKS OR CUBE WORK



Grand Rapids Public Museum #119483

WINDMILL AND WHIRLIGIG

A. HISTORY

Quilt Pattern

It appears that this quilt has two patterns: "Whirligig" and "Windmill". This was determined by comparing it with the various references: McKim's "Flutter Wheel";¹ Hall and Kretsinger's "Pin Wheel"² and "Windmill", "Water Wheel" and "Mill Wheel"³ and Finley's "Windmill"⁴. White⁵ lists all these patterns and has an illustration which is like the quilt in the study.

DONOR

Mrs. Elanche Fox Steenman
1046 Courtney N.E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan
December 17, 1959, gift

Historical Significance

Information was not available due to the recent death of the donor.

By Whom Constructed

Information was not available.

Year of Construction

Information was not available

Location of Construction

Information was not available.

-
1. McKim, Patchwork Patterns, p. 74.
 2. Hall and Kretsinger, Patchwork Quilts, p. 87, plate 6.
 3. *Ibid.*, p. 73, plate 8.
 4. Finley, Patchwork Quilts, p. 56.
 5. White, Newark Quilts, p. 16.

B. TOP

Overall dimensions: approximately fifty-two inches by sixty-four inches.

Design

There are ten blocks horizontally by twelve block vertically. Basically the "Windmill" pattern is in the darker fabrics. There are five diagonal rows of this pattern. The first one having four blocks; the next eight blocks; then ten blocks; next six blocks and the last a diagonal row of two blocks.

The blocks measure approximately four and five-eighths inches square.

Fabrics

Mainly a variety of cotton prints. The border is chints and the backing is a heavier cotton.

Signature

None

Border Design

There is a two and one-half inch border down the sides which has an arabesque like pattern on the plum color. On the ends between the side patterns is a border of a dark brown floral print which is one and one-fourth inches.

C. CONSTRUCTIONQuiltingBy whom

Not known

Pattern

Appears that each of the triangles have been outlined from the top and this forms a diamond pattern on the back. Each of the plain squares has quilting lines diagonally from each corner and then through the center from the top and the sides.

Thread

Black

C. CONSTRUCTION (cont.)**Quilting (cont.)****Stitches**

Six to seven per inch.

How Edges Completed

The top and back are turned under and held together with running stitches of brown thread. In some places the material has been gathered to meet the backing.

Type of Batting

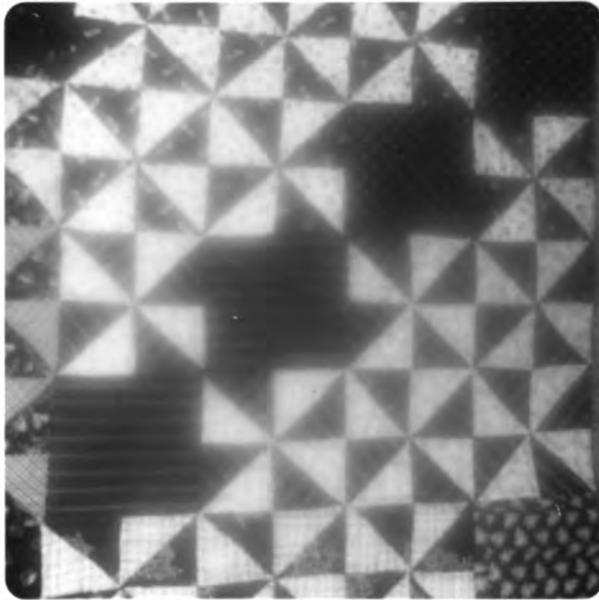
Thin cotton sheeting.

Backing

Purple and green stripe cotton with three leaf white pattern overlay.

PLATE XII

WINDMILL



Grand Rapids Public Museum #125023

CHURN DASH OR DOUBLE MONKEY WRENCH

A. HISTORY

Quilt Pattern

McKim calls this "Churn Dash"¹ which for her is a variety of a nine patch design. She says that this pattern makes a block nine inches square.

Hall and Kretzinger have a pattern "Churn Dash"² but it is different from the quilt and McKim's. Hall and Kretzinger's "Double Monkey Wrench"³ looks like the Museum's quilt. They also say this pattern is called "Loveknot", "Hole in the Barn Door", "Puss in the Corner", "Shoe Fly", "Lincoln's Platform" and "Sherman's March".

Finley also calls this "Double Monkey Wrench"⁴ and says that it is a nine patch design. Her "Churn Dash" is a four patch design.

Donor

Mrs. Blanche Fox Steeman
1046 Courtney N.E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan
December 17, 1959, gift

Historical Significance

Information was not available due to the recent death of the donor.

By Whom Constructed

Information was not available

-
1. Mc Kim, Patchwork Patterns, p. 121.
 2. Hall and Kretzinger, Patchwork Quilts, p. 70, plate 9.
 3. Ibid., p. 94, plate 11.
 4. Finley, Patchwork Quilts, p. 80.

A. HISTORY (cont.)Year of Construction

Information was not available

Location of Construction

Information was not available

B. TOP

Overall dimensions: approximately one hundred four inches by eighty-one inches.

Design

Across the first row is a block of three horizontal stripes which alternate with a block of pink and white squares that are arranged with three squares across and three down within the block. There are five striped blocks and four blocks of the nine little squares across one row.

On the next row the pattern of "Churn Dash" is placed above the block with the horizontal stripes. The pattern block alternates with a block of vertical stripes which is above the block with the little squares. There are five blocks of the pattern and four blocks of the vertical stripes across this row.

These two rows alternate on the quilt top.

In total there are six rows of the pattern and vertical stripes alternating with seven rows of the horizontal stripes and small square blocks.

The blocks are approximately seven and half inches by eight inches.

Fabrics

Bright red and pink cotton and a paler red and pink print. On the border are a few pieces of small pink and white check cotton gingham suggesting that the person did not have enough of the original print to complete the quilt.

White muslin blocks and thin white muslin for backing.

Signature

None

B. TOP (cont.)Border Design

On the two ends there is just the one-fourth inch white muslin from the backing as finishing. On the sides a long strip of material is adjacent to the pattern block and three small squares are along the side of the horizontal stripe block. Brightbill calls this a pieced border.¹

C. CONSTRUCTION (cont.)QuiltingBy Whom

Not known

Pattern

From the back the outside edges of the "Monkey Wrench" pattern can be seen. The rest of the quilting appears to be vertical lines one and one-half inches to two and one-fourth inches apart. Also the pattern forms one and five-eighths inch blocks.

Thread

White

Stitches

Five to six stitches per inch. Running stitches. Uniform and the lines are straighter than some quilts with more stitches per inch.

How Edges Completed

Backing is turned under one-fourth inch on the top (in places this widens to one-half inch).

Type of Batting

Appears to be thin cotton batting. Although there are places where it is thicker.

Backing

Light weight white muslin.

1. Brightbill, Quilting, p. 46.

PLATE XIII

CHURN DASH OR DOUBLE MONKEY WRENCH



Grand Rapids Public Museum #125824

CHERRY BASKET

A. HISTORY

Quilt Pattern

Hall and Kretsinger's "Bread Basket"¹ pattern is perhaps the closest to this pattern, but the top of their basket only has three triangles. The Museum quilt has five triangles with three being red and two white. Their "Cherry Basket"² looks more like the quilt as it has the curved handle, but this one has one more row of triangles than the quilt.

McKim's "Cherry Basket"³ appears to be the closest to the Museum quilt as it has an arched appliqued handle and the base consists of two triangles. McKim's basket however has an extra row of triangles at the top.

There are numerous basket patterns. But one way of distinguishing which is the pattern name is as follows: the arrangement of the triangles; whether the base of the basket is made of two triangles as this quilt is or of a solid piece of material; whether the handle is square or rounded; whether the handle is appliqued as this one is pieced and finally what the basket contains---flowers, fruit or if it is without anything extra.

Donor

Mrs. Burt Van Tassell
113 Fourth Avenue
Big Rapids, Michigan
October 11, 1957, gift

Historical Significance

Information was not available

-
1. Hall and Kretsinger, Patchwork Quilts, p. 126, plate 6.
 2. Ibid., plate 14.
 3. McKim, Patchwork Patterns, p. 32.

A. HISTORY (cont.)By Whom Constructed

Donor's Mother

Year of Construction

1890

Location of Construction

Grand Rapids, Michigan

B. TOP

Overall dimensions: sixty-nine and one-half inches by eighty-five inches.

Design

The top consists of a "Cherry Basket" pattern of red and white material. There are five basket pattern squares across the quilt and six basket squares vertically. Between each of the squares are lengths of the same cherry red fabric. These strips are two and one-fourth inches wide and the strips on the length of the quilt run the complete length. The strips on the horizontal are just the length of the top of each quilt block. These are hand sewn to the quilt top.

The pattern block measures approximately eleven inches square. This is divided diagonally. On the top part has been appliqued the red basket handle. On the bottom part the basket has been pieced together from red triangles and white triangles. Then the two half blocks have been pieced together.

The whipstitching on the basket handle is about ten stitches per inch.

Fabrics

The donor said that the red material was called Turkey Red and was purchased from a store, C.D. Carpenter, which is now out of business. The white is cotton.

Signature

None

Border Design

None as such. The red strip is around all the sides.

C. CONSTRUCTIONQuiltingBy Whom

Not known, but is different from the person who made the top.

Pattern

Overall diagonal lines about three-fourths an inch apart.

Thread

White

Stitches

Running stitches approximately seven stitches per inch.

How Edges Completed

White muslin seamed to the top and then turned under and whipped stitched to the back. Corners are rounded.

Type of Batting

Probably a single layer of cotton sheeting.

Backing

White muslin

PLATE XIV

CHERRY BASKET



Grand Rapids Public Museum #123901

CHAPTER V

CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING MUSEUM QUALITY QUILTS

There may be numerous reasons for a museum accepting a quilt. In some cases it is just a repository. In others the museum is noted for its textile or quilt collection and thus would have established some guidelines.

Some museums leave the acceptance of quilts to their Director or to their Board of Directors. Others have curators who determine by their own judgment or by established policies.

This writer could envision some guidelines such as: whether the quilt was of interest historically to the museum; whether this is the only quilt in the collection and would be an example of folk art; whether the quilt commemorated a special event, or was from the family of a famous person in the area. Also whether the quilt were an example of a popular pattern from the area.

Various museums which had well known quilt collections and other museums which were thought to have a collection of quilts were contacted.

Colonial Williamsburg does not accept items made after 1800, therefore the date and whether the quilt was truly representative of the period in which Williamsburg first flourished would be one of their deciding factors.

Among some of the criteria Henry Ford Museum uses is whether there is a need in the existing collection. They "try to represent as many different types of 18th and 19th century textile handcraft as possible, drawing upon as many geographical areas as possible in order to demonstrate regional variation."¹

Most of the museums consider whether the offered quilt is a duplication of one already in their collection. They also consider: age, condition, quality, workmanship, place of origin, quality of design, rarity and sometimes color. A gift of a quilt which is not in good enough condition for exhibiting might be accepted with the understanding that it would become part of the Museum's study collection.² "If the quilt is being offered for sale, is the price what is known as [sic] 'a fair market price?'"³

Concerning the workmanship and construction of the quilt one should remember that many of the quilts were made under dire circumstances and that each quilt should be considered for its own history. Many of the early quilts were undoubtedly made in haste as protection against the winter's chill. Later women had more leisure time and quilt making was more of a hobby. The quilter could almost "measure" every stitch.

Many of the books about quilting are written by women who are experts themselves and who would naturally be more aware of construction techniques. Unless this is a quilt judging contest this writer does not feel that one should be too harsh in their judgment of the workmanship

1. Letter from Melinda Y. Frazier, Curator of Textiles and Costume, Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village, Dearborn, Michigan; December 31, 1969.

2. Letter from Thomas Kyle, Curator, Decorative Arts; The Newark Museum, Newark, New Jersey, February 5, 1970.

3. Ibid.

outstanding workmanship. Of course, if this were a museum which is known for its outstanding quilt collection one would expect to find fine workmanship on display or else a good reason for exhibiting a quilt which was of mediocre workmanship.

The excellent quilters were very careful in cutting their pieces. This could be another criteria as one could measure the pieces and note whether they varied in size.

Carlisle² said that whenever seaming was done with curved lines, infinite patience was required. Therefore, this should be brought to the attention of the public when this type of quilt is on display (that it required more care than a quilt of simple construction such as a one patch variety).

A well planned quilt is described as: "the border should sustain the pattern and not overpower it. The central color motif of the quilt should be repeated in the border. Turning the corner is a good test of the skill of the quilter as it should be mitred."³

Sometimes a quilt contains interesting or rare fabrics and this would be another reason for keeping it in a museum collection.

If several quilts are available, the museum could use skill in making the quilt another deciding factor.

1. Thomas H. Ormsbee, Know Your Heirlooms, (New York: The McBride Company, 1957), p. 119.

2. Carlisle, Shelburne, p. 14.

3. Brightbill, Quilting, p. 43.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Fourteen pieced quilts were examined in the Grand Rapids Public Museum to determine their pieced and quilting pattern names; whether there was any historical significance attached to the quilt; the approximate date and location of construction. The donor's names were known from the "donor's book".

Two donor's were contacted personally. In each instance they gave further information about the use of the quilt, but not about the construction. One quilt was traced to one of the early settlers in Kent County and the other quilt was of interest in that it had been used in an early Chautauqua in Michigan.

Unfortunately the donor of four of the quilts in the study (and several others in the collection) had recently passed away. This clearly shows the urgency for recording information while it is still available.

Two donors could not be reached by telephone so a letter was sent. One donor was not listed in the phone book but had given sufficient information to the museum when they donated the quilt that a direct contact was not needed. Four donors were not listed in the current phone book and letters were sent to their last known address with questions and a self addressed, stamped envelope. It was hoped that the letters would be forwarded to them. Three letters were returned "Unknown" and the

fourth a niece answered for an elderly aunt.

One quilt was included in the study which was donated by the heirs because the pattern was an example of a popular quilt pattern and it was the only one in the collection. The date of construction was also known from the donor's book.

The construction techniques of all the quilts were essentially the same in that most of the quilts had been quilted with white thread except the dark quilts which were quilted with dark thread. A running stitch was used on all quilts. It is interesting to note that two quilts had the square set on the diagonal so they appeared diamond shaped.

In summary one could say that the Grand Rapids Public Museum has the nucleus of an outstanding quilt collection. This writer was particularly pleased that there was a "Le Moyne Star" pattern in the collection as this is the basis of so many other quilt patterns.

In determining the criteria by which a museum might accept donations for a quilt to their collection many considerations are possible. The writer contacted museums with known quilt collections¹ as to what they used for their criteria. Their curators listed such guidelines as: whether it was a donation or gift; whether the quilt was a duplication of one in the existing collection; if it would be a significant addition to their collection; condition; age; workmanship; design; rarity and historical value. If the quilt were in poor condition one of the museums contacted might consider accepting it for their study collection. A museum with a speciality such as a time span naturally has some guide lines. A total

1. Shelburne Museum, Shelburne, Vermont; The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois; Henry Ford Museum, Dearborn, Michigan; Newark Museum, Newark, New Jersey; Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, New York; Denver Art Museum, Denver, Colorado and the Cooper Union Museum, New York City.

of fifteen museums were contacted and all replied with concrete answers.

Recommendations

Although the Grand Rapids Public Museum does have a wide variety of quilt patterns this writer hopes that in the future someone will donate a "Double Wedding Ring" and one of the "Irish Chain" quilts as these were very popular patterns throughout the United States. Also there was a period when people basted material over papers (such as love letters and copy book papers) and it would be desirable to have a representation of this in the collection.

Originally the writer was going to suggest that if the future plans were to enable more students to study the textile collection at the Grand Rapids Public Museum that it might help to preserve the quilts by displaying them in frames similar to the rug frames which the Shelburne Museum uses. However, in writing to the Curator of the quilt collection in that museum it was learned that there are limitations to using the frames. Sometimes quilts must be folded in order to fit the standard sized frames and the quilts must also be stapled to the background to hold them in place.

As the museum does have quilt patterns available to the public it would be interesting to know how many quilts have been made from these patterns. Perhaps it would be interesting to conduct a survey similar to the one conducted at the University of Georgia.¹

This writer feels that one "crazy" quilt, if properly selected, would make a fascinating textile study.

1. Virginia Lee Fledger, "Documentary Survey of Quilts and Quilt Making in the Area of Athens, Georgia", Unpublished Master's Problem, University of Georgia, June, 1966.

If one is observant they can see quilt patterns in all forms of art in the past and present. For example, quilt patterns have been seen in marquetry on French furniture of the eighteenth century. Currently quilt patterns can be seen in textile designs for both upholstery and clothing. Therefore, it would be interesting to trace the origin of some of the popular quilt patterns.

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CHAPTER VII

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APPENDIX A

INFORMATION IN THE DONOR'S BOOK GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC MUSEUM

Information obtained from the Grand Rapids Public Museum, November 6, 1969. There is also another book which has the donor's name. There are forty-five quilts in the cases and approximately six in the display case.

Case 1

120210

123053 applique, green and red on white ca. 1870

121890 orange design on white 1868

120211 crazy

123585 crazy

134270 crazy

128382 pieced

128383 pieced

128710 white with blue and red flowers and leaves

125824 white and red geometric

124250 patchwork made of some campaign ribbons

32616 patchwork

136270 patchwork

129012 patchwork

128384 made of small triangles

119483 silk 1840-1900

Case 2

118007 crazy quilt, 1875

114474 tester bed curtain

119310 white quilted on sewing machine 1870-75

114515 handmade 1810

121231 8 pointed star, diamond quilting

121233 white sateen variety patterns in quilting

Case 2 (cont.)

- 123054 red needlework on white ground each square made by different women and quilt finally assembled 1870.
- 123621 red and white oakleaf variant ca. 1882
- 123901 basket design red and white 1890
- 127040 red design on white
- 127041 red and some green design on white, 8 pointed
- 130196 log cabin
- 133619 red and white variant of cock's comb 1847-1935

Case 3

- 120744 quilt wide tan border "Borrow and Return" 1834
- 122752 crazy, probably child's blanket
- 125823 known by various names in different states
- 134469 patchwork 1895
- 139218 silk
- 128206 baby's blanket yellow and white, old
- 120897 pieced and tied ca. 1830
- 125820 crazy
- 125822 log cabin
- 125825 mixed design
- 126699 1850
- 136851 quilt top
- 124023 crazy quilt, slumber robe ca. 1890

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE LETTER OF INQUIRY TO DONORS OF QUILTS

Box 535
Grand Haven, Michigan 49417
February 10, 1970

Mrs. Robert W. Irwin
461 Fulton E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Dear Mrs. Irwin

In 1956 you donated a pair of star quilts to the Grand Rapids Public Museum. At the present time as part of a special project I am studying the pieced quilts in the Museum while doing graduate work at Michigan State University. Therefore, I would appreciate it if you could answer a few questions for me.

Quilts have so many different names. Thus far in the literature I have found that this is called "Le Moyne Star" or "Lemon Star", but wonder if you knew it by another name?

Could you tell me who made the top and whether the same person did the quilting? Also, the approximate date of construction and where it was made would be of interest to my study.

Finding quilts in pairs is unusual, therefore, I wonder if it were made for a special purpose?

Thanking you in advance for any information you will be able to mail me.

Sincerely

Patsy Lee Leaders

P.S. I am enclosing a self addressed, stamped envelope for your convenience.

APPENDIX C

SAMPLE OF FORM USED TO STUDY QUILTS

A. HISTORY:

Quilt Pattern:

A. HISTORY (cont.)

Donor

Historical Significance

By Whom Constructed

Year of Construction

Location of Construction

B. TOP

Design

Fabrics

Signature

Border Design

C. CONSTRUCTION

Size of Stitching

Quilting

By Whom

Pattern

Thread

Stitches

How Edges Completed

Type of Batting

Backing

Additional

APPENDIX D

SAMPLE OF LETTER SENT TO MUSEUMS

Box 535
Grand Haven, Michigan 49417
December 20, 1969

Boston Museum of Fine Arts
Boston
Massachusetts

Dear Sir

At the present time I am working on quilts in the Grand Rapids Public Museum as part of a special problem while working on my Master's degree at Michigan State University. Therefore, I am wondering if you have any printed information on the quilts in your collection.

Also is there any criteria by which you decide whether to accept quilts to your collection?

Thank you.

Sincerely

Patsy Lee Leaders

APPENDIX E
LETTERS OF REPLY FROM MUSEUMS



Henry Ford Museum AND Greenfield Village

DEARBORN, MICHIGAN

December 31, 1969

William Clay Ford, *President*
Ed A. Shelley, *Executive Director*

Miss Patsy Lee Leaders
Box 535
Grand Haven, Michigan

Dear Miss Leaders:

At this time there is no printed information available to the public concerning the quilts in the collections of the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village.

Quilts and other textile items offered to our museum by gift or sale are judged by the Curator in charge as well as an acquisitions committee of curators and administrators before acceptance. The judgment is based upon the strengths and needs of the existing collections--in other words, we do not generally accept duplicates of articles already here and we try to represent as many different types of 18th and 19th century textile handcraft as possible, drawing upon as many geographical areas as possible in order to demonstrate regional variation.

The quilts are generally accessible through me, although only about 10 or 12 are currently displayed in their entirety.

If you will write me stating the precise nature of your research, the types of quilts you especially want to see and a date you would wish to come down I will be happy to assist you in your work. I would be available during the regular work week, Monday through Friday, 9-5.

Sincerely,

Melinda Y. Frazier

Melinda Y. Frazier
Curator of Textiles and Costume

MF:a

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Attach: Brochure

February 5, 1970

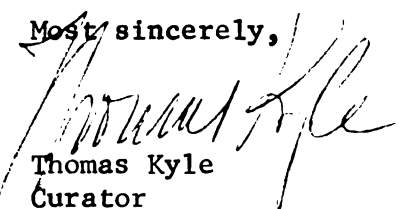
Miss Patsy Lee Leaders
Box 535
Grand Haven, Michigan 49417

Dear Miss Leaders:

In response to your recent letter inquiring if there is any criteria which we use in determining whether to accept quilts into our collection, the answer is yes. I have made a listing, which is enclosed, of the criteria which I would use. This, of course, would vary depending upon the curator, and so you must evaluate with this fact in mind.

I hope this information will be of assistance to you in your study.

Most sincerely,



Thomas Kyle
Curator
Decorative Arts

:rd
Enclosure

Criteria used for accepting quilts for collection in The Newark Museum:

1. Establish under what circumstances the quilt is being offered to the Museum for consideration as an addition to the collection.

If it is being offered as a gift, then the considerations will be slightly different than if it is being offered for sale. For example, a quilt being offered as a gift may not be of first quality or may not be in good enough condition to be exhibited; however, it may be accepted with the understanding that it will be part of the Museum's study collection.

2. Determine the material, age and the place of origin of the object. Does it seem to represent what it should in terms of technique and its quality, age of materials used, and quality of design? Is the condition such that it is worthy of consideration as part of either the permanent or study collection?

3. Determine whether this type of quilt is represented in the existing collection. If it is not represented, will this object be a significant addition to the collection? If it is represented, how does the quilt under consideration measure up in terms of design, technique and condition to what is already in the collection?

4. If the quilt is being offered for sale, is the price what is known as "a fair market price"?

TK
:rd

11

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