

DOCENT ARTIST/ARTWORK FACT SHEET – QUILTS

TYPE OF QUILT: ALBUM QUILT

DATING THE QUILT TYPE

In the first half of the 1800s autograph albums reached a height of popularity unknown today. By 1820 many a parlor table was graced by an album where guests would sign their names along with inspirational phrases. By the 1830s, magazines would print messages and poems to be included in autograph albums.

By 1840, new indelible inks were available that did not damage cloth. It was only natural that women would then take the autograph album a step further and create autographed quilts. The inscriptions on the early quilts frequently included poetry and dedications. Quilts made after the Civil War usually included only names and perhaps the city where the person lived.

Signature quilts were a true nineteenth century fad. The trend began in the early 1840s, surged through the 1850s, faded during the 1860s/70s, and enjoyed resurgence in the 1880s/90s. While the trend began on the eastern seaboard between Northern New Jersey and Maryland, it reached the greatest popularity in the Philadelphia and Baltimore areas.

During the 1840s, Baltimore was a prosperous seaport and the center of a growing textile industry. By 1850, it was the third largest city in the United States. The availability of an assortment of fabric and the existence of a group of high society women with time and money were the perfect setting for the development of album quilts. *Appliquéd* album quilts with elaborate floral, animal, patriotic, and fraternal motifs became the height of fashion. But Baltimore was not the only city where these beautiful appliquéd blocks were made. The style spread north to lower New England and west to Ohio before moving south to Virginia and the Carolinas. The earliest known examples are from 1840/41. Most of these early signature quilts were of the album or sampler variety, with the single pattern version not seen until about ten years later.

The initial hotbed of album quilts, Eastern Pennsylvania, Maryland and New Jersey, never really resumed an interest in these quilts after the civil war. The new popularity of these patterns was in the west, an area that had not participated in the first wave of the fad. Early album quilts found in these areas were brought there from the east and were not, in fact, made there.

Album quilts continue to be made today both inspired by historical patterns and using contemporary designs. An on-line search identified a number of pattern books and contemporary quilters.

DEFINING THE QUILT TYPE

Design

The quilts were based on block designs, but not patchwork. There are two distinct kinds of autograph quilts. Single pattern quilts are often referred to as friendship quilts while the more formal quilts made of different blocks are called sampler album quilts. Although both carried on the same tradition of signed remembrances, they were quite different. Sampler album quilts were made up of several unique intricately pieced or *appliquéd* blocks. A friendship quilt usually consisted of a simple block that could be quickly made from fabric scraps.

Books, textiles and even fine china were used as inspiration for the block designs. There were many women of German heritage in the Baltimore community and it is likely that German folk art had some influence on the designs used on these quilts. Examination of antique Baltimore Album quilts indicates that there were about three particularly talented designers in the area. Most likely, they developed patterns or kits that were bought by the women making these quilts. Some entire quilts appear to be made using these fine patterns. Simpler patterns were a result of cut paper designs and of course quilters with an artistic bent likely created their own more elaborate block designs. In some cases, one or more designer blocks were used in the middle of a quilt while the rest were designed by the quilter, perhaps a more economic way for middle class women to make one of these quilts.

Not all *appliqué* album quilts were signed and some were just signed with a few names. Many had names on most or all of the blocks. Often, all the names, dates and verses were written by one woman who was talented at calligraphy. These quilts were often inscribed with more than just signatures. Poems, bible verses and personal notes were all popular. Verses just for this purpose were published in the ladies magazines of the day.

Album quilts varied from region to region. For example, New York Album quilts had more white areas and smaller blocks than the Baltimore Album quilts. New Jersey Album quilts often incorporated a repeated block in a grid with a surrounding border. Western Pennsylvania and Ohio Album quilts are similar to the New York Album quilts, but they are more likely to maintain the classic red-green-pink color combinations.

The Baltimore Album quilts have certain design characteristics in common with the classic floral *appliqué* quilts: a botanical theme with a dominant red and green color scheme arranged as a grid with a border. The main difference is their exuberance of color and design.

Symbols and their meaning

Flowers, leaves, fruit, cornucopia, elaborately twined baskets and other symbols of goodwill, joy and fertility were popular themes. Many times the blocks depicted events of the time or events of the recipient's life. Sometimes boats, local emblems and symbols of Baltimore's political or social significance were included. Other popular design elements were birds, butterflies, landscapes, and patriotic designs. Pineapple designs were also found in many quilts as this was the symbol for hospitality.

The motifs on these quilts often referred to Baltimore's social, religious, or political organizations of the time, such as the Masonic organizations or the Methodist church. Also, many of the quilts were made for men and illustrated masculine motifs.

Baltimore Album quilts are regarded as the epitome of mid-nineteenth century quilts for their techniques, fabrics and pictorial images of Baltimore monuments, buildings, war heroes or prominent citizens.

Fabric

In the 1850s, Baltimore was a major center for commerce. Many fabrics were available to this area that was not available in other parts of the country. This may explain why these quilts sprang up in this area. The availability of many colors and prints were sure to be an inspiration for quilters of the time. Due to the amounts of different fabrics usually included in these quilts, they are a wonderful resource for viewing the fabrics available during that time.

Examining these fascinating quilts reveals more than just the patterns used, we also discover something about the quilter's lifestyle. The best of album quilts were not made with scraps, but with quality new fabric, indicating a degree of affluence. Sometimes dozens of different fabrics were included on one block. Yet, genealogy research of the names on album quilt blocks indicates that even middle class women found ways to make these lovely quilts.

Construction

The quilts were *appliquéd* and many had elaborate shashing as well, which incorporated design elements of the blocks. The background fabrics in these quilts were almost always white to allow for the design elements to stand out.

They were executed in stunningly detailed *appliqué* to form a number of blocks. The blocks used tiny pieces, such as baskets, stylized flowers, or cornucopias, to represent various floral and foliate motifs.

The *appliqué* album was the most popular style for some time, and many *appliqué* patterns trace their origins to this time and trend. Later quilts were often pieced patterns, such as the appropriately named album patch. Many of these patterns never survived the album craze and are rarely seen in any other quilts.

Process/Technique

The development of non-corrosive ink allowed the inscription of sentimental messages, leaving written legacies on the quilts. Signatures were often written with indelible ink, but sometimes they were embroidered. Occasionally, a single person with beautiful handwriting would inscribe all the signatures.

Social time with family and neighbors was a highlight in a woman's life. What could be more fun than gathering together to quilt? The women would add their fine stitching after the quilt top was pieced and the layers put together on a frame.

We tend to visualize a woman making and signing her block to be later sewn together into a friendship quilt. Although this was a common practice, there were other ways a friendship quilt could be created. Sometimes, a single person collected bits of fabric from others to make into a block and then signed the block with their name. Many quilts included only names of women, while other quilts included the names of children and men.

Friendship quilts took time to collect the fabric or blocks from each person, piece them together and quilt the layers. Individual blocks on a quilt may have been made over several years and not finished into a quilt until years later.

Research demonstrates that while women of all ages made blocks for these quilts, women in their twenties seem to have been most particularly involved. Although a few of these album quilts were made by one person, most were created by several women.

Where traditional floral *appliqué* is flat, the Baltimore style blocks may have flowers embellished. Where the flowers on traditional *appliqués* are conventional, the Baltimore style is more realistic and includes a wider range of flowers, plants and fruit, as well as a broader range of colors and fabrics.

Embroidery or fine ink sketches were sometimes used to add detail to the blocks. Initially, tiny cross-stitching was in vogue, but by the end of the nineteenth century, the chain stitch was more common.

These quilts received little wear. Some had thin or no batting, while others were not backed at all. It is obvious they were made to be used as decorative or as guest bed quilts.

Use

Album quilts were made and signed for a variety of special occasions: as gifts for a bride or groom, minister or minister's wife, town mayor, retiring teacher, special community member and even in memory of someone who had just passed away. A commemorative quilt dedicated to a soldier who died in the Mexican war might have several blocks portraying war and patriotism, while a captain of a ship may have a quilt with nautical motifs on it. A quilt with a block depicting deer hunting could have been presented as a coming of age or freedom quilt made for a young man. No matter how they were made, they all had the same purpose, to record memories of cherished friends and family members.

Also known as Presentation quilts, Baltimore Album quilts were often made to mark a special event. The blocks of the quilt were often made by different quilters and signed by each. Because these quilts were such cherished mementos, they were greatly cared for and rarely used. This is why we have many examples of these quilts in good condition today.

Occasionally, the quilt would have signatures of friends and family. These quilts served as a precious memory, not only to the women who stayed in one place all their life, but also for those who moved on to hardships on westward lands. Frequently, friends and relatives had only occasional letters to connect with each other. Many a lonely woman living out on an isolated homestead cherished her friendship quilt. It reminded her of the time when she lived among family and friends. In addition, illness and war took a dear one away forever. A name on a quilt became a precious remembrance of them.

General album quilts might not be as elegant as the Baltimore Album quilts, but they were an honor to receive and are represented in today's museums as Presentation quilts, Bride quilts, and Groom quilts. Some were even used in a way not seen these days; they were called "death quilts". As described in *Quilts in America*, Patsy and Myron Orlofsky's *Death Watch Quilt* (pg. 246) was made as a memorial to Eli Lilly by the family members while they sat beside his death bed. It even includes Eli Lilly's signature by the lyre on the quilt!

What, if any, role does this type play in the advancement of quilt design or technique.

Since the "Quilt Revival" beginning in the 1970s, quilters all over the world have been inspired by these quilts and the many books and course offerings about them. The maven of Baltimore quilts is Elly Sienkiewicz, who has an *Appliqué* Academy in Annapolis, MD. Sienkiewicz has authored a wide range of books on how to make Baltimore quilts and the techniques of floral embroidery used to embellish them.

BRESLER COLLECTION

One of the most important Bresler quilts is the *Baltimore Album Quilt*, c. 1852, made by Catherine Bell Hooper. It was documented in Dr. William Dunton's seminal book of 1946, *Old Quilt*.

There are a total of four album quilts in the Bresler Collection. They date from 1850 to 1870.
(See catalog for details.)

RESOURCES

The resources for this report were found on-line by searching "Album Quilts" on Google.
Following is a list of sites used:

www.womenfolk.com/historyofquilts/album.htm

www.straw.com/quilting/articles/baltimore.html

quilting.about.com/library/weekly/aa080597.htm

www.womenfolk.com/historyofquilts/friendship.htm

student.acu.edu/~ams96c/finalweb/album.html

www.tfaoi.com/aa/3aa/3aa573.htm

www.quiltersbee.com/qbqhsto.htm

Additional information is from a draft of material for the show catalog.

AUTHOR: Gail Light

DOCENT ARTIST/ARTWORK FACT SHEET – QUILTS

TYPE OF QUILT: *BRODERIE PERSE* QUILT (or Persian Embroidery, also known as Cut-Out Chintz *Appliqué*)

DATING THE QUILT TYPE

Broderie Perse quilts were popular in America in the first half of the 1800s. Center medallion quilts were made in the 1820s and 1830s. The album quilts were made later. This style of quilt disappears about the time of the Civil War.

DEFINING THE QUILT TYPE

Broderie Perse quilts are made by cutting out sections from printed chintz panels and applying the pieces to a foundation cloth with fine embroidery stitches. The chintz panels were imported from Europe and there were a limited number (about 35) of panel designs available. Quilt makers used great ingenuity in placing their cut-out pieces on the foundation so as to make an original design from the chintz sections. Because the chintz panels were imported, *Broderie Perse* quilts were generally made by affluent members of society and often were saved for the “best” occasions, rather than subjected to daily use. Especially in the South, a day of quilting by the ladies was often followed by an evening of dining, dancing and merry-making.

BRESLER COLLECTION

The Bresler Collection includes several *appliqué* quilts. The *Broderie Perse* quilt is a framed crib quilt, 38 x 45.5 inches. The quilt has cotton chintz cut-outs and wool embroidery. It is bordered in a pieced, saw tooth design with a knotted fringe on three sides. The quilting is all-over parallel lines. The vase of flowers in the center of this quilt appears on eight other quilts located by Merikay Waldvogel. The Bresler quilt may have come from Kentucky. The other quilts with the same design have been attributed to Maryland, Georgia, South Carolina and Virginia, which indicates the distribution of the chintz fabric in America.

PERMANENT COLLECTION

There is a center medallion quilt in the Mint Museum collection. It is a very large quilt, made by Sally Roxanna Caldwell of Charlotte in 1833. The chintz used in this quilt is in the same colors as the Crib Quilt from the Bresler collection, but is a different design. Six other medallion quilts made in Charlotte are at the Charlotte Museum of History.

RESOURCES

References used in this research included North Carolina Quilts, Chapter 2, in the MMCD reference library, and the item file on the Sally Roxanna Caldwell quilt at MMA. In addition, many of the quilt books in the MMCD library mention *Broderie Perse* quilts. The draft of Merikay Waldvogel’s catalog for the exhibition was very helpful.

AUTHOR: Sue Phillips

DOCENT ARTIST/ARTWORK FACT SHEET – QUILTS

TYPE OF QUILT: CRAZY QUILT

DATING THE QUILT TYPE

Crazy quilts date from the late 1870s with their peak of popularity in the 1880s. They continued to be the rage until approximately 1910. Many of the crazy quilts done during the Victorian era are sadly, rapidly deteriorating due to the silk fabric of that time being embedded with metals to give them weight.

Controversy exists over the beginnings of the crazy quilt. At one time people attributed its earliest forms to the first colonists of the new world. Blankets and coverlets were patched with recycled clothing and bedding out of necessity. Worn parts were cut away and useful pieces of fabric were inserted in a random pattern. This theory is no longer considered likely. Currently the origin of the crazy quilt is attributed to the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exposition. At this exhibit, the Japanese Pavilion exposed American women to art that was not symmetrical: crazed ceramics with its random, broken appearance; beautiful fans; and opulent embroidery that included birds, insects and flowers.

DEFINING THE QUILT TYPE

Crazy quilts were typically done as parlor throws or piano scarves. The fabrics were initially stitched over cotton muslin foundation squares to provide body for the many flimsy fabrics used. The embellishments would be added and then the intricate embroidery stitches would be put in place over the seams of the patched together scraps. They were seldomly quilted because of the weight of the fabrics and embellishments. The crazy quilt was most often given a backing fabric (typically black sateen) that was tacked into place with discreetly knotted black cotton that would not interfere with the design of the quilt top. The quilt was typically bound with a black or dark color of velveteen. Crazy quilts could also include embroidered verses, and information about family events. Frequently the quilter would embroider a spider on it's web for good luck. Sometimes small pictures were even painted on the fabric!

To people of the Victorian time period, the word "crazy" meant not only "wild," but also "broken or cracked into splinters." This is also a good description of many of the various triangles and odd shaped pieces in the random patterns of the crazy quilt. The crazy quilt was not only a testament to a woman's needlework abilities but also a status symbol. The intricate and time consuming piecing of expensive fabrics (velvets, silks and brocades); elaborate embroidery (often showing a sampler of stitches including herringbone, feather, fly, scroll, fern, lazy daisy and chain stitches); and novelty embellishments (cigar band wrappers, lace, ribbons, buttons and commemorative emblems) indicated that the woman had a great deal of leisure time, and so, a prosperous household.

RESOURCES

Crazy for Quilts by Jean Ann Eitel Country Collectibles Magazine
Crazy Quilt History: A Victorian Craze by Anne Johnson
Crazy Quilts by Betty Pillsbury in collaboration with Rita Vainius
Crazy Quilting from Quiltersbee.com

AUTHOR: Anna Monroe

DOCENT ARTIST/ARTWORK FACT SHEET – QUILTS

TYPE OF QUILT: EARLY PIECED QUILTS: 1830-1870

DATING THE QUILT TYPE

Contrary to popular myth, pieced quilts were not common in America during the 1700s and early 1800s. It was not until after 1840, when woven fabrics were available commercially in America, that women had the time to create pieced quilts. Once quilting became possible and popular, it served as an important social function for women. In rural areas, families frequently lived far apart. Getting together to share piecing patterns and quilt designs was a welcome relief from their solitary life. In towns, the quilting bee provided another opportunity for social interaction among women.

Today we date these early quilts by studying their fabrics, piecing designs, stitching patterns, batting and backing. The method of dating that requires the most scholarship and yields the most accuracy is the dating of fabrics. Methods of dyeing and printing fabric evolved over centuries. Fabric designs were originally painted or stenciled on fabrics. Later, fabrics were block printed, roller printed by hand, and eventually roller printed by machines. Once the manufacturing processes were mastered, inexpensive printed fabrics were available in many parts of the country. Thus, quilt fabrics can be dated by their pattern designs and by the method of manufacturing.

Applying lasting color to fabric proved to be quite difficult, and the process evolved over centuries. Early dyes were gleaned from plants and animals. Information about the type and source of dye assists in dating quilts. The challenges for the home dyer and eventually for the manufacturer were two-fold: how to make the color penetrate the cloth and how to make the applied color last. The visible colors, the methods of applying those colors, and the degree of color-fastness are all considered in dating quilts.

Stitching patterns evolved as well. The style, patterns, and intricacy of stitching can be dated from comparison with well-documented quilts. Other aspects of quilts used for dating include the materials used for filling and backing the quilt. These materials may help pinpoint not only the date the quilt was made but the location as well.

DEFINING THE QUILT TYPE

Pieced quilts are defined as quilt tops that have been created by sewing pieces of fabric together to create a design. The pieces of fabric may be quite large or very, very small. There are examples of pieced quilts with thousands of individual fabric pieces sewn into the design. Piecing may be used in combination with appliqué or embroidery.

BRESLER COLLECTION

The Bresler Collection contains several early pieced quilts:

The *Compass and Bulls Eye* (2001.38.14) from 1860 combines pieced work, appliqué, and an elaborate stitching pattern.

The *Evening Star* (2001.38.6) quilt from 1845 contains roller printed cottons.

The *Nine Patch with Stencil* (2000.62.5) from 1830 contains roller printed cottons and stencil motifs, which are quite rare.

The *Hexagon Mosaic Quilt* (2000.62.4) is from 1845. This technique was made to mimic mosaic tile designs. A template was cut from tin or heavy paper. From that pattern, paper shapes and then fabric shapes were cut. The fabric was folded over the paper pattern and the individual

shapes were sewn together using overhand stitches. The effect of the small pieces and striking color combinations could be dazzling.

RESOURCES

Kiracofe, Roderick. *The American Quilt*. New York: Clarkson Potter, 1993.

Bowman, Doris M. *American Quilts*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991.

AUTHOR: Ann Guild

DOCENT ARTIST/ARTWORK FACT SHEET – QUILTS

TYPE OF QUILT: INDIGO & WHITE QUILT

DATING THE QUILT TYPE

Indigo blue and white designs were introduced around the 1730s.

These blue and white quilts continued to be popular into the late 1890s. As a result, many have survived to today.

Historically, the Drunkard's Path pattern was utilized in many African American quilts. This pattern often served to remind those on the run to move east to west, much in the way a drunken man staggers, during their escape. Since blue and white were also the colors of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), the Drunkard's Path pattern was one of the designs used to promote this cause.

DEFINING THE QUILT TYPE

Design

Indigo fabrics appear in five types of American quilts: calimanco (all-wool whole-cloth quilts...glazed with heat and pressure), blue resist (whole cloth quilts, often used as center panels), penciled calicoes (often appearing in *broderie-perce* quilts in the late 1700's;), toiles (whole cloth quilts copperplate printed thus producing the fine line toile designs); and Chemical-discharge roller-printed (developed in the late 18th century and was first successfully used for indigo about 1826).

Of these, only the calimanco would have used yarn that was dyed and hand-woven in early American homes. Another reason indigo blue and white designs were so popular was that indigo was a superior dye; the color was true and fast.

Characteristics

Early quilts were dyed by painting indigo mixed with chemicals directly on the fabric. The intense color of Indigo provided high contrast color for the earth-tones used in quilts of the day, which were often whole cloth quilts.

Symbols & Meaning

Drunkard's Path pattern may have been one of the "signal" blocks used to help escaping slaves find routes and safe houses; their idea being: "never travel in a straight line". Other codes to slaves were the flying geese, and crossroads. Even the knotting had a signal relating to the distance needed to travel.

Drunkard's Path pattern was used in the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) movement as a symbol for their banners and raffle quilts. Other blocks used were the "T Block" and the Temperance Goblet block. Since the colors of the WCTU were blue and white, these quilts are often seen in blues and white.

BRESLER COLLECTION

Many of the symbols and the use of indigo and white as the theme appear in many of the Bresler Collection quilts.

Indigo fabrics having both practical and aesthetic appeal play a significant role in American quilts, past, present and future.

PERMANENT COLLECTION

I am sure as we review the collection we will note many of the patterns and the use of indigo appear throughout the quilt collection.

RESOURCES

Internet research, most valuable was the indigo project. Listed are some of their sources:

Carter Houck. The Quilt Encyclopedia Illustrated

Florence Harvey Pettit, America's Indigo Blues

Dorothy Miller "A Personal Exploration of Indigo"

AUTHOR: Marilyn Dix

DOCENT ARTIST/ARTWORK FACT SHEET – QUILTS

TYPE OF QUILT: LOG CABIN QUILT

DATING THE QUILT TYPE

The log cabin pattern is thought of as the most American style of all quilts. Most sources refer to early examples made during or right after the Civil War. Tradition relates the design to Abe Lincoln, who lived in a log cabin as a boy.

One log cabin quilt has been documented dating back to the 1820s. It was made by an Englishwoman named Mary Morgan, who emigrated to the American South. There are references in British books to the effect that the log cabin pattern originated in Britain. These sources assert that the pattern was handed down within a single Scottish family since 1745. The early design was thought to represent strip-farmed land in 17th century Scotland, the red center representing the sun shining on the fields.

All agree that the log cabin pattern has been immensely popular since the late 19th Century, through the Great Depression, and into the 1950s. It is still a great favorite today.

DEFINING THE QUILT TYPE

Two styles of quilts were emblematic of the Victorian era in America: the log cabin quilt and the crazy quilt. The log cabin quilt's geometric precision paved the way for the apparent random arrangement of fabric on the crazy quilt. When the log cabin quilt was becoming popular, sewing machines were emerging as a time saving device and were often used to stitch the strips together. Fabric was precious and every scrap left over from garment construction was saved. Old clothes were torn apart and used to make quilts. The log cabin design was favored because it did not require large squares but used small strips of fabric. Both pioneer women and city women used the Log Cabin design; the former with wool, cotton and rougher fabrics; the latter with fine dress fabric remnants.

The use of luxurious fabrics such as rich wool challis, silk and velvet became common in the 1870s. Silk became more plentiful and less expensive in the late 19th Century. Log cabin quilts can be found made from strips of silk as narrow as ¼" to ½". It was easier to manipulate the slippery silk in narrow strips than in larger pieces. A very rare type of log cabin quilt from the 1880s was called "Canadian or American Patchwork", made with silk ribbons. In the 20th Century, silk and wool were out of favor and cotton prints were most often used. Rural women often recycled feed or grain sacks as quilt pieces or backing. The younger girls would remove all stitching and wash and bleach the sacks to remove the lettering before the sacks were cut and used in quilts, including the log cabin quilt.

Log cabin quilts were featured in the cultural life of the late 19th Century. They were displayed at fairs and raffled off to raise funds for the needy families of ex-Confederate soldiers or, later, for women's suffrage. Stories exist linking the log cabin quilt to the Underground Railroad during the Civil War. The center of each quilt block is usually red, signifying the fire on the hearth of the cabin. A Log Cabin quilt with a black center hanging in the window of a house was said to mean that it was a Safe House.

The log cabin design was named for the construction of pioneer houses on the American frontier. Logs were laid horizontally around the center of the building in the same way that strips of fabric

were laid around the center square, which signified the hearth. Pattern construction was simple and the log cabin was often used to teach younger girls the technique of strip piecing.

Log cabin quilt blocks could be made using the foundation method. A piece of backing fabric, such as muslin, was cut the size of the block. The center square of the block, often red, was sewed to the muslin foundation with its wrong side on the right side of the backing. Then each strip was sewed, right side down, to the foundation and the center square or to the foundation and the previously stitched strip, in turn. Each strip was pressed back before the next strip was stitched in place. Blocks could also be made without the foundation, starting with the center square and stitching each strip around the center and around the outside of the previously stitched strips, as the construction progressed outward. This method worked better with wider strips (1 ½" or wider). Since it was difficult to quilt through all the seams in a log cabin quilt, they were often tied. Use of the foundation method added a layer of fabric, so batting was sometimes omitted.

The classic log cabin block divides diagonally down the middle, with darker fabrics used for one half and lighter fabrics for the other half of the pattern. The blocks can then be arranged into a secondary pattern, depending on how the light and dark halves of the different blocks are brought together. Three different secondary log cabin designs are: barn raising, also called sunshine & shadow, with blocks arranged with concentric bands of diamond shaped color; streak of lightning has blocks arranged with strong zig zag lines of color; straight furrow has blocks arranged with diagonal bands of color.

Other variations of the log cabin design are achieved by sewing the strips around the center differently, for example:

- Courthouse Steps – strips are sewn on opposite sides of the center square, in turn, instead of around the center.
- Chimneys & Cornerstones – little squares are added to the end of each strip to make a diagonal line of squares within each block.
- Chevron or Corner Log Cabin – the beginning square is not in the middle but in one corner of the block.
- Pineapple (also called Windmill Blades) – strips are sewn across the corners (45-degree angles) in addition to around the center square (parallel), creating an 8-sided figure.
- Asymmetrical or Corner Log Cabin – the strips are different sizes, half narrow, half wider.
- Other shapes, such as diamonds, hexagons, pentagons or rectangles, can be placed in the center to create additional variations on the Log Cabin design.

The log cabin pattern became popular with both the Amish and the Mennonite quiltmakers 10-20 years after its general popularity. They used vibrant solid colored wools and cottons to construct stunning quilts using the log Cabin patterns and its many variations.

RESOURCES

Gordon, Maggie McCormick. *The Ultimate Quilting Book*. London: Kiln House Books, 1999.
Houck, Carter. *The Quilt Encyclopedia Illustrated*. New York, Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1991.
Kiracofe, Roderick. *The American Quilt: A History of Cloth and Comfort, 1750-1950*. New York: Clarkson Potter, 1993.
Peck, Amelia. *American Quilts & Coverlets in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*. New York: MMA: Dutton Studio Books, 1990.

AUTHOR: Elizabeth Allen

DOCENT ARTIST/ARTWORK FACT SHEET – QUILTS

TYPE OF QUILT: MID 19TH CENTURY *APPLIQUÉ* QUILT, (or “Princess Feather” Quilt)

DATING THE QUILT TYPE

The Princess Feather pattern was a popular *appliqué* pattern in the 19th and even into the 20th century.

DEFINING THE QUILT TYPE

The Princess Feather pattern is mainly used as a quilting stitch. It is also an easy way to fill a large area with color.

It is said that this design originated from the time when ladies in waiting were presented to the Prince of England. As custom, the ladies wore a feather hat. Thus, the design is also referred to as “Prince’s Feather”. The characteristics are that of a plume. An alternate name for Princess Feather was Wild Cucumber.

Appliqué work consists of small fabric shapes stitched by hand or machine to a background fabric to form a design.

During 1834-1859, *appliqué* album samplers became very popular. They were used in borders and made in patterns of flowers and leaves, but Princess Feather was not usually found in album samplers, since it was usually used as a single pattern.

Princess Feather is traditionally executed in red on a white background, but was also made in other colors. In North Carolina, it was most noticeable in Catawba, Cleveland, Gaston and Lincoln counties.

The sewing machine was introduced in the mid-19th century and for many, this simplified the making of quilts. Around 1850, textiles started being factory based. Quilting then became widespread. Before this period, patterns were not widely available.

(Did you know that in 1873 William Morris revived chintz and block printing techniques.)

RESOURCES

Barbara Brackman - “Encyclopedia of Pieced Quilt Patterns”

Yvonne McKhin - “The Collector’s Dictionary of Quilt Names and Patterns”

“Encyclopedia of Applique

Better Homes & Gardens - “American Patchwork and Quilting”

Eanes, Kirkpatrick, etc. - “North Carolina Quilts”

Willow Ann Soltow - “Quilting the World Over”

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DOCENT ARTIST/ARTWORK FACT SHEET – QUILTS

TYPE OF QUILT: MID 19TH CENTURY *APPLIQUÉ* QUILT, Red & Green Floral

DATING THE QUILT TYPE

Between 1850 and 1875, aniline dyes were introduced which meant a new range of colors available for weaving and printing textiles. With the expansion of the railroad, more women wanted to buy fabrics and sewing machines became household fixtures. Quilts began to show more and more machine stitching. By 1861, with the Civil War and westward expansion at its peak, there was an increased need for bedding.

General economic well-being between 1840-60 meant more leisure time and time to support the arts. The Hudson River School of painting, Greek Revival architecture and Victorian style of decoration for individual objects and interiors were in vogue.

Abolitionists expressed new points through quilts (more women than men belonged to antislavery societies and used their needlework to raise funds for the cause). Familiar quilt patterns changed names: Job's Tears to Slave Chain, Jacobs Ladder to Underground railroad, North Star was named after the star that guided slaves to freedom. Some quilts were embellished with "May the points of our needles prick the slave owner's conscience" (Sara Grimke, *The American Quilt*).

During the Civil War, more than 20,000 Ladies Aid Societies were formed, 2/3 in the North. Regional social/patriotic events called Great Sanitary Fairs, popular from 1863-65, featured handmade and donated quilts. Crazy quilts were especially prized at these fairs; Northern patriots prominently displayed the American flag. Quilts went to battlefields and were used at home to raise funds for everything from gunboats to bandages. With the gradual change from an agrarian to urban society, the economic importance of children changed. Families began caring more about their children's emotional and psychological development and that led to a growing toy industry. Little girls often created doll quilts made with the parallel patterns used in bigger quilts. Sometimes the girls even made cradle quilts for infant brothers or sisters.

Southern women originated relief efforts for the War, providing essential clothing and bedding. Resources were limited due to the embargo against the South in 1861 though so makeshift "Confederate" quilts were made with homespun lined in newspapers. After the War, quilting became more closely allied with salvage art as sharecroppers' wives used feed sacks.

DEFINING THE QUILT TYPE

Red and Green Floral Appliqué

During the decades around the time of the Civil War, floral quilts were often appliquéd and pieced in red and green on a white background; this color combination was popular until the end of the century. Appliqué was used as an art form with one motif repeated again and again, and the quality of the work was usually far superior to patchwork. Many red and green quilts were made in New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio.

Raised *appliqué* was often used for details but it was unusual to find such an elaborate design for an entire work. Subtle additions to some of the red and green quilts included centers of flowers embroidered to create the flowers' pistils, and deliberately placed appliqué stitches were used on leaves and vine borders. Other stitches emulate tiny barbs like those found on rose leaves and stems. Some flowers show the use of layering; a large solid flower center will lie upon a tiny print that has been sewn over solid red and green fabrics below. Four-block appliqué style first

appeared in American quilts during the mid-19th century and was a popular style for red and green quilts.

Design

Template patchwork (Victorian silk) was offered in ladies magazines in America and England during the 1850s. Design schemes of a field with four large floral motifs and vine-like borders appeared over the period from 1850-80. "Quilts made between 1850 and 1875 were characterized by an experimental spirit," (Page 132, *The American Quilt*).

In the last half of the 19th century, the one color combination that surpassed all others in popularity was indigo blue and white probably because of the durability of dyes and the popular blue and white toiles de Jouy (Page 127, *The American Quilt*).

Quilt makers tried just about everything because of the new availability of goods. Almost every style of quilt today was developed during this general period, though names for patterns differed from state to state.

Symbols and their meaning

One popular motif for the *Broderie Perse* (Persian embroidery) style was the tree of life depicting a large tree filled with a variety of species of both flowers and birds. By the last part of the 19th century, Americans were also producing chintz. As the style became more and more popular, some fabrics were produced specifically to be cut apart and *appliquéd*. These included an urn or vase full of flowers as a central motif.

Eagles (loyalty, strength, power and patriotism) were popular from Vermont to Ohio around 1850. The bald eagle was native only to North America and was incorporated in the great seal of the United States. Often eagles were portrayed holding an olive leaf or branch in its beak. The olive plant as a symbol of peace was first documented in Greece.

Pine trees, especially the white pine, were an important source for shipbuilding and are often identified with the landscape of northern New England; today, Maine still uses a pine tree symbol in its state flag. Trees often grew up to 80 feet, making it ideal for masts of great sailing ships. These trees, often composed of primarily triangle shapes, were another design that women incorporated into their quilts from 1860-80. Western settlers took cuttings from rose bushes, herbs, fruit and pine trees with them; planting a tree signified home and the tree became a common quilt symbol. Oak leaves represented strength while roses and tulips may declare love and daisies sometimes denoted farewell.

A number of floral adaptations were used during the mid 19th century. Simplified flowers are seen on decorative arts of the period such as tinware and furniture. Understanding the symbolic meaning of flowers was thought to show a person's culture and social standing during the mid 19th century.

Tulips and narcissus were popular in American nurseries as were dahlias; lilies symbolized purity. As exotic flowers became popular in garden beds, they also began to appear in quilts. The illustrated gardening magazines of the time featured motifs and layouts that could be used in quilting; the floral and garden-design illustrations were simple line drawings easily adapted for appliqué quilt pieces. Both the Whig Rose and another quilt pattern used by Democrats incorporate undulating borders of leaves and blossoms that were characteristic of the period and quite indistinguishable! These quilts were usually red and green on white as were the Rose of

Sharon quilts (1850-70). They were designed as symmetrical, well-ordered wholes, like their contemporary flower gardens.

Roses (symbol of faith for early Christians, romance and beauty in 18th century and popular design for wallpaper and fabrics in 19th) have been universal favorites in both gardens and quilts. Today's over 100 known species of roses (over 13,000 varieties) were propagated from fewer than ten species.

Baltimore Album quilts and *Broderie Perse* quilts followed the flower garden design called a *gardenesque* style, one in which each tree and flower bed must be able to stand alone in its artistic merit but also work together to create a unified whole. The height of their popularity was between 1840 and 1860. Baskets of flowers were another common motif in quilts and gardens. Album quilts were almost like an autograph book with names or initials of the person who made or presented it to commemorate special occasions. The religious, mournful and moralistic concerns recorded by schoolgirl samplers and embroidered pictures began to appear on these album quilts.

Berries and grapes are common elements of appliqué quilts. They may symbolize abundance or, as in still-life paintings, aging: after maturity or ripeness, death follows. They may also refer to the making of wine.

Hexagons were popular in American early 19th century quilts, possibly because of the transmission of English paper-tracing techniques to America: fabric is gathered around a paper template and then each hexagon is carefully sewn together to form a larger pattern. They became popular in the later part of the century as a response to the Moorish or Turkish style of home decorating. Magazines showed hexagon quilts as an appropriate addition to exotically decorated rooms.

The last quarter of the 19th century saw a dramatic change in preferred design moving to more naturalistic, asymmetrical formats over formal, symmetrical ones. This may have been due to the influence of the Japanese exhibit at the 1876 Centennial Exhibition. After that crazy quilts became popular patterns.

Feather/wreath patterns

Appliqué pieces were usually attached with a nearly invisible whipstitch but many began to be further embellished with a delicate feather pattern, especially on Album quilts. Feather wreaths were used as background quilting and to provide a unifying element; they were a way to demonstrate excellent quilting skills. Feather shapes also show up as horizontal sashing between floral blocks. Partial feather wreaths sometimes emerge from an inner border to form half circles that fill triangular spaces around the outside of the Mexican rose pattern.

Wreaths are a common design in many quilt appliqué patterns and in the decorative arts. With a long history dating back to 15th and 16th centuries, wreaths were made of roses and were worn at weddings, festivals and pageants. Carved wooden wreaths were popular architectural elements in the 19th century.

Fabric

Cotton had grown in popularity for use in clothing and household textiles in both the US and Europe by the early 1800s. Cotton was readily available in Baltimore, an important seaport and home to a number of textile mills. Quilters had a wide range of cotton prints to choose from locally as well as those from England and France.

An English scientist developed the first synthetic dye in 1856. Other dyes soon followed and offered quilters a larger color palette. Colorfast greens were difficult to produce. Green fabric was usually dyed using a two-step process because no grass green dyes exist in nature. Either a blue dye was used with yellow or a yellow dye was applied over blue to create green colors. These green colors are seen today in the uneven fading in antique quilts where both methods were used.

Turkey red was used often during this period. The name was believed originated in the Turkish Ottoman Empire. But today we know that the prized, colorfast red cotton fabrics came from India rather than Turkey. By the mid 18th century, the dyeing process used to achieve the bright red cottons was being implemented in Europe and became more readily available.

Quilts from southeastern Pennsylvania often used unusual colors (colored background especially) during the mid to late 18th century; quilt makers from that area were usually of German descent. Crazy quilts used scraps of velvets, silks and brocade.

Construction

The earliest *appliqué* quilts of the period cut design elements from chintz and imported Oriental calicoes and *appliquéd* to white cotton or linen spreads. Women were eager to use these lovely prints but the yardage was scarce. Men would pick up a yard of this precious cloth when on business in Charleston, Baltimore or New York. The women would take these "Persian" prints and *appliqué* the flowers and birds to homespun fabric. The result was called a "one-yard quilt".

Quilt makers used hand *appliqué* techniques rather than piecing during the 19th century but the work was increasingly done by machine, especially borders and binding. The Midwestern Amish quilts often combined these techniques. (Household clothes were machine sewed during this period but elaborate quilts were hand stitched. Historians estimate that a calico dress made by hand took 6 ½ hours but by machine only 57 minutes.)

Piecing techniques, while well suited for geometric patterns, are more difficult with curved patterns such as the floral designs. Rounded shapes require great skill in easing the fabric around the shape and retaining the flat surface. Pieced quilts with structurally identical blocks and no outside border were popular in New England starting around 1840.

RESOURCES

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Websites:

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(quilts from Smithsonian)
Quilt and women's history books. Home.earthlink.net/~halsteadpub/
Sewing machine and quilters in 19thc. www.antiquequilt dating.com/sewmachine.html
Broderie Perse. www.womenfolk.com/historyofquilts/broderieperse.htm

DOCENT ARTIST/ARTWORK FACT SHEET – QUILTS

TYPE OF QUILT: WHITEWORK QUILT, (or “Marseilles Work” Quilt because the technique originated in France)

DATING THE QUILT TYPE

General Dates of Origin: Since the 1600s

Whitework, which is sometimes called Marseilles work, was/is an intricately quilted, corded, and stuffed textile, which includes bed quilts, petticoats and waistcoats, as well as yardage, produced in southern France since the 1600s. Marseilles quilting was taught as fancy needlework to privileged young ladies in the 1700s and was also imitated by professional embroiderers in England and India.

In the 1760s, a process was patented to create woven imitations of Marseilles work. It made use of a traditional draw loom, operated by two workers, to reproduce the effect of hand quilting. Loom quilting was further improved in the early 1800s with the adaptation of the punched card Jacquard mechanism to replace the second weaver. With this improvement, machine-made Marseilles quilts became affordable for many families.

French pieces tend to be more intricate than American.

Place within History of Quilt-Making

By the 1830s, British and American (mostly New England) textile mills were producing millions of yards of inexpensive fabrics every year. With this abundance of textiles, household scrap bags yielded an ever-growing selection of colorful cotton prints for pieced quilts.

Once most families could afford printed calicoes, upper-class urban women began to view calico quilts as ugly and unfashionable. Increasingly, pieced calico prints became a tradition of the countryside, in rural communities that held many of their own opinions on what was attractive and “in style.” Although calico patchwork quilts had fallen out of favor with the fashionable elite, whole cloth quilts made of chintz (glazed cotton) were accepted as practical and attractive.

Textile printing firms recognized that pieced calico quilts remained popular, even though fashionable writers disliked them. By the early 19th century, they were printing cotton fabrics with designs that imitated patchwork. This whole cloth quilt is made of dark chintz, just as the genteel advice books recommended yet it looks as if it was pieced from scraps of calico!

Inspired by Marseilles bed covers (see above), all white, hand-stitched quilts were greatly admired from the early 19th century through the 1860s. In contrast to pieced calico quilts, whitework quilts reflected the high style “Neoclassical” taste of affluent, generally urban, households, with its more subdued palette of colors. Though one quilter might occasionally practice both styles of quilting, whitework and calico reflected the cultural divide between urban and rural fashion.

DEFINING THE QUILT TYPE

Characteristics

In whitework quilting, white-fabric pieces can be embellished with white embroidery; candle wicking (embroidering or weaving using heavy thread to create three dimensional designs); and/or trapunto or cording (decorative quilting techniques in which batting or cord is inserted through the backing to create puffed designs).

Design

There is no particular one design that relates to whiteworking, but one might expect the design used to be flawless in execution. American pieces tend to be more open and have less needlework than French, where every inch is quilted.

Fabric

Consists of white cotton, white thread, and all white materials.

Construction

See above characteristics. On the short note – the needlework is really what whitework is all about.

Process/Technique

Standard quilting processes. Many of the more collectible pieces will have their maker's names embroidered on them, along with the date and sometimes even the town which the piece was made.

Note: *Should you decide to collect:*

As whitework quilts became more popular in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, English manufacturers began mimicking their look in less expensive, machine-made coverlets – made puffy to look like hand quilting – and calling the covers “Marseilles spreads”. By the 1900’s the spreads were available everywhere. To determine whether a piece is a genuine quilt or a Marseilles spread, which is far less valuable, follow the tips from dealer Stella Rubin (author of Miller’s *Treasure or Not? How to Compare & Value American Quilts*, 2001):

Inspect the edges. A loomed piece will have a woven selvage and a rolled-edge top and bottom; a handmade piece won’t.

Check the back. On Marseilles spreads, the reverse side will have a sunken version of the raised pattern on the front. In real trapunto, by contrast, the back is done in fabric with a slightly courser weave, and bits of batting may even poke through.

Look for labels. Not surprisingly, many manufactured pieces have company labels sewn onto the edge or woven in the head or foot. Value is determined by its condition, design, vintage, and provenance.

Use. Early quilts including, of course, bedclothes, but also dresser scarves, pillow shams, collars, bibs and other domestic items.

What, if any, role does this type play in the advancement of quilt design or technique:

In this writer’s opinion, whitework allows one to focus clearly on the design and composition of the quilt, and on the skill of the quilt maker because there is no color to interfere with its look.

BRESLER COLLECTION

There is an example in the collection, a *Marseilles Whole Cloth*, from 1800-1825. It is an example of an early whole cloth quilt. Whole cloth quilts were of one solid color and made of “calamanco,” a fine-glazed wood cloth, with the quilting stitches and patterns providing the decorative content. Other whole cloth quilts utilized patterned fabric and, therefore, were of a more utilitarian nature, serving only to unite the quilt top with the filling and the backing.

Another type of whole cloth quilt was known as “whitework,” where both the top and the backing would have been made of white cotton or linen. In the Neoclassical American textile world this celebration of classical purity manifested itself in the production of all-white quilts in which the decorative element was provided by the use of intricate stitching and padding that transformed a flat area of cloth into a low-relief. Techniques such as cording, trapunto and candlewicking or roving were employed to achieve this effect. Cording and trapunto work involve working from the wrong side of a quilt, onto which a layer of open weave fabric has been fixed: cord and stuffing were introduced between the two layers, thereby

raising these areas above the background of the quilt. In this way elaborate patterns were created without the need of introducing any color. As the 19th century progressed, what we now know as "blockwork" increased in popularity to the extent that wholecloth and cut-out chintz quilts became a rarity.

PERMANENT COLLECTION

Whiteworking quilts relate to the permanent collection in terms of adding historical value to our Textile collection.

RESOURCES

<http://www.embroiderersguild.org.uk/stitch/infocus>

http://www.osv.org/pages/Quilt_Index.html

Northern Comfort: New England's Early Quilts - Old Sturbridge Village Main Page

an online exhibit of early New England quilting. Old Sturbridge Village is proud to hold one of the nation's most extensive collections of early New England quilts, with nearly 250 pieces dating from the late 18th to mid-19th centuries.

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