

Quiltscapes

December 6, 2008 - May 17, 2009

Historic quilts are among the few types of everyday objects that, by virtue of their artistic qualities, survive to join museum collections as American folk and decorative art. Their allure reaches beyond graphic quality to reveal stories of family, community and work lives. Forty-three artful quilts from the permanent collection of the Eastern Washington State Historical Society echo our collective Northwest experience and reflect generations of quilt traditions used to create objects of beauty and function.



1. LANDSCAPE

c. 1900

Maker: Unknown

Museum Collection 2122.3

Heavy with blanket filling, this utilitarian quilt was abandoned in a cellar trunk. To our modern eyes its design might evoke an aerial landscape of the region's patchwork of farmland. But perhaps this quiltscape's charm is simply happenstance, the result of a quilter's need for bedding to keep the hired man from freezing in the bunkhouse.

CENTRAL MEDALLION DESIGNS 1800 - 1850

Artfully composed of small pieces, the central medallion format dominated early 19th century quilt designs.

The central star, called Lone Star or Bethlehem Star, was one of the most spectacular and popular patterns. Many fabrics found in period quilts like this one are of English origin, since American industry could not yet supply all of the country's demand for cotton fabrics.



2. LONE STAR c. 1820

Maker: Minerva Hellen Wilson

Museum Collection 2094.1

Minerva was only 32 years old when she died in 1839 leaving 4 children. This quilt, a legacy of design and elegant needlework, was handed to her eldest son and passed through two more generations before its donation to the Museum. Minerva may have developed such sophisticated design and sewing skills because both her father and her husband were hat makers. *The unexpected chrome yellow in the center makes the various shades of red pop and is testimony to Minerva's eye for color and texture.*

BLOCK FORMAT QUILTS 1850s - 1880s

By the second half of the 19th century, American industry was providing colorfully printed fabrics in abundance. Block format quilts became popular, and people with means could purchase enough fabric to make color-themed quilts like this “red and green” rose appliqué example.



3. ROSE APPLIQUÉ c. 1850

Maker: Unknown

Museum Collection 1744.3

The outer blocks in this quilt appear to be the same, but close examination reveals that the appliqué placement is slightly different on each block and the stitching style varies. These inconsistencies suggest that more than one person made blocks for this quilt. *Did friends get together to make a gift quilt? Notice how the central block is much more intricate than the rest.*

FANCY QUILTS 1880s - 1920s

By the 1880s machine-manufactured bedding was widely available to average households. Women's magazines helped popularize the fancy quilt art form, encouraging women to create small decorative quilts for the parlor using fancy silk scraps and ribbons. Often commemorative and advertising ribbons were incorporated.



4. ALASKA-YUKON-PACIFIC EXPOSITION c. 1909

Maker: Caroline A. MacKenzie MacKinnon

Museum Collection 2173.2

Built on the future site of the University of Washington, the 1909 Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition celebrated the West. The university today still uses the last two standing exposition buildings. Caroline MacKinnon collected daily ribbons and possibly entry tickets and sewed them into this banner. *How might Carolyn have collected so many ribbons? With a five year old daughter to care for, would she have attended the fair this many times? Did she have a job at the fair and acquire the ribbons each day?*

QUILT REVIVALS 1920s, 1930s and 1970s

Quilt historians Marie Webster and Ruth Finley sparked a revival of quilt making in the 1920s. During the Great Depression, magazines and newspapers encouraged women to provide handmade bedding using fabric scraps. And in 1976, America's official bicentennial emblem appeared in national women's magazines as a quilt pattern, again renewing interest in quilting as an American folk art form.

5. JEFFERSON SCHOOL BICENTENNIAL c. 1976

Maker/teacher: Linda Andrews

Museum Collection 2586.1

Students of the 6th Grade embroidered blocks and brought fabric that was incorporated into this red, white and blue Bicentennial quilt. Many of blocks include patriotic motifs and sayings with the students' names. *Was Bill Swartz the only boy to embroider a motif on his block?*



6. SUNBURST c. 1830

Maker: Unknown

Museum Collection 2158.1

Made by her grandmother and aunts in the New York area, Helen Dittmer's inherited radiating star quilt was a prize winner at many fairs. Helen carried the quilt to the Northwest, arriving in 1959 in Spokane where her husband William managed Kaiser Aluminum & Chemical Corp. After his death she moved to Minnesota where she died at the age of 98.



7. ENGLISH MOSAIC TOP c. 1820

Maker: Susan Eusden

Museum Collection 2208



Susan Eusden, born in England about 1838, probably brought her quilt top with her when she and her new husband immigrated in 1869. They homesteaded on Lost Creek in Platte County, Nebraska, where she died in 1910. Passed to her daughter Jane, the top came to the Museum from Susan's great-granddaughters. *Notice that Susan used pieces of old correspondence to form the hexagons.*



8. LONE STAR c. 1860

Maker: Unknown

Museum Collection 2191.1

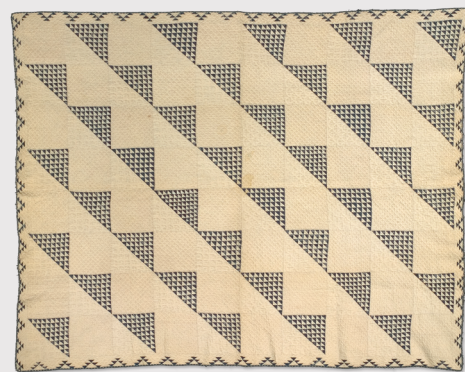
This Lone Star quilt's donor stated that it "was made by one of the first three white women to come to Stevens County." That county was formed in 1864, and the fabrics match the 1860s era. The first Stevens County census in 1870 counted 733 people, and very few of them were white women. *Notice the modernistic zigzag lines appliquéd in the corners.*

9. BIRDS IN THE AIR Incribed: 5th November 1846

Maker: Sarah Glover

Museum Collection 3922.1

Sarah Koentz was only 16 years old when she married Philip Glover November 13, 1819 in St. Charles County, Missouri. Thirty years later, the Glovers sold their farm, packed up eleven children and this quilt, and drove the Oregon Trail to settle east of Salem. The Glovers' son James founded Spokane in 1871. *Count the 91 triangles in every nine-inch block!*



10. HONEYBEE c. 1890

Maker: Sarah Chambers

Museum Collection 1601



This quilt was mistakenly dated circa 1850 because of its trapunto, appliqué and quilting techniques. But researchers found no record of its maker in that era. A closer look at its fabrics proved a later date; after 1880 American manufacturers were cutting costs by producing an inferior cotton fabric with lower thread count. With this new information, researchers found Sarah, who lived and died in Medina County, Ohio. She never had children of her own and probably made this quilt as a wedding gift for her grand-niece Charlotte, who came to Spokane about 1915.

11. NINE PATCH c. 1890

Inscribed: Mary Jane Wirt, Born October 12, 1851

Museum Collection 2362.16

Normally, a cradle quilt was marked with a baby's name. But this quilt's "cadet" blue fabric was not readily available until about 1900, decades after its 1851 inscription. Mary Jane Wirt Freter is buried in the Moran Prairie Cemetery south of Spokane, and her heirs found the quilt in a trunk. *Perhaps she made the quilt to commemorate the loss of her two young sons?*





12. CROSBY ALBUM c. 1860

Maker: Julia Stevens Crosby

Museum Collection 3352.1

This is one of three known, nearly identical quilts that Julia Crosby, who lived in Stevens Mill, Vermont, made for her children in 1860. Her son John Quincy Adams Crosby carried this personalized quilt with him to Cedar Falls, Iowa. The inscriptions on each block form his family tree, including his siblings and cousins, and the family tree of his wife Julia Sawyer. The quilt was passed from generation to generation until Julia's great-great-granddaughter donated it to the Museum. *Julia had five children. Did she make two more quilts that are yet to be found?*

13. LONE STAR c. 1860 -1870

Maker: Unknown

Museum Collection 1918.9

Imagine creating a Lone Star quilt in the mid-1800s. The 60-degree diamond shape may have been borrowed from a friend or carefully drawn on precious recycled letters or a rare piece of cardboard. Likely, the pattern changed shape with repeated tracings, giving irregularity to the finished quilt. After the day's chores were finished, women hand-pieced quilts in their laps by kerosene lamplight. *Today, Omnigrid rulers, rotary cutters, and the technique of piecing strip sets with sewing machines speeds quilt assembly and helps ensure that each piece of each design is uniform.*



14. ALBUM c. 1860 -1880

Maker: Unknown

Museum Collection 2971.1

Although Spokane's Griffith family donated this quilt, they did not recognize any of its inscribed names. Persistent researchers located many of the names in a three-county area of New York State in the 1850 census. Quilts like this one (in which all blocks are the same pattern and each block is signed) are called friendship quilts. These were made most often for special presentations to wedding couples or as send-offs for migrating families. *Methodists traditionally made presentation quilts for their ministers. Researching the minister in the Griffith family tree might lead to this quilt's origin. Find another documented Methodist presentation quilt in this exhibit.*

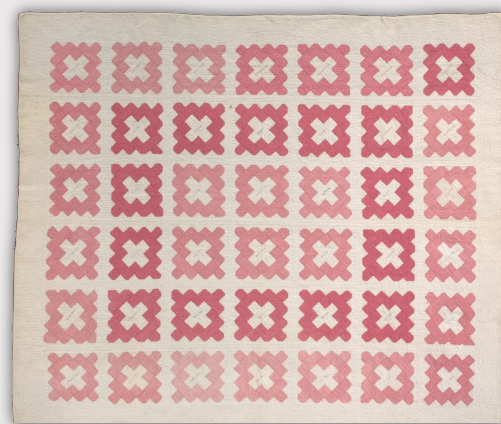


15. ROYAL ALBUM c. 1868

Maker: Unknown

Museum Collection 2192.1

The prominent Methodist family names inscribed on this quilt are young girls, ages 6 to 15, plus two older women who may have assembled the quilt. Its fabrics date to the late 1860s, when these girls were living in Cowlitz County, Washington Territory and Columbia County, Oregon. Reverend H.J.B. Royal had served this area as circuit preacher from 1855 to 1857, and very likely received this quilt in 1868 on the occasion of his second marriage to Emma Cornell.



16. FEATHERED STAR 1875 and 1930

Maker: Alice Belknap and Elizabeth Ruth Clizer Cross

Museum Collection 3006.1

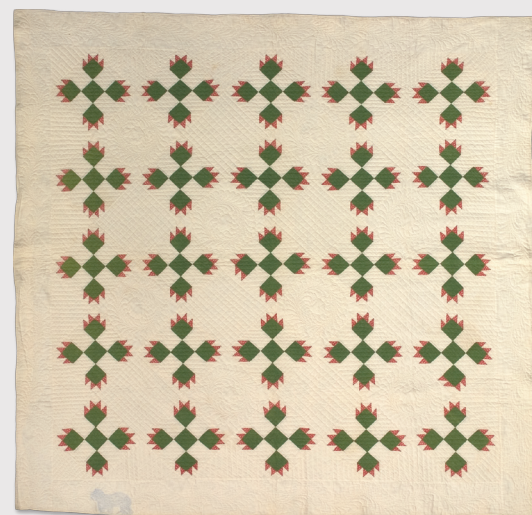
Alice was only 16 years old when she made her Feathered Star quilt! The complicated technique of positioning the little triangles around the star points didn't seem to deter the already-accomplished seamstress. Made at a time when red and green quilts were popular, the red cotton remains vibrant, probably dyed with colorfast Turkey Red. Alice's top was quilted years later by her sister-in-law, Elizabeth Ruth Clizer Cross.

17. DUCKS FOOT c. 1880

Maker: Jane Jacoby

Museum Collection 1533.1

When Dr. Pratt donated this quilt to the Museum, he wrote that it was made by his mother's mother's sister! That woman has proved to be Jane Jacoby who lived in Henry County, Indiana and married in the 1870s. Widowed with one child, she survived by living with relatives and making quilts to pay for her keep. She made this one for her nephew, Dr. Orville Pratt, who became Superintendent of Spokane Schools in 1915. Pratt was instrumental in forming the retired teachers' association, and wrote numerous articles on education and Spokane history.



18. DOUBLE NINE PATCH c. 1867

Maker: Mary A. Griffith McConnell

Museum Collection 3964.1

Mary A. Griffith organized tiny, one-half inch, hand-pieced scraps to create her quilt. Perhaps she made it in preparation for her marriage to James M. McConnell on October 9, 1867 in Schuler County, Illinois. The couple moved to Idaho, then Oregon and eventually homesteaded near Colfax, Washington. They raised 8 children, and Mary died in October 1901.



19. SEVEN SISTERS Inscribed: Josie Age 14 Wint 1876 Wash T.

Maker: possibly Josie Hamilton

Museum Collection 2572.1



Hand-pieced from a scrap bag, the tiny triangles include a fabric printed “1876” in celebration of the nation’s Centennial. Much of the stitching is very child-like. The indigo print was manufactured as early as the 1860s. However the lighter “cadet” blue dates closer to 1900. Records that came with the quilt acquisition indicate that “it was probably made by Josie Hamilton who was killed by Indians near Kamiah, Washington Territory in 1878.” No cemetery or census record or local inquiries have confirmed her life. *This quilt is filled with mystery.*

Who was Josie? Were the blocks assembled as a memorial? If you have a Josie Hamilton in your family tradition, tell us about her.



20. TREE OF LIFE c. 1870 -1890

Maker: Unknown

Museum Collection 2143.1

Representing the mid-19th century fashion for red and green quilts, these fabrics illustrate the problems that American chemists faced in developing dyes for cloth. If a quilter purchased two different lots of green, one might have faded to the soft beige shown here, while the other stayed a lovely sage color. Later in the century, mordants provided a stable and permanent green dye. *This mirror symmetry design is assembled so that the trees on the edges point up when the quilt is on a bed. Notice that most of the symmetrical quilts in this exhibit are based on a radial symmetry scheme. If those quilts were folded into quarters, the resulting layers of pattern would align.*

21. CIGARETTE SILKS c. 1900 -1920

Maker: Unknown

Museum Collection 3747.1

Around 1900 tobacco companies created cigarettes and packaged them with silk premiums to lure women to become smokers. Advertisers suggested using these “silkies” to make “useful items for decorating the home.” Ladies at a brothel in Walla Walla made this quilt around 1910. *Do you suppose they collected silkies from customers or from their own smoking habits? There is one piece in this quilt that isn't a silkie. Why do you suppose this piece is different from all the others?*



22. CIGAR BAND TOP c. 1910

Maker: Anna Brazeau

Museum Collection 2962.339

When she married Dr. Stephen Brazeau in 1906 in Asotin, Washington, Anna Williams was 37 and raising a 12-year old daughter from a previous marriage. Encouraged by popular advertising, she fashioned a colorful home decoration made from her husband's silk cigar bands, carefully embroidering along the vertical rows. But she never finished. *Although the Williams family employed a maid, do you suppose that Anna's free time disappeared when, at age 41, she gave birth to another daughter?*



23. LOG CABIN – BROKEN DISHES c. 1890

Maker: Katie Gifford

Museum Collection 2133.1

Katie displayed her artistic flare with this Log Cabin quilt made in New York as a gift for her sister's marriage. Using narrow strips of silk set in a complicated Broken Dishes pattern, she carefully fashioned light and dark fabrics to create a striped appearance. The treasured quilt migrated to Kansas City and to Spokane with the family until Katie's grand niece donated the quilt to the Museum. Katie herself came west and died in the Spokane area after 1910. *Can you find the Broken Dishes within this complicated design?*





24. CRAZY WITH RED BORDER c. 1890

Maker: Katie Gifford

Museum Collection 2133.2

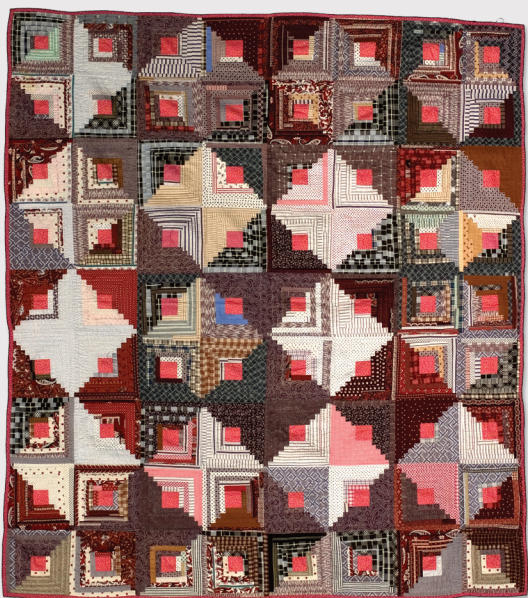
Katie Gifford was an artist, who used traditional crazy patchwork to create this stunning quilt. *Can you imagine piecing the random shapes onto a backing on your lap and arranging them in such a manner that rivals Cubism, the emerging art movement? Notice how the wheels seem to roll into one another and yet roll toward the edges, only to be stopped by a dominant red border.*

25. CRAZY WITH TRIANGLE BORDER c. 1890

Maker: Katie Gifford

Museum Collection 2133.3

Another Katie Gifford graphic artwork! Magazine and popular culture encouraged women of the 1890s to fulfill themselves creatively by expressing with their hands artistic and craft projects to decorate their homes. Katie's wheel shapes create an inner motion that seems to reverse on itself in the sharply pointed triangles along the edge. *Notice the Chinese print in the outside border.*



26. LOG CABIN Inscribed: May 15th 1881

Maker: Catherine Bush Gwin

Museum Collection 2149.2

After raising 10 children on a 200-acre farm in Washington County, Iowa, Catherine pieced this cotton Log Cabin quilt. The family moved to central Iowa in 1885, and Catherine continued to make a variety of quilts before she died in Keota in 1914. Catherine's daughter brought these quilts to the Northwest and eventually two were donated to the Museum.



27. LOG CABIN - STRAIGHT FURROWS

c. 1890

Maker: Jeannie Creighton

Museum Collection 1120.1

Jeannie Creighton had plenty of time and a ready supply of silks and ribbons to hand-piece this graphic Log Cabin design. In 1890 the Creightons opened a very successful dry goods store in Moscow, Idaho, the same year that the University of Idaho began offering classes. Creighton's store remained in business until 2005!

28. LOG CABIN - COURT HOUSE STEPS

c. 1900

Maker: Unknown

Museum Collection 2173.1

The maker of this artistic Log Cabin variation certainly had an intuitive ability with design and color. The maker chose men's and women's woolen suit fabrics and necktie silks. The light colors sparkle with luminosity against the black nighttime atmosphere. *Do you think that the pattern looks more like Court House steps or chains of colorful lanterns?*



29. LOG CABIN - STRAIGHT SET c. 1920

Maker: Mrs. Hoyt

Museum Collection 1483.6

Magazine advertisements and catalogs provided the home maker with "bundles" of silks and velvets for her artistic endeavors. Made for the front room, these silk quilts were advertised "to keep women's hands busy and calm her nervousness." Mrs. Hoyt combined many colorful silks on a black background to produce graphic effect.





30. PINEAPPLE c. 1910 and 1930

Maker: Matilda Anderson and Johanna Anderson
Museum Collection 2393

A single woman, working at Spokane's Crescent Store fur department about 1910, Matilda Anderson carefully saved colorful remnants from the coat linings that she replaced. After piecing the swirling pineapple shapes, she asked her sister-in-law Johanna to finish the quilt. Tying the front to back in a hidden method, Johanna completed the piece. Matilda then gave it to her.

31. CRAZY c. 1920

Maker: Ida Walker

Museum Collection 2212

Ida Walker won a 1st place blue ribbon at the 1920 Spokane Interstate Fair in the "Crazy in Silk" category. Widowed with a son to raise, Ida struggled to keep food on the table, even selling extra milk from her cow to provide necessities. However, it did not hamper Ida's ability to create with her needle. *Note the initials and the entwined rings in the pattern - a symbol of familial togetherness at that time.*



32. CRAZY KIMONO c. 1927

Maker: Minta Taylor Ireland

Museum Collection 3746.1

Minta made this kimono as a surprise 1927 graduation present for her niece Dorothy Wann of LaCrosse, Washington. Dorothy had admired one that Minta made for her own daughter, saying it was the most elegant thing she had ever seen. The gown is made of scraps that Minta saved from her dressmaking shop in Corvallis, Oregon.

33. CRAZY c. 1890

Maker: Eudora Parker Meade

Museum Collection 4127.1

Trained in the skills and traditions of Southern womanhood, 25-year-old Eudora crafted exquisite needlework. Covered with embroidery, the silk and velvet quilt also has many unique designs. Eudora came to Spokane in 1887 to join her husband who was mining near the Canadian border. They lived in the wild for a time, but eventually returned to Spokane where Eudora worked at a millinery and dressmaking shop. The sewing scraps made their way into her quilt. She died in Spokane in 1922. *Notice the tiny three dimensional parasols and the "M" among the florals.*

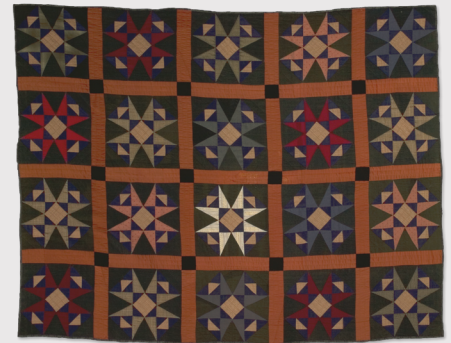


34. FIFTY-FOUR FORTY OR FIGHT c. 1900

Maker: Jesse and Ruth Brockway

Museum Collection 2962.154

Made shortly before 1900 this pattern features an eye-catching light star surrounded by darker shaded stars. The bright orange setting strips invite each star to stand alone. Sisters Jesse and Ruth used wool and heavy cotton clothing scraps to piece this graphic work of art. Women named and used patterns to express their political views. This pattern represents the turmoil between Britain and the United States over the Oregon Territory boundary, now the northern boundary of Washington State. An 1846 treaty settled on the 49th parallel precisely established by a survey in 1860. *When you step back to admire the overall effect of the pieced squares and triangles, are you surprised at the geometric form your eyes detect?*

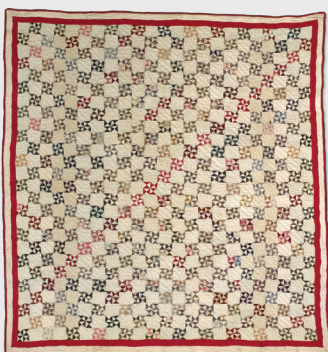


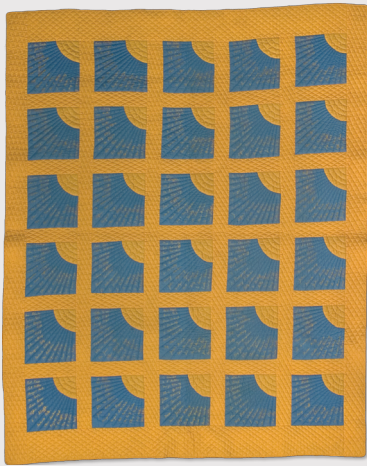
35. YANKEE PUZZLE c. 1900 and 1930

Maker: Rene Snider and Trissa Moore

Museum Collection 2990.1

Rene hand-pieced this quilt with tiny prints dating from 1850-1900, indicating that this was a scrap bag quilt. She died in childbirth shortly after she completed the top, and her tombstone in Wenatchee, Washington reads simply "Snider - Mother and Baby." Rene's sister-in-law Trissa Moore quilted the top with the help of her family about 1930. *Step back and see how the white triangles placed against larger white squares create an illusion of wobbling blocks. The single straight diagonal row of red blocks helps your eye see that the blocks are actually straight.*





36. GERMAN-AMERICAN SIGNATURE

c. 1920 -1930

Maker: Unknown

Museum Collection 3135.1

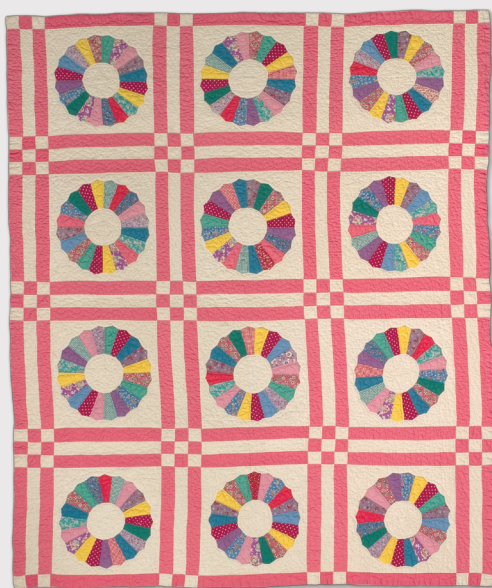
Produced during the 1930s quilt-making resurgence, this piece was a fundraiser for the Arion Singers group associated with Spokane's German American Society. For \$1, supporters had their names embroidered onto the quilt. Gertrude Blank was the lucky name drawn to win the quilt. Records suggest that master seamstress Frieda Faehnel assembled the quilt.

37. GRANDMOTHER'S FLOWER GARDEN c. 1940

Maker: Unknown

Museum Collection 2962.338

Typical of the many flower garden quilts produced in the 1930s and 1940s, this one contains very common household fabrics. Can you find the printed "feed sack" fabrics? The loosely-woven fabric sacks contained chicken or rabbit food purchased at the local feed store or warehouse. Homemakers recycled them into clothing, curtains and towels, using the scraps for quilts.



38. DRESDEN PLATE c. 1940 and 1950

Maker: Sarah Elizabeth Garoutte Greenlee and Bertha Greenlee Hall

Museum Collection 4155.1

Inspired by the aristocratic jeweled "dresdens" and fine china plates of Europe, this pattern was a perfect way to use scraps. Every petal could be different! After her husband died in 1936 Sarah Greenlee left the Spangle farm for Spokane and opened a boarding house for young girls. Around this time she pieced quilts for her three grandchildren and gave them to her daughter Bertha Hall to finish. Only after Bertha

herself was widowed in 1953 did she find time to quilt them. She gave this one to her son William Hall. *Does your family have a quilting tradition that has lasted through generations?*



39. POTS OF FLOWERS c. 1930

Maker: Edith S. Slee

Museum Collection 3400.220

Around 1930 Edith used a variety of fabrics for flowers, appliquéd to blocks. The stems and edge motifs are of green fabric produced during the 1930s and recognized today as “Depression Green.” Quilt makers could order a variety of patterns during the ‘30s through local newspapers that featured a syndicated column from the *Kansas City Star*. Later, Marguerite Ickis identified this pattern as a variation of the Flowers in a Pot design in the

1949 *Standard Book of Quilt Making and Collecting*.

40. SUNFLOWER c. 1920

Maker: Kate Brook McCrea

Museum Collection 1240.98

Kate McCrea fashioned her Sunflowers design exactly like the pattern she found in Marie Webster’s 1915 book, *Quilts: Their Story and How to Make Them*. Kate’s husband was

a senior partner at the insurance and loan firm, McCrea

and Merryweather, which afforded the family a fine home at 6th and Monroe (still

standing). Kate’s sister, Mary, lived for a time in a rented house next door and the two almost certainly quilted together. Several of their quilts were donated to the Museum.

Can you find similarities with the Webster-designed Apple Blossom quilt in this exhibit?



41. APPLE BLOSSOM Inscribed: 1922

Maker: Susan Hussey

Museum Collection 3958.4

Susan chose a Marie Webster pattern and fashioned pink cotton sateen apple blossoms with leaves and vines in three shades of green. An Amish group in Pennsylvania quilted the piece. Family members that donated the

quilt noted that “Susie looked old fashioned, but smoked, used profanity and always had an electric

sewing machine.” She died at 91 in 1954. *Can you find*

the other quilt in the show designed by Marie Webster?



42. CELTIC KNOTS c. 1980

Maker: Beth Riley

Museum Collection 4193.1

Drawn to needlework at an early age, Beth has done many beautiful embroidery pieces. Her quilter grandmother Alena Francis Strommer French inspired Beth to take up the craft during the 1960s. She dedicated this Celtic Knots quilt, made in the 1980s, to her husband John's Irish heritage. Each block is different and carries a different symbolism.



43. ABC QUILT c. 1930

Maker: Frankie Bartoo

Museum Collection 3470.2

Frankie's son gave her great joy, expressed in this ABC quilt made when he was 4 years old. She relied primarily on a pattern series published weekly in *The Spokesman-Review*, but added her own touches with children's book illustrations. Frankie died peacefully last year at 105! *Can you find images of The Gingerbread Man and The Night Before Christmas?*

Thank You!

Our special thanks go to co-curator Nancy Rowley for her patience, perseverance, and enthusiasm. For over ten years Nancy has traced the genealogical roots of this quilt collection and is a creative and intellectual force behind this exhibition.

Volunteers offered exceptional enthusiasm for this project. Once they ascertained the magnitude of readying the collection for exhibit, many women reorganized their personal schedule to ensure that each quilt was carefully considered, treated, and prepared. Their generous donation extends the longevity of the 165-piece quilt collection and reminds us that this collection exists for its community.

The Spokane Chapter of the Washington State Quilters assisted extensively in creating, promoting, and producing the exhibit's demonstration activities and related programs.

Marsha Rooney
Senior Curator of History

Laura Thayer
Senior Curator of Collections



NORTHWEST
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