

Minnesota Patchwork

Nicholas Westbrook
and Carolyn Gilman



IN 1863 Catherine Kurtz Sidle and her husband Henry decided to move from York, Pennsylvania, to Minneapolis, where commercial prospects seemed outstanding. The Sidles gave up the large and prosperous general store they had operated for thirteen years in order to join Henry's banker brother, Jacob. Jacob had organized the firm of Sidle, Wolford & Company, later the First National Bank of Minneapolis. Preparing for the long railroad journey west, Catherine packed into the Sidle trunks a tiny Irish Chain crib quilt¹ she had made about ten years earlier for one of her first babies. (Or did she use the quilt to keep her one-year-old daughter Susan warm during the trip to Minnesota? Or was it wrapped protectively around Catherine's prized china?) From the

THE PRIDE AND PATIENCE of quilters are exhibited annually at state and county fairs. This woman shows off her prizewinner in the 1926 Minnesota State Fair. Among the quilts in the MHS collection is Little Canada-born Marie Morissette's winning entry in the first State Fair in 1859.

not-so-barren facts of the quilt's family history and its provenance spring speculations about the artifact's historical context.

About the same time, an East Weymouth, Massachusetts, family also decided to move west to Minneapolis. Joseph Hawes was a young shoemaker, soon to become a father. Shoemaking was becoming one of the leading industries in the Twin Cities, a fact that may have enticed Joseph west. Among the things packed into his trunk was a bright pink calico quilt his mother, Sarah Hawes, had made. A few years after arriving in Minneapolis, Joseph became a partner of the well-established Minneapolis shoemaker, Christopher B. Heffelfinger. The Heffelfinger firm's very first customer had been Catherine Sidle, who became one of the leading ladies of Minneapolis.²

¹All quilts referred to in this article are from the museum collections of the Minnesota Historical Society. The Sidle quilt is accession number 8941.17. Information not otherwise cited has been drawn from correspondence with donors preserved in the museum accession files. On the Sidles, see *Minneapolis Tribune*, December 26, 1900, p. 1; Isaac Atwater, ed., *History of the City of Minneapolis Minnesota*, 1:489 (New York, 1893); Marion D. Shutter, ed., *History of Minneapolis, Gateway to the Northwest*, 3:357-359 (Chicago, 1923).

²Accession no. 7690.1. George W. Chamberlain, *History of Weymouth Massachusetts*, 3:260 (Weymouth, 1923); *Minneapolis City Directory*, 1873. *United States Census*, 1870, St. Anthony, Fourth Ward, vol. p. 700, census p. 14; *United States Census*, 1900, Minneapolis, vol. 17, sheet 4; Lucia L. Peavey Heffelfinger, *Memoirs of Christopher B. Heffelfinger*, 80 (Minneapolis, 1922).

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THIS Lone Star/Broderie Perse quilt was displayed in the Minnesota Historical Society museum several years after it was acquired in 1924. Improper exhibit techniques can shorten the lives of old textiles by subjecting them to wear and tear, the fading powers of light, and the expansion and contraction caused by temperature changes.

Traditional histories tell us about the business lives and public affairs of such people, emphasizing the social distances created by wealth and rank. Generally neglected are the intimate details of life — actions, objects, and language — which, when shared, tie individual lives together into a culture.

Joseph Hawes and Catherine Sidle had more in common than the chance relationship between merchant and customer. The shoemaker from New England and the banker's wife from Pennsylvania may not have been socially intimate. Yet they shared a material culture, a system of customary habits and beliefs concerning objects and their uses and values.

The depth of that shared culture is indicated in the similar roles played by the Hawes and Sidle quilts. Each quilt figured initially in an important parent-child transaction. Each soon acquired such significance in usefulness and sentiment that it warranted being moved to a new home halfway across the country. Eventually, charged with meaning, the quilts were passed on to daughters (both coincidentally named Hattie!). Finally, the two quilts were given to the Minnesota Historical Society, where they serve now as touchstones testifying both to their individual family stories and to the wider culture's history of changing taste and value.

The quilts that Joseph Hawes and Catherine Sidle brought west are part of an exhibit at the Historical Society museum called "Minnesota Patchwork." The display of thirty-five of the society's collection of over 120 quilts opened last January and will continue until September, 1979. An exhibit brochure traces the family histories of the quilts and also notes ways in which the quilts serve as valuable sources of information on textiles and textile technology.

Art historians and folklorists have long recognized quilts as peculiarly American and peculiarly female creations of folk art. But social historians have lagged behind. There has never been a systematic study of quilts as an aspect of Minnesota's material culture. Questions about the evolution of patchwork designs and their names, about the place of quilting in women's lives and in community life, about the ethnic orientation of quilting, or even about its geographical distribution, remain unanswered. Many collections of historical quilts have survived with such poor documentation that these questions would be impossible to answer. Fortunately, the opportunities for research in the Minnesota Historical Society's quilt collection are exceptional. Of the thirty-five quilts selected (on the basis of quality of workmanship, design, and condition) for the "Minnesota Patchwork" exhibit, two-thirds were identifiable by maker and place of origin. Once these crucial facts were known, supplementary information could be filled in by standard research methods applied to the society's extraordinary collections of censuses, genealogies, and local histories.

We must be chary, however, of making generalizations as if those quilts comprised a reasonable random sample. Looking at the Minnesota Historical Society collection, we might suppose at first glance that Minnesota quilters lived largely in the southeastern section of the state, near Winona. Ethnically, they were almost entirely Yankees. The quilters seem to have been rather well-to-do. Despite the popular image of frontier quilting bees, a good many of the MHS quilts were made in urban places. The wives of bankers and lawyers are represented as frequently as farm wives.

WHICH OF these observations will be shown through further research to contain a kernel of truth? In fact, the Minnesota Historical Society's quilts are probably *not* representative of the demographic backgrounds of Minnesota quilters. Since quilts have never been systematically collected by the society, its sample is prejudiced in favor of the kinds of people who have been donors and members of the organization during the last 130 years. This leaves out significant groups of the state's population. For instance, there is a thriving quilting tradition among Minnesota Indians, especially on the Ojibway reservations in the northern part of the state. Their quilting skills are not represented in the society's collection.



TEACHING quilting and lacemaking, missionaries sought to make Indian women conform to white culture. These Dakota women work in the mission at Redwood in 1897.

Yet the collection does preserve in documented quilts a timeline of the various techniques and materials in use between the late eighteenth century and the present. In those quilts we can trace the evolution of design schemes, colors, and construction methods. We can study the influences of the changing technology of textile manufacture, of inventions such as the sewing machine, of changes in taste and interior decorating theories, and — not least — of the many family, local,

³Accession no. 6358. On broderie perse, see Jonathan Holstein, *The Pieced Quilt: An American Design Tradition*, 15-21 (Boston, 1973). While nothing is known of the family history of this quilt, several others quite similar in design and size survive in collections elsewhere. Do these large “show” quilts have a common ancestry or inspiration? See, for example, Lilian Baker Carlisle, *Pieced Work and Appliqué Quilts at Shelburne Museum*, 47-49 (Shelburne Museum, *Museum Pamphlet Series*, no. 2, Shelburne, Vt., 1957), and Carleton L. Safford and Robert Bishop, *America's Quilts and Coverlets*, fig. 120 (New York, 1974).

⁴See, for example, two quilts — one appliqué and one pieced — made of the same fabrics about 1840 by Prudence Macklin Luken and her daughters, Lydia and Mary; accession no. 8608.2 and 8608.3.

⁵On the history of printed fabrics, see Florence M. Montgomery, *Printed Textiles: English and American Cottons and Linens 1700-1850* (New York, 1970), and Stuart Robinson, *A History of Printed Textiles* (London, 1969). For the Diehl quilt, see accession no. 67.168.

and national events that some of the quilts commemorate.

The earliest phase of quilt design represented in “Minnesota Patchwork” is found in a large, striking quilt embodying contradictory design principles and employing fabrics of different centuries.³ This Lone Star quilt’s rococo border of flowered chintz derives from an eighteenth-century aesthetic, while the meticulously controlled geometric design in the center is more a nineteenth-century usage. The border reflects a time in the eighteenth century when bright East Indian prints were so popular in Europe and America that England and France forbade importation in order to protect their domestic cloth industries. Shining with brilliant colors and intricate designs, the exotic smuggled chintzes were thus rare and precious. Women cut and patched to make every inch count. The practice of cutting out the printed designs and sewing them to neutral backgrounds became known as “broderie perse,” translated “Persian embroidery.” By the early 1800s English factories mass-produced chintzes imitating the large, hand-blocked patterns of the Indian fabrics. The chintz in this quilt, still retaining its high glaze, probably dates to this era. But the broderie perse quilt in “Minnesota Patchwork” also sports an enormous Lone Star design constructed from 800 pieces of mid-nineteenth-century fabrics.

The practice of using neutral white backgrounds to set off appliqué or pieced designs remained popular well into the nineteenth century. A number of examples survive in the Minnesota Historical Society collection. It seems to have been popular in the mid-nineteenth century to work designs in red and green calicoes against a white background.⁴ The effect is usually one of striking symmetry and balance. In the case of pieced work, different combinations of triangles, squares, and rectangles produced geometrical designs. In the case of appliqué, where any combination of curved lines is possible, quilters nevertheless restricted themselves to stylized floral designs of a strict regularity.

Between 1750 and 1850 mechanization transformed the textile industry. Large, hand-printed patterns gave way to tiny patterns of calico printed with rollers. The hues of organic dyes such as madder, indigo, butternut, and walnut gave way to the brilliant chemical colors of aniline (or coal-tar) dyes. The shades of pink and brown that entered the quiltmaker’s spectrum with aniline dyes are well represented in “Minnesota Patchwork.” An 1840s Random Square quilt made of exactly 2,115 pieces, each 1¼ inches square, provides a veritable sample book of nineteenth-century calicoes. Its backing is constructed from a defective bolt of cloth that the quilt’s maker, Leah Diehl, obviously intended to relegate to the humblest of roles. The defects, ironically, are interesting to the historian of textile technology, for they illustrate how the cloth was made.⁵ The white cotton wrinkled as it passed between the printing rollers, leav-



QUILTS are often shared endeavors, artifacts of communal bonds. Photographers documenting the care of the aged in Minneapolis in the 1920s recorded these women quilting.

ing streaks of plain white cotton where the dyes did not touch the cloth.

Another quilt made around 1875 preserves some of the heavier wools and twills of the nineteenth century. It was made by Meribah M. Herrick, a Canadian-born homesteader who moved to Yellow Medicine County near Canby in 1882. She called the pattern "Star Cabin," but it is better known as Pineapple. Her grandchildren, donors of the quilt, remembered Meribah saying that "the minimum time she required to make a Star Cabin quilt block was one day, with time out, of course, for her housekeeping duties." This account is surprising, for each block is constructed of 173 thin strips of cloth stitched down and pressed to overlap one another. The strips are carefully arranged by color, but the over-all pattern does not emerge until the quilt's forty-two blocks are sewn together, creating a complicated interplay of diamonds, circles, and stars. Perhaps the most amazing part of the quilt is its backing. Meribah Herrick was somehow able to find a backing fabric that was printed in the same pattern as the patchwork on the front (although reversing light and dark color values). It is an early example of American textile design that imitates

the complex geometry of traditional patchwork patterns.⁶

By the 1880s technological innovations such as sewing machines and carpet sweepers, together with the availability of cheap labor, eliminated many household tasks that had placed demands on the time of needleworkers. The straight seams of traditional patchwork lent themselves to machine stitching, and even the quilting process itself graduated out of the frame and onto the sewing machine.⁷ Time that had once been spent on mundane sewing chores was now free for the "genteel work" of the lady of leisure.

The result was the crazy quilt — a fad that was the very opposite of the practical patchwork of earlier generations. Victorian ladies of leisure did not hoard scraps of calico as their mothers and grandmothers had but pieced their quilts from velvet, brocade, and silk. Intricate embroidery, beadwork, and featherstitching displayed the quilt's conspicuous consumption of its maker's leisure time. That handwork camouflaged the easy, practical help of sewing machines.

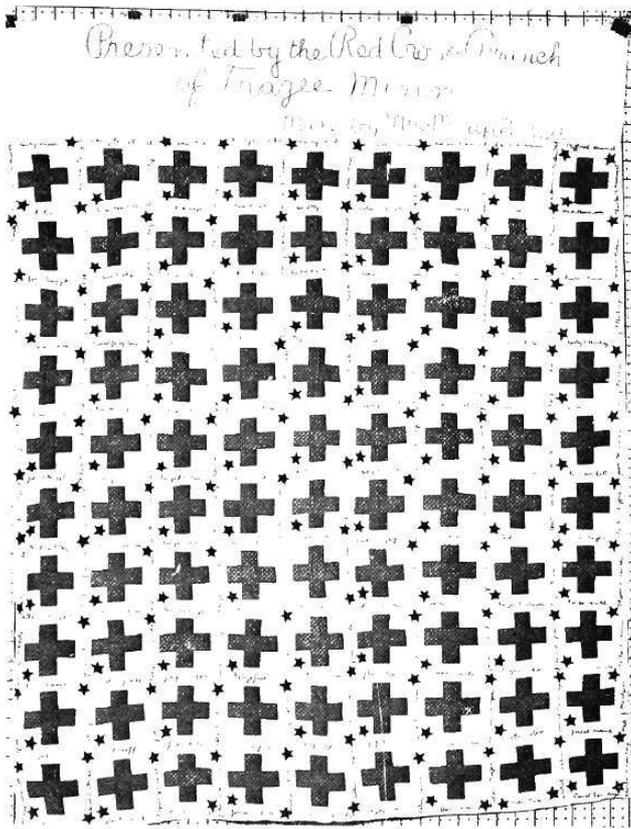
In 1885 a popular ladies' magazine announced: "The art of patchwork has, in our times, been carried to a pitch never before approached. In a word, it has ceased to be commonplace, and has become really artistic."⁸ Ideas of what was "artistic" had changed since the days of geometric patchwork early in the 1800s. Houses no longer were planned with the formal symmetry of Federal and Greek Revival styles. People filled their new eclectic interiors with a clutter of curtains, throws, coverlets, and doilies. Similarly, the crazy quilt symbolized the quilter's abandonment of geometrical regularity. "Above all things, the idea is to be original, even eccentric and odd," a ladies' magazine encouraged.⁹ Pieces of

⁶Accession no. 67.1.1. Two similar quilts, presumably also made by Meribah Herrick, were donated at the same time: see accession no. 67.1.2 and 67.1.3. On the Hiram and Meribah Herrick family, see the manuscript Minnesota Census, 1885, Yellow Medicine County, Town of Fortier, sheet 66, p. 1, schedule 1. Carl and Amy Narvestad, *A History of Yellow Medicine County Minnesota 1872-1972*, 575, 582 (Granite Falls, 1972). Only for this Star Cabin quilt and the Windblown Tulip quilt discussed below do we know the maker's name for the patchwork pattern. For the other quilts discussed, we have employed standard pattern names as suggested in such compendia as Carrie A. Hall and Rose G. Kretsinger, *The Romance of the Patchwork Quilt in America* (New York, 1935); Marguerite Ickis, *The Standard Book of Quilt Making and Collecting* (New York, 1959); and Ladies' Art Company, *Quilt Pattern Book, Patchwork and Applique* (St. Louis, 1922). Regional variations in pattern naming have been investigated by folklorists, though not yet for Minnesota.

⁷See, for example, "How to Quilt on a Wheeler & Wilson Sewing Machine," in *Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine*, 60:90 (January, 1860).

⁸Mrs. Jane Weaver, "Artistic Patchwork," in *Peterson's Magazine*, 87:457 (May, 1885).

⁹*Peterson's Magazine*, 85:538 (June, 1884).



FRAZEE NATIVE Mary Parker commemorated the World War I contributions of her townspeople in this quilt made for the Minnesota Historical Society in 1919. On the quilt are named 199 Frazee men who served in the war; gold stars identify the eleven who died. Size: 65½" × 83".

all shapes, colors, and sizes were stitched together with little apparent regard to the over-all effect. Souvenir ribbons, scraps of wedding dresses, and other memorabilia combined to make the crazy quilt a focus of nostalgia and sentiment. "I adore this work," said the heroine of a Victorian short story of her crazy quilt, "because it sets

¹⁰L. E. Chittenden, "A Story of a Crazy-Quilt," in *Peter-son's Magazine*, 88:518 (December, 1885).

¹¹Accession no. 68.183.4. On its maker, Sophia G. Westfall, and her family, see Theodore Christianson, *Minnesota: A History of the State and its People*, 4:247-248 (Chicago, 1935). The design is illustrated in other colors in Marie D. Webster, *Quilts: Their Story and How to Make Them*, facing 134 (New York, 1915). The quoted material appears on p. xviii.

¹²Accession no. 8726.1. On the Thrall family, see Walter Thrall, *Genealogy of the Thrall Family*, 14 (Poultney, Vt., 1890). For the Paiges, see Norman Newell Hill, *History of Licking County, Ohio*, 743 (Newark, Ohio, 1881). On the Tawney connection, see Franklyn Curtiss-Wedge, *The History of Winona County Minnesota Illustrated*, 2:1093-1094 (Chicago, 1913).

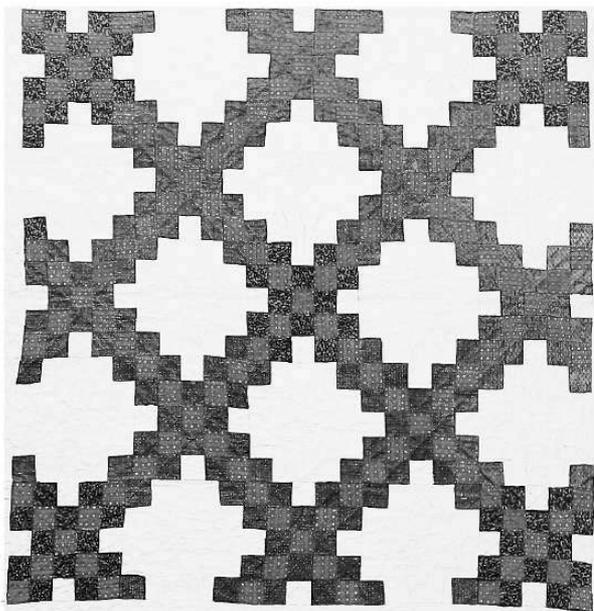
all rules at defiance. I do so detest anything with a pattern to be followed, and where you have to count."¹⁰

But the days of symmetrical patchwork were not over. In the first decade of the twentieth century quilts became the subject of both scholarship and merchandising. Marie D. Webster, a historian and collector of quilt patterns, eagerly advocated the revival of old styles. In order to "raise in popular esteem these most worthy products of home industry," Webster began to produce and sell colored tissue-paper patterns for amateur quiltmakers. At first from her home in Marion, Indiana, and later through the Marshall Field stores in Chicago, Webster spread a standardized patchwork aesthetic. A quilt in "Minnesota Patchwork" made from Webster's Windblown Tulip pattern shows how a St. Paul woman adapted a standard pattern to showcase her own fine workmanship using the muted pastel colors popular during the Great Depression years.¹¹

The publication of patchwork patterns has since become an industry. Books of instructions, photographs, and patterns load the shelves of craft-oriented bookstores. Despite the standardizing influence this exerts, quilters continue to strike off in new directions. Representational themes such as the figures on a Bicentennial quilt by Bonnie Ellis of Minneapolis, which was displayed by the Historical Society during the Bicentennial year, seem to exercise a strong hold on the imaginations of modern quilters. These bring a folk-art quality back to the tradition of quilting.

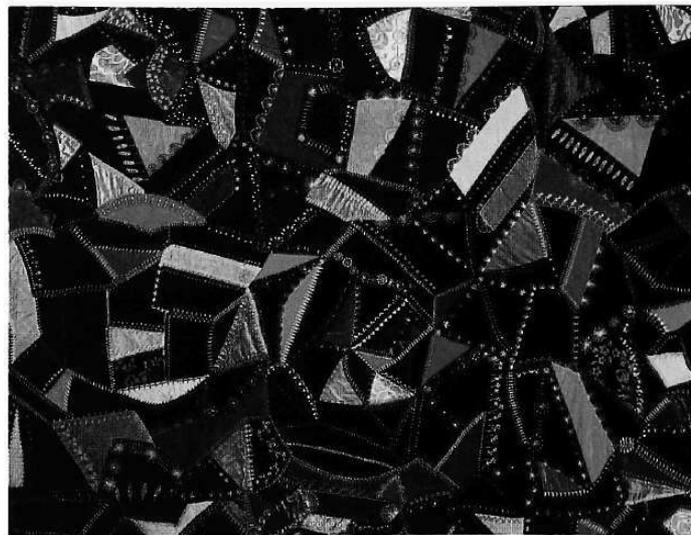
WHILE QUILTS in the society's collections record broad changes in American taste and technology, they also have hidden in their folds more intimate details of family history. Many of the quilts once served their owners as mnemonic devices, as emblems of significant family events. One of the oldest quilts in the collection celebrates a Vermont wedding 170 years ago, a wedding that set in motion a westward-trending family journey that traces one path in the nation's great nineteenth-century migration. In Rutland, Vermont, nineteen-year-old Rozetta Marilla Thrall worked a new quilt in preparation for her marriage to William Paige. Shortly after their wedding in 1809, the Paiges moved across Lake Champlain to Ticonderoga, New York. More than seventy-five years later, the quilt arrived in Minnesota, having served Rozetta's family through four generations and over a 1,500-mile odyssey in search of better opportunity. In 1948, Rozetta Thrall's quilt was donated to the Minnesota Historical Society by her great-grandchildren, thus memorializing a Vermont wedding more than a century before.¹²

Some families moving westward commemorated their old homes in the quilts they took along. Christina Kanoth Rose set out to make a quilt before leaving her Ohio home for a new life in Lanesboro, Minnesota, in



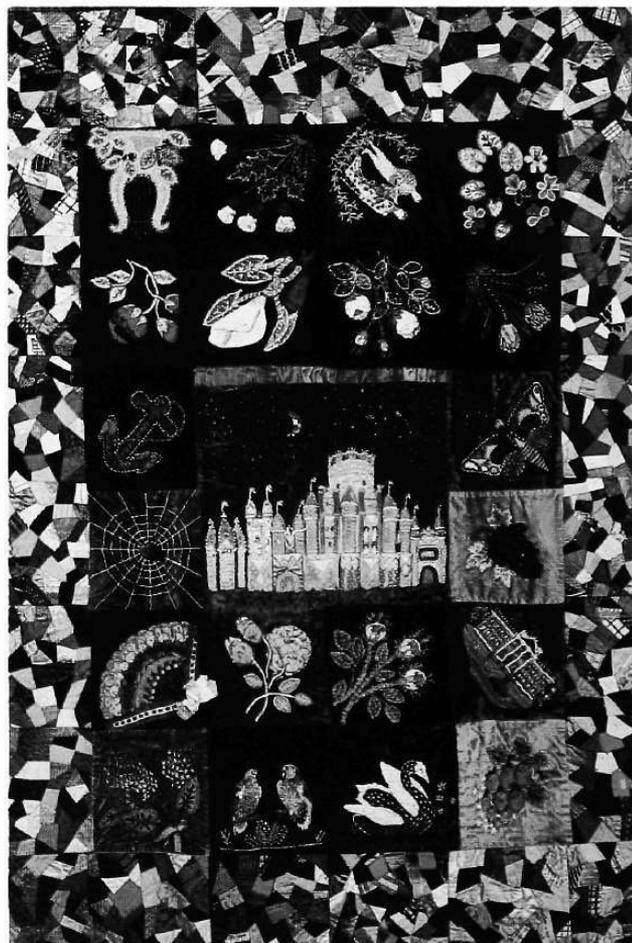
MADE IN THE 1850s, Catherine Kurtz Sidle's Double Irish Chain crib quilt traveled from Pennsylvania to Minneapolis with her family in 1863. The white spaces created by the patchwork pattern have been filled with a small floral quilting design. Size: 40" × 40".

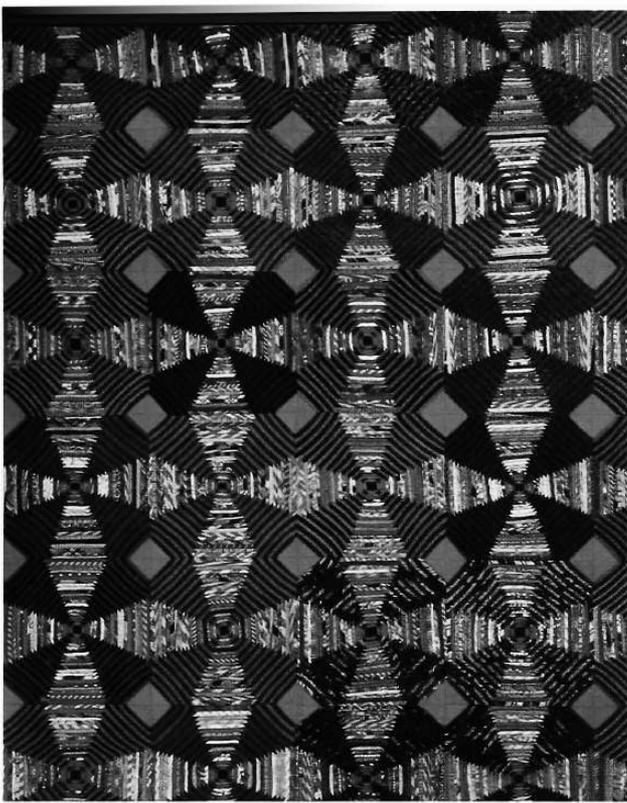
ABBY JANE GRAY incorporated souvenir ribbons from the 1885 River and Harbor Convention in St. Paul and the St. Paul Jobbers' Union in this detail of a "remembrance quilt" made for her daughter Cora, wife of Judge Hascal R. Brill. Size: 58" × 69"



THOUSANDS of embroidered flowers embellish Dora Timm's velvet crazy quilt made about 1920. The Lewiston native, born in 1887, employed a red, machine-quilted synthetic fabric as a backing. Size: 77½" × 87½".

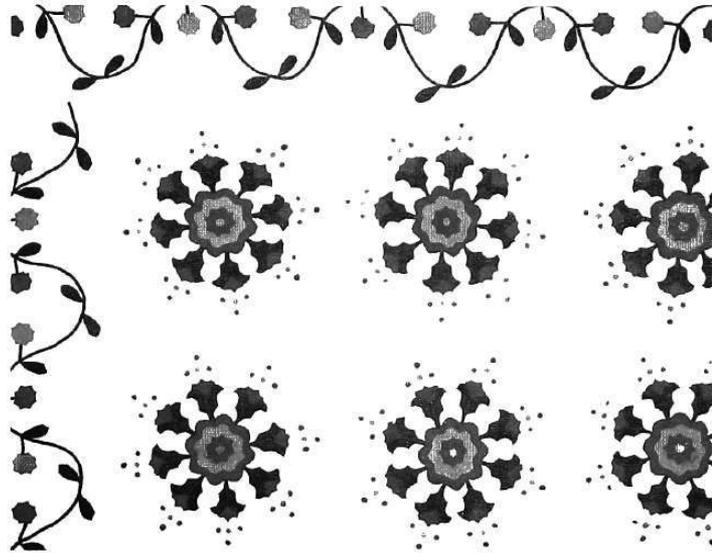
AN ENGLISH IMMIGRANT recorded her fancy for democracy's "castles" in this quilt, five years in the making. The White House and the Ice Palace from St. Paul's 1888 Winter Carnival suggest that Elizabeth Waller's cultural baggage included a sentimental attachment to aristocratic architecture. Size: 60" × 72".





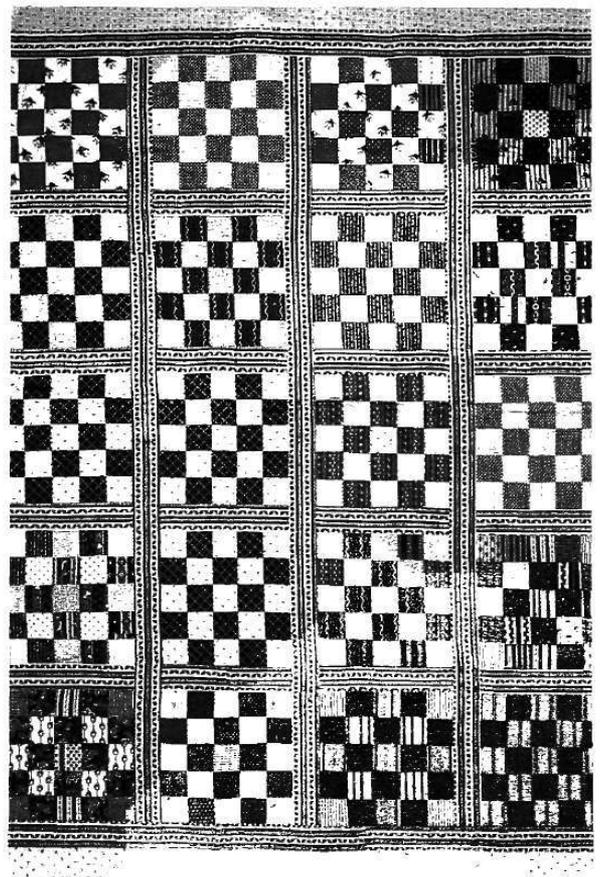
THIS STAR CABIN quilt made by Meribah Manning Herrick about 1875 was ideal for using up old woolen scraps from dressmaking, worn suits, and outgrown cloaks. Mail-order firms tried to discourage their customers from sending for free fabric samples to use in such patchwork. Size: 65" × 75½".

THE CAREFULLY worked out geometry and vigorous colors of the Lone Star in the center of this quilt contrast strikingly with the floral chintz and muted tones of the broderie perse border. Size: 111" × 111"



PERHAPS the Ohio Rose pattern selected by Christina Kanoth Rose recalled the home she left behind in 1860 for a new farm near Lanesboro in Fillmore County. This signed and dated quilt has probably never been washed — the pencil lines used to lay out the elaborate feather-wreath quilting are still visible. Size: 88" × 90".

SARAH HAWES' Five Patch pattern is simple, but she emphasized the checkerboard effect in her choice of colors and alignment of the printed textile design. Size: 71" × 77½".



1860.¹³ The appliqué pattern Christina chose is known as Ohio Rose or (more commonly) as the Rose of Sharon. Two other women helped Christina with the quilting, and they worked their initials — M.V.H. and J.A.V.H. — into the design. These women, probably members of the Van Horn family related by marriage to the Roses, used still-visible pencil lines to lay out the elaborate feather-wreath quilting.

We rarely know for sure what grandmother's quilt meant to a family making a new home in Minnesota during the 1800s. Was it a sentimental tie to past generations, to old homes and faces? Could the quilt speak of women's traditions, of friendships, or of patient labors? Or did the quilt claim significance in memory's archive because it served a more urgent and mundane function? One of the first homesteaders in the Mankato area wrote:

We finally arrived at the homestead. We set our stove up in the yard by a tree and lived in the shanty until our new log house was completed. The shanty was covered with seven loads of hay to make it warm inside and a quilt was hung over the door. Here we lived for two months, suffering at times from rain penetrating. At one time a heavy cloud burst nearly drowned us out.¹⁴

Quilts have also served as bridges between personal experience and community events. Mrs. Elizabeth Waller never lived in Minnesota. But a visit with friends living near St. Paul during the first Winter Carnival in 1886 inspired the centerpiece of a new quilt. This unusual quilt testifies to St. Paul's urban coming-of-age. The quilt has also proven to be the touchstone for the gradually unfolding family memories of Mrs. Waller's granddaughter. In correspondence with the society's museum curators over the last twenty years, Mrs. Marguerite Kennedy has reconstructed a world of meaning and value surrounding her grandmother's quilt. "How we used to save odds and ends for her!" Mrs. Kennedy wrote. "She could make use of anything we gave her, scraps that others would throw away. I know I hadn't begun school when I would go to her home and watch her work on it."¹⁵

"The quilt becomes, as it were, a monument to friendship and a memory of happy times," proclaimed ladies' magazines at the end of the nineteenth century.¹⁶ Eighty-three-year-old Nellie Pressnell Bloomer preserved a lifetime of memories in a quilt of otherwise simple design inscribed with names of neighbors, friends, and celebrities. The names of missionaries, fur traders, businessmen, and four Minnesota governors hark back to Nellie Bloomer's early life in Stillwater during the territorial era.¹⁷

Other quilts made by and for a community both serve and express public concerns. Several quilts in the society's collections served as fund-raisers. One such quilt helped to build a new church in St. Paul. When the

Reverend Robert Maclaren accepted the call to become pastor of St. Paul's Central Presbyterian Church in 1879, he joined a migration that would increase the city's population from 80,000 to 120,000 in five years. His church quickly became too small to contain the fruits of his evangelizing. In 1888 the congregation authorized construction of a \$110,000 structure. The building was half completed and half paid for when the panic of 1893 struck.

The congregation's Ladies Work Society, chaired by Emma Simonton, wife of the church historian and senior elder, raised money to help pay the mortgage. One of the society's fund-raising projects was a quilt listing the names of dime contributors and memorializing half-dollar donors with quilt blocks. Among the contributors were the Simontons, Governor Knute Nelson, the building committee, someone recording the names of all the church's ministers, a political partisan celebrating the death of the Tammany tiger in New York City, and another celebrating the rise of Ohio's Senator William McKinley. The Simontons' daughter, Mrs. O. J. Reynolds, donated the quilt to the Minnesota Historical Society. One square of the quilt records that her husband was a "chip of the old block."¹⁸

COMMUNAL quilting, or "quilting bees," enjoy a popular place in our folklore. Such events served the common good in several ways. The quilts produced were distributed as disaster relief, missionary benevolence, or wartime aid to the boys "over there." The communion shared by quilters as they worked reaffirmed social ties even in times of great crisis.

Quilters joined the war effort on the home front dur-

¹³Accession no. 68.94.1. On the Roses, see Charles A. Hanna, *Historical Collections of Harrison County, Ohio*, 307, 443 (New York, 1900); Edward D. Neill, *History of Fillmore County Minnesota*, 2:763-765 (Chicago, 1912). For the Van Horn connection, see *United States Census*, 1850, Harrison Co., Athens Township, 218, and Short Creek Township, 442, 446.

¹⁴John A. Jones in Lucy Leavenworth Wilder Morris, ed., *Old Rail Fence Corners: Frontier Tales Told by Minnesota Pioneers*, 174 (Reprint edition, St. Paul, 1976).

¹⁵Accession no. 9744.

¹⁶Jane Weaver, "Appliques for Crazy-Quilt," in *Peterson's Magazine*, 86:352 (October, 1884).

¹⁷Accession no. 8748. See the Bloomer Papers in the Minnesota Historical Society; *Stillwater Gazette*, September 3, 1936, p. 1; *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, August 31, 1936, p. 3.

¹⁸Accession no. 7972. On the church's history, see T. D. Simonton, *Semi-Centennial of the Central Presbyterian Church, 1852-1902*, 30-37, 59-60 (St. Paul, 1902). On Mrs. Emma Simonton, see obituary, *St. Paul Dispatch*, February 17, 1910. For Orlando J. Reynolds, see *Men of Minnesota*, 422 (St. Paul, 1902).

ing World War I, for example. While American men fought in France, women and children in small towns across Minnesota sewed quilts and knit socks and sweaters to keep the young soldiers warm. The Becker County Red Cross created eleven quilts during 1917 and 1918. The Frazee branch of the same organization was particularly active. Its 500 members created 2,480 different articles and raised nearly \$5,000 before the Armistice. After the war, branch member Mary Parker sewed a quilt as a memorial to neighbors who had served in the armed forces. Frazee was not a large town; in 1920 only 1,300 people lived there. But at least 199 of its young men had enlisted in the war effort, and all are named on Mary Parker's quilt. Gold stars identify the eleven men who died in the war.¹⁹

Despite the clues still attached to many of the quilts, some tell us exasperatingly little about their makers. One of the most striking, carefully constructed quilts was

¹⁹Accession no. 6068. Daniel Nelson, comp.: *An Honor Roll Containing a Pictorial Record of the Men and Women from Becker County, Minnesota, U.S.A. Who Served in the Great War* (Detroit, Minn., 1920).

²⁰Accession no. 65.154.

²¹For further information, read: Jonathan Holstein, *The Pieced Quilt: An American Design Tradition* (Boston, 1973); Bruce Johnson, et al., *A Child's Comfort: Baby and Doll Quilts in American Folk Art* (New York, 1977); Patsy and Myron Orlofsky, *Quilts in America* (New York, 1974); and Carleton L. Safford and Robert Bishop, *America's Quilts and Coverlets* (New York, 1974).

One of the largest and best documented quilt collections in Minnesota is the Hands All Around Quilt Museum in New Ulm, owned by Joyce Aufderheide. An outstanding quilt from her collection was recently hung in Vice-President Walter Mondale's office in Washington, D.C., to represent the significance of America's folk art tradition.

pieced in the Mariner's Compass design and trimmed with a streak-of-lightning border and scalloped edges. The maker was so proud of her work that she embroidered her name in tiny cross-stitches: "Susan Hanks was born June the 8th 1808. This finished April 10th 1857." Despite Susan Hanks' concern that she not remain anonymous, her identity is a mystery. According to the quilt's donor, Susan was a cousin of Nancy Hanks, the mother of Abraham Lincoln. But no record of such a cousin born in 1808 can be found. Nor is she listed in any Minnesota census or biographical collection. She remains as anonymous as hundreds of other needlework artists who did not sign their work.²⁰

Research must be undertaken concerning each of the quilts in the collection. Only from the cumulation of those specific studies can we really begin to sketch out a picture of the role of quilts in Minnesota's material culture. How did utilitarian quilts differ from "show" quilts? Did people make them for their thriftiness or for their beauty? Were most quilts constructed by quilting bees or family members?

Yet there are answers in the quilts as well. In the society's collection you will find many messages from the quiltmakers: The kinds of clothes they wore, the colors they liked, the events they thought important to commemorate, and, above all, their pride in good workmanship in this traditional women's art form.²¹

A free brochure discussing each of the quilts in the Minnesota Historical Society exhibit is available by writing Curator of Exhibits, Education Division, Minnesota Historical Society, 690 Cedar St., St. Paul, Minn. 55101.

ALL of the black and white photos are from the collections of the MHS audio-visual library. The color pictures of the quilts were taken by Nicholas and Virginia Westbrook, Elizabeth Hall, and Martin Fowler.

BOOK REVIEWS

F Scott Fitzgerald in Minnesota: His Homes and Haunts. By John J. Koblas.

(St. Paul, Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1978. 50 p. Map, illustrations. Paper \$3.75.)

ALTHOUGH the elm trees that for a hundred years arched over historic Summit Avenue are succumbing to the Dutch Elm beetle, and several of the houses between the Cathedral of St. Paul and Dale Street have been subdivided into apartments or are no longer used as private homes, most of the structures

lining the avenue have survived the fifty-seven years that have passed since Scott, Zelda, and Scottie Fitzgerald left the area for good. As John Koblas points out, many of the places in the area that Fitzgerald frequented as a boy and young man still stand.

The fifty pages of this pamphlet in the Minnesota Historic Sites series are devoted to identifying those places and to relating the events in Fitzgerald's life to the sites where he stayed and played. Fitzgerald was born in St. Paul in 1896, moved East with his family in 1899, and returned in 1908, staying until 1922. Koblas' book recalls those years, taking the reader to the homes, backyards, and places which inspired such Fitzgerald stories as "Winter Dreams," "Ice Palace," "Bernice Bobs Her Hair," and the Basil and Josephine stories. The reader visits the scene of the "Bad Luck Ball" and the Dellwood golf course

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