

## Milan H. Johnson

Milan H. Johnson designed and made the quilt in #1 entirely by hand. #2 shows Mr. Johnson and his handmade table and candlestick. Photos #1 and #2 with a short biographical sketch appeared in the *McCALL NEEDLEWORK*, Winter 1942-43 #3 is Apron #268. #4 shows the writing on the back of the apron. Apron photos by Michael James from the collection of Marie Kupferman.



Keene, N.H.

April 4, 1946

I am 88 years old. I was born in East Templeton, Mass. Sept. 25, 1857. One of my grandmothers was Alma Alden a direct descendent of John Alden who with our Pilgrim fathers landed on Plymouth Rock, Mass. in 1620. I was a chair maker 50 years. I have taught Cabinet wood work in Keene High School six years. Then in 12 years I made 12 nice bed quilts and in my best one I put 195,000 hand made quilted stitches. Patchwork Aprons are my new hobby. This one is #268. When I was 15 years old I lived in Chicago and saw the big fire caused by Mrs. O'Leary's cow kicking a lantern over on Oct. 17, 1871. I am the oldest member of the Keene Baptist Church. I have lived in Keene 73 years and in my present home 198 Church St. 52 years.

Milan Henry Johnson

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*Excerpts of letters to Emma Andres from Milan H. Johnson.*

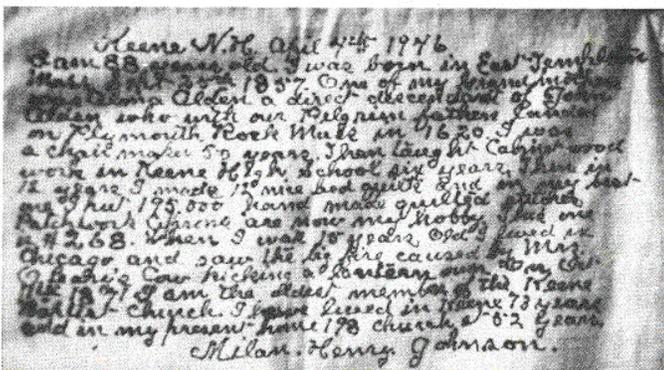
Oct 8th, '42

Since... (my wife died in 1936) I have lived alone in our 8 room house and done all of my cooking, washing & ironing and made quilts. I began on them right after I quit teaching school and I am on my tenth one now.

Nov 2, '42

..."I do use a thimble just to push my needle through after I get it started. I have to use my left hand under the quilt and holding the needle with my right hand I put it at the spot where I want to start the stitch then place my thumb nail on the head of the needle and press it down on to one of my fingers to get the length of stitch then tip the needle down and with one of my finger nails of my right hand press the cloth down in front of the needle and start it through by pushing with my thumb nail until it strikes my finger

cont on pg 9...



## Quilters' Hall of Fame

A Quilter's Hall of Fame sprang into being on October 27, 1979 with a surprise announcement at the banquet session of the Continental Quilt Congress, Inc. Officers of the corporation Hazel Carter, President, and Holice Turnbow, Vice-President, and writer Ellen Dykes had prepared a lovely booklet as a memento of the occasion, copies of which were presented to persons attending the banquet. The booklet's introduction states that "Quilters' Hall of Fame has been established to recognize the people behind the quilting renaissance, to pay tribute to their accomplishments, and thereby to establish documentation of a part of quilting history."

The 1979 entries into the Hall of Fame are listed and described in the booklet. They are: William Rush Dunton, Jr., Ruth Ehright Finley, Lenice Ingram Bacon, Marguerite Ickis, and Jonathan Holstein and Gail van der Hoof (entered together). This year's entries are all notable authors of books on quilts.

The main speaker at the presentation banquet was Jonathan Holstein (see story on next col.) and the special guest of the Congress was Marguerite Ickis. Miss Ickis, author of THE STANDARD BOOK OF QUILTMaking, was honored with a standing ovation when she was formally introduced, and was almost besieged with greetings, handshakes, and requests for autographs throughout the three-day Congress. The enthusiasm with which she was welcomed and congratulated left no doubt about her fame. Her friends and neighbors feted her again when she got home, and she reports that "the quilting party is still going on!"

Sally Garoutte

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cont from pg 13...

nail and then finish by pushing it through with my thimble.

...you may believe I have sore fingers from the time I begin to quilt until I get it done. My 1st & 2nd fingers scab up thick enough so I have to use sand paper on them.

I do not use any particular kind of a needle. I have a thousand or more that my wife left and I select one and use it until I break off the front and then hunt up another. But I use a short stubbed one that will do the work without bending much.

Yours very respectfully

## Jonathan Holstein on Art

Jonathan Holstein, premier quilt-collector and author of AMERICAN PIECED QUILTS, a catalogue of his quilts exhibited at the Whitney Museum in New York in 1971, later expanded into the book THE PIECED QUILT, was the featured banquet speaker at the recent Continental Quilt Congress at the Stouffer Hotel in Arlington, Va. In this presentation Holstein contracted his views of the place of quilts in Art, concluding ultimately that they have no place at all.

First, the collector-writer reminisced about past collecting and writing. Then he moved to definitions which he felt might be applied to quilts: Primitive art, Naive art, Nonacademic art, Folk art and Tribal art. He rejected the first three of these, and seemed rather to incline toward Folk art as his preferred description, although he felt that quilts stand somewhere between "design" and "folk art," being "utilitarian objects which are pleasing to the eye."

After presenting some extremely questionable theories regarding the origins of American quilts, Holstein did admit that he thought that pieced quilts had their origin in esthetic principles. However, he said, women were not artists, as they did not speak Artlanguage. "I have no reason to change my opinion," Holstein said. Art is only made by artists; and since, in his opinion, women are not artists, quilts -- by his definition -- cannot be art.

Maybe Holstein is right. And maybe quilters don't care. They know what they are doing; it doesn't matter what it's called.

Sally Garoutte

## HELP WANTED

I am researching black quiltmakers in U.S., from the earliest record to present day. Would you please share any information you have on quilts made by black women, slavemade quilts, post-Civil War quilts, or Contemporary Quilts. Or if you have addresses to which I should write, I would appreciate getting these.

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*If you have a specific area of research you would like help with, drop us a note explaining briefly what you are looking for and we'll try to publish it. Let's all help each other.*