

## Noah's Ark Quilt

Reprinted from DORCUS: A Magazine for Woman's Handiwork, Aug. 1886; publ by Dorcus Publishing Co. N.Y.

"One of the fashionable little 'fads' of the day in fancy work is a Noah's Ark quilt. The quilt can be of serge, cloth, satin sheeting or plain cream sheeting, and is designed and commenced by the lady who starts it. If she is a good worker she embroiders or appliques the Noah's Ark which is near the centre of the quilt, but placed high up. The animals are all in couples and form a long procession round the entire quilt, marching round towards the Ark. Sometimes the procession is curved so as to form a design over the entire surface, but this depends on individual taste and fancy. The lady asks her friends and neighbors to work the pairs of animals, usually giving them some choice in the matter. Some of these quilts are very amusing, and really worth keeping. At a recent starting of one, a lady volunteered to work two fleas, which she eventually did, with wonderful care and dexterity. In cream sheeting, the animals may be all in Turkey red twill worked with red ingrained thread, or in various colors. This may be an idea for many busy fingers... The animals are generally cut out in paper first, and then in whatever material they are to be worked in, and are copied from a child's colored picture book. In the Noah's Ark collection, scraps of fur and skin are used, to represent the specimen as true to nature as possible. It is occasionally all worked by one pair of hands, on a foundation of double width diagonal serge, with the various animals portrayed in wools"

Florence Peto mentions a Noah's Ark quilt in a letter dated Feb. 4, 1966 to Maxine Teele, well-known Iowa quilter,... "I have a charming Noah's Ark quilt - old. The ark in center is surrounded by big circle of every animal, bird, & insect, two by two - all to get into the ark, you understand."

Mrs. Teele refers to the quilt in her article about Mrs. Peto "In Partial Payment" in NIMBLE NEEDLE TREASURES, Winter 1973. "At one point in our correspondence she gave an off hand invitation to visit her if we should ever find ourselves in Tenafly. Though this seemed completely unlikely, family obligations did take us to New Jersey. After a phone call, we stopped by her home. For the next two hours, she pulled quilts from closets and chests. She showed us (my husband says) ninety-five of her eighty five quilts. One that I recall dis-

cont.

## Huge Quilt Custom

The following is an excerpt from the Feb 26, 1941 letter from Florence Peto to Emma Andres:

"When I give my lecture, I speak of the custom of making huge quilts, and this is about the way I tell it. Before the Revolution, houses were small and the families were large; there were seldom more than one or at the most two sleeping rooms. This does not apply to the great mansions occupied by representatives of the Crown, but rather to the average citizen and patriot whose house was tiny. Take Paul Revere's home in Boston as an example. The little house is preserved as a museum now and pilgrims flock to it every day. When I was there, standing in the one large bedroom, gazing at the immense four-poster bed, the lady who stood beside me voiced my thoughts; she said, 'What on earth did they do with all the children! For Paul Revere, the gifted man, fathered some 16 children and as far as I have been able to find out, they were all born and brought up in the tiny house. Well, what to do with your extra children was solved in the olden days by the trundle bed; at night, father, mother and all the youngest infants slept together in the big four-posters, while the other children crowded together in the trundle or feather beds placed on the floor. They slept close together to keep warm -especially in Boston, I imagine, where it is very cold in the winter. Then, in the daytime, the trundle was pushed under the four-poster which stood high to accommodate it, and a valance about the bed hid it from view; all the feather beds and pillows from the trundle and the floor were piled high on the mother bed and of course it took a counterpane of noble proportions to hide the whole from sight or cover them properly"

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NOAH'S ARK QUILT - cont.  
tinctly was the Noah's Ark quilt now pictured on pg. 146 of Safford & Bishop's AMERICAN QUILTS and COVERLETS. I recall just as clearly the twinkle in Mrs. Peto's eyes as she pointed out the impossibility of getting all those large animals into the tiny ark."