

## Recipe

For scouring Thick Cotton: As Counterpanes,

Quilts, Etc.

by Donna M. Schutt

I have just received my first issue of *QUILTERS' JOURNAL* and am pleased to learn that there is an audience of quilt enthusiasts like myself, interested in more than duplicating quilts. Altho I am a quilt-maker, I would like to consider myself a bit of an historian also.

My husband and I have recently moved to Bloomington, Indiana. My biggest discovery so far has been the Indiana University Library, where I have been exploring the upper levels in rather a patchwork manner, for materials on quilts. So far I have come across little of note except perhaps the article I have enclosed which I would like to share with the readers of *QUILTERS' JOURNAL*. It should interest us how they might have taken care of quilts and coverlets in their own time. I found it in *LADY'S BOOK*, March 1832.

Cut a pound of mottled soap into thin slices; put it into a pan with a quarter of an ounce of pearl-ash; then pour a pail of boiling water on it: let it stand till it is quite dissolved; then pour hot and cold water into your scouring tub, with a bowl of your solution of soap. Put in your counterpane, and beat it well with a doll, often turning the counterpane over in the tub. When this is done, wring it across a gallows or a hook, which is done by turning the two opposite ends round each other, and putting a small clean stick between them. By this method you may wring it as dry as possible, the harder, without injuring it, the better. Having given it this first liquor, you may pat in some old cottons or woolens that the liquor may not be thrown away, and then give your counterpane a second liquor as before. Wring it out again, and rinse in clean cold water; then pour a sufficient quantity of boiling water into your tub, with a small quantity of the solution of soap, so that you will reduce it to a very thin lather. Put three teaspoonfuls of liquid blue into the tub, whence your goods were taken, and the acid of the liquid blue and the alkali of the pearl-ash and the soap lye will cause a slight fermentation or, effervescence: stir this thin blue liquor with a stick, and put in your counterpane: beat it out with the doll about five minutes, which will colour the counterpane of a fine azure blue of the lightest shade; but as it dries in the wind, the blue mostly goes off, and leaves a brilliant white.

N.B. In some cases where the cottons are very brown and bad, it is necessary, instead of the last of these three liquors being poured into the tub, that it should be thrown into the copper, and the cottons put in and boiled an hour. When taken out, return them into the tub with some cold water and add the before mentioned quantity of chemic blue; and dry the articles in the air.

ED. NOTE: This is very rough treatment for a quilt and not to be recommended. Patsy Orlofsky, director of the Textile Conservation Institute, South Salem, New York, suggests that you will have easier and better results with the product "Ensure", made by The Stearns & Foster Co. Be sure to follow the directions.

Florence Peto... cont.

Where am I going to put all these quilts when Margie comes home and fires me out of her closet?

Sunday Dec. 2, 1945

"Since Marjorie came home this house has been in such a whirl I've had no time for my own affairs and, indeed, owe everyone I know a letter.

Margie's 'welcome home' party was nice -80 guests! My caterer lady turned out to be a treasure and luckily took all the refreshment problem off my hands.

(Let me tell you about) the Quilt Exhibition at East Orange; it was a County Fair and there were 115 quilts on display - old and new. The exhibits were far above average quality and it made the judging very difficult; I worked nearly three hours on them. One thing is always obvious - sorry to say - the old work far excels the modern! In my opinion there was only one modern piece of real distinction - of course I awarded it the first prize. That is, the prize for the modern class.

Dec. 29, 1945

In the news clipping, I'm the little fatty on the left; I'm not so far, either, just small - 125 lbs.

Several days ago a letter from Washington informed Marjorie that she had been promoted again - she is now a Lt. Col. We laugh at this; Jan. 9 she gets her final discharge papers.

In the next group of letters, Mrs. Peto has a visitor from Boston, publishes *HISTORIC QUILTS*, and visits the White House. We think you won't want to miss them.