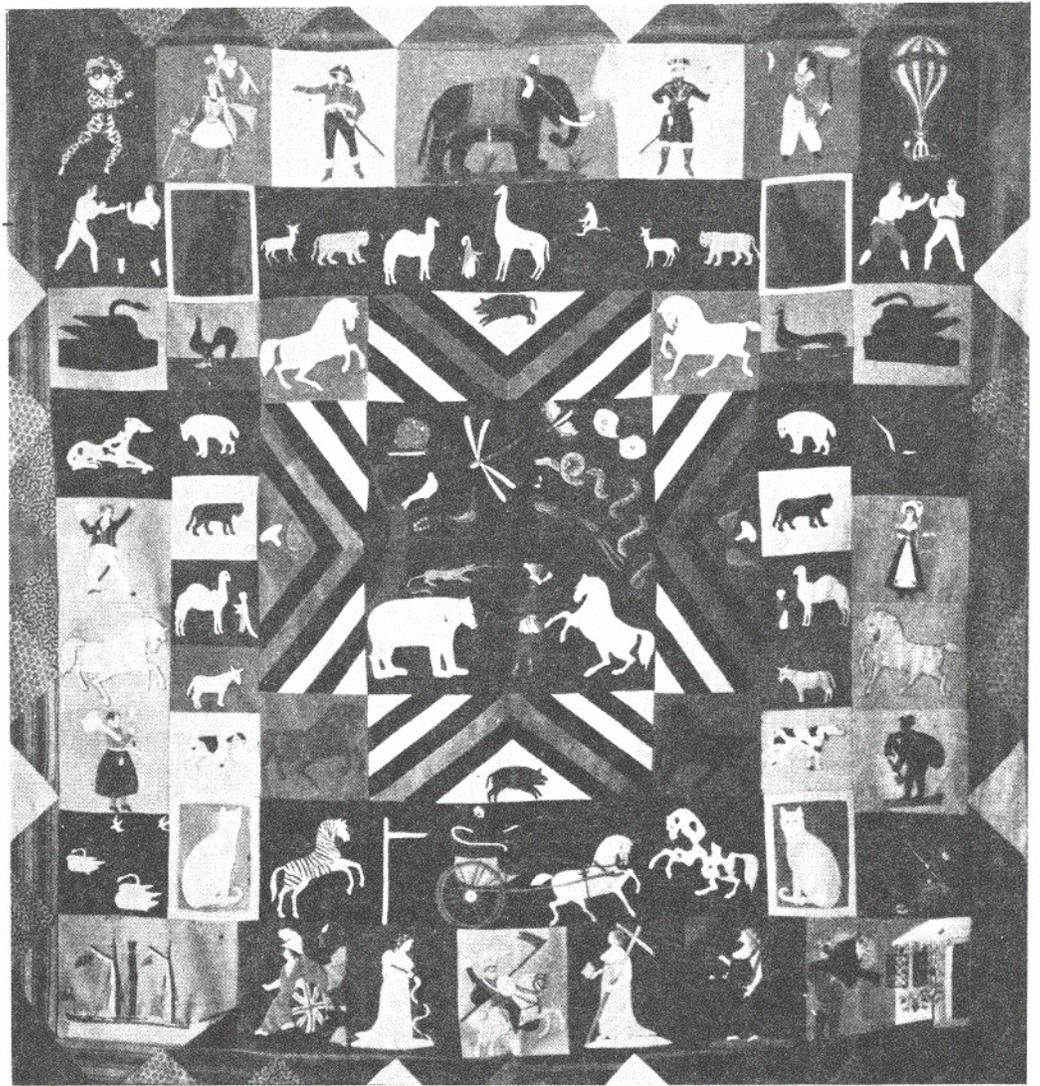


British Empire in Patchwork

"The applique quilt pictured here was bought at auction in Redding Ridge, Connecticut, a few years ago by its present owner, Mrs. Barrett Brady of Brooklyn. Its history is obscure, though the piece is said to have been seen in and around Danbury as long as one of the oldest inhabitants can remember. "From ANTIQUES September 1941.



PATCHWORK QUILT. Length, 5 feet, 6 inches.,

From the collection of Mrs. Barrett Brady.

The following is an excerpt from a letter by Florence Peto to Emma Andres: Jan. 22, 1941

Been puttering about all day, working hard but getting nowhere - I do not usually spend such a profitless day. Trying to get some material together about two quilts in which I want to interest ANTIQUES magazine; both quilts are extremely unusual and they ought to be published. What makes my task so difficult is there is no available history on either and, as an expert, I'm supposed to know something about them anyway!... The one I call the British Empire; it has all the things pertaining to England and her colonies depicted in applique on the quilt. Human figures representing Britannia, John Bull; others out of English history or literature. Then there is a Tree of Life in the center and all the animals of all the colonies surrounding it.

The woman who owns it, thinks it was made in the early 1800's but as she bought the quilt at auction in Connecticut, she knows nothing about it. She wants \$500 for it and naturally, desires to have people think it very old. People like this are anxious for me to give their quilts publicity but they get mad at me if I tell the truth as I see it; I am morally certain her quilt was not made until the last half of the 1800's. There are certain things: For instance, one block shows two prize fighters boxing with bare knuckles; padded gloves were introduced early in English ring history to be sure but fighters continued to box bare-fisted for many years. One of the fighters has side beards and looks like all the pictures of John L. Sullivan; he was not born until

cont. on next pg.

1858 and fought the last champion fight with bare fists in 1889. Besides, I think some of the tiny figures look like characters in the Gilbert and Sullivan operas one especially - Pinafore, a great English favorite. Well, if I am right, Pinafore was not sung until 1878 for the first time such characters could not get on a quilt before that time. Do you see what I mean? I've spent the last few days in the N.Y. Library trying to check upon data and all the pictures of costumes and all the cartoons of the 1800's I could lay my hands on. Some books were in one department of the library and some in others! I had to make out slips and sign and wait for books in each department. And now I don't know much about the quilt but I'm going in to ANTIQUES with a photograph of it tomorrow just the same. The editor may run the picture and let me tell what little I know about it but the chances are she will not pay anything for so small an item. Well we will see."

The textiles which compose the quilt, and which appear to be older than the designs, are wool - broadcloth, serge, fine twill, patterned mixtures (in the border of triangles) - with here and there a bit of velvet for effect. While white and pale yellow are used for contrast, for the most part the colors are dark - bottle and gray greens, rusty reds, black, brown, tan, rose navy and medium blues. Realistic details have been indicated with embroidery stitches in silk floss; the quilt is lined with woolen homespun but it is neither quilted nor tied to its background.

The editor evidently did let her tell about the quilt because a full page article and picture appeared in ANTIQUES, Sept. 1941. Mrs. Peto wrote a very lengthy and detailed description.

"The central medallion shows two tree trunks on whose branches a fearsome reptile coils and brilliant birds perch; what appears to be an anteater darts out his tongue. Overhead Hover butterflies, moths, and dragonflies. On the ground a dark skinned savage, with gold ear-ring, headdress, and a girdle of many colored feathers, flourishes a primitive weapon before an apologetic looking bear, while a sturdy horse rears up behind him. A chevron-like arrangement of red, white and blue stripes surrounds the central medallion; wild boars are displayed in two of the triangles and morning glories ornament the other two.

Classified

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Stolen Quilts

As quilts become more valuable, quilt thefts have increased. The JOURNAL will publish descriptions of stolen quilts in the hopes of reuniting the quilts and their owners. If you see one of these quilts, please notify us.

OHIO AMISH QUILT - black duck paddle set on point on a coffee colored background. Black thin inner border, hand dyed reddish brown outer border. Feather wreath quilting in blank square.

SUNBONNET SUE - green lattice work and borders all colors calico dresses. 1930's.

CATHEDRAL WINDOW made for a daughter's wedding present was stolen recently from a dry cleaners in the Minneapolis area. It was made of unbleached muslin in 4" blocks. The windows contained a variety of blue fabrics, and one window was satin with names and the date embroidered. It had a prairie points edging.

FROM THE MINNESOTA QUILTERS NEWS
Mar. 1980

"Carrie LaRosa, daughter of Minnesota Quilter member, Cathy LaRosa, recently heard her mother discussing the birth of a new baby. As is the nature of 3-year olds, her curiosity led her to ask her mother, 'Where did I come from?' Her mother answered, 'I made you.' Carrie then asked, 'You mean I was quilted?'"