

On The Book Shelf

THREADS OF HISTORY, Herbert Ridgeway Collins, Smithsonian Press, 1979, Washington D.C. \$60.

If the title suggests that Collins has written a history of fabrics, look again carefully. Not a history of threads, but something quite different: THREADS OF HISTORY is subtitled "Americana recorded on cloth... 1775 to the present". It is a pictorial record of our nation's political, social and cultural history as fabricated on banners, bandanas, quilts, samplers, broadsides and various other textile items.

America's separation from England and subsequent emergence as a separate nation were celebrated in textiles manufactured abroad. Our own textile industry burgeoned forth just at the time of George Washington's death, which was duly recorded on memorial banners. Since that time every presidential and Vice-Presidential candidate has had his likeness recorded on fabrics, usually on campaign banners and kerchieves. Meanwhile, national events, political slogans, instructional stories and games for children, advances in science, technology and art have all become grist for the fabric mill, textile productions depicting 200 years of American life.

Most of the 1500 items illustrated are political in nature, not less interesting for this slant. But quilt-lovers may feel somewhat slighted that only 30 quilts are included, of which a mere 13 found their way into the index. One wishes Mrs. Collins had searched a little harder for graphic, significant quilts that represent women's political commentary throughout our nation's development. Apart from these flaws this huge volume is peculiarly absorbing, so that intended browsing slips easily into attentive study. THREADS OF HISTORY would be an especially suitable addition to a textile reference collection.

W. Reddall

NOTE: Evie Landes is organizing a group of women and men who will study at the Univ. of London under the sponsorship of the American Institute of Foreign Studies during the summer of 1981. The four week course will emphasize color, design and textiles. One of the four weeks will include a course on the History of London complete with guided tours. The fifth week is reserved for foreign travels. For info: write Evie Landes, 25 Road Place, Woodside, CA 94062.

Project Quiltarian

From the PORTLAND OBSERVER May 1, 1980

Mrs. Osly J. Gates has initiated Project Quiltarian, a library reference to assist in providing documentary information about quilts of traditional designs, contemporary designs, original creations hand-made by Afro-Americans (particularly in Portland).

Photographic and biographical materials are needed on existing quilts by Blacks. Contact the Art Department of Central Library to complete a documentation form and other data for the following categories (ownership, construction, authorship):

1) ownership of an existing handmade quilt by an Afro-American

2) construction of a hand-made quilt currently existing by an Afro-American (the maker)

3) authorship of published or unpublished work on Afro-American quilts

The above information will remain on the premises of the library for reference.

The Manly Art of Quilting

cont. from pg 6

The price is virtually free! In 1978 this quiltmaker would make a quilt for \$40 including fabric or \$25 if the customer supplied the fabric. He was in a very poor neighborhood where many of his customers probably earn less than \$100 a month. Someone downtown would probably charge more... maybe \$50 for the labor alone. The average quilt would take two to four days depending on the intricacy of the design, which would also determine the price.

There is little or no interest in patchwork because these people live in rags. Their quilt is their luxury possession -the only "rich" item they buy. They want silks and moirees or at least rayon and acetate.

Such quilts are totally unwashable because the cotton filling would lump and the cotton seeds would turn yellow in soapy water. They are handbasted to top sheets before use and unbasted to launder the sheet.

Making quilts this way involves a lot of heavy work and very calloused hands. It is considered "man's work and women do not become apprentices or make the quilts. By tradition only the skilled craftsman makes quilts. It is his profession.

A woman quilter would cause more surprize and comments than men quilt artists in the United States presently do.

DIMENSIONS

Your block should be no larger than 18" including a coordinating solid color border and/or binding, and the block must be quilted.

Documentation:

Type on a muslin strip your Name, Address, Date, and Name of Square. Sew this onto the lower right hand corner of the back of your block, and attach a 3 x 5 card with the same information.

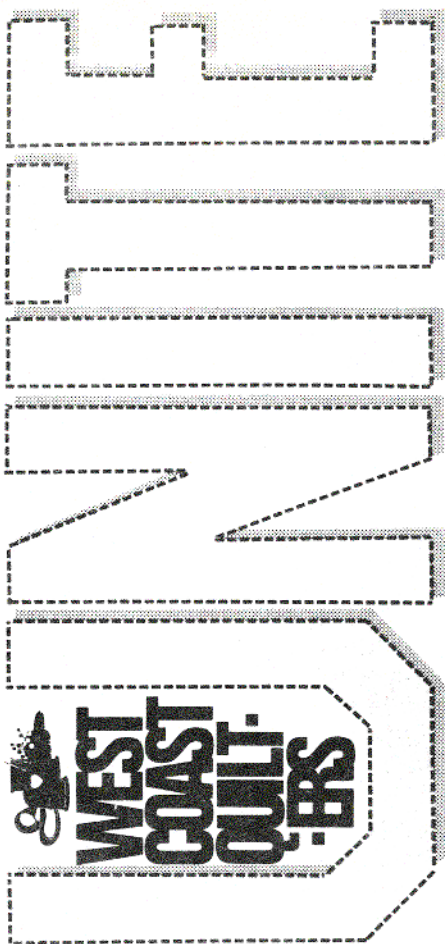
OBJECTIVE

Our objective is a museum quality collection, but in the meantime the blocks will be cared for and insured through your local quilt associations. Your finished block may be delivered to your local participating quilt store, or sent to **Patience Corners, 1382 Solano Avenue, Albany, CA 94706.**

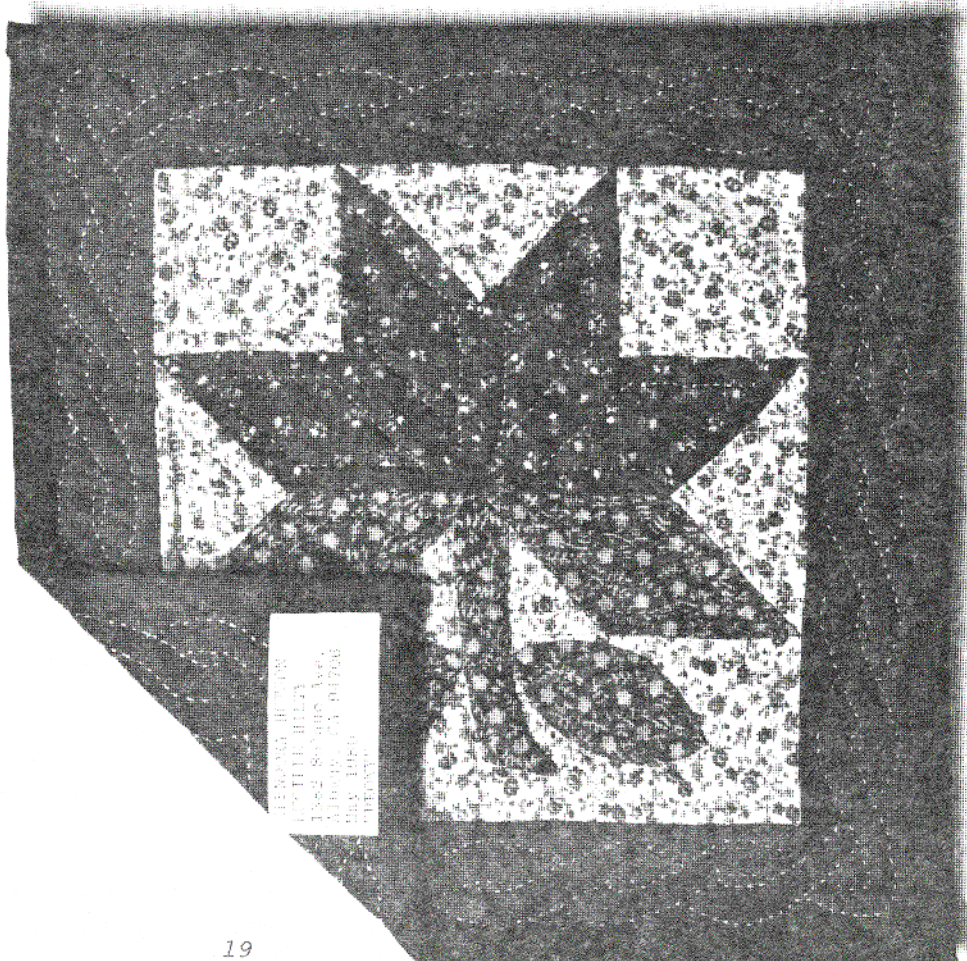
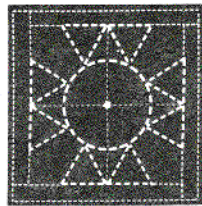
Please call for further information, but hurry, because although this will be an ongoing collection, our goal is November 1, 1980, so that the first showing will be in January, 1981. All participants will be notified. 415 526-5947.

PATIENCE CORNERS FABRICS

1382 Solano Ave.
Albany 526-5947
M-SA 10-5:30 Sun 1-5
YOUR SEWING RESOURCE STORE



Most of the U.S. thinks quilting doesn't exist this side of the Rockies. Have you noticed that all the collections in calendars and books are comprised of quilts from the East Coast and Midwest? Now is the time to let the world know what we are doing. Join your quilting friends from the West Coast in creating an outstanding quilt block collection that will document the imagination, creativity and workmanship that is our standard here in the West.



WEST COAST QUILTERS
1382 SOLANO AVE.
ALBANY, CA 94706
415 526-5947