

# QUILTERS' JOURNAL

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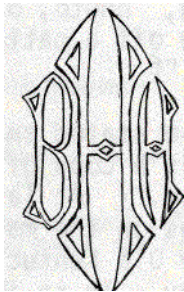


The Laurel - The quilt on my left - is the  
one I copied from Martha Washington's attic.  
I wish I could get all in one picture, but  
that just can't be -

Betty  
April 1950 -

## BETTY HARRIMAN

HARRIMAN, Elizabeth (Betty) Harned, quiltmaker, quilt collector, textile collector. Born September 22, 1890 in Bunceton, MO. Died June 21, 1971 in Bunceton, MO. Married Col. R. L. Harriman. Daughter of Ben & Betty Bradley Harned. One of nine daughters and the second of 11 children. Attended Bunceton High School, William Woods College, Fulton & Warrensburg State College. Taught school until married. Other interests: Gardening, dolls, church. Membership in: Daughters of the Confederacy, held office as historian. Hotel manager for 50 years. Retired to Windmere Farm, MO.



Betty (Elizabeth) Harned Harriman was born on Sept. 22, 1890 on a farm in Bunceton, Missouri. In early 1900 her parents purchased an adjacent farm and "Windmere Farm" has been the family home ever since. Betty attended Bunceton High School, William Woods College, Fulton and Warrensburg State College and then taught school until her marriage to Col. R. L. Harriman. After their marriage they made their home in Bunceton until his death.

While managing hotels and living in Virginia in Point Comfort, Natural Bridge and Abington, Mrs. Harriman became very interested in historical quilts and fabrics. She began visiting many of Virginia's old homes and museums and then asked for and received permission to sketch and photograph the old quilts. She began collecting old fabrics (calico, chintz, linsey-woolsey, homespun, etc.) and quilts. She found the fabric research almost as intriguing as the quilt research. She collected quilts in Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Missouri. She collected fabrics all along the Eastern seaboard, especially in the Boston area.

"I always loved quilts, even as a child. The first one I made was for my doll's bed," said Mrs. Harriman. "I made my first full-size quilt in 1920 - the Rose of Sharon - and I paid 75 a yard for the cloth. No one but a millionaire would pay that much for quilt material then - I was convinced I had the finest quilt (top) in America. When it was finished I sent it to the St. Louis Fancy Work Company to be quilted."<sup>1</sup>

With her sketches and photographs of the old quilts to copy, she began to make quilts using old textiles from her collection and her ability as a needlewoman to duplicate as authentically as possible the quilts from the historic homes and museums.



*This quilt. I made especially for "Wakefield"  
Geo. Washington's  
Birth Place -  
Virginia*

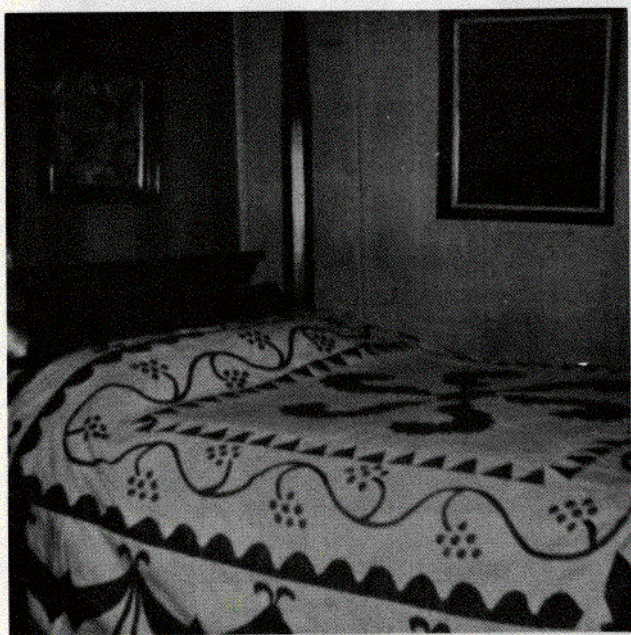
*Betty H. Harriman*

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"The biggest problem in reproducing or restoring old quilts," Mrs. Harriman pointed out, "is finding the cloth to work with. I have a trunk full of old fabrics and sometimes I can match a design perfectly. When I must resort to using today's reproductions of the old prints I soften bright colors to obtain a mellowed look by artificially fading them. I use coffee and tea, sometimes a bleach, and most often exposure to sunlight."<sup>2</sup>

One such example of her reproductions is displayed in the upstairs bedroom of George Washington's Birthplace, Virginia.<sup>3</sup> It is a replica of a Tree of Life quilt<sup>4</sup> which the staff of the historic place greatly admired. It had become worn and could no longer be used. Betty reproduced it using antique fabrics including a roller print. Hand tied fringe was used on the edge. It was completed in 1967 and presented to the Wakefield Historical Association.<sup>5</sup>



"Washingtons Plum"  
Found on a bed  
at Mt Vernon  
Brown Colles  
1965-

The staff invited Betty to be the guest of the state of Virginia and design the redecoration of the museum. Unfortunately she died shortly before the request came. Her family sent two quilts to the museum in her memory, one of which was the Laurel a copy of an 18th century Mt. Vernon quilt.

"Betty Harriman's workmanship was certainly on a par with other 20th century quiltmakers whose work is more generally known through museum catalogs. She was not known (to many) and had no desire to be known. She got complete satisfaction in creating beautiful things and collecting them in solitude and anonymity. Her unique and very special talent was an ability to look at a drawing, photo, or the quilt itself and sketch off a pattern which was in perfect scale."<sup>6</sup>

In 1970 an article stated that Betty's "latest project is a copy of a quilt called Washington Rose."<sup>7</sup> At last report the original quilt was on the master four-poster bed in "My Old Kentucky Home" in Bardston, Kentucky. It is interesting to note that Betty's great grandfather, Judge John Rowan built that "Home" for his family and that a relative, Stephen Foster, wrote the song, "My Old Kentucky Home" while he was visiting the Harned family.

It continued to be the family home for several generations, but it is now a Kentucky State Historical Shrine. Betty's grandmother, Marcia Pash Harned, was born there and lived in the house until she married and moved to Missouri in 1855.

Among the family treasures is a beautiful silver tea urn said to have been brought by the Marquis de Lafayette to Betty's grandmother Clarinda Sibert. Clarinda's son was named Return Lafayette Bradley.

Betty's family tree includes Robert E. Lee and, by marriage, George Washington.

After Betty Harriman's death, each family member was given quilts of their choice and the bulk of the remainder were sold to Rhea Goodman Gallery, New York. Some unfinished quilts in all stages of completion, tops, and quilt patterns were

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## On the Book Shelf

Continued

acquired by Mary Schafer of Flushing, Michigan. She has completed a number of them.

*We are grateful to Mary Schafer, a long time friend and correspondent of Betty Harriman, for compiling the information used in the article from newspaper and magazine articles and correspondence from her personal file.*

\*\*\*\*\*BIBLIOGRAPHY\*\*\*\*\*

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Holmes, Bryan *THE KATE GREENAWAY BOOK*, Viking Press, New York, 1976.

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### THE QUILT MAKER'S HANDBOOK

by Michael James, published by Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632. 1978, Soft cover, 138 pgs, 6.98.

THE QUILTMAKER'S HANDBOOK is a very complete step-by-step instruction book with many photographs about how to make a quilt. I remember a county fair prize winner some years back telling me how she had searched through every book in the library on quilts to find out whether she should use a single or double thread for quilting. Here's the book to answer just such questions and all the other beginner questions that so many quilt books ignore.

Even long time quilters will find a share of tips. I liked the one to use a flannel backed tablecloth, flannel side up, to lay out the fabric while marking. It will prevent stretching.

Mr. James gets a trifle "wordy" at times and it becomes necessary to read and reread a passage, in order to get the meaning. "In that applique offers a more flexible and unrestricted approach to linear expression than does pieced work. (pg.52) is an example.

The color pictures are excellent and it is a delight to see his own works in such detail. Mr. James is to be congratulated for this welcome addition to the quilt library of books.

HAVE YOU SEEN .....

In Dec. '78 *GOOD HOUSEKEEPING* a full color picture of Grandma Moses' White Christmas quilt made by Chris Wolf Edmonds and a few glimpses of some others... In the Dec. '78 *FAMILY CIRCLE* under "Readers' Idea Exchange" a suggestion that original quilt blocks signed and dated be exchanged instead of Christmas gifts and cards.. In the Fall '78 issue of *NEEDLEARTS* published by the Embroiderers' Guild of America an article on "The Crazy Quilt"...Oct. issue of *KANSAS FARMER* has color pictures of Chris Edmonds and Betty Hagerman quilts among others...HOUSE BEAUTIFUL "Colonial Homes" has a quilt article in it.