

LADIES AID GIVES QUILT PAGEANT TO OVERFLOW AUDIENCE

From LIFE magazine, Sept 22, 1941

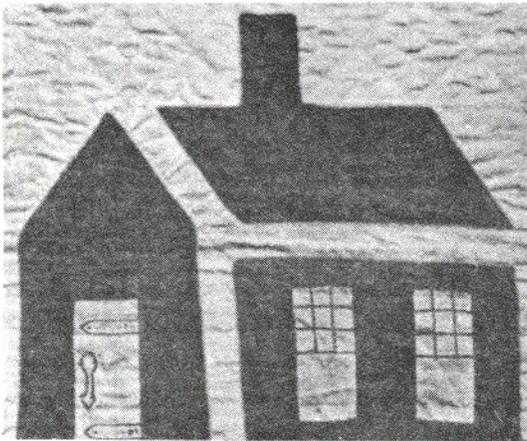


Every summer the Ladies Aid Society of Georges Mill, N.H. holds a fair. Highlight of the fair this year was a pageant, "Counterpanes and Coverlets", in which the featured players were quilts, some made by the ladies of Georges Mills, some inherited from their mothers and grandmothers. That the pageant was as exciting to Georges Mills as a boogie-woogie band to Broadway is proved by the fact that the pageant played to an audience which filled the Community Methodist Church, had an overflow of standees.

The pageant, a homey glorification of one of the simplest yet most gratifying forms of self-expression, is written and copyrighted by Ethel Hawthorne Tewksbury, a maiden lady of Andover, Mass who charges \$5. for production rights. The script calls for a narrator and twelve performers, all dressed in colonial costumes, and twelve

quilts. As the narrator tells the story of each quilt, a performer displays it. At Georges Mills, Mrs. Brownlow Thompson, wife of the minister, was the narrator. Mrs. Frank Holmes, the beaming lady who holds the red schoolhouse quilt above, played one of the four quilters.

Georges Mills is one of numerous New England communities where Miss Tewksbury's pageant has been presented. It offers a legitimate excuse for showing one's handiwork and inherited possessions. Scores of quilts are used to decorate the walls of church and vestry. There are crazy quilts with more than 2,000 pieces of material stitched together, quilts with all-over designs like the schoolhouse, flower and pinwheel quilt, quilts with appliqued patterns in squares like the one framing Mrs. Holmes' head, and quilts which are mostly a lady's own idea of what looks pretty.



Schoolhouse quilt detail shows main outline made of appliqued patches. Latch, hinges, window panes are embroidered.



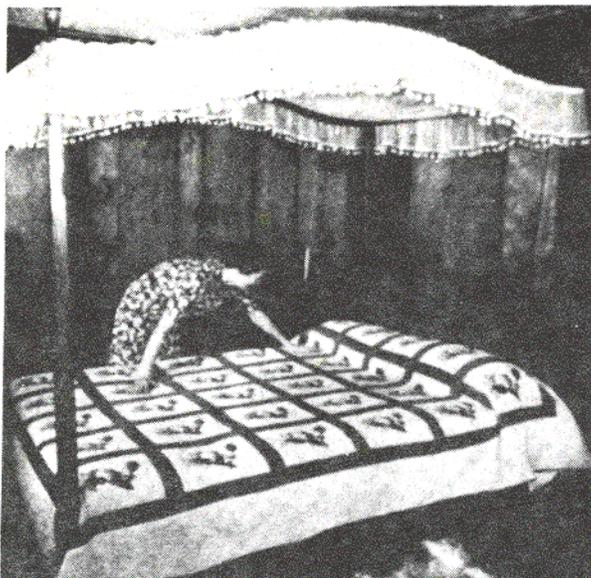
Album quilt held by Mrs. Walter Holmes, made in 1870 by Susan G Stocker, is a prized heirloom for the many signatures of the New Hampshire residents of that period.



Fox and Geese is traditional name of quilt in background. Mrs. H C Winter holds a quilt pieced by her great-aunt about 75 years ago. The pattern follows no set design.



Prairie Rose quilt held by Mrs. C Nichols and mother Mrs. H Serviss, was made by Mrs. Nichols great-grandmother in 1879. Background quilt has rolling-star pattern.

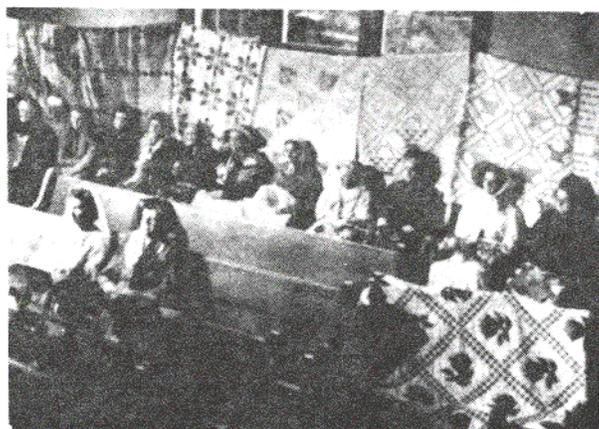


(a)

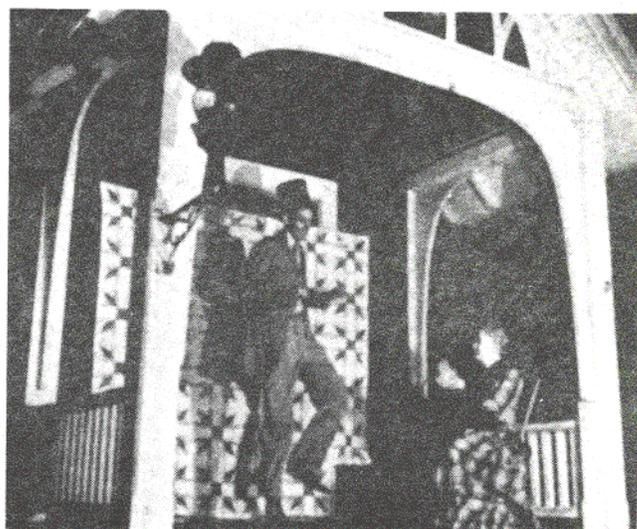
(a) Holly quilt of red and green design, owned and appliqued by Mrs. Curtis Caldwell, is used in place of bed-spread. Old quilt enhances the atmosphere of 150-year-old room

(b) Performers in costume rest between acts in rear of church surrounded by ten antiquated quilts. Oldest quilt dates back to 1825. Costumes are heirloom attic treasures

(c) Turkey Track quilt forms backdrop for buckand-wing routine performed by the 31-year old Rev. Brownlow L Thompson. Mrs. Stella Russell claps out the beat.



(b)



(c)

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the Archives of American Art at the Detroit Institute of Art, the Detroit Historical Museum, the Dossin Great Lakes Marine Museum and Ft Wayne. The latter was built in the 17th century."

Ms Malanyn told Marguerite Austin of the PRESS & GUIDE NEWSPAPERS in an article entitled "Researcher to show slides" Mar 12, 1981 that as she researched the quilts and their makers, she learned something about the time in which the people lived. "Photographs of quiltmakers in the dress of their eras in wedding portraits or with their husbands and children gave me a taste of their times and a look into their lives."

On Mar 19, 1981 after the project was over, Ms Malanyn presented a program of 140 slides of quilts to the public. One set of slides is with the Dearborn Historical Museum and arrangements may be made for them with the Museum. A duplicate set of slides and a script describing the quilts in detail and interesting and historical facts about the quiltmakers

was sent to the AAUW Headquarters.

Since Nov 1980 Ms Malanyn has been a resident of Barton City near Alpena, Michigan where her husband is Prosecuting Attorney. They live in the heart of the Huron National Forest overlooking a beautiful wooded lake. Although she is delighted with lovely setting she writes, "It is not easy to turn my former summer cottage into a permanent home here in the middle of the Huron National Forest. Distance and time are the determining factors for everything."

As we go to press, Ms Malanyn has several projects in mind. She is preparing an article for the DEARBORN HISTORIAN, the quarterly publication of the Museum and has some interesting thoughts about a calendar using some of the research. Since her time has been consumed with research, she has had little time for quilting so no doubt there is a quilt or two she has been planning.