



QUILTING ARTISTS - Mrs Mary Jay (left) and her sister, E. Noble Ball qualify as quilting experts. Together they have turned out more than 100 quilts. Mrs. Jay is holding an appliqued Tulip quilt and Miss Ball is displaying an afghan. LEDGER PHOTO

SISTER QUILTERS

From the Fairfield Ledger 5/8/67

The nimble fingers of two Fairfield sisters, E. Noble Ball and Mrs. Mary Jay, are busily flying along the intricate designs of one quilt or another almost any day of the week, morning, noon or night.

The sisters, who live at 306 E Washington, recently quilted their 119th quilt and are now at work finishing two cross-stitch creations for twin beds.

Mrs. Jay is the faster worker of the pair and sews a yard of thread in ten minutes. A quilt can be finished in two weeks. The last one was a Rolling Stone pattern, requiring 483 yards of thread, completely pieced, padded and quilted by the two.

Miss Ball and Mrs. Jay are natives of Jefferson County by three generations. Their parents, the late Mr. and Mrs. Frank P Ball, lived on a farm near Wooster with their four daughters and one son, George M Ball. The children's grandfather, Smith Ball, was one of Jefferson County's early settlers.

The girls began quilting when they were 10 and 11 years old. Their mother had worked in a tailoring shop and made sure her daughters learned to sew. Of course, this included hemstitching and embroidery.

Their maternal grandmother made a quilt at the age of 17 by candlelight. She weeded onions for her sister in order to earn money to buy the calico for the quilt. She was also an expert at making pleated white bosom shirts.

The sisters began making quilts for others in

1935 ... They have made their home together since 1932. Mrs. Jay's husband, the late Carl Jay died in 1953.

Miss Ball was the first woman bookkeeper at the Iowa State Bank, when she began work in 1918. She retired in 1954. After that time, she assisted in the offices of assessor, auditor and treasurer at the Jefferson County Courthouse.

Mary and Noble appliqued and quilted several of Mrs. Lillian Walker's originally designed quilts including The Robin Quilt The Friends of the Forest, and The Old Homestead. These beautiful pieces of needlework are known throughout the state.

The Rolling Stone quilt pattern which they have used many times was one their mother had at the time she was married...

The sisters have quilted several Wedding Rings and Mrs. Keith Goltry owns two Flower Gardens which they created and quilted.

Miss Ball and Mrs. Jay have made the Rose o Sharon for Mrs. Harry Smith, The Dresden Plate for Mrs. Laura Leonard, The Wedgewood Blossom for Mrs. L.T. Evans and The Humming Bird for Mrs. Rob't Phipps. This is to name only a few.

They use old fashioned quilting frames which were produced for them in the manual training department of Fairfield High School

Mrs. Jay has as a keepsake the silver thimble her grandfather gave her. It long ago developed a hole in the top and is no longer

ARIZONA CRAZY QUILT - cont from pg 11

In an article in the NEWTON BEE (Newton Conn July 29, 1977) Mrs. Spark compared the quilt with hundreds of crazy quilts she had seen and said, "this quilt ... is typical of (other) Victorian crazy patch quilts ... (however) I have not seen one decorated with desert flowers" (and other motifs typical of Arizona). The Society felt there were so few quilts identified with the early Territory it was important to acquire this historically unique piece.

The Society speculates that the five sets of initials appearing in various panels may represent women who made the blocks and the dates (1885 & 1887) the start and completion of the quilt. Nogales A.T. (Ariz Territory) was a small town which received its post office name in 1883. "Viva La Independencia" (barely discernable) reflects the Mexican heritage of this border town. Unfortunately no one has been able to decipher the other symbols. If readers

have additional information or theories, the Historical Society would appreciate being contacted.

In 1940 the Arizona Pioneer's Historical Society had the Flood's daughter, Ida Flood Dodge fill out a family biographical sketch She wrote that her father John Flood was born in Stockton, Calif in 1854 and her mother, Annie Laranja Browne was born in Stockton on Mar 22, 1955. They were married in 1876 and had six children.

The Floods moved to Arizona in 1880 and settled in Tucson in 1890 where Mr Flood was connected with the newly constructed Southern Pacific Railroad.

At John Flood's death (1925) the obituaries listed two daughters, Mrs. A L Vogel and Mrs. Guy E Dodge and two sons, J Leslie and Maynard Flood all residing in Tucson. Another son Walker E Flood resided in Mazatlan, Sinaloa, Mexico and a daughter Mrs. George Walling lived in Fresno, Calif.

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in use. Many pricked fingers are the results of their labors. It is necessary to feel the needle coming through the cloth to do an excellent job of quilting. They used 100 per cent cotton for backing with no seam. The padding these days is soft and beautiful.

Another talent of these versatile craftswomen is crocheting and knitting afghans. They have made about 14 . . .

Mary and Noble also make little crocheted pin cushions, based on a mason jar lid cardboard, with a small hole in the center for the thimble. They create tiny felt bookmarkers in the shape of mittens. These cover a hair clip.

Miss Ball and Mrs. Jay are very active in the Log Cabin Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. They are also 50 year members of the Order of Eastern Star.

There is no television in the neat and wonderfully homey house of the sisters. They have not felt the need for one. They listen to the radio while they sew and enjoy reading in their spare time.

Their active minds and joyous spirits along with their talented fingers, keep them among the blessed "young at heart."

Ed note: Mrs. Jay and Miss Ball also made Grandmother's Fancy, designed by Lillian Walker and pictured in QJ Spring '81 pg 3 and owned by Lucile and Ben Taylor.

F. Noble Ball died Mar 21, 1971 at the age of 84 and her sister Mrs. Mary Jay died July 17, 1975 at the age of 90.

Quilters, —
Miss E. Noble Ball
306 East Washington St.
Fairfield

— — —
Her sister who lives
with her is —
Mrs. Jay. —
Quilt miss Ball is the
'power behind the throne.'

From a note sent to Harriet Berman by
Lillian Walker