

From the collection of Harry MacNeill Bland

The sketchy designs of the printed cloth evidently show scenes in Pennsylvania and along the Mississippi at about the same period, although obviously not based on Hall's drawings.

The journey recorded in these cottons starts at the top left, evidently picturing the environs of the Quaker City, as suggested by the costume of the little figures on the lawn and by the architecture of the house, which may have been an inn. Thence the migrants proceeded by horseback, by stagecoach, by covered wagon, and by boat, all of which conveyances are duly depicted. In the Philadelphia or Conestoga wagons with curved canvas tops were not only settlers but merchants with wares to sell on the frontier - including such printed cottons as this one, hand-loomed in Philadelphia. The canal at the top right is not the Erie, the opening of which in 1825 quieted doubts as to the practicability of the canal and gave impetus to canal construction. This canal bears a resemblance in composition and landscape characteristics to a painting by E. L. Henry, made more than half a century later, titled *Before the Days of Rapid Transit*. Henry, three of whose genre pictures are included in the current *Life in America* exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, was active in New York near the end of the last century, but he had previously studied at the Pennsylvania Academy and was not unfamiliar with the Lancaster County landscape of Pennsylvania. This is the Susquehanna Valley, low, and with an abundance of rhododendrons.

The third scene is obviously on the Mississippi. The trade with New Orleans was the prize for which the manufacturers of New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore competed. Here a cotton plantation skirts the river; moss hangs from the trees; the tree at the left is a palmetto. On the river itself is a flatboat, a very early double-stacked steamboat with its paddle wheel at the stern. Farther away are more palatial steamboats, with their wheels in the middle, one coming upstream and one going down. Hence the date of these pieces of printed cotton is later than 1817, when the first successful trip upstream from New Orleans to Louisville was made by the steamboat *Etna*. A railroad would complete the picture of the various means of conveyance used along the Pennsylvania system: stagecoach, horseback, Conestoga wagon, canal boat, and, over the Allegheny Mountains, a portage railroad. The last, a great engineering feat, was opened to the public in 1834.

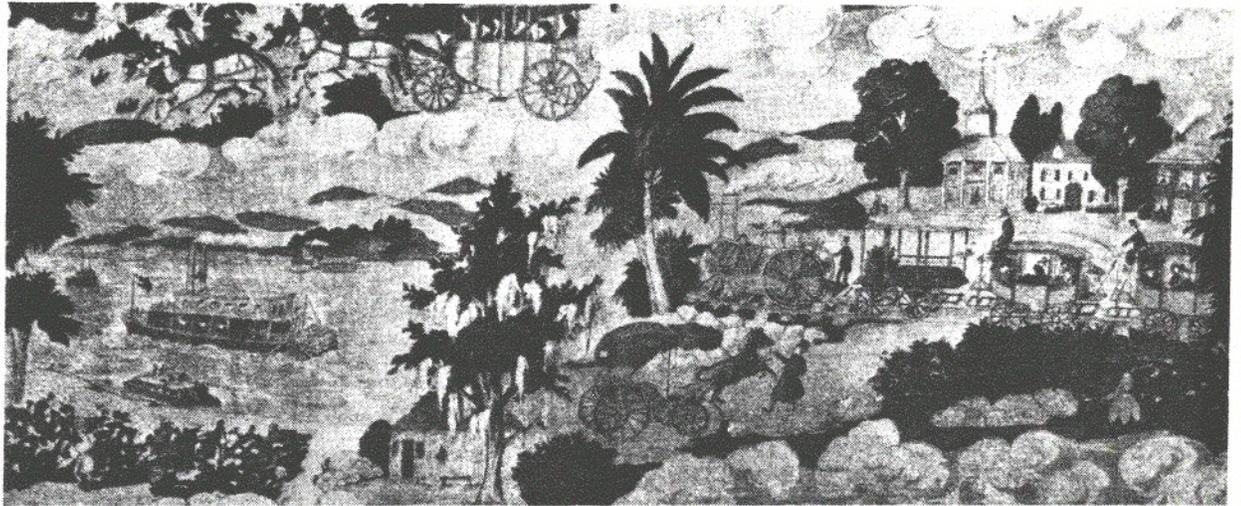
Unless the remainder of the original design is definitely proven to have included a train, however, we may assume that these pieces antedate the building of the railroad. The pattern is related to early river views. In subject matter these pieces bear a kinship to a printed cotton handkerchief in the American Wing of the Metropolitan Museum, an earlier treatment of a related theme which depicts in rose on cream a view near the covered bridge built about 1812 over the Schuylkill River near Philadelphia. This travelogue on cotton is probably to be dated between 1825 and 1830.

A COTTON TRAVELOGUE By ESTHER LEWITTES

MANY old prints, reflecting the life of a vital, expanding society, deserve to be considered as historical material. Such are three pieces of printed cotton that have been studied by the New York unit of the Index of American Design, a part of the W.P.A. Arts Program. These three pieces, whose over-all measurement is 33 by 21 7/8 inches, were originally parts of a single pattern from which one unit is now missing. In a surprisingly detailed and inclusive fashion the series depicts the stages of travel along the route from Philadelphia and Baltimore to New Orleans in the early nineteenth century. This was the period when migration on a large scale began - and when the Ohio and Mississippi valleys were still the western frontier.

Not only settlers and merchants, but also tourists from the Old World traveled in long processions of covered wagons over the Cumberland Road. Among the accounts of their travels that remain to us is a pictorial record made by Captain Basil Hall, who in 1829 published in Edinburgh a book called *Forty Etchings from Sketches Made with the Camera Lucida in North America in 1827-1828*. Incidentally, this book supplied Staffordshire potters with designs for many of their "American views." Hall's map shows that part of his journey followed, in reverse, the route indicated by our pieces of printed cotton. Starting from New Orleans, he went up the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers to Pittsburgh, along the Juniata River to Harrisburg, along the Susquehanna to Lancaster, thence to Philadelphia, and on to New York and points north and south.

FIG. 1 - A Cotton Travelogue. This section of a printed cotton completes the pattern illustrated in the December issue of ANTIQUES. It is a modern reproduction of the original piece which was made about 1830. The two scenes in the upper section, not shown here, depict a Conestoga wagon and a canal boat. From the collection of Miss Elizabeth F. Graves



Transportation Textile

PUBLICATION of the article A Cotton Travelogue by Esther Lewittes, in ANTIQUES for December 1939, elicited sharp protest from Elizabeth F. Graves of Worthington, Ohio. The three fragments of a fabric there illustrated could not, she wrote, be ascribed to any such early date as 1825-1830. She possesses a large piece of cotton, printed with the same design, which was purchased brand-new not ten years ago! Miss Graves was good enough to forward to the Attic a length of her material, that it might be compared at first hand with the fragments. Examination vindicated the published cotton. Though the other piece reproduces with fair accuracy, it is obviously a reproduction. The fabric itself is of different quality; the colors are flatter, lacking the richness of the older piece; and numerous details of shading and definition are omitted.

Not only was the authenticity of the fragments established. Miss Lewittes' surmise that the missing section of the repeat depicted a railroad scene was proved correct. The lower section is reproduced from the modern cotton in Figure 1. A steam engine pulling a fuel car and two passenger cars puffs past the church and dwellings of a village,

attracting the stares of children and their mothers and terrifying a horse hitched to a buggy. This scene may serve to date the original print slightly later than 1830, but not much. By 1833 railroad cars of the stagecoach type were being replaced by cars lone enough to seat sixty passengers, and cars approximating the present American type were in use as early as 1835.

One further comment on this interesting textile. Carl W. Drepperd takes exception to certain of Miss Lewittes' statements as to the locale depicted in the various parts of the design. Perhaps close identification of these is not permissible. Granting that the artist might have taken liberties with the actualities, the possibility should not be overlooked that he had no specific setting in mind for each of his four scenes, but filled in an appropriate background largely drawn from his imagination. Thus, the house in the Conestoga scene need not represent Philadelphia architecture, but merely a house, or a tavern, somewhere on the overland route. The fact that the low-lying landscape along the canal does not, as Mr. Drepperd points out, look like the Susquehanna Valley need not detract from the validity of the canaling scene. Now that the missing unit of the design has been applied, this cotton travelogue becomes of even greater interest.

"A Cotton Travelogue" is reprinted from ANTIQUES Dec 1939. "Transportation Textile" is reprinted from ANTIQUES March 1940

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I've enjoyed the JOURNALS over the years and find they improve with each rereading ...The current issue is/was so interesting. I suppose it's because like thousands of other people, I feel as if I know Bonnie Leman and it was wonderful fun to read about her life, family and the growth of QUILTER'S NEWSLETTER.

Elaine Miles, San Pedro CA

I grew up in the Kansas City area and am familiar with many of the areas that some of those early ladies are from - Emporia, Wichita, Lawrence, and other small Kansas towns. It fascinates me to read all about what went on back then - so please continue with all the quilt history it is possible to find. Marilyn Hann

I've been "with" you since your first year and I can't believe how each issue contains more info than ever. So many "jewels" of quilt history have been unearthed since the JOURNAL began.

I especially appreciate your focus on the historical and the traditional. While I try to keep an open mind of the "new quilt" being developed today, I can't help feel that quilt design has had a Golden Age just like Greece and Rome and when I make my own quilts, my eye is much more likely to turn backwards rather than forwards. Thanks for the notices about the many museum catalogs of gorgeous specimens that I would not have known about otherwise. Cindy Davis, Pagosa Springs CO