

ALBERT SMALL

In the JOURNAL #21 , Barbara Brackman wrote an article entitled 'Record Breaking Quilts' in which Albert Small was mentioned for his quilt made of 63,467 hexagons. We found two additional articles to add to your collection.

The following article was originally published in HISTORIC QUILTS by Florence Peto, Amer Historical Co. Inc NY 1939 pg 128.

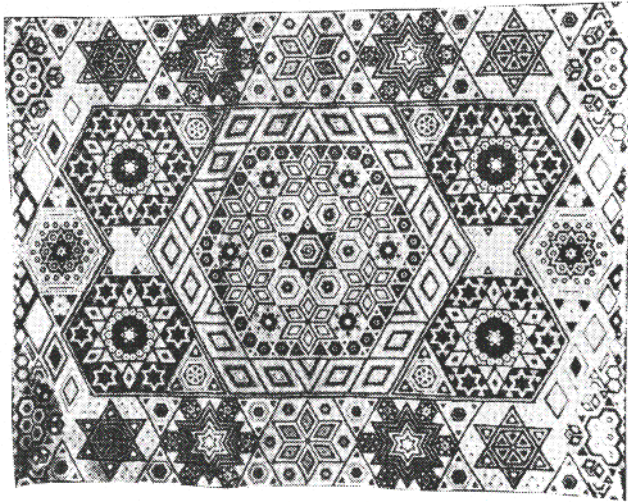


Plate #43

Plate No 43 shows a quilt completed in this year of 1939 by Mr Albert Small of Ottawa, Illinois. His elaborate mosaic composition contains 63,460 hexagonal pieces which were the size of a ten cent piece before the seams were taken off. Using a hexagonal piece of copper for his pattern, Mr Small declares that he can cut 1600 pieces from one yard of goods. This is his second quilt of similar construction, the first having contained only 36,000 pieces and having taken fourteen months to make. Mr Small was born in High Wycombe England in 1886 but he has lived in America for the last thirtyseven years. He is foreman for the Ottawa Silica Sand Company and his fingers are as nimble plying the needle to make a quilt at night as they are Working with sand plant machinery and handling dynamite and other explosives during the day. It would seem that quilting is not only the resort of men retired from active life but furnishes the recreation and relaxation of men still engaged in strenuous labors. Mr Small has been engaged in his occupation for the past thirty years, but his interest in quilting began only four years ago as he watched his wife and daughter-in-law piece quilts. He told them he could make a quilt which would contain more and smaller patches than any they could make, and proceeded to do it.

cont on pg 14

The following article is from an old newspaper with no date but presumed to be 1940s.

America's champion quilt maker!

The title can be awarded to Albert Small of 1117 Pine St, who works with heavy sand pit machinery by day and by night as a hobby pieces quilts.

Now he has practically completed one with 123,000 pieces - nearly twice as many as the one with the 63,450 pieces which gave him nationwide acclaim as a quilt maker a few years ago.

Before that he had completed one with 38,000 pieces. How many knots does that require? There are 250,000 on the quilt with the 123,000 pieces, so the knots probably total 500,000.

Small's quilt making is only one of his hobbies. He is an artist who has painted the beautiful pieces which hang in his home. On the back porch is... a collection of 160 pairs of salt and pepper shakers.

The quilt with the 123,000 pieces of work, so far as Small knows, is not exceeded by any other in the United States. He was assured by the publisher of a trade newspaper devoted to the quilting hobby that his quilt of 38,000 pieces at that time was the champion of its type in the United States.

The tiny pieces, carefully cut out and then sewed together are hexagon in shape. A dime will cover four of them and almost cover the fifth.

Four years of work went into his masterpiece of quilt. Time was spent on it in the evening and when he was not otherwise occupied. Big hands that handled heavy sand pit machinery proved dexterous in making his quilt even as they proved talented in painting.

The quilts are of different design. That in itself is a task for the designs must be artistic and the thousands of tiny pieces of various colors must harmonize, shade properly and not clash.

But Small accomplished what he set out to do. The quilt ... has not been bound around the edges and made ready for exhibition as were the others.

Small is a native of England, as is his wife who came to the United States 36 years ago.

GAME 2

Game 2 begins with the June 1884 issue of FARM & FIRESIDE MAGAZINE. It named this quilt pattern "Double Wrench". Five years later, in 1889, LADIES ART CO. St Louis, MO, published the pattern, repeating the name, as #148 "Double Wrench".

(Here, I must digress a bit, but I'll soon be back on track. LADIES ART CO. "started something" in 1889, quite innocently, I'm sure. LADIES Art presented two quilt patterns, #148 "Double Wrench" and #112 "Churn Dash", which are similar in appearance and construction. Yet, as presented, they are different patterns. However, I am convinced LADIES ART's early presentation of these similar designs has been one of the contributing factors in the now common practice of calling "Double Wrench" by the name "Churn Dash", and vice versa.)

Now to continue... In the OHIO FARMER in 1896, our game pattern was titled "The Wrench". In 1898 the Ohio Farmer became more explicit and called it "The Monkey Wrench". In 1899 LADIES HOME JOURNAL listed the pattern as "The Wrench".

In the 1900-1919 period, I found these published names for our pattern: "Square Triangles" in OHIO FARMER (1911), "Maltese Cross" in PICTORIAL REVIEW (1913), and "Bride's Knot" in ORANGE JUDD FARMER (1913).

In the 1920's, the number of names for our pattern increased. It was called "Aeroplane", "Dragon's Head" and "Monkey Wrench" by WOMAN'S WORLD, "T Design" or "T Quartette" by FARM AND FIRESIDE; "Wrench" by CAPPER'S FARMER; "Old Mill" by FARMER'S WIFE, and #3543N "Fisherman's Reel" by NEEDLECRAFT MAGAZINE, Augusta, Maine. WALLACES' FARMER applied three different names to this pattern at various times in 1928 - "Hens and Chickens", "True Lover's Knot" and "Broad Axe".

In the 1930's, the number of names our pattern acquired increased even more. FARM JOURNAL and Nancy Cabot called it "Chinese Coin". KCS Eveline Foland named it both "Crow's Nest" and "Churn Dash". In PRAIRIE FARMER, it became "Indian Hammer". Nancy Page assigned names "French 4's" and "Joan's Doll's Quilt"; while Helen Kaufmann termed it "The Monkey Wrench". Nancy Cabot called it "Double Monkey Wrench"; and McKim used the name "Churn Dash". Needlecraft Supply, Chicago, gave it the titles - "Colonial Design", "Baseball Diamond", and "Churn Dash", while HOUSEHOLD MAGAZINE, Topeka, Kansas, favored the name "Greek Cross".

In the 1940's, our pattern became "Lincoln's Platform" in WOMAN'S DAY; "Quail's Nest" in ANTIQUE JOURNAL, and Ickis reverted to "Churn Dash".

In the 1950-60's CAPPERS used two names for the pattern - "Pioneer Patch" and "Sherman's March". The Public Service Co. of Northern Illinois remained steadfast with "Double Monkey Wrench". Dolores Hinson chose "Hole in the Barn Door" and "Sherman's March". Joy Craddock, in her 4 J'S BULLETIN, did one of the most fascinating studies of this pattern I've encountered. She traced it by time and region from "Churn Dash" to "Sherman's March" to "Peek Hole" to "Picture Frame" to "Ludlow's Favorite" to "Fisherman's Reel" to "Monkey Wrench" to "Single Wishing Ring"!!!

Present-day published sources (1970's), thus had a large accumulation of names from which to choose for our game pattern. Here are their selections. CAPPERS chose the name "Pioneer Patch"; "Churn Dash" was the choice of Dolores Hinson and Beth Gutcheon. "Sherman's March" was also a Gutcheon selection. Mahier used "Wrench". QUILTER'S NEWSLETTER CATALOG chose "Hole in the Barn Door", and AEROPLANE (a WOMAN'S WORLD reprint). TUMBLING ALLEY CATALOG chose "Hole in the Barn Door", "Churn Dash" #1 and "Double Monkey Wrench". Helen Ericson (MRS DANNER'S QUILTS) called it "Quail's Nest". Martha Marshall's choice was "Dove in the Window II", and AUNT MARTHA'S was "Lincoln's Platform". Carter Houck called the pattern "Monkey Wrench" or "Double Monkey Wrench", and Heard & Pryer termed it "Churn Dash".

How many different published names did we find for our quilt pattern from 1884? We found 36. Did the pattern retain its integrity, and manage to hold on to its 1884 name? Yes. For in almost every decade, some published source continued to use this pattern's original name.

ALBERT SMALL- *cont from pg 9*

"I find only a little time to work on my quilts in spare moments after dinner at night. When I start, I do not know exactly what kind of design I am going to have," explained Mr Small. "I start with a star and make it up as I go along."

Until someone comes forward with a quilt containing over 63,460 patches, it would seem as if the honors belong to the quiltmaker of Ottawa. Needlewoman look to your laurels!"