

THE BIBLE QUILT

One of the most famous quiltmakers of the 1940s & '50s was Bertha Stenge of Chicago. A multi-prizewinner in many big quilt contests of that period, her intricate applique quilts with elaborate quilting designs were an inspiration to many. At Mrs Stenge's death in 1957, her quilts were inherited by her three daughters. The quilts belonging to Francis Traynor, the oldest daughter, have remained in her possession. One daughter subsequently died and left her share of the quilts to her three daughters. The youngest daughter, Prudence Fuchsman offered her quilts for sale in 1971. The CHICAGO TRIBUNE of April 5, 1971 ran an announcement of the sale and a full page color picture of the "Bible Quilt" in the

Ed note: The whereabouts of BS's "Bible Quilt" is unknown and the JOURNAL would appreciate information about it and all other "Bible Quilts" made from this pattern.

"Feminique" section with the caption, "The lighthearted feeling evoked by this hand-stitched quilt almost belies the expert, sophisticated craftsmanship with which it was executed. Its creator, the late Bertha Stenge was considered an authority in quilting ... Here, she depicted 12 scenes from the Bible in charming detail,

using as background antique white moire and ice blue skinner satin." For many years historians took "creator" to mean designer. In 1979, a letter dated Apr 2, 1953 came to light from Charlotte Johnson of LADIES HOME JOURNAL staff in reply to Bertha Stenge's query as to the designer of the "Bible Quilt"*. Miss Johnson replied, "I have not been able to find the name of the girl who designed our "Bible Quilt"**. I finally located her last name but cannot remember or find her first name. And so I think the 'credit' will have to be 'Miss Jervis'". Most of Mrs Stenge's quilts remain in the family and are rarely seen. Mrs Traynor and Mrs Fuchsman loaned quilts for the 1979 Patch in Time exhibit in San Francisco and Mrs Fuchsman's quilts were exhibited at the Land o' Lincoln Quilt Symposium.

* NIMBLE NEEDLE TREASURES Summer 1971 published the pattern and an article entitled "The Superb Mrs Stenge" by Cuesta Benberry.

** The "Bible Quilt" pattern was offered for 100 in the LADIES HOME JOURNAL Aug 1938 issue.

For more information about Bertha Stenge see JOURNAL Summer 1979, available to subscribers at the special price of \$1.50 including postage until Sept 1984.



Thanks to Sally Garoutte for this item.

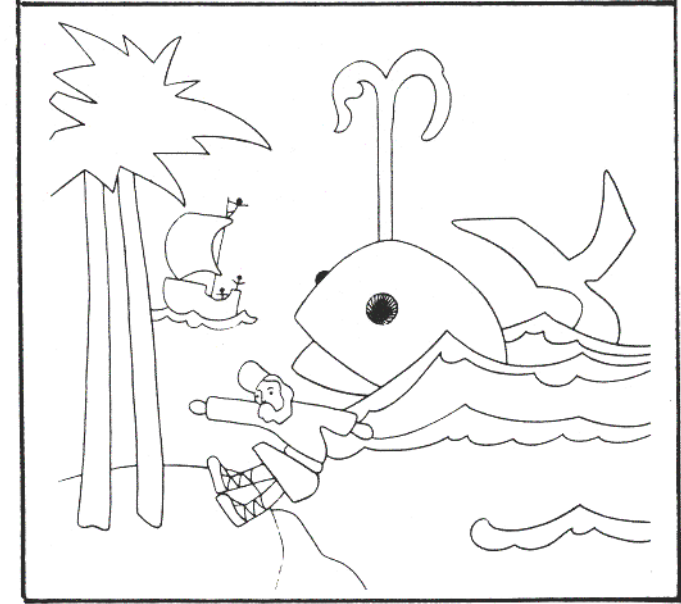
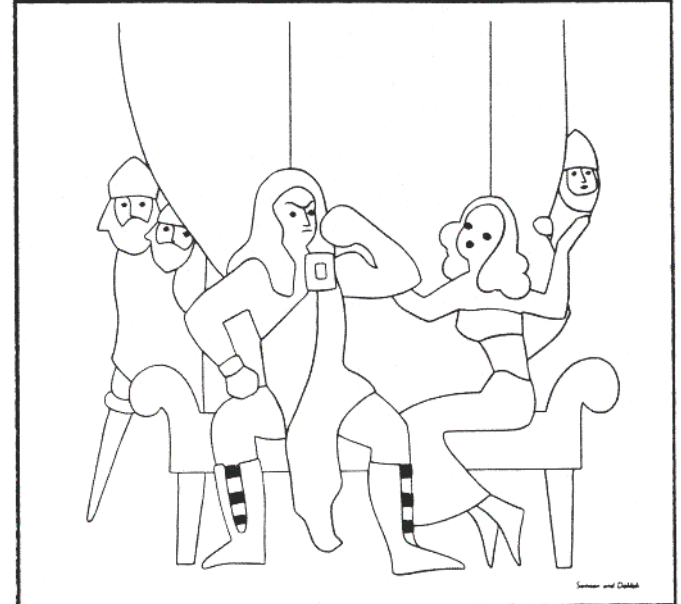
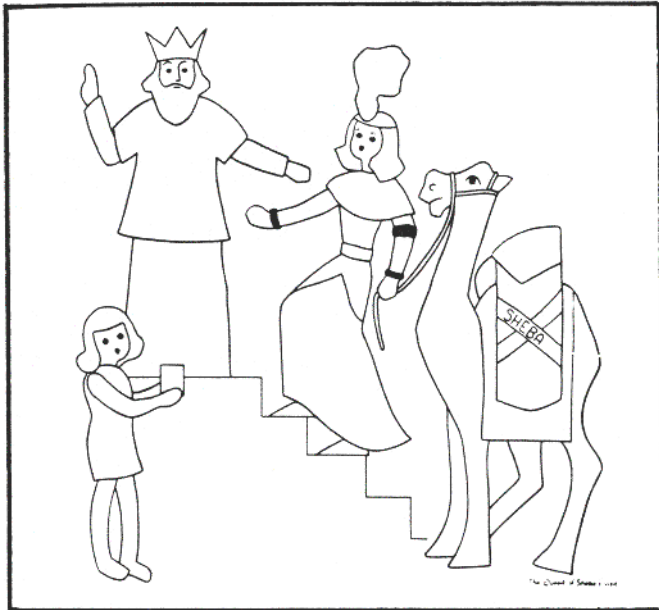
From DIARY OF A BOSTON SCHOOL GIRL, written by Anna Green Winslow, edited by Alice Earle, Cambridge- Houghton, Mifflin Co, 1894, pg 62.

"April 18th (1772) - Some time since I exchang'd a piece of patchwork, which had been wrought in my leisure intervals, with Miss Peggy Phillips, my schoolmate, for a pair of curious lace mitts with blue flaps which I shall send, with a yard of white ribbin edg'd with green to Miss Nancy Macky for a present. I had intended that the patchwork should have grown large enough to have cover'd a bed when that same live stock which you wrote me about some time since, should be increas'd to that portion

you intend to bestow upon me, should a certain event take place."

Anna Green Winslow was twelve years old when she wrote this, and was living in Boston with an aunt in order to get an education. Her parents lived in Nova Scotia.

My interpretation is: Anna Winslow was making some sort of applique (That's what "patchwork" meant in the 18th century). This diary entry is a copy of a letter to her mother, and Anna is telling her that she had originally hoped to make a complete quilt top, and to later quilt it with a wool batt from the livestock" her mother had promised her when "a certain event" (Anna's engagement or marriage) came about.



COLOR AND FABRIC SUGGESTIONS

FOR BIBLE QUILT No. 1503

ISSUED BY THE MAKE-IT-YOURSELF DEPARTMENT - LADIES HOME JOURNAL

WITH all the tiny pieces that go into the stories, this patchwork quilt is not easy to make, as you can see, but when it is finished, you will have an heirloom your little girl can give her little girl! Before you begin cutting your material, write in the color notations on this sheet so that you will have a working guide. Better still, cut a snip of the fabrics and lay in their places, then you will have a better idea of the whole color scheme. Trace off the outlines of the pieces, so that you can keep the diagram chart. If you prefer to do all the cutting out at one time, have a large envelope for each story square.

The background squares are 12" by 11 1/2", and allow for a 1/4" hem. If you use only the story squares, 3 squares wide, with a 3-inch border top and bottom, the quilt will be 42" by 52"; but alternating the story squares, with a plain square, the quilt will be 48" by 69".

Use plain color chambray-ivory, pale grey-blue or light beige for large squares. The background should be neutral, to make an effective color scheme. The original quilt was worked on grey cotton. Sew down the pieces, turning under a 1/8" hem with an over-and-over stitch, and embroider details as directed. Work eyes in black or blue satin stitch, features in black with running stitch, and mouths in red satin stitch, with mercerized embroidery cotton. Join squares, sew on the border, line with quilt lining or cotton batting and face.

Daniel in the lions' den. *Daniel* - blue linen robe and print belt; peach or flesh chambray for face, arms and feet; beard, brown linen. Center lion, yellow linen, mane outlined in grey or lavender feather stitching, features and leg outlines in chain stitch. Left lion, salmon pink linen; right beast, tan shirting; features worked the same. *Angel* - white or delicate blue stripe cotton for robe; pink features, orange hair, print wing; eyes worked in blue satin stitch, mouth in red, wreath in green mercerized embroidery cotton.

Samson and Delilah. Curtains, blue chambray. Bench, black mercerized cotton. *Samson* - flesh or salmon pink linen; robe, half tiny blue print, half deep blue linen; buckle, yellow print; hair, brown shirting; boots, yellow print with straps worked in crimson buttonhole stitch. *Sword* - pale green chambray. *Delilah* - white cotton, with orange hair; yellow chambray bra, small calico print skirt. Men in background, flesh cotton or linen features, yellow caps, brown beards and prints and checks for robes.

David and Goliath. Tents at left, checked gingham and bright yellow shirting, blue flags, doors worked in black buttonhole stitch. Tents at right, green cotton and plaid gingham, red flags, doors and flagpoles worked in black. *Goliath* - flesh or salmon pink linen for body, orange beard; shirt, blue linen with yellow shoulder pads, lavender belt with yellow buckle; skirt, black and white cotton print; leg shields, light blue linen with deep blue leg bands; black mercerized cotton shoes; helmet, white cotton with deep blue linen crest, shield, white cotton, circles worked

in tan mercerized embroidery floss; spear, green linen with tan spearhead. *David* - pink shirting body, yellow linen hair, print cotton dress with red belt; sling worked in black chain stitch and blue running stitch.

Noah's ark. *Noah* - rose spun rayon robe, white cotton hair and beard, face and arms in pink cotton. *Mrs. Noah* - hair, brown shirting; robes, blue and white check; features, pink cotton. One giraffe in salmon pink linen, other in spotted calico-red-outlined white dots on yellow background. Tree, green linen top, brown shirting brush. Monkeys-one in gunmetal, the other in light tan cotton; features outlined in black, mouths worked in red satin stitch. Rock, green linen. *Ark* - yellow linen roof, white walls with windows worked in satin stitch with black mercerized embroidery floss; lavender hull with anchor worked in chain stitch in black. White dove, green leaf embroidered in satin stitch. Red, white and blue rainbow.

Moses in the bulrushes. *Pharaoh's daughter* - body, tan shirting; hair, black wool or crepe; skirt, white cotton with gay print overskirt; headdress, pink chambray with print tail, cock's head embroidered in black. Slave-black wool or crepe; skirt, tiny flowered dimity; headdress cotton print; eyes worked in white and black; mouth in red satin stitch. Fan, blue and white print. Bulrushes, green linen with cattails in brown shirting, stems in chain stitch. *Moses* - pink cotton. Cradle, white dotted cotton. Sphinx, white with features embroidered in blue. Pyramids, tan and white cotton.

Adam naming the animals. Elephant, lavender linen, white trunk. Tiger, salmon pink linen, stripes worked in red and pink running stitch, eyes in green. Rabbit, white cotton with pink running stitch outlining features. Green chambray foliage. *Adam* - pink cotton with orange beard and hair, tablet in white. Use white muslin for signs and embroider names and Adams pen in black. Outline animals faces, legs, etc., with running stitch.

The Egyptians in the Red Sea. Wave, red calico with crest of wave in white. Horse, tan shirting, bridle worked in blue chain stitch and buttonhole stitch; reins in rose running stitch. Chariot, blue denim for wheel, blue linen for box and shaft, collar in green. *Captain* - face and arms, flesh sateen; hair, black cotton; robe, green shirting with blue-and-orange print apron; headdress, tiny dimity print. *Slave* - pink body, black hair, yellow helmet, coat, navy cotton with tiny dimity print skirt; spear worked in yellow chain stitch and satin stitch. *Israelites* - green linen, calico print and checked robes; hair in orange and brown; headdress on center figure, pale blue linen.

Jonah and the whale. *Whale* - black sateen, red calico mouth, eye worked in white mercerized embroidery cotton, spout white cotton. Ocean waves-white cotton. *Jonah* - pink shirting for body,

brown shirting beard and shoes, rose linen cap and belt, robe in tiny blue-and-white print. Printed calico for land, brown shirting for palm trunks, green chambray for tops. Boat, yellow chambray with plaid gingham sail, mast and sailors embroidered in running stitch.

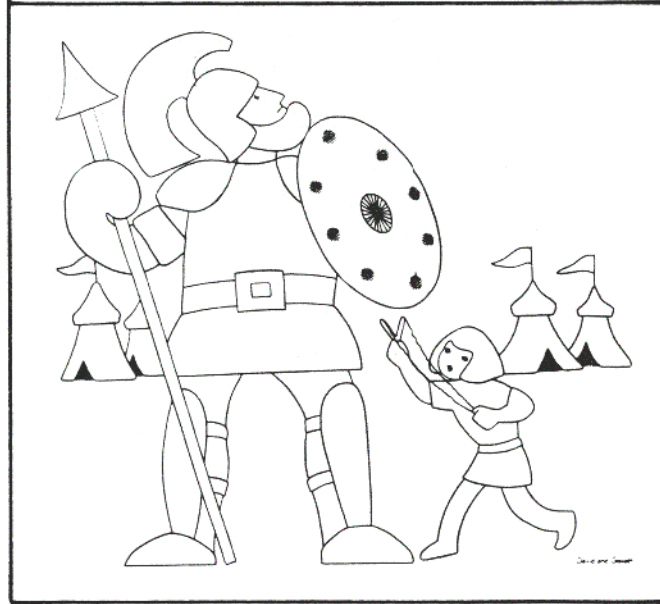
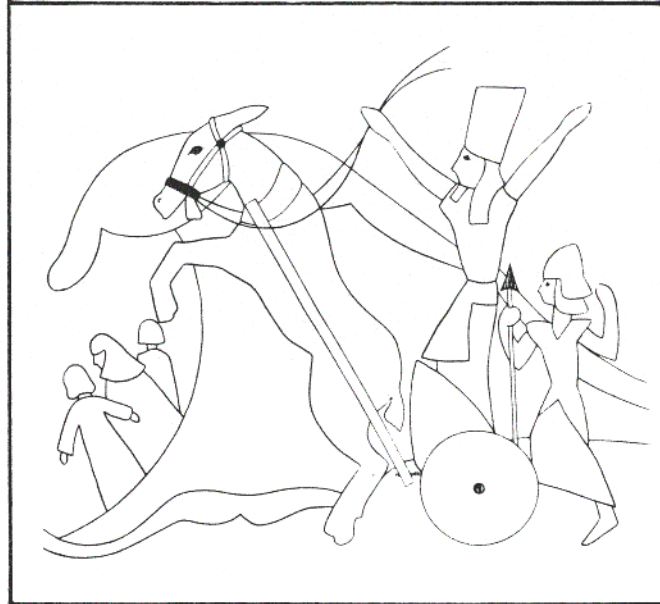
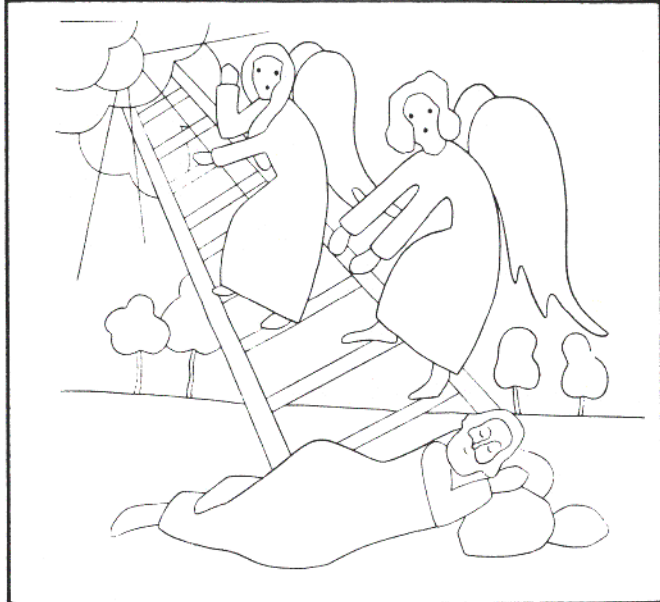
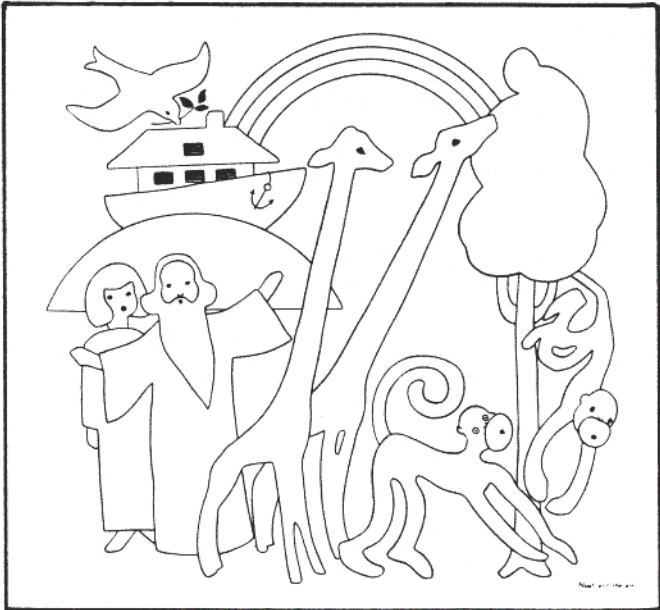
Joseph and his brethren. Pink shirting for faces, arms and feet. All robes are checks, stripes, tiny prints, white for Benjamin. Hair, brown or tan shirting, black cotton, orange linen for Asher and Benjamin. *Joseph* - yellow hair, tunic in blue linen with blue, red, white and yellow stripes, plaid gingham skirt. Work all names in black running stitches, "Joseph" in red. Work lines on ground in black running stitch.

The Queen of Sheba's visit. *King* - blue linen robe, plaid gingham coat, gold linen crown, brown shirting beard, pink shirting for flesh. *Queen* - body, flesh sateen; hair, black cotton; collar and girdle, red cotton; skirt, green print; armlets and coronet embroidered in gold floss; green feather headdress. Camel-salmon pink shirting, blanket, blue calico; pack, blue and white dimity with green covers, a red and yellow band crossed on pack. *Little boy* - white flesh, red and white print dress, golden hair, and green cap. Work steps in white, rein in blue and outline camel's leg in gold running stitch.

Jacob's ladder. Gold linen sun with rays worked in running stitch. White, pink and grey cotton clouds. Ladder, blue linen. *Jacob* - flesh cotton for features, rust-color rayon beard, black and white thin cotton robe. Stones, brown and black. Trees, green cotton. Top angel-features, white cotton; yellow hair; robe in white dotted calico, wings in lavender print. Angel-features, pink cotton, orange hair, robe in blue-and-white flower print, wings in pink-and-white print. Work horizon in green running stitch, tree trunks in black chain stitch.

Belshazzar's feast. Tablecloth-lavender linen, legs black cotton. The hand, pink shirting; cuff worked in pink buttonhole stitch, pen in gold running stitch, writing in black running stitch. *King* - features, white cotton; orange beard, pale green crown; robe, red and white calico print; coat, blue linen with blue-and-white print sleeves. *Queen* - pink cotton face, yellow hair, coronet embroidered in gold satin stitch; robe in plain green and print. *Man guest* - rose print robe, natural cotton face, brown shirting beard, black cotton cap. *Woman guest* - salmon pink linen face and hand, red calico hair with gold embroidered coronet, blue and white dimity check robe. *Child* - pink cotton flesh, tiny calico print robe, brown shirting hair. Outline the wine glasses in white, the wine in red, and King's shoes in gold with running stitch.







LUCY HILTY & THE BIBLE QUILT

as told by Lucille Hilty in a
taped interview 2/9/83 with
Joyce Gross

The Bible Quilt has been around since about 1977 when my friend Margaret Grosse asked me to finish a quilt from the blocks her mother, Alice Stone, had made in the 40s.

Fortunately, Margaret was not in a hurry for the quilt so I have been allowed to experiment with it and explore a lot of different ways of quilting. Because I have been allowed to experiment, the quilt has evolved and become more interesting. Because I had the time, I was able to go back to the Bible and read the story for the settings so I could quilt the background of the patches, e.g., the story of David and Goliath. It took place in the vale of Hebron. I decided that I could show that it was a valley by quilting some mountains in the background and making the mountains come together as though they were coming down into the valley.

In the case of the handwriting on the wall during the Babylonian captivity, I went back and read about their culture and found they had really magnificent buildings made basically with adobe. The adobe was made of a brick-clay mixed with organic material. I couldn't show this on the quilt but I learned they had beautiful walls in their palaces so I did a tile-like floor in that picture.

(continued on inside back cover)

Lucy Hilty quilts on either a hoop or on a big frame, depending on the project. Here she is seen using her hoop while quilting "Jonah & the Whale" on the Bible quilt. Another article about Miss Hilty is on pg 9.