

MRS HERBERT HOOVER'S COLONIAL QUILT-
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Once upon a time... there were two sisters named Mary and Lucretia. They were the daughters of a farmer, and lived in a little town in southern Massachusetts where they attended the local academy and, their education completed, became teachers - good, sensible cheery girls such as used to be... So ends the prologue; now we'll go on with the real story:

It was in the spring of 1854... that these sisters were preparing a trousseau for Lucretia, who was to marry in the autumn: Beside the lovely Irish crochet and other handmade laces... there were practical things without which no hope chest is complete... The sheets were of the finest cotton... the blankets were from the family store of home-grown wool, and the quilts and comforts were mainly made of pieces from many print dresses, saved for years for just such use.

But one very special quilt was of entirely new material, blue and white, the former a dainty "sprigged" pattern. Every patch was carefully cut, and the corners fitted and joined with marvelous precision and when it was completed the sisters quilted it on the old-fashioned frames with short, regular stitches through many patient hours. It was destined to become an heirloom: and was cherished and kept in perfect condition as the years went by.

Two years ago another chapter was written in the eventful history of what is probably the best specimen of the "double Irish Chain" quilt ever produced. The industrial department of the Neighborhood House, a social settlement in Washington D.C., had an exhibition of the handicraft of the neighborhood women, and as a further means of educating them in the older and better type of handwork, asked its Board of Trustees - of which Mrs Hoover herself is a member - to loan for this exhibition any fine or old handiwork that they owned, to which appeal Miss Ellen Vinton responded with the blue-and-white patchwork-quilt made for her mother's wedding outfit nearly seventy years before. Little did that dear little mother dream she, with her sister, sewed its patches and quilted the fine lines, that when she should be nearing the century mark this handiwork of hers would be admired by the wife of the Secretary of

Commerce, and serve as the model of Mrs Hoover's wedding-gift to her son, in 1925. The order for an exact copy was placed with the Neighborhood House, and great pain was taken to get the exact blue and white print, in chintz pattern, used in the original. The quilting was done in the south by an old time quilter who, we may well believe, was glad and grateful to have a share in a bit of homecraft destined for a lady held in so high esteem by the whole country...

So much for Mrs Hoover's quilt - which every homemaker who wishes to may easily duplicate: there is really no simpler pattern, and none more attractive.

Two blocks... go to the making of the quilt, the first consisting of 25 small sq. or patches, alternately blue and white; the 2nd block is of blue, save for the white sq in each corner which makes the "double chain" continuous. The small patches are 2" square... join 5 of these, forming 5 strips the 1st, 3rd, and 5th beginning with blue, the 2nd and 4th with white, then sew the strips together, taking care that all seams are uniform, and corners perfectly matched. The 2nd block may be in one piece with the corner sq. set in, or, as many prefer to do, felled in place with fine stitches, as applique; by cutting the inner corner the width of the seam no trouble will be experienced in setting it in the usual way or if preferred, this block too may be pieced; cut 4 white sq., 2 blue strips as wide as the small sq. and 3 times that width in length, join a sq. at each end of both strips and sew to the sides of the plain strip; this is probably the easier way... join the blocks in strips, and sew the strips together diagonally, filling in at each end. (To)...make the "double chain" of small sq. run straight across and lengthwise of the quilt: if the strips are laid straight the chain will run diagonally, but the pattern is not so distinct nor effective. Border (the quilt) with strips of blue and white, 2" wide with a 9patch of the 2 colors in each corner.

We all know, of course, that the renaissance of the patchwork-quilt is here. Probably never, even in its own time, was this useful craft of the olden days more popular. And this is not only true of the laid-work or applique; it relates especially to the plain, sensible, seamed together blocks such as went to the making of Mrs Hoover's quilt, and for which there are designs without number stored among the old-time treasures of most households.

A COLONIAL QUILT ENTERS THE WHITE HOUSE by
E H Jordan

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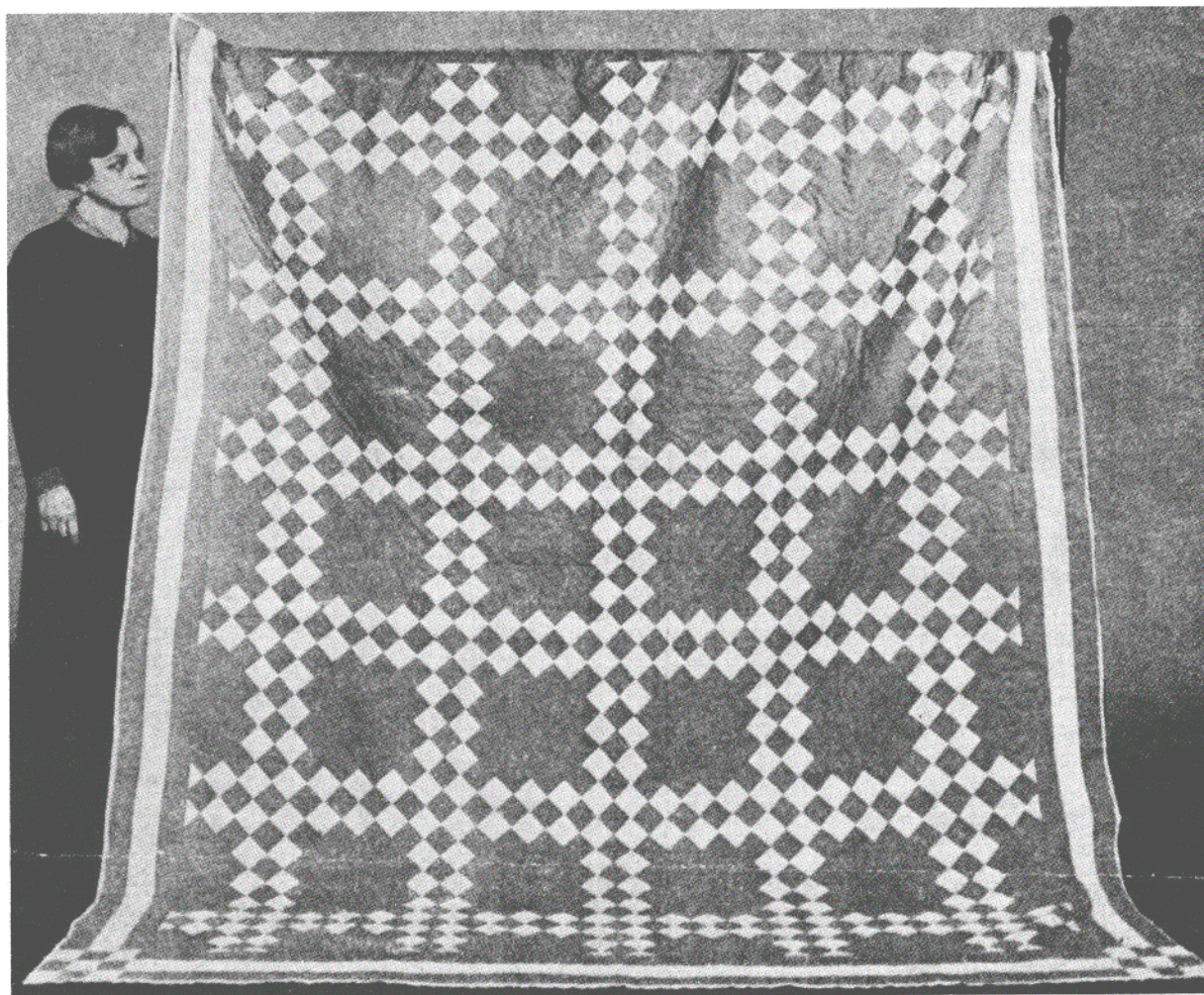
Among all the elaborate and expensive tokens of good-will and affection which were bestowed on President and Mrs Hoover at the time of their entrance into the White House, perhaps none represented greater sincerity or more loving care than the finely worked Colonial quilt, made of humble flour-bags by one of Mrs Hoover's warm admirers - Mrs J L Murray, of Bloomington, Ill. And that the "First Lady of the Land" was delighted with the offering is evidenced by the letter of hearty appreciation she sent the donor.

...NEEDLECRAFT called at the home of Mrs Murray, a cheery, capable, up-to-date woman ...she was found in the basement, busily

dyeing a large pile of flour-bags in winning shades of blue and green and pink. For if there is one thing she can do as well as quilting, it is dyeing; and if there is one virtue she admires more than another, that virtue is thrift.

And here is Mrs Murray's own story of how the beautiful quilt beside which she is standing came to be made: I watched the election with a great deal of interest, and when it was decided, I tried to think of something I might make as an inaugural gift to Mrs Hoover. Back in my mind there was an idea rumbling that I had read a long time ago in NEEDLECRAFT - something about Mrs Hoover and a patchwork quilt, so I got out my old files and started looking them over. Sure enough, I found it - in May 1926 issue.

"(When I had read the story again) the thought struck me at once that it would be nice to duplicate this same design myself



Mrs J L Murray of Bloomington, Ill is shown with the quilt she made for Mrs Hoover. From NEEDLECRAFT July 1929

as a present to Mrs Hoover at inauguration time. According to the story in NEEDLE-CRAFT, the original quilt was blue and white. Of course I had no way of knowing what shade of blue was used, but I decided on a rich Yale blue as being attractive and having a lot of character to it. I dyed six flour bags which I had on hand this color. It took sixteen bags in all, seven of which went into the back or lining. It was interlined with Canton flannel, and I used 1100 yds of thread in the quilting."

"But how did you come to use flour-bags?" Mrs Murray was asked.

"Oh that's the most natural thing in the world." she replied with a smile, "though the story goes a long way back. It goes back to my grandmother, Margaret Packard and the pioneer days of Illinois. Grandma Packard was born in 1828 in what is now Bloomington, and was known as 'The Mother of Bloomington.' She grew up to be an expert quilter. I can well remember, as a child, playing in and around her old pine quilting-frame, and so can my mother. We still have the frame, and it was set up for making the Hoover quilt.

"My grandmother was extremely thrifty and practical; I suppose pioneer conditions teach you that. Anyhow, my mother was

brought up to be the same and taught to work with any materials at hand, as were her own children. So there is the answer to the flour-bag query. But I learned, too, a lot about thriftiness from Grandma Packard herself, who died but a few years ago, just a little short of the century mark. She never really accepted the sewing machine, declaring it was only meant for lazy folk! And she handed down to me all her famous quilt-patterns, which are numbered among my dearest treasures."

So much for Mrs Murray's story, which every reader is sure to enjoy and perhaps profit by. It may be added as a matter of interesting record, that the war afforded this competent, friendly member of our circle a wonderful opportunity to preach her ideas of thrift and industry. She taught innumerable women the homely art of sewing, and to like it: and at the same time she spread the gospel of the used flour-bag! Mrs Murray is very active in club-work, and is a lecturer for the Farmers' Institute, as well as a conscientious housekeeper, homemaker and mother. And still she finds time for making quilts! Truly there must be something to this "coming from pioneer stock"!



CENTENNIAL QUILTS

cerized thread. It had been acquired in Portland, Maine where it had been used all these years by the same family. It had been washed many times until the original colors which probably were bright blue and sepia, had faded to a soft turquoise and tan. Unfortunately, there is no picture of this quilt that I later learned had been sold to a dealer in North Carolina.

Later in the same month, I saw another quilt with an identical scarf used as a center medallion. The colors were completely different, but the design was the same as in the quilt described above. It was a popular design because it showed more of what the traveler had seen. The maker of this quilt must have had a large scrap bag of men's shirting and dark calico pieces which she tastefully arranged to frame the square in lights and darks to make a most

striking quilt and to give us yet another fabric reference library dated. There was a subtlety about her color selection that made this the most artistic and interesting that I have seen. Regretfully, the questions of who and where it was made cannot be answered on this quilt; we can only thank the anonymous quilter and learn from this that all quilts should have a label with all the pertinent information firmly attached to them.

Having seen the price tag on these two quilts, I have come to the conclusion that the only form of collecting that is still affordable is one where quilts are kept in one's mind or photo album.

Author's note: We would appreciate any information about quilts using commemorative scarves and centennial quilts.