



"MARY, REMEMBER ME"

by Gloria Seaman Allen

Gloria Seaman Allen is Curator of Textiles DAR Museum, Washington D C. The article was originally published in the DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION MAGAZINE, April 1986 and is republished with permission. Photos courtesy of the DAR Museum.

When William Thomas Johnson inscribed "Mary, Remember me" on a quilt presented to Mary Mannakee in 1851, he assured Mary's immortality. (Fig 1). Shortly after receiving her quilt Mary Mannakee left her childhood home in Montgomery County, Maryland. As the second oldest of ten children and with her mother Elizabeth recently widowed, it was time for 23-year-old Mary to make her own way in life. When she left her community, perhaps to move West and to new opportunities, she left behind her brothers and sisters, her family farm and close friends like William Johnson. It is possible that William Johnson and Mary were in love, but she never married him and she never returned to Montgomery County. In accordance with a popular custom of the times, Mary was presented with a friendship or album quilt upon her departure. Her quilt would serve as a tangible reminder of her former friends and homeland. Frequently friendship quilts are signed by the quilt-maker, but in the case of Mary's quilt, the woman who so painstakingly cut out the colorful red and green fabrics and appliqued them to the ground cloth is anonymous. Using motifs that were frequently found in

Pennsylvania-German decoration, the quilt-maker may have been of German Heritage.

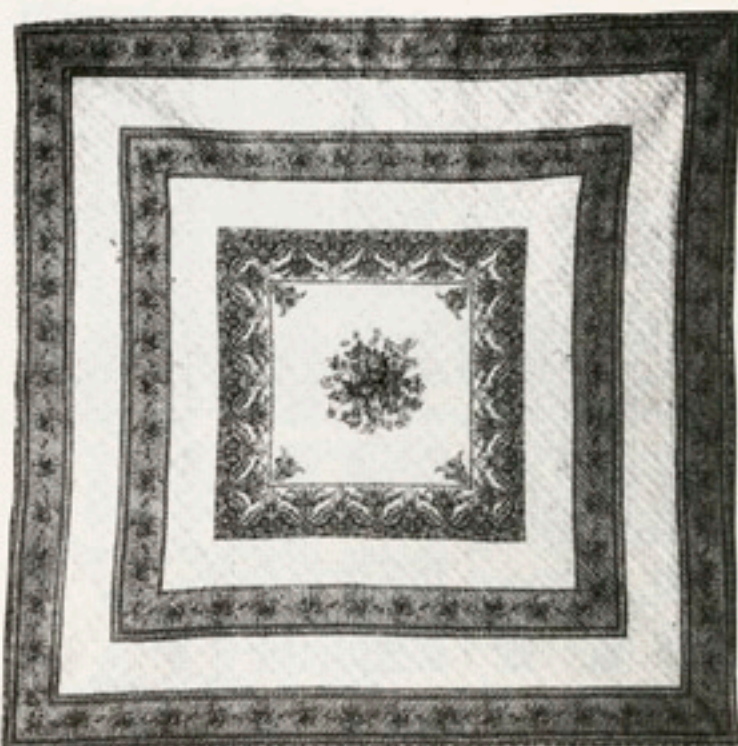
In neighboring Frederick County, in the northwestern part of Maryland, there was also a strong German tradition. By the time Mary Mannakee received her quilt in 1851, Anna Catherine Garnhart (Fig 2) had already made a number of quilts for her family. Born in 1773, Anna Catherine was the daughter of Christine Catharine Grundler and John Hummel who had settled near the growing commercial center of Frederick. The Hummel family maintained close ties with other German settlers who populated the area. Anna Catherine first married David Johann Markey, and after his death in 1820, she married Henry Garnhardt. Her domestic skills were so remarkable that they were noted in a family genealogy written many years after her death. The Markey Family praises Anna Catherine as a gifted healer who mixed special herb medicines from plants grown in her garden, and it describes in detail one of her quilts while mentioning several others. A quilt "decorated with a superb spread eagle, copied from a china plate or possibly (a) pitcher,



ANNA CATHERINE MARKEY GARNHART

and enlarged so as to nearly cover the entire expanse of the quilt" may well be the one now in the DAR Museum collection. (see Fig 3). In anticipation of her second marriage, which probably occurred in the 1820s, Anna Catherine selected and purchased from a local Frederick merchant a number of new English-made fabrics for her quilt. Instead of cutting out her printed designs and carefully sewing them to her bed cover, she chose the more painstaking inlaid technique where she cut holes in her ground cloth to expose the printed fabrics placed beneath. Her baskets, vases and sprigs of flowers were cut directly from her floral printed fabrics, but the large central eagle which dominates her quilt was her own creative design. Taking her pattern from familiar surroundings she may have been inspired by the transfer-printed outline of the federal eagle in the Great Seal which was used on pitchers and table-wares made in England for the burgeoning American market. Anna Catherine Garnhardt's "Eagle quilt" and a similar one,* made about fifteen years later, have survived to attest to her great sensitivity and her consummate skill as a needleworker. Through her quilts she has achieved immortality.

**See pg 12 for an article about Anna Catherine and her quilts.*

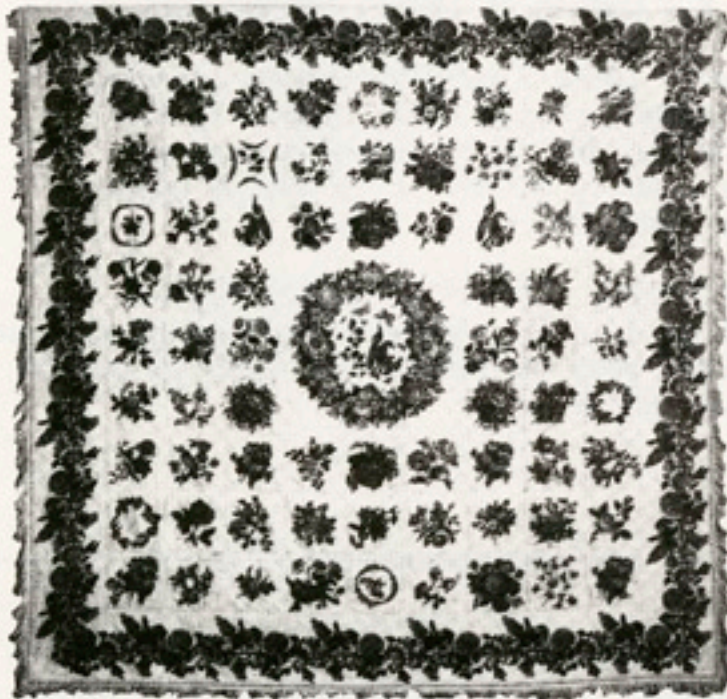


In another part of the country, 17-year-old Mary Ann Barringer also made a quilt in anticipation of her marriage. (see fig 4) Mary Ann Barringer was born in 1811, the daughter of Paul and Elizabeth Brandon Barringer of Poplar Creek, Cabarrus County, North Carolina. Her father held the rank of General in wars against the British, and her three brothers all achieved prominence; Daniel Moreau became Minister to Spain under President James Pierce, Victor became a Judge at the International Court of Appeals in Alexandria, Egypt, and Rufus became a Brigadier General in the Confederate Army.

Sometime prior to her July 1, 1828 marriage to Dr Charles Wilson Harris at the Barringer homestead, Mary Ann made her bridal quilt and a number of other less fancy quilts. For her best quilt she selected English textiles which were probably imported through the ports of Charleston, South Carolina or Wilmington, North Carolina. After having appliqued her floral motifs with tiny buttonhole stitches and pieced together her borders, Mary Ann stretched her quilt top on a frame so that she and other members of the household could bind the top, backing, and inner layer together with running stitches. Since the Barringer family owned slaves, it is possible that the house slaves assisted Mary Ann with her quilting or they took over some of her duties to allow her leisure time to work on her quilts. Mary Ann and her husband continued to own slaves until her death. Her slaves were then given the choice of being sent to Liberia or of being sold to masters of their choice.

(Continued on pg 16)

Although Mary Ann only lived 31 years, at least one of her quilts, and probably her best quilt, has been preserved to remind us of the exquisite workmanship of a young woman on the eve of her marriage.

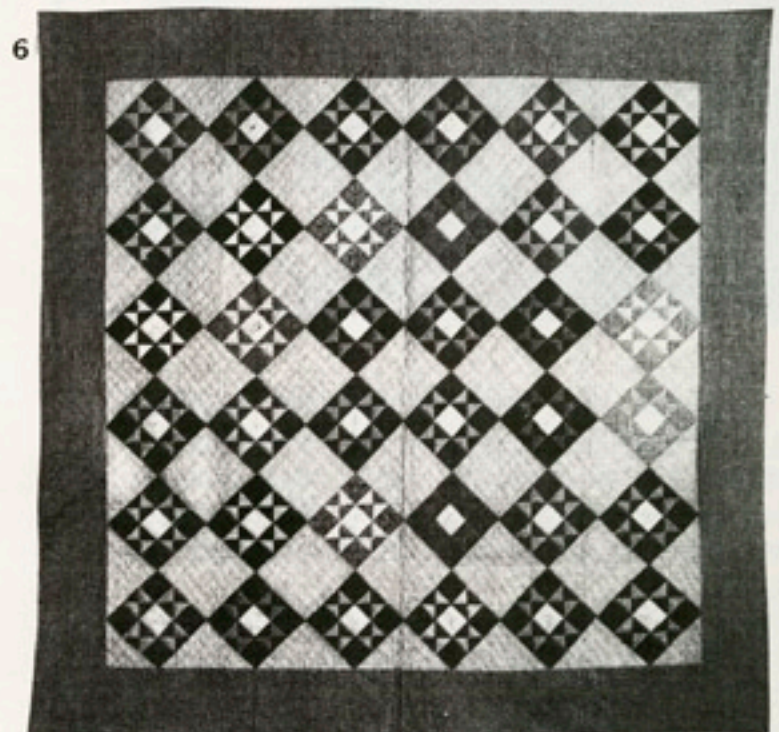


At the age of 18 Emma Maria Fish undertook the ambitious project of an album quilt for her relative, Eliza Moore. After she appliqued chintz motifs onto 72 small squares and one large square, she requested relative and friends to sign each square. Following the custom of collecting signatures, verses, drawings and other tokens of remembrance into albums or autograph books, quilts with signature blocks also served to remind the recipient of the friendship of the signers. Emma's quilt for Aunt Eliza Moore was signed by members of the Moore, Fish, Howell and Stryker families. The signers were nearly all related to each other and they lived within a small geographic area surrounding Trenton, New Jersey. The quilt "presenter" was three-year-old Emily Augusta Fish, the niece of the maker, as well as the niece of the recipient. Like Mary Mannakee, Eliza Moore may have left her family and community shortly after she received her friendship quilt. She cannot be located in family genealogy or census records but she will be forever remembered by a beautiful quilt inscribed with her name.

In Pennsylvania, album quilts achieved great popularity in the mid 19th century. Some, which were similar to Mary Mannakee's had fanciful motifs cut from red and green fabrics, while others made in southeastern Pennsylvania were frequently composed of squares pieced from several different

fabrics. When the center of each square was pieced with white fabric it was the ideal location for a signature or inscription. In 1850 when Martha Lee made her quilt as a gift for Elizabeth Moore, she collected 26 signatures from members of her extended family and other close friends who resided in the neighboring townships of Exeter and Amity in Berks County. (see fig 6) The majority of the signers were women, ranging in age from 17 to 70. Many were members of the Society of Friends and were affiliated with the Exeter or Philadelphia Monthly Meeting. Unfortunately neither Martha Lee's or Elizabeth Moore's names appear on the quilt so they are only remembered through family tradition and by a paper inscription pinned to the back of the quilt by a later owner. However there is one woman who will long be remembered because she died before the quilt was completed. The quilt block with the name of Ellen B Brimfield includes a moving memorial verse from a poem by Longfellow. The 1850 Census lists Ellen Brimfield, age 70 and with property valued at \$5,000.00 as residing with George and Elizabeth Leonard. The Leonard's signatures were also included on the quilt, and Ellen Brimfield was probably Elizabeth's widowed mother. Perhaps vanity caused Ellen to report her age at 70 to the census taker, for it was inscribed a year later on Elizabeth Moore's quilt as 77.

Manchester, located in Carrol County, was only a short drive from the metropolis of Baltimore. Therefore Carmelia Everhart, a life-long resident of Manchester, may have seen one of the pictorial album quilts





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which were being made by professional needleworkers in fashionable Baltimore in the 1840s and 50s. Perhaps when visiting the city, Carmelia purchased templates or paper patterns for her quilt designs as well as a selection of imported French and English fabrics (see Fig 7). Carmelia completed the appliquing of the eagle and other motifs on her album quilt shortly before her marriage on June 14, 1859 to the Reverend Henry Wissler. However, she did not use her quilt after her marriage because it was unfinished. The quilt remained unquilted for almost 50 years. In 1907 Carmelia, at age 71, finally added the decorative stitching to bind the layers of her quilt together. Little is known about the Reverend Henry Wissler or his parish, but the quilt, which Carmelia Wissler

worked on as both a young and an elderly woman, remains to remind us of her accomplished interpretation of the Baltimore album quilt.

These six quilts, which have been briefly described represent only a fraction of the collection of over two hundred American quilts located in the DAR Museum. Many have fascinating stories to tell and many remain as tangible reminders of their makers or recipients. All have been generously given to the Museum. Some, like the ones made by Anna Catherine (Hummel) Garnhart, Mary Ann (Barringer) Harris, Emma Maria (Fish) Chambers and Carmelia (Everhart) Wissler, have been treasured as family heirlooms and handed down from generation to generation before coming to the Museum. Others, like the one made for Mary Mannakee, were purchased and enjoyed for their aesthetic value before they were given to the Museum.

The Museum collection of 18th and 19th century American quilts continues to grow through generous gifts ... Quilts given to the Museum are thoroughly researched and catalogued so that they can be displayed and made available for study by interested groups and individuals. When not on view the quilts are stored in a climate controlled environment. Through preservation, research and exhibitions, the quilts are enjoyed by many. The women who worked so arduously to make them and the women who received them as tokens of friendship are forever remembered.

If you own a quilt you would like to have considered for donation to the DAR Museum, please send a photograph of the quilt and any available family history to the Curator, Gloria Allen, DAR Museum, 1776 D Street NW, Washington, DC 20006.

(FEDERAL EAGLE QUILT continued from pg 12)

I wrote to her. Several weeks of anxious waiting passed before I heard from her but she assured me she had the quilt and a "cradle quilt" that she "had always assumed was made by Mrs Garnhart". She also has the Washington pitcher which family tradition says Catherine used in designing the eagle. She has promised she will send me photos of the two quilts and the pitcher.

The "Federal Eagle" quilt, belonging to the Pioneer Museum and Art Center, Plains Indians & Pioneers Historical Foundation in Woodward, Oklahoma was included in the Woodward Quilt Show held April 18-21, 1985. The catalog states, "The highlight of the

Woodward Quilt Show is the 'Eagle Quilt'. Its maker, technique and workmanship make it unique, not only in the museum's collection of quilts, but from quilts found throughout the nation."

Turn to "Mary Remember Me" by Gloria Seaman Allen on pg 6 for photos of Anna Catherine and the DAR "Eagle Quilt". A picture of the quiltmaker and three of her quilts are included in the DAR catalog *OLD LINE TRADITIONS: Maryland Women & Their Quilts* which accompanied the exhibit of the same name. Copies may be obtained by sending \$8.00 (incl postage) to *QUILTERS' JOURNAL*, Box 5427, Mill Valley, CA 94942.