

NEW "QUILT DIGEST" IS THE BEST YET

by Bets Ramsey

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Publishers of QUILT DIGEST 4 have put together their best book to date, and it is not one to be missed. Michael Kile and Roderick Kirakofe insist upon the best in photography, reproduction, printing and material. In this issue of the QUILT DIGEST they have added impressive scholarship. If you are not a regular subscriber to the series I urge you to visit your local bookseller or place your order with the publisher.

I knew that SueEllen Meyer was writing an article on Pine Tree quilts because she asked to borrow one of my quilts to photograph. I knew that trees had long been a favorite subject of quilters. I was not prepared for the depth and sensitivity of her study as she explored women's roles in the settling of America and the relationship of trees to their lives. Here is a remarkable presentation that integrates history and quilting in a special way.

The women who came to America found the forests frightening and were intimidated by tales of Indians and wild animals. They felt closed in by the darkness of the woods. In time, the westward movement took place and other women longed for the sight of a tree in the great sweep of the flat prairies. Homesteaders planted trees to domesticate their plots of land, to give

shade and fruit. One woman wrote, "Every tree and shrub we planted in the ground was a companion, whose growth it was a delight to watch" Mrs Meyer, from impressive research, presents a significant study of pioneer women, their personal accounts, their quilts. She clearly defines the meaning of the tree patterns in the lives of the women who made them. I am grateful for her thoroughness and excellence of writing and for publishers who care about such matters.

Besides the showcase feature of marvelous quilts, old and new, another section features unusual quilts. In selections from THE ART quilt, the book she has written with Michael Kile, Penny McMorris introduces modern artists whose works have been influenced by quilting.

Two excellent articles round out the contents of the book. Nancy Callahan gives a thoughtful history of the Alabama Freedom Quilting Bee in "Helping the Peoples to Help Themselves." Shelly Zegart writes about Susan E Daggart, her friends in the Young Ladies Sewing Society in upstate New York in the 19th century, and the decision to remain single. Again, impressive research qualifies the article as an important addition to the literature of women's rights and quilt history.

You may order the QUILT DIGEST 4 from Quilt Digest Press, Dept 22-955 14th St, San Francisco CA 94114. Send a check for \$16.95 plus \$1.75 for shipping.

(FLORENCE PETO continued from pg 19)

... I'll send you a clipping of the newspaper WOMEN'S WEAR - one from the cotton-market.* They have published a series of three, each showing how to use quilt designs as inspiration for designing cotton goods. The first one gave my collection credit, the others did not, nor did they pay for the privilege of photographing the quilts and using them. I am a dumbell. Now LIFE wants to photograph them. The March AMERICAN COLLECTOR** had an article about them but it was written by a member of the Society and she asked my permission. As I say, I do not know just how much good this exhibition has done me. Publicity, yes but

has it sold my books? Which is what I wanted. The Society would not give out folders - nothing that sounded like advertising could be done! If anyone asked - was there any literature - they referred them to me. But the letter(s) are not about how can they buy a book but all sorts of crazy questions - like "did I make them all myself" or they have something older and 'very different'. One woman insisted she had a quilt older than any I had shown (in spite of the fact that there are four 18th century pieces) and it turned out to be a Crazy Quilt - Victorian. Sometimes I am ashamed of women - they are so stupid!

*See pg 3 for the article

**See pg 18 for an excerpt of the article