

SOLDIER'S QUILT/CIVIL WAR COUNTERPANE/"LA BELLE CHOCOLATIERE"

From: *AMERICAN QUILTS & COVERLETS*
by Florence Peto, Chanticleer Press, Inc
@1949, NY. Plate 23 & page 34.

Occupational therapists recognize the beneficent effect on the mentally disturbed when they can be induced to work with gay colored patches to create pleasing designs, and women everywhere have always turned to needlecraft for relief from monotony and even sorrow. Men also. Toward the close of the Civil War a wounded, discharged Union soldier decided to make a quilt to sooth his shattered nerves; he did not quite get away from it all for his quilt has silhouette figures of armed soldiers on horseback and afoot marching grimly around an intermediate border; in the central group foot soldiers surround women who appear to be offering refreshment on trays. Their outlines recall the trademark figure on the box of a well-known brand of chocolate*:



the trademark was adopted by the manufacturers in 1780 and had its origin in a contemporary French painting - "La Chocolatiere". A border comprising a lively bit of piece-work, twelve inches wide, separates the central panel from the marching soldiers; wide borders of chintz, Scotch ginghams, and paisley-patterned calicoes, all characteristic of the period, finish the edges. Colors are soft browns, cream, blue, rose and dull reds. Crescent moons, hearts, and fat, complacent doves may have been introduced to the militant picture to humor a wife or sweetheart. The applique stitchery is meticulously even and the quilting entirely adequate.

Ed note: Adequate?

*From: *FAMOUS AMERICAN TRADEMARKS* by Arnold B Barach, Public Affairs Press, 1971 ... "La Belle Chocolatiere" was an Austrian maiden (Anna Baltauf) who married an Austrian prince in 1745. For a wedding gift, the prince presented her with a pastel portrait of herself by Jean-Etienne Liotard, a well-known Swiss artist. Because Anna had been a waitress in a little Viennese chocolate shop when the prince met her, he had her pose in her waitress's uniform... In 1764, Walter Baker established a small chocolate mill in Dorchester, Mass and ... adopted La Belle Chocolatiere as the trademark for his chocolate and cocoa.



" The Viennese chocolate girl has adorned every package of Walter Baker's Breakfast Cocoa and other products for two centuries. The corporation, a part of the General Foods Corporation since 1927, is proud that as early as 1777 its cocoa was sold with a money-back guarantee, and that it was the only packaged and nationally-advertised food product sold in Abe Lincoln's general store in New Salem."

The portrait was hidden during WWII but has now been returned to the Dresden Art Gallery. In honor of the return, the East German government released a postage stamp of "Das Schokoladen-mädchen."

*Considerably changed through the years.

THE DICTIONNAIRE DES PEINTRES, SCULPTURES, DESSINATEURS ET GRAVEURS by E Benezit, published by Librairie Grond(c 1976) confirms that it was Jean-Etienne Liotard, a well-known Swiss artist who made the pastel portrait of La Belle Chocolatiere.

From: *PIECED WORK & APPLIQUE QUILTS IN THE SHELburne MUSEUM* @ 1957 by Lilian Baker Carlisle, Shelburne Museum Inc, Shelburne Vt. Pg 42 & 43

This spread ... was found in New Jersey and shows textiles much older than the Civil War period ...

Traditionally this counterpane was made by a Civil War veteran whose nerves had been shattered by his wartime experiences. After he was invalided home, he started this quilt as a therapeutic measure. He has used a variety of geometrical shapes, including squares, triangles, semi-circles, crescents and shaped eight-point cut-out stars. The two wide borders of pieced squares and triangles have been set off with small sharply pointed calico triangles. A rectangular white section depicts appliqued mounted soldiers grimly followed by marching infantrymen. The center square, enclosed by scallops, shows a diversity of forms. Here the foot soldier figure is repeated, but other appliqued forms have been added ... A female figure offering refreshments (copied from the trademark of a well-known brand of chocolate, which in turn was adopted from a 1780 French painting called "La Chocolatiere")* appears in each of the four corners...

*See Col I "Famous American Trademarks"



96" x 110"

Photo courtesy Shelburne Museum

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Florence Peto named it "Soldier's Quilt", Lilian Carlisle called it "Civil War Counterpane" and it could easily have been called "La Belle Chocolatiere". Whatever the name we can all agree it is a charming quilt.

It is made of chintzes, Scotch gingham, paisley-patterned calicoes in browns, blue, cream, rose and reds which Mrs Peto describes as "characteristic of the period" and Mrs Carlisle describes as "much older than the Civil War Period".

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