

THE CADEN SISTERS OF KENTUCKY:

A continuing Saga

by Wilene Smith

Wilene Smith, author of the book "Kansas City Star Pattern Index & History", is a quilt historian with a genealogy background from Wichita, Ks. She delivered a paper at the 1986 American Quilt Study Group entitled "Collection of Blocks as Patterns" to be published* in the fall of 1987. She has also done extensive research on the Mountain Mist pattern sheets.

For the following article, Ms Smith spent three hours in the Lexington, Kentucky Public Library extracting information from their City Directories. These directories, were enumerated on an irregular basis but much the same as the Federal Census at the turn of each new decade. They are a gold-mine of information. They attempted to list every adult living and/or working within a given city, their occupation and place of employment, home address and, if married, the name of their spouse. The information was taken from more than 29 Directories between 1883 and 1956. It was necessary to go to the Regional Branch of the Nat'l Archives in Kansas City, Missouri to obtain information from their 1900 and 1910 Federal Census to prove that the Caden sisters in Lexington City Directories were indeed sisters and to obtain their approximate dates of birth.

The Caden name first appeared in the Lexington, Kentucky City Directory for 1873-74, but none of the sisters for which I was searching turned up until ten years later with the appearance of Annie Caden, saleslady for Davis & Chinn, a dry goods and notions store in downtown Lexington. The next Directory in 1887 lists her as Miss Anna Caden, a clerk for A B Chinn. This dry goods store underwent a steady series of name changes as the years passed. It was known as Chinn, Ross & Todd and in 1893 it was called C B Ross Jr & Company. Two years later it was Chinn & Todd and remained so into 1902 where Miss Annie Caden was still listed as a clerk. In 1888 and in 1893 she was listed as Annie M Caden.

The next sister to appear in the City Directories was Mamie F Caden in 1893, a cashier at 32 East Main, the address of the dry goods store where sister Anna worked. In 1895, Mamie was said to be a bookkeeper for the store and continued to be listed in the Directories as a cashier or bookkeeper for one company or another for the next 24 years. During this period, she was enumerated one year as the Treasurer for a barber supply business. Over the years Mamie's name is shown in a variety of different ways - Mary F, Mayme J, Mame F and Mayme F. But since the name Mamie F Caden is used more often than the others, I will refer to her by this name.

A third sister came to the pages of the Directories in 1902 Miss Alice B Caden, a pharmacist for McAdams & Morford. By 1911, she owned her own business, the Caden Drug Co, Inc at 101 West Main, and she continued to be listed in this way for the next eight years. But she and her business disappear from the Directories after 1919 and she does not show up again until 1940.

*For information on UNCOVERINGS, send SASE to American Quilt Study Group, 105 Molino, Mill Valley, CA 94941.

Miss Susan D Caden, a fourth sister listed as Miss Sue Caden, also appeared in 1902 as a nurse at Good Samaritan Hospital. This proved to be the only year that her name was in the Directories until 1940.

By 1906, Annie had gone into business with Mary Winn in a dry goods store located at 204 West Main called Caden & Winn but this partnership was to be a short one. It only made one appearance in the Directories. By the next one in 1908, Anna M Caden was in business apparently by herself with a notions store bearing her name at 210 West Main. Over the next eleven years the business remained in the same location and continued to bear her name although by 1911 its business was that of ladies' furnishings.



But where is the main character of our story - Margaret Rogers Caden? The one sister that we've known about for more than fifty years? The one who flew to national attention in 1933 by winning \$1000 at the Chicago World's Fair during the height of the Great Depression? The one whose quilt was chosen over 25,000 other entries?

The name of Margaret R Caden makes its debut in the City Directories of Lexington in 1911 as a milliner at 210 West Main, the location of her sister's store. However, the name of the store is not mentioned and there is no mention of it in the next four Directories through 1919. In 1912, Mamie is shown to be the bookkeeper for Margaret R Caden but two years later it is with the barber supply company while Margaret is then shown to be in the Fayette National Bank Building and sister Anna remains at 210 West Main. By 1916, Margaret is back at 210 West Main and Mamie is with yet another business. During the next three years, Mamie again goes back with Margaret as a cashier at 210 West Main. Perhaps Margaret and Anna were not partners in the business but were separate businesswomen sharing the same location. Millinery just naturally compliments ladies' furnishings and therefore the convenience of the same address.

Anna, the shopkeeper for ladies' furnishings; Mamie, the bookkeeper and cashier; Alice, the pharmacist and drug company owner; and Margaret, the milliner, are all listed in the Directory for 1919 but none of the four are listed in the next directory in 1923. It's possible that they were simply skipped over but I suspect there might prove to be a reason for the missing entries with further research - perhaps the girls had a sisterly spat? And remember that the 1919 Directory is the last one that Alice appears in for the next 20 years. Coincidence? Another interesting note is that during these eleven or so years from 1908 into 1919 or perhaps one or two or three years more that Anna had her ladies' furnishing shop, she was always listed formally as Anna M Caden and never as Annie as she had been in all but one of the Directories prior to 1908 and as occasionally happened after 1927.

But three of the sisters return to the pages of the Directories in 1925 although the business has changed. In fact, many things have changed. Only the name of it remains the

same - Anna M Caden. As the years passed it was also variously referred to as Annie M Caden, Ann M Caden, and Mrs Anna (or Annie) M Caden. Even though Anna is listed in three Directories at various times after 1925 as "Mrs", there is very strong evidence that none of the five sisters married.

The business had become that of novelties, then of gifts. One year, in 1930, it was listed as art goods and brick-a-brac.* Both Mamie and Margaret were now working for sister Anna as sales ladies. Sometimes they were referred to as clerks or saleswomen. But never again is Mamie referred to as a bookkeeper or cashier nor is Margaret ever referred to as a milliner. These careers were evidently behind them. In its first four to six years, the shop was located at 123 Main, then moved to the Esplanage (which runs North from Main Street). A year later, it moved to 233 East Main. It's ironic that today, the Caden shop is remembered as being in the Phoenix Hotel which did prove to be its final location but 3 years is the maximum amount of time that it was in the hotel. Please note, also, that the address of the Phoenix Hotel is on the other side of Main Street from all of the previous addresses of the shop.

1939 is the last year that the gift shop is listed in the City Directories. Mamie's name is missing from that Directory and never appears again. Apparently she died in 1938 or 1939 and the other two sisters, who were attaining old age at this point, decided to retire. Anna was about 79 and Margaret was around 67. The following year, Alice and Sue reappear and the four remaining sisters spend the rest of their days together, first at 432 Fayette Pike, then at 501 North Broadway. One by one, the four women disappear from the Directory pages - Annie by 1945, Alice by 1953, Margaret in 1955, and Sue in 1956. Their approximate ages when they died were Annie 84 years, Alice 76, Margaret 82, Sue 81, and Mamie 72.

In each case a very long life and always a very busy life as any business owner or professional will testify. But then Mom and Dad had lived long lives. Their mother, Susan, was past 73 when she died and their father, Owen had been past 70. He was born in Ireland in September 1829 according to the U S Federal Census when it was enumerated during the year of 1900.

He came to America in 1854 and reportedly became a naturalized citizen. About four years after his arrival, he married Susan who was a Kentucky native, born in October of 1837 although her parents had also come over from Ireland. They had ten children but only nine were living in 1900 and seven of those were still at home when the Census was taken. And, all seven were unmarried. The oldest was 40 and the youngest was 24. Eugene, a carpenter, was the first-born in January of 1859. Anna was next in November 1890. Then came Mamie in October 1866, Elizabeth L in December 1868 and Margaret in April 1872. Susan came along almost exactly two years later in April 1874 and Alice in May 1876. There is a rule-of-thumb in genealogy which proves itself over and over again in family after family. Children in 19th century farm families were generally born every two years during the time of child-bearing and when these two years stretch into four, or five, or more, it can

*The word "quilts" never appeared in any of the **Directory** listings.

usually be safely assumed that known, but missing children, were born in these spans of time. Therefore, two of the three children missing from the 1900 Census were probably born between mid-1861 and the beginning of 1866 and the third child about 1870.

Their farm, which they owned, was about 2 1/2 miles north of the city and was free of debts in 1900. But Owen, the husband and father, was not the head of the household as usually is the case when both husband and wife are living. Susan was listed as the head of the household and as a farmer while her husband was listed as a farm laborer. My supposition, based solely on my genealogical experience and looking at the time frame, is that Owen served his due during the Civil War in the first years of the 1860's decade and was most likely incapacitated because of it from doing any hard manual labors as so many other men who had survived that awful time in our history experienced. Dysentery continued to eat at a person forever. Of course there could have been a physical injury, or any one of many other possibilities.

Even though we know that five of the daughters lived to grand ages, they did not age very much during the ten year period from 1900 to 1910 - Annie, Mamie and Margaret each became only one year older during this time, Alice gained two years but Elizabeth lost a year and became a year younger in 1910 than she had been in 1900 although Mother gained the correct number of ten years in her age.

The parents were farmers as the great majority of American residents were at that time, but at least six of thier children became professional people. Only Elizabeth, still living at home in 1910, was listed with no occupation.

So Susan, Owen and their children broke many molds and were far from being the "typical" or "average" family of their time.

References:

QUILTERS' JOURNAL #24,27,29

QUILTERS' NEWSLETTER MAGAZINE #156 pg 22-24



"Tattooing, though not exactly textile decoration, is so akin to it in motives and design that we cannot forbear to mention it here. As a practice it is very old and is found in many parts of the world. It seems to have been rediscovered by sailors and soldiers in the East, which would account for the prevalence of exotic Oriental motives, especially dragons, amongst the hearts, linked initials, flowers, butterflies, anchors and other homely symbols of luck, fidelity and affection which we find repeated over and over again in other forms of popular art...

"Printing has also been applied to cheap textile decoration. The printed cotton handkerchiefs and scarves of the nineteenth century really belong more to street literature than to textiles, with their commemorative, sporting and political figures. Even the ornaments for borders are often more reminiscent of typography textile traditions, although they sometimes combine both together." From: ENGLISH POPULAR & TRADITIONAL ART by Lambert & Marx publ by Collins, London 1946.