

The Romance of the Circuit Rider in Patchwork

Almost any one of the designs in this quilt made seventy years ago may be used as the motif for quilt or pillow.
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BACK in the days when ministers were fewer and religious faith stronger, the lean form of the Reverend G. C. Warvel astride his chestnut mare was a welcome silhouette against the winter sky. And no matter how severe the weather or how difficult the roads, this dauntless man of God came bringing his message of hope and cheer to his country parishioners assembled for worship in their cross-roads churches.

For not merely to one but to six communities did this good man minister in the course of his hundred mile circuit in the Miami, Ohio, district. And until his coming, which occurred only eight times a year at each church, were deferred the marriages and memorial services of the entire countryside. So sound was his counsel, both on temporal and spiritual matters, and so powerful and constructive an influence did he exert in the lives of the people in this vast territory that even today his name and some interesting stories of his exploits may be found on the pages of Ohio history.

It was in sincere appreciation of his services that forty of the women of the United Brethren church at Miami, Ohio, in 1862 presented the Reverend Warvel with this patchwork quilt. It is immensely interesting, not only because the varied patches represent each woman's idea of beauty and symmetry but also because of the signatures of the makers with which each block is inscribed, in ink now so faded and blurred as to be almost undecipherable. The Danby's, the Patterson's, the Smith's, the Cleveland's and many other names prominent in Ohio development all are represented on the patches which make up this humble tribute to the character and deeds of a good man whose services were invaluable to this community.

The "Circuit Rider's Quilt" as it is called is now the property of the Chicago Art Institute in their treasured collection of typical examples of early American art and needlecraft.

How to Use the Designs

In the "Circuit Rider's Quilt" there are forty-two blocks representing thirty-three designs. They offer an infinite variety to the enthusiastic needlewoman of 1932, who will find much inspiration and pleasure in perpetuating this piece of craftsmanship for generations to come.

Almost any one of the designs may be selected as the motif for a quilt. They can be used on blocks 11 inches square or larger. To illustrate, we have used the blocks numbered 29, 14, 25, 23, 12 and 11 for the six quilts sketched at the bottom of the page.

In the quilts made with numbers 29, 14, 25, 12 and 11, the motif is used for the colored appliqué patches, and it also serves as the design for the quilting stitches in the blocks that do not have appliqué. For the sixth

quilt, Number 23, the ever-popular diamond quilting is stitched around the appliqué flowers.

In selecting the border, there is an opportunity to emphasize the colors in the appliqué. Bias folds of varying widths offer colorful binding for 29, 23 and 11.

For the pillows, muslin to match the quilt is the usual choice for a bedroom. For living-room, sun room or porch, sateen and fast-colored gingham are prime favorites, as shown in the four pillows sketched.

Six Quilts and Four Pillows

Spring Glory Quilt, No. 29: The tulip design, always a favorite, is shown in orchid and yellow. Twelve 14-inch blocks are joined with quilted blocks and six-inch border. Finished size is 72 by 92 inches.

Sweet Clover Quilt, No. 14: A graceful design of green leaves and pink buds. There are 15 12-inch blocks and a nine-inch appliqué border. Finished size of the quilt is 78 by 90 inches.

Cosmos Quilt, No. 25: The eight-petaled blossoms can be made with four pink and four rose patches pieced together and then appliqué onto a 13-inch block. Twelve blocks set together diagonally with 12 quilted blocks make a quilt 72 by 90 inches.

Cosmos Pillow, No. 25: Oblong pillows are used in pairs, one at each end of a davenport. This one of rose sateen is 10 by 15 inches with two-inch box sides.

Rambler Rose Quilt, No. 23: Twelve 13-inch appliqué blocks and 12 plain blocks (joined diagonally) are required for a quilt 74 by 95 inches. Diamond quilting is used on quilt and 10-inch border.

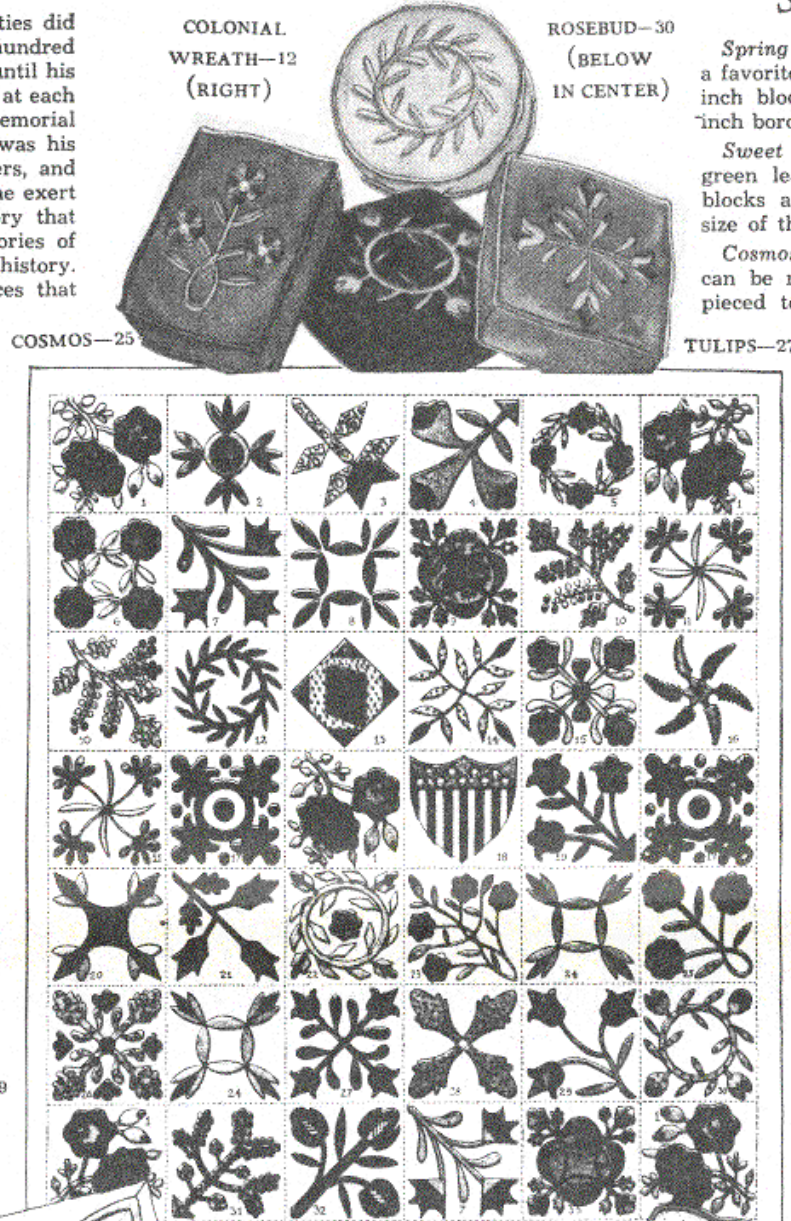
Colonial Wreath Quilt, No. 12: A simple leaf design is appliqué onto 10 15-inch blocks and quilted on the joining blocks. With the appliqué nine-inch border, finished size is 78 by 93 inches.

Colonial Wreath Pillow, No. 12: The design makes a 14-inch round pillow of green gingham. It has two-inch box sides.

Mountain Daisy Quilt, No. 11: Twenty 14-inch blocks, 10 appliqué and 10 quilted ones, make a quilt 76 by 90 inches with 10-inch border.

Rosebud Pillow, No. 30: A 12-inch black sateen pillow with two-inch box sides.

Tulip Pillow, No. 27: This design is attractive on a blue gingham 14-inch pillow.



COLONIAL WREATH—12 (RIGHT)

ROSEBUD—30 (BELOW IN CENTER)

COSMOS—25

TULIPS—27



SPRING GLORY—29

SWEET CLOVER—14

COSMOS—25

The Circuit Rider's Quilt, with its forty-two blocks, has provided the inspiration for the six quilts and four pillows sketched around it

RAMBLER ROSE—23

MOUNTAIN DAISY—11

COLONIAL WREATH—12

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This article attributes the Circuit Rider quilt to the collection of the Art Institute of Chicago. It was originally from the collection of Emma B Hodge and was given by her as part of a large donation of quilts from her collection to the Art Institute in 1966. (Additional information about Mrs. Hodge appears in the Winter 1978 and Spring 1979 issues of the JOURNAL)

In the 1966 AMERICAN QUILTS catalog from the Art Institute (now out of print) 20 quilts are attributed to Mrs. Hodges collection. Mine were listed from her collection in the 1978-79 exhibit. One other quilt which was part of her collection appears in the catalog but was donated by Mrs. Jennie Hodge Schmidt.

In an article appearing in THE LADIES! HOME JOURNAL, Jan 1922, two of her quilts which were shown in color were later donated to the Art Institute. The two listed in the 1966 catalog and article are Cherry Basket (Accession #19.550) and Cherry Tree (Accession #19.546)

The Circuit Rider (Accession #19.535) is described in the 1966 catalog, "The quilt was made by 40 women of the United Brethren Church of Miami, Ohio for the Reverend G C Warvel in plain and figured calicoes, each inscribed with the name of its maker. The blocks are quilted in square bands." It is inscribed "Presented to the Rev G C Warvel by the class of Low Chapel, Miami, A.C.U.B. Ch." The quilt measures 85" x 95"