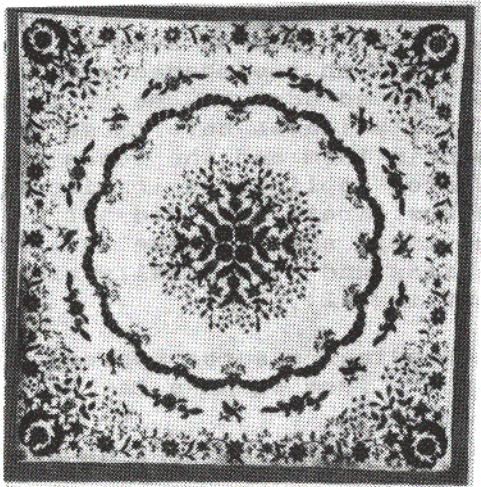


EVOLUTION OF A QUILT DESIGN

In the article, "Twentieth Century Game Plan, Naming the Quilt Pattern" (s/s 1977 Quilter's Calendar), Cuesta Benberry discussed the fun of quilt "Detective Game". At the National Quilting Association Quilt Show in June, 1977, (see pg 10 for review), I was excited to see a quilt entitled Flowers and Birds. (#260 in catalog) which I knew by another name.

In Woman's Day, March 1943, a quilt entitled Mrs. Eisfeller's Garden was pictured with an ad selling a set of instructions for "Prize Winning Quilts". It was a very complicated applique pattern with hundreds of tiny pieces and it has always intrigued me. I wondered if anyone had ever done it. Now here was proof! Someone had indeed done it and done it beautifully.

Here are four photographic versions of this quilt, originally called The Garden, with story following.



The Garden made by Arsinoe Kelsey Bowen. Photo courtesy OLD PATCHWORK QUILTS, Ruth Finley



Mrs. Eisfeller's Garden from WOMAN'S DAY PATTERN. Shown, Nat'l Quilting Assoc. Quilt show '77. Courtesy, Kokomo Print Wks.



The Garden by Pine Eisfeller. Photo courtesy Ed Gross.



Paradise Garden by Rose Kretsinger. from the collection of the University of Kansas Museum of Art. Photo courtesy Ed Gross

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The story of the quilt Flowers and Birds that was told to me at the NQA exhibit was that it had been part of the Maytag Estate in Pittsburg, Penn. After the estate sale, the maid had gone to put something into the garbage can. There she discovered this quilt and two others. They were filthy but when she took them home and washed them, they were lovely. The quilt, Flowers and Birds is now owned by Mrs. Louise Aggelo.

Mrs Eisfeller's Garden was originally made in 1938 by Ping L. Eisfeller (dated and initialed). Pine had lived in Hawaii where her husband was stationed in the army from 1930-35. She had become very adept at making Hawaiian quilts and was a noted lecturer on Hawaiian quilt lore. When they were transferred to Lake Ontario, New York, she continued to do a great deal of lecturing (including the Genessee Valley Quilt Club.) and won many blue ribbons for her quilts at both the New York State Fair and the Altamont Fair.

She had always admired the Garden (2) made by Arsinoe Kelsey Bowen in 1857. She didn't own a copy of the book so she took it to a photographer to copy the picture, typed the complete description of the quilt, and then set to work. The result was an outstanding quilt, but different in color and design from the original. She says, "The original Garden quilt had more open space ...but I wanted mine to be more flowery. Of course the colors are different because I used modern fabrics."

In 1942 Pine entered her quilts in the Woman's Day National Needlework Contest and won the 2nd Grand Prize and the 1st prize in the Quilting Division (In the same contest, Rose Kretsinger took a 2nd and Bertha Stene took 3rd). In the aftermath of the contest, the magazine adapted her quilt The Garden and sold it to fascinated women, coast to coast. They estimated the cost of the material at \$12.00 but cautioned their readers.. "(Mrs. Eisfeller's) are difficult quilts to make. Each will require months of patient, expert work. The designs are elaborate, there are many separate

motifs to be appliqued, many colors to be worked with care so that they blend and form a satisfying whole rather than a jumbled mass."(6)

And now, thirty years later, an adaptation of Mrs. Eisfeller's Garden won Viewer's Choice in another National Contest, the June 1977 National Quilting Association.

A different adaptation of the Bowen quilt was made by Rose Kretinger in the 1940's. In bright colors instead of Pine's pastels, the Kretsinger quilt is also more ornate. In Mrs. and Mrs. Eisfeller's the swag is a two-toned cable twist while Mrs. Kretsinger made a swag of a tiny blue check with two shades of blue in a scalloped edge. Some of Mrs. Kretsinger's leaves have three shades of green in them and the roses are a complicated applique of 16 pieces. Though Mrs. Kretsinger did not do her own quilting, she did make the careful designs and occasionally aided in the stuffing. (2), (4)

Nimble Needle Treasures reproduced the pattern from Woman's Day in Fall, 1971.(1)
----Joyce Gross

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- (1) Nimble Needle Treasures, Fall, 1971
- (2) Old Patchwork Quilts, Ruth E. Finley Charles T. Bradford Co., Newton Center, Mass. 1929, 1957, reprinted 1970
- (3) Patch in Time, Joyce Gross, 1973
- (4) 150 Years of American Quilts, The University of Kansas Museum of Art 1973.
- (5) Woman's Day, January 1943
- (6) Woman's Day, March 1943

EDITOR'S NOTE

When clipping articles or pictures from newspapers or magazines, please take the time to put on the name of the publication, the date, month and year. You would probably recognize the publication by the typo, but it is surprising how time slips by and one remember a date. If you pass it on to someone else, it is imperative for historical purposes.
