

Quilt History Tidbits -- Old & Newly Discovered

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Evolution of Nancy Cabot quilt patterns

Kansas City Star, Weekly Kansas City Star, and Weekly Star Farmer quilt patterns, 1928-1961

The *Kansas City Star* collection is perhaps the best-known quilt pattern collection of the many dozens that have been published since the late-19th century. I was still quite new to the world of quilts in July 1978 when I attended the Kansas Quilt Symposium at the University of Kansas. The numerous lectures included Louise Townsend's about the *Kansas City Star*. I was immediately mesmerized by these patterns and remember wondering if I'd ever be lucky enough to "own a few" of the clippings. At the time, I knew very little about antiques and collectibles, or how to go about finding and collecting them. Several months later, a friend sold me her mother's collection and a second collection soon came to me from a local estate. I was hooked, but found myself faced with a personal dilemma concerning how to arrange the clippings. Although most collectors arrange them alphabetically, this method didn't please me for a variety of reasons, in part because they seemed to be more meaningful in chronological order. This inspired my first major quilt-related research project in 1983-84-85 when I scrolled through 244 reels of newspaper microfilm over a 17 month period to identify and date these patterns, then self-published an *Index* to this amazing collection (see below), the first time this well-known collection had been methodically documented.

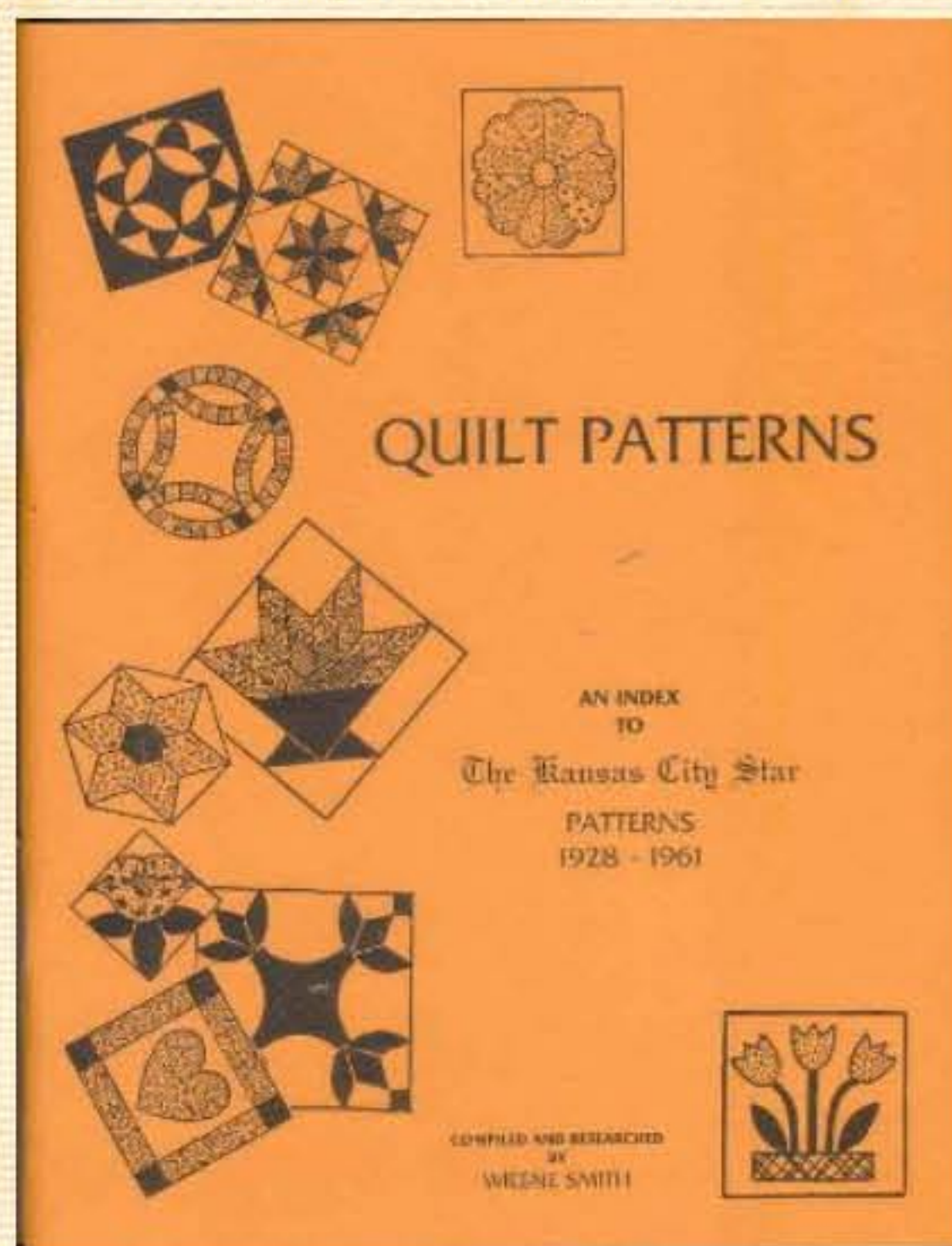
The *Kansas City Star* was founded in September 1880 by William Rockhill Nelson. The first issue of the *Weekly Kansas City Star*, also founded by Mr. Nelson, rolled off the presses March 6, 1890. Circulation was concentrated within Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas, and in the edges of Iowa, Nebraska, and Colorado with three editions: Missouri, Kansas, and Oklahoma-Arkansas.

The *Weekly Star* became the *Weekly Star Farmer*, February 13, 1952. "With this issue The Weekly Kansas City Star becomes the Weekly Star Farmer. The change in name is being made in order to make the publication's title fit in more completely with the character of its contents and the activities of the group to which it speaks--the farm families of this great Mid-Continent area. No changes in the form or contents of the paper have been made. It still is the same old Weekly Kansas City Star to which you have been accustomed, under a modernized name"

The *Weekly Star Farmer* published its last editions May 24, 1961. The announcement was made to its readers and advertisers, May 10, 1961, that the circulation lists had been sold to Home State Farm Publications, Inc., publishers of the *Missouri Ruralist* and *Kansas Farmer* along with six other farm publications. Subscribers were offered their choice of these eight papers. The *Weekly Star Farmer* was the last weekly farm newspaper of its type in the United States. While other farm weeklies either suspended publication during the Depression or were merged into other monthly or semi-monthly publications, the *Weekly Star Farmer* had continued as a reader service, its chief product, and never developed into a profitable enterprise.

How many quilt patterns were there, I wondered? When the microfilm project was completed in early 1985, I spent many long, agonizing hours analyzing, counting, and recounting in every way I could devise, and 1,068 was the answer that came each time. This number quickly became universally accepted and unquestioned after the publication of my *Index*, the first of its kind for this collection.

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