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Esther Millison, Fancy Work Editor, *Wichita (KS) Weekly Eagle*

The daily *Wichita (KS) Eagle* newspaper published a weekly farm paper, the *Weekly Eagle*, from January 27, 1888, to May 20, 1919.

The weekly paper inaugurated "My Fancy Work," August 22, 1913, as a special feature of the "Our Home" page edited by Esther Millison. Initially discovered in a scrapbook found at a local yard sale, the feature is typical of localized quilt pattern sources that occurred across the United States in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

During the nine months ending June 5, 1914, the paper illustrated 79 quilt designs in 33 of the newspaper's 39 issues, many of them contributed by readers. At the beginning of the period, the feature includes the first known publication for several designs, and others with names not previously known. By the end of the period, however, the editor reverted to designs published by earlier sources, primarily the Ladies' Art Company catalogs from St. Louis, Missouri.

Although there was an Esther Millison in 19th century America who would have been deceased by the 1910s, and another lady with this name in the 1950s who was born after the 1910s, the identity of the *Weekly Eagle's* Esther Millison has not been discovered and was likely a pseudonym. Her name is not listed in Wichita's city directories or in Kansas censuses or in censuses in any other state during the right time frame, and has not yet been found in other newspapers. It's possible the household feature emanated not from the *Weekly Eagle*, but from one of several newspaper unions (early syndicates) that furnished features to hundreds of small weekly newspapers throughout the midwest. Among these was Western Newspaper Union, one of the largest and most pervasive at the time. Miss Millison's columns for the *Eagle* are poorly edited if at all and replete with grammatical errors.

This is the only clipping in the scrapbook with the headline and date still intact which made my job much easier documenting the feature in the newspaper's microfilm. Left to right, top to bottom, the designs are identified as Star of Many Points, The Double T, Churn Dash, The H, The Double Wrench, and Cross and Crown. One design came from a lady in Helen, Arkansas, two from Oklahoma, and two from Kansas readers. The location of the sixth contributor is not identified.



See separate page for Mrs. Grace Jones, a 1914 *Weekly Eagle* contributor living in Iowa.

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