

Quilt History Tidbits -- Old & Newly Discovered

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Lydia Le Baron Walker and Mary Evangeline Walker

Syndicated by Bell Syndicate in newspapers across the United States from about January 1926 through the end of 1941 (according to search results at NewspaperArchive.com), this feature was primarily a general household column, but occasionally offered a quilt pattern.

Although I knew about the Walker column from Barbara Brackman's "References" section in *Encyclopedia of Pieced Quilt Patterns*, I had not seen an example until November 2010. The clipping is not dated but the text suggests its from late 1931 or early 1932 when the country was preparing for a nationwide bicentennial celebration of George Washington's birth during which time the cherry tree myth was widely circulated. The text says in part: "In the Tree and Truth design the name is self explanatory of the famous episode of Washington's boyhood. The units combined are the sturdy little tree and the hatchet with which he cut it down, as instanced in the homely little incident, in itself something which could happen in the lives of many a youngster. It is the imprint of truth which the little lad, George, left on the family, and the nation afterwards, that lends character to the tale and also the quilt made of Tree and Truth patchwork."

Two quilt patterns are mentioned in the text: "Among the modern quilts there are some worthy of mention, for they have historic significance and the necessary excellence of design to be peers of the handsome old ones. The Tree and Truth, and the Cherry Tree are two patterns (10 cents each). Both of these are linked with the name and character of George Washington."

The text ends: "Color schemes are suggested, and many uses for the designs are given on pattern sheets. Each one is 10 cents with self-addressed and stamped (3-cent) envelope. Requests should be sent to Lydia Le Baron Walker care of this paper." Mary Evangeline Walker's signature appears in a narrow strip across the bottom of the engraving.



The next image is from *The Daily Messenger* in Canandaigua, New York, June 6, 1927. It illustrates the Washington Pavement pattern with the headline, "Some Quaint Quilt Patterns and Theories About Their Names." The pattern for an 8-inch block was supplied free of charge by sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope to the newspaper. Retrieved from Ancestry.com, much of the text is not readable due to their poor quality image reader, its jpeg format, and the inability to manipulate the newspaper page and save only a single article.



The third image illustrates American Loghouse Quilting. It's from the *Cuba (KS) Tribune* in Republic County east of Belleville in north-central Kansas. Published October 29, 1936, Mary Evangeline Walker's signature does not appear in the engraving. This is the only Walker quilt design I was able to locate in NewspaperArchive.com search results.

The Household

By LYDIA LE BARON WALKER

THE name American patchwork was given by the English to a certain type of piece patchwork evidently originated on this continent. It is a name unfamiliar to most Americans, although credit for the beautiful work is given to the women in the United States and Canada. American patchwork found its way from this continent to England in the latter quarter of the last century, somewhere about 1875 or 1880. In Great Britain it was attributed equally to the United States and Canada, both countries being in America, and there being an uncertainty about just which section was responsible for the distinctive patchwork.

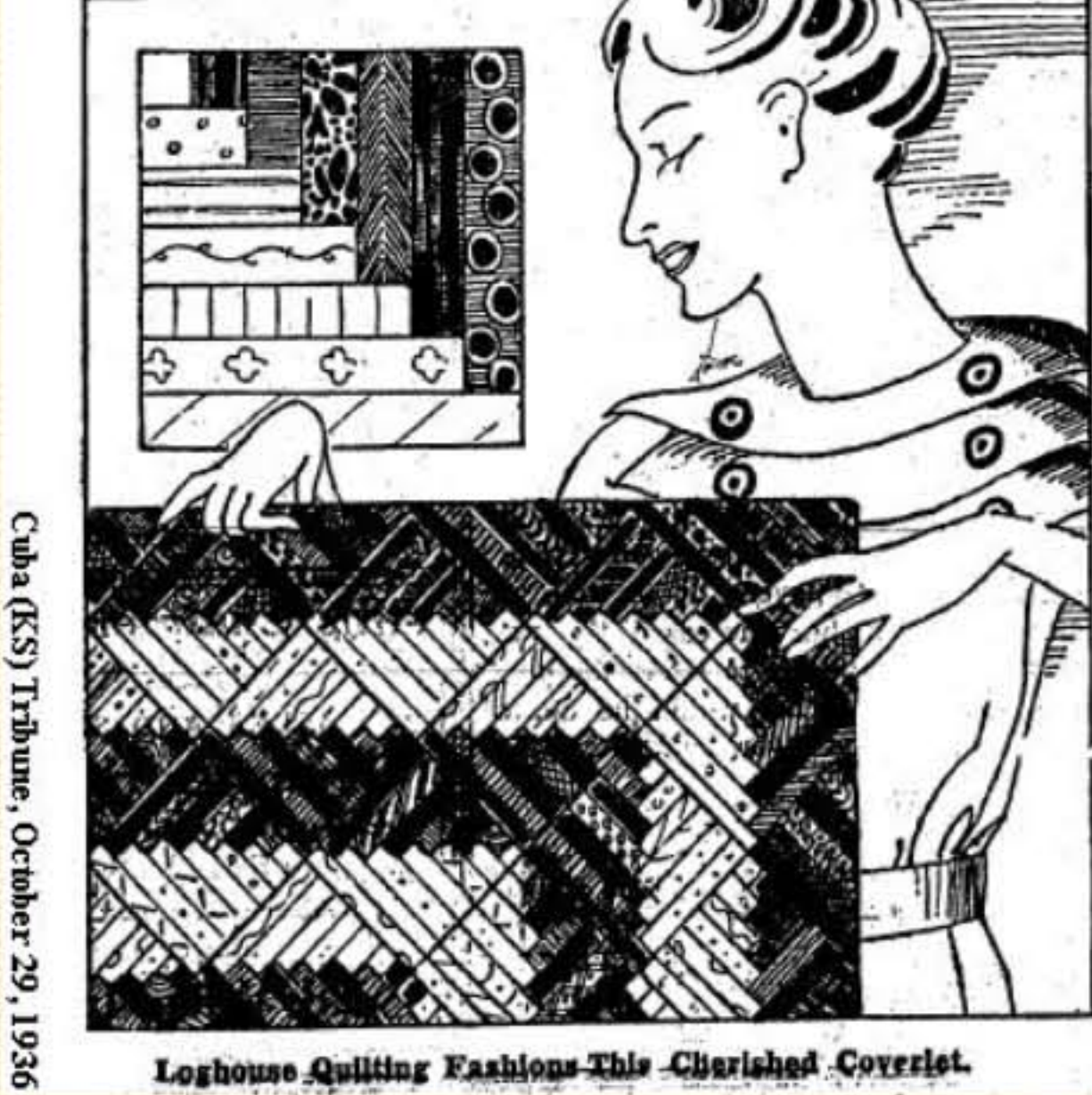
The name of loghouse quilting was given the design abroad. It has an odd sound to us for log homes are termed log cabins in America. Here the pattern has been known through the century as the log cabin pattern, but the name loghouse quilting has a fascinating ring to it. The patchwork was, and is, one of the hand-

somest types of all. Its special feature was its use of ribbons for patches and also silk and satin (and sometimes velvet) cut into strips of ribbon widths.

How To Make Squares.
The strips are positioned in ever-widening rows about a small square of one of the materials. In each row strips overlap one another. Ends are straight, that is they are not dovetailed or mitered. The ribbon-like strips can be sewed to a foundation square or be seamed together. In the old work the ribbons were sewed to a foundation, with a square of silk sewed on the exact center of the foundation square. After this the rows were set in order about it. Edges slightly overlapped so no lining was visible.

The method of arrangement of colors is definite. One diagonal half of a square is of dark colored pieces, the other of light ones. When squares are sewed together dark comes against dark and light against light, producing a fascinating sequence of ever widening squares of light and dark. When colors are artistically combined, the quilt with its rich materials is superb. We can well be proud of the quilts which bear the name of American loghouse quilting.

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Who were Lydia and Mary Walker?

Lydia Le Baron Holmes was born March 3, 1869, in New Bedford, Bristol County, Massachusetts, daughter of Josiah and Sarah A. Holmes, and married William H. P. Walker September 15, 1892. They had two daughters, Mary E. born February 1894, and Lydia born September 1895. Mrs. Walker was a widow by 1930 and identified as a newspaper writer in the 1930 census for Cambridge, Middlesex County, Massachusetts. Daughter Mary was an artist and daughter Lydia a free lance writer.

Mrs. Lydia Le Baron Walker wrote *Homecraft Rugs; Their Historic Background, Romance of Stitchery and Method of Making* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1929), illustrated by Mary Evangeline Walker.

Articles under Mrs. Walker's name were published in *House and Garden* (December 1911), *Woman's Home Companion* (November 1912), *Ladies' Home Journal* (March 1923), and probably others.

Mrs. Walker's daughter, Mary Evangeline Walker, received her art training at the Boston Museum School of Fine Art, Columbia University, and the New York School of Art (Chase). She was an educator, teacher, and lecturer, married Harold A. Landy sometime after 1930, and died in 1957 in Arlington, Massachusetts. She was described as "one of Boston's top [fine arts] teachers" in the *Lowell (MA) Sun*, January 8, 1950.