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The Land of Cotton: Quiltmaking by African-American Women in Three Southern States

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"I learned to quilt from my grandmother," said Sam Ella Gilmore.

> We lived in the country, near Rogersville, Alabama, and we raised cotton and everything we needed to eat. We had to chop cotton and pick it and take care of sheep, hogs, ducks, and chickens. My first job at making quilts was ironing the pieces of cloth for my grandmother. Us kids would whip the cotton with a switch to make it fluffy when she needed filler. The women went from house to house in winter to quilt and have prayer meeting. I'd play under the quilt frame when they came to our house. They liked to show off new patterns and trade with each other.
>
> When I got older, I made four quilts for my hope chest. I sewed them on the sewing machine and we quilted them. You know, I never did use them quilts 'cause I ran off to get married and left them behind. I stopped making quilts until I quit work and joined a senior citizens' group. Now I've made four more quilts. I just love to cover up in bed and enjoy the handwork my friends have put in my quilt.[1]

Interviews with thirty-five black women, quiltmakers from Alabama, Georgia, and Tennessee, reveal a variety of backgrounds and circumstances which shaped their lives. Many of them grew up in rural settings, ranging from sharecroppers' farms to extensive plantations, and a few have lived only in the city. They are joined together by the common bond of quilting and share their knowledge with each other the same way their mothers and grandmothers did.

My study was directed toward determining any existing characteristics and differences between the quilts made in the country and those made later by the same women after they had moved to the city. I wished to see how ready access to fabric, better income, social interaction, and urban styles affected their products and whether certain qualities set them apart as African-American quilters.

Herbert G. Gutman, in *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom 1750-1925*, states that during the period of slavery, despite harsh conditions, the family unit was strongly maintained whenever possible, not without maternal and paternal sacrifice and determination, and sometimes with the assistance of an extended family. Providing meager household necessities was a challenge requiring ingenuity and late hours of work.[2]

This view is confirmed by Ozella Angel who grew up in Heflin, Alabama. Her paternal grandmother bore sixteen children, eight in slavery, and was able to maintain the family intact during that period. Then, as a free woman, she was employed on the plantation of Lena Blake who taught her to sew. Some years later she acquired a farm and became self-sufficient. Even later, instead of resting from long labor, she assumed the responsibility for nurturing the four motherless young children of her son. [3]

The major importation of slaves from Africa to the United States occurred in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries when they were brought to New England and the eastern and upper southern states for various labors. After the invention of the cotton gin and an increased production of cotton, black people made a major migration to the lower South. Planters from Virginia, the Carolinas, and other regions envisioned possibilities for vast financial gain and quickly purchased extensive holdings in Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi. Joseph Gee, for example, a planter from Halifax, North Carolina, established a vast plantation in central Alabama in 1816. Through the years it prospered until Gee's descendants sold all 4,000 acres in 1895.[4]

The removal of the landowners' households, including slaves, to new territory was a cumbersome ordeal. After Gee's death and those of his two nephews who inherited his estate, the land went to another relative in 1846, Mark H. Pettway. It took weeks for Pettway and his family to prepare and move a caravan of a hundred or more slaves and

their household goods. Except for one cook, the slaves literally walked from North Carolina to Alabama. [5]

Large and small plantations and farms used the services of black people who were considered property of their owners. Their treatment varied from humane to extremely cruel. Many diaries, letters, and later interviews with former slaves supply vivid descriptions of mistreatment and suffering.[6] Families were separated for financial gain. Alice Stovall, of Stevenson, in northeast Alabama, never knew any of her mother's relatives. Her mother was sold at the age of twelve and never saw her family again. Shortly thereafter, the Civil War ended and she was freed. She came to live in north Alabama where she married and remained the rest of her life. [7]

Unlike Alice Stovall's mother, her son-in-law's family had experienced better relationships with their owners, the Johnsons, in nearby Hollywood, Alabama. After Emancipation, having been in the household for several generations, the black Johnsons were given their freedom and a choice of some property. Both Johnson families, black and white, held each other in high regard, acknowledged kinship, and remained close to one another. All the members of the large black Johnson family became successful landowners themselves by the twentieth century. [8]

Perhaps less dramatic are the eighteenth and early nineteenth century account books used on several large plantations in the South which demonstrate the continuity of family groups maintained there for several generations. One can see a fairly stable community working together to maintain itself with food and clothing and to make a profit for the landowner. [9]

Plantation tasks were many and those who showed special skills became valued for their work. Domestic duties went along with agricultural production and some women were trained in spinning, weaving, sewing, and quilting. Thomas Chaplin, in his plantation journal, complained of the number of mouths he had to feed—thirty besides his family—and only ten of those were put in the field for profitable employment. The others included a cook, seamstress, washer, nurse, housemaid, hog-tender, and "Old Sam, who can't do anything." Chaplin had already lost thirty or forty slaves in payment for bad debts. [10]

Helen Moore has described the loom house and production of goods, including blankets and quilts, accomplished by the slaves of her ancestors near Murfreesboro, Tennessee in the mid-1800s.[11] Examples made by other black women attest to their skills and can be seen in a **Plume** quilt in the Tennessee State Museum,[12] a floral applique quilt,[13] and a stuffed **Rose** quilt,[14] all made by household slaves.

The grandfather of Luella Jones was sold when he was a young boy because he was not large enough to do field work. He went to the home of a landowner near Rome, Georgia, where he was taught various processes of textile production. His primary task was to prepare cotton for weaving, for his mistress had to clothe an extensive household. In addition to spinning thread and warping looms, he learned to knit cotton thread into sturdy socks that were long lasting, a skill he retained all his life. He was accomplished at his work and was regarded with affection. When his master went off to war, he accompanied him, "to polish his boots," said Luella, and had many tales of adventure to tell his grandchildren in later years.[15]

Reconstruction brought about immediate or gradual relocations. Some chose to stay close to their former owners, as employees or sharecroppers, and others acquired land by gift or purchase for establishing their own farms.[16] Some individuals moved into northern or southern urban areas seeking employment. Jacqueline Jones, in *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow*, points out that many of those moving to the cities were widows, with families, who were unable to continue living on the land. With few employment opportunities other than laundress, cook, or maid, they had a continual struggle for existence. Husbands, too, had little choice but to accept low-paying jobs with negligible security. During slavery it had been necessary to improvise and make-do and the lesson continued for those who were free but of little means.[17]

The majority of the women I interviewed grew up in the country, for the most part on self-sufficient farms where their families raised cotton, sugar cane, fruit and vegetable gardens, and livestock. Cotton was the main cash crop. "My father was a wonderful farmer," said Ruby Beard, who lived near Athens, Georgia. "He raised everything we used. We all helped with the crops and the animals, but my main job

was looking after the younger children. We were a big family and everyone had a share in the work." [18] Sarah Belle Douglas said her father worked for a white family and only grew a garden for his family's use, and, with the cow given him by his employer, they needed little else.[19]

Elizabeth Hudson's family lived in middle Georgia and she described them as sharecroppers, that is, her father rented land which he paid for with a share of his produce. He had a prosperous farm where he raised peaches, cotton, sugar cane for sorghum, and a kitchen garden. His wife worked for the Walker family where she learned to cook, sew, and keep house. Hattie Clark, Mrs. Hudson's grandmother, passed down a meticulously made **Double Irish Chain** quilt which is evidence that she was well trained in sewing arts. Dating from about 1880 or 1890, new material was purchased for its making. Pieces for the blocks when seamed were 1¼" square. The thin cotton batt and even stitches are exceedingly fine. It is obvious that much time and expense went into the making of this quilt.[20]

Growing up on a farm near Huntsville, Alabama, meant that Rose Grimmett was well acquainted with hard work. She plowed, chopped and picked cotton, and could manage almost any other required task. She began to make quilts when she was six years old and has never put them aside.[21] Mattie Porter, from the same area, did not have to perform such physical labor. Her father was a nursery-man and she was not expected to do field work. She did sometimes have to pick leftover cotton scraps from neighbors' fields for use in making quilt filler.[22]

Another viewpoint is found in the story of Hattie Bryant's life in Commerce, near Athens, Georgia. Her grandmother was a slave whose oldest daughter was three years old when their freedom was granted. The grandmother had been taught, or had acquired, fine needlework skills which, in turn, she passed on to her daughter, Mathilda. Mathilda, Hattie's mother was reared in the home of the Wards, a highly respected white family in the community. They were able to provide her with advantageous educational opportunities. (During the interviews, I found this practice of placing a young black girl in a white home for the purpose of educating her repeated a number of times.)[23] She married James Wood, a prosperous cotton farmer, reared a family, had careers as lawyer, nurse, and business

woman, and all the while made beautiful quilts. [24]

Hattie remembers the years, after she reached the age of nine, when the annual fall Cotton Fair was held following sales at the cotton market. Her father was likely to sell eight or ten bales of cotton, at $1,000 a bale, and cotton seed, also at a good price. The Fair was a time to celebrate. He gave each of his children $100 to spend in any way they chose. Sometimes the children bought magic tricks and theatrical props for future home performances to which they charged 1¢ admission.

With similarities and differences, these families share their identitis as being black and southern, with rural backgrounds. Most of them raised cotton, produced quilts, and had contact with white people to greater or lesser extent. Several common practices occurred in their quiltmaking.

Almost all the women interviewed stated that quiltmaking in their homes was largely a matter of necessity and economy. The string quilt, narrow strips stitched on paper which was later removed, was the most ordinary type of utility quilt. String quilts were made in squares which were simply joined together, or diamonds which could form stars, or triangles for spider webs. Young girls had their first lessons making the blocks and, when a sufficient number had been completed and they were tall enough to sit at the quilting frame, they learned to quilt.[25]

Ozella Angel described a utility quilt she helped make for her brothers' use. She called it **Cocklebur** and it was made from all kinds of scraps and worn-out clothing, including overalls. "It was plenty heavy enough to keep them warm on the coldest nights," she said. She took a square of fabric, folded it in half and the half in thirds to make a point (a contemporary name for this technique is **Prairie Points**). Starting in the center of the quilt, she sewed overlapping units in concentric circles to cover the entire surface. The result was a heavy bedcover which did not require batting but was given a backing.[26]

These everyday quilts were made from the smallest scraps and odd-shaped pieces, easily assembled, and required little or no preplanning. Since most of the households were engaged in the production of cotton, filler was readily available. Some women hand-carded the cotton into batts, a few beat and fluffed the cotton with slender

String quilt block made by Ozella Angel when she was seven years old.

branches, and they occasionally used recycled quilts or blankets as filler.

Feed and flour sacks were widely used for backing. Preparation of the sacks was assigned to the younger girls. "We 'uns would have to take the stitching out of the sacks," said Vacie Thomas.

> Then we'd wash and bleach them in a black washpot out back, using homemade lye soap and well water.[27] We had an old broom handle to stir with and punch down the sacks. After they had boiled a while we lifted them out with the stick and rinsed them in a tub of water. When they had dried we had to iron them so's they'd be smooth for sewing. Sometimes the letters didn't come out but the sack was used anyway. It was a lot of work but we were taught to use what we had and not waste anything.[28]

Some women dyed the sacks with walnut, oak, or red mud to give color and show less soil. Even small sugar and tobacco sacks were

unravelled and dyed for quiltmaking. Sometimes the thread was saved for later sewing or quilting. Inexpensive domestic (unbleached muslin) was often purchased for the back, less often, a coarse gingham called cotton checks.

Better quilts were made from a variety of patterns with the use of all-new material or combined with scraps. **Gentleman's Bowtie, Trip Around the World, Flower Garden, Bear Paw, Sweet Gum Leaf, Basket, Fan, Star, Love Triangle, Nine Diamond (Nine Patch), Yo-Yo, Spool, Wedding Ring, Dutch Doll, Dresden Plate, Brick Layer,** and **Log Cabin** were mentioned as being favorites of mothers and grandmothers. Several women were noted for their ability to cut and make original designs, including intricate applique, and to execute fancy embroidery on wool and silk crazy quilts.

> "My mother was very talented," said Hattie Bryant. She could cut out anything and make her own patterns for applique, anything she wanted. I try to follow her example today. She was always thinking of other people, too. By the time I was nine years old I had pieced five tops for my hope chest. When the local teacher was burned out my mother had a quilting party to quilt my tops for her. She told me I'd have time to make more. I did make more but the same thing kept happening, and I never did have any quilts to take when I got married. I've made quilts all my life, starting when I was five years old, in 1908.[29]

Two major factors contributed to the twentieth century move in the South from country to city. The first occurred just before and during the 1920s when successful cotton farmers lost a series of annual profits due to the infestation of the boll weevil.[30] Without money to plant the next year's crop and recover losses, farmers were forced to sell or give up farms and seek employment elsewhere. The movement in the 1920s, according to those interviewed, was made by whole families—father, mother, children, and perhaps other relatives attached to the household. When local employment was found, it was usually a low-paying job requiring physical labor. The woman who went to work was limited almost entirely to domestic or laundry service.

The second motivation was the opportunity for employment arising with industrialization. Most of the survey participants came to

Autumn Leaves by Hattie Bryant, 1980.

the city as young married wives whose husbands were offered jobs in factories, foundries, or industrial plants. They were aware of the precarious existence and hard work connected with farming and sought a better way of life. Women, and some men, were anxious for more educational advantages for their children than could be obtained in the country.[31]

The Drummond children attended a country school which offered six grades of education. They were unable to attend high school in the nearest sizable town because of the expense of room and board.

Even so, their education went farther than many children who were required to give more time to farm labor.[32] Luella Jones did not have a school for black children near enough for her to attend so she had to pay to go to school in Dalton, Georgia. Then she went to a boarding high school for black girls in Knoxville and college in Rogersville, Tennessee. Her family had to pay for her entire education and it was a great sacrifice.[33]

The move to the city presented more occasions for social interaction than had occurred in the country. Associates in the workplace, neighbors, and acquaintances made through church and club membership became a part of urban life.[34] There was a much wider circle of influence than before. Women who had traded quilt patterns among half-a-dozen members of their quilting parties began to have access to quilt patterns in magazines and newspapers and had a broader base of exchange.

"Mrs. Hobday, the woman I worked for, used to buy patterns and material for quilts and she let me copy her patterns," said Ruby Beard.

> The pattern for the **Umbrella Girl** I made in 1960 was given to me by a friend. I still like to read quilt magazines and get patterns from them but I don't make as many quilts as I used to. I love to quilt, even when it is for someone else. I've done a lot of quilting for people who have made cross-stitch quilts or inherited quilt tops. They are always pleased and I am too, because I make a little money that way.[35]

Lillie Johnson is a talented contemporary quiltmaker who did not become serious about quiltmaking until she broke her arm and was forced, temporarily, to leave her job in a textile mill. She had rejected her mother's efforts to teach her to make quilts at a younger age. She recalls that her grandmother had made quilts, but she was not interested at that time. Having moved from south Georgia to a small farm on the outskirts of Chattanooga and, "not working out," the grandmother apparently tried to make up every pattern that came her way. Years after her death several dozen unquilted tops, each in a different pattern, were discovered in a storage shed. Her work was imaginative and well constructed. It was made with evident pride and personal fulfillment.[36]

Mrs. Johnson began quiltmaking in the 1970s by making several applique quilts from kits, then used a 1940s set of patterns to make the **Bible Verses** quilt. Before long she was doing applique work of her own design, making several stunning medallion quilts. After retirement she was able to spend most of her spare time making quilts and, like her grandmother, wanted to try patterns new to her and experiment with her own ideas. She exchanges patterns with her friends, both black and white, and always has future quilts in mind. Although her late grandmother and mother failed at the time to teach her to

Wall hanging made by Lillian Beattie, 1981 (Photo by Bill McClure.)

quilt, she has since gained a strong emotional bond with them through her own recent work.[37]

Ella McCoy was born in Chattanooga and, although her mother and grandmother were quilters, she waited until her retirement to make her first quilt, the **Lone Star**. As a young married woman she did dressmaking at home. When she was able to go to work she became a skilled machine operator working in a hosiery mill, a shirt factory, and a blue jeans factory. She was assigned as utility girl because she could work any of the machines in the plant. Her quiltmaking reflects her training. It is highly original, somewhat unorthodox, and is pieced and quilted by machine.[38]

Lillian Beattie at age of 101 years. (Photo by Mike O'Neal.)

Another quiltmaker, rebellious in youth, is Lillian Beattie,who learned to piece quilts as a girl while living in the household of a white family in Athens, Tennessee. It was not until she visited the New York World's Fair in 1939 and saw applique work that she had any interest in quiltmaking. Using newspaper and magazine illustrations as pattern sources, she selects appropriate material for the interpretation of her designs. Her daughter, Helen Spurgeon, with whom she lives, says some days she gets so carried away with her work that she forgets to eat her noon meal. At the age of 108, Mrs. Beattie had to give up her sewing due to failing eyesight. Mrs. Beattie died in November 1988.[39] Her work is included in several private collections and she has received considerable acclaim.

In comparing the family quiltmaking of the women interviewed here with studies done by Roland Freeman, Laurel.Horton, and

Shoo-fly, in casual placement, by Rose Grimmett, 1987.

Maude Wahlman, several points come to mind. These writers did their research in predominately black communities having little interaction with white people. This may account for their finding a greater continuity of traditional African concepts. Or it may mean the people there have less regard for conformity to Anglo-American standards of quiltmaking.[40]

African-American quilts have been characterized by Maude Wahlman as having strips, bold colors, large designs, asymmetry, multiple patterns, and improvisation. She calls this a creolization derived from African textile ideas and religious symbolism in combination with American technical and functional ideas.[41] The quilts she selects, primarily from Alabama and Mississippi, support her thesis. The fallacy here, as Cuesta Benberry often reiterates, is that the black experience is as long and varied as the white experience. Many samplings of work by black quiltmakers in varied locations and economic levels are necessary to give a valid interpretation of the nature of African-American quilts.

Friday Quilters of Senior Neighbors, Chattanooga, 1988

While the five previously stated characteristics are found in many quilts made by black women, the same can be found in the work of white women. For example, at the Cleveland Museum's fine exhibition, "The Afro-American Tradition in Decorative Arts," curator John Vlach included a quilt made in Triune, Tennessee about 1910. A variety of blocks were arranged in strips and joined together, with a larger, more dominant block placed near the center. He maintains that the quilt shows elements of African design in the strip arrangement, multiplicity of pattern, improvisation, and off-center placement.[42] Another Tennessee quilt, made about 1870 or a little later by Iora Almina Philo Pool, shows great similarity. She lived in Sunbright, in Morgan County, and she was white.[43]

Roland Freeman, on the other hand, has not found it necessary to interpret the work of the women he interviewed. As a photographer, he presents his findings as he sees them and does not attempt to equate the designs with African concepts. Thus, he sees worth in the work for its own sake. He meets the quiltmaker where she is, with her own values, experience, and training. He sees her attitudes and imagination reflected in the quilts she produces. He sees the work as an

Mattie Porter and her Beautiful Star quilt used as poster design for Smithsonian Folklife Festival, Washington D.C., 1986.

extension of that person and accepts it for what it is without looking for a possible hidden and unintentional meaning.

In a lecture presented at the Southern Quilt Symposium, Laurel Horton expressed concern for the categorizing of black and white quiltmakers.

> As often happens with cultural matters that are not fully understood, the existence of African retentions in American quilts is now sometimes misused as a way of stereotyping black quiltmakers and exaggerating black and white differences. A set of aesthetic guidelines is being applied to African-American quilts, and those which do not match the criteria risk being disregarded as 'impure' examples. . . . In an effort to recognize African-American design traditions as a viable part of American culture, we are moving toward a polarization. I think this is a dangerous situation because it emphasizes the differences rather than the similarities among black and white quiltmakers.[44]

It is true that Rose Grimmett still makes quilts from the patterns her mother taught her—**Nine Diamond, Shoo-fly, Monkey Wrench**. She has less regard for the alignment of blocks and correct placement of pieces than her other friends. When she joins the blocks in rows to put together with vertical striping, the horizontal strips don't always match, but this is not a concern. As a farm laborer, she was used to putting quilts together as rapidly as possible, and she retains that habit. Her carefree attitude and good nature are expressed in her work. Her more particular friends shrug and say, "That's Rose!" when they stitch on one of her quilts.

On the other hand, Rose's friends who have attended quilt workshops and taken classes at their senior centers have benefited more noticeably. Some still follow long established routines but they have acquired new ideas and gained greater assurance in their own abilities. Even now though they are able to purchase fabric for quiltmaking, many still like to use leftover scraps mixed with a variety of new material for a "scrap-look." Color selection is often bold and bright, reflecting the choice of an individual's clothing, but the use of strong color is not an inherent characteristic. Some black women prefer muted and pastel colors. These women blend the past and the present in their quilts by whatever choices they make.

The move from country to city has been personified by the two sisters, Maggie and Dee, in Alice Walker's brilliant story, "Everyday Use." Their mother awards the family heirloom quilts to Maggie who will remain in the country, use the quilts, and remember their makers. Dee, her liberated sister who has affected urban styles, sees the quilts as momentarily fashionable elements of interior decoration. She fails to recognize and value their sentimental meaning.[45]

While my findings are less extreme than the attitudes expressed in the Walker story, there have been noticeable changes occurring in the lives of the women I interviewed. The majority of them grew up in the country and learned domestic skills in the home at an early age. Frugality was impressed upon them and they learned the art of making-do with whatever was available. Many of their families had been closely associated with white people where instructional opportunities were possible. Most of them had moved to the city between the ages of fifteen and twenty-five.

For fifty or sixty years they have resided in an urban area offering experiences and situations quite different from those of their early homes. They have, generally, enjoyed a higher standard of living, better job offerings, educational advantages for their children, a wider circle of acquaintances through church, social and civic organizations, and have been exposed to trends in fashion and culture.[46]

The most significant change in the work done by these quiltmakers is in purpose. Sixty years ago most of their quilts were made out of need. Today they are being made for pleasure. Leisure time provides a chance to try new patterns gleaned from quilt books and magazines or traded with friends. New ideas come from attending quilt shows and seeing the work of others. One can see pride and a sense of worth increase when a quilt is exhibited or admired.

These women are not concerned with the monetary value of their quilts even though they are aware of the present popularity of patchwork and the market value. They are making quilts for personal satisfaction and the pleasure of working in an excellent support group of friends. Most of their quilts will be given as gifts to family members, a minister, or a dear friend, for they know that a gift of a quilt is a gift of oneself and establishes a loving bond between giver and receiver. There may be differences in their quilts and those of their grandmothers, but the transition has merely been an extension of a long tradition enduring through many generations.

Notes and References:

1. Interview with Sam Ella Gilmore. All interviews were conducted in Chattanooga, Tennessee, during 1986-1988.
2. Herbert G. Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom*, 1750-1925 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976), 213.
3. Interviews with Ozella Angel.
4. Nancy Callahan, *The Freedom Quilting Bee* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1987), 32-34.

5. Ibid.
6. Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family from Slavery to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, 1985). The subject is dealt with extensively throughout the book.
7. Interviews with Ethel Daniel, daughter of Alice Stovall.
8. Daniel interview.
9. Gutman, appendices.
10. Theodore Rosengarten, *Tombee, Portrait of a Cotton Planter* (New York: William Morrow, 1986), 152-53.
11. Interview with Helen Moore. The blankets and a **Pieced Rose** quilt are in the collection of the Tennessee State Museum.
12. **Plume and Star** quilt made by an unknown slave, ca. 1860, for Emma Florida Lipscomb McFall. In collection of the Tennessee State Museum.
13. Bets Ramsey and Merikay Waldvogel, *The Quilts of Tennessee: Images of Domestic Art Prior to 1930* (Nashville, Tenn.: Rutledge Hill, 1986), 2-3; quilt made by Eliza McKenzie, slave in the family of Tennie McKenzie Marler, ca. 1860. Private collection.
14. **Stuffed Rose** quilt made by a member of the Hughes family and her slaves, 1848-1849, Calhoun, Georgia. Private collection.
15. Interviews with Luella Jones. When she was a child her grandfather taught her to knit a small sock, still in her possession, using saved string and broom straws for knitting needles.
16. The will of Matthew Ramsey (1792-1867) of Amite County, Mississippi leaves $7,000 to Jackson Ramsey "a freedman who formerly belonged to me and who has been a faithful servant, to be invested and annual interest paid to him until his youngest child is of age and educated, after which the sum will be withdrawn and divided among Jackson Ramsey and his children, share and share alike."
17. J. Jones, 73-76.
18. Interview with Ruby Beard.
19. Interview with Sarah Belle Douglas.
20. Interview with Elizabeth Hudson.
21. Interview with Rose Grimmett.
22. Interview with Mattie Porter.
23. J. Jones attributes the practice to a desire to lessen overcrowding at home and bring in extra money. My interviews did not substantiate that theory.
24. Interview with Hattie Bryant.
25. Ramsey and Waldvogel, 77.

26. Ibid., 78. Another name is **Pine Burr**, a pattern not made exclusively by blacks as some have claimed.
27. When one hears the phrase "strong lye soap" it comes from someone who is unacquainted with homemade soap. Lye is, indeed, strong, but when it is combined with household grease or renderings, it is chemically changed to make a mild soap of excellent cleaning quality.
28. Interview with Vacie Thomas.
29. Bryant interview.
30. Roger L. Ransom and Richard Sutch, *One Kind of Freedom: The Economic Consequences of Emancipation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 171-72.
31. J. Jones, 75.
32. Ramsey and Waldvogel, 78.
33. L. Jones interview.
34. J. Jones, 75-76.
35. Beard interview.
36. Interviews with Lillie Johnson.
37. Ibid.
38. Interview with Ella McCoy.
39. Interviews with Lillian Beattie. Her work has been shown at the Hunter Museum of Art, Chattanooga; the St. Louis Art Museum; The Arvade Art Center in Colorado; the American Museum of Quilts and Textiles, San Jose, and elsewhere.
40. Roland Freeman, *Something to Keep You Warm* (Jackson, Mississippi: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1981); Laurel Horton, slide/sound documentary "Quilts Like My Mama Did" (Columbia, S.C.: McKissick Museum, 1986); Maude Wahlman, "*The Art of Afro-American Quiltmaking: Origins, Development, and Significance*" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1980).
41. Wahlman, "Aesthetic Principles," *Afro-American Folk Art and Crafts*, ed. William Ferris (Jackson, Miss. University Press of Mississippi, 1983), 86-92.
42. John Vlach, *The Afro-American Tradition in Decorative Arts* (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1978), 74.
43. Ramsey and Waldvogel, 12, 108.
44. Horton lecture,"Perspectives on African-American Quilts," Southern Quilt Symposium, Hunter Museum of Art, Chattanooga, Tennessee, March 22, 1988.
45. Alice Walker, "Everyday Use," in In *Love & Trouble: Stories of Black Women* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973), 47-59.

46. Those interviewed and their children have been employed as cook, dietician, practical nurse, surgical nurse, custodian, teacher, beautician, insurance agent, non-commissioned officer in United States Army, fire department captain, and Tennessee Valley Authority executive, to name but a few of their occupations.