

Uncoverings

1981

Volume 2 of
the Research Papers of
the American Quilt Study Group

Edited by Sally Garoutte

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Published by the American Quilt Study Group
660 Mission Street, Suite 400
San Francisco CA 94105-4007
Manufactured in the United States

Second printing 1993
ISBN 1-877859-04-4
ISSN 0227-0628
Library of Congress catalog card number: 81-649486

Cover photo: *A Century of Progress: Scenes from Early America (1933)*
made by Thelma Burleigh Johnston
of Long Lake, Minnesota
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This volume is supported by a generous donation from
Winifred Sharp Reddall,
a founding member of American Quilt Study Group

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Foreword

The advantage in translating research results into print is that they can be more widely available to interested people. The disadvantage lies in the phenomenon that Americans are such print-oriented people. If something is in 'black and white' we have a tendency to be uncritical about the information. In respecting the published work, we may put aside our critical faculties and sometimes our own plain common sense.

But words in print are not always the *last* words on a subject. They represent the state of one person's thinking and findings at one particular time. Most scholars do not end their study and thinking at the point of their first writing. Often, years later, they are even somewhat embarrassed by their first words on a subject of deep interest to them. Other scholars, aware that they do not yet have every last piece of evidence to present, refuse to present anything at all. Their work may be excellent, but it is essentially useless if never made available to other people.

Historical research never ends. We come to an understanding of our history only through small steps continually taken. Each research paper is a small step, and each one is a challenge for someone else to go a little further. When other information is found that refutes a paper's conclusions, it should be brought to light. Only in this way will our history become manifest.

The American Quilt Study Group is very proud and pleased to have sponsored the presentation in 1981 of the excellent papers published here. Each of the papers in this volume represents the best work of the authors at this time. The authors, however, have not ended their thinking and investigation of their subjects, and neither should the readers. Authors and readers are engaged in a mutual enterprise—neither could exist without the other. This enterprise of quilt history is a continuing process. We are delighted to have progressed this far, and look forward to the next steps with eagerness. There is much yet to uncover.