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"Better Choose Me": Addictions to Tobacco, Collecting, and Quilting, 1880–1920

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Some of the most unusual textiles in American quiltmaking are fabric novelties promoting tobacco consumption in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. These novelties include silk ribbons wrapped around cigars as well as printed silk fabrics and cotton flannels that were inserted in tobacco packaging or distributed as premiums. This research used tobacco industry history, information from women's magazines, and tobacco novelty quilts to explore the cigar-ribbon quilt which emerged as a grassroots creation using textiles publicizing cigar brands, the "silkie" quilt which was made from collectible novelties distributed as part of competition in the cigarette industry, and the tobacco flannel quilt which was explicitly encouraged in tobacco advertising aimed at women. In summary, tobacco novelty quilts represent the intersection of American commerce, advertising, and consumer choices during the "age of abundance."

The 1980s and 1990s have been recognized as decades of conspicuous con-sumption with brand names and designer labels proliferating in the American marketplace. Ironically, the phrase "conspicuous consumption" was coined a century earlier by an eccentric sociologist, Thorstein Veblen. Veblen sought to characterize how newly rich Americans displayed their wealth, particularly through wasteful purchases of clothing, food, furniture, and houses.[1]

Veblen's period, the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, is now interpreted by cultural historians as representing the "culture of abundance" or the "culture of consumption."[2] These terms signify

the explosion of manufactured goods purchased by Americans, a lifestyle of buying that resulted from the transition from an agricultural to an industrially based economy, and the accompanying "shift from a producer to a consumer culture."[3]

For quilt lovers, the crazy quilt is the epitome of the age of abundance. Constructed of rich materials such as silk jacquards, satins, and velvets, with embellishments ranging from fanciful embroidery to miniature painted motifs, the crazy quilt exemplified both the maker's access to luxury fabrics and the leisure time to ornament her home.[4] Yet, as noted by quilt historians Virginia Gunn and Dorothy Cozart, the crazy quilt was not restricted to upper-class homes.[5] Because of its scrappy structure, a crazy quilt was within the reach of any woman with access to scraps of fine fabric and the determination to make her own fashionable quilt.

The renaissance of American quilting in the last quarter of the twentieth century has revived interest in and appreciation for the asymmetrical designs and technical artistry of crazy quilts.[6] Yet the popularity of this distinctively American-style quilt has obscured the story of another quilt from the age of consumption: the tobacco novelty quilt.[7]

"Better Choose Me": Brand Names and the Cigar-Ribbon Quilt

The cigar industry grew significantly in the 1870s and in the 1880s the cigar became the most popular tobacco product in the United States.[8] Cigars were rolled by hand, and production could be housed in large New York City com-panies employing immigrant labor, in family-based craft shops in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, and in small "factories" located in almost every state (which we might think of only as retail tobacco shops). As a decentralized industry, these independent producers sold mostly to local markets.[9]

During the rise of cigar popularity, silk ribbons were wrapped around bundles of cigars, a custom originating in Cuba. These ribbons, made of lower-quality silk in a low-count, plain weave, were lustrous enough to attract attention, and sufficiently stable to be printed with

the cigar's brand name in black or red. While they often appeared in tones of yellow and orange, cigar ribbons were also produced in black, blue, green, pink, purple, red, and white.[10] Several cigar brands, including Harvard and Electric, featured ribbons with higher grade silk and woven-in names.[11]

The decentralization of cigar manufacturing and the absence of a nationwide marketing system led to the proliferation of brand names. Branded products were widespread in the tobacco industry, dating back to the early-seventeenth century, and preceded other forms of advertising.[12] Cigar brands ranged from Spanish names that evoked the preferred Cuban tobacco (e.g., Reina Victoria, Caballeros) to all-American names (e.g., Banker's Daughter) or a slogan such as "Better Choose Me" from the BCM Company that also touted its product as the "Best Cigar Made."[13] Ultimately, the goal of branding was to encourage purchasing loyalty in an industry where the competing products were not highly distinctive. Pamela Laird, a historian of advertising, proposed that the economic crash of 1893 heightened the worth of these trademarks.[14] At the turn of the century, some 350,000 different cigar brands were available in the United States.[15] According to Nannie M. Tilley, a tobacco historian, the "plethora of different brands testifies that the value of a brand was recognized."[16]

The abundance of cigars, obviously a totally consumable product, paralleled the abundance of non-consumables which could be collected and displayed. The advent of collecting by average Americans is illustrated by the collecting craze for advertising novelties sparked by the distribution of manufacturers' trade cards at the 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia.[17] This mania for collecting extended to cigar ribbons and eventually to the display of one's collection in a quilt or in other decorative items such as table covers or pillow tops.[18]

Cigar-ribbon quilts show both similarities to and differences from the crazy quilts of the same era. Like crazy quilts, cigar-ribbon quilts were ornamental and destined for the parlor. Like the crazy quilt, the cigar-ribbon parlor throw in Figure 1 was created by stitching the ribbons onto a muslin foundation. In contrast to the kaleidoscope of shapes and textures in a crazy quilt, the rectangular form of the ribbon was preserved by the makers through geometric arrangements. Yet the makers frequently recognized the design potential of

Figure 1. Silk Quilt, ca. 1880s. Silk cigar ribbons; herringbone stitching; replacement binding and backing. Maker unknown; purchased in Ohio. Photograph courtesy of Kauffman Museum.

the printed brand name. For example, the maker of the throw in Figure 1 staggered the black printing on every other row. Given the fragility of the silk surface, neither crazy nor cigar-ribbon quilts were actually quilted, nor have we found any cigar-ribbon quilts using a batting. Like crazy quilts, cigar-ribbon quilt seams were embellished with embroidery, often in black to repeat the black printing in contrast to the yellow silk. The simple herringbone stitch, seen in Figure 1, or the feather stitch were most common.

Dating cigar-ribbon quilts is an uncertain task which has been guided largely by collectors of tobacciana.[19] The earliest link between cigar ribbons and quiltmaking comes from a story appearing in an 1884 issue of *Godey's Lady's Book* in which a young woman *rejects* her brother's offer of "nasty little yellow cigar ribbons" for her crazy quilt.[20]

Not until 1896 do cigar ribbons appear in print as useful materials for sewing. In a column of advice from "Honorine" in *The Cultivator & Country Gentleman*, a shopper searching for the perfect gift for her husband is told: "You have heard of the craze for collecting cigar ribbons . . . why not beg, borrow or steal enough to ornament a smoking table?" The column then included directions for a "brier-stitched" table cover with ball fringe of yellow silk, a covered cigar box, and a tobacco pouch, all made of cigar ribbons. Honorine had opened her column with instructions for creating a sofa cushion made of cigar ribbons, noting that the "black lettering and yellow ribbons form a striking contrast."[21]

The notion that cigar ribbons could be both collectible and useful was echoed in the February 1900 issue of *The Housekeeper*:

> If the men of the family or of your acquaintance will smoke, it is some compensation to know that you can make a unique and really handsome pillow from the cigar ribbons which you may thus collect. The pillow is especially appropriate for a bachelor's rooms, a smoking den or library, and it is remarkably effective anywhere.[22]

The instructions for creating a cigar-ribbon pillow on a muslin foundation and the line drawing of a log cabin variation reinforce the links to quiltmaking and suggest that cigar-ribbon creations may have had their origins in the silk log cabin quilts which were popular in the

1870s.[23] The center portion of the design featured in *The Housekeeper* is seen in the table cover shown in Figure 2.[24]

Later that year, the September 1900 issue of *Ladies' Home Journal* published photographs of fourteen pillows submitted for a competition, including one similar to the pattern in *The Housekeeper* but "finished with a ruffle of yellow silk edged with white." A second photograph showed a "sofa-pillow of cigar ribbons in shades of yellow, put

Figure 2. Log Cabin Variation Table Cover, ca. 1880s. Silk cigar ribbons; feather stitching; silk backing. Maker unknown; purchased in Colorado. Photograph courtesy of Kauffman Museum.

together with fancy stitches in yellow silk. The edge was finished with a deep yellow silk cord."[25]

Not everyone appreciated the collectibility and creative potential of cigar ribbons. In response to a query from Little May of Waco, Texas, the editor of *American Woman* stoutly declared in May 1903: "I really do not think pillow-tops made of cigar ribbons at all pretty; but if you have a quantity and wish to use them, do so by all means—it is simply a question of taste."[26] With aesthetics in mind, the editor noted that the brand name was a decorative feature to be manipulated: "Only that portion of the ribbons are used which show the trademark, or name of the cigars which were tied by them." The editor also disclosed her preference for the log cabin arrangement over the "fan" pattern. The two designs must have continued to circulate; six years later both were described by a reader of *Happy Hours*, Wilma B. of Tombstone, Arizona, whose contribution was published in the October 1909 issue.[27]

While colorful paper bands around individual cigars began displacing cigar ribbons in the late-nineteenth century, quilt historian Wilene Smith has discovered magazine correspondence that reveals a lively trade in cigar ribbons throughout the first decade of the twentieth century:

American Woman, February 1901—"Seeds of the beautiful moon-flower, for pieces of silk or yellow cigar-ribbons." (Mrs. D. Gospodich, Los Angeles, California)

Hearth and Home, June 1902—"Silk cigar-ribbons, for same." (Alice Pullen, San Francisco, California)

Sunshine for Youth, April 1906—"Will all the sisters please send me cigar ribbons for my sofa pillow. I will be glad to return the favor in any way I can." (Miss M. Comstock Woodbury, Bangor, Maine)

Hearth and Home, June 1911—"One hundred and sixty silk cigar-ribbons, large handbag, for best offers; write." (Mrs. Mildred Avery, Chimacum, Washington)

Hearth and Home, November 1911—"Hand-embroidered waist, never worn, dry-goods, or other articles, for cigar ribbons; write first, stating what you have and want." (Mrs. E. H. Burghardt, Stevenson, Washington)

Hearth and Home, December 1911—"I should like to receive cigar-ribbons with which to make a sofa-pillow." (Emma Chapman, Roylyn, South Dakota)[28]

Clearly the desire to collect and create with cigar ribbons remained popular across the United States well into the twentieth century.

While 1896 is the earliest published date for sewing with cigar ribbons, we believe that the design links to crazy and silk log cabin quilts support an earlier beginning for cigar ribbon quilts. Following Virginia Gunn in her interpretation of crazy quilts, we propose that the instructions printed in popular women's magazines "followed rather than led" this quiltmaking trend.[29]

Cigar-ribbon quilts should be understood as a creative response to free materials intended to promote brand name recognition among the numerous cigars available across the United States. Given the magazine exchange on collecting and creating with these branded silk ribbons, cigar-ribbon quilts appear as a true grassroots decorative art with no indication that tobacco companies were aware of or promoted their making.

"Each One Recommends One More": Chain Buying and the Silkie Quilt

In the late-nineteenth century, American cigarette production lagged behind that of the more popular cigar, with bitter competition among small manufacturers.[30] Rival cigarette firms relied on novelties to promote "continuous patronage."[31] During the 1880s, firms began to insert small lithographed cards into cigarette packaging.[32] The free cards, printed in collectible sets, quickly became an industry-wide practice. Tobacco historians consider the cigarette cards as primarily male-oriented, with images of presidents and baseball players as well as female entertainers, often scantily dressed.[33] The educational value of some collectible sets has been pointed out, particularly sets showing flags of the world or mechanical inventions.[34] In an effort to create novelties that would be appealing to women, W. Duke, Sons & Co. distributed coupons redeemable for cards featuring "Costumes of All Nations" which could be collected and glued into a "premium album."[35]

Increasing competition and price-cutting tactics often drove small companies to consolidate with the more aggressive firms, and eventually led to the merger in 1890 of the five largest cigarette manu-

Figure 3. Advertising Poster for Zira Cigarettes, ca. 1914. Photograph courtesy of Gerard S. Petrone.

facturers into the American Tobacco Company. The fad for collecting cigarette cards waned in the 1890s, whether from public disinterest, monopolistic control lessening the pressure to provide incentives to buy, the expense of producing the cards, or the threat of legislation prohibiting packing coupons into product containers.[36]

The decline in cigarette cards paralleled the rather flat numbers for cigarette consumption in the 1890s, with actual declines from 1898 to 1901.[37] Regardless, the new century brought new competition in the form of independently produced cigarettes featuring aromatic Turkish tobacco, and expansion in advertising.[38] Average annual consumption per capita boomed, increasing from 36 cigarettes in 1900–04 to 59 in 1905–09, to 134 in 1910–14, and 310 in 1915–19.[39] Amidst rumors of unfair competition and lawsuits stemming from the Sherman Antitrust Act of 1890, manufacturers introduced a new variation on

the prize-in-every package, cigarette silks or "silkies." According to the U.S. Bureau of Corporations, "The great increase in advertising expenditures from 1906 to 1910 was due to newer methods of advertising, such as the insertion of silk banners, flags, novelties, etc."[40]

The size of a cigarette packet, silkies were fabric rectangles made of lightweight all-silk fabric with images printed in black onto light colors such as cream, off-white, or yellow. Early silkies featured portraits of actresses, baseball heroes, and presidents, in poses similar to those found on the earlier cards.[41]

The expansion of cigarette novelties accelerated in 1911 with the break-up of the American Tobacco Company into four companies: American Tobacco, Liggett & Myers, P. Lorillard, and R. J. Reynolds. Cigarette brands from the American Tobacco Company monopoly were divided among the first three firms. This set off a new round of competition for market dominance, and led to the creation of new brands to compete according to price level and tobacco composition. According to Richard Tennant, a tobacco historian, "Although advertising methods remained the same after dissolution, they were greatly developed and expanded. Premiums were made more elaborate. Pictures, souvenir flags, miniature rugs, and other novelties were packed along with cigarettes at considerable cost."[42]

Zira was one of the new cigarette brands formulated after the American Tobacco Company break-up. "Each One Recommends One More," the Zira marketing slogan in 1914, reflected the Lorillard company's promotion of chain buying (see figure 3).[43] The Zira advertising poster also proclaimed "A Satin Wonder in Each Package" and showed an example of an all-silk novelty depicting an actress on the left, and on the right a combination fabric (silk warp and cotton weft) in a satin weave with a multi-colored print of a carnation.[44] The combination fabrics were more colorful than the all-silk versions and also lower in cost to produce.

Packets of Zira cigarettes contained numerous designs issued in collectible sets. The motifs on Zira silkies ranged from flowers to fruit, from queens to American Indians, from domestic to exotic animals, and included a series of cartoon cigarette characters called the Zira girls.[45] Tobacco historian Jack J. Gottsegen has suggested that the designs appealing to children created family pressure to buy more ciga-

rettes.[46] Women incorporated silkies into crazy quilts along with other "found" fabrics, while addicted collectors assembled their accumulated novelties in pillow tops, table covers, and even parlor throws and quilts.[47]

Eventually, Lorillard created a series of thirty-five flags in all-cotton sateen, which were redeemable for Zira and Nebo cigarette coupons rather than being inserted directly into the packaging.[48] In comparison to the smaller silkies, the six by nine-inch cotton novelties could be stitched more easily into a quilt. An unknown quiltmaker sewed her collection of forty-nine flags representing twenty-seven nations into a quilt (see figure 4). The red, white, and blue borders change to bold tricolored stripes on the reverse side.

In contrast to the inexpensive silkies or "satin wonders" issued with modestly priced brands, so-called "luxury" brands of cigarettes distributed silkies which were jacquard-woven silk ribbons with neat selvages. The smoking-room throw shown in Figure 5 shows university and college crests, city and nation seals, and Masonic insignias distributed in Egyptienne Luxury and Turkey Red brands of cigarettes.[49]

In addition to encouraging silkie collecting, tobacco companies also directly promoted the fad for creating with silkies. Instructions included with a silkie from Old Mill Cigarettes, circa 1910, stated "Useful in making pillow covers and other fancy articles for home decoration."[50] Other manufacturers suggested making "doilies, sewing bags, belts, parasols, hair bands, belts, lamp shades, pin cushions, dolls' dresses, and door curtains. They could also be sewn into the designs of 'crazy quilts,' table linens and cushion covers."[51]

The numerous ideas distributed with the novelties may explain why fewer correspondents solicited how-to suggestions in early twentieth-century magazines. In the December 1912 issue of *Hearth and Home*, Mrs. MacGregor of Holyoke, Massachusetts, indicated that she had "silk seals" with butterflies, Indian heads, flags of different countries, and larger designs for the centers of the pillows, but wanted directions for making a pillow-top, because "I have vainly tried to obtain such information from many so-called 'high-class' periodicals."[52] The editor, in response, encouraged her to use creative "ingenuity" by tastefully arranging and appliqueing the silkies onto a fabric foundation with a buttonhole stitch.

Figure 4. Flag Quilt, ca. 1914. Cotton sateen novelties; cotton broadcloth borders and backing; hand-quilted. Maker unknown; purchased in Ohio. Photograph courtesy of Kauffman Museum.

Figure 5. Seals and Crests Parlor Throw, ca. 1912. Silk novelties alternating with silk and cotton fabrics; feather stitching; silk borders; replacement backing; hand-tied. Maker unknown; purchased in Boston, Massachusetts. Photograph courtesy of Kauffman Museum.

Many silkies continued the brand-name promotion established in cigar ribbons. But the brand name, if included on the face of the silkie, was printed or woven along the edge where it could be cut off, covered with decorative embroidery when appliqued, or hidden in a seam allowance if sewn in a patchwork arrangement. Thus the cigarette brand name was literally peripheral to the novelty.

With cigarette silkies, tobacco companies encouraged intentional collecting through repeat purchases, and by extension an addiction to smoking. The collectible set became the significant feature as cigarette companies sought to encourage chain buying over mere brand promotion.

"The Ladies Will Go Wild": Advertising and the Tobacco Flannel Quilt

The explosion of fabric novelties issued after the break-up of the American Tobacco Company monopoly also included all-cotton printed flannels. Flannels ranged in size from small 2" x 4" models to 8" x 11" pieces or larger. They were distributed as an insert, wrapped around a packet, given away by retailers as a reward for a tobacco purchase, or redeemed with package coupons. The flannels, printed in multiple colors to resemble miniature oriental rugs and the geometric designs found in American Indian blankets, were sometimes called "rugs" and "blankets."[53] One quiltmaker used blue sashing to frame flannels with motifs representing American Indian cultures: Iroquois masks, a peace pipe from a Great Plains Indian tribe, a Pueblo-style kachina, and a totem pole from the Northwest Coast (see figure 6). The swastika is illustrated in many flannels in this pre-World War I quilt. The swastika was an ancient symbol for good health among native Americans as well as for the peoples of India, Iran, and Japan.

Other popular designs on tobacco flannels appearing in quilts include butterflies, college pennants, flags of the world, and Kewpie doll cartoons signed by Rose O'Neill.[54] The bed comforter shown in Figure 7 is signed "May Button, 1912, Chalk Mound" and features a collection of flag flannels, including a United States flag with 48 stars (Arizona and New Mexico joined the union in February 1912 as the forty-

Figure 6. Indian Motif Quilt, ca. 1914. Cotton flannel novelties; cotton twill sashing and border; cotton print backing; hand-quilted. Maker unknown; purchased in Indiana. Photograph courtesy of Kauffman Museum.

Figure 7. Detail of May's Comforter, 1912. Cotton flannel novelties alternating with wool worsted; feather stitching and stem stitch embroidery; cotton blanket batting; striped cotton flannel backing; hand-tied. Makers likely the Chalk Mound, Kansas quilting group; purchased in Kansas. Photograph courtesy of Kauffman Museum.

seventh and forty-eighth states). The heavy comforter was possibly the work of the Chalk Mound, Kansas, quilting group, of which Ida McDivitt Button, May's mother, was a member.

Cathrine Wright (1891–1979) made a baseball flannel quilt for her husband, William. Most flannels were rectangular, so the square flannels printed "on point" to represent a ball diamond are rare (see figure 8). Three flannels in this quilt depict players who were among the first five selected for the Baseball Hall of Fame: Ty Cobb, Walter Johnson, and John P. Wagner. As the owner of a mercantile store in Kansas City, Kansas, William undoubtedly received these flannels to promote tobacco purchases. But since Kansas outlawed the sale or gift of cigarettes in 1909, the Wrights might have preferred to use these

Figure 8. Baseball Hero Quilt, 1916. Cotton flannel novelties; cotton sateen sashing and backing; hand-quilted. Maker Cathrine Wright, Kansas City, Kansas. Photograph courtesy of Kauffman Museum.

cigarette flannels in a quilt for themselves rather than risk prosecution from their distribution.[55]

Most tobacco flannels have no indication of the sponsoring brand, although several with "Satin Cigarettes" stamped on the reverse side have been found.[56] Advertisements from periodicals, however, clearly link the flannels with tobacco purchases (see figure 9). This *Washington Post* advertisement from 24 June 1913 suggested that Navajo blankets were the "*biggest*, most *marvelous* ornamental novelties ever designed! . . . The ladies will go *wild with delight* over them!"[57] The 5.5" x 8.5" blankets were distributed with each purchase of a twenty-cigarette packet of Omar, an American Tobacco Company brand introduced in 1912. The advertisement also reveals that the tobacco company targeted women and sought to show them the creative potential of the flannels: "Couch Covers, Den Draperies, Patch Work, Table Covers, Pillow Tops, Navajo Sashes, Fancy Costumes, Dress Trimmings, Doll Blankets, and an endless variety of other useful and ornamental articles."

With tobacco flannels, brand-name promotion and even chain buying were eclipsed in the broader effort to provide a point-of-purchase incentive for buying the tobacco product. Moreover, advertising showing women appeared in the mass media, to encourage product consumption as well as collecting and creating with flannel novelties.

"Our Ingenuity Wore Itself Out": The Demise of Tobacco Novelty Quilts

Collectors and researchers investigating the swift decline of tobacco novelties in the World War I years have proposed that the cost of producing and distributing fabric novelties led tobacco companies to discontinue the giveaways.[58] Yet the major tobacco firms continued to grow steadily until about 1920, suggesting that promotional novelties did not constrain profits.[59] An announcement for Hassan cigarettes in 1914 led to a more complex story. The announcement, made by the premium department of the American Tobacco Company, declared in English, Greek, Italian, and Polish:

Figure 9. *Washington Post* advertisement, 24 June 1913.
Image courtesy of Gerard S. Petrone.

> SPECIAL NOTICE
>
> We will continue to pack HASSAN Blankets for a short time only, as many of our consumers advise us that they have accumulated a sufficient supply of these Flag Blankets. We will then pack a Valuable HASSAN Coupon which we will redeem for useful presents of unusual value.
>
> "This slip is of no value—and should not be saved"[60]

The notion that the flannels no longer served as an incentive to purchase tobacco was also asserted in a statement by the Bureau of Corporations in 1915:

> The inserts are not desired by many consumers and the coupon system of obtaining articles of merchandise is of somewhat limited value, apparently either because many consumers do not care for these premiums, or because they are not willing to take the trouble to save the coupons and redeem them.[61]

This rationale was echoed by George Washington Hill of the American Tobacco Company who said, "Our ingenuity wore itself out."[62] The availability of alternate premiums, as in the Hassan announcement, and the popular utilization of tobacco novelties by American quiltmakers suggest that other and perhaps less obvious reasons exist beyond the industry-initiated story.

Of the four tobacco companies formed as a result of the break-up of the American Tobacco Company in 1911, only R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company did not receive a cigarette brand. To establish its position as a major force in the smoking sector, Reynolds launched Camel cigarettes in 1913 and concentrated its advertising on this new brand.[63] The Camel promotional strategy immediately differed from current practice by eliminating novelties. The new package and the mass-media advertising announced: "Don't look for premiums or coupons, as the cost of the tobaccos blended in CAMEL Cigarettes prohibits the use of them."[64] The claim is an example of the "new" sales argument known as the "reason why," which dominated American advertising for much of the twentieth century.[65] Following the introduction of the Camel strategy, the American tobacco industry began to focus on newspaper, magazine, and billboard advertising.[66] According to Richard Tennant, a tobacco historian, "Straight publicity expenditure on a national scale was introduced in place of prizes and premiums."[67]

The change in advertising also led manufacturers to drop low volume brands and to concentrate on publicizing their most popular lines.[68]

Other economic and political factors also contributed to the decline of tobacco novelties. The cigarette brands issuing silks and flannels often were tobacco blends which included the aromatic Turkish leaf. Quasi-oriental brand names, such as Hassan, Mecca, Nebo, Omar, or Zira, evoked the Turkish connection. World War I interrupted supplies of Turkish tobacco, driving up the price of the already expensive import.[69] Presumably this price disadvantage led to cost-cutting and the move away from novelties as inserts or premiums. At the same time retail grocery-dealers expressed their opposition to premiums because of lower profits on these goods. States began attempting to prohibit or tax the premium system. Although lower federal courts consistently ruled in favor of allowing premiums, in March 1916 the Supreme Court upheld the right of the states to impose laws governing the distribution of "free" goods.[70] This ruling resulted in state-by-state differences incongruent with the tobacco industry's move towards national marketing. With these changes in the nation's commercial structure, the production and distribution of tobacco novelties simply dissolved.

In the introduction to a book on accumulation and display in American culture from 1880 to 1920, Simon Bronner posed the question: "What arts, customs, and institutions expressed the culture of consumption?"[71] Tobacco novelty quilts tell a unique and underappreciated story of the interaction between American producers and consumers. They provide evidence of how Americans created a "conspicuous" display of their tobacco addiction. They demonstrate that the collecting mania of our time has a parallel a century ago. And they remind us that women creatively respond to materials at hand in their determination to adorn their homes.

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5. Gunn, "Crazy Quilts"; Dorothy Cozart, "When the Smoke Cleared," *Quilt Digest* 5, ed. Michael M. Kile (San Francisco: The Quilt Digest Press, 1987), 50–57.

6. See, for example, Judith Montano, *Crazy Quilt Odyssey: Adventures in Victorian Needlework* (Martinez, CA: C & T Publishing, 1991).

7. We define tobacco novelty as an item given away with tobacco purchases. Novelties are also called gratis goods because consumers perceived them as "free." Some novelties were inserted into tobacco packaging and so are called inserts. Other novelties, called premiums, were received after the consumer collected and mailed in package coupons. Sometimes inserts are also called premiums. Tobacco novelties included baseball cards and hand-held fans as well as the fabrics we discuss here. On promotional items in general, see Susan Strasser, *Satisfaction Guar-*

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16. Nannie M. Tilley, *The Bright-Tobacco Industry, 1860–1929* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1948), 521.

17. Laird, 77.

18. For examples of cigar-ribbon quilts, see Cozart, 50, 52; Jean Ray Laury, *Ho for California! Pioneer Women and Their Quilts* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1990), 95–96; Marsha MacDowell and Ruth D. Fitzgerald, eds., *Michigan Quilts: 150 Years of a Textile Tradition* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Museum, 1987), 74; Judith Montano, *Crazy Quilt Handbook* (Lafayette, CA: C & T Publishing, 1986), 8; and Nancyann Johanson Twelker, *Women and Their Quilts: A Washington State Centennial Tribute* (Bothell, WA: That Patchwork Place, 1988), 44–45. Our thanks to Merikay Waldvogel for sharing these references.

19. Jacqueline Key, then curator of the U.S. Tobacco Museum, suggested dating cigar-ribbon quilts from 1875 to the early 1900s ("Silk Cigar Ribbons Turned into Patchwork Quilt," *Greenwich Time*, 31 October 1983, page unknown; clipping supplied by the U.S. Tobacco Museum to Ethel Abrahams). Cozart proposed that cigar ribbons were available as early as 1870, 50. Petrone, page 69, claimed that the "first American cigar ribbon factory was established in 1868 in New York City" and that ribbons were an industry-wide practice by the 1880s.

20. Cited in Cozart, 52. The full story, "The Career of a Crazy Quilt" by Dulcie Weir, is reprinted in Jeanette Lasansky, *In the Heart of Pennsylvania: Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Quiltmaking Traditions* (Lewisburg, PA: Oral Traditions Project, 1985), 80–88.

21. Honorine, "With Cigar Ribbons," *The Cultivator & Country Gentleman*, 2 January 1896, 17. Wilene Smith, a quilt historian from Wichita, Kansas, and member of the American Quilt Study Group, compiled this and following citations from women's magazines as part of a larger research effort on references to quiltmaking in American periodicals.

22. "A Unique Pillow," *The Housekeeper*, February 1900, page unknown.

23. On silk log cabin quilts, see Gunn, "Quilts—Crazy Memories," 153.

24. A larger version of this piecing pattern can be seen in Alexandra Grave, *Three Centuries of Connecticut Folk Art* (New Haven, CT: Art Resources of Connecticut, 1979), 14.

25. "Some Odd Sofa-Pillows," *The Ladies' Home Journal*, September 1900, 25.

26. *American Woman*, May 1903, page unknown.

27. *Happy Hours*, October 1909, page unknown. Smith has noted that the article was reprinted nearly word-for-word in *American Woman*, February 1913.

28. All citations from Smith's unpublished manuscript; see note 21 above.

29. Gunn, "Quilts—Crazy Memories," 155.

30. On the history of the cigarette industry, see Reavis Cox, *Competition in the American Tobacco Industry, 1911–1932* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1933); Goodman; Jack J. Gottsegen, *Tobacco: A Study of Its Consumption in the United States* (New York and Chicago: Pitman Publishing Corporation, 1940); *"Sold American!"—The First Fifty Years* (New York: American Tobacco Company, 1954); Richard B. Tennant, *The American Cigarette Industry: A Study in Economic Analysis and Public Policy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1950); and Tilley.

31. "Continuous patronage" was a frequently used term in connection with the premium system. See Strasser, 178.

32. Colorful cigarette cards are shown in Gerard S. Petrone, *Tobacco Advertising: The Great Seduction* (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishing Ltd., 1996), 54–57. Tilley, pages 558, 576–77 (footnote 57), credited James B. Duke with introducing cigarette cards. Richard Kluger claimed that earlier cards were issued by the Allen & Ginter Company, in *Ashes to Ashes: America's Hundred-Year Cigarette War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996), 18.

33. On sex appeal in cigarette cards, see Patrick G. Porter, "Advertising in the Early Cigarette Industry: W. Duke, Sons & Company of Durham," *North Carolina Historical Review* 48, no. 1 (1971): 31–43. For background on gender and tobacco issues, see Dolores Mitchell, "Images of Exotic Women in Turn-of-the-Century Tobacco Art," *Feminist Studies* 18, no. 2 (1992): 327–42.

34. Porter, 35.

35. *"Sold American!"*, 22. Cigarette companies did not overtly target women smokers until the 1920s. See Gottsegen, 147–50; and Michael Schudson, *Advertising, The Uneasy Persuasion* (New York: Basic Books, 1984), Chapter 6, "The Emergence of New Consumer Patterns: A Case Study of the Cigarette."

36. On monopoly in the cigarette industry, see Tennant, 57; on cost, see Porter, 41, Strasser, 172, and Tennant, 24, 42; and on legislation, see Strasser, 176, and Tennant, 42. Understanding the decline of cigarette cards is beyond the scope of this study but clearly warrants a more complex investigation. On the rise and fall of the trade card in general, see Robert Jay, *The Trade Card in Nineteenth-Century America* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1987).

37. Gottsegen, 26, 28.

38. William H. Nicholls, *Price Policies in the Cigarette Industry* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1951), 35; and Tennant, 57.

39. Nicholls, 8; see also Gottsegen, 27–28.

40. U.S. Bureau of Corporations, *Report of the Commissioner of Corporations on the Tobacco Industry, Part III, Prices, Costs, and Profits* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1915), 165.

41. Like cigar ribbons, the dating of cigarette silkies remains uncertain. Sports memorabilia collectors have suggested 1909 as the earliest date for "white" silkies of baseball players and 1910 for silkies of dyed fabrics, as distributed by Helmar, Old Mill, Red Sun, and Turkey Red brands; Mark K. Larson, *Complete Guide to Baseball Memorabilia* (Iola, WI: Krause Publications, 1996), 394–95. A four-by-six inch silkie with a printed flag was redeemed from Egyptienne Straights cigarettes by Miss L. Jensen of Cheney, Washington in 1911 and the enclosed instruction sheet gave design and project ideas (Francine Kirsch, "The Fanciest of Printed Fabrics," *The Antique Trader Weekly*, 28 March 1990, 85). A similar flag in an envelope dated 1912 is shown in Petrone, *Tobacco Advertising*, 165. Joseph C. Robert noted the role of George Washington Hill of the American Tobacco Company in issuing silk flags with "Egyptian Straights" in order to reach a mass market, in *The Story of Tobacco in America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1952), 257.

42. Tennant, 70–71. We have found information connecting 35 U.S. cigarette brands with silkies, including Fatima (Liggett & Myers), Nebo (Lorillard), and Tokio (American Tobacco Company); see J. R. Burdick, ed., *The American Card Catalog* (Franklin Square, NY: Nostalgia Press, 1988); Larson; and Petrone, *Tobacco Advertising*. During the same time period, Canadian and British tobacco companies also distributed fabric novelties which appear in Canadian quilts. See Burdick, 85; Deborah Cannarella, "Ellis Island Treasures," *Piecework*, 4, no. 5 (1996): 39; and Mary Conroy, *300 Years of Canada's Quilts* (Toronto: Griffin House, 1976), 83–84.

43. The term "chain buying" appears in a photo caption in *Sold American!*, 23.

44. See also Petrone, *Tobacco Advertising*, 166. The Abrahams collection includes a table cover sewed from two lengths of printed silk-cotton yardage featuring uncut Zira silkies.

45. Burdick, 83–85. Examples of the Zira girls are found in the Abrahams collection.

46. Gottsegen, 191.

47. For examples of silkies sewn into pillows and quilts, see Cannarella, 39; Cozart, 54–55; Kirsch, 87; and McMorris, 64–65, 108–109.

48. Burdick, 83.

49. Ibid. Other woven motifs were national arms distributed by Richmond Straight Cut cigarettes, yacht club and college pennants issued with the Twelfth Night brand, and automobile makes (distributing brand unknown); Burdick, 83, 85.

50. From the card backing of an all-silk novelty distributed by Old Mill Cigarettes, Abrahams collection.

51. Petrone, *Tobacco Advertising*, 165.

52. *Hearth and Home*, December 1912, page unknown; from Smith (see footnote 21 above).

53. Tobacco flannels were also called felts, a misnomer; Tony Hyman, "Readers' Questions on ... Tobacciana," *The Antique Trader Weekly*, 15 September 1993, 94–95. More expensive brands of tobacco issued "Miniature Silk Rugs" which were packed in tins of tobacco or redeemable from the company's premium distribution center. See Burdick, 86–87; Cozart, 51; and Petrone, *Tobacco Advertising*, 167. Many of these fringed velvet novelties with oriental-rug designs were used in doll houses and are not considered here as their structure did not make them useful for quilting. For the same reason we do not discuss leather novelties with stamped patterns distributed by Silko and Turkey Red Egyptian cigarette brands. On leather novelties, see Burdick, 86; and Petrone, *Tobacco Advertising*, 167–68.

54. Tobacco flannel quilts are shown in Barbara Brackman, Mary Madden, Rebecca Martin, and Blair Tarr, *Material Pleasures: Quilts from the Kansas Museum of History* (Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 1995), 26; Conroy, 82; Cozart, 53; MacDowell and Fitzgerald, 61 (although the provenance and dating are questionable), 79, 92; and Merikay Waldvogel, "A Flag Quilt Launches a Search into the Past," *Quilting Today*, no. 68, 1998, 26–28. While conventional wisdom among Kewpie collectors holds that these cartoon flannels were issued with tobacco products, others have suggested that they were distributed with gum and candy; Burdick, 87–88.

55. On the Kansas ban on cigarettes, see Petrone, *Tobacco Advertising*, 204; and R. Alton Lee, "The 'Little White Slaver' in Kansas: A Century-Long Struggle Against Cigarettes," *Kansas History*, 22, no. 4 (1999–2000): 258–67.

56. Burdick, 86; Abrahams collection.

57. Advertisement reprinted in Petrone, *Tobacco Advertising*, 167.

58. Cozart, 56; and Petrone, *Tobacco Advertising*, 165.

59. Nicholls, 42–43. Profits of the "successor" companies were, however, relatively lower than before the monopoly break-up, a fact which has been attributed to the large increase in cigarette advertising; U.S. Bureau of Corporations, 328, 444.

60. *"Sold American!"*, 48; illustrated on page 50.

61. U.S. Bureau of Corporations, 379; quoted in Tennant, 83.

62. Tennant, 84.

63. Ibid., 75–78, 82–83; and Tilley, 609–11.

64. Quoted in Tennant, 78.

65. Strasser, 173–74; and Tennant, 77–78.

66. Strasser, 173–74.

67. Tennant, 83.
68. Ibid., 84.
69. Ibid., 79; and Tilley, 611–12.
70. Strasser, 176–79.
71. Bronner, 6.