

Uncoverings 2001

Volume 22 of
the Research Papers of
the American Quilt Study Group

Edited by Virginia Gunn



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October 12–15, 2001*

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Preface

American Quilt Study Group members attending the twenty-second annual seminar will celebrate “Quilting in the Commonwealth of Virginia” when they meet in Williamsburg from October 12–14, 2001. Kimberly Smith Ivey, associate curator of textiles at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, will deliver the keynote address, “A Room in Itself: Textiles for the Bed, 1750–1850.” The weekend is hosted by the Colonial Piecemakers Quilt Guild of Williamsburg and the Peninsula Piecemakers Quilt Guild of Newport News. The hosts have planned numerous educational tours, programs, and exhibits, to enhance the central focus of the conference which is the new research presented by the authors of this volume.

Volume 22 of the Research Papers of the American Quilt Study Group includes a section of color illustrations for the first time. I want to especially thank three people hard at work behind the scenes who have made these annual volumes and improvements possible. Dariel Mayer, the book designer, turns out an outstanding product each year. Her design and presentation make our volumes a visual pleasure to read. Merikay Waldvogel, the publication chairperson, sets and oversees the schedule and attends to all details, including extra proofreading. Her efforts make it possible for us to have the new book available at seminar time. Ricky Clark, chair of the paper selection committee, assembles the volunteer reviewers, coordinates all the details that go into selecting the final papers, and gives constructive feedback to all those who submit their work for consideration. AQSG members can be proud of the high level of dedication on the part of all concerned, including our office staff.

The first half of this volume focuses on new contributions to our knowledge of eighteenth and nineteenth century quiltmaking. Gloria



Allen's careful analysis of both verbal and visual sources for the Chesapeake Region reinforces the economic importance of textiles in the Southern plantation culture and clearly delineates the central role of slaves, both female and male, in their production.

Lynn Bonfield's research demonstrates the richness of local Civil War sources and her analysis of letters and records left in Peacham, Vermont, adds poignant and personal understanding to our overall knowledge and interpretations of the importance of quilts to Civil War soldiers and their families.

Linda Welters and Margaret Ordoñez show how in-depth analysis of extant artifacts helps us achieve understanding when the verbal sources are few and far between. Their material-culture approach to mining information from an early Rhode Island quilt provides new insight into the struggles of American textile firms' attempts to print cotton fabrics in the early nineteenth century.

The second half of this volume highlights a variety of recent quiltmakers and helps us celebrate and understand the rich and continually evolving traditions of quilting. Barbara J. Eikmeier calls our attention to outstanding quiltmakers from Korea. With the help of an interpreter, Barbara interviewed numerous Korean quiltmakers to learn about their art quilts, recorded in beautiful exhibition catalogs. She identified and documented a trend to create Korean-style quilts, showing how an imported American tradition is being shaped by quiltmakers to create a distinctive Korean style.

Yolanda Hood helps us understand the work of important African American art quiltmakers who use quilts to tell their own stories. She clearly shows us how these quilt artists have graphically recorded their personal stories of self-defining in cloth. Her sound scholarship adds to our understanding of feminist theory and the African American narrative tradition.

To round out the contemporary picture, Laurel Horton introduces us to a dance group that makes "affection" and friendship quilts that play an important role in what Laurel argues is a genuine contemporary folk culture. While the quilts would not be considered art quilts, they definitely show that the longstanding tradition and importance of quilts in community continues today.

Our third decade of quilt research is off to a strong start!