

Uncoverings

2004

Volume 25 of
the Research Papers of
the American Quilt Study Group

Edited by Kathlyn Sullivan



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of the American Quilt Study Group

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Preface

This volume of *Uncoverings* marks the silver anniversary of this publication. It is a tribute to quilt scholars everywhere and their continued desire for knowledge and understanding.

Quilt history is special in many ways for it encompasses not only textile artifacts, but studies relationships, links between generations, social custom, decorative and design trends, economic aspects of production and distribution, and the nurturing and emotionally comforting aspect of bedcovers. In an age of blankets and down comforters, quilts continue to be made in record numbers to celebrate family events, and moreover, as vehicles of artistic expression of beauty, graphics, or social commentary.

Included in this 25th volume of *Uncoverings* is the keynote address delivered by Barbara Brackman on October 10, 2003 at the AQSG Seminar in Dallas. Brackman calls for researched proof to dispel the myths attached to popular quilt lore.

The events of a nation at war are the focus of the papers by Virginia Eisemon and Kaaren Beaver-Buffington. Far from anonymous, the quilts they chose to study are documented through inscription. From the state of Maine comes a quilt especially made by a group of Sunday school girls for use by soldiers recuperating in military hospitals. Their quilt is covered by words of encouragement, morality, and reflection. Across the nation, in a town barely a dozen years old, a luxurious silk banner quilt



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was made to raise funds for the Union's Sanitary Commission and be presented to the general who would lead the nation.

Inscribed friendship quilts were studied by Lucinda Cawley and Loretta Chase and Pamela Weeks Worthen. Cawley's work focuses on Pennsylvania quilts with inked inscriptions in German fraktur lettering. Her analysis reveals certain preferred patterns and colors, demographics, and the work of identified scribes. The Chase-Worthen study brings to view the social and economic contexts in which a young, rural New Hampshire woman made her friendship quilt in 1848.

A rare treasury of quilts is the focus of Laurel Horton's paper regarding an upcountry South Carolina family. Three generations of quilts reveal changing function, status, and trends in quilting within that family.

The distinctive and rare indigo-resist prints of the eighteenth century are the subjects presented by Mary Gale and Margaret Ordoñez. The authors research the origins of the decorative patterns and their use in quilts and bed hangings. Pattern book examples are compared to the actual cloth. Once again, quilts are studied through and within the economic contexts in which they were made.

Our lives are stimulated and enriched by recording the history of others. The activities and presentations at the 25th American Quilt Study Group Seminar in Vancouver, Washington, October 8–10, 2004, are dedicated to promoting that tradition. The vision of Sally Garoutte and the other scholars who met for that very first AQSG Seminar in Mill Valley, California in 1980 is affirmed.