

Uncoverings

2004

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

Edited by Kathlyn Sullivan



A Quilt for General Grant

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A Quilt For General Grant tells the story of a red, white, and blue silk quilt made to raise funds for the United States Sanitary Commission during the last year of the Civil War. The Ladies Social Circle of Eureka, Humboldt County, California fashioned a quilt which was raffled off again and again on the evening of April 5, 1865 gathering \$1,000 for the cause. The funds were sent to aid Union soldiers and the quilt was sent to Lt. General U.S. Grant. Grant served at Fort Humboldt in 1854 and citizens had not forgotten their famous former resident. The quilt remained with Grant's family only to return 126 years later to Eureka's Clarke Historical Museum. The history of the "Banner Quilt" illuminates West Coast involvement in the Civil War, including information about "Sanitary Fairs" and the contributions of women during that time.

It was my good fortune to be in college studying history in 1991 when a most unique and significant quilt appeared in Eureka, California, Humboldt County. My professor, Dr. Dolores McBroom, asked if I was interested in doing research on a red, white, and blue silk quilt that was made in 1865 in Humboldt County. Soon after its completion it was sent away to a future president of the United States and his family. The quilt was returned 126 years later to the place it was created to rest at the Clarke Historical Museum in Eureka, sent by the family of that President's great-granddaughter.

I accepted the challenge of historical detective work; it was very exciting to look back in time through microfilm and books in the Humboldt State University Library.



Sometimes I would imagine the wind blowing briskly, gathering cold and salty mist from the ocean, chilling the air around Humboldt Bay with its dampness. This is typical April weather for Eureka. By 8:00 p.m., it would be cold and dark. I could envision a group of people hurrying across the dirt street and stepping up onto the wooden sidewalk. They would pull their wraps tightly, the sharp winds penetrating through the fibers of their coats. A tall man, eager to get inside, pulls on the door handle, the wind whipping the door from his hand and slapping it open against the outside wall of Brett's Hall. He steps back and his companions hurry inside.

The Hall is crowded. People talk noisily amongst themselves. Plates are piled high with homemade food. A wood stove, combined with the warmth of friends, makes the meeting room comfortable, if not a little too warm. Neighbors greet neighbors in a convivial fashion. "A very large number of persons were in attendance."¹ Music is playing. Excitable children have smiles for their friends; laughter echoes through the building.

As the evening lengthens, it is time to accomplish their goal. The auction is about to begin. Among the items being sold is a quilt—a beautiful, bright, quilt fashioned out of red, white, and blue silk. Its makers had embroidered and quilted it with great skill and style. *The Humboldt Times*, a weekly newspaper, reports "This Banner Quilt was esteemed the feature of the evenin."²

The women of the Eureka Ladies Social Circle made the quilt and prepared this gala event to raise funds for the U.S. Sanitary Commission and to honor Lt. General Ulysses S. Grant, America's war hero. As a young lieutenant, Grant had served a short time at Fort Humboldt from January 5 to May 7, 1854, and had met Eureka during his leisure and working hours.³ Humboldt County citizens had not forgotten their most famous former resident (see figure 1).⁴

"The ladies of this Circle had been engaged in preparing for the occasion during a period of some months."⁵ People eagerly awaited the festival. This particular occasion seemed to have an inordinate amount of publicity and attention, yet it was just one event in a long list of fundraisers, parties, lectures, donations, picnics, and work parties, all held to raise funds and supplies for the Union soldiers.



Figure 1: Second Lieutenant Ulysses S. Grant, in 1843. An engraving based on a daguerreotype made soon after Grant was graduated from West Point. Julia Grant referred to this portrait “As Lieutenant Grant was when I first knew him.” Originally published in the work: *The Personal Memoirs of Julia Dent Grant*, edited by John Y. Simon ©1988 by the Ulysses S. Grant Association, reproduced by permission of the publisher, the Board of Trustees, Southern Illinois University.

Yes, the battlefields of America’s great Civil War were far from Eureka, Humboldt County, California: 2,450 miles from Antietam, and 2,500 miles from Spotsylvania and Gettysburg. Yet it was evident that the devotion shown here for the cause was real. The town of Eureka, in a county exceeding the size of Delaware and Rhode Island by 300 square miles, is geographically isolated. There are times during the year, even today, that one can neither travel in nor out. ⁶ Floods, storms, and road closings sometimes keep news and people distant. *The Humboldt Times* provided weekly war news from San Francisco. Despite the isolation and communication delay, Humboldt County citizens kept apprised of the happenings of the Civil War. In local newspapers, support for the Union forces seemed unquestioned.

While news of the War Between the States pervaded the pages of the Humboldt County press, supportive efforts on the home front were also included. Reports from the Treasurers of the Sanitary Fund Committee were commonly included in the week’s news. A typical example is the “Report of the Treasurer of the Sanitary Fund Committee to the Rev. W.



L. Jones, Chairman of the Humboldt County Sanitary Fund Committee” in *The Humboldt Times* on February 8, 1864. That report, submitted by Treasurer L. C. Schmidt indicated that the Sanitary Fund Committee in Arcata alone had contributed, during an unspecified period, the amount of \$1164.28.⁷

On April 5, 1865, Humboldt County citizens were focused on gaiety, the fun of a festive occasion. However, war was very much in the back of the minds of the men and women who were at Brett’s Hall that night. They had come to raise money to finance the immense costs of a country doing battle with itself.

“The Sanitary Commission is the great artery which bears the people’s love to the people’s army,” said Katherine Prescott Wormeley, a Commission worker.⁸ Humboldt County was only one of hundreds of areas in the United States that sent money and supplies, its form of “love to the people’s army,” through the conduit of this organization.

The origins of the U.S. Sanitary Commission, forerunner of the Red Cross, were humble. The Rev. Dr. Henry W. Bellows, minister of All Souls Unitarian Church in New York was very concerned for the needs of soldiers. According to William Quinten Maxwell, in his book, *Lincoln’s Fifth Wheel: The Political History of the United States Sanitary Commission*, the United States had no medical association and no nursing schools. The United States had no way to alleviate the assault being waged on the present hospital set-up on and near the battlefields of the Civil War.⁹ Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell ran the New York Infirmity for Women and Children.¹⁰ She invited some influential wealthy women, as well as Dr. Bellows and Dr. Elisha Harris, to discuss the needs of New York Union volunteers who were ill. An announcement promoting the meeting was published on April 29, 1861, by every newspaper in New York and signed by “Ninety-Two Most Respected Gentlewomen.” Four thousand women attended this meeting held at the Cooper Institute in New York, and on April 30 the Women’s Central Association for Relief was born.¹¹ However, the organization met resistance from the military leadership as well as smaller communities outside of New York who were unwilling to give up their autonomy to the big city organization.

Aware of this resistance, but sure of the need, Bellows, along with some medical doctors, traveled to Washington, D.C. The travelers knew



of the success of the British Sanitary Commission. Poor preparation and unsanitary conditions caused alarming casualties during the Crimean War in 1855. But the British Sanitary Commission had been given great power and amazing results were achieved with the field hospitals established by Florence Nightingale. With strict adherence to sanitary conditions, Nightingale and her unit of thirty-eight nurses showed an astounding improvement in survival rates.¹² The committee from New York, including Dr. Bellows and Dr. Elisha Harris of the Women's Central Association of Relief, Dr. W. H. Van Buren of the Physicians and Surgeons of New York Hospitals, and Dr. Jacob Hansen of the Lint and Bandage Association, reached Washington, D.C., on May 16, 1861.¹³ They met with Miss Dorothea Dix, Superintendent of Nurses, and received her support. The proposal they offered for an organization that would mix military and civilians in support of the "Sanitary Interest of the United States Forces" was not accepted readily. After much negotiation and argument, the proposal was put into the form of an order and sent to President Abraham Lincoln.¹⁴

After it had sat on his desk for four days, Lincoln signed the order giving authority to the U.S. Sanitary Commission. He was concerned that a novelty like this might become "a fifth wheel to the coach."¹⁵ Lincoln was referring to the traditional depiction of the military as a coach with four wheels: the quartermaster services, the commissary, transportation services, and medical and surgical care.¹⁶ With a negative label like this, it was clear Lincoln feared that an organization of this type did not have much hope for success; a fifth wheel was pretty useless to a coach. He knew the military did not look favorably upon a connection with civilians. However, the Sanitary Commission, now official, elected its first president on June 12, 1861. Rev. Bellows was the new president. He immediately went to work. Bellows knew that the women of America would be able to meet the challenge that the military posed. Under the umbrella of the Sanitary Commission, the women of America could comfort, clothe, bandage, and feed the soldiers far better than the Medical Bureau of the U.S. government.

The Commission needed to do more than just augment the work of the existing Medical Bureau of the military. In addition to setting up relief corps for military camps, battlefields and hospitals, they organized



at least seven thousand aid societies. Supplies could be obtained from these relief societies when needed.¹⁷ Quilts, comforters, blankets, knitted socks, mufflers, coats, bandages, shirts, and more knitted socks were made by the hundreds of thousands to meet basic needs of the men at war.

Another service offered by the Sanitary Commission to the soldier was communication that helped the soldier contact his family. Assistance was available to soldiers who needed help in getting back pay. Rest stations for a meal and sleep, and even the distribution of information about recent improvements in medicine were some of the other benefits the Sanitary Commission provided.¹⁸

The expenses of the Sanitary Commission's services did not exceed five thousand dollars in the first months of operations. The Commission did not want to appeal to the government for funds. The government did not provide money, but was generous in its offering of resources such as offices, storehouses, ambulances, horses, and wagons at no cost. Still, bandages, food, and message services for soldiers needed to be supplied for the Union forces. The Sanitary Commission saw the need for additional services, including "sanitary inspection of camps, provision for nurses, hospitals, and ambulance service." All of which supported efforts of the regular army.¹⁹ The Sanitary Commission was there to supply those services, but it needed more money.

The men of the Commission turned to the women of the country. Women in all the major cities generated large sums through an event called "a Sanitary Fair," first held in Chicago in November 1863.²⁰ These fairs were well-advertised, well-attended, sometimes lasting as long as two weeks, like the New York 1864 Metropolitan Fair. Public buildings held displays of goods, treasures, trinkets, crafts, art, cakes, and more. Volunteers provided entertainment, by staging tableaux.²¹

Nellie Grant, General Grant's young daughter, portrayed "the Old Woman in the Shoe" at the Sanitary Fair in St. Louis in 1864 (see figure 2). Grant's wife Julia Dent Grant, said Nellie was "delighted with the selling of dolls and her photos, telling me the ladies gave her a half dollar for every doll and every picture." Mrs. Grant attended the great Sanitary Fair in New York and cast a vote for her favorite Union general, after paying a dollar (see figure 3). The most popular general would receive



Figure 2: Nellie Grant portraying “the Old Woman in the Shoe” at the Sanitary Fair in St. Louis in 1864. Nellie sold both the dolls and pictures of herself to raise money for hospital supplies for the army. Originally published in the work: *The Personal Memoirs of Julia Dent Grant*, edited by John Y. Simon, © 1988 by the Ulysses S. Grant Association, reproduced by permission of the publisher, The Board of Trustees, Southern Illinois University.

Figure 3: Julia Grant in 1864. Photo by Brady, New York. Originally published in the work: *The Personal Memoirs of Julia Dent Grant*, edited by John Y. Simon ©1988 by the Ulysses S. Grant Association, reproduced by permission of the publisher, the Board of Trustees, Southern Illinois University.



a jewel-hilted sword.²² Abraham Lincoln's contribution to the Chicago fair was widely discussed. He sent the original draft of the Emancipation Proclamation with a note: "I desire to retain the paper, but if it shall contribute to the relief and comfort of the soldiers, that will be better."²³ Young children put on mini-fairs to support the soldiers. In Philadelphia, ten young girls brought in \$16.50 apiece. There are "doubtless ten millionaires in the land who have not done as much in proportion, though they may have given thousands."²⁴

In California, *The Humboldt Times* reported the success of the Brooklyn Sanitary Fair. "Over \$300,000 have already been realized—which we think, is a least \$130,000 more than was ever before raised at any fair in America, if not in the world—and she shall yet swell the generous amount to fully \$400,000."²⁵ The same paper reported the Chairman of the Metropolitan Fair in New York gave \$1,000,000 to the Sanitary Commission.²⁶ The fundraising endeavors of the Sanitary Fairs brought women together and showed them they could achieve remarkable success. According to Commission records, these fairs raised \$2,738,868.84.²⁷

The U.S. Sanitary Commission touched a need in Americans to try to alleviate the pain and suffering of fighting soldiers.²⁸ The Commission sent representatives to speak to concerned citizens; their speeches sparked a desire to help. Rev. Bellows, who took his mission to California, expounded at a Sanitary meeting in Sacramento that, "No Government since the world began ever took as good care of its sick and wounded soldiers, as does the United States."²⁹ Five months later, Dr. Bellows was again the subject of an article in *The Humboldt Times*. He was leaving San Francisco for New York. The esteemed Rev. Bellows was the subject of flowery praise:

His earnest patriotism on all occasions and his geniality in the social circle have endeared him to all. He has traveled much in aid of the Sanitary Fund and organized the noble charity upon a permanent basis. Societies are being formed throughout the State, whose members contribute fifty cents each per month, thus ensuring a regular income to the fund without burdening the contributors. Can not you do something of this kind at Eureka and Arcata, or organize one society for the county?³⁰



It is no surprise that California sent \$750,000 east to the Sanitary Commission Fund.³¹

The male leadership of the Humboldt County Sanitary Commission also turned to women to do most of the major work needed to raise money. Humboldt County citizens met again and again to raise funds for bandages and other necessities for the fighting men on Civil War battlefields. Pages from *The Humboldt Times* told of many successful efforts to raise money for wounded Union soldiers. One Arcata writer told of a plan to:

Open a 'Potato Subscription' in Humboldt County [,] the proceeds of the contributions to be for the benefit of the Sanitary Fund. There are few persons in the county who will refuse to donate a sack of potatoes to promote such a cause . . . It is hardly necessary to remind our citizens how much our sick and wounded soldiers need the gifts of the loyal hearts at home³²

The 1864 Fourth of July Committee wanted to celebrate the Fourth with "firing salutes . . . a picnic and patriotic speaking . . . that a subscription be taken up on the picnic ground for the benefit of the Sanitary Fund; that in the evening a ball be given, the profits of which, if any, be contributed to the same fund."³³

Humboldt County women organized Sanitary Fairs with interesting themes, which enticed residents and sparked their beneficence. The Ladies Sewing Circle of Arcata sold and resold a "Great National Cake" at one of their fairs. The decorated cakes were baked in the shape of different states of the Union. People would often bid on their home state. Proceeds from this Cake totaled \$353.60; total proceeds from the Arcata fair were \$712.63.³⁴

Eureka played a role too. At a Eureka meeting of the Humboldt County Soldiers' Aid Society, women also created a great National Sanitary Cake. The total raised for their cake was \$1,003.00. A quilt won by Capt. H. H. Buhne took in \$26.00.³⁵

While *The Humboldt Times* proudly told the story of Humboldt County support for the Union soldiers, it also told the story of the battles.



And of course, these stories would be incomplete without mentioning the local hero, Ulysses S. Grant.

The Humboldt Times brought the battles from across the continent into the lives of Eureka residents with news from correspondents, some from the front line. “The Latest News! Glorious News: Grant Marching On!”³⁶ General Grant’s response to General Simon Buckner, the rebel commander who offered to settle with terms of capitulation, was, “No terms except immediate and unconditional surrender can be accepted.”³⁷ People read in *The Humboldt Times*:

General Grant has captured within the past seven months four-hundred and twelve rebel cannon. No wonder the rebels await with fear and trembling the approach of spring and the anticipated advance of this Unconditional Surrender General.³⁸

Enthusiastic proponents insisted that Grant’s initials “U. S. G.” stood for “Unconditional Surrender Grant.”³⁹

Understandably, the women of Eureka dedicated their quilt to Grant as if such dramatic prose mirrored their thoughts. Grant was very popular. When he later ran for president, his face or name could be seen on banners, flags, bandannas, and even yardage goods all around the country (see figures 4 and 5).⁴⁰

Far from Civil War battlefields, women on California’s North Coast worked diligently to make the quilt for Ulysses S. Grant. In the fall of

Figure 4: Yard goods with the legend “U.S. Grant/ First in Peace/ First in War.” 1868 campaign. Collection of Julie Powell.



1864, Eureka women started what came to be both a tribute to them and to General Grant, whom they so admired. Gathering in each other's homes, they planned and sewed a quilt, which would raise funds for the Sanitary Commission. The colors were brilliant. Electric blue, white, and flag red pieces of silk were sewn together, fashioning a splendid quilt. Hand quilted it measures 78 by 76 inches. The quilt back is a red and white silk woven in a crisp small check.⁴¹ The silk fabric itself is a plain weave. The silks used were probably specially ordered from San Francisco, as no local mercantile would have regularly carried such vivid colors, according to contemporary quilt historian from Eureka, Mary Ann Spencer. The more common colors of the day were dull greens, burgundy and brown.⁴²

Humboldt County had watched from afar Grant's ascension to higher rank and command and felt a personal pride on seeing him become Commander in Chief of the Union forces, as evidenced in their quilt.

Issues of *The Humboldt Times* published when the quilt was being made contained many notices concerning meetings of different aid groups. It was difficult to identify the particular group of women responsible for the quilt's construction. Miss L. Wilson served as Secretary of the Ladies Social Circle in December of 1864 when it worked to benefit the Christian Commission.⁴³ In May of 1865, Mrs. H. S. Comstock was President of the Soldiers Aid Society and Mrs. D. W. Nixon, its Secretary. According to Anne L. Macdonald in her book *No Idle Hands*, sewing circles, church societies, and town groups quickly converted to "Soldier's Aid Societies."⁴⁴

Other women's names mentioned in the newspaper in association with various social and sewing circles that might have been involved with the making or marketing of the Banner Quilt included: Mrs. Con-

Figure 5: Yard goods with "USG" repeated in the stripe with patriotic emblem with "Grant" and "HW" (for the vice-president, Henry Wilson), 1872 campaign. Collection of Julie Powell.



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nor, Mrs. John Brock, Mrs. J. S. Murray, Mrs. J. E. Wyman, Mrs. Wiggins and Mrs. J. H. Kimball.⁴⁵ Even though the quilt was embroidered with the words “Ladies Social Circle of Eureka,” it was not clear which group actually made this quilt because there were so many similarly named groups listed in the newspaper. Names mentioned were The Ladies’ Sewing Circle, The Sewing Circle, The Ladies’ Sewing Circle of Eureka, Ladies’ Social Circle, Humboldt County Soldier’s Aid Society, and the Ladies Soldiers Aid Society. Meetings of the Ladies’ Social Circle were only announced two times in the period October 1864 through January 1865 and not at all for the next several months. Two meetings would not be enough to make this quilt. The Ladies’ Sewing Circle was listed seven times. Again, the Ladies’ Soldiers Aid Society was mentioned when it petitioned the Board of Supervisors of Humboldt County for use of the Court Room twice a month for the purposes of the Society, possibly for a large quilting space. Wednesday was a common meeting date for most of the groups, but there was no duplication of meeting locations, except in the instance of Mrs. Knight who was hostess at two gatherings of the Ladies’ Sewing Circle.⁴⁶

A fair conclusion is that the quilt was made by women who called themselves the Ladies Social Circle of Eureka who met at various locations.⁴⁷

The community read about the coming fancy event in an advertisement placed in *The Humboldt Times* on March 25, 1865.



It is very apparent that the people of Humboldt County claimed kinship with their General.

An article in *The Humboldt Times* on the same day doubled the attention this fundraising extravaganza would get, encouraging one and all to attend the Festival and Fair.

The proceeds of this Festival and Fair will be applied in aid of the Sanitary and Christian Commissions. The ladies of this Circle have been for a long time past engaged in preparing for this occasion, and have devoted much time and labor to the end that it may be at once interesting and entertaining to all who may attend and productive of the greatest benefit to the cause in aid of which the proceeds are to be appropriated. It is an idle task for us to undertake to present arguments in favor of giving our money on every occasion that offers, which has for its object the alleviation of the sick and wounded soldiers in the hospitals and upon the battlefields. We hold that an unanswerable reason should be found in every truly loyal heart why it [sic] this should be done. Go then everybody to the Festival and Fair of the Ladies' Social Circle.⁴⁹

“Almost the entire population for miles around came together to witness the unveiling,”⁵⁰ according to the Rev. J.W. Hines. *The Humboldt Times* told the full story of the successful fair:

The Festival and Fair of the Ladies' Social Circle of this place, came off according to announcement, on Wednesday evening. A very large number of persons were in attendance, and the affair was in every respect an eminent



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success. The ladies of this Circle had been engaged in preparing for the occasion during a period of some months, and the scenes displayed in the hall where the Festival was held, and the proceeds realized from the sale of articles prepared by them and other sources, testify with what success their labors have been rewarded.

The newspaper didn't have space to tell of all the evening's events, but it recorded every detail of the beautiful "Banner Quilt," the star of the show:

It was made entirely of silk materials, and embraced none other than the national colors. Around the border were thirty-six national flags, represented as flung to the breeze, and the blue field of each was embroidered the name of the State it was intended to represent. The center of the quilt was of blue silk, upon which was embroidered in white silk, an eagle with out-spread wings, grasping in his talons a shield and flags, in colors; this was surrounded by a constellation of thirty-six stars, wrought of silver thread, and again, at the margin of the blue eight other larger stars of the same material-representing the eight Territories. The following inscription is wrought upon the same field: 'To Lieutenant General U.S. Grant; by the Ladies' Social Circle of Eureka, Humboldt County, California.' This quilt was sold during the evening and produced the sum of one thousand dollars in currency. The total receipts of the Festival and Fair, were about \$2,500 in currency.⁵¹

The Ladies' Social Circle expressed thanks to "R.W. Brett, Esq., for the use of his Hall, so generously tendered at their recent Festival and Fair"⁵² The location of the Hall in Eureka was not immediately apparent. Advertisements show Brett's Hall was utilized on March 21 and March 22, 1865, for their examinations and semi-annual exercises, which they opened to the public.⁵³ It seemed at first that Brett's Saloon might have served as the site for the quilt festivities and Humboldt Academy ceremonies; the names are close enough. However, when it became clear after reading a newspaper advertisement in *The Humboldt Times*, that the second floor of the saloon was "finely fitted up for lodgings,"⁵⁴ it was unlikely that the saloon was the site used for the fundraising. It would



be difficult to entertain a large gathering without a large open space. Several later advertisements in *The Humboldt Times* featured a business called Knowles and Olmstead, which was located in Brett's Hall, but the copy didn't mention the location. That information was finally revealed in an announcement in the June 24, 1865, newspaper, telling of this new business, "Knowles and Olmstead . . . a new firm just commencing business in this place. Their store is on F between First and Second Streets."⁵⁵ It is most likely that this address is the location of Brett's Hall. No other information concerning this site was available in *Eureka, An Architectural View*,⁵⁶ as newer buildings were documented on the maps. A study of deeds might confirm the exact location of Brett's Hall.

The women of Eureka had no way of knowing the most recent news about the progress of the Civil War at the time of their great quilt unveiling on April 5, 1865. The mails from San Francisco were very slow. Correspondence from San Francisco alluded to the fact that "the mail service from the bay, from some cause is very unsatisfactory in its working. The mails are generally ten, never less than seven, and frequently twelve days in coming through."⁵⁷ Humboldt County citizens didn't know that Richmond had fallen three days earlier. The Confederate States of America surrendered four days later at Appomattox. President Lincoln would die in six days.⁵⁸

Women raised over fifteen million dollars across the country in their work for the Sanitary Commission.⁵⁹ Humboldt County played their part in this relief effort in its work on behalf of the Union soldiers. Considering the size, remote location, and age of the community, the work of the Eureka women was a great success. The "Banner Quilt" was sent to General Ulysses S. Grant in 1865. The Reverend Joseph W. Hines, an agent for the Christian Commission,⁶⁰ who lived in Humboldt County with his family during the time the quilt was made, reported seeing General Grant and his wife in San Jose some years later. Mrs. Grant told his wife, Mrs. Elizabeth Hines, that she "cherished that beautiful quilt, made by the ladies of Humboldt, as one of her most valued treasures."⁶¹

This has been a story about the U.S. Sanitary Commission, which contributed in winning the Civil War. It has been about the surprising devotion of Humboldt County to the Union forces. Humboldt, a distant, isolated county, barely a dozen years old, played a very respectable part in



Figure 6: The Quilt for General Grant, Clarke Historical Museum, Eureka, California. (See also Plate 5).

the winning of a faraway war. It has been about General Ulysses S. Grant, and a patriotic and beautiful quilt made in 1865 that has re-surfaced today. (See figure 6 and plate 5). The quilt returned 126 years later to Eureka and its new home at the Clarke Historical Museum. Bruce R. Hazard of San Diego sent the quilt back to Eureka in January 1991. His late wife, Mabel Grant Hazard, was a great-granddaughter of the late president and his wife. Her father, a grandson of the General, gave the quilt to her.

The bed-sized quilt is in good condition, yet fragile. The fabric is split in more than one place. But the colors are surprisingly bright. Because



light and handling will damage the quilt, the quilt rests in darkness most of the year. It comes out for viewing in its special box at selected times. It is appropriate that the Clarke Historical Museum likes to bring it out for the fourth of July.

This quilt gives insight into a turbulent period of United States history. The Banner Quilt's own history mirrors the Civil War, from the West Coast to the East Coast, from the fundraising fairs to the battlefields, from the quilting table to General Grant. Material culture has given us a view into our nation's past and shows the important connections to the Civil War from one side of the country to the other.

The room is crowded, yet people are quiet. No one will be pushed aside. Each waits their turn to get close. Everyone is looking towards a low-sided square wooden box with a clear plastic pyramid cover. A father picks up a small boy in shorts and t-shirt and swings him up onto his shoulders. Two elderly sisters, some schoolgirls and a tall white-haired man move close enough to see. This is viewing day at the Clarke Historical Museum when the "Banner Quilt" is on display. The colors are still brilliant: electric blue, white, and flag red, all of it silk.

Acknowledgments

The author wishes to thank the following people for their help and information for this quilt and this paper: Xenia Cord, Mary Cross, Elizabeth Hoffman, Claudia Israel, Matina Kilkenny, Dolores McBroome, and Pam Service and Lynn Wellman, Director and Assistant Registrar of the Clarke Historical Museum respectively.

A special note in recognition is noted for the site of the twenty-fifth seminar of the American Quilt Study Group held in Vancouver, Washington. Ulysses S. Grant was stationed at Fort Vancouver in the 1850's as quartermaster. He left there for Fort Humboldt in California in 1853. He returned as a visitor to Vancouver after had he served two terms as President of the United States. The first house built on Officer's Row was renamed The Grant House in his honor. It is the oldest building remaining at Vancouver Barracks and is open to the public.



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38. *The Humboldt Times*, 23 January 1864.
39. Livermore, 181.
40. Herbert Ridgeway Collins, *Threads of History* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1979) 37, 170, 175–81, 183–86, 188, 193, 203–4, 232, 248, 320; Robert Bishop and Carter Houck, *American Patriotic Quilts As Expressions of Liberty*, (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1986), 26.
41. Quilt specifications were taken from a Receipt Agreement dated January 26, 1991, from the archives of the Clarke Historical Museum, Eureka, CA.
42. Telephone interview with Mary Ann Spencer, Board Member of the California Heritage Quilt Project, 23 May 1993.
43. *The Humboldt Times*, 3 December 1864.
44. Macdonald, 98.
45. *The Humboldt Times*, 3 September 1864; 1 October 1864; 10 October 1864; 22 October 1864; 5 November 1864; 11 March 1865.
46. *The Humboldt Times*, 1 October 1864; 19 October 1864; 20 August 1864; 3 December 1864; 31 December 1864; 7 January 1865; 31 December 1864; 3 September 1864.
47. Author's note: It is possible that the names attributed to the different groups were not as accurate as they could have been. Perhaps, with further research, a more definitive conclusion could be drawn as to which group of women made this quilt and whether they belonged to an established Eureka women's group.
48. *The Humboldt Times*, 25 March 1865. Author's Note: The name of the U. S. Christian Commission appears often in information about Civil War organizations. This smaller group also supplied the Union Army with some medical and comfort supplies; however, its focus was religious in nature and bibles were an important part of their contribution.
49. *The Humboldt Times*, 25 March 1865.
50. Rev. Joseph Wilkinson Hines, *Touching Incidents in the Life and Labors of a Pioneer on the Pacific Coast Since 1853* (San Jose, CA: Eaton & Co., 1911), 17.
51. *The Humboldt Times*, 8 April 1865. Barbara Brackman, *Clues in the Calico* (McLean, VA: EPM Productions, 1989), 195. Author's Note: Quilts with flags can often be dated by the number and design of the stars; or, in this case, by the number of flags which represented the thirty-six states in the Union in 1865-67. Of course this "Banner Quilt" is easily dated because the date is embroidered on it.
52. *The Humboldt Times*, 8 April 1865.
53. *The Humboldt Times*, 15 March 1865.
54. *The Humboldt Times*, 11 March 1865.
55. *The Humboldt Times*, 24 June 1865.
56. *Eureka, An Architectural View* (Eureka, CA: Eureka Heritage Society, 1987).



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57. *The Humboldt Times*, 1 October 1864.
58. George Brown Tindall, *America—A Narrative History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1988), 693.
59. Sara M. Evans, *Born for Liberty* (New York: McMillan, Inc., 1989), 114.
60. *The Humboldt Times*, 25 March 1865.
61. Hines, 17. Author's Note: Mr. Hines offers that his wife was especially skillful in the use of the needle and says she was responsible for nearly all of the embroidering of the stars on the quilt. At the time of the writing of this paper, there has not been found any mention of the quilt in Grant's papers.

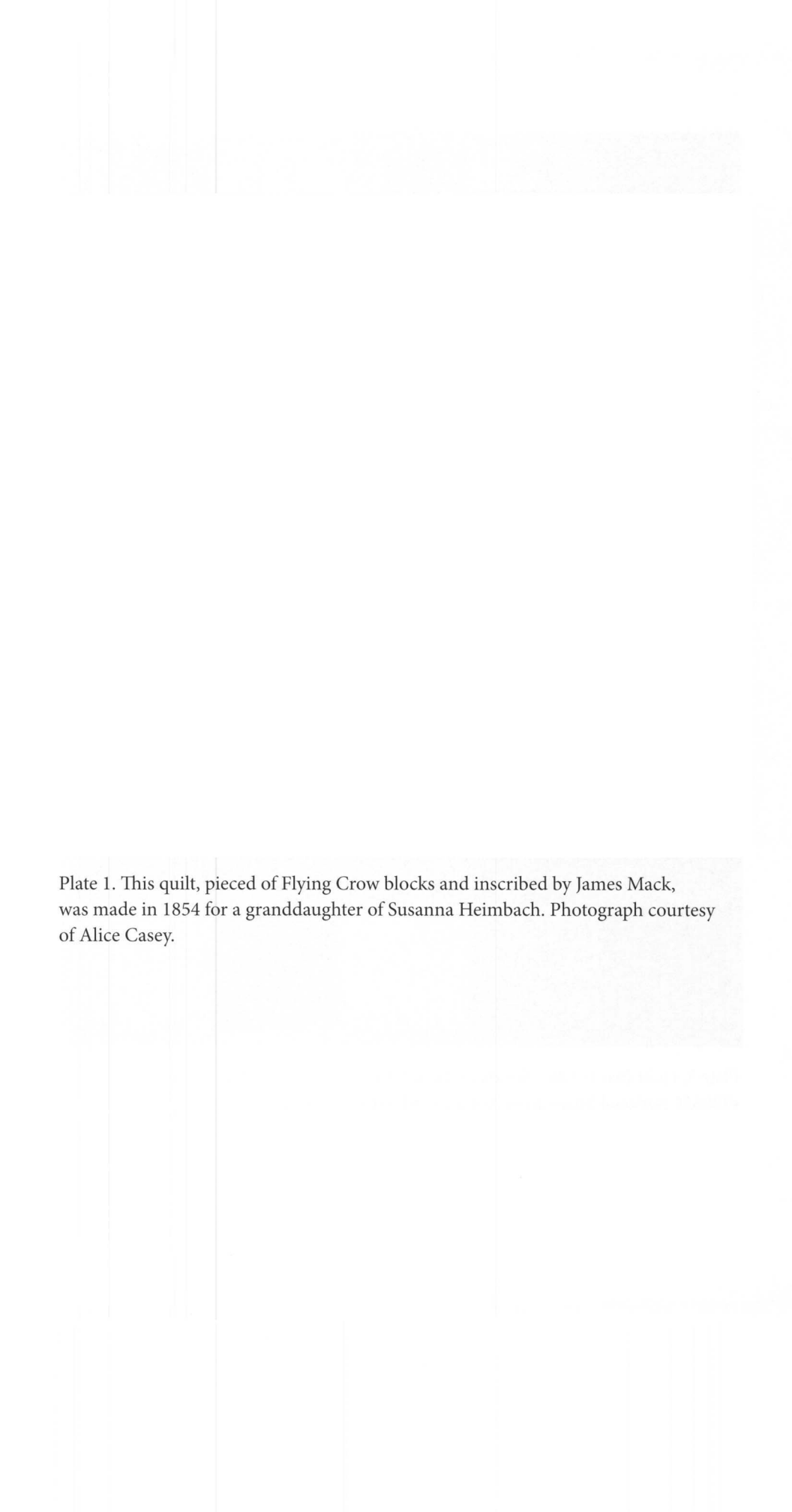


Plate 1. This quilt, pieced of Flying Crow blocks and inscribed by James Mack, was made in 1854 for a granddaughter of Susanna Heimbach. Photograph courtesy of Alice Casey.

Plate 2. Quilt. 1863. Sunday School Scholars, Augusta, Maine. Accession #138338
National Museum of American History, Washington, D.C.

Plate 3. Quilt (back) 1863. Sunday School Scholars, Augusta, Maine. Accession
#138338 National Museum of American History, Washington, D.C.

Plate 4. “ ‘The Sunflower’ pieced by Rosa Benson Snoddy. The fancy design of stitches called the ‘wine glass.’ ” 94 x 97 inches. Photograph courtesy of the Mary Black Foundation.

Plate 5: The Quilt for General Grant, Clarke Historical Museum, Eureka, California.