

Uncoverings 2007

Volume 28 of
the Research Papers of
the American Quilt Study Group

Edited by Joanna E. Evans



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Cover illustration: Indiana Wreath quilt (January 1927), by Rose Frances Good Kretsinger, cotton, appliquéd, reverse appliquéd, quilted, 83.5 x 86.5 inches, Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas. Gift of Mary Kretsinger.



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Preface

Participants in the twenty-eighth annual seminar of the American Quilt Study Group (held October 12–14, 2007, in Lowell, Massachusetts) can participate in an exciting variety of study centers, activities, and tours. The seminar committee planned activities that celebrate the Spindle City's rich textile history. In addition, attendees at the seminar hear presentations of the research included in the volume of *Uncoverings*.

Individual quilts inspired the research of several of this year's authors. Ginny Gunn examines modest, early twentieth-century gingham and chambray quilts. In her article, she explores the reasons for the sudden emergence and disappearance of this quilt style and puts the quilts in the context of the home sewing and calico industries.

Lynne Shultis adopted a redwork quilt top that she found in a pile of linens at an antique show and was inspired to delve into its history and meaning. Through careful genealogical work, she uncovered relationships among music students and their teacher, the likely recipient of the 1893 top. Shultis tracked down many of the signatories and the parlor songs and tunes they cited and located the design sources for many of the quilt blocks. Shultis's research provides an interesting glimpse into the lives of immigrant mill-working families influenced by popular American culture.

Mary Robare explores the relationships among the Quaker ancestors who signed blocks on the Pidgeon Family Quilt, which was passed down through her husband's family, and the Sandy Spring Quilt of Maryland. These two quilts are part of a much larger group of quilts



made by Quakers in the mid-Atlantic states during the mid-nineteenth century that are currently under investigation by quilt researchers. New publications and exhibits on this topic will be forthcoming.

As a graduate student in Kansas, Jonathan Gregory developed an interest in the quilts and the creative life of Rose Kretsinger after he saw her quilts and early watercolors in the Spencer Museum of Art. His investigation focuses on early creative influences and the development of Kretsinger's personal aesthetic philosophy as recorded in *The Romance of the Patchwork Quilt in America*, the book she co-authored with Carrie Hall. Gregory goes on to situate Kretsinger and her work in relation to the Colonial Revival Movement.

Carol Gebel immersed herself in images of a single quilt pattern, the Princess Feather. After studying the origin of the design, she investigated 370 quilts to determine the most common attributes and attempted to define a "typical" configuration for this pattern and to reveal some unusual variations.

Eleanor Dugan introduces readers to an avid collector and teacher, who amassed a remarkable teaching collection of textiles that is still growing several decades after her death. Visitors to Rachel Kay-Shuttleworth's family home in Great Britain—now a property in the National Trust—are still encouraged to touch the textiles that Rachel gathered to be studied and handled.

Laurel Horton has followed the responses to the 1999 publication of *Hidden in Plain View: A Secret Story of Quilts and the Underground Railroad*. She has presented her observations at a number of conferences and was asked to do a special presentation at the 2007 American Quilt Study Group seminar based on her March 22, 2006, lecture at the International Quilt Study Center at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Her presentation addresses her journey toward an understanding of the role of belief and its relationship to the goal of objectivity.

Several of this year's authors have focused on specific quilts or patterns. There are advantages to this micro-scale approach in which the researcher can study an object in great detail. Similarly, there is value to the macro-approach that focuses on larger social movements. Whether quilt researchers emphasize micro-, meso-, or macro-research techniques, their findings continue to be of interest to quilt scholars.