

Uncoverings 2013

Volume 34 of
the Research Papers of
the American Quilt Study Group

Edited by Lynne Zacek Bassett



Uncoverings 2013

Volume 34 of the Research Papers
of the American Quilt Study Group

Edited by Lynne Zacek Bassett

*Presented at Charleston, South Carolina
September 18-22, 2013*

Copyright © 2013 by the American Quilt Study Group
All rights reserved

Copyright note: This is a collective work. AQSG holds the copyright to this volume and any reproduction of it in whole. Right to individual articles are held by the authors. Requests for permission to quote or reproduce material from any article should be addressed to the author.

Published by the American Quilt Study Group
1610 L. Street
Lincoln, NE 68508

Manufactured in the United States

Uncoverings is indexed in:
America: History and Life
ARTbibliographies
BHA (Bibliography of the History of Art)
Clothing and Textile Arts Index
Feminist Periodicals
Historical Abstracts
MLA International Bibliography
Sociological Abstracts

ISBN 10 digit 1-877859-29-X
ISBN 13 digit 978-1-877859-29-8
ISSN 0277-0628
Library of Congress catalog number: 81-649486

Cover illustration:
Shelburne chintz appliqué album spread, dated 1850-1857,
by Mary Frampton (Townsend) Pope
108 x 109 inches
© Shelburne Museum, Shelburne, Vermont, #10-151, acc.no. 1954-412



Contents

<i>Preface</i>	5
<i>Adirondack Quilts and Comforters: A Regional Study</i>	8
Hallie E. Bond	
<i>The “Cooish” Rescue of the Quilt in Harry Kelly’s Cottage</i>	46
Dr. Cheryl Cheek	
<i>Lowcountry Chintz: The Townsend/Pope Quilt Legacy</i>	66
Sharon Fulton Pinka	
<i>Printed Panels for Chintz Quilts: Their Origin and Use</i>	101
Merikay Waldvogel	
<i>Alabama Cotton and Bemis Bags: Pieced into Quilt History</i>	133
Sarah Bliss Wright	
<i>Contributors</i>	161
<i>Index</i>	164

 *Preface*

The papers published in this thirty-fourth volume of *Uncoverings* were presented at the annual seminar of the American Quilt Study Group in Charleston, South Carolina, in September of 2013. Few cities in this country have witnessed such pivotal events in American history as Charleston, site of the beginning of the American Civil War in 1861. On April 12 of that year, Confederate artillery fired on Federal forces in the unfinished and inadequately defended Fort Sumter in Charleston harbor, bombarding them for thirty-four hours, until they were compelled to surrender. Four years and 750,000 deaths later, the war finally ended. Charleston was shattered. But just as frugal nineteenth-century quiltmakers were inculcated to “gather up the fragments, so that nothing be lost” (John 6:12), so the people of Charleston gathered up the fragments of their city. Now, at this time of the Civil War Sesquicentennial, Charleston’s rich history, arts community, and elegant streets make it among America’s most beautiful, interesting, and vibrant cities.

It is particularly appropriate, then, to feature two of the essays in this volume. First, Sharon Pinka’s paper about a group of eight bed covers from South Carolina’s Lowcountry illuminates the lives of the plantation-owning Townsend and Pope families in the antebellum and Civil War periods. It is the most rewarding part of research to be able, as Sharon has done, to discover previously unrecognized or forgotten artifacts and reconnect them to their family and community context. Particularly poignant is the story of



one quilt, stolen by occupying Federal forces and taken to New England—now reunited, intellectually if not physically, with other family quilts scattered among museums and Townsend/Pope descendants.

Merikay Waldvogel offers in her essay a path-breaking study of printed chintz panels, used for a style of appliqué favored by southern quiltmakers. The purchase of a chintz medallion quilt from North Carolina spurred Merikay to undertake a two-decade study of these printed panels, asking: When were they made? When were they used? Who printed them? How did their use differ from Britain to the United States? Her findings will cause us to re-evaluate the dates of many quilts in this style.

We stay in the South but move into the twentieth century with Sarah Bliss Wright's study of the Bemis Bro. Bag Company of Alabama. Senator James Henry Hammond of South Carolina declared that "Cotton is King" in 1858 – but while the southern states grew 75 percent of the world's cotton at that time, they manufactured very little of it into cloth. This pattern changed in the twentieth century, when the southern states became dominant in cotton manufacturing. Sarah examines one aspect of this cotton industry, asking the question: Did the farmers of Alabama buy printed feed bags manufactured from cotton that they had grown? Sarah's research into one leading company offers important new insights into the printed feedsack industry, adding a must-read contribution to the literature on this popular subject.

Like the study of Depression-era feedsack fabrics, two more papers offer significant new information on quilts made by people in difficult economic circumstances. Hallie Bond's study of quilts made in the region of the Adirondack Mountains is an important addition to the information offered in the New York Quilt Project's book, *New York Beauties: Quilts from the Empire State* (1992). In preparation for an exhibition at the Adirondack Museum, Hallie undertook to document quilts made and used in this wilderness region along the eastern edge of the state. She found that, while the quiltmakers were obviously aware of national quiltmaking trends, their quilts reveal a distinctly local history. Cheryl Cheek takes us across the Atlantic in her study of another isolated community of quilters. In her essay, residents of the Isle of Man undertake to reproduce an early quilt on display at an open air museum (called a "living history" museum here in the United States) in order to preserve the original. The quilt is of a type called a "Manx Log Cabin," possibly a prototype for American Log Cabin quilts.

Applying “Swidler’s conceptualization of Cultures in Action,” Cheryl analyzes the quilting traditions on this remote island in the middle of the Irish Sea.

As the American Civil War marked a turning point in the history of our host city, Charleston, so it marks two distinct periods of history represented by quilts in this volume. Southern antebellum elegance and international trade are seen in the appliquéd quilts studied by Sharon Pinka and Merikay Waldvogel, while post-war expansion and economic shifts are seen in the studies by Hallie Bond and Sarah Bliss Wright. Once again, in this volume of *Uncoverings*, the American Quilt Study Group presents important research representing a wide variety and history of quilts – quilts made under circumstances of wealth and of poverty, across the country, and across the Atlantic.