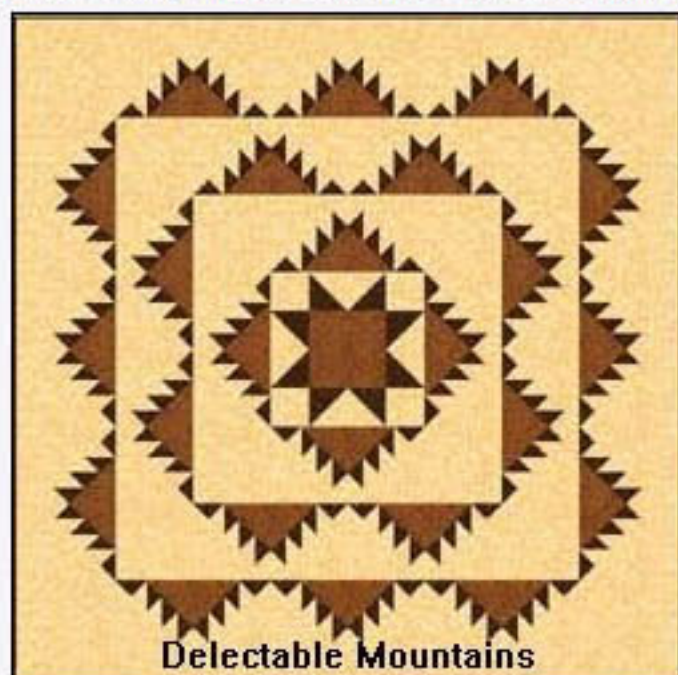


PIONEER QUILT PATTERNS & THE STORIES OF THEIR NAMES

"That any quilts survived the trip West is remarkable. It attests both to the durability of the quilts and to the loving tender care so crucial to that survival." ¹

MEANINGFUL NAMES ON PIONEER QUILTS

Quilts were precious to pioneer women for many reasons. They not only warmed the weary travelers at night but also brought memories of old friends and hopes for a good life in the new land. Sometimes friends and family made a friendship quilt giving a pioneer woman a precious



memento of loved ones so far away. Women also made quilts in anticipation of the journey. It's only natural that some quilt patterns favored by pioneers have names related to the journey and to their faith in God.

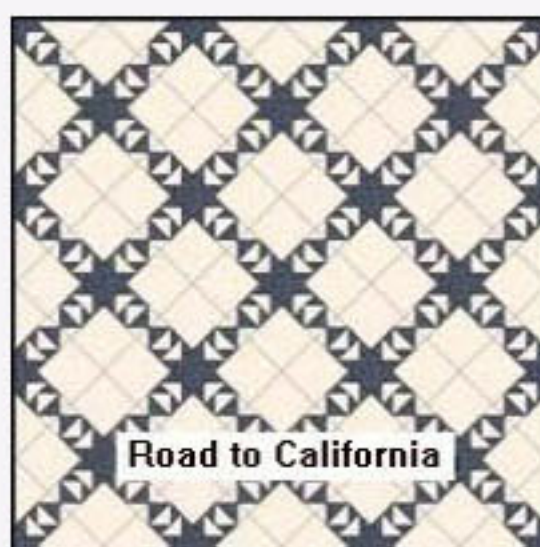
NAMES RELATED TO THE JOURNEY AND NATURE

There are names that refer directly to the pioneer experience like Rocky Road to Kansas, Road to California and Oregon Trail.

Others relate to nature and the new life they would be living like Log Cabin, [Bear's Paw](#) and Pine Tree. Some blocks represented the journey including Wandering Foot and Prairie Queen as well as various wheel patterns

and star patterns.

Sometimes quilt blocks known by other names were given a name related to the migration west. For example the pattern most often known as Drunkards Path has been called Wanderer's Path in the Wilderness, Oregon Trail, Endless Trail and even The Road to California. You can find a free pattern to this block under yet another name at [Solomon's Puzzle](#).



QUILT MAKING AS A CREATIVE ENDEAVOR

Quilts were not just made out of necessity. Many pioneer women expressed their creativity through quilt making. For example Dorinda Moody loved quilt making and managed to find time for it in spite of her rigorous pioneer life. "Dorinda obtained ideas for her quilts from her own creative mind and from the trees, plants and natural objects around her. She always kept a notebook and pencil on the table next to her bed. When a quilt design occurred to her, she would light her coal-oil lamp and draw out the design." ²

NAMES REFLECTING RELIGIOUS FAITH



Perhaps the most meaningful to these women were names that reminded them of their devotion to God. They knew the trip west would be fraught with danger and sometimes their faith was all that kept them going. A quilt made with blocks named from the Bible would be a source of comfort.

In keeping with this importance of religious faith to these women the first quilt pattern in this series will be the Delectable Mountains, a name inspired by the book, "Pilgrim's Progress".

The Rose of Sharon, a Bible based applique design, was sometimes used to make a quilt for newlyweds who were about to embark on the journey west. This pattern can be found at the [Rose of Sharon Bible Quilt Pattern](#) page.

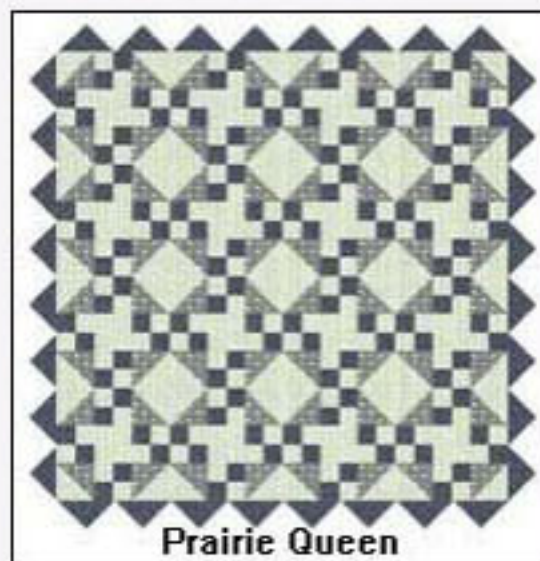
EXPRESSION OF THE PIONEER EXPERIENCE THROUGH QUILTS

The following quote best sums up the pioneer quilt maker's experience.

"For women experienced in needlework, interpretation of the Oregon Trail through their quilts was a natural creative enterprise. Themes reflecting their perceptions of leave-taking from family and friends, the six months of living outdoors, and the reliance on equipment and divine guidance appeared in quilts connected to migration." ³

FREE PIONEER QUILT PATTERNS

Look at the navigation in the upper left corner of this page to find the pioneer quilt patterns that I've designed for you. Enjoy these free patterns and remember the story of pioneer women and their quilts as you sew.



Learn more about pioneer quilts at [Pioneer Quilts: A Comfort Through Hardship](#).

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REFERENCES:

¹ p11, ["Ho for California!: Pioneer Women and Their Quilts"](#), by Jean Ray Laury

² p45, [Pioneer Quiltmaker: The Story of Dorinda Moody Slade](#), by Carolyn O'Baggy Davis

³ pp 79, [Quilts of the Oregon Trail](#), by Mary Bywater Cross