

Exhibition at Craftery Gallery  
Hartford, Conn.

Nov-Dec 1986

"AFRICAN-AMERICAN MASTER QUILTMAKERS"

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DORA ALICE (PYLES) ARCHIE  
GREENWOOD, SOUTH CAROLINA  
1903 -

Mrs. Dora Archie, known to loved ones as "Mama Dora", learned to quilt from her mother in a day when quilting was an art form that also helped meet the needs of the family.

Mama Dora used scraps of material left over from her dressmaking and pieced together quilt patterns. Using a thimble, heavy thread and a needle, she put each quilt together by hand.

Once the cover pattern was wide enough to cover the bed, she pieced the lining together from strips of muslin. The lining was placed on the frame which hung from four hooks on the ceiling. The next step was to layer on the raw cotton which was picked directly from the fields. She then placed the cover on the top of the cotton and tightly fastened the material to the frame. The quilt was then ready for quilting.

Later in life, Mama Dora made quilts for each of her children as they married and left home. Mama Dora recently celebrated her eighty-third birthday, and she still finds quilting therapeutic.

Curator of  
exhibit

LAURA M. HUDSON  
FORESTVILLE, CONNECTICUT  
1920 -

Mrs. Hudson learned the art and skill of quilting as a child in Alabama from her mother and grandmother and has spent decades refining her techniques. She quilted off and on for over fifty years and has retained many of the old quilt patterns handed down by her mother and grandmother from Alabama.

She usually makes piece quilts and most of her quilts are completely hand made. She collects quilt patterns and will usually add her own innovations to the various standard quilt patterns, as well as create her own patterns. She especially likes to work with and use bright colors, although she also works with the standard earth tones used in many quilts.