

PATTERNS OF LIFE

Cultural Diversity and American Quilts



*Photograph, Family, c. 1930.
Collection of America Hurrah Antiques, NYC*

PIECING TOGETHER A HERITAGE

The quilts of American women have provided a vital record of their lives through the centuries. Quilts have acted as journals, diaries, and drawings — traditional sources of learning about America's past. American women, irrespective of their ethnic background, have often been limited in their formal education and leisure time, thus their quilts gave them a vehicle of expression.

In America, the quilt has served as a common link between diverse cultures. By the late 19th century, African-Americans and Native-Americans had both established quilting traditions. These peoples had learned European-American techniques and patterns, but in each instance had adapted them to their own cultural practices.





*Citrus Heritage Quilt, c. 1896;
made by Mrs. E. M. Sheldon;
gift of Mrs. Helen G. Halbach, A511-14.
Photo John Kleinman*

SUGGESTED READINGS:

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Publicity Materials:

Ruckle & White Corporate Advertising

Exhibition objects came from the Riverside Municipal Museum collection, as well as, the Neutrogena Corporation, Michigan State University Museum, High Desert Museum, Rachel Clark, Robert Dyer, Alta Hobbs, Lizzetta LeFalle-Collins, Marjorie McKinley, E. F. "Sandy" Sandison, Margaret Smith-Wisker, Mr. and Mrs. Ed Guy, Mr. and Mrs. Kelly Hillenburg, and Mrs. and Mrs. William R. Woodford.

Funding for this project has been provided by grants from the Riverside Arts Foundation, California Council for the Humanities, Sunkist Growers, Inc., San Antonio Orchard Co. Inc., and Riverside Museum Associates.

In-kind donations have been provided by Ruckle & White Corporate Advertising, John Kleinman Photography, and the City of Riverside Development Department.

This brochure was funded, in part, by a grant from the California Council for the Humanities.



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