

Montana Quilts and Quiltmakers

A HISTORY OF WORK AND BEAUTY

by *Mary Murphy*

FROM SUNBURST TO NINE-PATCH—
Treasures of the Nineteenth Century

by *Annie Hanshew*

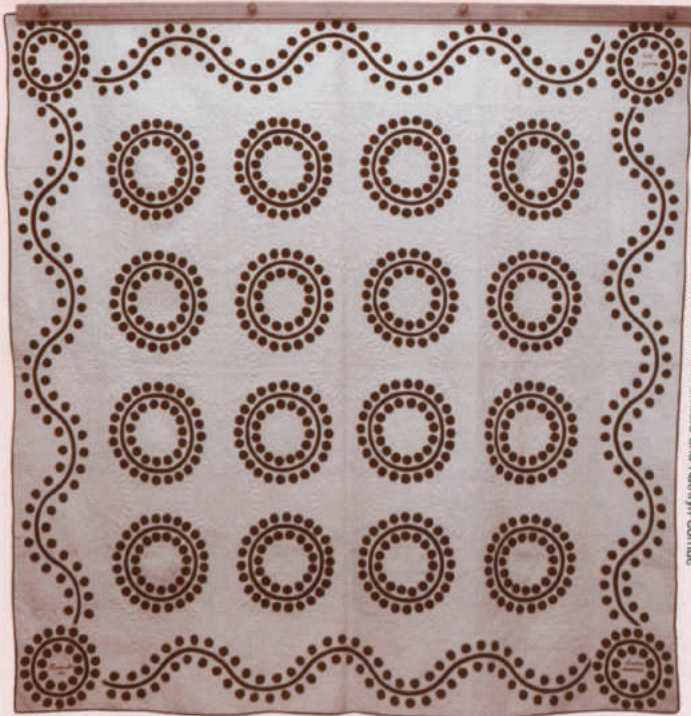
HISTORIC QUILTS provide insight into the changing cultural values, aesthetics, and technologies as well as into the life and times of individual quiltmakers and their families. In the pages that follow, interconnected articles by Mary Murphy and Annie Hanshew reveal the fascinating histories of the quilts collected by the Montana Historic Quilt Project, which documented more than fifteen hundred quilts from across the state. These quilts are the subject of *Border to Border: Historic Quilts and Quiltmakers of Montana*, forthcoming from the Montana Historical Society Press.

A History of Work and Beauty

IN 1917, Amanda Freed came to Grass Range, Montana, bearing a quilt inscribed with the words “Remember Me.” The phrase was not uncommon on traveling quilts, which often served as talismans from particular individuals or a group of friends to a sojourner. But over the passage of time, as their origin stories have been lost, those inscriptions of love and friendship have absorbed different meanings. The phrases, as the quilts themselves, have become fragments, clues, tiny jeweled windows onto the experiences of women in our past. They hint at networks of kinship and friendship, of the disruption and promise of migration, of the love of things warm and beautiful.

We can mourn the fact that we know so little about Montana’s historic quilt-makers, about what symbolic meanings they stitched into their fabrications of color and pattern. But we can also embrace their gift-giving spirit. Many quilts were gifts of particular significance for the original recipient—and they are also gifts from the past to the present. Historic quilts are invitations to contemplate the world of their makers, to wonder at the imagination and talent of past needle workers, and to be inspired by a continuing tradition of artistry and generosity. They are ideograms of the private and public histories of this place.

The cutting of cloth and its reassembly into quilts has a long history. Most quilters today are careful to identify themselves; quilt labels provide titles, describe when and where the quilt was made, and sometimes include an interesting tale about its genesis. We are not always so fortunate with historic quilts. The phrase “anonymous was a woman,” made famous by Mirra Bank’s book about women’s art, is particularly apt when applied to women’s needlework. In the nineteenth and throughout most of the twentieth century, the predominantly male arbiters of what constituted art in America relegated quilting to



Quilts were often given as tokens of kinship and friendship and to commemorate rites of passage. Seamstress Susan Newcomer made this “Remember Me” quilt for her apprentice, Amanda Adams. Newcomer signed the quilt and on another block dated it March 1, 1872.

“craft” and dismissed it as a domestic skill that served a function and was sometimes, almost accidentally, beautiful. It was not important to identify the designers and makers of such work. Certainly, thousands of utilitarian scrap quilts were made by women and worn out by their families, and neither their makers nor the people kept warm by them were concerned with having those quilts recognized as art. But quilt historians have charted a long parallel trail of quilts sewn of fine materials, with original designs, brilliant color combinations, and exquisite stitching that are, by any criteria, works of art.¹

Quilts are part of a wider legacy of women’s needlework, and it is in that context that I offer this essay. Necessity and pleasure are twined through the history of women’s needlework. Before the advent of mass production of household goods and clothing, it was a woman’s task to produce linens and clothes for her family, and the quantity and quality depended upon her family’s wealth and her skill. Girls learned “plain” and “fancy” sewing, and many cultures prescribed the linens a girl should stitch before she wed.

For many women, sewing of any kind was a chore; for others, needlework was a pleasure. Judged by the level of skill, design, and preservation, the quilts described here were the products of women who enjoyed working with cloth and color and who prided themselves on their stitchery.

Quilts are bearers of remembrance, often produced or presented in order to commemorate significant rites of passage in people's lives: births, christenings, graduations, engagements, marriages, anniversaries, departures, illnesses, bereavements, and deaths. A single quilt can carry in it a long history. Amanda Freed's "Remember Me" quilt, which is embroidered with the date March 1, 1872, arrived in Grass Range, already having traveled far. Born in 1852, Amanda Adams was apprenticed at age twelve to seamstress Susan Newcomer in the village of Wilmot, Ohio. Susan stitched the striking red-on-white appliqué quilt and gave it to Amanda, perhaps in 1872. Amanda had the quilt when she wed farmer Alex Freed in 1881. After he died, the quilt traveled with the widow and her son and two daughters to Wooster, where she ran a boardinghouse and put her children through the coeducational College of Wooster. Later Amanda accompanied her daughter Hazel to Ann Arbor, Michigan, then to Denver, Colorado, and finally to Grass Range, Montana, where Hazel began a medical practice near the Winnett homestead of her older brother Elden and his family. "Remember Me" went along.

The quilt remained with Amanda and Hazel through the tumultuous years of World War I when Montana's homesteaders scrambled to meet the booming demand for grain, and the future looked bright. Hazel practiced medicine in the communities of Grass Range and Stanford for over forty years, traveling by handcar on the Milwaukee Railroad's tracks when winter roads became impassable, and rounded out her career as Judith Basin County's health officer. When Elden's wife died in the 1918 influenza pandemic, leaving him a widower with two small children, Amanda and her quilt moved in. With Amanda caring for his children, Elden flourished, becoming, over time, Petroleum County's superintendent of schools, assessor, county manager, and a state legislator. When Amanda became ill, she returned to Grass Range, where she spent the rest of her life with
(continued on page 33)

From Sunburst to Nine-Patch

TREASURES OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

In 1971, the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City mounted an exhibition of antique quilts titled *Abstract Design in American Quilts*. The exhibit drew huge crowds and brought new attention to quilts as objects of art. For quilt historians, it denoted the beginning of a quilting renaissance. Although interest in quilting had ebbed and flowed over the past century, this rebirth coincided with the feminist and the counter-culture movements, which emphasized greater respect for domestic work, folk art, and, especially, quilts.

Miles away from the New York art scene, Montana women never stopped quilting or cherishing old quilts, but this national trend drew new attention to the state's quilting past. Increasingly aware of quilts not only as beautiful works of art but also as valuable historic documents, Montana quilters were inspired to launch an effort to preserve the stories of Montana's quilts and quiltmakers. The documentation project began in Hardin in 1987 when Jackie Redding, Karen Stanton, and Sandy Weaver collected oral histories and registered 175 quilts in Big Horn County. Their findings motivated fellow quilters to organize a statewide project. By that fall, representatives from the seven Montana regions of the Quilters Art Guild of the Northern Rockies had established a registration effort, the Montana Historic Quilt Project (MHQP). Each region held documentation days during which trained volunteers examined and registered quilts of all ages and conditions. By the spring of 1996, more than fifteen hundred quilts had been registered.

MHQP researchers initially expected that the majority of the quilts they documented would be from the twentieth century—the cheery, pastel-colored Grandmother's Flower Gardens and Sunbonnet Sues that were so popular during the Great Depression. As the registration effort unfolded, researchers were astonished by the number and variety of nineteenth-century quilts that appeared. Some were brought to Montana by pioneers who came in covered wagons or steamboats. Others were inherited by Montanans in the twentieth century. The four quilts featured here show the evolution of quiltmaking styles over the span of the nineteenth century. Each quilt also tells a story of Montana's settlement.



Museum of the Rockies Collection—Donors Annabel Durnford and Kathryn Cornue

(continued from page 25)

Dr. Hazel, who inherited the “Remember Me” quilt when Amanda died in 1931. Hazel bequeathed the quilt to her sister Martha, who left it to her daughter Kathryn. As in the previous generation, sisters passed the quilt to each other, and Kathryn’s sister, Annabel Cornue Durnford, finally donated it to the Museum of the Rockies in Bozeman. We know nothing more about “Remember Me”’s maker Susan Newcomer, but quilters who visit the museum collections marvel at the quilt’s fluid design, her quarter-sized appliquéd circles, and her fine stitching. Her work, passed down through the hands of appreciative women, has left its mark. Susan Newcomer has not been forgotten.²

Quilts in Montana share a history with those in other western states. In her study of quilts on the Kansas frontier, historian Barbara Brackman identified a pattern in the survival of historic quilts. Few surviving quilts were made in early-day Kansas; of the six quilts dated before 1880 in the Kansas quilt inventory, only one was made in Kansas rather than brought in with early pioneers. Several factors accounted for this. Women were relatively scarce on the frontier and so was fabric—western states were not textile producers. Early female settlers probably carried bedding with them and had more pressing tasks to do than make quilts. The early quilts found in Kansas tended to be treasured ones transplanted along with emigrants—perhaps parting gifts from friends and family.³ As

western territories became more settled and transportation networks extended further into the countryside, women began to have more time and resources to make finer, more elaborate quilts that were carefully tended and that survive today.

Demographics are another important factor when considering historic quilts. In the nineteenth century, the Euro-American population of Montana was small—20,595 in 1870; 39,159 in 1880; 132,159 in 1890—and until well into the twentieth century, it was a man’s world. In 1870, women were only 18.6 percent of the population of Montana Territory; by 1890, a year after Montana achieved statehood, women made up only 34 percent of the population. In 1910, soon after changes in homesteading laws made it easier to acquire land, the general population increased to 376,053 (a jump of over 54 percent from 1900). But women constituted only 40 percent of that number, and in the countryside, where the imbalance was greatest, there were 165.4 men for every 100 women.⁴

Across Montana, whether in cities and towns such as Butte, Anaconda, Great Falls, Billings, Miles City, and Fort Benton or on homesteads and ranches, women sewed. By the late nineteenth century, women everywhere in the state were accumulating the materials, tools, and skills to make clothing and household linens and then to turn their attention to more artful quilts. Because Euro-Americans settled Montana in the 1860s, many of the textiles, tools, and patterns that Montana women used for sewing were products of industry and commercialization, not home manufacture. In the first two decades of settlement, goods arrived by river and road. In 1860, the first steamboat docked in Fort Benton carrying troops and Indian annuity goods. May Flanagan, who grew up in Fort Benton, recalled the “beautiful sight” of steamboats arriving “in the dusk of a summer evening with the glow of the furnaces showing thru open doors.” For her, a steamboat meant “new striped stockings or perhaps a new style hat, oranges and maybe grapes.”⁵ Textiles were undoubtedly among the goods in these early cargoes. Dry-goods stores throughout the territory regularly carried bolts of cloth and sewing notions.

Acquiring cloth was simplified with the spread of the railroad. In 1883, the Northern Pacific Railroad completed its mainline through southern Montana, and over the next thirty years, the Great Northern

Railway and the Milwaukee Road constructed trans-continental lines and branches throughout Montana, which permitted the shipping of goods by rail. Traveling salesmen or agents, as they were often called, rode the rails to lure customers with all kinds of goods, including sewing machines.

Sewing machines became the first real consumer appliance. Elias Howe patented the first practical sewing machine in 1846, and subsequent improvements by John Bachelder and Isaac Singer led to its mass consumption. While patent infringement suits initially kept the sewing machine industry in turmoil, by the end of the 1850s the industry had stabilized and rapidly expanded. Edward Clark, Isaac Singer's partner in the Singer Sewing Machine Company, pioneered consumer installment plans in 1856, enabling women to purchase a machine with as little as \$5 down on a total cost of up to \$125. A year later, he introduced the idea of allowing customers to trade in older machines for credit toward the purchase of a new machine. The industry exploded. As a result of extensive advertising, outlets in all major American cities, traveling salesmen, and monthly installment plans, five hundred thousand sewing machines operated in the United States by 1860. By 1900, the Singer Company alone was selling a half million machines per year.⁶

If a woman lived in a major Montana city such as Butte, she need only go to Hennessy's Department Store to buy her sewing machine. But anyone could order one through the mail, and in fact, sewing machines were one of the most popular items sold by Sears, Roebuck and Company. Indeed, an early general manager for Sears, Roebuck claimed that "the mail order business was built to a great extent on the volume sales of the sewing machine." In the 1889 Sears catalog, five of its eight pages were dedicated to sewing machines. Founder Richard Sears's innovative salesmanship guaranteed every element of his machines: bobbin, shuttle, treadle, leather belt, cabinet, and varnish. He

even guaranteed "that the neighbors would admire it." Montgomery Ward also prominently featured sewing machines, displaying its offerings in color on the catalog's back cover.⁷

Several innovations by the U.S. Postal Service, such as the initiation of RFD—rural free delivery—in 1898 and, in 1913, rural delivery of parcel post, facilitated mail orders. While freight charges initially made it pricier for western women to obtain sewing machines, the railroads' growth alleviated that. In 1907, a trade publication sympathized with the plight of sewing machine salesmen because their product "already has found its way into almost every home." By the early twentieth century, Montgomery Ward and Sears, Roebuck published twelve-hundred-page mail-order catalogs, known as "Big Books," allowing most rural Montanans to familiarize themselves with the most up-to-date consumer goods.⁸

The experience of Grace Stoddard Mason illustrates the culture of sewing and its connection to consumer and transportation networks. Grace disembarked from a Great Northern train in Culbertson in 1913, a bride of sixteen days. The school board had hired her husband, Clark, as superintendent, and the couple arrived shortly before the fall school term. In a series of charming letters written during 1913 and 1914 to her family in Kalamazoo, Michigan, Grace described a young married woman's life in a small Montana town. Grace's days were punctuated with sewing. Among her new housekeeping goods were a blue quilt and rag rugs, and when a blizzard hit in September, another quilt hung in the doorway kept out the cold. Grace's mother had given her a dresser scarf before she left, and embroidering it and adding "Genevieve's lace" (presumably another relative) was

By the late nineteenth century, many of the tools, textiles, and patterns used for quiltmaking were available commercially to Montana women through manufacturers, mail-order catalogs, and local businesses. This advertising card from the New Home Sewing Machine Company in Massachusetts was meant to appeal to settlers in the West.





MHS Photograph Archives, Helena, Pic 84 55

Newly married and living in northeastern Montana, Grace Stoddard Mason described her sewing, crocheting, and embroidery projects in letters home in 1913 and 1914. She and her husband, Clark, (above, in a wedding photograph) had married in August 1913 in Michigan, and then came to Culbertson, where Clark served as superintendent of schools.

“really something to keep busy at.” She finished stitching it during a call from one of the town’s ladies.⁹

Grace took great pleasure in dressmaking, frequently illustrating her letters with sketches of the clothes and hats she was constructing. By the time Grace arrived in Culbertson, the town had two clothing stores, a tailor, two milliners, and a notions store. Despite the availability of “store-bought clothes,” many women, like Grace, sewed their own clothing, and like her, purchased patterns from the *Ladies Home Journal* and then shared them with relatives and friends, often altering and personalizing

them to satisfy their own taste. Mail-order catalogs offered a wide selection of dressmaking materials. Grace confessed that one day she had the clothes sprinkled and ready to iron when a Montgomery Ward catalog arrived, and it so distracted her that it became “too late to get the ironing done before dinner time.” While she might pore over the catalog, Grace was more than happy to send a traveling salesman wanting to sell her a dress on his way, impressing upon him “pretty forcibly that he might as well move on.” Grace liked her own designs and planned to finish a blue silk dress for the Halloween dance, noting that “all the teachers wear such ‘foxy duds,’ that I’ll have to spruceup.” Grace had her sister send fabric samples, piece goods, lace, and embroidery floss from Michigan because prices in Culbertson were so high. Eventually, Grace began sewing for other women and wrote home that she looked forward to starting a bank account “all for my own ‘blowing.’”¹⁰

While she sewed dresses and curtains, crocheted with the Ladies Aid Society, and embroidered with callers, Grace apparently did not make quilts. In a characteristically humorous letter to her grandmother, she wrote, “If you get out of a job and want a new one, I’ll send money to get cloth to piece a small quilt for my first offspring. Haven’t decided yet whether to have a boy or a girl. If I do decide on a boy I shall want the quilt blue, but Clark is fond of girls, so if I give up and let it be a girl, guess the quilt ought to be pink.” Her grandmother did make a quilt, and although Grace would not have her first child until 1917, she wrote to her grandmother in April 1914, “I am glad to think if there really is anything doing, the next generation will be born with a quilt.”¹¹

As children, women such as Grace learned all kinds of needlecraft from their mothers and grandmothers, and as adults those who enjoyed sewing, knitting, lace-making, and quilting could ply their craft and hone their skills in needlework groups and women’s clubs. Montana women first formally organized sewing in ladies auxiliaries to fraternal orders and church groups, such as St. John’s Episcopal Sewing Guild, established in Butte in the 1880s. When the independent women’s club movement emerged in the 1890s, sewing women had new opportunities to gather together. Some groups, like Butte’s Marian White Arts and Crafts Club, were quite focused. Far more common were arts and crafts



R. H. McKay, photographer, MHS Photograph Archives, Helena, 949-936

Girls learned needlecraft from their mothers and grandmothers, adult women honed their skills in needlework groups and clubs, and many forms of their arts, including quilts, were exhibited at world, state, and county fairs and expositions. These county champions got to bring their Girls Sewing Contest winning entries to the Montana State Fair in Helena in 1913.

departments in general women's clubs, such as that of the Helena Woman's Club, founded in 1896. By 1926, the department hosted classes on rugs and quilting, tapestry, needlecraft, knitting, and cut lace. Members not only practiced various crafts but researched the craft's histories and shared them with club members. At one meeting, four women presented "excellent papers" on hooked rugs, weaving, quilting, samplers, and tapestry. At yet another session, Mrs. A. H. Tuttle gave "an instructive talk" on Ruth E. Finley's 1929 book, *Old Patchwork Quilts and the Women Who Made Them*, one of the first histories of American quilts. The club had more than forty members during the 1930s, and when they met in 1931 in the parlor of the YWCA building, "several pretty quilts were on exhibition."¹²

World, state, and county fairs and expositions were other venues that encouraged the display of

quilts. For western territories and states, nineteenth-century fairs were primarily about abetting settlement. As early as 1874, in preparation for the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition, boosters argued that a Montana exhibit would "promote the interests of all our farmers, laborers, mechanics and tradesmen." Exhibit planners, however, wanted to do more than simply demonstrate the mineral wealth or fecundity of Montana soil; they wanted to show that Montana would be a good place to call home. Thus, planners recruited women to furnish and decorate the state buildings at a succession of world's fairs and expositions and to exhibit, as the charge of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago read, "women's work, both usual and unusual."¹³

Montana women pulled out all the stops for the Columbian Exposition. Hand-painted china, fruit preserves, butter sculptures, and needlework were

presumably counted “usual”; mineral samples from mines owned by women and a panoramic photograph of Butte constructed by “amateur lady photographers” were among the unusual. The planners anticipated that “the needle work of the Gallatin County ladies and that of Lewis and Clarke will be equal to any there.” While quilts may have appeared in state buildings as part of the furnishings, they were not a prominent feature at the Women’s Building, which was devoted to American women’s accomplishments. In one list of the building’s 2,098 displayed items, only one bedspread and five “slumber quilts” were cataloged—all of them, interestingly, were from Montana. Unfortunately, we know nothing about them or their makers.¹⁴

By the twentieth century, fairs were big business. In 1903, for instance, the Montana State Fair attracted twenty thousand paying visitors, and almost fifty thousand visitors came to Helena during fair week in 1914. In 1927, Montana hosted at least fourteen regional and county fairs beginning in late August and continuing into early October.¹⁵

Sewing constituted a large part of women’s fair work. The Montana Agricultural, Mineral and Mechanical Association held its first fair in Helena in 1870, and cash prizes were awarded for the best “worked quilt,” “patch-work quilt,” and “white quilt” in the needlework section of Class VII, “the “Ladies Department.” A separate section for quilts appeared in 1871. That year, the best silk quilt earned a set of solid silver teaspoons, and the best woolen and calico quilts won other silver cutlery. Judges distinguished between hand sewing and “work done on machine” in 1881, awarding two dollars to the best specimen of quilting accomplished on a sewing machine. “Machine work” became a regular section of the Ladies Department, separate from “quilts,” which presumably were not quilted on a sewing machine. In 1890, a new category was created to accommodate the wildly popular silk crazy quilts.¹⁶

The changes in fairs’ exhibit categories and premium lists give us an idea of how interest in quilting shifted over time and how quilting fit into women’s lives. In her study of the Minnesota State Fair, Karal Ann Marling found that quilting declined in popularity after the turn of the century. Young urban women were presumably “too busy with club work, with golf, and with automobiling to patch quilts.” Instead,

quilts came from the rural counties, stitched by women in their seventies, eighties, and nineties. A similar trend occurred in Montana. After 1900, the number of quilt categories at the Montana State Fair shrunk. By 1905, there were no quilts in the girls’ work division; increasingly quilt entries were relegated to the “Old Ladies’ Department.” In the 1910s, quilts disappeared entirely for a couple of years, and then new categories for appliqué quilts emerged in 1914. In 1915, the best cotton appliqué patchwork quilt earned a special premium of a case of Hiawatha-brand canned vegetables, worth five dollars, a substantial prize considering that most needlework premiums were one dollar or two dollars. Over the course of the 1920s, however, quilt premiums were minimal, and in 1928 the Old Ladies Department became “Aged Ladies Work,” which remained the chief venue for fair quilts until the state fair’s demise during the Great Depression.¹⁷

Still, sewing remained a key component of the pantheon of domestic skills, and sewing classes were staples of female education. In Montana, the subject was generally taught in the last few grades of elementary school, most often in rural schools. Lessons such as “darning stockings brought from home; patching and sewing on buttons; lengthening skirts” also spoke of the frugality necessary on Montana farms and ranches.¹⁸

Sewing was also an important path to assimilation for Native American girls. Reservation schools, whether run by the government or missionaries, taught sewing. “Dressing white” was part of the assimilation process, and sewing would help prepare Indian girls for their future domestic roles as well as provide them with a marketable skill. As anthropologist Nancy Tucker noted, “changing clothing styles were an outward sign of hoped for internal changes and conversion.” Mary A. Renville, wife of native pastor John B. Renville, both of whom did missionary work in Dakota Territory in the 1870s, agreed with that idea, and she reported as a partial success children clothed in starched bonnets, white stockings, and moccasins. In 1908, a visitor to the annual Crow Fair, an agricultural exposition held on the Crow reservation, lauded the sewing and darning of Indian girls at Saint Xavier Mission School. She singled out Josephine Pretty-Medicine and Magdalene Horse-Mane for their darning and complimented Pryor School student Lucy Plain-Bull’s “very pretty pincushion.”¹⁹

Native women had, of course, sewn long before the advent of Euro-Americans, and when teachers introduced new tools, new clothing styles, and new techniques, Indian women grafted them onto their own aesthetics and skills. In 1876, Mary Renville recalled going into Indian women's homes to teach "making and quilting bed quilts and comfortables." White women's groups from various religious denominations shipped barrels of cloth for Indian women to sew and bought Indian women's beadwork, which missionaries sent back to home churches. In 1883, the *Iapi Oaye, The Word Carrier*, a newspaper printed in both Dakota and English, which began publication in 1871 "to aid in civilizing and christianizing the Dakota Indians, of whom over one thousand can now read," reported that the main activity of the women's society that year had been quilt making.²⁰

Missionaries organized adult women's sewing groups, girls stitched patchwork in school, and individual Indian women also took up quilting. Mrs. Flora Chapin, a missionary working at Poplar Creek, Montana Territory, in 1885 reported that when "Lucy," an Indian woman whom she was training in domestic work, became ill, Chapin gave her quilt pieces to pass the time as "they seem to think them [quilts] splendid for warm weather, instead of their blankets." Another young girl to whom Chapin gave "cut-blocks enough for a whole quilt" and calico to set them together "went on her way rejoicing very much."²¹

During the Great Depression, government-sponsored sewing projects and home demonstration clubs kept quilting popular among Indian women. On the Fort Peck Reservation, James Garfield, an Assiniboine, and his wife, Nora Garfield, a Hunkpapa Sioux, produced two remarkable pictorial quilts in the pastels so pervasive in the 1930s. The two virtually identical quilts present aspects of Assiniboine history and culture. James drew the pictures, and Nora embroidered them using stem, straight, satin, and seed stitches, along with French knots.²²

Indian women also took up quilting, grafting new tools and techniques onto their own aesthetics and skills. A hand-embroidered quilt made in the 1930s by Nora and James Garfield depicts the Assiniboine way of life described by James's father. In block three, right, a woman slices meat for drying and four sources of meat occupy the corners.

James's father, James Garfield Sr., who was born in the 1860s and lived the way of life depicted by the quilt, related the information for each of the thirty numbered blocks. Every block has a central scene; twenty-two of them have additional embroidered symbols or figures in the block's corners. For example, in the center of block three, a woman slices meat for drying and in the four corners are a bear, deer, buffalo, and rabbit, the animals, as Garfield Sr. narrated, "who were the most abundant and provided the Indians with their meat." Many of the pictures illustrate women's work: smashing and boiling buffalo bones to get grease, making pemmican, scrapping and tanning buffalo hides, sewing moccasins, carrying wood. Blocks seventeen and eighteen illustrate the cooking of "fancier dishes," including turtle and puppy. The corners of block eighteen feature figures of a skunk, duck, gopher, and badger because they "were prepared in the same manner as the dog." While many blocks deal with hunting and food preparation, others chronicle play, ceremonies, and birth and death. Block thirty shows a newborn baby accompanied by a toadstool with healing properties, a slim slice of which was placed over the navel with the umbilical cord run through a hole in its center. The cord was then cut with a knife and tied with sinew; those tools are shown in another corner. The remaining two corners hold the baby's carrier and a cattail, the fuzzy head of which, when mashed, lines the carrier. Death is depicted in three blocks. Block twenty-two illustrates a warrior's burial. His body, wrapped in a buffalo robe, is placed on a platform in a tree,





MHS Photograph Archives, Helena, 955-531

Indian women sewed quilt patterns that were popular across the country. Among the quilts shown in this 1920s photograph taken at the Blackfeet Midwinter Fair are geometric patterns, including a sughan, Log Cabin, and Irish Chain, draped over the upstairs railings in the Browning High School gymnasium.

and his belongings are hung around him for his use in the next world. In the corners of the blocks are his weapons and shield. Another burial scene is conveyed in block twenty-four, in which a robe-wrapped body lies on a raised platform and a relative with his braids cut off is slashing his arms and legs in grief. The most mysterious block is twenty-three, which shows an Indian woman hanged by her neck from a tree. In contrast to James Garfield Sr.'s other lengthy descriptions, here he writes only that, "This illustration pictures a squaw who has committed suicide." Unlike the other blocks, which render archetypal kinds of daily and seasonal work, this one apparently referred to a specific historical event.

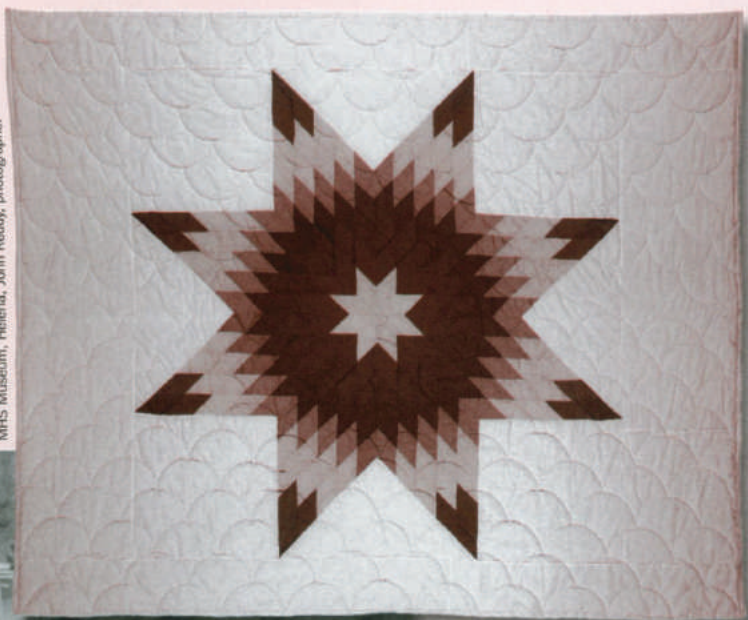
This story quilt is unique. Indian women, for the most part, sewed patterns that were popular across the country. A photograph of the Blackfeet Midwinter Fair in the 1920s features the gymnasium at Brown-

ing draped with quilts more typical of the period; a sughan, Log Cabin, and Irish Chain are among the many geometric patterns. The star was the most popular pattern among northern Plains Indian women. For the northern Plains people, quilts took the place of buffalo robes, which had often been painted with a morning star motif. Some scholars say that Indian star quilts echo the pattern of those painted robes, but no one has determined the exact origin of the design. Patricia Albers and Beatrice Medicine posit that Indian women probably borrowed the design from Euro-Americans who taught them to quilt and in that process "transposed the symbolism of the morning star from an old medium to a new one." Contemporary quilters also sometimes talk about the pattern as a representation of the sacred circle.²³

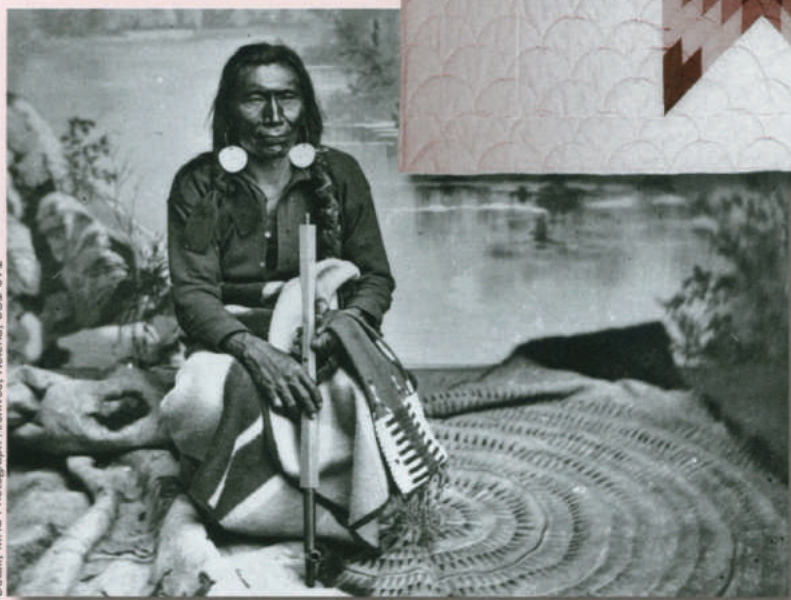
Today, star quilts are integral to Sioux and Assiniboine life. Women spend a good part of the year

The star pattern that echoes the morning-star motif often painted on buffalo robes has long been among the most popular quilt pattern among northern Plains tribes. L. A. Huffman photographed one of the star-painted buffalo robes in this portrait of Hunkpapa Sioux scout Spotted Bear at Fort Keogh in 1879. The modern star quilt at right was presented to the Montana Historical Society by the Fort Peck Tribal Archives in 1985 in memory of Sioux leader Gerald Red Elk and in honor of the Assiniboine and Sioux people.

MHS Museum, Helena, John Reedy, photographer



Detail, MHS Photograph Archives, Helena, 981-071



making quilts for giveaways at powwows and as gifts to mark births, marriages, puberty ceremonies, graduations, and tribal elections and to welcome home returning military veterans. Star quilts have roles in the sun dance, in the Lakota *yuwipi*—a nighttime curing ceremony—and in funeral rites. In the late twentieth century, star quilt ceremonies have become a fundamental part of eastern Montana basketball tournaments. Fort Peck families present star quilts, often stitched with an appliquéd basketball, to opposing team members who have “displayed exceptional qualities of good sportsmanship.”²⁴

Among Euro-American Montanans, perhaps the most iconic quilt is the sugan, the heavy-duty wool quilt carried by cowboys, loggers, and sheepherders that had found its way north along the cattle trails. Described as “hit and miss quilts” . . . because they

just put them together anyway,” sugans were durable and tough. On one occasion that toughness saved a Montana man’s life. When rolling logs trapped independent logger Jim Flansburg in an accident near Evaro, his fellow workers rigged up a stretcher from poles, shoelaces, and a sugan, and then hung it as a hammock in the

rear of a Model T that was adapted into a log truck and trailer and used it to transport him to the hospital in Missoula.²⁵

K. D. Swan, who joined the U.S. Forest Service in 1911 and was assigned to the Sioux National Forest with units in far southeastern Montana and western South Dakota, slept under the gamut of bed coverings as a guest of many ranch families. “A top covering of two or three sugans” on a straw mattress kept him warm “even on a cold night after the bunkhouse fire had gone out.” The occasional featherbed was a treat, and Swan, who grew up in Boston, admired the efforts women made to “bring to this frontier some of the tidiness and comfort familiar to her in some former home.” He stayed in ranch houses furnished with family portraits and braided rugs, treasured pieces of furniture, and “priceless patchwork quilts.”²⁶

Some sugans have survived their hard use, but most historic quilts that remain in families or that are preserved in Montana's museums were special ones sewn to mark rites of passage or community or political events. In the late nineteenth century, the infatuation with crazy quilts combined with the middle-class penchant for joining clubs and lodges enabled campaign and convention ribbons to make their way into many quilts. Mary Kirby's 1893 crazy quilt, now in the Montana Historical Society collection, incorporates political campaign ribbons to illustrate the battle over which city would become Montana's capital.

In other cases, causes and events prompted clubs to work collectively on quilts, as gifts for members, as visual testimonies of belief and support, or as fundraisers.²⁷ In 1900, the Montana Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) presented outgoing president Reverend Alice Barnes with a quilt in recognition of her service.²⁸ Approximately two hundred members contributed silk ribbons embroidered with their autographs, and, in some cases, their communities' names. Many women embellished their signatures

with small blue forget-me-nots, the floral emblem adopted by the state union in 1889. Arranged in rows by community, the rectangles of ribbon are connected with white and yellow thread in a feather stitch and framed by silk strips lettered with the text, "For God and Home and Native Land/ Montana W.C.T.U./The Love of Christ Constraineth Us." The quilt is a fitting representation of the WCTU: it takes its form from traditional women's work, yet it is stitched with a roster of women who were committed to reform and who refused to remain anonymous. Today, Reverend Barnes's quilt, now in the collection of the Montana Historical Society, can be read as a text of Montana women's political and social activism, and the forget-

Doug O'Looney, photographer, MHS Museum, Helena, gift of Arthur William Schmidt



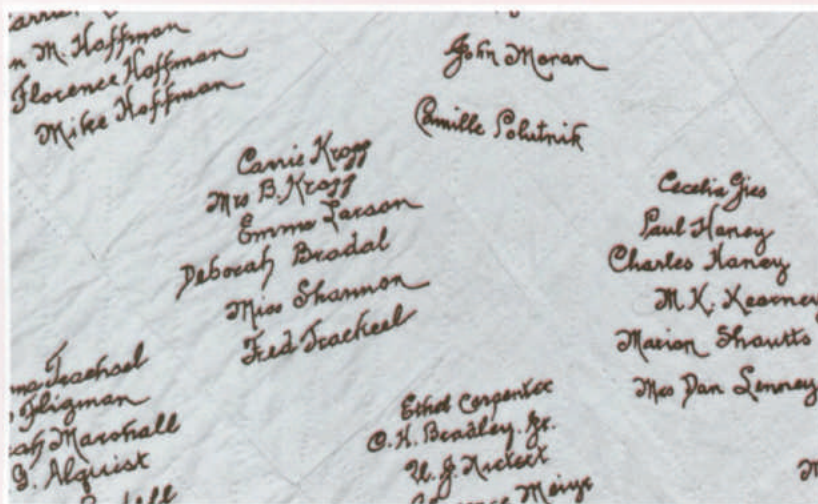
Henry Syrenud, photographer, MHS Photograph Archives, Helena, PAc 77-94 v.1 p.19 #1

Heavy, durable wool quilts, sugans were usually made of simple, plain blocks salvaged from old clothing. A glimpse of one is visible here on a bed in the lower left corner in the homestead shack of John (left) and Henry Haaven, East Coalridge Community, 1909.



MHS Photograph Archives, Helena, PAC 83-55

Some quilts were created collectively as gifts, testimonies of belief and support, or fund-raisers. In 1900, the Montana Woman's Christian Temperance Union made this quilt for their outgoing president Reverend Alice Barnes. About two hundred members contributed silk ribbons embroidered with their names and the state Union's floral emblem, the forget-me-not. Reverend Barnes is on the far right in the photograph of the Montana WCTU officers in 1900. The others are, from left: Mrs. I. N. Smith, Mrs. Matt W. Alderson, Mrs. W. E. Curran, Mrs. Anna A. Walker, Mrs. Rose Ingersoll.



During World War I, women raised money for the war effort by embroidering the names of donors on Red Cross quilts and then raffling the quilts. This detail shows a section of names on the back of the 1918 quilt of the Ladies Auxiliary to Council 349 of the United Commercial Travelers, Cascade County.

MHS Museum, Helena, gift of Mrs. J.H. Grievold
Doug O'Leary, photographer

Doug O'Leary, photographer, MHS Museum, Helena, gift of Mrs. J.H. Grievold

me-nots as reminders of Montana women's work to improve the quality of life in the state.

When the United States entered World War I in April 1917, women's clubs endorsed an array of patriotic activities: buying Liberty Bonds, signing pledges to conserve food, and, above all, working for the Red Cross. Popular magazines urged women to make quilts and "save the blankets for our boys over there." More common than quiltmaking, however, was sewing clothes for refugees and hospital goods for casualties; knitting sweaters, mufflers, and socks; and making bandages. Production of these goods was prodigious. Young women took up handwork they had previously considered "work for grandmothers," ministers encouraged knitting during services, and the Red Cross kept meticulous records of the hours that men, women, and children devoted to needlecraft. Gertie Saunders of Billings, whose son, Raymond, was in the service and was reported missing in action in October 1918, spent 2,969 hours sewing and knitting. By the end of the war, the Red Cross chapter of Yellowstone County alone churned out over 26,505 sewn pieces of clothing and hospital linens, 22,042 knitted garments, and 162,169 surgical dressings.²⁹

Montana women also stitched Red Cross fundraising quilts as a way of serving the war effort on the home front. Women appliquéd the organization's easily recognizable red cross on a white or off-white background in a variety of layouts. In exchange for contributions, the women embroidered names of individual and organizational donors on the crosses and in the interstices and then raffled the finished

quilt to raise more money. The Cascade County Red Cross quilt, initiated by Mrs. W. V. Roth and executed by the Ladies Auxiliary to Council 349, Order of the United Commercial Travelers, and now in the collection of the Montana Historical Society, contains over a thousand names on its front and back.³⁰

Another quilt that emerged from bloody conflict and spent a great many years in Montana originated with the Civil War. It represents the connections forged between the enormity of political and social events, the dailiness of women's sewing, and the sweetness of life stories. In summer 1864, the women of the Patriotic Society of Vernon, Connecticut, made several quilts for the U.S. Sanitary Commission, an organization founded to promote better field and hospital conditions for Union soldiers. Women, desirous of helping their sons and husbands, initially flooded the commission with clothing, bedding, and medical supplies and continued through long years of war to raise money and goods for soldiers' welfare. The commission encouraged women to form Soldiers' Relief Circles and requested that they make "quilts of cheap materials, about seven feet long by fifty inches wide"—quilts that would be useful for a cot, bedroll, or hospital bed. One soldier described these quilts as "things of vertu."³¹

Northern women responded to the call by stitching 250,000 quilts over the course of the Civil War. One quilt, embroidered with the names of its makers, was given to Captain Robert Emmett Fisk of the 132nd New York Volunteer Infantry. Fisk was born in Ohio but moved to New York in 1861, where he joined

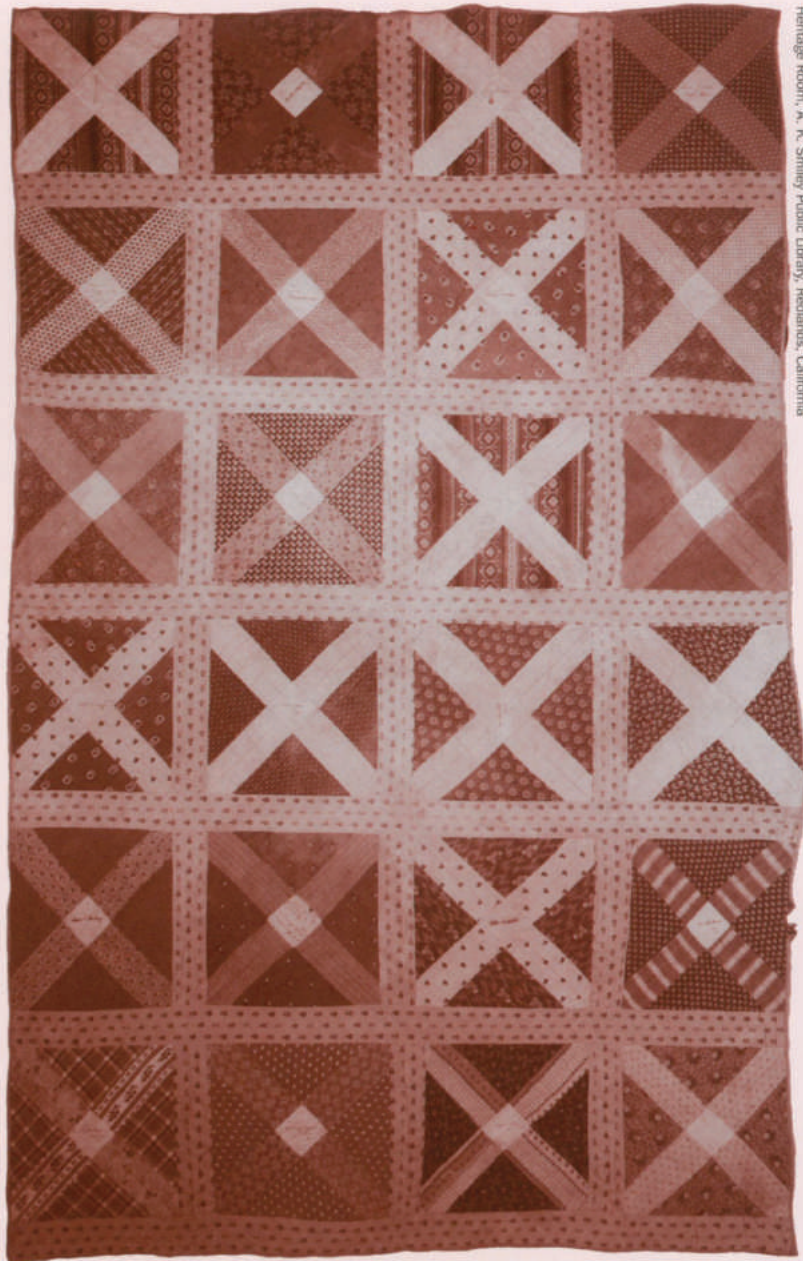
In 1864, the young ladies of the Patriotic Society of Vernon, Connecticut, made this quilt for the U.S. Sanitary Commission, which promoted better conditions for Union soldiers serving in the Civil War. Before it was sent, one of the quilters, Fannie Chester, tucked a list of the girls and women who had worked on the quilt in its folds.

Abraham Lincoln's Republican Party and started a newspaper career before he enlisted. In 1864, his unit was in North Carolina and, according to the story later told by his daughter, in dire need of quilts because Confederate troops had raided their camp and seized the majority of their bedding.³² Tucked into Fisk's quilt was a note from sixteen-year-old Fannie Chester with a list of the girls and women who had worked on it.

Captain Fisk wrote to Fannie from "Oak Posts, Among the Pines, near New Berne, N.C.," on September 18, 1864, to thank her and "her fair companions" and to assure them that their handiwork "has fallen into the hands of a soldier who is not altogether unworthy of your sympathy, your charity, and your prayers—one whose only mistress is his country and whose patriotism has been tested on many battle fields since the commencement of the war." Captain Fisk was a master of pretty prose, and having established the fact that he was single, he clearly relished the chance to flirt, going on to praise the "sterling virtues of New England women: endowed, generally, with rarest gifts of face and form, and educated in head and heart to adorn the loftiest sphere of the sex." He was sure New England women

made "the truest sweet hearts, the best wives, and most perfect mothers in the land." He hoped that Fannie would share his letter with the Society and wanted to assure them that having their names on the quilt meant that they would always be "warm in my remembrance."³³

Fisk's letter was read to the group, who asked Fannie's older sister Lizzie to reply to the captain. She wrote to him in October, telling about the town of Vernon, "noted for the moral and religious tone



Heritage Room, A. K. Smiley Public Library, Redlands, California



The recipient of the Sanitary Commission quilt, Captain Robert E. Fisk, of the 132nd New York Volunteer Infantry (above, c. 1865), wrote his thanks to Fannie Chester and "her fair companions" and assured them that their handiwork "has fallen into the hands of a soldier who is not altogether unworthy of your sympathy, your charity, and your prayers—one whose only mistress is his country and whose patriotism has been tested on many battle fields since the commencement of the war."

of its society," and about the origins of his quilt. That year, she wrote, the young ladies of the Patriotic Society had been engaged in gathering gifts for freed slaves, so quilting for soldiers had been left to "the children." Twelve-year-old Emma Ford had been the "prime mover in getting together the blocks for your quilt," which her mother then put together. Lizzie passed on one and all's bid for "God speed" and the society's delight that the quilt has met such "an excellent owner."³⁴

So began the correspondence between the Union captain and the self-described "Yankee school-ma'am" that continued throughout the war. The two exchanged photographs and increasingly intimate letters. Lizzie was relieved that by the spring of 1865 Robert had "passed safely through the contest." Robert planned



Chosen by the quilting group to answer Fisk's letter, Elizabeth "Lizzie" Chester (left, early 1890s) began a correspondence that lasted through the war and led to their marriage in 1867, after which they moved to Helena, Montana.

to head west with his brother at the end of the war, but after his discharge in early July, he came to Vernon to propose to Lizzie. Lizzie accepted, but the wedding did not take place until 1867, after Robert established himself and a Republican paper, the *Helena Herald*, in the recently created territory of Montana. They wed in Connecticut, and then Robert escorted Lizzie and a new printing press by steamboat up the Missouri River.³⁵

Lizzie's letters to her family, written between 1867 and 1893, chronicle the boisterous development of the city that became Montana's capital. Her intelligence and curiosity and her involvement in a variety of voluntary organizations, as well as Robert's position as a prominent Republican, fueled astute observations on the political development of the territory and state. Nevertheless, as wife and mother of six children, domestic arrangements preoccupied Lizzie, and her letters are full of the tribulations and triumphs of housekeeping and motherhood. She kept her sewing machine in her dining room and continued to sew clothing, household linens, and at least some quilts throughout her life, including a crib cover that she quilted with red thread for her son Robbie.³⁶

When Robert retired in 1902, the family moved to California. The autograph quilt that began Lizzie and Robert's courtship remained in the family and was donated by their descendants to the Lincoln Memorial Shrine in Redlands, California—one of a handful of surviving U.S. Sanitary Commission quilts. The quilt held great significance for the Fisk family. Lizzie and Robert's daughter, Florence Fisk White, wrote a short memoir about her parents' courtship, which concludes with Robert's return from Montana "to claim his bride of the Autograph Quilt." The quilt took on new meaning in 2004 when Don Beld of the

Citrus Belt Quilters Guild of Redlands launched a project to sew quilts for the families of local soldiers who had been killed in Iraq and Afghanistan. Beld, whose own quilts are often inspired by historical events, replicated the pattern of the Fisk quilt because he wished to carry forward the tradition of providing comfort that had been established by the Sanitary Commission quilts. Through word of mouth, stories in quilting magazines, and the Internet, the project expanded, first to the rest of California, then nationwide. By 2008, quilters across the country had made and distributed three thousand quilts under the auspices of what became known as the Home of the Brave Quilt Project.³⁷

WHAT DO quilts offer us in terms of understanding Montana's past? How should we evaluate the thousands of hours that the Montana Historic Quilt Project volunteers spent recording the sometimes comprehensive, but more often spotty information they could gather about Montana's historic quilts? With gentle nudging, or sometimes significant shoving, we can help people see quilts as art—as constructed objects of complicated design, color, and manufacture. But what do they tell us about Montana history, specifically about Montana women's history?

First, I cannot overemphasize the importance of the project's accomplishment in naming the makers of more than fifteen hundred Montana quilts. Anonymity can have its uses, but when it erases the accomplishments of a significant portion of the population, it diminishes our understanding of who worked, who added comfort, and who added beauty to Montana's homes and communities. As we know, there simply were far fewer women than men in Montana during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and they were not always readily visible. There were no shoe or textile factories employing hundreds of women, no large districts of boardinghouses to shelter single girls who came to the city looking for work and flooded the streets when their shifts were over. Domestic labor was, for the most part, interior, isolated work. The community improvement work undertaken by women's groups might also easily be overlooked. Not many casual observers would know that nearly every public library in Montana was originally the project of a women's club, that the flower beds outside county

courthouses were maintained by local women's garden clubs, that the glass of milk drunk at a café's lunch counter was safe because women had lobbied the state legislature for pure food laws. In one very straightforward way, quilts are the vivid, palpable evidence of the work of thousands of Montana women.

Second, it is important to remember that the meaning of these historic quilts changes over time. In some cases, we know the story of why and how individual quilts were made, and even the reactions of those who received them as gifts, but, for the most part, what quiltmakers thought about their products and how they wanted the quilts to be viewed or used remain a mystery. Because quilts are mute and therefore subject to multiple impositions of interpretation, we need to distinguish between what quilts actually tell us about the past and what they mean to contemporary viewers. Historic quilts have acquired a romanticized, nostalgic patina, partly because our largely urban populace sees quilts as symbols of a bucolic rural past, in which handwork spoke of slower, quieter, perhaps more deliberate times. But I think we must resist sentimentality and overgeneralization when we look at historic quilts.

Certainly, many quilts made by Montana women reflect quiet moments and pride in handwork. In fact, many of them may indeed have been stitched in some of the only quiet moments hard-working women had. Considered individually, each quilt tells us something about a woman's skill and taste and, to a degree, her personal history. Taken collectively, however, these quilts reveal much about the social and political issues affecting women's lives. They demonstrate the ubiquitous sewing skills that women were expected to acquire, the charitable and political agendas of women's voluntary organizations, the pervasiveness of commercial patterns and fabrics, and Montana women's desire to share national fashion trends. If anything, these quilts demonstrate that women in a distant and overwhelmingly rural state wanted to be a part of national culture.

Lastly, historic quilts give us an important medium with which to envision the past. When we study Montana's history, we can fall into the trap of visualizing a monochromatic place—because most of the visual aids we have are black-and-white photographs. But when I look at historic quilts, I am struck by their color. I am impressed by the design



Taken collectively, Montana's historic quilts demonstrate the ubiquitous sewing skills that women were expected to acquire, the charitable and political agendas of women's voluntary organizations, the pervasiveness of commercial patterns and fabrics, and Montana women's desire to share national fashion trends. Above, bolts of fabric lie on shelves behind the dry-goods counter in Birney's general store in June 1939.

and, frankly, intimidated by some of the stitchery, but I am dazzled by the colors. I think of a woman driving in a buckboard or a Model T across the grasslands of eastern Montana to discover that the new home her husband has built is a tar paper-covered shanty with a dirt floor, and I picture her hoarding her "pin money" to buy a bolt of Turkey Red calico. I think of a woman in a four-square worker's cottage in Butte, looking out on an alley filled with refuse and laundry made grimy by the pall of smelter smoke and walking to Hennessy's after her husband's payday to buy a piece of fabric figured with brilliant chrome yellow and orange. I think of a woman in the Great Depression sweeping up the aftermath of a dust storm and sitting down for an hour to piece the cheerful pastel hexagons of a Grandmother's Flower Garden. Quilts

are compelling evidence that women created things of beauty in the midst of busy, often difficult lives. Thinking about the choices of color each woman made when she pieced her quilt makes even the most anonymous figures of the past more human, more alive, more accessible to us. Imagination is the passport to the foreign country of the past, and quilts are among our most scenic pathways.

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54. Ralph Hubbard to Reginald Laubin, Sept. 9, 1928, Hubbard Correspondence.

55. See, esp., Deloria, *Playing Indian*; and Conn, *History's Shadow*.

56. Shi, *The Simple Life*, 207. See also Deloria, *Playing Indian*; Robert M. Berkhofer Jr., *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York, 1979); Roy Harvey Pearce, *Savagism and Civilization: A Study of the Indian and the American Mind* (Berkeley, Calif., 1988); and Conn, *History's Shadow*.

57. Smith, *Reimagining Indians*, 214–15; *American Indian Hobbyist*, 1 (Jan. 1955), 1.

58. The most recent National Powwow, the fourteenth, was held August 9–12, 2008, in Danville, Illinois. See www.nationalpowwow.com. The longest-running of the hobbyist magazines is *Whispering Wind*. It began publication in 1967 and remains in print. See www.whisperingwind.com. An excellent summary of the history of the postwar hobbyist movement is in Preston E. Miller and Carolyn Corey, *The New Four Winds Guide to Indian Weaponry, Trade Goods, and Replicas* (Atglen, Pa., 2007), 139–58.

Montana Quilts and Quiltmakers FROM SUNBURST TO NINE-PATCH

1. Paul Ballinger Davidson, "Florence Ballinger Hamilton, 1873–1970," ms. courtesy Jane Klockman. Copy in Hamilton, Ballinger, Davidson, Bunnell, McAfee, and Weesner Family Papers, 1764–1998, Collection 2488, Merrill G. Burlingame Special Collections, Montana State University Libraries, Bozeman.

2. Virginia M. Fox, letter to author, March 14, 2007.

3. *Ibid.*

4. Linda Peavy and Ursula Smith, *The Gold Rush Widows of Little Falls: A Story Drawn from the Letters of Pamela and James Fergus* (St. Paul, Minn., 1990), 161.

5. *Great Falls (Mont.) Tribune*, April 18, 1965.

A HISTORY OF WORK AND BEAUTY

The author would like to thank Joan Jensen and Dale Martin for their careful reading of this essay and very helpful suggestions. Jodi Rasker, Sue Armitage, Don Beld, Joseph Miller Jr., and Jim Ward were generous with their time and provided critical research.

1. Mirra Bank, *Anonymous Was a Woman* (New York, 1979); Patricia Mainardi, "Quilts: The Great American Art," *Feminist Art Journal*, 2 (Winter 1973), 1, 18–23; Patsy and Myron Orlofsky, *Quilts in America* (1974; repr., New York, 1992);

Roderick Kiracofe, *The American Quilt: A History of Cloth and Comfort, 1750–1950* (New York, 1993); Janet Catherine Berlo and Patricia Cox Crews, *Wild by Design: Two Hundred Years of Innovation and Artistry in American Quilts* (Seattle, Wash., 2003).

2. Information on Susan Newcomer's quilts is in the collection files of the Museum of the Rockies, Bozeman, Montana. See the obituaries of Amanda (Mar. 3, 1931), Elden (Sept. 17, 1959), and Hazel (Aug. 17, 1967) in the *Winnett (Mont.) Times*. For Hazel's career, see John A. Forssen, ed., *Petticoat and Stethoscope: A Montana Legend* (Missoula, Mont., 1978), 14.

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4. See U.S. Census for general statistics. Sex ratios for 1910 are found in U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910, vol. II, Population, 1910, Reports by States, Alabama-Montana* (Washington, D.C., 1913), 1145. General population figures for 1870–1910 are in *ibid.*, 1132.

5. May G. Flanagan, "Personal Recollections," in *Our Fort Benton of Yesterday and Today*, ed. Nora E. Harber (Fort Benton, Mont., n.d.), 13.

6. Anita B. Loscalzo, "The History of the Sewing Machine and Its Use in Quilting in the United States," *Uncoverings*, 26 (2005), 175–208; Elizabeth M. Bacon, "Marketing Sewing Machines in the Post-Civil War Years," *Bulletin of the Business Historical Society*, 20 (June 1946), 90–94.

7. David Blanke, "A Comparison of the Catalogs Issued from Sears, Roebuck & Company and Montgomery Ward & Company, 1893–1906," in *Essays in Economic and Business History, Selected Papers from the Economic and Business Historical Society*, 12 (1994), 328; Louis E. Asher and Edith Heal, *Send No Money* (Chicago, 1942), 77, 55.

8. Thomas J. Schlereth, "Country Stores, County Fairs, and Mail-Order Catalogues: Consumption in Rural America," in *Consuming Visions: Accumulation and Display of Goods in America, 1880–1920*, ed. Simon J. Broner (New York, 1989), 369–70; Marguerite Connolly, "The Disappearance of the Domestic Sewing Machine, 1890–1925," *Winterthur Portfolio*, 34 (Spring 1999), 37.

9. Grace Stoddard Mason Letters, SC

1699, Montana Historical Society Research Center, Helena (hereafter MHS). All quotations from Grace are from these letters.

10. On Culbertson's development, see *Culbertson Diamond Jubilee 1887–1972, Seventy-Five Years of Progress* (Culbertson, Mont., 1962); and Loretta Segars, *100 Years in Culbertson, 1887–1987* (n.p., 1986). Laurann Gilbertson, "Patterns of the New World: Quiltmaking among Norwegian Americans," *Uncoverings*, 27 (2006), 157–96, discusses the variety of ways immigrants to the northern plains obtained fabric.

11. Grace Stoddard Mason Letters, MHS.

12. Folders 1, 2, box 4, Helena Woman's Club Records, MC 303, MHS.

13. Quoted in Douglas M. Edwards, "Fair Days in the 'Zone of Plenty': Exhibit Networks and the Development of the American West" (PhD diss., University of Maryland, 2001), 51; Board of World's Fair Managers of the State of Montana, *Proceedings of Board of World's Fair Managers* (Helena, Mont., 1892), 82.

14. *Proceedings of Board of World's Fair Managers*, 82–83, 84; Barbara Brackman, "Quilts at Chicago's World's Fairs," *Uncoverings*, 2 (1981), 65.

15. Edwards, "Fair Days," 148. The *Premium Book, Inter-Mountain Fair, Bozeman, 1927*, in the MHS collection, gave the schedule for other fairs held that year.

16. For annual fairs, see the collection of "Premium List, Rules & Regulations for the Montana Agricultural, Mineral and Mechanical Association," MHS library collection.

17. Karal Ann Marling, *Blue Ribbon: A Social and Pictorial History of the Minnesota State Fair* (St. Paul, Minn., 1990), 96–97; Montana State Fair premium lists, 1903–1931.

18. See the collection of "State Course of Study" from the 1910s through 1942 in MHS library. Sewing lessons are enumerated in the *Handbook to Accompany Course of Study for Rural Schools of Montana* (n.p., Sept. 1917).

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20. *Iapi Oaye, The Word Carrier*, vol. 5, no. 5 (May 1876); *ibid.*, vol. 2, no. 1 (Jan. 1873); Tucker, *Indian Star Quilts*, 61.

21. *The Word Carrier*, new ser., vol. 2, nos. 8, 9, 10 (Oct., Nov., Dec. 1885).

22. Tucker, *Indian Star Quilts*, 21. The Garfield quilt is held by the Denver Museum of Nature and Science. All information comes from its files, object AC.2002. For James Garfield Sr., see David R. Miller et al., *The History of*

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25. T. M. Pearce, “Three Rocky Mountain Terms: Park, Suga, and Plaza,” *American Speech*, 33 (May 1958), 104–5; Lois Flansburg Haaglund, *Tough, Willing, and Able: Tales of a Montana Family* (Missoula, Mont., 1997), 2–4.

26. Kenneth D. Swan, *Splendid Was the Trail* (Missoula, Mont., 1968), 46.

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28. For the history of the quilt, see “Minutes of the 19th Annual Convention of Montana WCTU, Sept. 23–25, 1902, Butte,” folder 1, box 9, Montana Woman’s Christian Temperance Union Records, 1883–1976, MC 160, MHS; and Rev. Alice Barnes Hoag and Mrs. Matthew W. Alderson, *Historical Sketch of the Montana Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, 1883–1912* (Helena, Mont., 1912).

29. Nancy J. Rowley, “Red Cross Quilts for the Great War,” *Uncoverings*, 3 (1982), 44; W. W. Gail, ed., *Yellowstone County Montana in the World War, 1917–1918–1919* (Billings, Mont., 1919), 174, 178.

30. On the Red Cross quilt, see Documents file, X82.71.01, Montana Historical Society Museum.

31. Virginia Gunn, “Quilts for Civil War Soldiers from Peacham, Vermont,” *Uncoverings*, 22 (2001), 50. For a discussion of quilts and the Sanitary Commission, see Barbara Brackman, *Quilts from the Civil War* (Lafayette, Calif., 1997), chap. 4.

32. Florence Fisk White, “The Autograph Quilt,” folder 2, box 4, Fisk Family Papers, MC 31, MHS (hereafter Fisk Papers).

33. R. Emmett Fisk to Fannie Chester, Sept. 18, 1864, folder 13, box 4, Fisk Papers.

34. Lizzie Chester to Capt. R. E. Fisk, Oct. 3, 1864, folder 14, box 9, Fisk Papers.

35. Rex C. Myers’s *Lizzie: The Letters of Elizabeth Chester Fisk, 1864–1893* (Mis-

soula, Mont., 1989) contains a selection of Robert’s and Lizzie’s letters.

36. *Ibid.*, 88.

37. White, “The Autograph Quilt”; Don Beld, e-mails to author, Feb. 15, 16, 2008. The Fisk quilt is now in the collections of the Redlands Library, Redlands, California.

A Call to Order

1. Details of this story are taken from *Miles City (Mont. Territory) Yellowstone Daily Journal*, Aug. 3, 1884, p. 1; and Granville Stuart, *Forty Years on the Frontier . . .*, 2 vols. (Cleveland, Ohio, 1925), 1:197–209. The ranchers’ campaign gives rise to questions of justice, since many stockmen had started out doing just what the rustlers did. This issue, however, falls outside the scope of this article, which analyzes the means the cattlemen used to attain their ends rather than the ends themselves. Moreover, the article should not be construed as justifying the stockmen’s agenda. Of the secondary works on vigilante justice, the most thorough are Robert Hine and John Faragher, *The American West: A New Interpretive History* (New Haven, Conn., 2000), 326–28; and William Savage Jr., “Stockmen’s Associations and the Western Range Cattle Industry,” *Journal of the West*, 14, no. 3 (1975), 52–59.

2. Robert Fletcher’s narrative account, *Free Grass to Fences: The Montana Cattle Range Story* (New York, 1960), is the best source on stock raising in the territory, but its focus is on the industry’s more recent history. Other works—notably Ernest Osgood’s *The Day of the Cattlemen* (Chicago, 1929); Edward Everett Dale’s *The Range Cattle Industry* (Norman, Okla., 1930); Michael P. Malone, Richard B. Roeder, and William L. Lang’s *Montana: A History of Two Centuries*, rev. ed. (Seattle, Wash., 1991); Clark Spence’s *Territorial Politics and Government in Montana, 1864–1889* (New York, 1978); and Ray Allen Billington’s *Westward Expansion: A History of the American Frontier* (New York, 1949)—mention some of the events discussed here but mostly look at the years after 1885.

3. Terry Jordan, *North American Cattle-Ranching Frontiers: Origins, Diffusion, and Differentiation* (Albuquerque, N.M., 1993), 300; Robert E. Strahorn, *Montana and Yellowstone National Park . . .* (Helena, Mont., 1879), 26; James Brisbin, *The Beef Bonanza . . .* (Philadelphia, 1881), 450.

4. Stuart’s partners were Samuel T. Hauser, Andrew J. Davis, and Erwin Davis.

5. U.S. Census Bureau, *Census of Population*, 1880, 833. Texas longhorns were first brought to Montana in 1881.

6. These problems intensified in the 1880s because of the growth in the territory’s cattle population. Between 1882 and 1883 alone, the number of stock on Montana’s ranges doubled, and their value tripled. By January 1884, there were six hundred thousand head in the territory, nearly three times the number in 1880. U.S. Census Bureau, *Census of Agriculture*, 1880, 162; *Report of the Governor of Montana John Schuyler Crosby to the Secretary of the Interior Henry M. Teller*, H. Exec. Doc. 1/30, serial 2191, pp. 541–50 (Washington, D.C., Oct. 31, 1883).

7. *Virginia City (Mont. Territory) Weekly Montanian*, Dec. 18, 1873, p. 5; *ibid.*, Jan. 1, 1874, p. 7. To diminish confusion regarding names, I call each organization by the name it gave itself in its bylaws or, where these were not available, by the name used most often in the press.

8. *Laws, Memorials, Resolutions of the Territory of Montana, Passed at the Eighth Regular Session of the Legislative Assembly* (hereafter *Laws . . . Territory of Montana . . .* and session number) (Helena, Mont., 1874), 85–90. The 1874 law was revised in 1876 and repealed entirely during the 1877 legislative session. See *Laws . . . Territory of Montana . . . Ninth Session* (Helena, Mont., 1876), 109; and *Laws . . . Territory of Montana . . . Tenth Session* (Helena, Mont., 1877), 236–37.

9. *Helena (Mont. Territory) Weekly Herald* (hereafter *Weekly Herald*), July 11, 1878, p. 7; *ibid.*, Jan. 9, 1879, p. 7.

10. *Helena (Mont. Territory) Daily Herald* (hereafter *Daily Herald*), Jan. 24, 1879, p. 4; *Weekly Herald*, Feb. 13, 1879, p. 4; *ibid.*, Jan. 30, 1879, p. 8; *Great Falls (Mont.) Daily Tribune*, Oct. 2, 1914, pp. 1, 6; *Weekly Herald*, Feb. 27, 1879, p. 3; *White Sulphur Springs (Mont. Territory) Rocky Mountain Husbandman* (hereafter *Rocky Mt. Husbandman*), Mar. 11, 1880, p. 2, 7.

11. *Weekly Herald*, July 24, 1879, p. 8; *Rocky Mt. Husbandman*, June 5, 1879. In *Free Grass to Fences*, p. 58, Fletcher claims that groups formed in the Shonkin District, Gallatin County, Deer Lodge County, and Smith River at this time. However, these organizations did not form until much later (1881 and 1882).

12. “Speech to Sun River Protective Organization,” Sun River Protective Organization Records, 1877–1879, MC 815, Montana Historical Society Research Center, Helena (hereafter MHS); *Rocky Mt. Husbandman*, Mar. 11, 1880, pp. 2, 7. Note that Ford never applied for a charter for the organization.

13. *Daily Herald*, Mar. 6, 1880, p. 3.

14. *Rocky Mt. Husbandman*, Mar. 10, 1881, p. 4; *Weekly Herald*, Aug. 25, 1881, p. 8; *Rocky Mt. Husbandman*, Sept. 8, 1881, p. 4; *ibid.*, Sept. 22, 1881, p. 4.