

Lancaster Farming *Antiques Center*

Pieces Of History Found In Antique Quilts

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— For attendees of the recent Quilt Show and Tell, "Building Memories Through The Years," it was evident that quilts mean much more than just a warm and cozy covering for a bed.

For the quilters, the pieces of dresses, aprons, or father's shirts that comprise the design make the quilts worth far more than simple monetary value.

Hosted by the Red Rose Quilters Guild of Lancaster County, the event drew more than 225 people to the gym at Calvary Church.

Visitors watched as exhibitors took turns telling the stories of their quilts. Susan Swan, for instance, described her "trip around the world" quilt, which was "made by my grandmother and her friends at quilting bees."

She said, "I have memories of being at the farm where the la-

dies would gather on the second floor — I remember hearing them laughing and talking" as they worked," she said.

Swan later found one of these quilts, torn and tattered, and decided to ask Nancy Jane Ryder, Leola, "to rescue" the quilt.

Ryder first snips the loose threads and tattered pieces of material, then appliques new, closely-matching pieces onto the top before quilting it. She is careful not to quilt the whole way through so the back of the piece looks the same.

The quilt rested on a bed in Swan's home until it returned for its second repair after her daughter's 125-pound Mastiff "nested" in it.

Ryder has replaced a total of 35 blocks. The quilt will someday be passed on to Swan's first granddaughter, who was born in May.

Katherine Huddle, Lititz, brought along her 2,500 patch quilt, which has been featured in quilting books and on a postcard album.

Made in 1915 by Katherine Hershey, her grandmother (who made a quilt for each of her five sons), the quilt features one large patch made up of 25 smaller squares. Since there are 100 of the bigger patches there is a total of 2,500 smaller patches. Each large patch is alike, however is placed in a strategic pattern so the quilt has a varied appearance. Even though it is valuable for its appearance, the quilt has also been utilitarian.

"Mother used it and I used it," said Huddle.

Brenda Brown, Manheim, displayed a quilt made by her great great grandmother. Pieced together with remnants of feed-sacks, dresses, aprons, towels into small squares of two triangles and tied with yarn, the quilt was rescued from her father who was going to use it in the garage.

"My mother was very frugal," observed Norma Pacl, Lititz. Besides making her children's clothing and her husband's shirts, Pacl's mother pieced together quilts, one of which Pacl displayed at the show. Her mother had put the top together in the late 1920s to early 1930s and then put it away without quilting it. Pacl, who can recognize pieces of dresses and patches from her mother's aprons, got it out five years ago and began finishing the quilt with her own hand stitching work. The double wedding ring pattern took three years.

Joan Sweigert, Ephrata, displayed several quilts at the event. Of special interest was the quilt that is made by her mother, Mabel Fake, from feed sacks, her own skirts, and her children's clothing. "I remember my mother, during World War II, doing a lot of handiwork while my father (a medical doctor) was away," said Sweigert. "He was gone three years and she raised four girls."

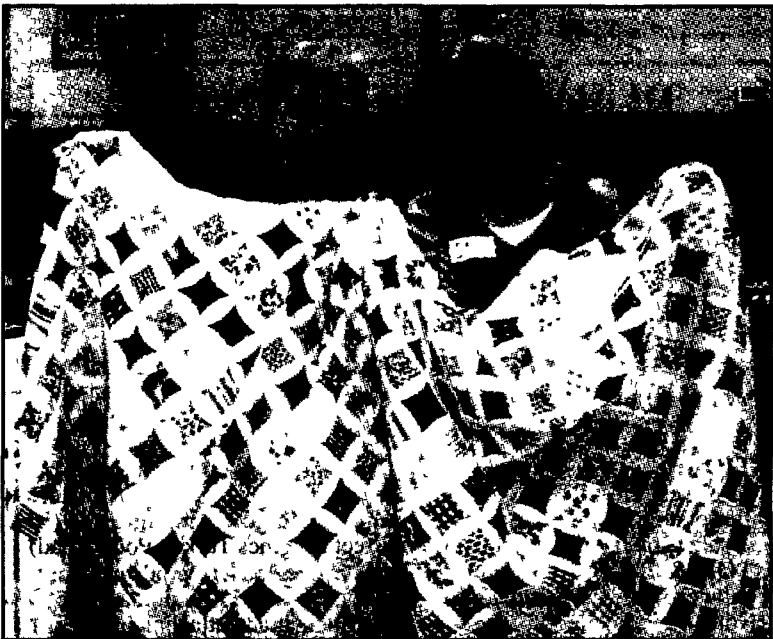
Sweigert recalls her mother working underneath the chandelier of the family's dining room. Quilting "kept my grandmother busy," said Sweigert. "I used to think, 'what are you doing that for?' Now I'm hooked."



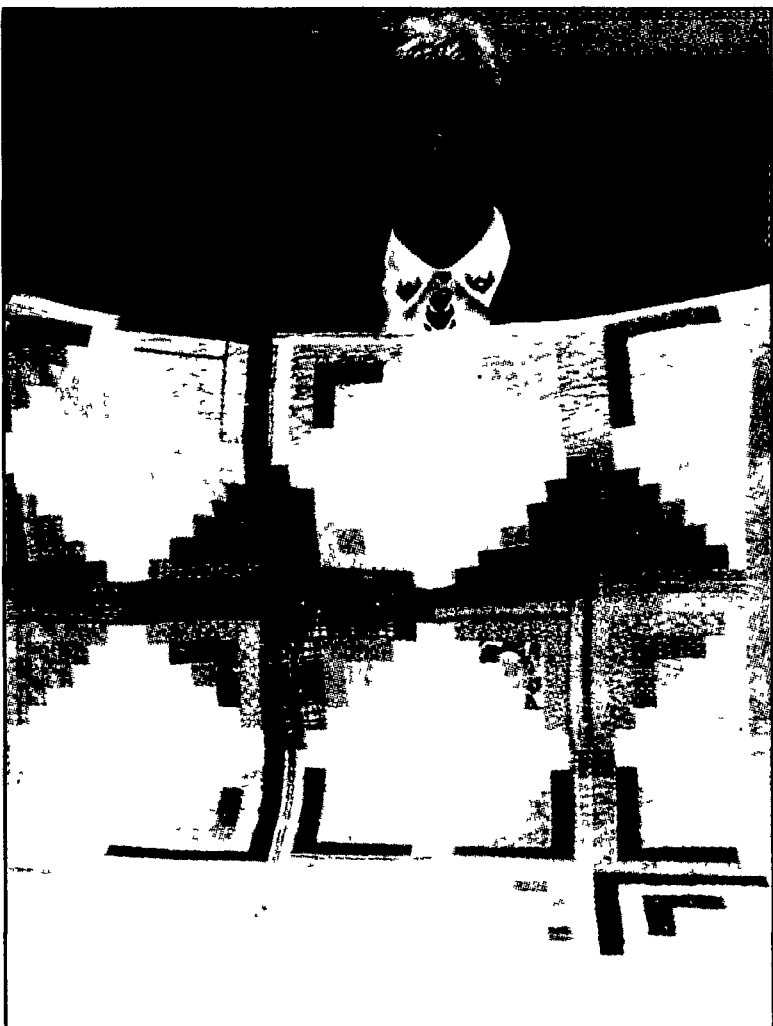
Joseyane Carro, Lancaster, purchased this quilt at an auction. The piece "had been in a barn for decades and smelled bad and was filthy," she said. "The dry cleaners wouldn't take it." Carro washed the quilt in her own washing machine and plans to make pillows with the quilt, which she believes was made in the early 1920s. The quilt has a many-layered history. When one top would wear thin, it would be replaced with another, directly overtop of the first. "I think there are about seven layers," said Carro.



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Arlene Dougherty, Ephrata, made this cathedral window pattern in 1975 and pieced together curtains to match it. "Mom said she was quite sick of the pattern once everything was done," said her daughter, Mimi Geiss, Downingtown, at right.



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