

History of Quilting in Loudoun County 1830- Present

By Priscilla Godfrey, Waterford Quilters Guild

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Quilting and Quaker Settlements

Amos and son Mahlon Janney built and ran the first two mills in Waterford, Virginia in an unbroken line from 1738 until 1808. Amos Janney, who was originally from Bucks County, Pennsylvania, settled in Waterford, VA in 1733. They were part of a Quaker settlement that highly valued women’s sewing skills. Fancy fabrics like chintz and glazed cotton came south from the boats sailing into Baltimore and the cotton that was grown in the south was shipped north to Richmond and Alexandria.¹ John Jay Janney, a possible relative of Amos, was quoted as saying “One of the common labors of women was quilting. They did not buy spreads at the store but quilted them at home. They all had patchwork covers made of bits of calico cut into pieces sewed together and spread over a cotton sheet with raw cotton between them, then quilted in squares and sometimes intricate figures.”²

Waterford Quilters Guild, 1978 – the Present

The Waterford Foundation and the annual Fair has preserved the crafts and handmade items from the Colonial period. Anna Holland, a resident of Waterford, was a hand-piecing and applique artist, teaching from her house on Water Street. When Jan

¹ Mary Holten Robare, *Quilts and Quaker Heritage*, Winchester, VA: Hillside Studios, 2008, Pg. 20. (Accompanying pamphlet to the 2008 exhibit of Quilts and Quaker Heritage at the Virginia Quilt Museum.)

²Virginia Consortium of Quilters, 2006. *Quilts of Virginia 1607-1899*. Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishing, Pg. 48. (Authors include Barbara Tricarico, Hazel Carter and Bunnie Jordan).

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Meyers opened her quilt shop in Leesburg, Anna began teaching there as well. In 1978, Anna decided to start a professional guild. Some of her students were invited to join and meetings took place in the Second Street Schoolhouse the second Wednesday of every month. In the winter because the schoolhouse had no heat except for a small potbelly stove, the meetings took place at members' homes. From 1979 on, the Guild has regularly participated in the Waterford Fair. In 1979, Anna Holland supplied a wooden quilting frame that was set up at the John Wesley Church across from the mill. During the Fair, the Guild demonstrated quilting to all fairgoers. The Guild began to annually make a quilt which is raffled off to some lucky ticketholder the last day of the Waterford Fair; a tradition that continues to this day.

The Second Street Schoolhouse became a living history experience for elementary students in 1984 and the Guild moved to the second floor of the Waterford Corner Market. After two years, we moved up the hill to the Catoctin Presbyterian Church where the Guild met from 1986 to 1995 when the church began major renovations. The Guild met at the new St. Francis de Sales Catholic Church from 1995 – 1998. As membership grew, the Guild found St. David Episcopal Church was perfect for our needs. When they began a renovation, the Guild moved to Blue Ridge Baptist Church in 2010. In 2007 there was an early morning fire in Waterford that burned down the auditorium attached to the Old Waterford School. The school was saved by the quick actions of the Loudoun Fire Department. Six tankers took thousands of gallons of water from the Catoctin Creek and from an underground tank at nearby Waterford Elementary School; the absence of a water supply in rural Loudoun has become an acute issue with houses taking over farmland. The Waterford Foundation rebuilt the auditorium in 2012. In 2014 we were finally able to return to our roots and hope we don't have to ever move again! Membership in the Guild is 56 with members coming from West Virginia, Maryland, Leesburg, Purcellville, Lucketts, Lovettsville and Hamilton.

Countryside Quilters: 1987 – Present

Countryside Quilters have been meeting at Community Lutheran Church in Countryside since 1987. They meet the first and third Tuesday of the month and annually sponsor a bus to the Mid-Atlantic Quilt Show at Hampton Roads, Virginia. They invite quilt teachers to give workshops and lectures at their meetings. They support various charities with donations of quilted items. They have members coming from all over Northern Virginia.

Station Stitchers: 2010 – Present

Station Stitchers was founded in 2010 to make quilts for hospital patients with acute care needs, starting with oncology patients and growing to serve other departments such as ICU, Neo-natal Intensive care, Dialysis and Pediatrics. They have expanded their reach to make quilts for under-served populations such as victims of domestic violence, people in need of Family Services (foster care, child protective services and adult services), seniors in nursing homes, the Tree of Life charity, Salvation Army, and veteran organizations. They supplied the quilts for Boulder Crest Retreat Center beds in Bluemont when it opened.

History of Quilting in Loudoun County 1830 – Present

Since its inception, Station Stitchers has donated 2,598 quilts to our local community. Station Stitchers Studio is located on the second floor, Suite 207, at 201 N. Maple Ave. in downtown Purcellville. They provide a place of friendship, mentorship, creativity, and inspiration to their many volunteers. There are no paid employees, and all materials and equipment has been funded through generous donations from community sponsors.

Joshua's Hands Valiant Warriors Project: Joyce Guthrie

Since 1981, Joshua's Hands has sponsored twice a year gathering of quilters in Purcellville to make quilts over a ten-day period for wounded U.S. soldiers. Quilts are designed to cover the soldier being transported on gurneys in C130's to the hospital in Germany. Over 2,000 quilts have been donated so far. Donated jeans are made into 6-inch squares that are signed by children and then sewn with six-inch pieced squares.

Quilting Today

Loudoun County is home to several professional quilt artists, quilting teachers, quilt book authors, long arm machine quilting businesses, quilt show judges and a quilt fabric store. Kathie Ratcliffe of Waterford opened her business, Nine Patch Studios, in 2001 where she sells her framed mini-traditional quilts; Carly Webb of Hamilton opened her business, WebFabrics, in 2003 and daily ships quilting fabric around the world; Julia Graves in Leesburg started her longarm machine quilting business in 2007 and teaches quilting, judges quilt shows, makes commission quilts and sells/services APQS longarm machines; Carolyn Goins has a longarm machine quilting business and is author of several quilt books; Renelda Peldunas Harter of Purcellville is also a book author and quilt teacher; Stevii Graves, Leesburg, is a professional quilt judge and quilt show organizer; Joyce Carrier, Clarke County, has won awards for her textural thread painting quilts; Kerry Faraone of Purcellville has had her pictorial quilts exhibited nationally and Priscilla Godfrey of Philomont is a certified quilt judge and her quilts are permanently displayed at the Purcellville Town Hall and in Sterling at the Claude Moore Recreation Center.


Today's quilting industry is \$3.7 billion dollars strong with 7 to 10 million quilters in the United States alone. An average of \$422 dollars is spent annually per quilting household.

Why Are Some Quilts Not Signed or Labeled?

Not seeing a label on a quilt does not mean it is not important or worth collecting. Most women of the past simply didn't think that the everyday or even the "best" quilt they made was important enough to sign. Some even felt it would be too prideful to sign their quilt. Some quilts have initials that become a starting point for research. Quilts were considered "women's work" and were very utilitarian. When they wore out, they were tossed or used for another purpose. Ladies who cross stitched linens were advised to number and initial every item so they wouldn't be overused and worn out. As a result of this practice, we find nineteenth century quilts that were signed or initialed with cross stitches. Some were even numbered to mark the accumulation of quilts they made in preparation for marriage. It was expected to have 12 done before being wed. Indelible inks were made around the middle of the nineteenth century, so we find the use of this ink in the signature blocks that became popular. Even today, there are many contemporary quilters who do not make time to label their quilts. They will make it just as difficult for future historians to determine when and by whom quilts were made.

Examples of Wonderful Quilts:

The following are historic quilts made in Loudoun County starting with the thistle border quilt made in 1830.



Thistle Border Quilt. Photograph by John Herr. Courtesy of Sandy Carper.

Figure 1. Thistle Border Quilt, 1830.

Made by Hannah Taylor (1811-1855).
Private collection.

Hanna married Lott Purcell on Sept. 23, 1833. Lott was a Quaker, but Hannah was not, so eventually they had to move from Loudoun to Frederick County, Virginia where they joined the Upper Ridge Meetinghouse on Apple Pie Ridge Road in Winchester.

The block pattern is called nine Patch, pieced with large muslin squares in between each nine patch block: it is also known as Single Irish Chain.

The Taylor name is present still today. Near Lincoln, which also has a Quaker meetinghouse, there is a Taylor Road named for the Taylor family. Descendants of the original Taylors live in the family home on Taylor Road.



Figure 2. Honeycomb Mosaic of Hexagons, c. 1830.

Made by Maria Hester Monroe Gouverneur (1803-1850). James Monroe Museum Collection, Fredericksburg, Va.

Maria was the younger daughter of U.S. President James Monroe. She was also the first presidential offspring to marry in the White House. She married her cousin Samuel L. Gouverneur on March 2, 1820. In 1822, they moved to New York City where Samuel held a series of political posts. Upon the death of his wife

Elizabeth in 1830 at Oak Hill, James Monroe moved in with them. In 1805, Monroe had become sole owner of Oak Hill on Route 15 south of Leesburg. It was a large plantation growing wheat that was milled at the Aldie Mill in Aldie, Virginia. Maria died at Oak Hill in 1850.

The design is made of English Paper Pieced hexagons. The hexagons are backed with paper and the fabric is sewn over the paper pattern. At the time, it was very fashionable to do things the English way. The papers used were recycled newspaper clippings, advertisements, and handwritten letters. The pattern is called a honeycomb mosaic.

The reason why the quilt top was never finished is still unknown.



Figure 3. Nine Patch Quilt, c. 1850.

Made by Thamasin Haines Walker (1811-1860).
Loudoun Museum Collection.

There are many inscriptions from Quaker families such as Lydia Hollingsworth, a resident of Waterford from 1854-1879.

Janney Lupton of Winchester, a descendant of Lydia, made a 1997 version of the Quaker Friendship Quilt and won Best in Show awards in two

quilt shows. Applique is a French word for “apply” as the colored fabric patterns are “applied” and sewn onto the background. The Waterford Foundation has two quilts in their collection that feature many of the same Quaker names as this quilt.

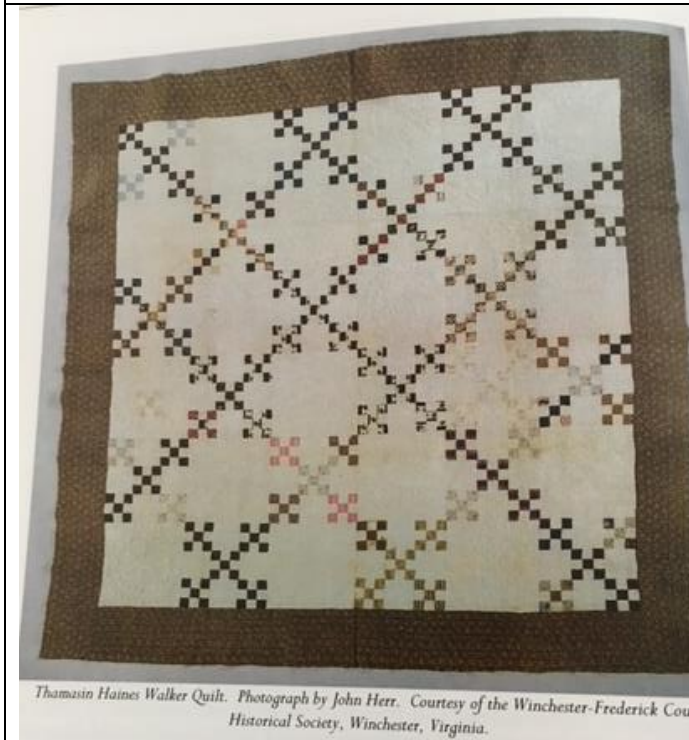


Figure 4. Wedding Quilt c. 1826.

Made by Thamasin Haines Walker (1811-1860).
Winchester-Frederick Historical Society Collection.

Walker’s inscription is in black ink on the back. It is customary for all guests to sign the wedding quilt at Quaker weddings and this signature matches her handwriting on the 1826 wedding certificate.

This quilt pattern is an arrangement of nine patch blocks with 5 dark fabrics and 4 light fabrics. This design is also known as a Single Irish Chain.

Thamasin Haines Walker Quilt. Photograph by John Herr. Courtesy of the Winchester-Frederick County Historical Society, Winchester, Virginia.



Figure 5. Inscribed “Mary Kern, Loudoun County VA August 24th, 1853.”

Presented to Mary Kern by her parents. Quiltmaker unknown. Loudoun Museum Collection.

This is a flying geese quilt pattern with rows of triangles representing flying geese. The border of triangles is called a sawtooth border.

Quilt was purchased by Carousel Antiques in 1979 from Morgan

Anderson who purchased the quilt at an estate sale in Loudoun. The quilt was then donated to the museum in April 1983.



Figure 6. Dutton Quilt, c. 1862-1870.

Made by Mary Francis Dutton (1840-1933). Waterford Foundation Collection.

Dutton used a green/gold silk cut from Emma Schooley’s wedding dress. Feathered wreaths are hand quilted in the background.

Quilt was donated in 1994 to the Waterford Foundation by Phoebe Haviland Steer, a

descendant of two Waterford Quaker families, the Duttons, and the Steers. The quilt pattern is another variation of the nine-patch block and known as Single Irish Chain.



Figure 7. Drunkard's Path Quilt, c. 1880-1890.

Made by Hannah McKee-Boyles (1862-1953). Private Collection.

Hannah Taylor Purcell in 1880 lived next door to Charles Boyles, the man her granddaughter, Hannah McKee married. She and Charles had nine children. Hannah was the youngest of three generations of quilters.

The Drunkard's Path pattern is made of fabric quarter circle patches pieced with muslin quarter circle patches. It represents the swagger of those who have over

consumed alcohol. This period was the start of the temperance movement, a national movement to curb alcoholism.



**Figure 1 and 9.
Crazy Quilt, c. 1880-1900.**

Quiltmaker unknown.
Loudoun Museum Collection.

The quilt was donated in 1992 to the Museum from the estate of Mrs. Marian P. Simpson.

The crazy quilt style was immensely popular at the turn of the century. Velvet and silk patches were embroidered with illustrations from children's books

and many motifs from nature.

Mrs. Simpson was the wife of James Lupton Simpson of Paeonian Springs (1902-1967), for whom a LCPS middle school was named. Upon her death in 1984, the Evening Rotary Club of Leesburg established an annual high school scholarship in her honor.





Figure 10. Red and White Feathered Star, c. 1880-1925.

Made by Orra Van Sickler Tillett (1859-1939).
Loudoun Museum Collection.

Orra Van Sickler was born and grew up at North Fork, VA. She married Samuel Tillett on September 25, 1882, and they lived at Red Gate Farm in Ashburn, VA. They raised seven children, including the mother of William Brown. Orra died at age 80 (Feb. 11, 1939) and is buried at the Union Cemetery in Leesburg.

Cotton muslin and Turkey red fabric were hand pieced in this feathered star design. Turkey red fabric was popular in the early 1900's. The quilt remained in the family of the maker's descendants and ultimately became the property of her great grandson, William Brown of Lincoln. Mrs. Jean Brown, William's widow, donated the quilt to the Loudoun Museum June 13, 2007. Jean Brown died January 15, 2021.



Figure 11. Log Cabin Quilt, 1890-1910.

Quiltmaker Unknown.
Loudoun Museum Collection.

This quilt was donated to the Museum by Karen Titus, November 4, 1994.

Terry Titus of Leesburg recently died, and his obituary lists a sister-in-law, Karen Titus of Georgia.



Figure 12. No More Feathers, 1983.

Made by Waterford Quilters Guild Block Exchange.
Priscilla Godfrey Collection.

From 1980 to 2008, block exchange quilts were popular among the local Loudoun County quilt groups. Quilters signed to participate in the block exchange knowing that they would receive blocks made by the others in the group and in return they would be making a block for each person who signed up. The quilt features hand quilted feather circles in each muslin square.



Figure 13. Tree of Life, 1984.

Made by Priscilla Godfrey
Priscilla Godfrey Collection.

This medallion style of quilting features one large panel in the center surrounded by different widths of borders. This quilt was inspired by the fall leaves of trees we planted on our new Mountville property in 1980. The dark outside border features quilted mimosa, sugar maple and dogwood leaves. Jinny Beyer of Great Falls began teaching the medallion style of quilting in the early eighties so there are many of these quilts still around in Northern Virginia.



Figure 14. Holiday Houses, 1987.

Made by Waterford Block Exchange.
Priscilla Godfrey Collection

In the late 1980's cotton quilt fabric became much more colorful so when these exchange blocks started coming in, I asked everyone to pick their favorite holiday. The blocks were personalized in a variety of ways with buttons, ribbon, and embroidery.



Figure 15. Baltimore Album Style Quilt, 1995.

Made by Virginia Consortium of Quilters.
Priscilla Godfrey Collection.

This state guild decided to do hand applique Baltimore Album style quilt blocks as a fundraiser. I bought just one ticket and won! The outside sawtooth border is very typical of traditional applique quilts.



Figure 16. The Barns of Loudoun County, 2001.

Made by Waterford Block Exchange.
Priscilla Godfrey Collection.

This Waterford block exchange quilt was inspired by the varied barns in western Loudoun County. I gave everyone a choice of two different barn block patterns, and they added chickens, horses, dogs, and cats making this a very unusual and delightful quilt. It has been displayed at the County Government Center and the Loudoun Farm Museum



Image 17. Red and Green Christmas Blocks, 2006.

Made by Quilt Revival Quilt Group, Fairfax, Va.
Priscilla Godfrey Collection.

The Revival Quilt Group in Fairfax does a block raffle every Christmas. The fabric is purchased for the entire quilt; blocks are cut out by the group; each person makes three or more blocks and puts their name in with each block made. After 15 years making Christmas blocks, I won in 2003.



Figure 18. World Full of Color, 2008.

Made by Waterford Block Exchange.
Priscilla Godfrey Collection.

At the turn of the century in 2000, more quilters were turning their attention to making art quilts; quilts that used circles, spirals and other non-linear shapes and quilts that depicted faces and places instead of rows of squares. I used this block pattern for the Waterford Block Exchange and asked them to make four separate quadrants of the circle with solid bold colors of orange, red, and yellow. This gave me lots of opportunity for contrast.



Figure 19. Waterford Raffle Quilt, 1993.

Made by Waterford Quilters Guild.

Since 1979, the Guild has been making raffle quilts on an annual basis. The tickets are sold at the Waterford Fair and the winning ticket is picked on the last day of the Fair, Sunday afternoon.



Figure 20-21. Cleveland and Hendricks 1884-1885 Campaign Quilt, (date unknown)

Quiltmaker unknown.
Oatlands Collection, Leesburg, VA.

This unique quilt was donated to Oatlands by docent Chase Stephens. It features an 1885 Inauguration Decoration Committee ribbon and an 1884 Presidential Campaign ribbon

for Cleveland and Hendricks. This quilt pattern is called Crazy quilt for its haphazard piecing of silks, velvets, and satins. It features various hand embroidery designs. Grover Cleveland is the only president to win two nonconsecutive terms.





Figure 22. Bicentennial Quilt, 1976.

Made by Loudoun Extension Homemakers Clubs.
Loudoun Museum Collection.

The Bicentennial celebrations in Loudoun County were quite extensive and included this Appliqué quilt. The Extension Service Homemakers clubs made 21 blocks representing iconic Loudoun buildings and scenes such as the Waterford Mill; the red barn Sterling Community Center, and Little River Baptist Church. The center logo lettering was embroidered in black thread by hand.



Figure 23. St. Francis de Sales Catholic Church Quilt, 1991.

Made by the ladies of the church in 1991 as the new church was being built. Quilt was made to facilitate the transition from the old church on Main Street to the new on St. Francis Court just north of Purcellville. Priscilla taught them how to Appliqué and they each chose a part of church life (baptism, marriage, communion, etc.) to depict in fabric. Excellent example of a community quilt. The quilt is housed at St. Francis de Sales Church, Purcellville, Virginia.

Further Research

The American Quilt Study Group was founded in 1980 to provide a forum for in depth research on quilt making and quilt history. In the 1980's and 1990's, several states launched Quilt Documentation Projects, gathering information about antique and contemporary quilts in different locations. These projects led to the publishing of several books that noted designs, styles, sizes, and in some cases, information about the quiltmakers.³ Listing all would be too large a project for this article; but here is a list of probably the best.

Always There: The African American Presence in American Quilts, *Cuesta Benberry*, Kentucky Quilt Project, 1992, ISBN 0684162725.

American Quilts & How To Make Them, *Carter Houck and Myron Miller*, New York City, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1979, ISBN 0684162725.

The Amish Quilt, *Eve Wheatcroft Granick*, Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 1994, ISBN 1561481092.

Celtic Quilts: A New Look for Ancient Designs (That Patchwork Place), *Beth Ann Williams*, Bothell, Washington: Martingale & Company, March 23, 2011.

Inspiration Kantha: Creative Stitchery and Quilting with Asia's Ancient Technique – Illustrated, *Anna Hergert*, Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishing, August 28, 2017.

Quilts and Quaker Heritage, *Mary Holton Robare*, Winchester, VA: Hillside Studios, 2008, VREF 746.46088.

Quilts of Virginia 1607-1899: The Birth of America Through the Eye of a Needle – Illustrated, *Virginia Consortium of Quilters, Paula C. Golden, et al.* Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishing, July 27, 2006.

The Romance of the Patchwork Quilt in America: in three parts, *Carrie Hall & Rose Kretsinger*, New York: Bonanza Books, 1935, ASIN B000V8ZC1G

Hopi Quilting : Stitched Traditions from an Ancient Community, *Carolyn O'Bagy Davis, et al.* Manti, Utah: Sanpete Publications, 1997.

Quilt Museums

The Virginia Quilt Museum, 301 S. Main St., Harrisonburg, VA 222801. This museum houses 370 quilts in their collection and has a regular rotating cycle of quilt exhibits from around the United States.

³ Womenfolk.com, America's Quilting History.

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The National Quilt Collection, part of the Division of Home and Community Life's Textile Collection at the National Museum of American History, Constitution Avenue, NW, between 12th and 14th Streets, Washington DC,

The International Quilt Museum, 1523 N. 33rd St., Lincoln, Nebraska 68583 has over 2,000 quilts in their collection.

The National Quilt Museum, 215 Jefferson St., Paducah, KY 42001, has over 600 quilts in their collection.