

# PATCHWORK PRESS

H E B E R V A L L E Y Q U I L T E R S

## History Lessons ~ Time Marches On

By HVQ Guild President, Company Commander Rachel Crane

World War II is the most widespread war in history, with more than 100 million military personnel mobilized. Marked by significant events involving the mass death of civilians, including the Holocaust and the only use of nuclear weapons in warfare, it was the deadliest conflict in human history, resulting in 50 million to over 70 million fatalities.

It was not so much that quilting disappeared at this time; it simply became less important in the greater scheme of things. Some folks quilted and some didn't but the world was focused on much greater concerns. May women in rural areas kept up their sewing and quilting, but thousands of women in urban areas went to work in the factories to help the war effort and to fill the vacancies the men left as they went overseas. The women that stayed home still sewed, and knitting became a huge way to help with the war effort. Before the United States was involved in the war, American women knit sweaters, hats, and other clothing to send to Europe and to the British, but when American soldiers were freezing in the European forests, they got very busy with their knitting.

First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt was often photographed knitting for the war effort or at least carrying her voluminous knitting bag. General Dwight Eisenhower called the efforts

“the friendly hand of this nation, reaching across the sea to sustain its fighting men.” Factory work, childcare, nursing the sick: all had stretches of down time. On the bus going to work the assembly line, in the mid-day hours between all-night nursing shifts, in the evening listening



to war news on the radio, idle hands were turned to service as Americans once again knit for victory.

Knitters also produced 15-20 foot stretch bandages. The bandages were knit with 100 percent cotton yarn in garter stitch. Garter stitch (all stitches knit, none purled) produces a stretchy fabric that lies flat on the edges. The finished bandages were sterilized and

shipped to medical units worldwide. After the war ended, some knitters dropped their needles for good. Others joined the rage for knitting complicated argyle patterns in a wide variety of colors -- anything, many swore, but Army-issued khaki or navy blue.

The quilting world was still alive and well during World War II, just not as prominent. Roll call quilts were popular during World War II. Women in Newport, Texas, made a quilt commemorating the soldiers from their local community. Names, ranks, and locations are carefully stitched into the blocks. Mrs. Earl E. Schaeffer sewed a “Gold Star Mothers” quilt featuring the names of soldiers from Ohio who died during World War II. These quilts serve as local memorials in national causes. This type of roll call or honor roll quilt is similar to war memorials listing the names of the dead. These quilts act as textile forms of the stone memorials, recording names, battles, and war in a softer, more domestic manner.

With war still upon us, we can do the same thing the earlier women of this nation did; we can sew and quilt, and make beautiful reminders of the good things we enjoy in this life and this nation. We can honor those in our past, present, and even our future with the fantastic talent and hobby we enjoy.

## October 8th: Depression Era, 1930's

### Reconnaissance Mission FEEDSACK QUILTING

Feedsacks bring to mind poverty of the Great Depression but at the same time there is a romance to the idea that women could make something beautiful from something so mundane. In truth feedsacks were used for sewing well before the depression and for several years after. The evolution of the feed sack is a story of ingenuity and clever marketing.

Initially farm and food products were shipped in barrels. Between 1840 and 1890 cotton sacks gradually replaced barrels as food containers. Many of the logos on the flour sacks were circular, a legacy from the time when these logos had to fit on the top of a barrel. <sup>1</sup> Women quickly discovered that these bags could be used as fabric for quilts and other needs.

Cotton had been king until the period of 1914 to 1929 when the price dropped out of the cotton market partially because synthetic fabrics like rayon became popular for dresses and undergarments. With the drop in the price of cotton even more companies began using cotton sacking as packaging.

Initially these bags were plain unbleached cotton with product brands printed on them. In order for women to use these bags they first had to remove the label. In spite of their efforts the entire brand label didn't always get removed and sometimes it didn't seem worth the bother especially for making undergarments. As a result there are some amusing stories regarding feedsack underwear. One young girl

was out walking with her beau when she tripped and fell. Oh, how embarrassed she was when her betrothed noticed her underdrawers imprinted with 'southern best'!

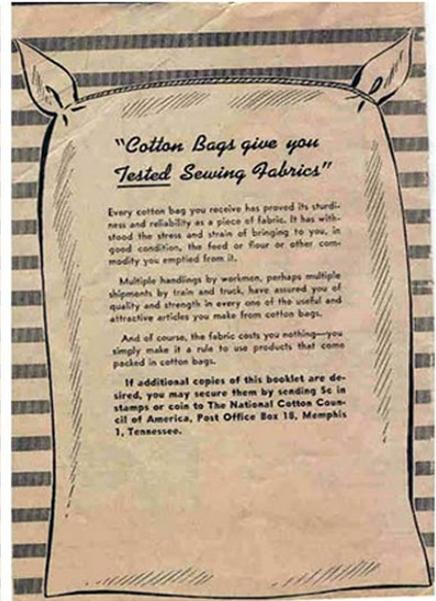


Another story was about a woman who made her husband's drawers from a flour sack and left the words 'self rising' on the cloth.

It took a while for feed and flour sack manufacturers to realize how popular these sacks had become with women. Eventually they saw a great opportunity for promoting the use of feedsacks. First feed sacks began to be sold in colors then around 1925 colorful prints for making dresses, aprons, shirts and children's clothing began to appear in stores. Manufacturers began to paste on paper labels making it far easier to remove them.

By the late 1930s there was heated competition to produce the most attractive and desirable prints. Artists were hired to design these prints. This turned out to be a great

marketing ploy as women picked out flour, sugar, beans, rice, cornmeal and even the feed and fertilizer for the family farm based on which fabrics they desired. Some sacks



displayed lovely border prints for pillowcases. Scenic prints were also popular.

Iowa quilter, Ethel Taylor Jordan, recalls how "Papa couldn't go to the store and buy feed without one of us girls, if you were the one who needed material you were the one who got to go."

Moreover if it was a long way to the store and a few sacks of flour were to be bought a fellow's wife or daughter might have had him move several 50 pound sacks of flour from a 6 foot high stack just so she could get the matching fabric she wanted.



## November 3rd: Civil Air Patrol

Foxholes and Flying Geese! This week's guild meeting will focus on this year's HVQ Guild Quilt pattern, designed by Rachel Crane and Cat Beckstead. The final touch: A border of Flying Geese! Demonstrations at guild meeting will focus on several different ways to make flying geese, along with tips, tricks and formulas for success every time.

### Friendship Exchange

Those participating in the Friendship Block Exchange group, be sure to return your assigned 12" block (12-1/2" unfinished) with a "Camping" theme for Tamara Ellis tomorrow night. If you cannot attend guild meeting, please make arrangements for someone to bring it for you.



Here is the Exchange Schedule:

Aug: Tamara  
 Sept: Beth W, Deonn  
 Oct: Leah  
 Nov: Beth E, Sally  
 Dec: Timpi  
 Jan: Shauna, Mindy  
 Feb: Rachel

### Finishing Bee

CONGRATULATIONS to Bethany on the birth of her new baby son! For those participating in Finishing Bee, remember to bring your finished UFOs for October, or add a Fat Quarter to add to the pool.

March—PINK, April—YELLOW, May—PURPLE, June—BLACK, July—WHITE, Aug—NOVELTY PRINT, September/October/November, check with Bethany for your **Finishing Bee** assignment: [jayandbethany@hotmail.com](mailto:jayandbethany@hotmail.com)

### Planning Meeting

You are cordially invited to attend the Heber Valley Quilters annual Business Meeting to select officers for next year's guild board, and offer suggestions for guild meetings in 2012. We will meet at 6:00 pm, prior to our regular guild meeting at 7:00p.m. There are many positions to fill for next year, including Vice President (President Elect), Newsletter Editor, Historian, Charity Quilt Committee Chairperson, etc. The guild needs YOU!



Be sure to visit the guild blog often to see the creativity of our guild members!

<http://hebervalleyquilters.blogspot.com>

(Subscribe or make a comment and your name will be entered in a monthly drawing!)

Also, check the guild website for the guild's exclusive "Block of the Month" patterns, past newsletters, slideshows, etc. [www.hebervalleyquilters.com](http://www.hebervalleyquilters.com)

### Checklist

PLEASE BRING:

\* (6:00 PM) Nominations for next year's Board Members, and Ideas for 2012 Curriculum

\* Friendship Exchange Blocks  
 \* Finishing Bee or Novelty Fat Quarter

\* Sew & Tell Projects  
 \* Quilted Nametag

See you at guild meeting!