

# 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

As the Victorian craze for making a crazy quilt waned, a new sewing fad took its place. Women turned to the craft of Redwork embroidery using a wonderful deep red thread called Turkey Red. Although the popularity of Redwork embroidery peaked around the turn of the century it wasn't new. Beginning in the 1880s women had been willing to pay extra for Turkey Red thread because unlike most colors it was colorfast.

The manufacturing process for "Turkey Red" was complex and a well-kept secret for decades. The complete "recipe" for the original dye is still a mystery. Redwork was extremely popular among the common people because the cotton thread was not only colorfast, but it was less costly than the silk threads commonly used at the time. And the designs were easy to embroider.

Redwork began in England at the Royal School of Art Needlework in Kensington where students decided to work on designs simply using the outline stitch embroidery. For this reason, the stitch became also known as the Kensington Stitch. All one requires to get started is the Kensington Stitch along with the stem stitch, French knots or colonial knots, and back stitch.

Initially Redwork was not done on quilts but on a variety of useful household items. Our foremothers used Redwork designs to adorn coverlets, dish towels, laundry bags, splashers, bureau scarves, pillow covers, mantel covers etc. Embroidered tidies were used to protect chair backs, on napkins, tea towels, dresser scarves, chair cushions, sofa pillows and anywhere else possible.

Some patterns were quite simple, others intricate. The array of designs was endless and varied fabric was used. Animals, flowers, toys and children were all popular themes. Pictures of famous buildings and people were stitched as well as playful storybook and nursery rhyme characters.

Manufacturers encouraged women to start a home business of stamping fabrics for friends and neighbors. Kits including all the necessary materials including a large variety of designs were sold for this purpose. In the 1870s iron on transfers were developed. This was a welcome new product compared to the old stamping methods.

Although little girls often learned how to embroider in school, they practiced embroidery on "penny squares"

provided by their mother. A square of white cotton with a stamped design cost a penny, as did the skein of red floss.

It wasn't until the turn of the century that women began to use Redwork embroidery for bed coverings. Preprinted squares ready to embroider were sold. The quilt blocks used for Redwork quilts ranged from six to ten inches across. They were usually embroidered then sewn together without any sashing between the blocks. Often a feather or cross-stitch was used to cover the seam line. Later a red or red print sashing was sometimes used. Some of these bed coverings were quilted while others were "Summer Quilts" - simply lined without batting and then tied at the corners of each block. In the 1920's more and more embroidered pieces were done with a delightful variety of colors as methods were found to make all colors colorfast. It is now seen an umbrella term signifying a certain kind of embroidery, rather than the color of the thread used.

Taken from Judy Anne Breneman's [www.womenfolk.com/quilting\\_history](http://www.womenfolk.com/quilting_history) and Rosie de Leon-McCrary's "History of Redwork" [www.redworkplus.com](http://www.redworkplus.com)

## September 8th — Evasive Maneuvers

Guild meeting this month will include a workshop led by Christy Watt, Embroiderer Extraordinaire! We'll each make have the opportunity to make our own "Penny Square", using traditional Redwork stitches. Fabric, needles and floss will be provided. If you'd like, you may bring a small embroidery hoop, thimble and scissors, and we'll stitch, stitch, stitch!

Guild Meeting, Thursday, Sept 8th, 7:00 pm AmBank Building Community Room

### 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:

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

### Finishing Bee

For those participating, remember to bring your finished UFOs for August, or a Fat Quarter to add to the pool.

March—PINK, April—YELLOW, May—PURPLE, June—BLACK, July—WHITE, Aug—NOVELTY PRINT.

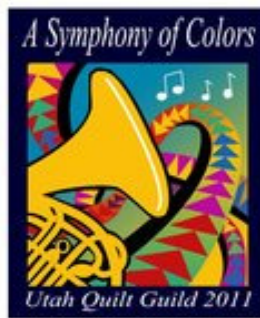
### Utah Quilt Guild

Don't Miss

#### *Quilt Festival!!!*

September 20-24, 2011  
 Marriot Hotel, Provo, UT

Schedule of Events/Registration:  
[www.utahquiltguild.org/annual](http://www.utahquiltguild.org/annual)



Please bring a large *Symphony* chocolate bar and colorful fat quarter to contribute to the guild's Quilt Fest gift basket. Call BARB if you need more info: 654-0656

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:

\*Symphony Chocolate Bar & Fat Quarter for Quilt Fest Gift Basket

\* Embroidery hoop, scissors, thimble  
 \* Friendship Exchange Block  
 \* Finishing Bee or Novelty Fat Quarter

\*Sew & Tell Projects  
 \*Quilted Nametag

See you at guild meeting!