

GARDNER MUSEUM of Architecture and Design

332 Maine, Quincy, Illinois



NEWSLETTER

FALL/WINTER 1987

"QUILTS AND QUILTERS"

THE CRAZY QUILT

Why were crazy quilt designs, such as those in the Gardner Museum's fall exhibition, "Quilts and Quilters," so popular during the Victorian era?

Their popularity can be traced to the rapidly increasing industrialization of the United States in the 19th century, the increased leisure time for women and typical U. S. pride in handiwork.

With the men off to produce whatever could

be sold and the children in school all day, the Victorian woman enjoyed more time to herself than any other woman had in the nation's past. Quiltmaking was a favorite activity to pass the time and socialize. Quilts had moved from the privacy of the bedroom to the walls and racks of the parlor. A quilter's skill at hand-painted adornment and stitchery, such as number 54 in the exhibition, was essential to impressing one's peers.

Industrialization and the relaxing of textile restrictions expanded the availability of material for quilters. Silk, in any form—cigar bands, shoe labels, even neckties, as number 123 in the exhibition is quilted of—was utilized extensively in the Victorian era.

The pride of a parlor quilt and the increased material helped to spark the zenith of Victorian crazy quilts popularity in the United States.

—Kevin Woodward

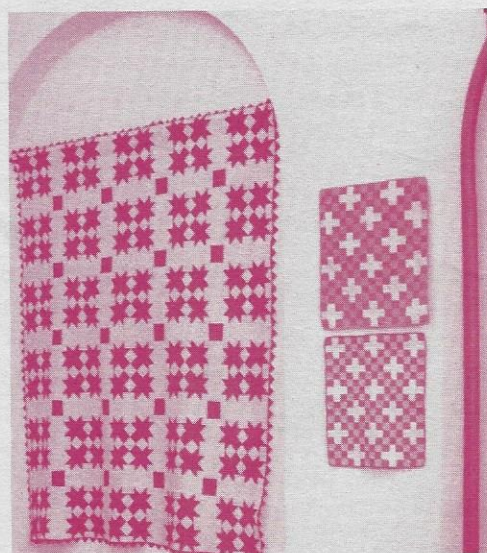


Second floor gallery scene of "Quilts and Quilters"
photo courtesy Quincy Herald-Whig

"Quilts and Quilters" is open now through December 13, each weekend, 1-5 p.m. The exhibit features over 125 quilts ranging in age from 1828, to the late 1930's. One exception is a locally made crazy quilt made a few years ago of old men's ties. It is so spectacular with its stitching variations and colors, our exhibition committee felt it should be included in the display.

Gardner Museum officials express appreciation to our first ever guest curator, Mrs. Jean Shelor Lyle of Quincy. Her knowledge and expertise in all aspects of the quilting world enabled us to produce a fine exhibition of a true art form. A big thanks to our exhibition committee, too, for their many hours of sleeving quilts and decision making. The committee was comprised of: Mrs. Lyle, Mrs. Eileen Dezotell, Mrs. Pat Geraci, Mrs. Beverly Karp, Mrs. Judy Milfs, Mrs. Pauline Wessells, Mrs. Rolla Wike and Museum officials.

Hundreds of visitors have toured this exhibit, some returning for a second and third look, quite impressed with the variety and quality of the quilts. Groups of all ages and sizes are encouraged to tour the galleries through the week by appointment. Information can be obtained by calling our office (224-6873), Monday through Friday 9-4.



First floor galleries — showing doll quilts and
"corner star" or "devil's claw" quilt