

## THE ROLE OF HANDICRAFT IN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE

## РОЛЬ РЕМЕСЕЛ В АМЕРИКАНСКОЙ ИСТОРИИ И КУЛЬТУРЕ

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**Аннотациясы:** Ар бир олконун озунун тарыхы, маданияты, каада-салты, жашоо ыңгайы жана билим тармагы менен озгочолонот.

**Негизги сөздөр:** устачылык, Америка, тарых, маданият.

**Аннотация:** Каждая страна имеет свои особенности в истории, культуре, традиции, образе жизни, образовании и т.д. Ремесло одно из этих особенностей.

**Ключевые слова:** Ремесло, Америка, история и культура

**Abstract:** Every country has its own peculiarities in history, culture, tradition, way of life, education etc. handicraft is one of these peculiarities.

**Key words:** handicraft, America, history, culture.

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Every country has its own peculiarities in history, culture, tradition, way of life, education etc. January is known as National Hobby Month in the United

States. That means that Public libraries, community centers, various clubs are all encouraging people to discover a new hobby or spend time enjoying their

current favorite leisure activity.

Old craft that is experiencing new life and it has enjoyed a long tradition in the United States and today is more popular than ever. According to a 2003 survey by Quilters Newsletter Magazine, there are more than twenty one million American quilters (representing 15 percent of U.S. households). The most dedicated among them are likely to have an entire room in their house devoted to quilting and to own more than \$8,000 worth of quilting supplies. Their creations range from everyday items such as bed coverings, clothing, and table mats to treasured heirlooms and museum quality works of art.

A quilt can warm a bed, decorate a wall, and comfort a child in her crib or a soldier at war. A quilt also can tell a story, commemorate an event, honor the dead, unite a community, and reflect a culture. Quite a resume for a piece of needlework! And evidence, too, that quilts have captured the hearts and imaginations of Americans unlike any other form of folk art.

The world quilt itself has come to describe far more than stitched pieces of fabric. Civil rights activist Jesse Jackson used the word to describe American society when he said: "American is not like a blanket—one piece of unbroken cloth, the same color, the same texture, the same size. America is more like quilt—many patches, many pieces, many colors, many sizes, and all women and held together by a common thread."

The last 30 years have brought a tremendous increase in the appreciation of quilts not only as folk art but as fine art worthy of hanging in the best museums. Dozens of museums and historical societies display quilts as part of their collections, and museums dedicated only to quilts are thriving in such places as Kentucky, Massachusetts, Virginia, Colorado, and California.

The event credited with sparking this quilting renaissance was the 1971 exhibition, "Abstract Design in American Quilts," at the prestigious Whitney Museum of Art in New York City. The first exhibition ever to treat quilts purely as an art form, the show was one of the most popular in the museum's history and subsequently traveled for nearly four years throughout the United States and Europe.

Elevated to fine art, quilts can command large sums of money. The quilt believed to hold the record sold at auction in the early 1990s for more than \$264,000 and was purchased again later for an undisclosed amount by private buyers who then

donated it to the International Quilt Study Center at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Stitched in 1867 by women in Brooklyn, New York, the album style quilt features outstanding construction, a wealth of different fabrics, and numerous vignettes relating to the quilt maker's personal life and more broadly to the reconciliation between the North and South following the Civil War, according to curator Carolyn Dicey.

The International Quilt Study Center itself is testimony to the serious regard for display, preservation, and study of quilts in the United States. Founded in 1997 with the gift of 950 quilts from private collectors Addis and Robert James, the center holds the largest publicly owned collection in the world—about 1,900 pieces at last count—and also offers the only graduate degree in textile history with an emphasis on quilt studies.

Love of quilts and quilting will only continue to grow, Ducey predicts, because "there is somehow a connection to quilts that makes them so accessible to people. You can look at them through almost any lens—American history, women's history, even technology, because the desire to produce cotton cheaply helped launch the Industrial Revolution in this country. No matter who you are, you are probably going to find something that will fascinate you about quilts."

Quilt patterns almost certainly number in the thousands. Two quilt pattern encyclopedias published in 1993 featured over 4,000 different pieced quilt patterns and nearly 1,800 applique patterns. Accurate numbers are difficult to come by because the same pattern may have different names in different parts of the country. A design known as Duck's Foot in the Mud on Long Island (New York) became Hand of Friendship in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Bear's Paw in Ohio. What is known as Mariner's Compass in New England might be called Sunflower in Kansas. However, the design was used in Great Britain much earlier, and a Scottish quilt expert suggests that it stems from patterns of land cultivation practiced since the middle Ages. Even more intriguing was the discovery of the pattern in strips of linen wound around mummified cats found in Egyptian tombs early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Did these mummies, many of which were shipped back to England, inspire some farmer's wife to create a "new" quilt design?

Another pattern with a colorful history is Drunkard's patch, so named because its winding

curves suggest the staggering gait of someone who has imbibed too much. Often associated with the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) campaign to outlaw alcohol in the late 1800s, the design is in fact probably much older, thought was used in some quilts made and sold to raise money for the WCTU.

Many other evocative names for quilt patterns were suggested by farm life (Barn Door, Hen and Chicks, Rail Fence) and domestic life (Broken Dishes, Baby Blocks, Puss in the Corner). Patterns with roots in Bible stories include Jacob's ladder, Job's tears, Crown of Thorns, and Garden of Eden. Love and romance gave us the Double Wedding Ring, Cupid's Own, and Lower's Knot, while nature inspired Pine Tree, Bear's Paw, Clamshell, and Turkey Tracks. From the great westward migration across the continent we have such patterns as Prairie Queen, Chisholm Trail, and Sage Bud.

Some distinctive quilt designs are associated with certain ethnic groups. African American quilts, for example, feature bold, asymmetrical patterns and large shapes inspired by African textiles. Black women also produced story quilts to record family events and traditions or to depict stories from the Bible. The most famous of these, two Bible quilts sewn by former slave Harriet Powers, are now in the collections of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

Equally renowned for their quilt making are the Amish, members of a religious sect who dress plainly and shun modern technology. Known for their simple designs and bold solid colors of greens, blues, purples, and black, Amish quilts are much in demand and draw thousands of shoppers to southern Pennsylvania, where there is a large Amish community.

A quilt is basically a fabric sandwich made of three layers—a decorative top, a filling, and a backing. The word quilting refers both to the process of making a quilt and to the means by which the layers are fastened together: they may be tied with strategically placed knots or secured with stitching, often done in intricate patterns that add to the beauty of the finished piece. Quilters use a frame to hold and stretch the fabric during the quilting process. Some frames are large enough to hold the entire quilt, others small enough to be held in the hand while working on one section at a time.

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The arrangement of the blocks and of pieces within the blocks allows for a myriad of pleasing designs. A second type of quilt top is applique, from a French word meaning "to put on or lay on." In this method, fabric shapes in abstract motifs or in realistic forms, such as flowers or animals, are sewn to a background with tiny, invisible stitches. Most applique and patchwork quilts have fabric borders that frame the entire design and are also usually quilted.

In a third style, known as a whole cloth quilt, the entire top is a single, solid color, and the decorative stitching, or quilting, provides the interest. Some quilters enhance the look with a technique called trapunto, in which extra stuffing is inserted to raise certain parts of the design in relief.

In conclusion, we would like to share from history of Kyrgyz people's craft.

We have similarities of making quilts. A quilt is a type of blanket with many squares of fabric stitched together. Some of the squares are different colors, and some have patterns in various colors and shapes. Many quilts consist of traditional squares with images of things such as flowers, stars, kind of figures and national symbols and ornaments. When girls are married, their mothers stitch and present kind of quilting supplies (coverlet, cushion, wall decoration like a carpet, stair-carpet, table napkin for tea pot, etc.) .They are the best heritages for girls.

Quilts histories and themselves each have their own histories. Quilts get handed down within families from one generation to the next, along with

stories about the persons who made them and owned them. Pieces of the stories can be forgotten along the way, making it harder to determine the exact age and origin of a quilt, although many people are interested in doing that.

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