Intimate Parallels: The Art, History, and Activism of Civil War-Era Women's Quilt Art

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Intimate Parallels: The Art, History, and Activism of Civil War-Era Women’s Quilt Art

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Abstract

The Civil War era was the most chronicled and transformational period in United States history. Narrated in art and text by mainstream publications, information regarding the era was readily available to most Americans. Distant from the white male-dominated mainstream forms of art and journalism, a less renowned art form also chronicled the Civil War era. Denied the vote, and social and political equality, many Civil War-era women expressed their sentiments through the symbolic messaging of quilt art.

This study inquires into Civil War-era quilt art’s ability to exhibit historical events and its proclivity to symbolize and message the disparity between men’s and women’s social and political environments. It asserts that quilt art of the Civil War era reflects the general historical events of the era and creates a material record of women’s social and political sentiments. Furthermore, this thesis contends that an intimate parallelism exists between quilt art, the historical events, and the lived social and political experiences of Civil War-era women.

The direct observation and interpretation of primary source quilt art and relevant primary and secondary source documents evidence quilt art’s intimate parallelism with history and women’s liminal status. Today, Civil War-era quilt art represents some of our nation’s most cherished artifacts. As social and material culture history, quilt art provides an insightful and endearing connection to those artists, historians, and activists who endured the challenges and transformations of the Civil War era.
Dedication

This project is dedicated to those intrepid quilters of the Civil War era. Despite the turmoil and disparity of their social, political, and economic realities, women of the Civil War era stitched a material record of the historical events and the challenges and transformations of their lived experiences. Collectively, the quilt art of northern and southern, free and slave, and black and white Civil War-era women represents artistic expression and an historical legacy that challenges our memory of the Civil War era and the role of women during that grand epoch. This study is a grateful acknowledgement to the quilt art and perseverance of Civil War-era women. The symbols, images, and messages of their craft continue to enrich our lives.
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# Table of Contents

Dedication ......................................................................................................................... iv
Acknowledgements ............................................................................................................... v
List of Exhibits ....................................................................................................................... viii
I. Women, Quilt Art, and Civil War-Era Culture ................................................................. 1
II. Myths, Realities, and Scholarship of Quilting in America ............................................... 5
III. Scholarship and the Social History of Civil War-Era Women ......................................... 11
IV. Religiously Inspired Quilt Art of the Civil War Era ......................................................... 15
V. Politically Inspired Quilt Art of the Civil War Era ........................................................... 39
VI. Socially Inspired Quilt Art of the Civil War Era ............................................................. 63
    Abolition and Slavery ........................................................................................................ 64
    Temperance ....................................................................................................................... 77
    Family and Community .................................................................................................... 91
VII. Civil War-Inspired Quilting Art ..................................................................................... 108
    Nationalism and Patriotism ............................................................................................... 109
    War Relief and Early Reconstruction ............................................................................... 121
VIII. Intimate Parallels: Quilt Art, History, and Civil War-Era Women ................................. 139
Endnotes ................................................................................................................................ 144
Bibliography ........................................................................................................................ 153
List of Exhibits

Exhibit 1: Solomon’s Temple, Margaret Ann Yates, 1860 .............................................. 29
Exhibit 2: Solomon’s Crown, maker not recorded, pre-Civil War ......................... 29
Exhibit 3: Christian Cross, Julia Wells Maxson, 1867-1880 .............................. 30
Exhibit 4: Christian Cross, maker not recorded, 1848 .............................................. 30
Exhibit 5: Dove at the Crossroads, Jenny Wyckoff Russell, 1860-1890 .................. 31
Exhibit 6: Church Steps, Kathrine B. Davis, 1852 ..................................................... 31
Exhibit 7: Crown of Thorn Variation, Betty Brown family, 1870s ....................... 32
Exhibit 8: Rose of Sharon, Sarah McWilliams Denney, 1840-1860 ...................... 32
Exhibit 9: Star of Bethlehem and Eight Point Design, Thomas Mifflin family, 1840-1850 .......................................................... 33
Exhibit 10: Bible Quilt, Harriet Powers, date unrecorded ........................................ 33
Exhibit 11: Star of Bethlehem Variation Quilt, Ellen Morton Littlejohn, Margaret Morton Bibb, circa 1837-1850 .............................................................. 34
Exhibit 12: Dove in the Window, Martha Jane Riffe, 1853 ..................................... 34
Exhibit 13: Rose of Sharon, maker not recorded, 1870 .............................................. 35
Exhibit 14: Garden of Eden, maker not recorded, 1874 .............................................. 35
Exhibit 15: Jacob’s Ladder, maker not recorded, 1840-1860 ............................... 36
Exhibit 16: Rose of Sharon, Mary Jane Gray Rouse, 1850 ........................................ 36
Exhibit 17: Ark and Dove, Harriet Lucinda Acker McDavid Russell, 1860 ................ 37
Exhibit 18: Solomon’s Temple, Elizabeth Sayres Parkinson, 1860 ......................... 37
Exhibit 19: Sarah and Mary J. Pool Album Quilt, Margaret Rodney Herget, circa 1847-1848 .......................................................... 38
Exhibit 20: *Whig Rose Bouquet*, Elizabeth Trodge Turley, Circa 1860 ...................... 54
Exhibit 21: *Whig Rose*, Mary Loomis, Ethel Kent, Circa 1840-1860 ...................... 54
Exhibit 22: *Whig Rose*, Matilda Whisler, circa 1860-1865 .................................. 55
Exhibit 23: *Harrison Rose Floral Urn Quilt*, Susan Noakes McCord, circa 1860 .... 55
Exhibit 24: *Old Tippecanoe Friendship Quilt*, Zimmerman family, 1843 .............. 56
Exhibit 25: *Lincoln’s Platform*, Margaret Ann Simkins, circa 1865 ...................... 56
Exhibit 26: *Mosaic Quilt or Henry Clay Ribbon Quilt*, maker not recorded, 
Circa 1840 (full and detail views) ............................................................... 57
Exhibit 27: *Henry Clay—La Grange Mill Boys*, 
Elizabeth Willis Anderson, circa 1844-1850 ................................................. 58
Exhibit 28: *Whigs Defeat*, maker not recorded, 1850 ........................................ 58
Exhibit 29: *Democrat Rose*, Mrs. Joseph Grigsby Smyth, circa 1865 ...................... 59
Exhibit 30: *Polk’s Fancy*, Catherine Ubker, circa 1855 ........................................ 59
Exhibit 31: *The Union Star*, Elizabeth Holmes, 1869 .......................................... 60
Exhibit 32: *Original Design*, maker not recorded, 1870 ..................................... 60
Exhibit 33: *Davis Stars*, Varina Howell Davis, circa 1864 .................................... 61
Exhibit 34: *The Reconciliation Quilt*, Lucinda Ward Honstain, 1867 .................... 61
Exhibit 35: *Liberty Medallion Quilt*, Elizabeth Hobbs Keckley, circa 1870 .......... 62
Exhibit 36: *Evening Star or Cradle Quilt*, Lydia Maria Child, 1836 ..................... 72
Exhibit 37: *Medallion*, Rebecca Scattergood Savery, 1845 ................................. 72
Exhibit 38: *Hadley Abolitionist Quilt*, Rebecca Harvey Hadley, 1842 ................. 73
Exhibit 39: *Underground Railroad*, maker not recorded, circa 1870-1890 .......... 73
Exhibit 40: *Wistar Family Tree Quilt*, 
maker not recorded, circa 1850 (full and detail views) ................................. 74
Exhibit 41: Deborah Coates, Deborah Coates, circa 1840-1850 (full and detail views) ........................................... 75

Exhibit 42: Susan Bond Quilt, maker not recorded, 1847 ................................................................. 76

Exhibit 43: Penn Family Quilt, Ruth Penn, circa 1850 ................................................................. 76

Exhibit 44: Drunkard’s Path, Amanda Haight, circa 1870 ................................................................. 86

Exhibit 45: Drunkard’s Path, Letta Childers, 1896 ................................................................. 86

Exhibit 46: Tree of Life on point, Taylor Family, circa 1860-1880 ........................................... 87

Exhibit 47: Temperance Tree Quilt, Mary Ann Rodgers, 1886 ........................................... 87

Exhibit 48: Liberty Tree Quilt, Mrs. S. K. Daniels, circa 1876-1890 ........................................... 88

Exhibit 49: T Pattern, maker and date unrecorded ................................................................. 88

Exhibit 50: T Pattern, maker not recorded, 1874 ................................................................. 89

Exhibit 51: Cornelia Dow, Cornelia Maria Dow and others, 1864 ........................................... 89

Exhibit 52: WCTU Bear Paw Quilt, maker not recorded, circa 1900 ........................................... 90

Exhibit 53: Crusade Quilt, Hillsboro, Ohio, WCTU, 1876 ................................................................. 90

Exhibit 54: Lemoyne Star, Mrs. L Johnson, 1873 ................................................................. 100

Exhibit 55: Wild Goose Chase Variation, maker not recorded, 1843 ........................................... 100

Exhibit 56: New Hampshire Signature Quilt
Friends of Carrie Foster, circa 1850-1875 ................................................................. 101

Exhibit 57: Nine Patch Strip, on point,
Quaker Friends of the Roberts family, circa 1845 ................................................................. 101

Exhibit 58: Basket, Mary High Prince, 1863 ................................................................. 102

Exhibit 59: Bear Paw, Emma Miescher, 1873 ................................................................. 102

Exhibit 60: Grandmother’s Flower Garden,
Lydia Braman Peabody, circa 1846-1870 ................................................................. 103

Exhibit 61: Album Patch, Amey Randall Manton, 1877 ................................................................. 103
Exhibit 62: *Wild Goose Chase*, Margaret E. Aiken Cody Means, 1874 ........................................ 104

Exhibit 63: *Album Quilt*, maker not recorded, circa 1846 ................................. 104

Exhibit 64: *123 students dedicated to Patience Smith*,
Pupils of Friends Institute of New York, 1852 ........................................ 105

Exhibit 65: *Haring Applique Sampler Quilt*, Betsy Haring, 1859 .......................... 105

Exhibit 66: *Album Quilt*, The Frenchtown Sewing Society, 1874 .......................... 106

Exhibit 67: *Friendship Quilt*, Friends and family of Emmeline, 1857 .................. 106

Exhibit 68: *Philena Cooper Hambleton’s Quaker Friendship Quilt*,
maker not recorded, 1853 ................................................................. 107

Exhibit 69: *Album Patch*, maker not recorded, circa 1845 ................................. 107

Exhibit 70: *Kansas Troubles*, maker not recorded, circa 1850 .......................... 116

Exhibit 71: *Eagle*, Mary Caroline Nelson, 1846 ................................................. 116

Exhibit 72: *Eagle applique*, Helen Gilchrist Ferris, circa 1848 ............................. 117

Exhibit 73: *Patriotic Embroidered Counterpane*, Susan Adel Esputa, circa 1850 ...... 117

Exhibit 74: *Flag Quilt*, Ivy Purcell, 1861 .......................................................... 118

Exhibit 75: *Patriotic Quilt Variation*, Margret E. W. Dodge, circa 1865 ................. 118

Exhibit 76: *Mary Lord’s Civil War Quilt*, Mary Hughes Lord, 1861 ..................... 119

Exhibit 77: *Harper Crib Quilt*, Maria Preston Harper, 1861 .................................. 119

Exhibit 78: *Confederate Applique Quilt*, Susan Robb, circa 1863-1865 ............... 120

Exhibit 79: *Davis Applique Quilt or Butterfly Quilt*, Varina Davis, circa 1870 ...... 120

Exhibit 80: *LeMoyne stars*, Boston area women, 1865 ........................................ 133

Exhibit 81: *1864 Civil War Album Quilt Top*, maker not recorded, 1864 ............ 133

Exhibit 82: *1863 Susannah Pullen’s Civil War Quilt*, Susannah Pullen
and Sunday School class, 1863 .......................................................... 134

Exhibit 83: *1856 Ward Wedding Quilt*, maker not recorded, 1856 ....................... 134
Exhibit 84: *Sampler*, maker not recorded, 1864 (full and detail views) .................. 135

Exhibit 85: *Gunboat*, Martha Singleton Hatter, 1861 ......................................... 136

Exhibit 86: *Gunboat-B*, Martha Singleton Hatter, circa 1862 .................................. 136

Exhibit 87: *Red Calico Sawtooth*, maker not recorded, circa 1865 .......................... 137

Exhibit 88: *Feed the Hungry*, Women of the Methodist-Episcopal Church, South, Lexington, Missouri, 1866 ................................................................. 137

Exhibit 89: *Civil War/Presentation Quilt*, maker not recorded, circa 1865 .............. 138

Exhibit 90: *Embroidered Candlewick*, Margaret Davis, circa 1865 .......................... 138
I.
Women, Quilt Art, and Civil War-Era Culture

On the eve of the Civil War, the United States was a diverse and disparate scene of growth, achievement, and socio-political turmoil. Since the beginning of the nineteenth century, the size of the United States quadrupled, the population doubled every twenty-three years, and the Gross National Product doubled every fifteen years. The United States achieved the world’s highest standard of living and overall literacy rate. Urbanization, improved technology, the development of railroad systems, and educational enhancements made the United States the envy of the manufacturing world.¹

Conversely, the bounty of America’s growth and achievement was not equally shared and enjoyed. The Civil War era, defined for this study as the years 1840 through 1874, was also characterized by the conquest of Native peoples, an unpopular war with Mexico, and slavery. During the Civil War era, the disparate treatment of women gave rise to the beginning of the women’s rights movement.²

America’s growth and achievements resulted in cultural devastation, the loss of homelands, and dependency for numerous Native peoples. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, signed in 1848, ended the war with Mexico and ceded lands to the United States that extended to the Pacific Ocean. Tension over extending slavery into the existing western territories and the new lands acquired from Mexico was tearing the United States apart. Propelled by slavery and other sectional differences, including state’s rights and economic issues, the United States spiraled into war with secessionist southern states.³
The Civil War era was narrated in art and text by many publications including *Harpers Weekly, Frank Leslie’s Illustrated*, and the *New York Times*. Lithographers *Currier and Ives* and the burgeoning craft of photography provided images chronicling it. Public and commercial messages and news regarding the Civil War traversed the United States with remarkable speed via the electric telegraph. These mainstream forms of art, literature, and communication created a permanent record and brought the events of the Civil War era home to most Americans.⁴

Disregarded by the controlling, white male-dominated culture, and its mainstream forms of art and journalism, a less prominent art form also chronicled the Civil War era. Denied the vote, legal equality, and largely excluded from the public processes of social activism and politics, many Civil War-era women expressed their experiences and sentiments through the symbolic images and messaging of quilt art. Armed with needles, threads, fabrics, and the desire to be heard in a society that suppressed their voices, they utilized quilt art as an instrument of expression. Sometimes with intricate beauty, often with folk art simplicity, women of the Civil War era recorded history and stitched a material record of the disparity within their social and political environments.⁵

This thesis examines Civil War-era quilt art in the context of its ability to exhibit Civil War-era history and its penchant to symbolize and message women’s social and political realities throughout the Civil War era. Building on existing scholarship, this study hypothesizes that the relationship between quilt art, women’s social and political history, and the events of the Civil War era possess a complex connectivity that is intimate and more deeply associated and interdisciplinary than is generally expressed in contemporary literature regarding quilt art and women’s social history. Specifically, it
contributes to a matrixed understanding of quilt art as material culture, women’s social history, and our historical memory regarding the Civil War era.

Testing this hypothesis required a synthesis of Civil War-era primary source quilt art, the events of the Civil War era, and the liminal status of women. Liminality or liminal status is a transitional period, or periods, in which the participants lack social rank, are largely anonymous in the social and political realm, and must follow prescribed forms of conduct and dress. Liminality is an imposed social order in transition, and those being moved by changing cultural forces are between evolving social and political systems.6

Establishing the synthesis between quilt art, historical events, and the liminal social and political status of Civil War-era women involved the direct observation, comparing and contrasting, and interpretation of primary source quilt art and women’s social history documents and literature. Secondary source documents and literature relevant to Civil War-era quilt art and the liminal social and political status of women were also consulted. At issue was demonstrating that the images, symbols, and messages of Civil War-era women’s quilt art existed in sufficient quantity and meaningful interpretation to establish intimate parallelism with the chronicling of Civil War-era and women’s social and political realities. Parallelism in history involves the sharing of historical events, direction, practices, and tendencies. Parallelism becomes intimate when this sharing includes character, message, and meaning.7

Civil War-era women understood liminality and engaged the social, political, and economic disparity under which they struggled. Voicing their sentiments through quilt art, they quilted for causes and in broad terms, the causes for which they quilted were
religious, political, social, and Civil War related. More specifically, women representing the broad spectrum of social classes and different geographies of the United States, stitched a material record and permanent legacy attesting to their sentiments regarding: religion, abolition and slavery, temperance, community and family, politics, suffrage, patriotism and nationalism, war relief, and the experiences of their liminal status.

The affective motivations powering Civil War-era women’s quilting were as expansive as the topics for which they quilted. Their motivations included: creative expression, emotional expression and stability, therapeutic value, sense of individual and community identity, linkages to past people and places, and their own personal legacies. This thesis argues that Civil War-era quilt art is a social, cultural, and historical text of the sentiments and lived experiences of women. The quilt art stitched by Civil War-era women is a material record that evidences the intimate parallelism between quilt art, historical events, and the social and political realities endured by women of the Civil War era.
II.

Myths, Realities, and Scholarship of Quilting in America

Synthesizing quilt art, historical events, and the social and political realities of Civil War-era women demands an understanding of quilt art history. This understanding requires knowledge of the fundamental definitions and meanings of quilting as both a process and a historiography. Furthermore, depth of understanding is obtained through study of quilt art’s myths, folklore, and historical realities. Additional awareness into quilt history is enabled by insight into the slow and varied evolution of quilt art scholarship.

During the Civil War era, needle, thread, and fabric art work was multi-dimensional. It included banners, flags, handkerchiefs, and bedding. Stitched art work also graced sewing cases, book and diary covers, and items of clothing. Moreover, many sewn items produced for philanthropic and war relief purposes were decorated with inscriptions and drawings. ¹¹

This thesis defines quilt art as the images, symbols, and messages portrayed on bed or cot style quilts and coverlets made for personal, utilitarian, display, war relief, and fund raising purposes such as auctions. Quilted artifacts are further defined as the joining of three layers of fabric. These layers include; an artistically stitched, pieced, or appliqued top; a middle batting for comfort and stability; and a backing material. Coverlets are artistically designed tops that lack batting and often lack backing. ¹²

Interchangeably throughout this thesis, the terms “quilt,” “coverlet,” “quilting,” and
“quilt art” represent the personal sentiments and historical legacy of the artists, historians, and activists who crafted those fabric symbols, images, and messages.

Over the centuries, the objective history of quilting, like other genres of history, became satiated with myths. Eclipsing the objective history, the perceived history of quilting created romanticized myths encompassing the origins, symbols, images, and development of quilting in America. The perceived realities of myths often defy historical realities and facts. Textile historian Virginia Gunn professes: “Myths survive and thrive because they reflect people’s dreams, ideas, and values. They provide images and stories that unite and inspire members of society.”

Quilt art myths flourished because quilts as material culture did not receive the scholarly attention afforded politics, military events, and other art forms of the Civil War era. Languishing for decades, quilt scholarship published prior to the 1930s recognized the historical text present in quilt art. However, lacking access to primary source materials, early quilt scholarship relied upon, and perpetuated, historically inaccurate folklore portraying quilting’s origins and images as being a uniquely American craft firmly established in colonial history. Continued study through the early 1970s further acknowledged the historical context of quilts and focused on quilt art patterns, quilting techniques, and quilts within the decorative arts.

Beginning in the middle 1970s and continuing to the present, interest in quilting as creative expression and material culture flourished. Likewise, scholarly research burgeoned. Historians discovered a trove of material culture to research. Scholarly inquiry and documentation quickly replaced the folklore myths of quilting with objective historical realities.
The folklore myth that quilting’s origins and images were a uniquely American craft firmly established in colonial history was corrected by historical realities identifying quilting’s origins as dating to ancient China and Egypt. Migrating to Europe during the Crusades of the High Middle Ages, quilting traditions ultimately migrated to British North America via Dutch and English colonization. Furthermore, the earliest quilts made in America, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are directly related by design and technique to those found in Europe during the same time period.16

Objective history instructs that printed fabric was an expensive luxury in Colonial America and the first American quilts were the products of affluent households. Moreover, colonial period quilts were not the pieced and utilitarian bed covers made by frugal women on America’s frontier. They were whole-cloth and elaborately quilted coverings made to decorate the finer homes of Colonial America. Another early quilting technique was the *Broderie perse*, a central medallion and a series of borders appliqued onto whole-cloth. Contrary to folklore, broad-based application of patchwork, piecing, and applique quilting in America did not become fairly common until the late first quarter of the nineteenth century, and became widespread during the second quarter of the nineteenth century.17

America’s growth, achievements, and social and political turmoil were transforming the nation’s culture. As America was responding to its transformations, American quilters were distinctively changing the culture of quilting. During the 1840s and 1850s, the abundant supply of affordable textiles and the advent of the sewing machine enabled quilting to become an artistic forum and a channel for social and political commentary. The broad social spectrum and geographic distribution of Civil
War-era women were empowered by readily available fabrics and the time-saving sewing machine. This period was “The Golden Age of Applique” and current scholarship demonstrates that Civil War-era women actively engaged the artistic, religious, social, political, and war-related events of their lived experiences.\(^\text{18}\)

The Civil War era was an epoch where the quilting needle was as expressive as the ink pen or paint brush. It was a period where quilt art represented meaningful social and political commentary. It was a creative era that witnessed the development of new quilt art designs, patterns, and techniques.\(^\text{19}\)

Slow in developing, the upsurge in scholarly attention that displaced quilt art myths with objective history is chronicled by several late twentieth-and early twenty-first-century key initiatives:

- In 1974, the Folklore Archives at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville began the first quilt archive in the United States solely dedicated to the study of quilts in an academic setting.
- The American Quilt Study Group (AQSG) in Lincoln, Nebraska, was founded in 1980. A scholarly initiative, the AQSG’s mission is to promote the highest standards for interdisciplinary quilt research, study, and publication. Annually, the AQSG publishes *Uncoverings*, a summary of contemporary quilt scholarship.
- The Kentucky Quilt Project Inc. (KQP) was established in 1981. It was the first state wide endeavor to document quilts, including their oral and textual histories. It was the prototype for documentation projects throughout the United States. In 2011, the KQP was showcased in a nine-part Public Broadcasting Service series titled, *Why Quilts Matter*. 

8
• The Women of Color Quilters Network (WCQN) was established in 1986. Organized to promote and preserve quilting art among women and men of color, the WCQN also promotes historical research, quilt documentation, and facilitates African-American quilt exhibitions for museums and galleries.

• The Alliance for American Quilts was founded in 1993 to encourage the documenting, preserving, and sharing of America’s quilting heritage within the realm of quilt makers, designers, quilt industry, quilt scholars, and collectors.

• The International Quilt Study Center and Museum at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (IQSCM) was established in 1997. The IQSCM was created to enable formal and informal scholarship regarding quilt and textile history. The IQSCM contains over four thousand quilts and related textile artifacts in its 37,000 square foot facility. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln offers a graduate program in textile history with an emphasis on quilt studies.

• The Quilt Index is a partnership between the Alliance for American Quilts, Michigan State University, and the Michigan State University Museum. Established in 1998, The Quilt Index created a centralized, on-line, bibliographic style quilt information resource for education, research, and public access. Launched in 2003, The Quilt Index, in association with multiple historical societies, museums, universities, and private collections, archived over 50,000 quilt images and related records.

• During the last decades of the twentieth century, museums across America established permanent exhibitions and published scholarly summaries of their collections. Notable institutions were the New England Quilt Museum, Lowell,
Massachusetts; National Society Daughters of the American Revolution Museum, Washington D.C.; Shelburne Museum, Shelburne, Vermont; and the American Folk Art Museum, New York, New York. Credible resources today, these initiatives were the vanguard of scholarly research and documentation into the study of quilt art as material culture.

Knowledge of quilt history and the material culture of quilt art are essential to establishing intimate parallelism between quilt art, historical events, and the social and political realities of Civil War-era women. Understanding quilt history is also integral to the study of women’s social history. Comprehension of the material culture of quilt art and the social history of women facilitates the understanding of the intimate parallels present in quilt art, history and lived experiences of Civil War-era women.
III.
Scholarship and the Social History of Civil War-Era Women

Similar to the study of quilt art, the social history of Civil War-era women did not receive the scholarly attention given to traditional Civil War-era studies. Such voids in scholarship obscure objective history and limit our historical memory of the Civil War era. Knowledge of Civil War-era women’s social history and insight into the development of its scholarship aids in the comprehension of the intimate parallels between quilt art, historical events, and the social and political experiences of Civil War-era women.

Portrayed in the visual arts, music, theater arts, literature, and eventually motion pictures, the Civil War era remained active in the American conscious for over one hundred fifty years. Annually, publishers proffer a wide range of literature interpreting the Civil War era. Historian Nina Silber emphasized, in *Battle Scars: Gender and Sexuality in the American Civil War*, “that the dominate picture of the Civil War still revolves largely around leading generals, great battles, and famous political leaders … virtually no Civil War study gave much attention to women, let alone to issues of gender.” Silber also emphasized the changing landscape of Civil War-era scholarship and contemporary scholarship’s intensified interest in women’s experiences and the role of gender. Moreover, Silber implied that the intensified scholarly interest in the experiences of women and the role of gender created “a kind of collision between three sub-disciplines in the historical profession: traditional Civil War scholarship, the
development of women’s history, and a new emphasis on social and cultural history that dominated the historical profession toward the end of the twentieth century.”

The origins of this thesis are founded in Silber’s statement regarding the collision of Civil War-era scholarly sub-disciplines. The collision and resulting transformations within traditional Civil War-era study disciplines enables an opportunity to view history through multiple lenses and create a synthesized scene. The synthesized scene for this thesis is the intimate parallelism between Civil War-era historical events, women’s social history, and the material culture of quilt art as these phenomena conjointly traverse and impact the Civil War era.

Study regarding the experiences of women and the role of gender during the Civil War era was limited. In the 1960s, historians began studying the role of women in America’s past. This included research into women’s roles in the public arena and the transformations in their social, political, and economic lives wrought by the Civil War. These early studies acknowledged that the Civil War was a liberating turning point for women in the United States.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, scholarly interest in social history gained favor and the field of women’s social history became a bonanza of research opportunities. America’s historical past was being reassessed within the context of the experiences and influence of women. In 1992, historians Catherine Clinton and Nina Silber edited Divided Houses: Gender and the Civil War. A collection of essays by scholars examining the role and influence of gender during the Civil War era, Divided Houses: Gender and the Civil War energized the study of the experiences of Civil War-era women and the role of gender. Literature regarding the experiences of northern and southern white women and
free and slave black women during the Civil War era flourished. America’s historical memory regarding the Civil War era was being altered by the fresh perspective of the experiences of women.25

The increased scholastic focus on the material culture of quilt art and the social history of women, combined with the recognition of the sesquicentennial of the Civil War, fostered an abundance of Civil War-era interpretative literature. Scholarly texts regarding Civil War-era women, southern quilts, quilts from the Civil War, slave-made quilts, gender and the Civil War, and books about women as spies and soldiers crowded book shelves. Monographs addressing women’s suffrage, temperance, and social and legal inequality were also prevalent. Contemporary Civil War-era women’s social history scholarship also addressed women’s domesticity and the non-traditional jobs and responsibilities thrust upon them by the exigencies of the Civil War and the absence of men to perform their culturally ascribed social, political, and economic functions.26

Contemporary scholarship regarding quilt art of the Civil War era routinely acknowledges the historical text and social and political messaging contained in quilt art.27 Similarly, contemporary social history regarding Civil War-era women recognizes the social, economic, philanthropic, and patriotic significance associated with the needle crafts of Civil War-era women.28 However, neither contemporary quilt art scholarship or women’s social history scholarship focused on, or developed, the broad scope of intimate parallelism present in quilt art and women’s social history of the Civil War era. Building on contemporary quilt art scholarship and the contemporary scholarship of women’s social history, the following chapters of this thesis are constructed to synthesize and demonstrate intimate parallelism between Civil War-era quilt art, the historical events of
the Civil War era, and the lived socio-political experiences and sentiments of Civil War-era women.
IV.

Religiously Inspired Quilt Art of the Civil War Era

This chapter focuses on the synthesis between the proclivity of Civil War-era women to produce religiously inspired quilt art, the geographic distribution of that quilt art, the diversity of patterns in religious quilt art, and the ancillary historical information associated with Civil War-era quilt art. The quilt patterns and titles selected for inclusion in this chapter were selected from the many identified during research. Selected patterns and titles were chosen for their design diversity, geographic distribution or state of origin, and ancillary historical information. Many patterns and titles identified during research were excluded because they were repetitious of patterns and titles selected, ambiguously titled, or did not coincide with the defined time period established for this thesis.

Furthermore, this chapter is about the liminal status of Civil War-era women creating a material record of their religious sentiments and thus purposely limits discussion regarding quilt colors, size, pattern details, and quilting techniques. Purposefully limiting the text regarding quilt descriptions limits extraneous information and preserves the overall clarity of the intimate parallels between religiously inspired quilt art and women’s social history.

Structurally, this chapter will address the religious culture of Civil War-era women and the religiously inspired quilt art of Civil War-era northern women, slave and free black women, and southern women. A unique artistic phenomenon, Baltimore Album quilts, is addressed. This chapter ends with museum and private collection
archival images of selected quilt art. All archival images and exhibits are authorized by copyright holders.

The Second Great Awakening was a period of Protestant revivals that resulted in numerous conversions to faith between the 1820s and the 1850s. The evangelical enthusiasm of the Second Great Awakening facilitated a host of social reforms. The social reforms and initiatives championed by early reformers included abolition, temperance, prostitution, and support for church benevolence to the indigent. Activism included the sale and auction of quilt art to raise funds. ²⁹

Throughout the Civil War era, women comprised the majority of church membership. Conversions during the Second Great Awakening greatly increased women’s plurality in church membership. Recognizing the value of their agency and commitment to religious principles, the church traditionally gave women space for social and benevolent activism. Women of the Civil War era actively engaged the moral, cultural, fund raising, and social initiatives of their churches.³⁰

Women of the Civil War era also actively engaged their religious principles, and lacking formal avenues of expression within or outside the church, stitched religious sentiments into their quilt art from the periphery of mainstream society.³¹ Throughout the Civil War era, quilters created numerous new quilt patterns. They also renamed and altered familiar patterns to reflect their religious sentiments.³² Selected patterns and titles include: Ark and Dove, Baltimore Album, Bible Quilt, Christian Cross, Church Steps, Crown of Thorns, David and Goliath, Dove in the Window, Garden of Eden, Jacob’s Ladder, Rose of Sharon, Solomon’s Crown or Temple, and the Star of Bethlehem.³³ Derived from the Old Testament and New Testament, the patterns they stitched
symbolized Civil War-era quilter’s personal interpretations of biblical verses, events, images, and scenes.

Crafted in Illinois by Margaret Ann Yates, circa 1860, the *Solomon’s Temple* quilt (Exhibit 1) was titled by the maker. Similarly titled religiously inspired quilt patterns and quilt titles include *Solomon’s Puzzle, King Solomon’s Temple, King Solomon, and Solomon’s Crown*. The *Solomon’s Temple* quilt is curated and accessible in the permanent collection of the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution Museum, Washington, D.C. Documentation accompanying the evaluation and provenance procedures of *Solomon’s Temple* indicate it won the First Prize at the Illinois State Fair shortly after completion.

Privately owned and available for research through the Arizona Quilt Documentation Project, Arizona Historical Society, Tempe, Arizona, *Solomon’s Crown* (Exhibit 2) was crafted in Indiana before the Civil War. Attributed to an unrecorded maker, the pattern of *Solomon’s Crown* differs greatly from the previously described *Solomon’s Temple* quilt made in Illinois. Information accompanying the documentation of *Solomon’s Crown* asserts that a century after its completion, *Solomon’s Crown* was awarded First Prize in its category at the Nebraska State Fair circa 1950. The exact date of the Nebraska State Fair referenced is unrecorded in the notes of the Arizona Quilt Documentation Project.

Separated by distance and the decades in which they quilted, Julia Wells Maxson of Rhode Island and an unidentified quilter from New York have much in common. Both women crafted a religiously inspired quilt titled *Christian Cross* (Exhibits 3 & 4). Julia Wells Maxson completed her *Christian Cross* circa 1867-1880. The unidentified
quilter from New York completed hers in 1848. Both quilts are hand stitched, hand quilted, and are similar in dimensions. The notable difference in these patterns is that the crosses in the Rhode Island Christian Cross are diagonal and those in the New York quilt are vertical.

Miles and decades apart, Maxson and the quilter from New York used quilting as a vehicle for artistic and religious expression. The Rhode Island Christian Cross is accessible through the Rhode Island Quilt Documentation Project, University of Rhode Island Department of Textiles, Merchandising and Design, Kingston, Rhode Island. The New York Christian Cross can be researched through the Michigan Quilt Project, Michigan State University Museum, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan. The top of the New York quilt is embroidered with the names and cities of people acquainted with, or related to, the quilt maker or owner.

The State Historical Society of Iowa, Des Moines, Iowa, documented a quilt titled Dove at the Crossroads (Exhibit 5). Hand pieced by Jenny Wyckoff Russell and hand quilted by the members of River Bretheran Group, this quilt is in nearly new condition. Privately owned, Dove at the Crossroads was completed circa 1860-1890. While documentation is sparse, what is certain is that Ms. Russell and her church group bequeathed a legacy of their religiously inspired artwork for future generations to enjoy.

State quilt documentation projects record a myriad of data pertaining to a quilt’s origin, maker, size, fabric, color, construction, inscriptions, and needlework. They also record oral and textual histories and ancillary information. The documentation process for a quilt titled Church Steps (Exhibit 6) included an undated and unsigned note accompanying the quilt. The unpunctuated note stated:
Cotton Pieced Quilt – Colonial Pattern – Church Steps – Pieced about 1852 by Kathrine B. Austin Davis at her home in Roxand Township, Eaton Co. in early Michigan days when the country was sparsely settled during winter evenings when the country doctor was making distant calls on horseback. This work was done by candlelight was her spinning, knitting and the rough homespun garment making of the 1850s.

Privately owned, Church Steps was displayed at the 1929 Women’s International Exhibition, Detroit Convention Hall, Detroit, Michigan. This religiously inspired quilt was also displayed during Michigan Quilts: A Celebration of 150 Years of Textile Tradition, exhibited September 13, 1987, through January 30, 1988, at the Michigan Historical Museum, Lansing, Michigan. Church Steps can be viewed through the Michigan State University Museum, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan. Church Steps and its historical documentation exemplify the synthesis between quilt art, historical events, and the religious expression of women during the Civil War era.

Betty Brown’s grandmother stitched the Crown of Thorn Variation quilt in New Jersey during the 1870s (Exhibit 7). Mrs. Brown and her husband, the Pastor of Epworth Methodist Church in Palmyra, New Jersey, owned the quilt until 1990, when it was gifted to other private ownership and registered with the Heritage Quilt Project of New Jersey. The Crown of Thorn Variation quilt is available for research at the Rutgers Special Collections and University Archives, Heritage Quilt Project of New Jersey, New Brunswick, New Jersey.

Crafted in Martinsburg, Ohio, but documented through the State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa Quilt Research Project, Des Moines, Iowa, the Rose of Sharon quilt (Exhibit 8) was made by Sarah McWilliams Denney circa 1840-1860. Throughout the Civil War-era, the Rose of Sharon was a popular Civil War-era religiously themed
quilt pattern. Privately owned, *Rose of Sharon* from Ohio is documented to be in nearly new condition.

The *Star of Bethlehem and Eight Point Design* quilt (Exhibit 9) from Pennsylvania is a Civil War-era religiously inspired quilt that was accompanied with a historical note from the donor. Garnered at the quilt documentation process, the historical information indicated:

The quilt was made by a member of Thomas Mifflin’s family. Mifflin was the first Governor of Pennsylvania (1790-1799), and an aide to George Washington and a signer of the Constitution. According to donor information, his daughter Emily was one of thirteen girls representing the thirteen colonies scattering roses in the Inaugural Parade for George Washington. She later married Joseph Hopkinson who wrote the words to the song, *Hail Columbia*.

Constructed circa 1840-1850, *Star of Bethlehem and Eight Point Design* is uniquely crafted with the Star of Bethlehem as a center medallion. The center medallion is surrounded by repeated blocks featuring an Eight Point Design. The Eight Point Design is alternately titled *Eastern Star or Star of Hope*, depending on the religious intention of the quilter. The *Star of Bethlehem and Eight Point Design* quilt is in much worn condition and can be viewed in the permanent collection of the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution Museum, Washington, D.C.

Civil War-era quilts made by slave and free black women are rare. Religiously inspired quilt artifacts crafted by slave and free black women are exceedingly rare. Historian and Folklorist Gladys-Marie Fry, instructs: “Researching the quilting traditions of African-American women has been hampered by two major problems: the scarcity of data concerning slave women in written historical sources; and the task of documenting slave-made quilts.”

Furthermore, the destruction endured throughout the southern states during the Civil War adversely impacted the number of surviving quilts. Sewing skills
were among the important trades taught to slaves, and while the number of extant quilts is extremely limited, examples continue to emerge. In addition, and difficult to document, some surviving southern quilts were the result of slave labor in the plantation system or the result of collaboration between slave seamstress and plantation mistress.\textsuperscript{35}

Harriet Powers was born into slavery in Georgia in 1837. Renowned for its superb statements of religious expression, her \textit{Bible Quilt} (Exhibit 10) was crafted in the story telling folk art or narrative style. Powers drew upon decades of oral religious histories and traditions in creating her \textit{Bible Quilt}. The actual construction date of the \textit{Bible Quilt} is uncertain. However, it first received public attention in 1886. Discovered in a booth at the 1886, Athens, Georgia, Cotton Fair, the \textit{Bible Quilt} was purchased and saved for posterity by local artist Jennie Smith.\textsuperscript{36}

The cultural and historical significance of the \textit{Bible Quilt} warrants a detailed description. The \textit{Bible Quilt} is an eleven block, seventy-five inch by eighty-nine inch, hand-and machine-stitched, plain and printed cotton quilt. Jennie Smith recorded and preserved Ms. Powers’ descriptions and meanings of the large folk art images and symbols stitched into each block. The images and symbols include: Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, Eve and a son in the Garden of Eden, Satan amidst the seven stars, Cain killing Abel, Cain in the land of Nod, Jacob’s dream, the baptism of Christ, the Crucifixion, Judas Iscariot and thirty pieces of silver, the Last Supper, and the Holy Family. Remarkably, the \textit{Bible Quilt} and another Harriet Powers’ quilt, the \textit{Pictorial Quilt or Creation of the Animals} quilt are the only documented nineteenth-century slave or free black women’s quilts with a discernable African lineage.\textsuperscript{37} The \textit{Bible Quilt} can be
accessed by a data base search of Collections at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History, Kenneth E. Behring Center, Washington, D.C.

Ellen Morton Littlejohn and Margaret Morton Bibb were slaves at “The Knob,” the Morton family plantation at Russellville, Logan County, Kentucky. The Morton family and their slaves were people of religious conviction. Their religious sentiments are present in the circa 1837-1850 Star of Bethlehem Variation Quilt (Exhibit 11). Littlejohn and Bibb are documented as the quilters of the Star of Bethlehem Variation Quilt.

Documented slave-made quilts where the names are identified are extremely rare and the provenance of this quilt is the scholarship of Claire Somersille Nolan. Nolan’s essay, “The Star of Bethlehem Variation Quilt at the Metropolitan Museum of Art,” American Quilt Study Group, Uncoverings 2005, thoroughly documents the textile, oral, and textual history of The Star of Bethlehem Variation Quilt. The result of Nolan’s scholarship is that Littlejohn and Bibb are fully credited for their artwork.38

Similar to religiously inspired quilts crafted by slave and free black women, quilts stitched by white women throughout the southern states are limited in number compared to those crafted in northern states. The devastation of the Civil War in the southern states, and the strife of Reconstruction, destroyed or consumed nearly all available textiles. Treated as precious family heirlooms, many extant southern quilts from the Civil War era were hidden from scavenging Union and Confederate troops.39

Some southern quilts did survive the destruction of the Civil War. Many surviving southern quilts include patterns and titles derived from religious and biblical themes. Religiously inspired quilts from Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, North Carolina, South
Carolina, Texas, and West Virginia evidence the acceptance and wide distribution of religiously inspired quilts throughout the southern states during the Civil War era. In addition to their wide geographic distribution, religiously inspired southern quilts are equally diverse in the patterns and titles stitched by Civil War-era quilters of the southern states.

Dated 1853, the *Dove in the Window* quilt (Exhibit 12) was made in Kentucky by Martha Jane Riffe. Alternatively titled *Dove at the Window*, this pattern is a traditional religiously inspired quilt pattern. Very sparsely documented, *Dove in the Window* is privately owned. Documented through the Kentucky Quilt Project, *Dove in the Window* can be assessed at the University of Louisville Archives and Records Center, Louisville, Kentucky.

The *Rose of Sharon* (Exhibit 13) represents religiously inspired quilt art emanating from Louisiana. Attributed to an unknown maker, this quilt is dated 1870. The owner of the *Rose of Sharon* quilt submitted the following statement to the Louisiana Quilt Documentation Project, “When the Union soldiers seized Simmesport, the cotton bales on the river front were thrown into the Atchafalaya River. The Callahan family retrieved some of the cotton and used it as the batting in this quilt after the war was over.” Privately owned, the *Rose of Sharon* from Louisiana is documented and available for review through the Louisiana Regional Folklife Program, Louisiana Technical University, Rushton, Louisiana.

Dated 1874, the *Garden of Eden* quilt (Exhibit 14) is a uniquely designed religiously inspired quilt. Centered by a large eight-point star, the *Garden of Eden* contains four large blocks. The blocks are pieced, appliqued, stuffed, and embroidered
with the flora, fauna, and biblical imagery of the Garden of Eden. The maker of this multi-colored extraordinary art work is Josephine Miller Adkins. The *Garden of Eden* is inscribed, “1874; John Adkins.” During documentation of the *Garden of Eden*, the donor provided the following provenance:

This quilt is presented to the DAR in honor of Josephine Miller Adkins, the maker of the quilt and my great aunt, who gave it to her sister, Mary Louise Miller Anderson, my great grandmother, and in memory of the following subsequent owners. The quilt was passed on to her niece, Cora Anderson Bitzer, my mother, who passed it on to me. I hope that current and many future generations of Marylanders, and others, may enjoy its beauty and be warmed by its spirit.

Maintained at the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution Museum, Washington D.C., the *Garden of Eden* quilt can be accessed in their permanent collection.

A popular pattern, known by many names during the Civil War era and later periods, *Jacob’s Ladder* is a religiously inspired quilt pattern. The *Jacob’s Ladder* included in this thesis is from North Carolina (Exhibit 15), and is dated circa 1840-1860. Made by an unknown quilter, *Jacob’s Ladder* is associated with the Battle family and the Cool Springs Plantation of Tarboro, North Carolina. Donated in 1964, by Cornelia P. Battle of Rocky Point, North Carolina, *Jacob’s Ladder* is conserved and available for review at the North Carolina Quilt Project, North Carolina Museum of History, Raleigh, North Carolina.

The *Rose of Sharon* quilt, attributed to Mary Jane Gray Rouse, was crafted in South Carolina (Exhibit 16). Dated circa 1850, this *Rose of Sharon* is made of handwoven cotton. The *Rose of Sharon* from South Carolina was documented by, and donated to, the Tennessee State Library and Archives, Quilts of Tennessee, Nashville, Tennessee. According to documentation notes, the *Rose of Sharon* remained in the
maker’s family until donated to Quilts of Tennessee. During the donation process, the following additional quilt history was recorded, “According to the family, the quilt was made before the Civil War and during the war it was hidden in the ground (the quilt maker dug with her own hands) to keep northern soldiers from taking it.”

The *Ark and Dove* quilt (Exhibit 17), created in Texas circa 1860, is a uniquely designed religiously inspired quilt of maker Harriet Lucinda Acker McDavid Russell’s own design. Worthy of description, the *Ark and Dove* is hand pieced, appliqued, quilted, and embroidered. The center block features an appliqued model of the Ark and two doves. The remaining twenty-four blocks repeat a theme of doves and rose stems. The present owner of *Ark and Dove* is the great, great, granddaughter of the quilt maker.

Documented by the Texas Sesquicentennial Quilt Association and Texas Quilt Search, Austin, Texas, the *Ark and Dove* quilt was one of sixty-two quilts exhibited in *Lone Stars: A Legacy of Texas Quilts, 1836-1936*, at the Texas State Capitol Rotunda, Austin, Texas, as part of the 1986 Texas sesquicentennial celebration.

Elizabeth Sayres Parkinson was a West Virginia housewife and Presbyterian. She stitched her *Solomon’s Temple* quilt (Exhibit 18) in 1860. Despite its worn condition, and over one hundred fifty-five years of service, *Solomon’s Temple* gracefully reflects Parkinson’s religious sentiments. *Solomon’s Temple* can be reviewed at the West Virginia Department of Archives and History, West Virginia Heritage Quilt Search, Charleston, West Virginia. The only additional information accompanying *Solomon’s Temple* at documentation was that her husband, John Parkinson, was born in 1803 and died in 1889.

Album quilts were popular throughout the Civil War era. Album quilts differed from pieced and repetitive pattern quilts as they were crafted in a series of frames or
blocks of different designs. Blocks in album quilts often represented a theme or possessed a meaning or interpretation beyond their aesthetics. The images and messages stitched into album quilt blocks included: commemoration of a special occasion, friendship, remembrances for someone leaving the community, historical buildings and monuments, historical events, patriotism, nature, political opinions, and religious sentiments.

Fashioned by an individual or group of quilters, many album quilts were termed signature or friendship quilts as they bore the signatures, poetry, biblical verses, or well wishes of the quilt makers.⁴⁰

Album quilts reached their height of design and technical sophistication in the decade prior to the Civil War. Crafted throughout the United States, quilts from the Middle Atlantic States, and more specifically Baltimore and the surrounding geography of Maryland, were the most refined. Baltimore Album quilts, as they are termed, portrayed a host of religiously inspired block designs:

- The harp or lyre, in multiple design forms, symbolizes Divine Music.
- The Rose of Sharon reflects the *Song of Solomon* and symbolizes wedded love.
- Block designs portraying apples have numerous religious connotations ranging from temptation to salvation.
- The presence of doves and urns symbolize the grave, the Life of the Soul, or the Soul Heaven Bound.
- The Bible, carried by a dove, often centered a quilt block.
- Fountains of various designs represent the Fountain of Life, the Fountain of Living Waters, and fountains are associated with the Virgin Mary.
• The presence of a peacock denotes immortality and the circular coloring on the peacock’s feathers symbolized the All-seeing Eye of God.

• A block designed in a squared grapevine wreath denotes blessings to the quilt recipient.

Religious symbols and messages were present in Baltimore Album quilts made by an individual quilter. However, Baltimore Album quilts were often made by church groups as gifts for ministers moving to new congregations.41

The *Sarah and Mary J. Pool Album Quilt* (Exhibit 19) illustrates the exceptional art and symbolic messaging of Baltimore Album quilts. Attributed to Margaret Rodney Herget of Baltimore, Maryland, the circa 1847-1848 quilt contains the broad scope of historic, nature, community, political, and religious sentiments associated with Baltimore Album quilts. Religiously inspired designs in the *Sarah and Mary J. Pool Album Quilt* include lyre or harp, Rose of Sharon, urn and dove, fountain, and peacock themed blocks. This magnificent artifact is privately owned and can be studied in the Jane Katcher Collection of Americana promised to the Yale University Art Gallery.42 The Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, Maryland, curates the nation’s largest collection of Baltimore Album quilts. Additional Baltimore Album quilts can be researched at the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution Museum and The Smithsonian National Museum of American History, Kenneth E. Behring Center, Washington, D.C.

In summary, women of the Civil War era were strongly committed to creating a material legacy of their religious sentiments. Surviving Civil War-era religiously inspired quilt art and the many private and public collections of religiously inspired quilt art attest to their commitment. Furthermore, the intimate parallels between religiously inspired
quilt art, the general history of the Civil War era, and women’s proclivity to message through the symbols and images of quilt art is evidenced in the broad geographic distribution, artistic diversity of patterns, and ancillary historical information associated with religiously inspired Civil War-era quilt art.

Except for slave plantation systems and the most rural situations, the economic transformations of the Civil War era changed the homes of the United States from centers of production to centers of consumption. Men as producers were taken out of the home and into industry and commerce. The functional world of men was business, politics, and family affairs outside the home. Women’s responsibilities in the home changed from producers to managers of the obligations required for a stable and flourishing home and family. Women’s functional world was children and the spiritual, educational, and quality of life within the home. This “cult of domesticity” or “separate spheres” of social function restricted Civil War-era women from social, political, and economic participation outside the home.43

Church-affiliated moral and social activism gave Civil War-era women a public purpose and presence outside the home. Their dedication to public purpose and religious sentiment is portrayed in the proliferation of Civil War-era religiously inspired quilt art. Moreover, participation in church affiliated benevolent work and active involvement in church social reforms molded the origins of the social and political skills Civil War-era women needed to confront their liminal social and political status.44 Women of the Civil War era gained social and political poise from their church-related philanthropy and reform activities. The social and political skills enhanced through church activities would benefit the struggle to attain women’s suffrage.
Exhibit 1. *Solomon’s Temple*, The Quilt Index: ID Number - 85.78

Exhibit 2. *Solomon’s Crown*, The Quilt Index: ID Number - CW066
Exhibit 3. Christian Cross, The Quilt Index: ID Number - 190 Rhode Island

Exhibit 4. Christian Cross, The Quilt Index: ID Number - 86.0123
Exhibit 5. *Dove at the Crossroads*, The Quilt Index: ID Number – E-61

Exhibit 6. *Church Steps*, The Quilt Index: ID Number – 85.1112

Exhibit 9. *Star of Bethlehem and Eight Point Design*,
The Quilt Index: ID Number – 57.30

Exhibit 11. *The Star of Bethlehem Variation Quilt*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York, Accession Number 62,144


Exhibit 15. *Jacob’s Ladder*, The Quilt Index: ID Number – CN18: 1964.60.10

Exhibit 16. *Rose of Sharon*, The Quilt Index: ID Number – 1879 South Carolina
Exhibit 17. *Ark and Dove*, The Quilt Index: ID Number – tqs_0015

Exhibit 18. *Solomon’s Temple*, The Quilt Index: ID Number – 20603
Exhibit 19. *Sarah and Mary J. Pool Album Quilt*, Private Collection of the Jane Katcher Collection of Americana, promised to the Yale University Art Gallery
V.

Politically Inspired Quilt Art of the Civil War Era

Throughout the Civil War era, women were denied the vote, political office, and were largely excluded from electoral politics. Concentrating on women’s political disparity, this chapter focuses on the intimate parallels between politically inspired quilt art, historical events, political culture, and the early women’s suffrage movement of the Civil War era. Intimate parallelism will be established through the identification and exhibition of quilt patterns and quilt titles related to political parties, political principles, political candidates, historical events, and the liminal political status of women.

Consistent with inclusion, exclusion, and quilt description rationales previously discussed for religiously inspired quilt art, this chapter will exclude quilt art patterns and titles that are repetitious, ambiguous, or beyond the temporal scope of this project. Similarly, for purposes of clarity, text regarding quilt descriptions will also be limited. Furthermore, this chapter is about the liminal political status of Civil War-era women creating a material record of their sentiments regarding women’s suffrage and the overall political culture of the Civil War era and purposely limits discussions regarding the political intricacies of abolition and slavery, temperance, and the legal inequality.

Beginning with an overview of the political culture endured by Civil War-era women, this chapter will subsequently address the politically inspired quilt art and sentiments of Whig and Republican Party-aligned women. Next, the sentiments of Civil War-era women supporting the Democratic Party will be noted. Quilt art pertaining to
political candidates and notable political figures will likewise be discussed. This chapter also describes extraordinarily crafted album, Baltimore Album, and free and slave black women’s politically inspired quilt art and concludes with selected images of politicized Civil War-era quilt art. All images included are archival images and are authorized by the appropriate copyright owners. In the following pages, the liminal voices of women record their political sentiments and redress the existing political culture by stitching the votes they were legally denied into their quilt art.

The origins of the political realities endured by Civil War-era women are partially founded in Sir William Blackstone’s 1769 treatise, The Commentaries on the Laws of England. Blackstone wrote, “By marriage, the husband and wife are one person in the law? The very being and legal existence of woman is suspended during the marriage, or at least is incorporated into that of her husband under whose wing and protection she performs everything.”45 English common law influenced the development of the American legal system and by 1840, Civil War-era women were governed by a disparate system that denied them the vote and political office. Varying by individual state legislation, Civil War-era single and married women endured a myriad of restrictive contract, property, and wage laws and regulations. Married women were legally “feme covert,” possessed very limited legal rights, and were covered or subordinate to their husband’s legal standing. Single women over the age of twenty-one and widows were “feme sole” with broader but restricted property and contract rights.46

Efforts to improve women’s social and political status were embryonic but gaining strength and confidence by 1840. Throughout the 1830s, participation in church benevolent work and involvement in social reforms molded the origins of the social and
political skills Civil War-era women needed to confront their liminal political status.\textsuperscript{47} Challenging their liminality and uniting emerging voices, activists Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott organized the first large-scale gathering of women, and some men, to address discrimination against women. Held at Seneca Falls, New York, on July 19 and 20, 1848, the convention culminated in the \textit{Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions}. A statement calling for the end of discrimination against women, the \textit{Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions} also demanded equality with men. Considered the beginning of the organized women’s rights movement, the gathering at Seneca Falls also resolved to secure elective franchise, or the vote, for women.\textsuperscript{48}

Beginning in 1850, a National Women’s Rights Convention was held annually, except in 1857, until sidelined by women’s support for Civil War-related initiatives. Surpassing other issues, women’s suffrage became the principle focus at the National Women’s Rights Conventions. During these annual conventions, activists Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Lucy Stone emerged as champions for women’s suffrage. Reluctantly agreeing to forego suffrage during the Civil War, Anthony and Stanton organized the Women’s Loyal National League, which focused on the Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution abolishing slavery. The Women’s Loyal National League collected 400,000 petition signatures in support of the Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.\textsuperscript{49}

After the Civil War, in 1866, the National Woman’s Rights Conventions were reconvened. The eleventh annual National Women’s Rights Convention was assembled and voted to transform itself into the American Equal Rights Association. Organized to advance the equal rights of all citizens, especially universal suffrage, the American Equal
Rights Association suffered a devastating referendum defeat in the Kansas elections of 1867.  

Upset over how to support the Fifteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and weakened by losses in the Kansas referendum and the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which defined voters as male, the American Equal Rights Association disbanded. In 1869, the American Equal Rights Association fragmented into the National Women’s Suffrage Association and the American Women’s Suffrage Association. The National Women’s Suffrage Association, organized by Anthony and Stanton was steadfast and would only support universal suffrage that included all men and women. The American Women’s Suffrage Association, under the leadership of Lucy Stone and Julia Ward Howe, compromised with the existing political culture and unenthusiastically supported the Fifteenth Amendment’s prohibition against the denial of voting privileges based solely on race, color, or previous servitude. The American Women’s Suffrage Association chose to champion women’s suffrage as an endeavor separate from black suffrage. Defeat and dismay followed as the Fifteenth Amendment, ratified in 1870, did not prohibit the denial of voting privileges based on sex or gender. In 1870, the National Women’s Suffrage Association unsuccessfully advocated a Sixteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution that would give women the vote.  

The years of advocacy from the 1848 Seneca Falls convention through the end of the Civil War and early Reconstruction produced limited success for the women’s rights movement. While twenty-nine states passed very limited versions of married women’s property rights legislation, efforts to influence the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendment
to the U.S. Constitution were a failure. As of 1874, only the territories of Wyoming and Utah granted elective franchise to women.\textsuperscript{52}

In 1874, the suffrage movement gained a powerful ally, the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union. With temperance advocate and suffragist Frances Willard’s leadership, the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union’s multiple agendas and unified voice became a formidable partner in the fight for women’s suffrage. Further strengthening the suffrage movement, in 1890, the National Woman’s Suffrage Association and the American Women’s Suffrage Association consolidated their influence into the National American Woman Suffrage Association. It required another thirty years of advocacy before women gained the vote through the Nineteenth Amendment, ratified in 1920.\textsuperscript{53}

Politically inspired quilt art and religiously inspired quilt art share a parallel reality. During the Civil War era, women worked steadfastly for the social and philanthropic initiatives of their churches. Despite lacking access to positions of clergy and the hierarchy of administration, women of the Civil War era persistently stitched their religious convictions into their quilt art. Likewise, denied the vote, political positions, and lacking political equality, women of the Civil War era stitched their political convictions and material votes into their quilt art.\textsuperscript{54}

Many Civil War-era women cast their stitched votes for the Whig Party. An active political party in the decades prior to the Civil War, many Whig Party politicians supported temperance, abolition, and excluding slavery from the western territories. Endearing to suffragists of the Civil War era and contrary to the norms regarding women’s participation in politics and public speaking, the Whig Party instituted all-
women presidential campaign clubs. On few occasions, the Whig Party permitted political speeches by women and allowed women to march at rallies. The Whig Party dissolved in 1854 over the contentious issue of slavery and slavery’s expansion into the western territories. Northern Whig Party abolitionists, economic progressives, and southern unionist politicians gravitated to the new Republican Party.

Despite their years of advocacy, limited political success, and the near non-existent political support for women’s suffrage during the creation and ratification of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution, Civil War-era women remained engaged political participants. Denied official ballots, Civil War-era women, mostly northern, redressed the existing political culture by casting quilt art votes for many Whig and subsequently Republican political principles. The legacies of their stitched votes are preserved in a myriad of quilt patterns and quilt names. The Whig Rose was a popular political pattern throughout the Civil War era. The Whig Rose expressed broad support for Whig-Republican causes and was a variation of commonly used quilt patterns. Other Whig-Republican political patterns included the titles; Harrison Rose and Tippecanoe for William Henry Harrison and John Tyler, Lincoln’s Platform, Clay’s Choice for Henry Clay, and Star of the West for John C. Fremont.

Civil War-era women throughout the United States crafted Whig Rose patterned and titled politicized quilt art. The Whig Rose quilts they crafted varied in design but not political intent. Three Whig Rose politicized quilts, by different quilters, in three varying patterns, from Illinois, Iowa, and Virginia were selected for exhibition in this thesis.

Elizabeth Trodge Turley of Waverly, Illinois, was a Civil War-era widow, farmer, and mother of ten children when she created her Whig Rose Bouquet quilt (Exhibit 20).
Documented and curated by the Illinois State Museum, Springfield, Illinois, the *Whig Rose Bouquet* was made circa 1860. The *Whig Rose Bouquet* quilt remained in the Turley family until donated to the Illinois State Museum in 2001. The *Whig Rose Bouquet* pattern stitched by Turley differs notably from the *Whig Rose* pattern in the quilts exhibited from Iowa and Virginia.

The *Whig Rose* pieced by Mary Loomis and quilted by Ethel Kent (Exhibit 21) in Denmark, Iowa, was quilted in a corn crib in 1845. She was building a new home at the time and it was the only space large enough for a quilting frame. Documentation accompanying this quilt indicates it was a three-time blue ribbon winner at local county fairs. Privately owned, the *Whig Rose* is accessible through the State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa Quilt Research Project, Des Moines, Iowa.

The Smithsonian National Museum of American History, Kenneth E. Behring Center, Washington D.C., conserved and documented the *Whig Rose* stitched by Matilda Kramer Whisler of Rockingham County, Virginia (Exhibit 22). A housewife, married to a shoemaker, Matilda Whistler had three daughters, a son, and created her *Whig Rose* circa 1860-1865. In excellent condition, Whisler’s *Whig Rose* was donated to the Smithsonian by her daughter, Mrs. Myrtle Mallette. Otherwise unknown to history, Matilda Kramer Wisler of Virginia, Mary Loomis and Ethel Kent of Iowa, and Elizabeth Trodge Turley of Illinois crafted material legacies of their artwork and political sentiments into their *Whig Rose* quilts.

Susan Noakes McCord is a renowned Civil War-era quilt artist. Her quilt art has been exhibited in multiple museums and material culture publications. McCord was also a mother, farmer, and homeopathic medicine practitioner to her neighbors of
McCordsville, Indiana. Created circa 1860, McCord’s *Harrison Rose Floral Urn Quilt* (Exhibit 23) was documented by, and is in the permanent collection of, the Henry Ford Museum, Dearborn, Michigan.

The *Old Tippecanoe Friendship Quilt* (Exhibit 24) was created, circa 1843, by an unknown member of the Zimmerman family. The *Old Tippecanoe Friendship Quilt* is a friendship quilt, as it is inscribed with the names of several Zimmerman family members. Dates on the quilt range from 1841 through 1842. The Zimmerman’s were originally from Pennsylvania. Crafted in Pennsylvania, the quilt and family migrated to Colorado. The *Old Tippecanoe Friendship Quilt* and documentation are in the permanent collection of the Rocky Mountain Quilt Museum, Golden, Colorado.

The North Carolina Quilt Project documentation process for the *Lincoln’s Platform* quilt (Exhibit 25) indicates that upon returning from the Battle of Chattanooga, Civil War veteran, Albert Simkins bought some red and gray fabric. The fabric was for a quilt for his two-year-old daughter, Alberta. Hand and machined pieced by Margaret Ann Simkins at Corsica, Pennsylvania, circa 1865, *Lincoln’s Platform* was quilted by an unknown quilter(s). *Lincoln’s Platform* remained in the Simkins family until 1986, when it was donated to the North Carolina Museum of History, Raleigh, North Carolina.

*Clay’s Choice* and *Star of the West* are Whig-Republican politicized quilt titles. They are variations of patterns involving sixteen patch blocks incorporating star or pinwheel center designs. This pattern has been assigned numerous names. Many *Clay’s Choice* and *Star of the West* patterns and quilt titles were identified during research. However, none were selected for inclusion in this project. They were excluded for the following reasons; lack of provenance, unrecorded maker and date of construction,
ambiguous or shared pattern and quilt titles, or the date of creation did not coincide with the temporal scope of this thesis.

Two Whig Party quilts with intimate relationships to the political culture, political candidates, and historical events of the Civil War era are included. Both of them relate to Senator Henry Clay of Kentucky. Henry Clay was a unionist, proponent of economic growth, enhanced education, and a Whig Party founder. A three-time loser, Clay was defeated by William Henry Harrison for the Whig nomination in 1840, lost the 1844 presidential election to Democrat James K. Polk, and again lost the Whig Party nomination to Zachary Taylor in 1848. Despite his political losses, Henry Clay enjoyed support from Civil War-era quilters. A quilt uniquely intimate to the candidacy of Henry Clay and the Civil War-era women that cast their artful votes for him is the Mosaic Quilt or the Henry Clay Ribbon Quilt (Exhibit 26, full and detail views). Completed by an unknown artist(s) circa 1840, the Mosaic Quilt contains historic Henry Clay campaign ribbons and is inscribed, “Henry Clay—The Pride of America and the People’s Choice—Protector of America.” Owned by the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution Museum, Washington, D.C., the Mosaic Quilt can be accessed in its permanent collection.

Ashland, the Henry Clay Estate, Lexington, Kentucky, owns and displays the Henry Clay—La Grange Mill Boys quilt (Exhibit 27). Attributed to Elizabeth Willis Anderson of La Grange, Tennessee, and completed in 1844-1850, the Henry Clay—La Grange Mill Boys quilt is appliqued, pieced, inked, quilted, and has an American Flag center medallion. A distinctive stitched vote, the Henry Clay—La Grange Mill Boys quilt is artistic political commentary. The Henry Clay—La Grange Mill Boys is embroidered
with the quote, “I had rather be right than be president. H. Clay.” The archives at the Henry Clay Estate contain additional quilts synthesizing Civil War-era history, political culture, and women’s liminal political status.

Motivated by sectional differences, mainly abolition, many Civil War-era women expressed their support for the Democratic Party through quilt art. The patterns and titles they selected included Whigs Defeat, Democrat Rose, and Polk’s Fancy. Equally popular throughout the Civil War era, but less abundant, Democratic Party political quilt patterns were also variations of existing quilt patterns.

Documented and conserved at the Living History Museum, Quilts of Tennessee, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, Tennessee, the maker of Whigs Defeat (Exhibit 28) is unrecorded. The date of creation for Whigs Defeat is 1840. Documentation notes indicate Whigs Defeat was made on the Georgia plantation of Charles Screven Gaulden. Thomas Gaulden, the son of Charles Screven Gaulden, served in the Confederate army and died fighting in Virginia.

George W. Smyth was a signer of the Texas Declaration of Independence in 1836. The Democrat Rose (Exhibit 29) was made in East Texas circa 1865, by Smyth’s daughter-in-law, Mrs. Joseph Grisby Smyth. Mrs. Smyth’s first name is unrecorded. Masterfully crafted, the Democrat Rose was featured in numerous exhibitions and quilt art publications. Privately owned, the Democrat Rose and accompanying documentation and notes can be enjoyed through Texas Sesquicentennial Quilt Association at the Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas, Austin, Texas.

Polk’s Fancy (Exhibit 30) appeared in several publications exhibiting quilt art and quilt art scholarship. Notable, the scholarship of Teri Klassen, titled Polk’s Fancy:
Quiltmaking, Patriotism, and Gender in the Mexican War Era, was published in the American Quilt Study Group’s annual publication, Uncoverings 2006, Lincoln, Nebraska. In her essay, Klassen investigates the regional phenomena of Polk’s Fancy titled quilt art of southern Indiana. Klassen surmises that Polk’s Fancy patterned quilt art was an expression of Civil War-era southern Indiana women’s social, political, and patriotic awareness and engagement. The Polk’s Fancy included in this project is by Catherine Ubker of Jackson County, Indiana. Completed circa 1855, Polk’s Fancy is privately owned and can be accessed through the Michigan Quilt Project, Michigan State University Museum, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan.

The Union Star quilt (Exhibit 31) is commanding evidence to the intimate parallelism between Civil War-era political culture, historical events, notable political figures, and quilt art. The Union Star quilt memorializes President Abraham Lincoln and registers political support for President Ulysses S. Grant and his Vice President, Schuyler Colfax. The Union Star quilt was completed in the folk art style, in 1869, by Elizabeth Holmes. The symbols and messages of the Union Star quilt portray a stylized flag, the white dove of peace, and in bold letters declare, “Abraham Lincoln—Grant PR—Colfax VI & The Union Forever 1869—The Union Star.” The Union Star is in the private collection of Bill and Maggie Pearson and can be viewed in Hearts and Hands: Women, Quilts, and American Society, by Elaine Hedges, Pat Ferrero, and Julie Silber, Nashville, Tennessee, Rutledge Hill Press, 1987.

The 1992 West Virginia Heritage Quilt Search documentation process for the Original Design quilt (Exhibit 32) contained some fascinating historical and cultural information. Attributed to an unknown quilt maker, the Original Design quilt contained
the embroidered inscription, “Free and unfettered our eagle shall soar. The reign of oppression forever is o’er.” Moreover, the documentation process contained the following accurately reproduced notes:

This quilt was made by a woman living in Herkimer, N.Y. (name unknown). She had great admiration for General Grant and in the late 1860’s designed and made this quilt expecting to give it to the then President Grant. She died before it was quilted (after working two years on it) and a Mrs. Mae Petrie, who had given her a home, presented it to the owners’ grandmother. The 39 stars represent the number of states in the Union in 1868. The top 13 represent the original colonies. The oak leaves are for strength and the laurel leaves for victory, and the words are for the freeing of the slaves. The ensign is the United States government.

The *Original Design* quilt is a material culture treasure. Hands stitched into the fabric are historical events, political culture, and quilt art. What remains is the mysterious identity of the woman who crafted *Original Design*. Property of the West Virginia Department of Archives and History, Charleston, West Virginia, the *Original Design* quilt was completed circa 1860-1870.

The women of the Confederacy used needle and thread to vote support for their President. The Museum of the Confederacy in Richmond, Virginia, is home to the *Davis Stars* quilt (Exhibit 33). Completed circa 1864, the *Davis Stars* quilt is attributed to various women including Varina Howell Davis, the wife of Confederate President, Jefferson Davis. *Davis Stars* is a fine art quilt of silk and wool featuring piecework, embroidery, and quilting in a tumbling block and stars pattern. The *Davis Stars* quilt depicts numerous motifs of the Confederacy and anchors the Museum of the Confederacy’s collection of quilts portraying the Civil War era.

Described by the American Folk Art Museum as a “pictorial diary,” the *Reconciliation Quilt* (Exhibit 34) is an album quilt that summarizes the relationship between quilt art, historical events, and Civil War-era women’s desire to create a lasting
legacy of their political sentiments. Completed by Lucinda Ward Honstain in 1867, the symbols, images, and messages in each of its forty blocks showcase Honstain’s social and political feelings. Named for the block that portrays the release of Jefferson Davis to his daughter who is holding an American flag, the Reconciliation Quilt also conveys patriotism, emancipation, uniformed soldiers and sailors, liberty, union, and scenes from Honstain’s lived experiences. Honstain cast decades of votes into the Reconciliation Quilt. A masterpiece of quilt art, the Reconciliation Quilt can be accessed at the International Quilt Study Center and Museum, University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Additional quilt art connecting the political culture of the Civil War era and women’s propensity to cast votes in fabric are intimated in Baltimore Album quilts. Utilizing colorful appliqued designs, these uniquely styled quilts depicted the interests and local culture of Baltimore-area quilters. Like a picture album, every block on a multi-block Baltimore Album quilt portrays a separate motif depicting friendship, historical buildings and monuments, historical events, patriotism, nature, or a political sentiment. Whig-Republican sentiments are present in Baltimore Album quilts when the patriotic eagle, American flag, and the Phrygian or Liberty Cap appears in the same block pattern. Titled the Patriotic Eagle, this pattern suggests a unified country where all are equal. Baltimore Album quilts lacking the Phrygian or Liberty Cap are equally plentiful. Baltimore Album quilts, both containing and absent, the Phrygian or Liberty Cap can be viewed in Past Exhibitions, Eye on Elegance: Early Quilts of Maryland and Virginia, at the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution Museum, Washington D.C.

The Baltimore Album quilt attributed to Margaret Rodney Herget, and named the Sarah and Mary J. Pool Album Quilt (Exhibit 19), epitomizes political quilt art.
Completed circa 1847-1848, Herget’s quilt contains the *Patriotic Eagle* titled pattern displaying the Phrygian or Liberty cap. Politically and artfully stunning, the *Sarah and Mary J. Pool Album Quilt* also depicts a log cabin, two raccoons on the roof, a cask and pitcher, and an American folk art flag. Herget stitched multiple political sentiments and symbolisms into the *Sarah and Mary J. Pool Album Quilt*. Researchers interpret the log cabin and cask as political support for William Henry Harrison’s “Log Cabin and Hard Cider” presidential campaign. Further interpretations conclude the raccoons on the roof, one of which is saying, “You can’t come in,” is reference to Henry Clay, the “Old Coon,” and his opposition to the annexation of Texas. Owned privately by Dr. Jane Katcher, Miami, Florida, the *Sarah and Mary J. Pool Album Quilt* can be studied in the Jane Katcher Collection of Americana.  

As previously noted, Civil War-era quilts, with provenance to slave and free black women are rare. Quilts where the name of the slave or free black quilt artist is known are extremely rare. The *Liberty Medallion Quilt* (Exhibit 35) is an elaborate quilt completed by former slave, Elizabeth Hobbs Keckley, circa 1870. The *Liberty Medallion Quilt* is an artful example of political commentary. Keckley bought her freedom with funds earned as a seamstress and eventually became dressmaker and confidant to Mary Todd Lincoln. Keckley’s political sentiments are portrayed in a stitched vote that displays a patriotic eagle, a folk art style American flag, and the word “LIBERTY” as the focal point of her *Liberty Medallion Quilt*. Allegedly made from scraps of Mary Todd Lincoln’s gowns, the *Medallion* quilt resides in a private collection and can be researched through the Kentucky Quilt Project, University of Louisville Archives and Records Center, Louisville, Kentucky.
In summary, quilt art is replete with images, symbols, and messages registering the political preferences of Civil War-era women. Quilt titles like the *Whig Rose*, *Democrat Rose* and *Whigs Defeat* portrayed the general political sentiments of Civil War-era women. More intimate preferences focused on political figures including quilt patterns and quilts titled: *Henry Clay—La Grange Mill Boys, Mosaic Quilt* or *Henry Clay Ribbon Quilt*, *Harrison Rose, Tippecanoe* for William Henry Harrison and John Tyler, *Clay’s Choice, Star of the West* for John C. Fremont, *Lincoln’s Platform*, and *Polk’s Fancy*. More profound connections to the hierarchy of the Civil War era were created in the images and sentiments contained in quilts like *The Union Star* for Abraham Lincoln, *Original Design* for General Grant, and the *Davis Stars* for Jefferson Davis. Capstones, the *Reconciliation Quilt*, the *Sarah and Mary J. Pool Album Quilt*, and the *Liberty Medallion Quilt* represent fine art symbolisms regarding the stitched votes of Civil War-era women. Cumulatively, these quilt patterns and quilt titles evidence the intimate and parallel relationship between quilt art, the political culture, political events, and the early women’s suffrage movement.

Material culture is the relationship between people and the things or objects of their lived experiences. Quilts and the symbols, images, and messages in quilt art represent the objects and artifacts of Civil War-era women’s social and political realities.64 The artful text of Civil War-era women’s quilt art provides an enhanced understanding of the political culture and liminal political status endured by women of the Civil War era. Colloquially, understanding and interpreting quilt art enriches the ability to understand and interpret the political events and political culture of the Civil War era.65


Exhibit 23. *Harrison Rose Floral Urn Quilt*, The Quilt Index: ID Number – 13.0061

Exhibit 25. *Lincoln’s Platform*, The Quilt Index: ID Number – EW1 Lincoln’s Platform
Exhibit 26. Mosaic Quilt or Henry Clay Ribbon Quilt (full view), The Quilt Index: ID Number - 2003.24

Exhibit 26. Mosaic Quilt or Henry Clay Ribbon Quilt (detail view), The Quilt Index: ID Number - 2003.24

Exhibit 29. Democrat Rose, The Quilt Index: ID Number – tqs_0017

Exhibit 30. Polk’s Fancy, The Quilt Index: ID Number – 09.0176
Exhibit 31. *The Union Star*, Private Collection of Bill and Maggie Pearson

Exhibit 32. *Original Design*, The Quilt Index: ID Number – 60653
Exhibit 33. *Davis Stars*, The Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond, Virginia

Exhibit 34. *Reconciliation Quilt*, International Quilt Study Center and Museum, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska
Exhibit 35. *Liberty Medallion Quilt*, The Quilt Index: ID Number – 34-17-7
VI.

Socially Inspired Quilt Art of the Civil War Era

Civil War-era women’s socially inspired quilt art derived its artistic sentiment from the moral and social reforms of abolition and temperance. Socially inspired quilt art also derived artistic sentiment from family and community events. Such events involved a myriad of occurrences including births, deaths, marriages, family migrations, and the dynamics of a constantly evolving community. The intimate parallelism between socially inspired quilt art, history, and the lived experiences of women is established through the analysis of quilt art directly related to abolition, temperance, and the commemorative historical and social events of Civil War-era women.

This chapter will include, exclude, and describe quilt art consistent with the rationales previously discussed for religiously and politically inspired quilt art. Beginning with a section on abolition and slavery, this chapter will discuss slavery, Civil War-era women’s activism in abolition, and exhibit quilt art associated with abolition and slavery. It includes a section on temperance and Civil War-era women’s activism in the early temperance movement. This section closes with temperance-inspired quilt art. Next is a section addressing the broad array of family and community events commemorated by Civil War-era quilt art. The family and community section of this chapter ends with the exhibition of quilt art that portrays meaningful occurrences in the lives of Civil War-era women.
Abolition and Slavery

By 1840, Civil War-era women, mostly northern, were firmly engaged in the struggle to end slavery. Active as members of church-based abolitionist groups and as members of private and public abolitionist organizations, women organized meetings, gave lectures, prepared abolitionist literature, and raised funds for abolitionist causes. Emanating from the activist space provided by their churches for moral and social reforms, Civil War-era women became a primary force in the effort to abolish slavery in the United States.\(^\text{66}\)

Efforts to abolish slavery represented a momentous task. The enslavement of Africans was already permanently established in the Western Hemisphere when the Dutch brought slaves to Jamestown, Virginia, in 1619. The Portuguese traded in African slaves throughout the known world since 1472, and the Spanish used African slaves to replace depleted Native American slaves beginning in 1503. The Dutch prospered from an empire built on the slave trade throughout the seventeenth century. By the end of the nineteenth century approximately twelve million Africans were forced into slavery in the Western Hemisphere. Five hundred thousand African slaves were traded to the English colonies, subsequently the United States. By 1860, there were over four million black free and slave individuals in the United States with the vast majority enslaved on southern plantations raising cotton, sugar, and tobacco.\(^\text{67}\)

On the eve of the Civil War, the southern United States furnished seventy-five percent of the world’s cotton. “King Cotton,” mostly grown by slave labor, equated to sixty percent of America’s exports. Cotton fields in the southern states stretched from the Atlantic coast to the plains of Texas and as far north as Kansas and Missouri. The
economic and political power of cotton agriculture was felt throughout the United States and Europe. As powerful as cotton agriculture was, it flourished amidst constant challenges from abolitionists. Between 1777 and 1804, Vermont, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, and New Jersey passed anti-slavery laws. The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 banned slavery in the Northwest Territories. Numerous local anti-slavery organizations were established, including the Pennsylvania Abolitionist Society, incorporated in 1789 by Benjamin Franklin. Joining independent anti-slavery organizations into a nationwide authority, the American Convention for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery was established in 1794.

Early abolitionist views were founded in natural laws of equality such as those found in America’s Declaration of Independence. Religious initiatives emanating from church moral and social reforms also attacked slavery. The Religious Society of Friends, the Quakers, was the perennial foe of slavery. The Hicksite Quakers, a less orthodox faction of Quakers, advocated a boycott of slave-made goods and the establishment of an egalitarian spiritual community. The Hicksite Quakers endorsed women’s equal participation in community and spiritual leadership.

Abolitionist views were consistent with women’s responsibility for the moral health of the family during the Civil War era. Evangelical in form, the women’s movement against the “sin of slavery” was equally consistent with the reform spirit of the Second Great Awakening. Beginning in the 1830s and advancing through the Civil War era, women were first active in the abolitionist initiatives of their church, then female abolitionist organizations, and ultimately mixed gender organizations.
Women’s history historian, Judith E. Harper writes that, “The righteousness of the abolitionist cause gave these Northern women the moral sanction they needed to participate fully in the public sphere.” Civil War-era women engaged their public moral and reform opportunities with spirit. Lucy Stone and Susan B. Anthony were paid agents of the American Anti-Slavery Society. Women served on the executive committees of the American Anti-Slavery Society. Women’s rights articles, authored by women activists, were published in American Anti-Slavery Society newspapers. In 1832, the black women of Salem, Massachusetts, organized the first all women led anti-slavery society in the United States, the Salem Female Anti-Slavery Society. Other female anti-slavery organizations soon followed, notably in Philadelphia and Boston.

The American Anti-Slavery Society, founded in 1833, and radicalized in 1839 through 1840 under the leadership of William Lloyd Garrison, became the national leader in the abolitionist movement to end slavery in the United States. Under Garrison, the American Anti-Slavery Society demanded the immediate end of slavery and denounced the U.S. Constitution as illegal for supporting slavery. Garrison and the American Anti-Slavery Society valued women’s commitment to abolitionist causes and provided Civil War-era women considerable agency within American Anti-Slavery Society operations.

Civil War-era women’s anti-slavery organizations outnumbered those established by men. To support their activism and the principles of abolitionism, Civil War-era women actively participated in fundraising events. The abolitionist movement was largely supported by the fund raising initiatives of Civil War-era women. The sale and auction of quilt art was an important element in fund raising.
The *Evening Star* or *Cradle Quilt* (Exhibit 36) was sold to raise funds at the December 1836 Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society fair. A rare surviving artifact from the early abolitionist movement, the *Evening Star* quilt is attributed to abolitionist, women’s rights activist, and journalist, Lydia Maria Child. Star patterned quilts were popular among abolitionist quilters. The center block of Child’s quilt contains an inked poem. The poem is attributed to Quaker poet Elizabeth Margaret Chandler:

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Mother! When around your child
You clasp your arms in love,
And when with grateful joy you raise
Your eyes to God above—
Think of the negro-mother,
When her child is torn away—
Sold for a little slave—
Oh then, For that poor mother pray!
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Curated at Historic New England, Boston, Massachusetts, the *Evening Star* is the earliest known abolition fundraising quilt and is material evidence connecting historical events and women’s burgeoning confidence and experience in social activism.⁷⁵

Quilts sold or auctioned to raise funds for abolitionist causes are extremely rare and provenance is a difficult process. The *Liberator*, William Lloyd Garrison’s abolitionist newspaper, often carried advertisements of items to be sold at fairs. Items for sale included needlework of all descriptions and specifically mentions cradle and bed quilts. On occasion, the *Liberator* would devote text to detailed descriptions of quilts. Descriptions of quilts sold in the *Liberator* span the decades of the Civil War era.⁷⁶

Another star patterned abolitionist quilt was crafted by Rebecca Scattergood Savery in Pennsylvania, circa 1845. Savery was the daughter-in-law of prominent Quaker abolitionist William Savery. William Savery was a signatory to the 1783 *Quaker Anti-Slavery Petition*. Rebecca Scattergood Savery’s *Medallion* quilt (Exhibit 37) is in the
Dated and signed 1842, the Hadley Abolitionist Quilt (Exhibit 38) was completed by the Quaker women of Clinton County, Ohio, and Wayne County, Indiana. Estranged from local mainstream Quaker meetings for their strident anti-slavery views, the women who crafted the Hadley Abolition Quilt were members of the Indiana Yearly Meeting of Anti-Slavery Friends. These abolitionist Quaker women met monthly and were soon welcomed back into mainstream Quaker meetings. Signed in Clinton County, Ohio, by Rebecca Harvey Hadley and her daughters, the Hadley Abolitionist Quilt is part of the permanent collection of the Ohio Memory Collection, Clinton County Historical Society, Wilmington, Ohio.

Just as Civil War-era women created new patterns and altered and renamed existing patterns to express their religious and political sentiments, they did the same to enable expression of their abolitionist views. The Jacob’s Ladder pattern became a pattern called Underground Railroad. Crafted circa 1870-1890, Underground Railroad (Exhibit 39) exemplifies the adaptive and responsive ability of Civil War-era women to express themselves through quilt art. Privately owned in the Collection of Richard and Suellen Meyer, the maker of Underground Railroad is unrecorded. Underground Railroad can be viewed in Hearts and Hands: Women, Quilts, and American Society, by Elaine Hedges, Pat Ferrero, and Julie Silber, Nashville, Rutledge Hill Press, 1987.

The image of a kneeling slave woman or man, with hands extended in prayer, became an iconic abolitionist image. Popular with abolitionists in England, it became equally admired in the United States. Printed and drawn, this image graced purses,
handbags, handkerchiefs, dishes, newspapers and pamphlets, book and diary covers, and was a mainstay image in William Lloyd Garrison’s abolitionist publication *Liberator*.77

“Remember the Slave” is an ink print of a kneeling and praying slave signed by Rebecca S. Hart. The image is in a block on the *Wistar Family Tree Quilt* (Exhibit 40, full and detail views). Completed circa 1850, by an unrecorded maker, the *Wistar Family Tree Quilt* is from Pennsylvania. A Quaker family, the Wistar’s voiced their abolitionist sentiments in their signed and dated family heirloom quilt. The *Wistar Family Tree Quilt* can be accessed in the permanent collection of the International Quilt Study Center and Museum, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska.

The image of a kneeling and praying slave centers the abolitionist quilt attributed to Deborah Coates of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Crafted circa 1840-1850, the *Deborah Coates* quilt (Exhibit 41, descriptive and detail views) possesses a unique and controversial history. Deborah Coates was the wife of Lindley Coates, former president of the American Anti-slavery Association. The stamped ink image is a material statement of the Coates’s abolitionist sentiments. The image and sentiment were hidden when the quilt was split and bequeathed to two granddaughters. The quilt halves were reunited by a subsequent descendant and the image fully restored.

The controversy regarding the *Deborah Coates* quilt involves its association to the Underground Railroad. *Hidden in Plain View: A Secret Story of Quilts and the Underground Railroad*, New York, Random House, 1999, by Jacqueline L. Tobin and Raymond G. Dobard contends this quilt is a directional guidepost for runaway slaves. Tobin and Dobard assert that a partial block in which two small triangles point in a different direction from all the other stitched triangles is a subtle clue for runaway slaves
to continue North on the Underground Railroad. Contemporary scholarship contests the assertions of Tobin and Dobard as unscholarly and further contests the premise that quilts were guideposts on the Underground Railroad. The Deborah Coates quilt, a much publicized art work, is privately owned by the Marjorie A. Laidman Collection and can be evaluated in Hearts and Hands: Women, Quilts, and American Society, by Elaine Hedges, Pat Ferrero, and Julie Silber, Nashville, Rutledge Hill Press, 1987.78

Baltimore Album quilts were a relevant outlet for the abolitionist sentiments of Civil War-era women. Maryland was a state deeply divided over slavery. Similarly, Methodism was divided over slavery and split into the pro-slavery Methodist Episcopal Church-South, with the balance of the Baltimore Conference joining the anti-slavery northern Methodist churches. Baltimore Album quilt historian, Elly Sienkiewicz asserts that those Baltimore Album quilts depicting the Phrygian or Freedom Cap are expressing abolitionist sentiments.79

Bearing twenty-one names, the most prominent name being Susan Bond, the Susan Bond Quilt (Exhibit 42) is dated May 22, 1846. Made in Baltimore, Maryland, the Susan Bond Quilt showcases the Patriotic Eagle with Phrygian or Freedom Cap as the centerpiece of the quilt. The Susan Bond Quilt is curated at the West Virginia Department of Archives and History, West Virginia Heritage Quilt Search, Charleston, West Virginia.

Contrasting the Susan Bond Quilt is the Penn Family Quilt (Exhibit 43). Crafted circa 1850, in Elkridge Landing, Maryland, by Ruth Penn, the Penn Family Quilt is a traditional Baltimore Album quilt lacking any patriotic, liberty, or anti-slavery motifs.
Ruth Penn made the *Penn Family Quilt* on the occasion of her son’s wedding and it may be accessed in the permanent collection of the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution Museum, Washington, D.C.

Demonstrating the intimate parallel relationship between abolition inspired quilt art, women’s involvement in the abolitionist movement, and historical events of the Civil War era do not require an abstract construct. The diversity of quilt art portraying abolitionist sentiments demonstrates Civil War-era women’s awareness and material culture engagement of the abolitionist movement. Their operational and administrative involvement in anti-slavery organizations demonstrates their public agency and commitment to ending slavery in the United States. Historically, Civil War-era women and their quilt art were active participants and material culture witness to the most critical reform and social issue of their day, abolition and slavery.
Exhibit 36. *Evening Star* or *Cradle Quilt*, Historic New England, Boston, Massachusetts, Accession Number – 1923.597

Exhibit 37. *Medallion*, International Quilt Study Center and Museum, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska, IQSC Object Number – 2006.003.0006
Exhibit 38. *Hadley Abolitionist Quilt*, Ohio Memory Collection, Clinton County Historical Society, Wilmington, Ohio, File Name – Om752_1035503.tif

Exhibit 40, *Wistar Family Tree Quilt* (full view), International Quilt Study Center and Museum, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska, IQSC Object Number – 2005.059.0001

Exhibit 40, *Wistar Family Tree Quilt* (detail view), International Quilt Study Center and Museum, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska, IQSC Object Number – 2005.059.00
Exhibit 41. Deborah Coates (descriptive view), Marjorie A. Laidman Collection

Exhibit 41. Deborah Coates (detail view), Marjorie A. Laidman Collection
Exhibit 42. *Susan Bond Quilt*, The Quilt Index: ID Number – 20674

Exhibit 43. *Penn Family Quilt*, The Quilt Index: ID Number – 92.172
Temperance

Prohibition, the banning of consumable alcohol, was the culmination of two hundred years of political, social, and religious acrimony regarding alcohol’s adverse impact on society. Prohibition is the colloquialism for the Eighteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. With limited exceptions for medical and religious applications, the Eighteenth Amendment prohibited the manufacture, transportation, and sale of consumable alcohol in the United States. Ratified January 16, 1919, the Eighteenth Amendment became effective one year later. The negative legal and social consequences of the Eighteenth Amendment forced it to be the only U.S. Constitutional Amendment repealed. The Twenty-first Amendment to the U.S. Constitution ratified December 5, 1933, repealed prohibition. The Eighteenth and Twenty-first Amendments were twentieth-century phenomena. However, the temperance movement and the historiography leading to the Eighteenth Amendment began in colonial America.80

Throughout the eighteenth century, churches across British North America, and subsequently the United States, preached about the social and family evils inherent to alcohol consumption. In 1805, Dr. Benjamin Rush of Philadelphia published *An Inquiry into the Effects of Ardent Spirits Upon the Human Body and Mind: with an Account of the Means of Preventing, and of the Remedies for Curing Them*. Consistent with the medical science of his time, Dr. Rush’s essay advised the American public about the health hazards associated with alcohol consumption. Dr. Rush’s argument concerning the perils of alcohol consumption was medical, moral, and legal as his essay included the problems of fraud, theft, uncleanliness, physical abuse, and murder associated with alcohol consumption. The medical science, social, and religious admonitions related to alcohol
consumption formed the impetus of the temperance movement. Temperance speeches
and literature depicting these admonitions were the mainstay informational techniques of
the temperance movement through the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries.\textsuperscript{91}

The New England Religious Tract Society was organized in 1814 and evolved
into the American Tract Society in 1825. A non-denominational evangelical organization,
The American Tract Society promoted Christian values through the publication and
circulation of pamphlets, newspapers, and books. Between 1825 and 1851, the American
Tract Society distributed nearly five million temperance pamphlets.\textsuperscript{82}

Consistent with the moral and social reform initiatives of the Second Great
Awakening, the first formal organization adopting a nationwide platform for total
abstinence from alcohol was the American Temperance Society. Organized by Boston
area ministers, the American Temperance Society was established in 1826. By 1834, the
American Temperance Society had five thousand local chapters and over one million
members.\textsuperscript{83}

Temperance organizations were numerous. In addition to those of the American
Temperance Society, many churches sponsored local temperance societies. The United
States Congress created the Congressional Temperance Society in 1842. Temperance
organizations were slowly achieving change. Several states began regulating alcohol
consumption through manufacturing and sales regulations. Counties and local
municipalities were regulating sales by controlling the number of establishments
receiving operating licenses. While it generally received very few votes, a National
Prohibition Party was formed in 1869. Cumulatively, the annual per capita consumption
of spirit alcohol went from seven gallons per person in 1820, down to two gallons per person in 1850.\textsuperscript{84}

The lowering of per-capita consumption of alcohol did not alleviate the vulnerability of women and children from the depredations of alcohol. There being limited provisions for public or social welfare, the havoc of alcohol consumption greatly impacted women, children, and the quality of home life. Championing the cause of temperance, Susan B. Anthony served as president of the Rochester, New York, unit of the Daughters of Temperance. Refused the right to speak at the 1853 state convention of the Sons of Temperance in Albany, New York, Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton formed the Women’s State Temperance Society.\textsuperscript{85}

The goal of the Women’s State Temperance Society was to petition the State of New York to limit the sale of consumable alcohol. The Women’s State Temperance Society collected twenty-eight thousand signatures on a petition to limit the sale of alcohol. The New York legislature rejected the petition because most of the signatures were from women and children. Convinced that women’s suffrage was the way to impact legislation and create social change, Anthony and Stanton shifted their activism focus from temperance to gaining the vote for women.\textsuperscript{86}

Beginning in late 1873 and continuing into 1874, New York and Ohio women were actively, on a large scale, crusading against the depredations on the family caused by alcohol consumption. Boldly singing, praying, and petitioning, women were confronting alcohol consumption in the home, public, and businesses where alcohol was served. The New York and Ohio crusades against alcohol consumption gained nationwide momentum. In the fall of 1874, at a national women’s temperance convention
in Cleveland, Ohio, the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union was formed. Annie Turner Wittenmyer was elected President and Frances E. Willard was voted Corresponding Secretary. Willard became president of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union in 1879. Under Willard’s leadership the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union became the nineteenth century’s largest women’s organization. With its unified voice and strong membership, the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union expanded its agenda to include women’s suffrage, labor laws, child welfare, and legal equality.87

Similar to involvement in abolition, Civil War-era women were first active in the temperance movement through their churches and subsequently public organizations. Their agency and commitment to the temperance cause was critical to successful operations and the sustainability of temperance reform. Active in temperance reforms throughout the Civil War era, it was their activism in the temperance crusades of 1873-1874 that enabled the formation of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union. It was Civil War-era women’s continued activism that fueled Reconstruction and Post-Reconstruction temperance activism. Despite being repeatedly denied elective franchise and lacking social and political equality, women of the Civil War era remained active participants in the struggle against the moral and social conditions that threatened their homes and families.88

The temporal scope of this thesis concludes with the 1874 emergence of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union and the temperance movement’s ascent toward the Eighteenth Amendment. However, it is important to note that temperance inspired quilt art and the social and political activism of Civil War-era women are integral
components of the early history of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union. It was the social, political, and administrative skills acquired by Civil War-era women’s involvement in church reforms, suffrage and abolition initiatives, and non-traditional work experiences caused by the Civil War that enabled and maintained the early Woman’s Christian Temperance Union. Although temperance inspired quilt art with documented attribution to the temperance movement is extremely rare, quilt art with assumed attribution to the temperance movement is plentiful. Eventually, quilt art became the symbolic icon of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union. In the years following the 1874 emergence of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union quilt art was prominently displayed at conventions, fairs, and fundraisers throughout the United States.

Temperance-inspired quilt art developed in a manner similar to religious, political, and abolition inspired quilt art. Civil War-era quilters expressing their temperance oriented sentiments created new patterns, altered, combined, and renamed existing patterns. Quilt patterns named Oregon Trail, Solomon’s Puzzle, Fool’s Puzzle, and Arkansas Troubles were recast as Drunkard’s Path. The Tree of Life and Tree of Paradise patterns became the Temperance Tree. The very popular and traditional “T” and double “TT” patterns evolved into the Temperance T. Often these patterns and quilts lacked documentation and inscriptions attributing them to the temperance movement. Yet, from the assumed attribution of temperance inspired quilt art, evolved the documented and inscribed quilt art that became the hallmark of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union.
Quilters began titling quilts and quilt patterns as Drunkard’s Path in the decade prior to 1874. Amanda Haight made and titled her Drunkard’s Path quilt circa 1870, in New York. Owned by the Dearborn Historical Museum, Dearborn, Michigan, the purpose and designation of Drunkard’s Path (Exhibit 44) was documented by Floyd Haight, the maker’s grandson. Haight donated Drunkard’s Path to the Dearborn Historical Museum in 1985.

The Drunkard’s Path (Exhibit 45) attributed to Letta Childers of Union Springs, New York, was created in 1896. Signed and dated with inscriptions supporting temperance, Drunkard’s Path is in the permanent collection of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, California. The Letta Childers’s Drunkard’s Path, like all inscribed temperance inspired quilt art, was made subsequent to 1874. Inscribed temperance inspired quilt art crafted after 1874 are exhibited in this thesis because they demonstrate the ongoing similarity, legacy, and significance between quilt art and the temperance movement.

The Tree of Life on point quilt (Exhibit 46) and the Temperance Tree Quilt (Exhibit 47) illustrate the legacy of quilt art’s adaptiveness to social causes like the temperance movement. The Tree of Life on point quilt was made by an unrecorded member of the Taylor family, circa 1860-1880, in New Jersey. The Tree of Life on point quilt has no attribution to the temperance movement. Very similar in design, the Temperance Tree Quilt has attribution to the temperance movement with its inscription, “To William and Rebecca, Please accept this Temperance Tree Quilt containing 2094 pieces pieced by me in my 77th year. Your mother, Mrs. Mary Ann Rogers New London Conn. Jan. 1886.” The Tree of Life on point quilt is in the permanent collection of the
Camden County Historical Society, Camden, New Jersey. The Temperance Tree Quilt is owned by the Department of Textiles, Fashion Merchandizing and Design, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, Rhode Island.

The Liberty Tree Quilt (Exhibit 48) is another post-1874 inscribed temperance related quilt that displays a design heritage to earlier patterns. Crafted circa 1876-1890, the Liberty Tree Quilt contains numerous political and patriotic inscriptions. Advocating temperance, the Liberty Tree Quilt is embroidered, “abstain from strong drink.” The statement is poignant because this is a profusely political and patriotic quilt. Made by Mrs. S. K. Daniels in Kentucky, the Liberty Tree Quilt is in the collection of the Michigan State University Museum, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan.

In the lexicon of quilt language, the letter “T” suggests temperance. Quilts utilizing the “T” pattern often implied temperance and teetotaler. People attending meetings would, as appropriate, put the letter “T” next to their name indicating temperance or teetotaler. 92 Two quilts employing the single “T” and double “TT” pattern are the T Pattern quilt owned by the Michigan State University Museum, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, and the T Pattern quilt privately collected and accessible through the North Carolina Quilt Project, North Carolina Museum of History, Raleigh, North Carolina.

The T Pattern quilt (Exhibit 49) at the Michigan State University Museum is undated and lacks maker and origin designations. It is a fundamental brown-and-white quilt dominated by repetitive “T” patterned blocks. By contrast, the privately owned T Pattern quilt has a double “TT” design and was crafted as a wedding gift. The privately owned T Pattern quilt (Exhibit 50) is dated 1874 and bears numerous inscribed names
and dates. A colorful quilt that remained in the makers family, it is also dominated by “TT” patterned blocks. Regardless of documentation or complexity of design, these quilts suggest temperance.

Organized by Cornelia Maria Dow and completed in 1864, the *Cornelia Dow* quilt is a unique collection of quilt blocks portraying nationalism, patriotism, religious, anti-slavery, and temperance themes. Crafted in Portland, Maine by several quilters including Dow, the *Cornelia Dow* quilt (Exhibit 51) displays inked inscriptions and drawings. Several temperance slogans are inscribed on the quilt. Cornelia Maria Dow served on the executive committees of the Maine Woman’s Christian Temperance Union and the national Woman’s Christian Temperance Union. Dow’s father was General Neal Dow, a renowned Civil War officer and national temperance leader. The Dow homestead was donated to the Maine Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, and today is a temperance and Civil War-era museum. A well-publicized quilt, the privately owned *Cornelia Dow* quilt can be studied in Pam Weeks and Don Beld’s *Civil War Quilts*, Atglen, Pennsylvania, Schiffer Publishing, 2011.

The *WCTU Bear Paw Quilt* (Exhibit 52) is another highly recognized and often exhibited quilt attributable to the temperance movement. Crafted by an unrecorded maker circa 1900, the *WCTU Bear Paw Quilt* owes its heritage and design to the decades old standard Bear Paw quilt pattern. Crafted in the blue and white official colors of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, the *WCTU Bear Paw Quilt* is a bold statement supporting temperance. The *WCTU Bear Paw Quilt* can be examined in detail in *World Quilts, The American Story, Temperance*, at the International Quilt Study Center and Museum, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska.
Discussions regarding temperance inspired quilt art and the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union are lacking if they do not include The *Crusade Quilt* made by the local Woman’s Christian Temperance Union of Hillsboro, Ohio. Crafted in 1876, The *Crusade Quilt* (Exhibit 53) contains the signatures of three thousand women. The *Crusade Quilt* was created to commemorate the 1873 Women’s Temperance Crusade in Ohio and to honor its leader Eliza Jane Trimble Thompson. Recognized as one of the identifying symbols of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, the *Crusade Quilt* contains a block for each state in attendance at the 1878 national convention of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, in Baltimore, Maryland. The *Crusade Quilt* was often used as a banner at temperance conventions and fairs. The *Crusade Quilt* is part of the Francis Willard House Museum and Archives, Evanston Illinois. The Francis Willard House Museum and Archives curates a diverse collection of temperance-inspired quilts.

In summary, the relationship between temperance-inspired quilt art, Civil War-era women’s activism, and the history of the temperance movement represents an inseparable synthesis. Temperance inspired quilt art evolved from altered and renamed existing patterns to become iconic symbols of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union. The early temperance movement was enabled and sustained by the activism of Civil War-era women. Intimately parallel, the history of the temperance movement shared the same material culture, time frame, meaning, and purpose as the quilt art and activism of Civil War-era women.
Exhibit 44. *Drunkard’s Path*, The Quilt Index: ID Number – 83.1316

Exhibit 45. *Drunkard’s Path*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, California, ID Number – M.86.134.4
Exhibit 46, *Tree of Life on point*, The Quilt Index: ID Number – 54-001-34

Exhibit 47, *Temperance Tree Quilt*, The Quilt Index: ID Number – 63 Connecticut
Exhibit 48. *Liberty Tree Quilt*, The Quilt Index: ID Number – 01.0005

Exhibit 49. *T Pattern*, The Quilt Index: ID Number – 86.0844
Exhibit 50. *T Pattern*, The Quilt Index: ID Number – DA23

Exhibit 51. *Cornelia Dow*, Privately and Anonymously Owned
Exhibit 52. *WCTU Bear Paw Quilt*, Privately and Anonymously Owned

Family and Community

Despite their liminal social and political status, Civil War-era women engaged the world outside the home and stitched a lasting historical record of their religious, political, abolitionist, and temperance inspired sentiments. Quilt art is also material witness to the history of life within the homes of Civil War-era women. Through quilt art, Civil War-era women have bequeathed an artistic expression of their lived experiences involving their families and communities.

The Family and Community section of this chapter will discuss the social and historical development of needle craft within the homes of Civil War-era America. It will discuss the use of quilt art to commemorate the family life events of Civil War-era women. Commemorative life events quilt art selected for exhibition includes births and birthdays, deaths and remorse, hope chest, dowry, and marriages.

This section also examines the community events experienced by Civil War-era women. The community was a dynamic and constantly evolving environment that impacted the home life of Civil War-era women. Women recorded these events in their quilt art. Community events quilt art selected for exhibition includes: student commemoration to a teacher, community places and buildings, office holders and prominent citizens, and migrations to frontier America or other communities.

The economic transformations of the Civil War era changed the homes of the United States from centers of production to centers of consumption. As previously discussed, the functional world of men became business, politics, and family affairs outside the home. Women’s purposeful world was children and the spiritual, educational, and quality of life within the home. These “separate spheres” of social function restricted
Civil War-era women from social, political, and economic participation outside the home. Conversely, the economic transformation of the Civil War era afforded women a larger family role with added responsibilities inside the home. These responsibilities included the schooling and functional education of children. Needlework was a critical functional skill for girls during the Civil War era and quilting a logical component of their needlework education.92

Training young girls in the domestic art of sewing began as soon as they could handle a needle and thread; some girls were competent by age five. Early needlework training involved making and repairing simple household items. The hem stitch, doll clothes, and crib and doll quilts were part of the domestic arts needlework curriculum. Fancy stitches, fine patchwork, embroidery, and knitting came later for quilts, household decorations, and clothing. Needlework education was consistent with the prescribed roles of the “cult of domesticity,” and represented preparation for the familial and socially ascribed role of homemaker. The assigned domesticity for Civil War-era girls and women was reinforced by popular publications including, The American Frugal Housewife, Godey’s Ladies’ Book, and Peterson’s Magazine.93

Economic transformations of the Civil War era were also impacting quilting in the United States. The successes of the textile mills in New England created affordable fabric for the broad social classes of women. The widespread use of the sewing machine lessened the work of repetitive sewing and quilting. Patented in 1851, by 1871, seven hundred thousand sewing machines were being manufactured each year. The sewing machine did not reduce the sewing and quilting habits of Civil War-era women. The efficiency of the sewing machine enabled the time necessary for finer and more time
consuming hand applique and quilting. A life time of training, an abundance of fabric, the efficiency of the sewing machine, and the desire to chronicle events, were the mix of skills, innovations, and commitment that Civil War-era women utilized to craft family and community-inspired quilt art.94

Quilt art commemorating births, deaths, hope chests, dowries, and weddings registers the personal sentiments of Civil War-era women regarding their families. Mrs. L. Johnson was commemorating her great grandson’s sixth birthday when she created his Lemoyne Star birthday quilt (Exhibit 54). Johnson was seventy-six years old when she stitched the Lemoyne Star for Augustus Allen in 1873. The Lemoyne Star was documented by the North Carolina Quilt Project and is curated at the North Carolina Museum of History, Asheville, North Carolina.

Sarah M. Thomas received a Wild Goose Chase Variation quilt (Exhibit 55) for her birthday in 1843. While the maker of this quilt is unrecorded, the Wild Goose Chase Variation quilt was inscribed with sentiments and signed by numerous men and women. The Wild Goose Chase Variation quilt is maintained by the Rutgers Special Collections and University Archives, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey.

The Friends of Carrie Foster made and signed the New Hampshire Signature Quilt (Exhibit 56) circa 1850-1875. A remorse or condolence quilt, the center block of the New Hampshire Signature Quilt is inscribed, “Carrie F. Foster West Henniker Please accept this quilt, my dear friend to atone for a loss we cannot amend And let troubles pass by fraught with despair And learn with a light heart lie’s sorrows to bear.” The New Hampshire Signature Quilt is in the permanent collection of the New England Quilt Museum, Lowell, Massachusetts.
The *Nine Patch Strip, on point* quilt (Exhibit 57) was constructed and signed by the Quaker Friends of the Roberts Family circa 1842-1843. Commemorating the passing of children, the *Nine Patch Strip, on point* quilt includes records of children’s deaths and Bible verses. The passing of children from several families are recorded on this quilt. The *Nine Patch Strip, on point* quilt is accessible at the Rutgers Special Collections and University Archives, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey.

A commemorative quilt for the death of a loved one, the documentation process for the *Basket* quilt (Exhibit 58) reveals intriguing Civil War-era information. The *Basket* was crafted by many quilters and is attributed to Mary High Prince of Raus Community, Tennessee. Completed in 1864, the documentation notes collected by Quilts of Tennessee reveal that Prince and her fiancé were spies for the Confederacy. Captured, she was set free and her fiancé was hung. Notes further indicate that Prince and her sister returned with a wagon, cut him down, and brought him home to Raus Community for burial. The *Basket* is inscribed. “I love the old red clay of Franklin Co. & good people.” Rumored to have been hidden in stumps to avoid marauding troops, the *Basket* is privately owned and can be reviewed through the Quilts of Tennessee, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, Tennessee.

Emma Miescher was nineteen years old when she created the *Bear Paw* quilt for her hope chest in 1873. On the backing of the *Bear Paw* (Exhibit 59) is the image of the Morton Salt Girl and the words “Love Me.” The *Bear Paw* quilt remains in the Miescher family and can be accessed through The Quilt Index, Identification Number: T318, Michigan State University Museum, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan.
Lydia Braman Peabody endowed each of her nine children with a quilt. Quilt maker Peabody is a descendent of Mayflower passenger Elizabeth Peabody. Lydia Braman Peabody crafted her *Grandmother’s Flower Garden* quilt circa 1846-1870, in Rhode Island. Privately owned by descendants of Lydia Braman Peabody, *Grandmother’s Flower Garden* (Exhibit 60) can be viewed through The Quilt Index, Identification Number: 458-Rhode Island, Michigan State University Museum, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan.

Amey Randall Manton made a wedding quilt for her daughter Susan Manton. Started in 1856-1857, in Rhode Island, Manton’s *Album Patch* (Exhibit 61) was signed and later completed by numerous family members. The *Album Patch* is privately owned by descendants of Amey and Susan Manton. Documented and available for review, the *Album Patch* can be accessed at the Rhode Island Quilt Documentation Project, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, Rhode Island.

Margaret E. Aiken Cody Means made a quilt to commemorate her wedding to T. W. Cody in 1874. Widowed, Margaret E. Aiken Cody later married Ruben Lee Means. Cody, then Means, was living in Texas when she completed *Wild Goose Chase* (Exhibit 62) in 1874. *Wild Goose Chase* is inscribed, “TWC M.E.Aiken/When this you see remember me Nov 1874.” Owned by the great grandson of the quilt maker, *Wild Goose Chase* was documented and is available for view through the Texas Sesquicentennial Quilt Association, Texas Quilt Search, University of Texas, Austin, Texas.

The permanent collection of the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution Museum, Washington D.C., houses a profusely inscribed wedding commemorative quilt titled the *Album Quilt*. Crafted by an unrecorded maker, for the
wedding of Matilda Jones to Henry Swope, the *Album Quilt* was completed in 1846 for their 1847 wedding. The *Album Quilt* (Exhibit 63) contains numerous well wishes, friendship statements, and Bible verses. It also contains a genealogy of the Jones family. Matilda Jones and Henry Swope were married in Maryland, May 17, 1847.

Quilt art commemorating community events represents the personal sentiments of Civil War-era women. It can also reflect the sentiments of Civil War-era youth. The *123 students dedicated to Patience Smith* quilt (Exhibit 64) is quilt art commemorating Friends’ Institute of New York teacher Patience Smith. Signed by the students and crafted by their families, the *123 students dedicated to Patience Smith* is inscribed, “A precious memento from my pupils at Friends’ Institute New York 1852 Sacred to memory of Patience Smith.” Privately owned, the *123 students dedicated to Patience Smith* quilt was documented by the Western Pennsylvania Quilt Documentation Project. It is curated and accessible at the Beaver County Historical Research and Landmark Foundation, Freedom, Pennsylvania.

Betsy Haring created her *Haring Applique Sampler Quilt* (Exhibit 65) to commemorate objects and places in her community that were important to her. Dated 1859, images in the *Haring Applique Sampler Quilt* represent local manufacturing products and industries. The *Haring Applique Sampler Quilt* is available for review through the Rutgers Special Collections and University Archives, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey.

Baltimore Album quilts are uniquely expressive of community events and places. The *Sarah and Mary J. Pool Album Quilt* (Exhibit 19) elaborately portrays the Maryland Manor House, the Baltimore Battle Monument, and a commemorative to the Baltimore
and Ohio Railroad. The *Reconciliation Quilt* (Exhibit 34) is expressive of the community places and events familiar to quilt maker Lucinda Ward Honstain’s New York community. Honstain stitched images of locally owned businesses, schools, homes, and a local war memorial.

The Frenchtown Sewing Society of East Greenwich, Rhode Island, celebrated the public service of its office holders with a quilt titled *Album Quilt*. Completed circa 1870, the *Album Quilt* (Exhibit 66) lists the names of office holders and their dates of service. Inscribed, “Members of the Frenchtown Sewing Society Commencing May 28th 1874,” the *Album Quilt* exemplifies the outside the home community activism of Civil War-era women. Privately owned, the *Album Quilt* was documented and can be viewed through the Rhode Island Quilt Documentation Project, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, Rhode Island.

Americans were on the move during the Civil War era. Many were moving to the western territories. Some were moving among existing communities as a result of industrialization and urbanization. Most were leaving family and friends. These community events were often commemorated in quilt art.95

The *Friendship Quilt* (Exhibit 67) created by the Friends and Family of Emmeline commemorates Emmeline’s move to Westerly, Rhode Island. Signed and dated by friends and family throughout New England, the *Friendship Quilt* also commemorated Emmeline’s impending marriage to Orlando Smith. Dated 1857, the *Friendship Quilt* was discovered in a historic home owned by the Westerly Historical Society, Westerly, Rhode Island. Orlando Smith was the first owner of the home in which the *Friendship Quilt* was discovered. The date the quilt was discovered is unrecorded. Curated at the Westerly
Historical Society, Westerly, Rhode Island, the *Friendship Quilt* may be viewed through the Rhode Island Quilt Documentation Project, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, Rhode Island.

The *Philena Cooper Hambleton’s Quaker Friendship Quilt* (Exhibit 68) was created by the female relatives and friends of Philena Cooper Hambleton to commemorate her 1854 move from Ohio to Iowa. Twenty-one of the twenty-five blocks on the *Philena Cooper Hambleton’s Quaker Friendship Quilt* are signed and dated 1853. The life of Philena Cooper Hambleton and the *Philena Cooper Hambleton’s Quaker Friendship Quilt* were published by the quilt’s current owner, Linda Salter Chenoweth, in *Philena’s Friendship Quilt: A Quaker Farewell to Ohio*, Athens, Ohio, Ohio University Press, 2009.

Completed circa 1845 by an unrecorded maker, the *Album Patch* quilt commemorates the migration of Mary and Calvin Tolford to Marietta, Ohio. Signed and dated by friends and family members of Concord, New Hampshire, and vicinity, the *Album Patch* quilt (Exhibit 69) contains Bible verses and sentiments of friendship. The *Album Patch* quilt is accessible through the Signature Quilt Pilot Project, The Quilt Index, Identification Number: KQP # ljj244, Michigan State University Museum, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan

In summary, quilt art inspired by the experiences of family and community life is not the big history of Civil War-era politics or military exploits. It is not the history of nationwide reforms like abolition and slavery. It is the personal and social history of every day local life events. Through their quilt art, Civil War-era women cast a wide net over the history of their personal and social lives. With needles, threads, and fabric,
Civil War-era quilters stitched an indelible relationship between their lived family and community experiences and the history of the Civil War era.
Exhibit 54. *Lemoyne Star*, The Quilt Index: ID Number – FC110

Exhibit 55. *Wild Goose Chase Variation*, The Quilt Index: ID Number – 55-025-01
Exhibit 56. *New Hampshire Signature Quilt*, The Quilt Index: ID Number – 2428

Exhibit 57. *Nine Patch Strip, on point*, The Quilt Index: ID Number – 52-006-03
Exhibit 58. *Basket*, The Quilt Index: ID Number – 0619

Exhibit 59. *Bear Paw*, The Quilt Index: ID Number – T318
Exhibit 60. *Grandmother’s Flower Garden*, The Quilt Index: ID Number – 458

Exhibit 61. *Album Patch*, The Quilt Index: ID Number – 59 Rhode Island

Exhibit 63. *Album Quilt*. The Quilt Index: ID Number – 98.35
Exhibit 64. *123 students dedicated to Patience Smith*, The Quilt Index: ID Number – WP.ALG.0159

Exhibit 65. *Haring Applique Sampler Quilt*, The Quilt Index: ID Number – 71-001-01
Exhibit 66. *Album Quilt*, The Quilt Index: ID Number – 47 Rhode Island

Exhibit 67. *Friendship Quilt*. The Quilt Index: ID Number – 607
Exhibit 68. Philena Cooper Hambleton’s *Quaker Friendship Quilt*, The Quilt Index: ID Number – Signature Quilt Pilot Project, Display 4

Exhibit 69. *Album Patch*, The Quilt Index: ID Number – KQP # Ijj244
VII.

Civil War-Inspired Quilt Art

Historian James McPherson noted in his 1989 Pulitzer Prize winning book, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*: “Hundreds of books about the conflict pour off the presses every year, adding to the more than 50,000 titles on the subject that make the Civil War by a large margin the most written-about event in American History.”96 Parallel to the text-and-ink artistry of Civil War-era newspapers and magazines, Civil War-era women stitched their sentiments and lived experiences of the Civil War into their quilt art. From the pre-war violent conflicts in the western territory of Kansas, through the war years of 1861-1865, and during Reconstruction, the quilt art of northern and southern Civil War-era women was material witness and artistic record to the history of the Civil War.

This chapter contains two sections, Nationalism and Patriotism, and a section on War Relief and Early Reconstruction. In Nationalism and Patriotism, the prelude to hostilities is discussed, including the violence in the western territories. The Nationalism and Patriotism section addresses the war years of 1861-1865. This section also exhibits quilt art expressive of Civil War historical events and the nationalistic and patriotic sentiments of Civil War-era women.

In War Relief and Early Reconstruction, the efforts of Civil War-era women to support the war and bring humanitarian services to soldiers and their families are noted. These discussions include fundraising initiatives and the myriad of services provided by
soldier’s aid societies and commissions. This section also reviews the early years of Reconstruction and notes the sentiments of Civil War-era women. The quilt art exhibited in this section reflects these fundraising and service initiatives and the associated early Reconstruction events of the Civil War.

Nationalism and Patriotism

In the early nineteenth century, tension over the existence of slavery and the expansion of slavery into the western territories threatened to tear the nation apart. As a compromise to lessen tension, Congress enacted the Missouri Compromise of 1820. This legislation prohibited slavery in the Louisiana Territory north of latitude line 36° 30’. To further compromise and maintain the balance of power in Congress, Maine was admitted into the Union in 1820 as a non-slave state, and Missouri in 1821, as a slave state.97

Propelled by contentions over slavery, hostility between the southern pro-slavery states and northern anti-slavery states continued to escalate. The nation was at a breaking point when Congress passed An Act to Organize the Territories of Nebraska and Kansas in 1854. Known as the Kansas-Nebraska Act, it repealed the Missouri Compromise of 1820 and established popular sovereignty. Popular sovereignty allowed the citizens of each territory to decide if it would be free or slaveholding. Subsequent to the Kansas-Nebraska Act, the Kansas Territory became known as “Bleeding Kansas” as pro-slavery and anti-slavery forces battled for control. The violence was prelude to the Civil War.98

Civil War-era women preserved a material record of their sentiments regarding the violence in Kansas. Quilt historian Barbara Brackman indicated the quilt pattern Kansas Troubles emerged in the 1850s. A variation of existing patterns, the popularity of
the Kansas Troubles pattern grew throughout the Civil War era and it appeared in nationwide magazines and pattern books as Kansas Troubles circa 1890. The L. B. Collection at the Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, houses the Kansas Troubles Quilt. Completed circa 1850 by an unrecorded maker, Kansas Troubles (Exhibit 70) is an early example of this quilt title and demonstrates Civil War-era women’s adaptiveness and awareness regarding quilt art and the lived experiences and challenges affecting their community.

Motivated by the recent war with Mexico and mounting challenges from pro-slavery states to dissolve the Union, Civil War-era women were inspired to register their pre-Civil War nationalistic and patriotic sentiments for the Union. Despite their liminal social and political status, which largely excluded them from the public processes of nationalistic and patriotic sentiment, Civil War-era women expressed their support for their country through quilt art. Mary Caroline Nelson, the daughter of War of 1812 veteran Gilbert Nelson, crafted her patriotic Eagle quilt in 1846. An early and bold patriotic statement, the Eagle quilt (Exhibit 71) is dominated by a large patriotic eagle and includes a star for each state of the Union. Donated in 1936 by Nelson’s granddaughter, the Eagle quilt is in the collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of American History, Kenneth E. Behring Center, Washington D.C.

Crafted circa 1848 by Helen Gilchrist Ferris, the Eagle applique quilt (Exhibit 72) displays patriotic eagles and American flags. The Eagle applique quilt is inscribed, “Holy Bible, The Light of the World and the Guide of our Nation. E Puribus Unum.” The Eagle applique quilt is artistic expression of pre-Civil War patriotism and is accessible at the Illinois State Museum, Springfield, Illinois.
“THE FEDERAL UNION MUST BE PRESERVED” is inscribed on one of the blocks of Susan Adel Esputa’s *Patriotic Embroidered Counterpane* quilt. Completed circa 1850, the *Patriotic Embroidered Counterpane* quilt (Exhibit 73) contains embroidered images of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, patriotic eagles, and an American flag. Donated by her granddaughter, the elaborately embroidered *Patriotic Embroidered Counterpane* quilt demonstrates Esputa’s strong pre-Civil War sentiments regarding nationalism and patriotism. This quilt is in the collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of American History, Kenneth E. Behring Center, Washington D.C.

Abhorring abolitionist attacks on slavery, northern states’ willingness to thwart the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, and the popularity of Harriet Beecher Stowe’s 1852 book, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, politicians representing the interest of slaveholding states increased their threats of secession. Pro-slavery states were further inflamed and poised for secession by abolitionist John Brown’s efforts to incite slave rebellions and his 1859 raid on the government arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia, to arm his planned rebellion. Hanged that same year, John Brown became a martyr for the abolitionist movement. It was the 1860 election of Abraham Lincoln that incensed pro-slavery interests and commenced the secession process.¹⁰⁰

By the time Lincoln was inaugurated in March of 1861, seven states had seceded from the Union: South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas. The seceded states formed a government and elected Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederate States of America. On April 12, 1861, Confederate forces bombarded and subsequently captured Fort Sumter, an island fort in the harbor of Charleston, South Carolina. On April 15, 1861, President Lincoln declared a state of insurrection existed
and called for seventy-five thousand volunteer troops to suppress the rebellion. Between April 17, and June 8, 1861, Virginia, Arkansas, North Carolina, and Tennessee seceded from the Union. With eleven states forming the Confederate States of America, the stage was set for the bloodiest conflict in the history of the United States, the American Civil War. More than 620,000 soldiers died in the Civil War, 360,000 from the Union, and 260,000 from the Confederacy.¹⁰¹

The Confederacy enjoyed considerable military success against Union forces throughout the Civil War. Confederate troops routinely controlled the battlefield as Union troops could not establish advances into the Confederacy. Invading the North, Confederate troops suffered strategic loses at Sharpsburg (Antietam), Maryland, in 1862, and again at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, in July of 1863. The Confederate loss at Gettysburg combined with the July, 1863, defeat at Vicksburg, Mississippi, were turning points in the Civil War with success shifting toward Union troops. Union victories at Atlanta and Savannah, Georgia, in 1864, devastated the Confederacy. Battlefield losses combined with the effects of the Union naval blockade, dwindling Confederate military resources, and mounting military resources for Union troops, signaled the end of the Civil War was near. General Ulysses S. Grant accepted the unconditional surrender of Confederate General Robert E. Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia on April 9, 1865. All armies of the Confederacy surrendered by the end of June, 1865.¹⁰²

Aware and engaged, Civil War-era women representing the Union and Confederacy stitched their nationalistic and patriotic sentiments throughout the war years of 1861-1865. Crafted in 1861, Ivy Purcell’s Flag Quilt (Exhibit 74) contains approximately seven thousand hand stitched, predominately red, white, and blue hexagon
and diamond shaped pieces. The center medallion is a blue field containing thirty-four stars, a star for each state of the Union in 1861. Flag and star quilts were a favorite design used by Civil War-era women to express nationalism and patriotism. Made in New Jersey, the *Flag Quilt* is privately owned and accessible through the Heritage Quilt Project of New Jersey, Rutgers Special Collections and University Archives, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey.

Margaret English Wood Dodge made two nationalistic and patriotic quilts. One was sent to Abraham Lincoln and the other is in the permanent collection of the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution Museum, Washington D.C. Completed circa 1865, in New York, Dodge’s *Patriotic Quilt Variation* (Exhibit 75) is a bold statement in red, white, and blue. It portrays stars, a dominate eagle, flag-style stripes, and a patriotic shield.

Documentation at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History, Kenneth E. Behring Center, Washington D.C., indicates that Mary Hughes was thirteen years old when she completed *Mary Lord’s Civil War Quilt* (Exhibit 76) in 1861. The day Tennessee seceded from the Union, June 8, 1861, Hughes, as a symbol of nationalism and patriotism, stitched the U.S. Flag in the center of her quilt. The Hughes family was loyal to the Union, and fearing for the safety of his family and being pressed into military service for the Confederacy, Mary Hughes’s father smuggled his family though Confederate lines to safety in the Union town of Cincinnati, Ohio. Mary Hughes carried her quilt all through the trip to safety.

When Fort Donelson, Dover, Tennessee, fell to Union troops on February 16, 1862, the Hughes family returned home to Nashville, Tennessee. Union General William
Rosecrans suggested Hughes make her quilt an autograph quilt, and along with many of his staff, signed her quilt. During and after the Civil War, Hughes secured the names of many prominent individuals: James A. Garfield, Winfield Scott, Abraham Lincoln, Philip Sheridan, Chester A. Arthur, William Tecumseh Sherman, William McKinley, and Theodore Roosevelt. The *Mary Lord’s Civil War Quilt* was exhibited at President Lincoln’s funeral and saluted by twenty thousand troops. It was also displayed at President Garfield’s funeral. Mary Hughes married Henry Edward Lord in 1865 and their daughter donated the quilt to the Smithsonian in 1943. Highly publicized, the *Mary Lord’s Civil War Quilt* was showcased in numerous historical, textile, and quilting publications.

As previously discussed, extant quilts crafted in southern states during the Civil War are limited. The Civil War devastated the Confederacy and textiles available for military and public use were either consumed or destroyed. The Union blockade of seaports and the destruction of southern railroads prevented resupply.

Symbolic of the entire Confederacy, Maria Preston Harper’s *Harper Crib Quilt* (Exhibit 77) contains a silk embroidered mosaic star for each of the eleven states comprising the Confederacy. An eleven-star flag and a pieced flag representing South Carolina complete the quilt. Made in 1861 for the son of Reverend Henry Dickson, a chaplain in the Confederate Army, the *Harper Crib Quilt* was documented in 1922 by the United Daughters of the Confederacy. Crafted in South Carolina, the *Harper Crib Quilt* is curated at the American Civil War Museum, Richmond, Virginia.

Susan Robb’s *Confederate Applique Quilt* (Exhibit 78) is a statement of patriotic pride and commemoration for her two stepsons who served in the Confederate army.
Crafted in Arkansas, Texas, or Mississippi, circa 1863-1865, Robb’s quilt has a center medallion depicting marching southern troops, mounted officers, and Confederate flags. In a small appliqued scene, a southern stork is defeating a presumed northern eagle. A highly publicized quilt, Robb’s *Confederate Applique Quilt* is in the collection of the Museum of Texas Tech University, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas.¹⁰³

Varina Howell Davis began her *Davis Applique Quilt* or *Butterfly Quilt* (Exhibit 79) during the Civil War. The quilt was completed about 1870. Adorned with flags and images commemorating the Confederacy, the center medallion is an embroidered butterfly. The *Butterfly Quilt* was donated to the American Civil War Museum, Richmond, Virginia, by Varina Davis Hayes Webb, the granddaughter of Jefferson and Varina Davis. Notes accompanying the donation described the symbolism of the butterfly as representing the beautiful and immortal soul of the Confederacy.

The material records of quilt art demonstrate Civil War-era women’s nationalistic and patriotic support for the Union and Confederacy. Quilt art linked their domestic world to the national political and military environment. Through quilt art, Civil War-era women created a text of their patriotic awareness and engagement.
Exhibit 70. *Kansas Troubles*, L. B. Collection, Spencer Museum of Art, The University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, ID Number – 2003.0110


Exhibit 74. *Flag Quilt*, The Quilt Index: ID Number – 53-004-01

Exhibit 75. *Patriotic Quilt Variation*, The Quilt Index: ID Number – 88.23
ID Number – TE’T08900

Exhibit 77. *Harper Crib Quilt*, American Civil War Museum, Richmond, Virginia,
Accession Number – 0985.10.32
Exhibit 78. *Confederate Applique Quilt*, Courtesy Museum of Texas Tech University, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas

Exhibit 79. *Davis Applique Quilt or Butterfly Quilt*, American Civil War Museum, Richmond, Virginia, Accession Number - 0985.5.2
War Relief and Early Reconstruction

Historian Lynn A. Bonfield’s 2001 essay, *Quilts for Civil War Soldiers from Peacham, Vermont*, noted that between 1861 and 1865, the town of Peacham, in northern Vermont, sent one hundred twenty-two men, or nearly ten-percent of its 1860 population, to fight in the Civil War. Two-thirds of Peacham’s soldiers lost their lives. Only eight died from battlefield wounds, the rest died from disease.¹⁰⁴

Peacham soldiers often wrote home of their Civil War experiences. Several Peacham women described their homefront experiences with diary entries. Some Peacham soldiers’ letters and women’s diaries are extant and preserved in historical societies, museums, and private collection across the United States. Bonfield wrote that the letters written by soldiers described a constant lack of provisions and conveyed the harsh conditions of camplife. She also stated that the diaries of Peacham women depicted their war relief efforts to provide provisions, aid, and comfort to Peacham soldiers and local residents impacted by the Civil War.¹⁰⁵

Referencing selected primary source letters, Bonfield’s essay highlights servicemen’s requests for quilts and other items needed to alleviate the harsh conditions of camplife. Referencing primary source selected diary entries, Bonfield portrayed the efforts of Peacham women to aid local soldiers and their families impacted by the war. Bonfield noted Peacham women’s support for the larger war effort through supplying the U.S. Sanitary Commission and the U.S. Christian Commission. Bonfield also acclaimed Peacham women’s initiatives to raise funds for war relief. Aid packages requested by soldiers and sent by Peacham women included: quilts, comforters, blankets, shirts,
Bonfield’s essay noted the immediate reaction of Peacham women to the needs of local soldiers. She also remarked on the difficulties of delivering provisions to soldiers stationed at distant locations. She wrote that aid packages were sometimes lost, stolen, or deteriorated in warehouses. Bonfield wrote that quilts were more than comfort and warmth, they were sentimental links to home and family. The women of Peacham engaged their patriotic duty and provided war relief to local enlistees, men in service, and the nationwide aid associations throughout the Civil War.

Bonfield’s essay is reflective of events throughout the Union and Confederacy as America progressed into the Civil War. The Union and Confederacy were unprepared for war. The Union possessed a small military of sixteen thousand men scattered across the Nation. The Union had no general staff, no strategic plan, few veteran officers, and no maps of the southern states. In the Confederacy, each regiment initially supplied its own uniforms, arms, horses and wagons, and personal provisions. Stored military supplies were inadequate to meet the needs of armies comprising tens of thousands of men. In the Union, many enlistees left home with nothing but the clothes on their backs. In the Confederacy, volunteers were rejected because of the lack of supplies.

The need was great and local communities, North and South, provisioned their servicemen as best they could. Families and friends from the local community continued to aid their troops with material and consumable provisions throughout the Civil War. In the North, as many as twenty thousand local aid societies were formed within weeks of the beginning of the war. The South began outfitting their army before the attack on Fort
Sumter. When Fort Sumter surrendered, the Confederacy had a provisioned army of sixty thousand. However, lack of supplies haunted the Confederacy throughout the war.\textsuperscript{109}

In the chaos of war, supplies sent from home to soldiers in the field were not always received. Provisions sold at and near army camps commanded highly inflated prices. Concerns about supply corruption, supply logistics inefficiency, sanitary conditions, and medical services to servicemen caused the concerned citizens of New York City to establish the Women’s Central Association of Relief (WCAR) in April of 1861. The Board of Management of the WCAR included Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell, the first women to receive a medical degree in the United States, eleven other women, and twelve men. The WCAR was organized to coordinate the relief work of existing aid societies, create new aid societies, communicate with the U.S. Army Medical Department, and train and register nurses.\textsuperscript{110}

WCAR representatives traveled to Washington D.C. in May of 1861 to share their concerns and inform officials of the supply, sanitary, and medical enhancements WCAR members learned from the Crimean War of 1853-1856. Representing the WCAR was Reverend Henry Bellows and healthcare reformer Dorothea Dix. After some resistance, Bellows and Dix convinced the Lincoln administration to establish a sanitary commission similar to that of Florence Nightingale’s in the Crimean War.\textsuperscript{111}

The War Department sanctioned the U.S. Sanitary Commission (USSC) on June 9, 1861. Organized by civilians, managed by civilians, and funded by the public, the USSC was responsible for promoting and coordinating supplies from aid societies, promoting sanitary and healthy conditions in camps and hospitals, and staffing hospitals with nurses and volunteers. The largest war relief organization in the Union, the USSC
coordinated services and fundraising initiatives between seven thousand aid societies throughout the Union. Cumulatively, the USSC sent two hundred fifty thousand quilts to Union soldiers, raised over four million dollars at fundraising fairs, and contributed approximately fifteen million dollars in war relief supplies. The USSC provided approximately three thousand two hundred trained nurses for army hospitals.112

Similar in responsibilities to the USSC, the Western Sanitary Commission was organized by Union General John C. Fremont on September 10, 1861. The Western Sanitary Commission relied upon the Ladies Union Aid Society of St. Louis, Missouri, for the delivery of supply, sanitary, and healthcare services. The Western Sanitary Commission operated seventy field hospitals, including fifteen hospitals in St. Louis. In addition to raising funds to support all services, the Western Sanitary Commission employed the indigent families of Union soldiers, organized a Contraband Relief Society, a Cherokee Relief Society, and established a home for refugees.113

The United States Christian Commission was founded on November 16, 1861. Its purpose was to promote the spiritual welfare of service personnel with the cooperation of Chaplains. Founded by leaders of the Young Men’s Christian Association, the services of the United States Christian Commission included promoting religious observances, promoting temperance, providing libraries and reading rooms, and gymnasiums. Responding to the challenges of war, the United States Christian Commission distributed emergency medical supplies, food, clothing, and operated canteens. The United States Christian Commission also worked to assemble burial records. In total, the United States Christian Commission sent approximately five thousand volunteers into service and spent over six million dollars providing spiritual and material aid to Union soldiers.114
The Confederacy also organized soldier aid societies. The Confederacy did not have aid organizations with the capacity to raise funds or provide services like those of the Union. War relief in the Confederacy was hampered by lack of a sustainable textile industry. The naval blockade and disrupted rail service further constrained Confederate war relief as medical supplies could not be replenished. The death rates at Confederate hospitals was higher than those of the Union.\textsuperscript{115}

The success of the U.S. Sanitary Commission, Western Sanitary Commission, and the U.S. Christian Commission is attributed to the independent and collective war relief efforts of Civil War-era women. Women helped organize and formed the functional national, regional, and local leadership of the U.S. Sanitary Commission. The women of the Ladies’ Union Aide Society of St. Louis, Missouri, implemented the services of the Western Sanitary Commission. The U.S. Christian Commission’s medical, dietary, and material supply operations were staffed and administered by thousands of women volunteers, including women administrative delegates.\textsuperscript{116}

In \textit{Civil War Quilts}, by Pamela Weeks and Don Beld, fifteen surviving Civil War quilts are studied. Twelve of the quilts were crafted consistent with U.S. Sanitary Commission (USSC) requests for, “Quilts, of cheap material, about seven feet long by fifty inches wide.” The USSC single bed or cot quilts were made for camp and hospital use. More than two hundred fifty thousand quilts were supplied by aid societies throughout the Union. Used as burial shrouds, worn out, abandoned, soiled and burned, these quilts were casualties of war and only a dozen or more exist today. The surviving quilts are historic treasures.\textsuperscript{117}
Three of the quilts reviewed by Weeks and Beld were elaborately crafted for display and possible sale at fundraising fairs. Weeks and Beld note that quilts are iconic symbols of Civil War-era women’s humanitarian and war relief efforts. Weeks and Beld’s review highlighted and exemplified the two principle uses of Civil War aid society quilts; physical and emotional comfort for soldiers; sale, auction, and display at fundraising fairs.118

The LeMoyne stars quilt (Exhibit 80), like the soldier that received it, is a survivor. Completed by Boston area women, the LeMoyne stars quilt was issued to Union soldier James George in early 1865. George was captured at the Battle of the Wilderness in May of 1864 and sent to the infamous Andersonville prison camp in Georgia. George survived Andersonville prison and returned home to his wife. The LeMoyne stars quilt is one of a dozen or more service quilts that survived the Civil War. The LeMoyne stars quilt is signed by the makers and contains Bible verses and anti-slavery messages and images. Highly documented, publicized, and often exhibited, the LeMoyne stars quilt is curated and accessible at the New England Quilt Museum, Lowell, Massachusetts.

Sent to a Union army hospital during the Civil War, the 1864 Civil War Album Quilt Top (Exhibit 81) is inscribed by its many makers and contains religious messages and well wishes. Notable inscriptions are, “Three cheers for the Red, white & blue 1864” and “God save Gen. Grant and his brave men.” Crafted at Amherst, Massachusetts, the top of the 1864 Civil War Album Quilt Top was applied to an older wool quilt. The 1864 Civil War Album Quilt Top is documented and maintained at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History, Kenneth E. Behring Center, Washington D.C.
Crafted in Augusta, Maine, in 1863, by the Sunday school class of Susannah Pullen, the back of the *1863 Susannah Pullen’s Civil War Quilt* is inscribed;

> The commencement of this war took place Apr. 12th 1861. The first gun was fired from Fort Sumpter. God speed the time when we can tell when, and where, the last gun was fired; & ‘we shall learn war no more.’ If this quilt survives the war we would like to have it returned to Mrs. Gilbert Pullen, Augusta, Me … This quilt completed Sept. 1st 1863.

The quilt made by Pullen and the fourteen young ladies in her Sunday school class did survive the war and was returned. Inscriptions on the *1863 Susannah Pullen’s Civil War Quilt* requested servicemen to write the Sunday school class. Letters from two soldiers, convalescing at different hospitals, at different times, in Washington D.C., were curated with the quilt. Pullen’s Sunday school class quilt contains over one hundred fifty inscriptions of Bible verses, riddles, health advice, and patriotic messages. One personal message is inscribed, “If you are good looking send me your photograph.” The *1863 Susannah Pullen’s Civil War Quilt* (Exhibit 82) is documented and can be examined at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History, Kenneth E. Behring Center, Washington D.C.

Like many Confederate servicemen, Major Lemuel Ward, outfitted himself. Ward took his wife’s wedding quilt to war and used it nightly. Ward also took silverware, cooking utensils, and a slave as a personal attendant. Surprisingly, the *1856 Ward Wedding Quilt* (Exhibit 83) survived the war. The *1856 Ward Wedding Quilt* is privately owned and can be studied in Barbara Brackman’s *Quilts from the Civil War*, Lafayette, California, C & T Publishing, 1997.

Quilt historian Pamela Weeks writes that the few quilts surviving the Civil War, did so because they had special meaning. They survived because they represented a
sentimental link to the people and places of home. The *LeMoyne stars, 1864 Civil War Album Quilt Top, 1863 Susannah Pullen’s Civil War Quilt, and 1856 Ward Wedding Quilt*, represented familiarity and personal attachment. Week’s suggests that personal attachment is why they survived. It was the meaningful link to the homefront and personal value to the soldier that helped these quilts avoid the destruction of the Civil War.\(^{119}\)

Quilts as sale and auction items were important fundraising elements at fairs sponsored by aid societies in the Union and Confederacy. Large events earned considerable funds. The Chicago Sanitary Fairs of 1863 and 1865, raised one hundred thousand and two hundred thousand dollars respectfully. The 1865 Philadelphia Fair earned one million dollars. The Mississippi Valley Sanitary Fair, held in St. Louis, raised five hundred fifty-four thousand dollars in 1864. An 1862 fundraiser organized in Charleston, South Carolina, to raise funds to build a gunboat for the Confederacy, raised ten thousand dollars. While some objected to women being involved in the public processes of philanthropy and commercialism, it was Civil War-era women that originated, operated, and made the fairs successful.\(^{120}\)

The patriotic *Sampler* quilt (Exhibit 84, full and detailed views) is a fundraising quilt crafted in Tarrytown, New York, to support war relief. The center medallion of this quilt is inscribed, “Tarrytown Sanitary Fair for the Benefit of Disabled Soldiers July 1864.” A very rare and unique quilt, the *Sampler* was documented through the Connecticut Quilt Search Project. Privately owned, the *Sampler* can be accessed through The Quilt Index, Identification Number: 316, Michigan State University Museum, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan.
Gunboat Societies were formed in the Confederacy to raise funds to build gunboats to battle the Union naval blockade. Two quilts attributable to Martha Singleton Hatter of Greensboro, Alabama, were crafted to raise funds for gunboats. Both quilts feature a large floral and vase center medallion. Hatter’s Gunboat quilt (Exhibit 85) was made in 1861. The Gunboat was auctioned twice in the same evening. The second successful bidder returned the quilt to Hatter and it remained in her family until donated to the Birmingham Museum of Art, Birmingham, Alabama, in 1985.\textsuperscript{121}

Gunboat-B, attributed to Martha Singleton Hatter circa 1862, was auctioned four times in the same evening. Each successful bidder would return the quilt to auction. Funds raised went to support the building of a gunboat and distribution to the families of absent soldiers. Gunboat-B (Exhibit 86) is curated and accessible at the First White House of the Confederacy, Montgomery, Alabama. The enthusiasm and support of Gunboat Societies disappeared with Confederate naval losses early in the war.\textsuperscript{122}

Reconstruction began in earnest at the end of the Civil War. It was a period of rebuilding infrastructure, communities, and relationships. It was a time and a process dedicated to reconstructing the Nation. Reconstruction was challenging as it required an answer to questions involving the status of four million recently freed slaves. It required a process for readmitting Confederate states to the Union. It also required a system for retributive justice against former Confederate military and political leaders.\textsuperscript{123}

Technically, Reconstruction was comprised of three periods or components: Wartime Reconstruction, 1861-1865; Presidential Reconstruction, 1865-1867; and Congressional or Military Reconstruction, 1867-1877. Historically, Reconstruction was a period of continued post-Civil War struggle between radical northerners who wanted to
punish the former Confederacy and the defeated Confederacy’s efforts to preserve its antebellum social, political, and economic hierarchy. It was an era where southern Republicans and recently freed blacks asserted their newly achieved political rights. It was a violent period that witnessed the rise of the Ku Klux Klan and reigns of violence including beatings and lynching’s that continued decades past the official end of Reconstruction and the 1877 withdrawal of Federal troops from the southern states. Reconstruction was a period in American history where the darkness of racism and political and economic greed eclipsed the social, political, and economic remedies initiated to reconstruct and reconcile the shattered Union.\textsuperscript{124}

The Civil War ended and Reconstruction begun, the efforts of Civil War-era quilters remained basically unchanged. Civil War-era women, as previously discussed, continued to register their religious, political, and social sentiments in quilt art. War relief efforts became aid and fundraising for returning Union and Confederate veterans. Madelyn Shaw and Lynne Zacek Bassett included the \textit{Red Calico Sawtooth} quilt in their exhibition of post-Civil War quilts in \textit{Homefront \& Battlefield: Quilts \& Context in the Civil War}. Crafted for a fundraising auction to benefit Union veterans in Albany, New York, the \textit{Red Calico Sawtooth} quilt (Exhibit 87) sold for one hundred dollars to discharged veteran Major Albert I. Perry, the grandson of War of 1812 hero Oliver Hazard Perry. Made circa 1865 by an unrecorded maker, the \textit{Red Calico Sawtooth} quilt is in the permanent collection of the New York State Museum, Albany, New York.\textsuperscript{125}

\textit{Feed the Hungry} is the title and sentiment inscribed on the center of a quilt made by the women of the Methodist-Episcopal Church, South, in Lexington, Missouri. Crafted in 1866 as a fundraiser to aid Confederate veterans and their families, the \textit{Feed
the Hungry quilt (Exhibit 88) has the words “Feed the Hungry” spelled out with brass sequins across the middle of the quilt. Bets Ramsey and Merikay Waldvogel included this quilt in their book, *Southern Quilts: Surviving Relics of the Civil War* as did Shaw and Bassett in *Homefront & Battlefield: Quilts & Context in the Civil War*. Donated in 1938, *Feed the Hungry* is curated at the Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis, Missouri.126

For Civil War-era women early Reconstruction was more than continued aid to returning veterans. It was a time for remembrance and commemoration. Remembrance and commemoration was an individual and collective endeavor as Civil War-era women honored their husbands, sons, brothers, sweethearts, and the armies and units in which they served.

The *Civil War/Presentation Quilt* was made circa 1865 to commemorate Union troops and President Lincoln. The *Civil War/Presentation Quilt* displays embroidered flags, Union shields, and patriotic eagle motifs. It contains inscriptions honoring President Lincoln, individual servicemen, and army units. The names, places, and dates of various battlefields and encampments are also inscribed. Crafted by an unrecorded maker and privately owned, the *Civil War/Presentation Quilt* (Exhibit 89) was documented by the Massachusetts Quilt Documentation project and can be studied through The Quilt Index, Identification Number: 3386, Michigan State University Museum, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan.

Documentation accompanying the *Embroidered Candlewick* quilt (Exhibit 90) notes the quilt was made in commemoration of the men and wives under Major General Thomas L. Kane. The *Embroidered Candlewick* quilt is embroidered with two hundred thirty-five names of men, women, and embroidery honoring the Unknown
Soldier. This quilt is also inscribed, “1809 A. Lincoln 1865.” Attributed to Margaret Davis, Circa 1865, the Embroidered Candlewick quilt is privately owned. Documented by the Arizona Quilt Documentation Project, this quilt can be studied through The Quilt Index, Identification Number: P054, Michigan State University Museum, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan.

Begun during the Civil War by Varina Howell Davis as a patriotic and commemorative statement, the Davis Applique Quilt or Butterfly Quilt (Exhibit 79) was completed circa 1870 in commemoration of the Confederacy. Davis completed the Butterfly Quilt as time and material became available subsequent to the end of the war. The Butterfly Quilt is one of several Civil War and post-Civil War quilts stitched by this accomplished quilter. The Butterfly Quilt is in the permanent collection of the American Civil War Museum, Richmond, Virginia.

The material records archived in public and private collections across the United States demonstrate Civil War-era women’s nationalistic and patriotic support for the Union and Confederacy. These collections also demonstrate Civil War-era women’s participation in war relief and fundraising initiatives during the war and in early Reconstruction. Archived in these sources are Civil War-era quilts commemorating the soldiers, armies, and military and elected leaders of the Union and Confederacy. Through quilt art, in the fine and folk art style, Civil War-era women demonstrated their support for the war effort, their commitment to relieve suffering, and their passion for commemorating the servicemen of the Civil War. A stitched thread and fabric legacy, quilt art of the Civil War enables a fresh perspective to the way the Civil War is interpreted.
Exhibit 80. *LeMoyne stars*, The Quilt Index: ID Number – 4026

Exhibit 82. 1863 Susannah Pullen’s Civil War Quilt, Smithsonian National Museum of American History, Kenneth E. Behring Center, Washington D.C. ID Number TE’T14021.00B

Exhibit 83. 1856 Ward Wedding Quilt, Privately and Anonymously Owned
Exhibit 84. *Sampler* (full view), The Quilt Index: ID Number - 316

Exhibit 84. *Sampler* (detail view), The Quilt Index: ID Number - 316

Exhibit 86. *Gunboat-B*, Collection of the First White House of the Confederacy, Montgomery, Alabama

Exhibit 88. *Feed the Hungry*, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, Missouri
ID Number 1938.17.001
Exhibit 89. Civil War/Presentation Quilt, The Quilt Index: ID Number - 3386

Exhibit 90. Embroidered Candlewick, The Quilt Index: ID Number - P054
VIII.

Intimate Parallels: Quilt Art, History, and Civil War-Era Women

This thesis hypothesizes that Civil War-era quilt art reflects the general historical events of the era and creates a material record of women’s social and political sentiments. It further asserts that an intimate parallelism exists between quilt art, the historical events, and the lived social and political experiences of Civil War-era women. As exhibited in reasonable quantity and meaningful interpretations, the images, symbols, and messages of Civil War-era quilt art portrays the general events of the prelude, hostilities, and post-war occurrences of the Civil War era. The quilt art exhibited also reveals the religious, political, social, and war-related sentiments of Civil War-era women. Despite their liminal social and political status, women of the Civil War era engaged and actively participated in the social and political challenges and transformations of the Civil War era. Civil War-era quilt art is the historical record and artful text of their activism.

Parallelism in history occurs when historical phenomena share events, direction, practices, and tendencies. Parallelism becomes intimate when this sharing includes character, message, and meaning. Demonstrating intimate parallels between quilt art, historical events, and women’s liminal social and political experiences requires a synthesis of these historical phenomena that spans the Civil War era. Demonstrating a decades-long synthesis between quilt art, history, and women’s liminal status necessitates the study of these individual histories as they conjointly and concomitantly traversed and impacted the Civil War era. The synthesis occurs when the separate histories of quilt art,
historical events, and the social history of Civil War-era women fuse into a single narrative. As previously discussed, it is like viewing history through multiple lenses and achieving a single synthesized view.

The relationship between quilt art, history and the liminal status of Civil War-era women is intimately parallel and synthesized. Inspired by religious, political, social, and Civil War events, quilt art of Civil War-era women is documented to have spanned the decades of the era, chronicled historical events of the era, and is material witness to Civil War-era women’s liminal social and political status. Alternatively stated, the historiography of the Civil War era is captured in the broad geographic distribution, artistic diversity of quilt art patterns and titles, and the ancillary and inscribed historical information associated with religious, political, social, and Civil War inspired quilt art. The relationship between Civil War-era quilt art, historical events, and the liminal status of women is bonded and inseparable from any comprehensive narrative or text regarding the Civil War era.

Cultural anthropologist Clifford Geertz in his 1980 essay, *Blurred Genres: The Refiguration of Social Thought*, writes that the instruments of reasoning are changing and there is considerable cross-genre mixing in the scholarly interpretations emanating from the social sciences. Social thought across anthropology, economics, geography, government, history, humanities, jurisprudence, political science, psychology, and sociology are combining to provide broadened interpretations of the lived experiences of a society. In *Blurred Genres*, Geertz describes three mixed-genre analytical approaches to interpreting the lived experiences of a society. In Game Analogy, the social actions or lived experiences of a society are a serious and competitive game of interactive strategies,
structures, rules, and struggles. In Drama Analogy, the social actions or lived experiences of a society are a social drama of public, private, theatrical, and government symbolic roles and rituals that describe and portray how a society lived and functioned. In Text Analogy, they are a text of recorded actions captured in inscribed symbols, expressions, and meaning of formal language, colloquialisms, popular arts, and literature.\textsuperscript{127}

Geertz’s mixed genre and lived experiences analogies enhance Civil War-era quilt art’s credibility as a scholarly component of material culture and women’s social history. The Game Analogy of societal lived experiences requires strategies, structure, and action between players. The redressive symbols, images, and messages stitched by Civil War-era quilters represent an oddly mannered game or competition with their controlling culture. It is a game where women that were denied the vote, challenged the controlling culture and stitched their unofficial votes into a material legacy. It was a competition where liminal voices struggled and strategized to express their lived experiences in artistic symbols, images, and messages. It was a game where self-expression competed against the controlling culture for recognition.

The Drama Analogy of lived experiences applies to Civil War-era quilt art as quilt art portrays the roles and rituals of Civil War-era women’s religious, political, social, and war related realities. The drama captured in quilt art’s symbols, images, and messages is a repetitive performance of the lived experiences of Civil War-era women. In Civil War-era quilt art, the drama of birth, life, and death are artistically portrayed at the personal and societal levels.

Civil War-era quilt art is a text of women’s religious, political, social, and war related sentiments. It is a stitched text formed in popular art. It is a text constructed of
purposeful and persistent meaning. It is a text available to all the social sciences. It is a text that represents credible material culture and a viable component of women’s social history.

The legacy and vitality of the relationship between Civil War-era quilt art, history, and the social and political activism of Civil War-era women is prominently visible today. In the spirit of Civil War-era women’s social and political activism, quilters today, mostly women, employ quilt art as a channel for social and political expression. The NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt is a powerful material culture statement of the devastation of the AIDS pandemic. Comprised of three-foot by six-foot panels, and containing thousands of names, the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989. Containing over forty-eight thousand panels, the last display of the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt was in October, 1996, where it covered the entire National Mall in Washington D.C.  

The 9/11 Memorial Quilt Project was crafted by over five hundred volunteers nationwide. The 9/11 Memorial Quilt Project consists of a ten-foot by sixty-foot Victims’ Quilt and separate quilts for New York and New Jersey police, firefighter, port authority, and emergency personnel. The 9/11 Memorial Quilt Project – Victims’ Quilt is on permanent display at the National September 11 Memorial and Museum, New York, New York.

Since 2003, the Quilts of Valor Foundation has awarded over one hundred thirty thousand quilts to returning veterans and active personnel. Quilts of Valor are a material culture, “Thank you for your service, sacrifice and valor,” from Quilts of Valor Foundation volunteers. QuiltFest Inc. is a humanitarian organization comprised of
independent quilting guilds that collectively conduct quilt contests, sales, and auctions supporting local and nationwide youth projects, cancer awareness, and the Wounded Warriors Project. Today, as during the Civil War era, quilt art reflects the realities of history.

Collectively, quilt art of the Civil War era is an artful portrayal of the entire epoch. It is an imaginative gift from the women of the Civil War era to all future generations. It is the gift of art. It is the gift of an alternative view to history. It is the gift of insight and connection to the women, some known, so many unknown, who endured the challenges and transformations of the Civil War era. It is their story, bequeathed to us through needle, thread, and fabric.
Endnotes


22 Clinton and Silber, *Battle Scars*, 5.


24 Clinton and Silber, *Battle Scars*, 5.

25 Clinton and Silber, *Battle Scars*, 4-5, 7, notes 16-17.


36Fry, *Stitched from the Soul*, 84-91.


40Shaw, *American Quilts*, 61-64.


50 DuBois, *Feminism and Suffrage*, 163.

51 DuBois, *Feminism and Suffrage*, 164-185.


Bonfield, *Quilts for Civil War Soldiers from Peacham, Vermont*, 57-59.


Weeks and Beld, *Civil War Quilts*, 8-9; McPherson *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 313, 318.


Weeks and Beld, *Civil War Quilts*, 6, 10, 15.

Weeks and Beld, *Civil War Quilts*, 15.
119 Bonfield, *Quilts for Civil War Soldiers from Peacham, Vermont*, 37, 49, 60; Weeks and Beld, *Civil War Quilts*, 15.


121 Ramsey and Waldvogel, *Southern Quilts*, 86-89.


Bibliography


