

The Journal of the LYCOMING COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

JEWELS & NEEDLES



Studies of 19th Century Women



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On the Cover:

Detail of reproduction album cross quilt,
“Don’t let the Rebels get this quilt.”
Courtesy of Ann Diseroad.

“...adding new jewels to her coronet”:

The Remarkable Career of JULIET LEWIS CAMPBELL

By Timothy Lorson, with additions by Gary W. Parks

By all accounts, Juliet was an over-achiever. To her credit are several full-length books and poetry published in national magazines, as well as raising four children and assuming the duties of a wife to the U.S. Minister to Sweden and Norway. Hillary Rodham Clinton might be a comparable example, however, the life of Juliet Lewis Campbell is two centuries removed from the present day. She was a remarkable woman in her time and remains so to this day.

Looking at us confidently from her portrait, Juliet Lewis Campbell exudes an air of quiet authority and intelligence. The portrait, donated by her descendant Tim Lorson, graces our Greek Revival Parlor. It looks as if Juliet is ‘at home’.

Juliet Hamersly Lewis was born on the 5th of August, 1823, the eldest daughter of Judge Ellis and Josephine (Wallis) Lewis. At the time of her birth, the family resided on Pine Street in Williamsport. The house was located at approximately the location of the former Brozman’s Department Store. Her future husband James Campbell resided directly across the street. Soon after Juliet’s birth, the Lewis family removed to Towanda, Bradford County where Juliet’s early formative years were spent “amid the enchanting scenery of that beautiful country... educated mainly under the personal superintendence and influence of her excellent father, whose varied acquirements, literary tastes, and endearing gentleness of character, fitted him peculiarly for the pleasing task of assisting and directing the early developments of genius in this beloved daughter.” (May, p. 318)

Judge Lewis was named Attorney General for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in 1833, at which time it was decided to return to Williamsport. With this return to the city, the Lewis family built their home at 307 East Third Street (now the Eagles Club). Along with John W. Maynard, Judge Lewis was instrumental in establishing the first Christ Church within Williamsport, where Juliet and her mother were among the first to be baptized. Later, in the same year, Lewis was named President Judge of the Eighth Judicial District, which comprised Columbia, Northumberland, Lycoming and Union Counties. In 1843, Lewis was named President Judge of the Second District (Lancaster County) and in 1851, he was elected Justice of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. In 1855, he was named Chief Justice. Four years later, he declined repeated nominations for re-election to the Supreme Court,



wishing simply to retire to private life. Later, Juliet wrote a biographical sketch of her father Ellis Lewis whom she described as *“a ripe scholar, a profound thinker, a large hearted and public spirited man.”*

Judge Lewis wrote “Life!-Its Similitudes: For My Daughter’s Album.” As revealed in the preface to the poetry which first was published in the *Lycoming Gazette*, and reprinted in *The Rural Repository*, “The following beautiful lines...appear in his daughter’s Album, which in the course of its perambulations, fell late into our hands a few days since... Conceiving, they possess merit infinitely beyond the itinerant effusions which usually make their debut in a Ladies’ Album, we have transferred them to our columns.”

“The TREE, the STREAM, the GOLDEN SUN,
Are emblems of the course we run;
The BUBBLE too, so brief and light,
Is like this world- as empty quite;
The CURRENT glides like life away,
TIDE and TIME, for no one stay;
The highest and the haughtiest man
Is but a WORM- his life a span.
So, dearest JULIET, must it be
With thee, and thine, and all we see...”

In a more somber tone, Judge Lewis published a volume entitled *An Abridgement of the Criminal Law of the United States*. In addition, Judge Lewis wrote a book *Romance of Matrimony*, adopting the pen name Howard Challen for its publication in 1865. It is apparent that a love of writing transferred from one generation to the next. Juliet’s poetry complements her father’s poetry. The fragility of life and the certainty of death are common themes expressed in nineteenth century poetry. Her poem “Autumn” was written in Pottsville November 7, 1848.

*"Oh, Autumn is a conqueror!
He wears a frosty crown;
The fearful armory of Heaven,
He maketh all his own.
His banner's on the battlement;
His blast is on the breeze;
He moveth in the pride of might,
Amid the forest trees."*

Juliet's poem "A Song of Sunset" typifies the preoccupation with death and mourning, prevalent during the mid-nineteenth century and inspired by Queen Victoria's mourning of her husband Prince Albert.

*"Day is dead, and we are dying-
Every hour but speeds our doom-
Every breath we now are drawing
Brings us nearer to the tomb.
Let this thought rejoice our spirits,
Drooping o'er life's weary way-
Every day removes a burden-
We are dying every day."*

Inspired by her father, Juliet's career in writing probably began as a schoolgirl exercise. As forward-thinking parents with the financial means to do so, Judge and Mrs. Lewis sent their daughter to the Moravian Seminary for Young Ladies in Bethlehem, where she would not only learn regular studies, but the polite accomplishments of needlework, art and music. She entered in 1835. Later she would attend a French Boarding School in Philadelphia. It is noted in *American Female Poets*, by Caroline May, that Juliet began writing poetry at the tender age of fourteen and according to May, "*everything that has been published under her maiden name, was written during the space of three years from that early age...*" (May, p. 318). Her schooling would prepare her for the future roles of hostess, wife, mother, housekeeper, and as a writer.

Her poem, "A Story of Sunrise" was published in T.B. Read's *Female Poets of America*. The introduction to her poem reads, "*At a very early age she gave evidence of fine poetic power, and her more mature productions are characterized by truthfulness in description, by purity of sentiment and diction, and display great versatility.*" In part, the poem reads:

*"... When the summer morn is breaking
Glorious, with its golden beams,
Through my open, latticed window,
Matin music wildly streams
Not the peal of deep-toned organ
Smites the air with singing sound,-
Not the voice of singing maiden,
Sighing, softer music round;-
Long e'er these have hailed the morning
Is the mystic anthem heard,
Wildly, fervently, outpouring
From the bosom of a bird."*

Juliet's study of the classics is apparent in her poem regarding Tarpeia, the daughter of Tarpeius. Tarpeius, the keeper of the Roman capitol, agreed to surrender the capitol to the Sabines with the condition that Tarpeia "should have for her reward that which they carried upon their left arms." Upon orders from King Titus, the Sabine warriors sabotaged her by throwing not only the gold bracelets they wore on their left arms, but their shields as well, crushing her to death.

*"He threw to her the bribe, for which
Imperial Rome was lost,
And there upon the traitoress
His heavy shield he toss'd.

She fell beneath it, with one shriek,
One agonizing moan,
While fast the weighty shields were piled,
And golden bracelets thrown.

Buried beneath her infamy,
Crush'd 'neath her weight of guilt,
Her ignominious monument
Of her reward was built."*

Juliet sat for her portrait at the age of sixteen. It was painted by the well-respected artist John F. Francis. Seeking commissions, Francis traveled to central Pennsylvania at least three times, capturing the likenesses of many residents of Williamsport and nearby Lewisburg. Juliet's second portrait was accomplished by John Henry Brown in 1845. The third portrait was painted by the celebrated artist Thomas Sully in 1863, when Juliet was forty years old. The latter two portraits are within the collections of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

In 1843, Juliet married James Hepburn Campbell, her childhood neighbor. James was the son of Francis C. Campbell, a well-known lawyer, and Jane Hepburn Campbell, the daughter of James Hepburn. By the time of the Civil War, James Campbell was a successful lawyer, practicing in Pottsville. He served as a Capitol Guard for the Union in 1861 and by 1863, he served in the 39th Pennsylvania Militia Regiment, writing to his beloved wife on a daily basis.

Approximately one hundred letters written by James to his wife have survived and are preserved in the William L. Clements Library of the University of Michigan.

Each letter closes with an endearment, reflecting his great affection for his wife and children despite the miseries of war, excessive heat, and lack of sanitation in the field. In his letter dated July 5, 1863, for instance, James wrote, "*Love, worlds of love to you darling, and all the dear children.*" [letter dated July 5, 1863]. A week later, James from their encampment near Chambersburg, recorded "*Lee is in a tight place, around Hagerstown and Williamsport [Maryland]. He has 60,000 men and all his artillery and will fight hard. I suppose as soon as a division is formed here, we will be thrown forward. It may be*

a day or two, or a week. We cannot tell..." [Letter dated July 11, 1863]. Four days later, James' letter from camp near Green Castle, records, "*Lee has escaped! What a forced march we made in the exhausting heat of yesterday. My brain reels while I think of it- 16 miles over the hills to this place some 15,000 strong. Reached Camp at 9 P.M. Men slept where they fell. In roads, on the wet grass, in the gutters. Men died by the road side... This morning we were ordered to Hagerstown at 6 A.M. Countermanded. Lee had crossed. I am well. Our next move I know nothing of. I am well. Slept in my blanket on the wet grass last night by a camp fire...*" [Letter of July 15, 1863].

On July 21, James writes, "My dearest- This is a glorious day. Sun and wind and swaying shadows and the murmur of leaves innumerable in Camp- All quiet- only dull routine of camp life... Sanitary condition and discipline good... I am seated on a camp stool purchased this morning, in the shade writing to the darling of my youth and manhood, the best wife in the world.... Darling you will have no trouble in Pottsville about the draft. I think the N. York riots settled that, and Capt. Jones will have a strong force at hand. But if any out break shall be threatened run no risk, but pack up the silver and take the children, and go to Phila. until all danger is over. You can close the House- run no risk- use your judgment..." [Letter of July 21, 1863]. His letter of July 25 continues the running monologue of life in camp, closing by writing, "*The Rebels made fearful havoc through this valley. Every family has its tale of wrong to tell- in every field you can see traces of war's ravages. But fearfully did they pay for it at Gettysburg. The drum beats "Orderly call" and I must close.- Darling I miss you more than ever, and long to be with my love. But patience and courage, all will yet be well... Love to all my darlings...*" [Letter of July 25]

A year later, James was appointed U.S. Minister of Sweden and Norway by President Abraham Lincoln. The family removed to Sweden where they remained for the three year tenure of James' appointment.

Once his appointment was finished, James moved his growing family to Philadelphia, setting up residence in a city house in Rittenhouse Square. During the summer, they retreated to their country home "Aeola" in Wayne, Pennsylvania, where they resided until their deaths. James died April 12, 1895 and Juliet died December 26, 1898. They are buried in Woodlands Cemetery, Philadelphia.

James and Juliet Lewis Campbell were the parents of four children. Their three sons were Francis Duncan, James Jr., and Ellis Lewis and their daughter was named Julia. Francis Duncan and James Jr. both fought and died during the Civil War. Julia removed to England and followed in her mother's footsteps. With an interest in the Theosophical Society, she published a book *Letters That Have Helped Me* under the pseudonym Jasper Niemand in 1891. Ellis Lewis Campbell followed in his father's footsteps, pursuing the legal profession and settling in Philadelphia.

Despite the duties of wife and mother, Juliet continued her writings. In 1850, a short story "David Dashwood's Adventure" by Mrs. Juliet H.L. Campbell appeared in *The Ladies' Wreath: An Illustrated Annual for 1849-1850*, edited by Mrs. S.T. Martyn. Accompanying the short story was an engraving of Juliet's portrait by John Francis. It was engraved by T. Doney. In 1857, Juliet published *Eros and Anteros or the Bachelor's Ward*. It was published under the pen name Judith Canute. Juliet wrote and published the short story "Legend of the Infancy of our Saviour: A Christmas Carol" in 1862. As Caroline May points out in *American Female Poets*, "Although she won a high place in public estimation upon her first appearance, it will be perceived, upon examination of her later productions, that in adding new jewels to her coronet, it has lost none of its brilliancy" (*The Tear, or Consolation*, p. 319). Brilliant, indeed. A brilliant career.

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Timothy R. Lorson has been interested in the history of Williamsport for as long as he can remember. A native of Williamsport, he spent many years in Philadelphia before returning 'home' in 2000. He collects old photographs and memorabilia relating to the city.

Several years ago, his Great Aunt gave him a collection of family photographs and other materials including a book which once belonged to his great great grandfather. Somewhat embarrassed, Tim admits that "as a child [I] tore the pictures out and scribbled in it." Redemption came because "it piqued my interest and I started to do research on him. His name was Ellis Lewis, he was a judge in Williamsport and later Chief Justice of Pennsylvania." Tim also received several poetry books authored by Ellis Lewis, along with a novel and poetry by Juliet Lewis Campbell, the daughter of Judge Lewis. In this article, Tim recounts the fascinating and accomplished life of his great grandmother Juliet, whose portrait he donated in 2012. The portrait now graces the re-created Greek Revival Parlor of the Taber Museum.

CIVIL WAR QUILTS AND CARE PACKAGES

Support for Soldiers from the Women at Home

By Ann F. Diserod

So much of what we see and read about the contributions of women during the Civil War concentrates on the dramatic few who did exceptional things: women who disguised themselves as men so they could fight, female spies, and even nurses since at that time nursing was considered an improper occupation for the "better class."

What often goes unrecognized is the tremendous contribution that hundreds of thousands of women made within the constraints of their traditional role. The monetary value of that contribution has been estimated at twenty-five million dollars (in 1860s dollars) for the north. I have not found an estimate for the contribution of southern women. Were it not for the contributions of northern women, the union might not have prevailed, and were it not for the contributions of southern women, the north might have had a much easier time of it.

This article represents a work in progress. It started about five years ago when I read Virginia Gunn's study of two surviving Civil War quilts and two books by Barbara Brackman, *Civil War Quilts* and *Civil War Women*. These inspired me to create my own versions of the surviving quilts. The project has since grown to include not just quilts but knitted articles, hospital garments and many other items made at home for the soldiers. I hope ultimately to make samples of all the existing different patterns and surviving examples of sewn and knitted items.

There is little here about the work of southern women. I've concentrated on the north because my sympathies lie there. I have at least eight Civil War ancestors all of whom fought for the Union. Several were wounded. One died of scurvy at Andersonville prison. One was only 15 when he enlisted. Another was 51, well above the official upper age limit for enlistees, but he felt so strongly about the need to preserve the Union that he somehow got in. These are the men I hope to honor with this project along with the local women who produced quilts, socks, housewives, pincushions and countless other items for the soldiers.

Drawing upon local primary sources, I have tried to show how the women of central Pennsylvania contributed to the work performed throughout the North.

The War Begins

When the war began with the firing upon Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861, the reaction in Bloomsburg, my home town, was a rally held in front of the courthouse on April 18. Columbia County was nearly as divided in opinion about slavery and

abolition as was the country. Some folks were even suspected of being secessionists, while others were ardent abolitionists who participated in the Underground Railroad.

There was no political partisanship at this event, however. Political leaders from both parties spoke. A number of resolutions were adopted including one to condemn the Rebel efforts to disrupt the Union as traitorous acts. There were numerous cheers for the Union, the Stars and Stripes, President Lincoln and the army.

This event was reported in the three Bloomsburg newspapers: two staunchly Democratic and one equally staunch Republican. Newspapers at this time tended to mix reporting, editorializing and advertising indiscriminately, but the rally got glowing reviews in all three; there was no more political sniping in the press than there had been at the rally.

Within a week, William W. Ricketts of Orangeville had recruited and organized a company of soldiers from Columbia County, mostly from Bloomsburg and Catawissa. This company became known as the Iron Guards. Officially they were Company A of the 35th Regiment of the Pennsylvania Volunteers, also known as the 6th Pennsylvania Reserves. The ladies were not far behind.

On Saturday April 27, 1861, the Ladies' Aid Society of Bloomsburg presented a silk flag which cost \$50 to the military company. In many communities the ladies of the town made flags for their departing soldiers, but this seems to have been a purchase. Remarks on behalf of the ladies were made by the Rev. Damm.

Following rapidly on the heels of the flag presentation, on Monday April 29, 1861, the ladies of Catawissa presented every man with a "handsomely made pin and needle cushion (sic)." The paper reporting the event, the *Star of the North*, went on to say, "*We presume well filled with the article they were designed to contain.*" This time Mr. Merceron represented the ladies.

Both presentations took place in Market Square, observed by a large crowd, and included patriotic speeches. It is important to note that while the ladies making the gifts were present, they did not actually make any remarks. Public speaking was not an accepted activity for ladies. Yet the reports acclaimed the women for their contributions.

Today pincushions might seem like an odd gift for a company of departing soldiers, but in the mid-nineteenth century they were most appropriate. Pins filled a number of functions today performed by other gadgets. They were used as we would use

staples or paper clips to hold papers together. They could be used to replace a small hinge pin. They could be used in lieu of a tack or nail to post a notice. They were used for emergency clothing repairs. Plus pincushions were often presented as sentimental gifts or souvenirs, much as today we give friends and relatives mugs, T-shirts and refrigerator magnets.

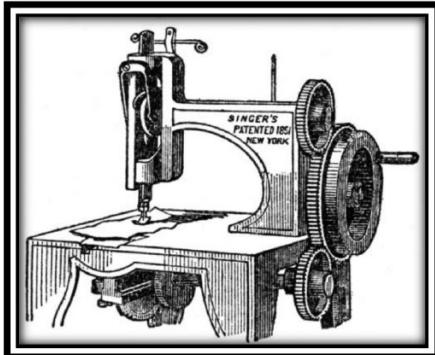
The pincushions presented to the soldiers were probably pocket pincushions made by covering two pieces of cardboard with fabric and sandwiching several layers of wool felt between them. The pins were inserted around the perimeter into the felt with the points toward the center. They were protected from rust by the lanolin remaining in the wool and secure from poking the owner.

Government Resources are Inadequate

Across the state and across the nation, men and women were answering President Lincoln's call for support. The standing army of the United States had never been higher than 15,000. At the time of the attack, it stood at 13,000. There was no way the government could adequately provide for the 75,000 troops requested.

West of here, in Cleveland, 1,000 volunteers camped near the city but had no blankets or uniform shirts. The ladies of the city embarked on a "blanket raid" collecting 729 quilts and blankets for the soldiers the first day and finishing the job the next. Then they attacked the problem of shirts. They obtained army flannel from the post commander, patterns and cutting services from local tailors and sewing machines from local merchants. After setting up shop at the YMCA, they solved the shirt problem in another two days.

The Sewing Machine - The Women's Weapon



The first sewing machine sold for home use in 1851. In 1862 three-quarters of all sewing machines in use were owned by clothing manufacturers, but they were being widely advertised for home use. Tens of thousands of women first used the machines while engaged in war work with Ladies' Aid Societies.

The first sewing machine specifically for home use was marketed in 1851. In 1862 three-quarters of all machines were owned by clothing manufacturers although by that time they were

being widely advertised for sale for home use. In Bloomsburg alone, six different brands were advertised. Machines ranged in price from \$10 to over \$200. Most of the cost difference was in the cabinets, not the actual machines. Most machines came with a full set of attachments including hemmers, tucker, ruffler and quilting bar. Quilting was frequently mentioned in sewing machine ads.

During the Civil War women in the South had to stop using their sewing machines when the blockade prevented importation of the factory made thread they required. Northern soldiers destroyed sewing machines when they encountered them in the South because they were considered a form of military support.

Interestingly, the manufacture of both guns and sewing machines changed dramatically around the time of the Civil War with the introduction of interchangeable identical parts. Previously individual guns and sewing machines were made by a single individual from start to finish with each part made specifically for that item. With identical interchangeable parts production was faster and repairs easier.

Women Organize on the Home Front

In New York City on April 26, 1861, some 4,000 leaders of society, mostly women, along with a few men, met at Cooper Union to form the Women's Central Relief Association. This was the largest of a multitude of Ladies' Aid Societies that sprang up spontaneously across the nation in cities, towns and villages. In June, the WCRA would form the backbone of the U. S. Sanitary Commission, which for the remainder of the war served as the umbrella for some 7 to 10 thousand (some estimates run as high as 20 thousand) individual Ladies' Aid Societies across the nation to get food, clothing and medical supplies where they were needed when they were needed.

The name of the organization sounds odd today, but one of its primary purposes was to improve sanitation for the soldiers and thus reduce the number of deaths from disease which prior to the Civil War outnumbered battle deaths four to one. The goal was achieved. The Sanitary Commission cut that number by fifty percent. The army still lost twice as many men to disease as to battle, but even so, that was half the rate of any prior war.

The Sanitary Commission published two periodicals with patterns and instructions for needed items, reports from camps and hospitals and letters and stories from the field regarding the commission's work. The *Sanitary Commission Bulletin* is available on the internet and is a priceless resource for descriptions of firsthand experiences both of the women who provided for the soldiers and of the soldiers themselves.

At first neither President Lincoln nor the government was favorably impressed with the Sanitary Commission. The military did not want civilians meddling in their business. They especially did not want women civilians meddling. Lincoln himself initially expressed the view that the organization would be the "fifth wheel on the carriage."

By 1864 his view had changed dramatically. At the closing of the Patent Office Fair in March he said, "I have never studied the art of paying compliments to women, but I must say, that if all that has been said by orators and poets since the creation of the world in praise of women were applied to the women of America, it would not do them justice for their conduct during this war. I will close by saying God bless the women of America!"

WOOLEN SOCKS FOR THE ARMY.—The following directions, which have been furnished by a lady of much experience, may prove useful to those who will engage in knitting woolen socks for the army. The yarn should be bluish gray, No. 22, and the needles, No. 14 or 15.

Set up twenty-seven stitches on each needle. Knit two plain and two seam rows alternately, until the ribbing is three inches long; then knit plain seven inches for the leg, remembering the seam one stitch at the end of one needle. To form the heel, put twenty stitches on two of the needles and forty one on the other—the seam stitch being in the middle. Knit the first row plain, the next row seam, and so alternately until the heel is three inches long; then narrow the plain row each side of the seam, stitch for five plain rows which will leave thirty-one stitches. To close the heel, knit the last seam row to the middle of the needle, knit the seam stitch plain, then fold the two needles together, and with another needle take off the seam stitch. Then knit a stitch from both needles at once, and bind the seam stitch over it. Continue knitting in this manner until but one is left and the heel is closed. Take up as many stitches as there rows around the heel; knit one round plain; then widen every fifth stitch on the heel needles. Narrow once at every round at each side of the foot until there are twenty-seven stitches on each needle; knit plain six inches narrow at the beginning and end of every third needle on each round till you have seventeen stitches on each; then narrow every second round till the foot is closed. One pound costing from seventy-five cents to one dollar, will furnish four pair of socks.

Knitting directions published by *Star of the North*, a Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania, Democratic newspaper on October 23, 1861. Nearly identical directions were published throughout the war in both the North and the South.

in its entirety, "The government calls upon the loyal women of America to knit stockings for our brave soldiers: --Get large needles and a coarse yarn; cast on seventy-eight stitches, and knit the leg ten inches before setting the heel. The heel should be three and a half inches long, and knit of double yarn, one fine and one coarse, for extra strength. The foot should be eleven or twelve inches long."

These directions also appeared in *The Natchez Daily Courier* on November 1, 1861, minus the reference to "loyal women of America." Natchez is in Mississippi which had seceded on January 9, 1861.

Not only had the officers of both armies trained at the same military academy, West Point, the supporting women for both

sides worked from the same knitting directions.

It may seem odd that *Scientific American* would publish knitting directions, even cryptic ones, but at that time the publication was more of a general interest periodical.

In Bloomsburg knitters were quick to respond. The Robison family sent two sons and two nephews to the war as soldiers and two daughters as nurses. Isabella, who was active in Bloomsburg's Ladies' Aid Society early in the war and who later served as a nurse wrote to her sisters on November 15, 1861, "Julia Rupert and I have been very busy going around getting yarn, money, knitters, etc., etc. for the soldiers. The money we send to the factory and get yarn at 50 cts. per lb. As it is for the soldiers Sands lets us have it at the cost of the wool. I have knit one pr. and will start another soon as I can. Mother has knit two prs. besides the four prs. she knit for the boys and is ready for another soon as we get the yarn. We intend to form a society, think the Ministers will give it out on Sunday in the different churches. The next thing we think of doing is to get up a box of hospital stores; think it can be gotten without much trouble...."

"We have about fifty prs. of socks knit and being knit...and will perhaps get seventy five prs...."

I find the collection of 50 to 75 pairs of hand-knit socks in less than a month nothing short of amazing. Working with the same patterns used by these women, it takes me about 30 hours to knit one sock.

Sock knitting entered American popular culture. The March girls in *Little Women* knit socks for the soldiers. Literary magazines published numerous poems and short stories about sock knitting as well as pictures of young women knitting socks and soldiers receiving socks. Even children's books were published about knitting socks and mittens for the soldiers.

Sock knitting continued throughout the war. Children as young as five years and elderly ladies in their eighties and nineties all made socks. Eighty-three-year-old Mrs. Abner Bartlett of Medford, Massachusetts knit over 300 pairs and sent her 300th pair to Abraham Lincoln who acknowledged the gift in writing.

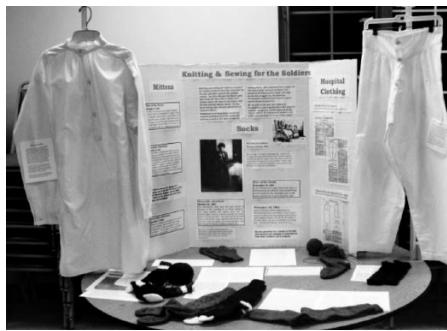
There are numerous stories reported in the *Sanitary Commission Bulletin* and elsewhere about notes placed in socks sent to soldiers. One amusing note included in the memoirs of Mary A. Livermore, a former Civil War nurse read as follows:

"My Dear Boy, -- I have knit these socks expressly for you. How do you like them? How do you look, and where do you live when you are at home? I am nineteen years old, of medium height, of slight build, with blue eyes, fair complexion, light hair, and a good deal of it. Write and tell me all about yourself, and how you get on in the hospitals. Direct to _____ P.S. If the recipient of these socks has a wife, will he please exchange socks with some poor fellow not so fortunate?"

Also in great demand that fall and every fall and winter throughout the war were mittens. Magazines and newspapers, including the *New York Times* and *Scientific American*, repeatedly

urged women to knit mittens and published patterns for special shooter's mittens with a forefinger as well as a thumb.

Again, the Robison correspondence echoes the newspapers. On December 3, 1861, Boyd Robison, one of the family's soldiers, wrote to one of his sisters, "I feel the need of those mittens Augusta is knitting...By the by, if they have not the fore finger & the thumb separate from each other & from the rest they will be useless in handling a gun cartridge, &c..."



Display of reproduction Civil War hospital garments and knitted items. The hospital shirt and drawers were made from patterns published in the *Sanitary Commission Bulletin* May 1, 1864.

this date read: "Cotton bed-shirts, one and a half yards long; two breadths of unbleached muslin, one yard wide; open at bottom; length of sleeve three-fourth yard; length of armhole twelve inches; length of collar twenty inches; length of slit in front one yard; fastened with four tapes."

The drawer directions were no better: "Loose drawers, one and a quarter yards long with a breadth of one yard wide, muslin, in each leg a hem and drawing-string round the waist and bottom of each leg; length from waist to crotch on the back twenty-two inches; and in front eighteen inches with three buttons and three buttonholes."

Perhaps these instructions were too vague even for the period since in 1864 the *Sanitary Commission Bulletin* included patterns for shirts, drawers, slippers and other items. These patterns are still quite sketchy by today's standards. They consisted of drawings of the various pattern shapes with the dimensions noted. The actual patterns to be used for cutting had to be drafted by hand on newspaper or wrapping paper.

Local women responded enthusiastically to these requests. The December 4, 1861, *Star of the North* under the heading "PATRIOTISM" reported that "Little Jerseytown, in this county, is pretty patriotic after all the fuss some of the Republicans tried to make about her, by threatening to mob her citizens. - The ladies of that place have been actively engaged in preparing and sending off articles to our soldiers for their convenience and comfort. Last week they forwarded quite a lot of comforts, undershirts, blankets, socks, drawers, and pillows. We are pleased to chronicle such evidences of true patriotism."

Letters from Bell Robison after she became a nurse and was

working in hospitals in Washington and at the front frequently mention garments sent to her by her family back in Bloomsburg. She specifically requested shirts closing with ties rather than buttons and described using one of the new shirts she received to bury a soldier who had died.



Housewives. Roll-up sewing kits were in great demand for soldiers. They contained needles, thread, pins, spare buttons, yarn for darning socks and darning needles. Comfort bags included all of these plus additional items such as letter paper, stamps, handkerchiefs, Bibles, combs and foodstuffs such as coffee or tea and medicinal spices.

assorted needles, one skein white cotton, one skein black linen thread, one-half dozen horn or porcelain shirt buttons, (large size), one-half dozen pantaloons buttons, a small ball of yarn, (any color), a darning needle and a few pins. With this material men can repair clothing that would otherwise be thrown away."

Other items

Related to the pincushions mentioned above were housewives and comfort bags. The terms were sometimes used interchangeably, but in general, housewives were just sewing kits while comfort bags included additional items such as letter paper, stamps, medicines and foodstuffs.

A note in the *Sanitary Commission Bulletin* of October 15, 1864 says, "WANTED FOR MEN IN THE ARMY. 'Housewives' or 'Comfort Bags.' Small bags, each containing one-half dozen

Not Just the Sanitary Commission

It was common, despite the pleas of the Sanitary Commission to centralize distribution of supplies, for people to send things directly to individuals they knew, thinking this would assure that the materials they sent would actually reach those who needed them and be used properly. In reality, boxes shipped direct were more likely to go astray.

One box which did successfully reach its recipients was acknowledged in a letter John Hower, one of the Columbia Iron Guards, wrote to his sister November 19, 1861 from Camp Pierpointe, Virginia. He said, "We received the box with the robe, 2 cans of butter, some jelly cakes, chestnuts, 2 pairs socks & 1 pair socks, 1 mit for Rupert. Also 1 pair of Gloves and John and me each a buck wheat cake." He then made a request for the future, "And by the way, if the Bloom folks should send a box of things to the boys, if you can, some Saffron."

Blankets and Quilts

From the beginning of the war in the chilly spring of 1861 when the ladies of Cleveland made their blanket raid, through many months after Lee's surrender while wounded soldiers and seriously ill recently released prisoners remained in hospitals,

there was a demand for blankets, often scarce and poorly made.

On October 9, 1861, *Star of the North* announced that the ladies of Lewisburg had donated 118 blankets to the soldiers in response to a call from the Quarter-Master-General who had stated that notwithstanding “*every exertion has been made to procure army blankets for the troops, the demand has been so great that the ordinary sources of supply have failed to meet the wants of the service.*” The situation was apparently so dire that the plea for blankets was repeated October 23, 1861.

The concern with blankets had been noted by the Robison family back in September when Bell wrote to her sister and told of their Uncle John ordering blankets for Bell’s brothers Boyd and Isaiah and nephews Calvin and Ario, all Union soldiers.

Quilts were considered preferable for hospital use because they were softer and smoother for the sick and injured, and they could be laundered. One circular reads: “*Sheets and Quilts are now very much wanted. The latter should be seven feet long, four and a half feet wide, and may be made of old calico or delaine, with cotton quilted firmly between, so that it will not lose its place on being washed.*”

An estimated 250,000 quilts were sent to the Sanitary Commission during the Civil War. Of these there are only about a dozen documented survivors.

There are good reasons so few Sanitary Commission quilts have survived. They were used hard under difficult conditions. Some went home with the recipients only to be used up rather than saved as veterans frequently battled poverty. Many were abandoned as troops advanced and retreated and hospitals had to be quickly relocated. There are several stories of these quilts being spotted in use by former slaves although those quilts have now disappeared.

Many of the quilts were used to bury recipients who died in the hospitals as coffins were in short supply. Bell Robison makes reference to this in a letter from Fredericksburg, Virginia where she served as a nurse in May 1864. She observed the burial of 20 soldiers noting, “But two were in boxes. All just rolled in their blankets and some of them not even covered. It is sad, sad to see such sights.”

Several Surviving Quilts and my Reproductions

My reproductions are not slavish copies of the originals. Nor are they drastically simplified versions merely inspired by originals like some of the commercial patterns available for Civil War quilts. I have tried to strike a middle ground where the construction is as authentic as I can make it, but the written messages on them honor a variety of people: my own Civil War ancestors, the makers of the original quilts, and the men and women from Columbia County and surrounding area who gave of their time, their limited supplies and even their lives for the Union cause. I did not use any commercial patterns. The calculations, planning and design are all original.

All the quilts were pieced on treadle or hand crank sewing

machines, not actual Civil War period machines, but machines made within 50 years of the war, a period during which the technology changed little but the number of machines in use skyrocketed.

Some quilting was done by hand, some by treadle sewing machine; one quilt is tied. These are all period techniques. Several of the surviving Sanitary Commission quilts have machine quilting. I did all of the inking by hand using pigment pens, although I used the modern assistance of a light box to avoid having to re-do too many blocks because of mistakes.



Reproduction flag quilt. The original on which this quilt was based was made in 1865 by a Ladies' Aid Society in Florence, Massachusetts. The original was constructed “potholder style” with individual blocks quilted and bound before they were joined. Mine is dedicated to my great-grandfather George W. Perkins who rescued his company's flag at Lookout Mountain, Tennessee, when the original flag bearer was mortally wounded. Flag quilts were popular during the Civil War, and several of the survivors have this theme.

Flag Quilt

Quilts with a flag theme are among the documented survivors. The last week in June 1861, the Bloomsburg papers, and newspapers nationwide, published an advertising notice for the July issue of *Peterson's Magazine* which contained one of the earliest full-color quilt patterns ever published, a bold “Stars and Stripes quilt.” “*Every lady ought to have a number,*” said the ad, “*so as to work on one of these quilts.*” It is obvious this was taken to heart as there are several surviving period quilts based on this design.

The original of my flag quilt was made by a Ladies' Aid Society in Florence, Massachusetts in 1865. Mine is nearly the same size as the original, which was 85” by 53”. The original was constructed “block by block” with the individual blocks quilted, bound, and then stitched together. This is called “potholder” style and was peculiar to New

England. Making quilts this way allowed busy women to work independently and made the work portable. I chose to make my quilt with the blocks joined in the conventional way with narrow strips of dark blue sashing between them.

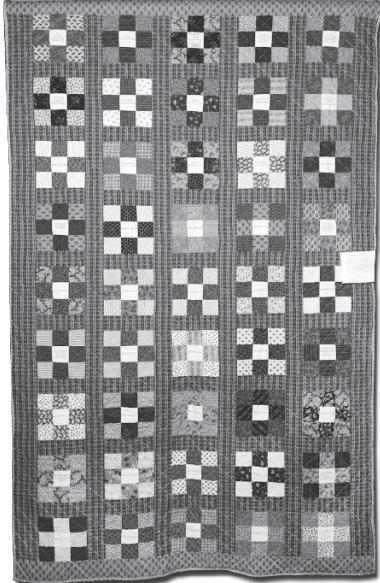
The original of this quilt is one of those with machine quilting, not surprising since the Florence Sewing Machine Company had been founded there in 1860, and the ladies of Florence were no doubt proud of that fact, not to mention probably having greater access to sewing machines than was common elsewhere.

The original fabrics are primarily madder browns. The

border blocks contain messages of moral instruction such as "Touch not intoxicating drink" and "Touch not tobacco – a curse on it." The large central block contains a flag, with the stars arranged to form another large star. The words "Rally Round the Flag," a line from the popular and rousing song, "The Battle Cry of Freedom," appear above it. Also above are some lines from *The Star Spangled Banner*, and below are the last lines of a once popular, but now forgotten, poem "The American Flag" by Joseph Rodman Drake.

My version is dedicated to my great-grandfather George W. Perkins with his military history and some genealogical information, including a sketch of his grave, inked on the blocks. My flag is a copy of the 137th New York Infantry regimental colors which Sgt. Perkins rescued at Lookout Mt., Tenn. In keeping with the patriotic theme, my blocks are red, white and blue.

There were stories about flag quilts reported in the *Sanitary Commission Bulletin*, and several other surviving quilts also incorporate that theme.

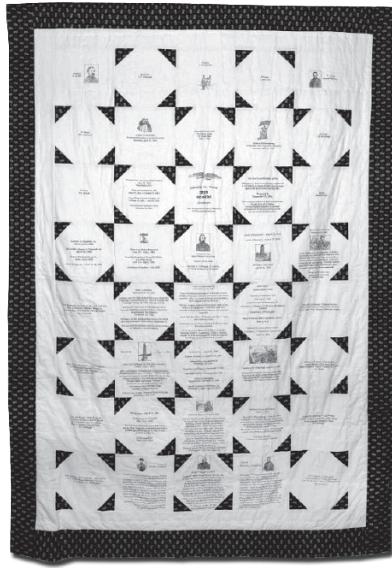


Reproduction nine-patch quilt, similar to one made by the Dublin (New Hampshire) Ladies' Aid Society in September and October of 1863. The long, narrow dimensions, 48 inches by 84 inches were specified to fit hospital cots. This quilt is dedicated to the Bloomsburg and other central Pennsylvania Ladies' Aid Societies. It lists a number of the Bloomsburg society's leaders and activities of several Columbia County societies.

upper and middle classes. All three Bloomsburg newspapers printed the group's constitution and the names of its officers and members of the group's committees. These names are listed on my quilt. Hannah Jane John, secretary, was married

to Palemon John, editor of the *Columbia County Republican*, the abolitionist newspaper in Bloomsburg. His family was active in the Underground Railroad. Two members of the society, Harriet Sharpless and Bell Robison, later became even more active in the war effort by becoming nurses in Union hospitals and on hospital ships. They even traveled to the front.

The quilt also lists the contributions of other area Ladies' Aid Societies.



Iron Guards quilt based on surviving quilt sent by the Brandon (Vermont) Soldiers' Aid Society to the Sanitary Commission. The original was unusual in that it was the work of a single individual. The reproduction honors the Columbia County, Pennsylvania Iron Guards, Company A, 35th Pennsylvania Infantry, 6th Pennsylvania Reserves. Text and illustrations include the original roster of the company, its battle record and the stories of several prominent men who joined after the company's original founding.

number of years prior to being returned to Vermont.

While Mrs. Fairbanks inscribed her quilt with inspirational sayings and Biblical quotations, mine gives the history of the Iron Guards, Company A of the 35th Pennsylvania Infantry, 6th Pennsylvania Reserves, the Columbia County, Pennsylvania, company raised less than two weeks after the attack on Fort Sumter. The large white areas include text and drawings with the original roster of the company, the company's record in battle, and the stories of several notable individuals who joined at a later date.

One name is of particular interest. Henry Mayhew (lower right corner) was a black man. Blacks were not permitted to serve in the army at the time the company was raised; however, officers were permitted to take their own servants. Mr. Mayhew

Iron Guards Quilt

This quilt reproduces one now owned by the Vermont Historical Society which differs from other Sanitary Commission quilts in that it was the work of a single individual. The original was made by Mrs. Luke Fairbanks, formerly Caroline Bowen, of Brandon, Vermont. She was just 18 when she made it in 1863 to honor her husband who had just gone back to the war after recuperating at home from wounds.

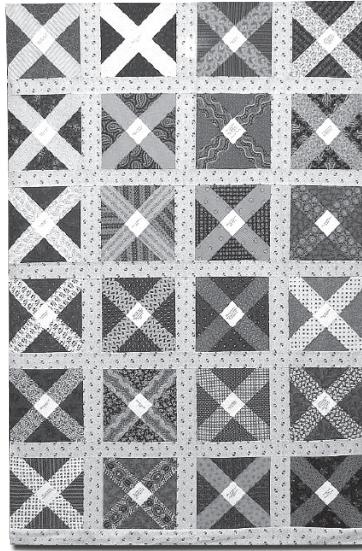
The quilt was signed by its maker. It was sent to the U. S. Sanitary Commission by the Brandon Soldiers' Aid Society and bears the stamp of both that society and the Sanitary Commission. It was apparently brought home from the war by a Pennsylvania soldier since it was in the collection of the York County (Pennsylvania) Historical Society for a

Bloomsburg Ladies' Aid Society Quilt

This quilt honors the efforts of Bloomsburg women who formed a society "to ameliorate the condition of the sick and wounded soldiers." It is based upon a Sanitary Commission quilt made by the Dublin Ladies' Aid Society in New Hampshire during September and October of 1863. A nine-patch with sashing in Civil War reproduction fabrics, mine reflects 21st century sensibilities as the borders are all the same size and same fabric. The original, typical of many quilts of the period, had one border slightly wider and made of a different fabric.

Like most Civil War Ladies' Aid Societies, the Bloomsburg Ladies' Aid Society drew most of its moving spirits from the

chose to go as a servant to one of the officers, but the *Star of the North* listed him along with the names of all the other men of the company as if he had enlisted. This is rather amazing as *Star of the North* was a Democratic and vehemently anti-abolitionist and anti-black newspaper. Later Henry Mayhew did fulfill his desire to fight and is buried in Old Rosemont Cemetery in Bloomsburg with a veteran's marker.



Reproduction album cross quilt. The original of this quilt was made by the Vernon Patriotic Society in Vernon, Connecticut. Correspondence between one of the makers and the quilt's recipient resulted in marriage. The use of a border on only one side is typical of period quilts.

families of American soldiers killed in Afghanistan and Iraq. Because many of the states participating in this project use the album cross block which was popular in 19th century signature quilts, the block is now popularly called the Sanitary Commission block. This block predominates in several of the surviving quilts.

The original, measuring 48 inches by 84 inches, consists of 20 blocks with signatures. The Vernon Patriotic Society in Vernon, Connecticut, completed the quilt and sent it to the Sanitary Commission in 1864. Among those who worked on it and signed their names was sixteen-year old Fannie Chester. Robert Emmett Fisk, a 27-year-old captain in the 132nd New York Infantry received the quilt in North Carolina.

Because Fannie had conveniently included her address, Captain Fisk wrote thank-you notes to her and to another of the quilters and asked them to correspond with him. Fannie realized that she had overstepped the bounds of propriety by soliciting mail from a male stranger and asked her older sister Elizabeth to intervene. She did, and when the captain boldly asked her to continue the correspondence, with some misgivings, she consented, justifying her daring on the grounds that, "we at home are urged to write to our friends in the army, to cheer them in their

loneliness, and to atone, in some measure, for the hardships they undergo for us."

The correspondence led to friendship which led to romance which, in turn, led to marriage in 1867. The Fisks moved to California bringing the quilt with them. It was donated to the A. K. Smiley Public Library by their granddaughter in 1982.

My quilt is visually very similar to the original now in California including the use of a narrow outside border on only one side. In that spirit, all of the inscriptions on the blocks were copied from sayings actually found on several of the surviving quilts. My favorite is "Don't let the Rebels get this quilt." See this detail on the front cover of this journal.

Blocks for reproduction of Sunday School Scholars quilt. Large, brightly colored blocks will be assembled potholder style to honor my great-grandfather John

Diseroad and his brother Casper. The original of this quilt was made in 1863 by current and former students in Mrs. Susannah G. Pullen's Sunday School class in Augusta, Maine. It was used in two different hospitals in the Washington, D. C. area where its 3,675 words of inscriptions entertained soldiers during their slow recoveries.



Sunday School Scholars Quilt

The original of this quilt was made in 1863 by current and former students in Mrs. Susannah G. Pullen's Sunday School class in Augusta, Maine. It measures 49-1/2 inches by 82-1/2 inches and consists of fifteen large blocks, individually quilted and bound, and assembled potholder style. Despite the

predominant color being light brown, the overall impression of this quilt is a very cheerful, primary color scheme. The contrasting fabrics include solid blue, a red furnishing print or chintz, and some madder and yellow prints.

The blocks are full of text, 3,675 words according to Mrs. Pullen's count. They include Bible quotations, Biblical riddles, stories derived from Psalms or hymns, more riddles of a non-Biblical nature, health advice and patriotic inspiration.

This quilt doubtless provided hours of entertainment helping to fill the long, boring weeks and months that soldiers spent recovering. It is extremely well-documented, and from it we learn that Sanitary Commission quilts were, in fact, washed and re-used. Letters from two different soldiers, one of them a Pennsylvanian, who used the quilt at two different hospitals survive.

Mrs. Pullen included a note which read, "We have many dear friends connected with the army & any proper letters from any persons embraced in the defense of our country, received by any whose names are on this quilt shall have a reply. Tell us if nothing more, its destination... We meet with many others to sew for you every Wednesday and your letters would prompt us to more exertions for our patriots." She also asked for the quilt

to be returned to her if it survived the war.

Like many of the groups which sent items to soldiers, Mrs. Pullen's Sunday School class expressed the hope that their offering would be used by someone from the state which sent it. The first reply received, sent in November 1863, indicates that happened. Sergt. Nelson S. Fales, of Co. B, 7th Regt., Maine Volunteers was wounded at Chancellorsville and admitted to the Armoury Square Hospital in Washington, D.C. With the assistance of someone else who did the actual writing for him, he wrote to Mrs. Pullen appreciatively and ended with "*heartfelt wishes for your prosperity, Madam, and of all those worthy ladies who assisted in making that beautiful Quilt.*"

Another letter came to Mrs. Pullen in February 1864 from Sergt. Wm. M. Neall, Co. K, 119th Pennsylvania Volunteers, who had been injured at Fredericksburg and was a patient at Carver Hospital in Washington, D.C. He remarks on many of the quilt's inscriptions showing that he read it closely.

After the war, the quilt was returned to Mrs. Pullen as she had requested. For a number of years, it was on loan to the Augusta Historical Society before being donated to the National Museum in Washington in 1936.

My version will closely resemble the original. I have tried to match the fabrics as closely as possible and plan to assemble it potholder style. It will honor another great-grandfather, John Diseroad and his brother Casper. These were the sons of German immigrant parents born in Bucks County who enlisted in Philadelphia and moved to Columbia County with their parents and other relatives after the Civil War. John was wounded twice and spent time convalescing in a hospital in Alexandria, Virginia, probably under a Sanitary Commission quilt.

School Children's Quilt

This quilt is based on one mentioned in the Sanitary Commission Bulletin but which no longer survives. It was made not by women but by children.

In 1864 a group of 34 school children from Bradford County, possibly Pennsylvania, each made a block signed with their names and ages, none over 12. Most of the blocks were sewn by girls, but at least one little boy made his own. The rest of the boys earned the \$3.00 for backing and batting. They designated that the quilt should go to "*any soldier who loves little children.*"

A Minnesota soldier in Tennessee got the quilt from the Sanitary Commission when he was unable to get a blanket from the government. He wrote to the children, "*how highly I value it, how carefully I shall preserve it, and how I shall take it home with me (if I don't wear it out, and live to go home).*"

This reproduction quilt was started at School Day at the Barton House when nearly 300 children visited the day before the opening of the 2008 Bloomsburg Fair. Each signed his or her name on the strip that became the center of each block and assisted in piecing the blocks on antique hand crank sewing machines. My husband, Christopher Byerly, and I finished piecing



Reproduction school children's quilt. The original of this quilt was made by a group of school children from Bradford County and received by a Minnesota soldier while in Tennessee. Mine was created with the help of nearly 300 school children at the Barton House during the Bloomsburg Fair in 2008. As in the original, the children signed their names to bits of muslin which became the centers of the blocks. They then each had a turn assisting in sewing the blocks on antique hand crank sewing machines. My husband, Christopher Byerly, then helped me to complete the quilt which was on display by the end of the week when many of the children returned to spot their names on the finished work.

and assembling the quilt. It was on display by Friday of Fair Week, and a number of the children returned to find their names on the quilt.

Other Quilts Gone But Not Forgotten

There are references to a couple more quilts once known but now lost. Another album cross quilt that had been made in 1864 in Green Bay, Wisconsin, was reported seen in 1884 "*in a cabin of a negro family living near Bentonville [Arkansas].*" The individual who spotted it said only part of it remained, but the description is clear. "*The piece that remained contained eight blocks, each of which had in the centre a white cross running diagonally, while the outside pieces were of colored calico, bordered with white. On each square was written the name of its maker in indelible ink; a few of the blocks bore also timeworn inscriptions.*" Obviously, even though only a small portion of it remained, this quilt had been treasured.

The Hartsville Ladies' Aid Society in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, made 20 album quilts which were distributed to hospitals in Washington. It is unknown whether these were the album cross pattern or one of the other popular album patterns or a variety. In any case, it was reported that a soldier who had lost his leg in the Battle of the Wilderness wrote to the society asking permission to take his quilt home with him. The society obliged.

The few Sanitary Commission quilts that have survived hard use and 150 years are all of a very special quality and typical of the type of quilts that tend to be preserved. The vast majority of quilts made and sent to the soldiers were no doubt very utilitarian.

Some Sanitary Commission quilts may have appeared quite crude. There were instructions for taking two regular size quilts, cutting part off of each one and stitching the two smaller pieces together to create three quilts from two. Also published were directions for making bed coverings out of carpet.

Many local newspapers printed lists of the items sent by their local Ladies' Aid Societies. An article published in the *Agitator* in Wellsboro on May 18, 1864, for instance lists items contributed by ladies in that area during the months of April and May. It reports that a box sent to the Philadelphia office of the Sanitary Commission on May 16 contained 2 quilts along with quantities of dried apples, socks, drawers and other items. Other contributions by various individuals included the "outside" for several quilts. Presumably by this, they meant pieced quilt tops. Also mentioned was simply "patchwork" and a "roll of patchwork."

Throughout the war, women across the state and across the nation made not just quilts, socks, mittens, pincushions, housewives and hospital garments but also sheets, pillowcases and towels, and a wide variety of foodstuffs and potables. Among the many items sent to the Sanitary Commission regional office in Philadelphia from Ladies' Aid Societies all over Pennsylvania were 55,368 pairs of drawers; 519 housewives; 226 comfort bags; 3,297 pairs of mittens and gloves; 6,452 needlebooks and pincushions; 75,113 shirts; 9,550 pairs of slippers; 74,943 pairs of socks; and 4,330 quilts.

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Ann F. Diseroad is a retired librarian and local historian in Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania. She serves on the board of the Columbia County Historical and Genealogical Society, was a member of the Selection Committee for "Pennsylvania Quilts: Studies in Color," the highly acclaimed quilt show held at the Packwood House Museum, Lewisburg, Pennsylvania in 2009, and works with the Barton House at the Bloomsburg Fair to provide a living history experience for visitors. Her lectures, workshops, articles and cemetery tours have a popular following. She is one of twelve artisans nationwide who will participate in creating textiles for the Robert E. Lee House in Arlington, Virginia.



The Largest Stock And Lowest Prices...

JEWELRY AND WATCHES in Nineteenth Century Williamsport

By Corinne Brister, with additions by Gary Parks



Williamsport, PA., Market Square, depicting (to the right) J.S. Mussina Jewelry Store, c. 1892

—LCHS Collection

Imagine, for a moment, downtown Williamsport, perhaps on the corner of West Fourth and William Streets. People bustle about. Fine ladies bedecked in the latest fashion of dresses with long elegant skirts, thin corseted waists, and high collars. Gentlemen sport big mustaches and bowler hats custom made to match their tailored three-piece suits. Horse-drawn carriages rumble slowly down the cobbled street, while delivery boys carrying their wares on bicycles weave in between them. Merchants attempt to sell their goods to the passersby. The year is 1892 and this is not the Williamsport that we know today.

The streets are lined with small specialty shops. Some will be filled with the necessities of life (groceries, meats and poultry, tonics and liniments, and a blacksmith to re-shoe your horse) and others will be filled with luxuries. If you were Miss Lizzie Morris, you might linger in front of the shop of Sylvester Mussina. In the City Directory of 1892, Mr. Mussina tempts you with “*the largest stock and lowest prices... Of Watches, Jewelry, Diamonds, Silver, Clocks.*” Particularly catching your eye is a pair of coral earrings. Still, they are \$1.25! You ponder temptations that you have seen at the other emporiums in town.

And there are a number of establishments within the city of Williamsport in 1892 to tempt you! Under the listing of Watchmaker/Jewelers in Boyd’s *City Directory* for that year, there are:

- Bower & Co., 18 West 3rd
- Dayton, John B., 252 West 4th
- Foucart, Augustus D., 325 Pine Street,
also a milliner
- Garman, George J., 336 Court Street
- Grassler, William F., 162 Pine

Hellstein, Henry, 231 Market
Jackson, Huston, 220 West 4th Street
Lundy, Jerome K., 783 East Third
Moore, Robert, 28 East Third
Mussina, Charles C., 109 West

Fourth Street
Mussina, Sylvester, 1 East Third Street
Vogt, Frederick, 406 Franklin
Wolever, G. Oscar, 1206 West Fourth

Finally, after much deliberation, you feel certain that the coral earrings will accent your dark chestnut hair. You confidently enter the shop and as you nod to the shop owner, you notice the other female customer. She is seated at the jewelry counter. Mrs. Peter Herdic! You exchange pleasantries and wait as Mrs. Herdic deliberates over the selections in front of her. Finally, Mrs. Herdic picks out the amethyst cross and matching earrings and leaves the store. You hastily select the earrings from the store window. “*These will do quite nicely, Mr. Mussina,*” you say, as you select the proper amount from your coin purse. Mr. Mussina inquires after Mrs. Morris, Lizzie’s mother. She has been in declining health since the death of her husband. “*Papa has been gone three years in June and still Mother gets frightful upset....*” Lizzie relates to the sympathetic storeowner, “*She still has Papa’s hair*

| | | | |
|-------------------------|----|------------------------------|------------|
| Mrs P Herdic | 22 | 10 Amethyst in Cross at 2.50 | 22.50 |
| + 1 at 2.30 | | | |
| + 2 in E Rugs 2.00 each | | | 6.00 28.50 |

Mussina Jewelry Store Manuscript Collection.
Accounts Book

—LCHS Collection

| | | |
|----------------|----|------|
| Lizzie Morris | 13 | 1.25 |
| Coral Earrings | | |

Mussina Jewelry Store Manuscript Collection.
Accounts Book

—LCHS Collection

pressed between the pages of the Bible. She keeps saying she wants it woven and placed in a locket....” “*Let her know, Miss Morris, that I am ready to assist her when she is ready,*” the sympathetic Mr. Mussina says, as he packs the earrings in a pasteboard box, carefully tying the lid in place with a pale blue ribbon.

A jewelry shop would have been able to provide that service, inserting a loved one’s plaited hair into a locket or creating a watch chain, bracelet or necklace out of someone’s hair. As well, the shopkeeper offered watch & jewelry repair, re-plating silver, and repairing the mechanisms of clocks. Engraved trophies and commemorative pieces and even hardware for furniture and coffins might be found at a jeweler. An entry in the Mussina Jewelry Store

Account Book indicates that a coffin plate for Mahlon Fisher (d. 28 December 1874) was purchased, the balance of which was paid

| | | | | | |
|------|------------|-----|--------------|-------------------|------|
| paid | A. N. Rose | for | coffin plate | Mahlon Fisher - 1 | 1.00 |
|------|------------|-----|--------------|-------------------|------|

Mussina Jewelry Store Manuscript Collection.

Accounts Book

- LCHS Collection

deceased, life dates, and age at time of death were often engraved by a jeweler and affixed to the coffin.

The urban American culture one hundred and twenty years ago was obviously much different than present day. Queen Victoria of England was nearing the end of her life, but the “civilized” world was still very much in the grips of Victorianism. The Victorian Era began in 1837, with Queen Victoria’s coronation. Her long and prosperous reign brought a dramatic evolution of cultural shifts to not only her native United Kingdom, but to the entire world. The United States, having particularly close ties with England, was no exception. Wealthy Americans looked to both the aristocrats in England and continental Europe for cues on not only the proper behavior and etiquette, but also chic fashion and trendy housing.

Unlike Great Britain, Victorianism in the United States was not all-encompassing; it was essentially an upper-class, Protestant movement for people of European descent. Wealthy Americans, who would have been more concerned with “proper” etiquette, largely inhabited vivacious cities. Williamsport, although small, was experiencing a time of immense wealth, and so was not excluded from the strict social customs made trendy by Victoria. These practices, however, would have been impractical in a rural, proletariat-dominated setting. Non-European peoples, like the American Indians, certainly did not consider themselves to be Victorian, either. Also, there were subtle differences between the urban-based capitalist society in the North and the land owning gentry of the South.

The Civil War hugely altered the psyche of Victorian Era Americans. An estimated 620,000 soldiers died, roughly 2% of the population; today that would be equivalent to 6 million deaths. Mourning was no longer reserved for the family of an individual who had died; the entire nation was grieving. Death became a basic routine in an era that already suffered a high mortality rate. The people of the nineteenth century were incredibly overexposed to death; they were almost numb to it.

Due to the massive loss of life, the idea of *The Good Death* was popularized in the United States. Deriving from the fifteenth century texts and accompanying tradition *Ars moriendi* (The Art of Dying), *The Good Death* was resurrected by Jeremy Taylor, an English cleric and author, through his book *The Rule and Exercise of Holy Dying*. Taylor explored the concept of “how to give up one’s soul gladly and willfully, how to meet the devil’s temptations of unbelief, despair, impatience, and worldly attachment; how to pattern one’s dying on that of Christ; how to pray.”

Nineteenth century Americans were universally concerned with dying properly; as this idea transcended any religious customs.

The colossal amount of death during the Civil War combined with the strict social etiquette and resulted in constricting fashion

trends for those who were considered to be in formal mourning. in January 1875. For people of prominence, sterling silver coffin plates with the name of the

trends for those who were considered to be in formal mourning. The best example of the severe attitudes toward people in mourning is a scene in *Gone with the Wind*. Scarlett O’Hara is attending a charity ball, shortly after her husband Charles Hamilton had died of pneumonia and measles. She is wearing a heavy, black dress and a black hat with a long veil (this is a perfect illustration of full mourning clothing, the only visible skin on Scarlett is her face and neck). The men at the ball are bidding money for women to dance with them. Rhett Butler struts through the crowd and places a large bid for Scarlett, which shocks the other attendees because while one was in full mourning, they were expected to abstain from most social activities apart from church. So dancing was forbidden, especially for a new widow. The gasp of the party goers and the fainting of one of Scarlett’s friends is a rather accurate portrayal of people’s actual reactions to that social *faux pas*.

The dress code for those in official mourning was explicit and stringent. There were different levels of mourning: Deep Mourning (like Scarlett at the ball): 1 to 2 years, black dress made from a fabric that did not have a sheen to it, with no jewelry or other ornamentation (lace trim, hat flowers, etc.); Second Mourning: 6 months, still only black dress, but some jewelry, as long as it was also black, could be added; and Half Mourning: 3 to 6 months, dresses could now be colors other than black, provided they were muted (grays and lavenders). These restrictions were required of adult women who were either married to the deceased or closely related (sister, daughter, or mother). This was inspired by Queen Victoria who, when her husband, Albert, died in 1861, wore mourning clothing for the rest of her life (40 years later). Men, however, only had one mourning period, which was, at most, one year long.

Lower social classes would not have been financially able to follow the trends. Mourning often required a full, new wardrobe, which the poor would most certainly not be able to afford. Instead, some took dresses they already owned and dyed the clothes black. If this could not be done, especially in rural areas, life went on as usual without special clothing.



Hair Jewelry consisting of a pair of drop earrings and a matching brooch

- LCHS Collection

In addition to garments, there was a large emphasis placed on mourning jewelry. For the Second Mourning Period, ornaments could only be made with certain gemstones. Jet became extremely popular. “Although it is so brown that it looks black and it polishes to a glassy sheen, jet is a form of coal fossilized from a specific ancient variety of araucarian tree.” (Fales, 125)

Another tremendously prominent material that was used in mourning jewelry was human hair. Victorians treasured hair because it was a beautiful reminder of the deceased and does not decompose after death. Keeping pieces of jewelry that were either made out of or contained hair was a way to both honor a loved one and to remember them. Hair was plaited or braided, either plainly or in intricate designs, then placed in charms or rings. Hair could

be fashioned into a delicate pair of drop earrings or made into a pendant cross. Chains for necklaces, bracelets, or watches could also be woven from hair, and were remarkably durable. Often, an entire set of jewelry was made from a single person's hair. Hair wreaths honored a family, highlighting the individual members of the family, and were proudly displayed on Victorian parlor walls.



Peter Herdic's watch is accented with a hair jewelry chain, allegedly the hair of his first wife Amanda.

— LCHS Collection 67.2308

design. Gold caps enclose the ends of the hair, while also attaching the fob and watch.



A very rare watch paper is enclosed in this pocket watch.

taken out of the case for easier repair. Cases and watches were often independently purchased. It is possible that Mr. Herdic's watch was replaced at some point in time. The case is a DoubleTime Keeper #59787, however there is no maker's stamp on the watch. It seems unlikely that one of the wealthiest millionaires in America during the late 19th century would own a common, generic timepiece.

That is not to say the basic watches available at the time were not masterpieces themselves. Another example gives true meaning to the phrase, "do not judge a book by its cover."

The case and the watch face are rather plain looking, no adornments or exceptional motifs, although inside the back of the case is a watch paper reading, "Wm. Anderson, Watch and Clock Maker, Paisley [Scotland]." Watch papers are fairly rare and we were thrilled to find this one! Upon removal of the watch from its case, one is met with a most unexpected surprise of the golden workings. There is the fitting engraving of a paisley and the words "P. Johnson, Liverpool #1481." The watch dates from the late 18th century. The details of its original owner are not known due to the disastrous fire at the



A selection of enamelled and engraved ladies' watches from the collections of the Lycoming County Historical Society fitting engraving of a paisley and the words "P. Johnson, Liverpool #1481." The watch dates from the late 18th century. The details of its original owner are not known due to the disastrous fire at the

Historical Society in 1960 which destroyed accession records.

Men's watches would fit into a waistcoat pocket and be anchored in place by a chain and a watch fob or winding key. It was a symbol of status and the sign of a proper gentleman to have a gleaming, gold chain stretched across his midsection. In contrast, ladies' watches were demure and worn as a pendant around the neck or else attached to a small pin. The pin was often in the form of a bowknot or a fleur-de-lis and worn on or near the lapel. A lady's watch was handsomely embellished with enamel or engraving on the case, normally more intricately decorated than the watches for men. Telling time was probably secondary to the beauty of the piece. The Lycoming County Historical Society has several ladies' watches with blue enameling on the case. Two are accented with tiny gold stars, perhaps suggesting the heavens. An engraved watch, from the Waltham Watch Company, still brilliantly shines after its many decades of use and appreciation.

Many of the 19th century traditions would be out of place in our society. There are not many watchmakers that will handcraft their merchandise and you will not find many people to purchase a necklace or pair of earrings made from a deceased loved one's hair. We should remember, however, that our own customs would likely not fit in the culture of one hundred and twenty years from now.



Sue HOFFMAN wearing a ladies' watch on her lapel. Photographed by Engel, Williamsport.

— LCHS Collection 96.3.15



Theodore HENLEY and his cousin Ora NEWCOMER (later Mrs. HARMAN). Photographed by Jackson, the Artist, Williamsport.

— LCHS Collection 1998.14.4

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Corinne Brister, from Coopersburg, Pennsylvania, is a student at Lycoming College, working toward a dual degree in Art History and Religion. When she finishes her degree, she would like to work in the museum field. She undertook this study of our jewelry collection as an independent intern. She laid bare a few finds and uncovered more than a few mysteries—many of the items have no markings on them, thus, we can only speculate on their origins.

UNRAVELING THE EMBROIDERY THREAD: The Margaret Clark Needlework Sampler

By Gary W. Parks

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The journey of an artifact from the day of its creation until the day it arrives as a fresh accession into a museum's collection is often unknown. Provenance, or the artifact's origins, can be as important as the artifact itself. What family did it come from? Who owned it? What urban legends or stories are attached to it?

One of my early, and abiding, interests is in needlework. I grew up next door to my maternal grandmother. She took great pride in her ancestry and related many stories of our family to me.

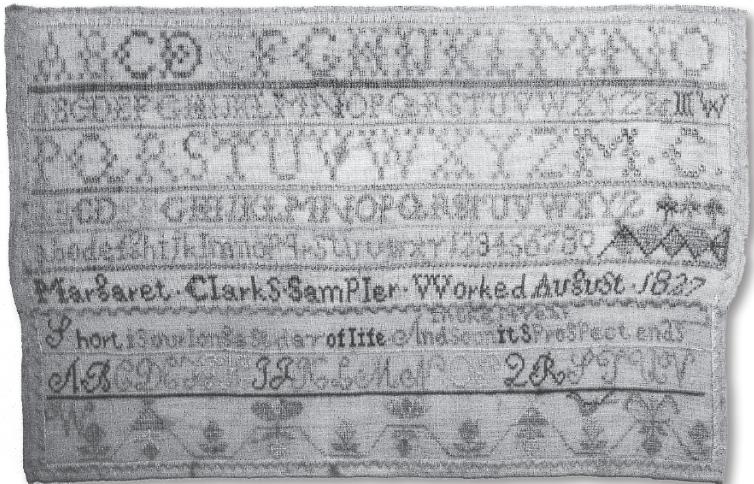
We would often walk around her house and she would point out family ‘heirlooms’, including a needlework sampler made by my great-great-great grandmother Emke in 1777. Although she began the sampler in Germany, she finished it in Baltimore in 1778. The sampler depicts Adam and Eve, and the serpent tempting Eve with the apple as he is coiled around the trunk of the Tree of Knowledge in the Garden of Eden. All by way of saying that this early exposure to needlework developed a strong interest in samplers.

The Lycoming County Historical Society textiles collection includes several samplers, carefully stitched by the young ladies who made them. Mind you, most young ladies were under pressure to produce a sampler, practicing the sewing and darning stitches in anticipation of their future roles as housekeeper, wife and mother. Most young women received instruction under the guidance of a female relative, or if their families were affluent and/or forward thinking the young lady might be sent to a needlework school or a female academy. The sampler would then be taught under the careful eye of a needlework teacher. If the teacher did not like what a young girl had stitched, she would pull out the threads and make the young lady start over!

Margaret Clark was one such girl, who under the tutelage of an unknown needlework teacher, stitched a very competent sampler in her 14th year in 1827. The sampler, given to the museum in 1971, was a gift of Mrs. Laura Litchard, who resided at the Park Home, Williamsport. According to the donor card, Laura Litchard "was the granddaughter of Margaret Clark, who was the daughter of Colonel Robert Clark of Revolutionary fame." Seems like a perfectly reasonable provenance. Little did I know what paths and detours, twists and turns, I would take in researching this sampler!

Margaret Clark is a fairly common name and I couldn't immediately find information about Robert Clark even though famous during the Revolutionary War! I decided to start with the most recent name- Laura Litchard. I was soon rewarded with an obituary in the *Grit*, February 8, 1970 edition, page 50, in which I read,

"Services Wednesday in Watsontown.
Mrs. Laura McVicker Litchard, 101,
of 800 West Fourth, formerly of
Turbotville, who died Sunday, 1 February,
1970, at the Park Home.
Burial in Strawberry Ridge Cemetery."



*"Margaret Clark S Sampler Worked August 1827/ In the 14 year/
Short is our longest day of life/ And soon its ProSpect ends"* Chain,
buttonhole, outline, tent, Gobelin, and chain stitches. Silk thread
on linen background. 20 inches (width) X 12-3/4 inches (height).
Accession Number 1971.135

Ooh, my first good lead! Strawberry Ridge Cemetery! Where was it, where was it????

Well, it turns out it is in Montour county. Strawberry Ridge is a cluster of six or seven houses and a very friendly community as I soon found out!

After work, I headed out with my pad of paper and drove... and drove... and drove. I found a cemetery- thinking it must be Strawberry Ridge Cemetery I got out and trooped around and around... no Laura Litchard. Rats! I hopped back in my car. "*I'll drive a little further...*" and suddenly I was passing through the village of Strawberry Ridge. Don't blink! And there on the hill, was the cemetery. Even though sloppy from rain which had fallen during the course of the day, I trooped all over the cemetery until finding the two names needed.

"J. Harvey Litchard 1863-1938

Laura A. Litchard 1869-1970"

Having found what I came for, I proudly marched back to my car, only to find that it would NOT start. I was on top of a hill! In the middle of nowhere, more or less. I trooped back down the hill and down into the village. I knocked at the first door, and thankfully, a young man with a car and a kind heart, despite my interruption of his evening meal, drove to the hill, we attached my jumper cables, and I was back in business. At least I thought. I got as far as Lewisburg and my car died in the middle of traffic in front of the Lewisburg Hotel.

Try as I might I couldn't get the car started. Add to the fact that the hood release pulled off in my hand. I rushed into the

Lewisburg Hotel, exclaiming, "A pair of pliers! A pair of pliers! My kingdom for..." The lady at the front desk scrambled in the back, presenting me with a wrench.

Now, if you can picture this- I'm laying on my stomach, my legs sprawled on the pavement in the westbound lane of traffic! attempting to pop a hood with a huge wrench! It was then that a car with flashing lights pulled up behind me. GULP!

Actually, the officer was very nice. He got the hood popped. We once again jumped the battery. Closed the hood. Hopped in my car, only to see the wrench lying on the seat.

I hopped out of the car, ran into the Hotel, thanked the lady profusely, and rushed out. Only to find the officer attempting to pop my hood. The car had stalled out again.

Finally we got it started. "I will escort you home," the kind officer said.

"I am going to drive this straight to the car repair center." He followed me. He loaned me his cell phone to call my friend Judy. She said, "Well, I might just leave you there..."

"Judy, there is a police officer standing beside me..."

"I'll be right there!"

The officer left, and as I was attempting to put my car in a less conspicuous place, I backed right into a concrete abutment. All for the seeking of truth!

The second research trip ran a little more smoothly. And it was a lot easier. I did it in the comfort of my home office, where I have a subscription to www.ancestry.com. All sorts of information regarding the Litchards, McVickers, and Pickards!

Margaret was the daughter of Robert (b. 1778-d. 1868) and Jane Wilson CLARK (b. 1780-d. 1863). My heart leapt when I saw the maiden name of Margaret's mother. In our collection, we also have a sampler made by Sophia Wilson in 1838. Sophia Wilson was born in Hartley Township, Union County, the daughter of John F. and Nancy Hones Wilson. Sophia had a sister Jane. Not Margaret's mother, but undoubtedly a close cousin. I would bet money on it because it is indicated that Laura Litchard also donated this sampler. I'm itching to do more research, but will have my car battery checked first!

Finally on a day on which the snow was beginning to melt, I traveled to the Derry Mennonite Church (formerly the Presbyterian Church from 1785 until 1938) in White Hall and found the final threads of the research:

The young needleworker:

"Margaret Pickard/ Died October 10, 1891,
aged 77 years & 3 months"
The Master hath come and called

Her daughter and son-in-law:

"Ada McVicker 1847-1937
Wilson McVicker 1846-1918"

And her father:

Robert Clark
Died June 10, 1868

And her grandparents (not her parents)

"In Memory of/
Robert Clark/
Departed this life on the 23rd
Day of January 1821
Eighty one years & 21 days
And of his wife
Sarah Clark
Departed this life
19th Day of August 1820
75 years 2 months & 12 days
Lived as man & wife
55 years

Captain 1st Company, 1st Battalion 1776

Lt. Col. & Sub Lt. 1777-1780
Lancaster County, Pennsylvania Militia

And so, the line of descent is, as follows...

Captain Robert Clark (1740-1821) and his wife Sarah (Sally) Hutchison (1745-1820) CLARK

Robert (1778-1868) and his wife Jane Wilson
(1780-1863) CLARK

Margaret Clark PICKARD (1814-1891) and her husband James PICKARD

Ada M. Pickard McVICKER (1847-1937) and her husband Wilson C. McVICKER

Laura V. McVicker LITCHARD (1869-1970) and her husband J. Harvey LITCHARD

Margaret's sampler is framed and for the present time, is on display in the Hall of Industry, Crafts, and Farming. The sampler hangs serenely on the wall. And, oh that it could talk!, it would have quite a tale to tell.



Gary W. Parks is the Executive Director of the Thomas T. Taber Museum of the Lycoming County Historical Society, a position he has held since January 2011. He also serves as Editor of the Journal. He was no stranger to the museum when hired, however. From 1992 until 2005, Gary served in various capacities as the Museum's Archivist, Acting Collections Manager and Guest Curator. Gary is a graduate of Towson University with B.S. degrees in Biology and English and a graduate of the University of North Carolina with a M.A. in History with a concentration in Public History. Gary's previous work sites have included the Maryland Historical Society, the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, the Monmouth County Historical Association, Freehold, NJ, and most recently as Director of the Slifer House Museum in Lewisburg, PA. Gary is the author of numerous articles regarding local history published in *Susquehanna Life*. Gary is the compiler of a number of genealogical indices published by Genealogical Publishing Company. He is a graduate of Leadership Susquehanna Valley and the recipient of the Union County Historical Society Preservation Award for his preservation efforts of the alleged oldest house in Winfield, PA., the site of the Lee Massacre.

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