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QUILT EXHIBIT

The home craft of making quilts was known in Europe as early as the 11th century and the early American settlers brought with them their own methods and patterns. Today in America, quilting means two things: a pieced quilt or patchwork cover; the top and bottom of an interlined coverlet held together by a stitching in design. However, before 1750 nearly all the quilts made in America were pieced quilts. In the *THE ROMANCE OF THE PATCHWORK QUILT IN AMERICA*, by Carrie A. Hall and Rose G. Kretsinger, it is noted that "Although quilt making is one of the world's oldest arts, the pieced quilt is our own American production. The patchwork quilt, as such, has come to be a distinctly American art form, indigenous to our native soil and well embedded in the background of our national consciousness."

Once the basic needs for homemaking were met, the women were free to follow their natural desire to introduce new beauty into their homes. As Ruth E. Finley in *OLD PATCHWORK QUILTS AND THE WOMEN WHO MADE THEM* says: "It is in the nature of a folk craft that its products reflect the personal whimsy of the individual worker. There is a living reason for all that human fingers create." Thus there came to be numerous types of quilts, many of which were associated with special, and very popular, social gatherings. There were "Friendship Quilts" for which the maker asked for material for one block from each of her friends; "Friendship Medley" quilts where each friend brought a block already finished; and "Freedom Quilts" which were made to celebrate a young man's twenty-first birthday. And, of course, the familiar "Crazy Quilt" which reached a peak of popularity in the 1870's. Whenever an historical event was a popular one, so was the contemporary quilt, as when the eagle was adopted as the national symbol.

The quilting tradition has been carried on by the women in America as both a skill of which they are proud and a creative outlet in which they find pleasure and personal satisfaction. The quilts displayed in this exhibit were all made in 1966 by such women for the Pennsylvania Folklife Festival. Some are in traditional patterns and some are personal "whimsy".

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