



SKYWALKER/
SKYSCRAPER
(Matriarch)

BLANKET
STORIES



Amy Henderson

Carmel, Indiana

This is just an ordinary everyday blanket, given to me by my mom, that was purchased at a store when I needed something heavy to keep me warm. But now, looking back, this is no ordinary blanket.

This is a blanket that has seen the ups and downs of life. A blanket that was there at the beginning of marriage. A blanket that was there when I sat exhausted in the middle of the night nursing two beautiful baby girls. It where there when toddlers crawled in to cuddle and watch Curious George in the early morning hours. Then again, when those same young girls were sick with fever or frightened by nightmares. Now that life has calmed down, I lay on this ordinary blanket, reading the latest book, as I'm greeted by two teenagers who plop down to share (or not share) their nightly escapades. No, this is not an ordinary blanket. It's a symbol of a colorful everyday life.



Anastasia Karel

Indianapolis, Indiana

I made the blanket with the help of my mother and grandmother.

It takes me a long time to finish projects. In the spring of 2000, I saw a patchwork quilt that I really liked in a Pottery Barn catalog. With my mother's help and encouragement, I decided to try making a similar one. We went to the fabric store and selected a variety of fabrics mostly with shades of green, purple, or pink, florals, and some plaids.

The process was slow, but steady: I remember my mom's instruction to create strips of the fabrics squares, ensuring that no two strips looked exactly like one another and to make sure that two squares of the same fabric did not end up next to the other. We attached the quilt top to a plain muslin back with safety pins, and my grandmother showed me how to hand quilt using a large hoop to keep the fabric taut. She started with a purple square near the center of the quilt, which contrasted with the cream-colored thread, making it easy to see the stitches. Using a sterling silver thimble that my mom found in an antique store, I began the methodical work of stitching around each

square. I developed my own technique, and the stitches were much smaller than my grandmother's sample, causing her to exclaim that I was making it harder on myself than necessary.

I continued working on the quilt throughout graduate school and into my early career as an archivist, finishing the hand stretching sometime around 2006. The next and final step involved binding the edges with a contrasting green-colored fabric, and this is where I stopped. I simply could not figure out how to bind off that quilt!

Finally, in 2018 I met a woman named Sarah who owned a craft studio in Cleveland, Ohio. I took the quilt to her shop and she showed me how to pin the binding fabric to the quilt and how to navigate the corners. And just like that, I was done! I use the quilt year-round on my bed and it always reminds me that I am capable of finishing things.



Anne Laker

Indianapolis, Indiana

My mother and I believe that this blanket was a wedding gift to her parents, who were married in 1929. My mother recently gave it to me.

This blanket is approaching 100 years old. It has an oblong shape and is wool, though it has thinned. I do not have children, so there will be no one to give it to when I die. My mother is 77 and starting to clean out things. You can't take it with you, as they say. My mother, Mary Ann, had a contentious relationship with her mother, Loretta Catherine Brewer (1910-2012). My mother and I talked about how, if the grid went down, we might need this blanket. Instead we are giving it to you. Mothers are imperfect people who sometimes try and fail. But a blanket has a way of soldiering on and continuing to provide security.



Becca and Dottie King

Indianapolis, Indiana

In Memory of Andy King (Gran) and J'Nann Grayson

This blanket was made for my brother by Gran, who was a bonus grandparent to us. Gran and her husband Don lived 2 houses from the house we grew up in. Their daughter, Mindy, was our babysitter our whole childhood and their home/family was a second to ours. Gran also made a similar blanket for me which I have held on to because it's special to keep a part of her to myself. It's an honor to let this piece of her and my brother live on through art.



Becca King

Indianapolis, Indiana

Through discussion with my mom neither of us can recall who made it or where it came from. Our best guess is my paternal grandmother (Grandma Jenny) or her mother, Alma.

This was one of my favorite blankets as a kid, as you can tell from the wear and stains. I would grab it to put down on the floor in front of the TV for Saturday morning cartoons with my brother or for a pretend picnic with friends.



Becca King

Indianapolis, Indiana

This doll bedding set was made by my Grandma Jenny/paternal grandmother.

This bedding set was made for me for a set of doll furniture I had. I loved having a cute set that resembled something I would have for myself. My grandma would frequently make clothes for my dolls, so it made sense that she could also make the perfect set for me to “play house.”



Becky Bosch

Indianapolis, Indiana

This blanket was made by my grandmother, Lucille Bowyer (1895-1985). Grandmother Bowyer grew up sewing and quilting with her mother on a small farm near New Washington, IN.

My grandmother lovingly made this quilt for me in 1958. As a new grandmother myself, I now understand the overwhelming joy my grandmother felt welcoming her new granddaughter with this quilt.



Carol Young

Westfield, Indiana

This baby afghan was crocheted by my maternal grandmother, Ethel Lepper, when I was born in 1947.

This afghan is special because it was made for me by my grandmother when I was born. As most women of her generation, she was quite accomplished in sewing, quilting, crocheting, and other needle crafts. For our high school graduations she made her granddaughters quilts. She made my youngest aunt's and my wedding gowns. These have become treasured by all of us.



Carol Young

Westfield, Indiana

This quilt was made by my mother Helen Boyce. It is one of three that I own.

When I was growing up, quilts were what we used on our beds as blankets. From the wear and tear, it is obvious it was well used and washed often. My mother learned her quilting skills from her mother. These quilts bring back happy childhood memories. They were made for practical reasons and made with love.



Carolyn Aileen Meeker

Indianapolis, Indiana

The materials I am donating belonged to my maternal grandmother, Stella Aileen (Brock) Thomas, 1904-1980. I was named after her.

I have three quilts and many crochet pieces made by Grandma Thomas. I cannot part with the quilts, but I have some patterns and pieces she left to me.

I have written the attached documents to describe what I am donating. I think it could be used to explain the construction of a quilt. If you decide not to use this, I would like to have it back, if at all possible.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the exhibit.



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Dana Katz

Carmel, Indiana

This was a wedding gift to us from an older friend of my parents. I have no idea of who made it or its story, but from the fine work you can tell it was made with care and love.



Dana Rene Chambers Hershey

Avon, Indiana

This quilt was pieced and quilted by hand by my maternal grandmother, Tillie Merle Grady Madden, in Piatt County, Illinois. Grandma made each of her grandchildren a quilt to be given to them when they started their own homes. However, I was the recipient of an additional quilt.

When I was a toddler, it was discovered that I had one hip that was out of the socket, causing me to “waddle like a duck” as my mother related.* After the doctor maneuvered the hip into the socket, I spent several months in a series of casts. Following this, I wore a brace at night, which held my legs out at extreme angles. Because my legs stuck out over the edge of a bed, I slept on a rollaway cot in my parents’ bedroom. My mother did not have a bedspread for the cot, so Grandma made this quilt to use on the cot. It would have been made in 1952-53.

I have used the quilt since having my own home. It has traveled with me from Illinois to Wisconsin, back to Illinois, and finally to Indiana. When it began to wear, I hung it on the wall. Its unique shape of the rotated nine-

patch squares, the green-and-white color scheme, and the appliquéd flowers have always been very appealing to me and admired by friends. It is now so worn that it cannot be used without further deterioration.

Grandma Madden and my Great-Aunt Irene Madden created many quilts and other fabric arts for the family. I grew up hearing stories of their artistry. My mother, Erma Madden Chambers, did not quilt, but she and I did a lot of garment-sewing together. I took up quilting when my mother passed away at the age of 100, in 2014; I believe it was my way to continue to feel connected to her—and my family's past.

I would be honored to have my quilt utilized in an exhibition which values the Threads of Connection between generations of women.

* At the time the hip socket problem was discovered, my parents were also told that my bones were softening. One evening as I slept my mother placed her hand on my hip and felt a sensation begin at her shoulder, travel down her arm, and into me. When we returned to the doctor for further tests, they said the bones were no longer “decalcifying.” My mother told me this story when I was older and asked her how she knew that there was a God. I do believe my life has been shaped by this story—and this quilt is a physical reminder of that.



Dawn McKnight

Zionsville, Indiana

This blanket was found amongst my mother's things after her passing. I do not know who originally made it as it is not marked.

The pattern is a "Sun Bonnet Sue," which has been around since the early 1800s and is still made today. Almost all of the women in my husband's family quilt. Once we were married, one of my first Christmas gifts from his mother was fabric, and all of the supplies to make a quilt, including lessons! I have loved quilting ever since! Grandmother passed to mother passed to daughter and daughter-in-law. I have made many quilts for my children, and for other family members and friends. My daughter and I have also made quilts together. I love picking out the pattern and deciding on fabric. It is a wonderful craft that allows all kinds of personal expression as well as conversations and new friendships! Put two quilters together and they will always have something to talk about!



Dottie King

Indianapolis, Indiana

In memory of Candy Vincent & Andy King

This comforter represents LOVE, the selfless love of one young woman. This woman gave birth to a baby boy on January 13th, 1984. She was unable to properly care for the child, so she placed him up for adoption. A young couple had desperately wanted a child, but after three years of infertility treatments were unable to conceive. They welcomed that newborn baby into their family on January 27th, 1984, which happened to be his adoptive father's 35th birthday! What a wonderful gift! The baby's birth mother who had loved her baby had not only given him the gift of life, but a new home and family, as well as a comforter. This comforter was presented to his adoptive parents as a gift for her baby. The child's adoptive mother kept the comforter as a remembrance for nearly 40 years. It was truly a symbol of love that a mother has for her child.



Gretchen Wiegel

Indianapolis, Indiana

Eleanor Colson Felger (1908-1989)

Granny Square Afghan 100% Wool, 3'7" × 6'6"—Probably made in the '30s

When it was unusual, Eleanor received a Bachelor's degree in Home Economics from Indiana University in 1930. Her creativeness was aided by the understanding and making her projects, whether sewing, knitting or crocheting. The accomplishments were varied including: clothing of all kinds, afghans, quilts, draperies, rag rugs, and slipcovers.



Gwendolyn S. Burton

Edwardsburg, Michigan

This afghan was made by my Aunt Becky, Rebecca Katherine King Smith. I found it stored in a pink plastic tub, after her death.

This afghan was made by my Aunt Becky, Rebecca Katherine King Smith of Barboursville, KY. I am not sure when it was made. It was not until I found it stored in a pink plastic tub, after her death, that I even knew she crocheted. I never witnessed her crocheting nor do I remember afghans displayed at her house. I guess she was a closet crocheter. I think her work is lovely and I am happy to have it displayed. I think Aunt Becky would be proud to have it displayed.

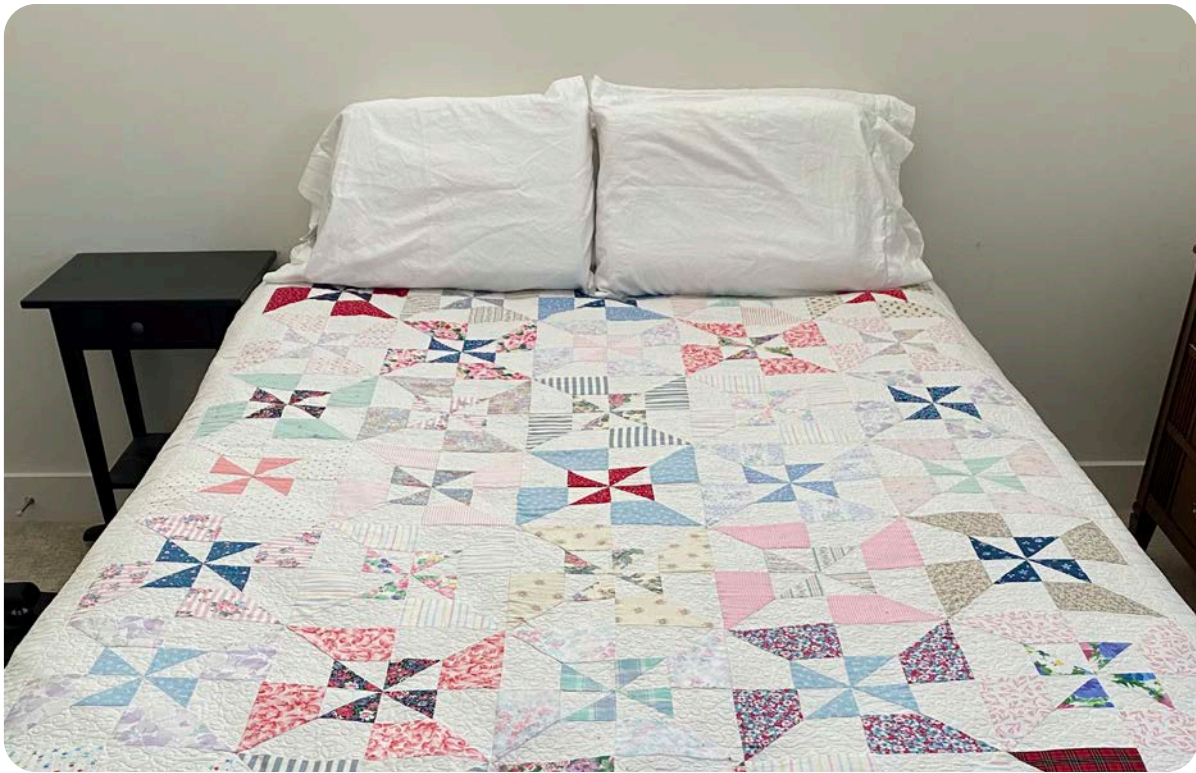


Janet Carpenter

Indianapolis, Indiana

My dad and I made it.

Cross stitched this with my dad in the 1990s for my future babies. Finished around the time my 1st niece died of SIDS. Have never felt right giving this to anyone because of the link to death. Commercial pattern linked to societal expectations of perfect motherhood too—yuck. Happy it will have a new life as art!



Janet Dittmer

Zionsville, Indiana

The above image depicts the quilt in my blanket story. The blanket used in the sculpture is a proxy blanket selected by the artist because the quilt could not be donated.

I made the quilt as a gift to my daughter and her husband. I cannot give the quilt to you, as it belongs to her and is too special to part with!

We have six sons and only one daughter, Anna. I began sewing when I was ten years old, enjoying it very much, so I loved making dresses for this wonderful daughter when she was young. After making a dress for her, I always saved the extra fabric. After Anna was married, I made a queen-sized quilt for her from the scraps from many of her dresses. Of course, I couldn't include fabric from dresses made of velvets or satins, but fabric from a number of dresses made their way into the quilt. I used a pattern called "Double Pinwheel" because pinwheels make me happy, and I wanted the different fabrics to be highlighted on a white background.

When I completed the quilt, I put together a notebook that contained pictures of the completed quilt and the label on the back of the quilt, along

with pictures of Anna wearing several of the dresses. These picture pages included the date, any pertinent information about where the dress was being worn, and a swatch of the fabric. I made two notebooks, so that both Anna and I could remember our special memories of the dresses she wore.

The fun and uniqueness of this quilt continues because Anna now is the mother of three sons and just one daughter, named Martha. I saved several of Anna's dresses, and have sent them to her when Martha was the right age to wear them. In May 2023, we visited their family in Salt Lake City, Utah, and on the Sunday we were there, Martha chose to wear one of the dresses I had made for her mother. Martha explained to me that she always calls it her "purple piping dress" because that's what her Mommy called it when she wore it as a little girl. Martha and I also had fun looking for the fabric from that dress in the quilt, which is now on the bed in the guest room where we stay when visiting them.

This is a story I wanted to share because these fabrics have brought us so much happiness through the years—when I first made them into special dresses, when they were much later made into a quilt, and how my granddaughter is now wearing the dresses and finding joy as she sees the fabric in the guest room quilt.



Janet Hopewell

McCordsville, Indiana

My Great-Aunt, Joy Young, hand quilted my blanket. It was gifted to me after passing.

I have used this quilt for over 40 years, as a throw across my bed. I remember using it after my divorce, it was a comfort and a reminder that my family loves me.



Jennifer Pitts

Zionsville, Indiana

Made in rural Clatonia, NE ca. 1975 by Verna Holsing (1922-2008). This is one quilt of the estimated 100 made for family and friends in her lifetime. It represents all of those, now spread across the world, in the homes of her five daughters and 12 grandchildren.

Grandma Verna Holsing called this a car blanket, but in fact, it's a quilt made from Grandpa's KEY overalls and Dad's Lee blue jeans. They wore out the fronts growing milo, wheat, corn, and soybeans in the black dirt of Nebraska's southeast plains. As Mom and Grandma folded clothes on washdays, they'd cull out any pair torn or stained. Though the front sides were shot, the backsides were good. Grandma, industrious and thrifty as any farmwife, cut squares out of the backsides and stacked them up in a box kept next to her Singer machine. When the count was right, she sewed them together for the top layer. Then, after sewing the top, batting, and backing together, she lovingly stitched through every square's center and hand-tied each knot. One quilt stayed in the pickup for lunch in the fields. We kept this one in our family car. Little ones shared it when they were too tired to go on. It has passed down from grandmother to mother to daughter to grandchild.

In the thick of her mothering years, Grandma Holsing sewed clothes for her five daughters. Those sewing scraps also went into quilts. On quilting days, the Soap Creek church ladies gathered at Grandma's house for quilting. Racing home from country school, the Holsing girls would sneak treats off Grandma's cut-glass serving trays then crawl unseen beneath the quilt frame surrounded by farmwives all bent to the task. As the girls snacked, they watched stitches fly down from above as they eavesdropped on stories flowing overhead—stories about a neighbor's loose cows, a young girl in trouble, or when the men joined the manhunt for Charles Starkweather. Those stitches not only bound the quilt together, they stitched together memories evoked by each fabric scrap as well as memories formed underneath the stretched quilts.

Using these same patchwork quilts, the next generation made memories of their own. Cousins sprawled across the blankets at Grandma's house for living room sleepovers and summertime lounging under her locust trees. They performed basement Christmas pageants using quilts as robes for shepherds and magi. When her grandkids left home, Grandma gifted each of them a quilt made with fabric and patterns they chose. Her grandkids moved on wrapped in the strength of memories held close in their own quilt.

These quilts collected stains and holes along the way, but Grandma's great-grandkids made good use of them, constructing elaborate forts for their own sleepovers. Huddled in their hideouts, they shared video games, snacks, giggles, and secrets. Though not all of them had the chance to meet their great-grandma, all of them are building a bed of memories in the comfort provided through those blankets.

Now, I pass on one of these memory-laden quilts to you. Although it's seen some years, it still has space for your memories of times when you laughed, when you cried, and everything in between.



Jonathan Wright

Indianapolis, Indiana

Unsure of Maker. I am 44 years old and I have owned it longer than I can remember. I carried it everywhere as a child. It was in my parents' home and given to me again as an adult when I moved into my first home.

Short Version—It was given to me as an infant for “winning” a beautiful baby contest. Yet, I knew it was somehow connected to my grandmother—Elaine Frantz.

Fuller Story—My mother recently showed (while giggling) is that my grandmother entered my baby picture in a baby contest. It was for a charity, and for every donation one could cast a vote. Despite money being very tight for my grandparents (grandma was fighting cancer and grandpa worked full time at the local steel plant and many side jobs), they apparently made more donations than anyone else because I “won” and received the blanket as the prize. I dragged it everywhere, and my mom had to trim off the tattered lace edging so I wouldn't trip on it. Mom kept it safe all these years for me.



Jordan Bahler

Frankfort, Indiana

My blanket was quilted by my mother and various members of my father's family. My great-grandma Crescentia Schaefer taught my grandmother who in turn taught my mother how to quilt. This quilt was presented to my great-grandfather on his 95th birthday. After his passing, it went back to my mother who gave it to me.

My great-grandparents began a number system to show that the family reunions were growing. My great-grandfather and great-grandmother Schaefer were the originals—#1 and #2. This tradition has continued many years later, I am #56 and my youngest is #132! Quilting has a rich history on this side of my family. My grandma Virginia Bailey, #5, was such an avid quilter that every one of her children and grandchildren would receive a quilt for their wedding & their 25th anniversary. Every grandchild received a baby quilt. My mother (Cora Bailey, #53) learned from her, and I remember so many vacations or car trips with her basket when she would hand piece blocks together. Her quilt frame was a staple in our house growing up. So when my mom had the idea to honor Great-Grandpa Schaefer with a quilt for his 95th birthday, everyone was on board. He had 4 children, so each child's family had a corner block and every family designed a square. I got to design our family square! I was only 4 years old at the time, so I drew our family—two dogs included—and

my mother used needlepoint to go over the lines. We continue to pass on the rich heritage of quilting. My home is filled with quilts from my grandma and my mother. My sister has made a quilt, and ironically when this opportunity to share about quilting came up, I had just returned home from the library with an armful of inspiration to have my mom help me plan a scrap quilt to work on this coming winter. This is a family tradition I hope to pass on for years to come. To cover our loved ones with the warmth of a blanket that took many, many hours to create. All the while thinking and praying for their well-being and envisioning them passing it on to their families for years to come.



Kristin Mullaney

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Made by Kristin Mullaney in 1992. Gifted to Ruth Carlson Mullaney in 1992. Returned to Kristin Mullaney in 2017.

This log cabin quilt was made by me as a gift to my mother and father for Christmas the year of their 40th wedding anniversary, 1992. The inscription reads:

To my mother, Christmas 1992

The log cabin pattern symbolizes hearth and home. My first one is for you in appreciation for teaching this architect that "home" is not a building.

With love from Kirsty.

We celebrated their anniversary with a surprise party in September, but my father did not live to Christmas and so never received this gift. After he died, my mother was advised that one thing she should do is change her bed so it would be different from when she shared it with him. Luckily, she had a new quilt.

She used it for 25 years until she died in 2017, at which point I took it back for myself. It confronted me in my loss, but it also suffered from rough treatment by dog claws. I am glad it has a purpose in this exhibit.



Kyla Shrake

Fishers, Indiana

This blanket was made by Wanda Stratton. It was passed down to me from my dad.

My grandmother made so many things for our family, usually by knitting. This blanket is different, in that it was sewn, she only made a few this way. Everything she made is special to me because I know she made it with love. I have passed down hats, scarves, and slippers made by grandma, that I wore as a child. I think of her every time my daughter wears them and share the story of her. Even as a 4-year-old she understands how special it is when someone makes something for you. She is proud that these items are hers now, and she says she will give them to her daughter someday. In Grandma's last days, she made blankets for my first-born child and gave them to my dad to give to me when the time came. I never learned from my grandma how to knit, I wish I would have, but I think it's because of her that I wanted to learn while I was pregnant with my daughter.



Laurie Gilbert Wood

Indianapolis, Indiana

My mother had been a nurse prior to giving birth to me and staying home to raise me and my younger brother. When I was 5, she was asked by a member of the church we attended if she would be willing to be an at-home hospice nurse for a family that had a son my age who was dying of cancer. They had moved to Indianapolis to be closer to Riley Children's Hospital and had no close community or support group yet outside of the hospital services. My mother stayed with this family, the Tisdales, for several weeks taking care of Scotty and providing care and support for them during his final days.

During that time, she became very close with them, and shortly after Scotty's death, we all got together for a cookout. They had children in the same age groups as my brother and me, and we all became fast friends. The Gilbert family and the Tisdale family became inseparable, and most of our family vacations, camping trips, and Sundays after church were done together. We added more families into the group over the years, creating my most influential friends and family base during my school years.

The fabric in this quilt was discovered when my mother and I were helping the Tisdales sort through the belongings of their mother who had recently passed away. It is from the 1950s and was already cut into the pieces, but never assembled in any way. Those happened to be my mother's favorite projects; finishing what someone else started! Without hesitating, my mom assembled a simple and small lap quilt for every member of the families. This quilt is one of 7 she made.

For me, this quilt represents so many of the characteristics of my mother that I hold dear. She is a caretaker, a comforter, a servant, a community-builder, she sees potential in what others have abandoned, and she always thinks of others before she thinks of herself. Quilts in general have always carried so much symbolism for me because they provide warmth and comfort, and because of my mother, I know how much time and care goes into making them.



Lynn Gibboney

Carmel, Indiana

Mary Palmer crocheted the blanket for me in 1990 to celebrate the birth of my son. Mary was a woman that I worked with and a friend.

Mary Palmer was in my marketing group when I worked at a major manufacturing company in Indianapolis. Our marketing group was small, and we were a family. Like many families, ours was somewhat dysfunctional but close. When my son, Adam, was born in June 1990, Mary crocheted for me this beautiful blanket. (Mary taught me how to crochet. I wish I could say I can create beautiful blankets like this one, but my talent is limited to mediocre scarves. I find, however, crocheting to be very therapeutic.) I was so moved by her generous gift. My son is now 33 years old. I would love to honor Mary's talent and her friendship by donating this blanket to Newfields' sculpture, Blanket Stories, by Marie Watt.



Marian M. Pettengill

Bloomfield, Michigan

Made by Mary Cecilia Owens, born 1888; given to me upon her death in 1967. She died on Christmas Eve. She was my maternal grandmother.

My grandmother was of that generation when women stayed home and, especially, if they lived in rural areas did needlework of all types. My grandmother was no exception, and when died she left her quilts to her three granddaughters. Each winter she would put up her quilting frame and make quilts of all types—traditional patchwork to appliqué to embroidered designs, all had stitched and hand quilted. Sadly, she stopped quilting around 1946, but she left behind a legacy of quilts. What makes her quilts dear to me was that she was the stabilizing force in my life during some turbulent years of my life. She, in essence, taught me how to be a grandmother, so when my granddaughter was born, I gave her one of her great-great-grandmother's quilts which her parents hung by her crib. For me to give this quilt is a way for me to honor my grandmother.



Marie Watt

This coral red wool blanket with blingy satin binding is a placeholder for a family quilt that I suspect was made by my great-grandmother and other women in our family. My mom believes this quilt was made from annuity cloth, also known as treaty cloth, as well as remnants from beloved garments. Annuity cloth is distributed in bolts annually to Seneca and fellow members of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy as part of the continued observance of the Canandaigua Treaty of 1794. Historically the bolts of cloth came in the form of patterned calico prints. Today the treaty cloth comes in the form of less expensive cotton muslin. The federal government tried to negotiate and buy out the treaty cloth responsibility in our treaty, and clan mothers refused this offer as there was justified concern that if this got renegotiated, it might make the federal government feel like other items in our treaties could be renegotiated. This bright red blanket draws attention to the important work our matriarchs do in the Haudenosaunee community as scholars, makers, educators, advocates, knowledge bearers, and leaders, as well as mothers, sisters, aunts, grandmothers, and ancestors.



Mary Redman

Indianapolis, Indiana

My quilt was made by my husband's grandmother (his father's mother), Ada Collins Redman.

The Quilt

A hummingbird hovers at my feeder,
wings flapping in the rapid figure-eights
as breeze wafts through a window screen
to lift an edge of the hand sewn quilt, made
90 years ago by my husband's grandmother.

Her quilt is work of art on our wall.
not shelved and safe from fading sunlight.
She died before my husband really knew
her, but I know her from photos - that look
in her eyes set above a firm mouth.
In one picture, she holds an infant in front
of her first married home - a tent
on the Pakota River near the coal mines.

Years later, at home in a place in town,
she must have loved the luxury
of her new circumstances: store-bought
goods, a frame house and green yard, health
for her spouse, no longer miner but a foreman.

Still frugal, she gathered cloth, some new,
some from outworn clothing. She clipped
and sorted shapes then hand-stitched thirty
intertwining circlets into a wedding ring pattern,
a spread large enough for her marriage bed.

Skillfully she quilted the piece by hand
with white thread arcs to echo it's rings.
Working, she thought of quilts she'd made
in girlhood blending flour sacks into designs.
This one would win her a prize at the 4H fair.

Outside her window two children played;
a hummingbird sipped sweetness from a glass
feeder she had hung there. The breeze ruffled
curtains then as now, while a tiny messenger
signaled stories of sweet remembrance.



Mitch Manders

Carmel, Indiana

My great-grandmother made this blanket and passed it to my grandmother. She passed it to my mom, Paula. My mom had two sons, so she then passed it to my daughter, Layla.

It's been in my family for 5 generations, and this blanket is in very good shape. It's pretty rare to have something last so long. We hope it will bring joy to those who see it at Newfields. My great-grandmother immigrated from Romania to Indianapolis around 1920. We believed the blanket was made around 1922, or 100+ years ago.



Paula Manders

Indianapolis, Indiana

I made the quilt as a welcome to the world to my sons. As they grew up I retained ownership of the quilt.

I started the quilt when my first son was born, 1984. Then I went back to work full time and didn't finish until my second son was born. The date 1986 is painted in the pink flower in the corner. The pictures symbolize happiness and all the love and worldly beauty you want to give your children. I thought this would be a forever momento with life but little boys grow up and interest changes with life situations. I hope this is preserved as an art collection.



Peggy Christensen

Westfield, Indiana

Maker is an unknown woman. I purchased this quilt at a Wisconsin Antiques Market in 1980.

This quilt helped save my sanity many times by comforting my fussy infant daughter 40 years ago. I hung it on a wall in my living room where it served as an art piece for many years. When my daughter Greta was born in 1982, to comfort her, I would prop her on my shoulder and walk in front of the quilt. Its contrasting, geometric pattern caught her attention and she quieted down right away.



Peggy Pontius-Wessel

Indianapolis, Indiana

My grandmother, Mable Richardson, it was one of the items my mother gave to me when my grandmother died in 1982

My grandmother was a wonderful seamstress. She sewed, as they called it back then, By Eye, if she could see it, she could copy or duplicate it. She never used formal patterns.

She used this blanket to help me learn to embroider. My work on this piece was her name, in the upper-left corner and a part of the flower at the lower-right corner.

I was obviously a beginner. Her work on the peacock was so beautiful.

She taught me the fundamentals of sewing and handwork and encouraged me to use my own ideas instead of copying someone else's work. I was about 10 years old when she started teaching me.

What I learned from her in this first lesson, and those that followed, is still the path I follow in my quilting and designs.



Peggy Pontius-Wessel

Indianapolis, Indiana

The quilt was made as a collective project by my mother, Colleen Pontius' quilt circle in 1999.

My mother was a part of an amazing group of quilters who would meet once a week in a neighborhood Methodist church on the west side of Indianapolis. I was invited to join them as a novice quilter, and they taught me the fine art of hand quilting.

As the youngest person in the group (this was back in 1999), I was taught by each woman her style and methods of hand quilting. Each woman had her own way of hand stitching, and they shared those with me. They were so patient and giving of their time, it instilled in me the joy of quilting and hand work.

The last block in the lower-right corner was my mother's block, and it has her message, name, and date on it. This quilt was one of many of my mother's quilts that passed to me when she died 11 years ago.

I am still quilting, and every stitch I take, I have these beautiful women and my mom in my thoughts.



Richard Patrick Anderson

Indianapolis, Indiana

This is a substitute blanket; as my original is an Antique 1909 Pendleton Wool—However, this blanket was also used by me at the same time as the one I'm writing about, but is not the same density or color, but was used to keep the other clean.

Sometimes a blanket is not so much presented to one with comfort, but rather it is thrown at another hastily and without a second thought other than to hide the vulnerably naked and exposed being in front of them from view.

Sometimes a blanket is used to cover something repugnant, disgusting

Vile.

Or as hurled at child with a vitriolic curse smoothed with spit from a mouth and tongue of a parent filled with Christian "Love":

"You are an abomination in the sight of God."

All because the What you are admitting to is now Who you are. They throw an old blanket at you. Realizing in that moment, sometimes a blanket is used to relieve someone of their shame.

So.

This Blanket is another “thing” that you gather and put into your car with all the other trash bags of “stuff” as something ironically a Parent who goes by the name of “Grace” when in Church, is now verbalizing as vitriolic bile through clenched teeth, specifically, exactly, and what is, “yours.”

It’s March 1984, and there is a light reminder of the past snow still lingering in places reminding you that this blanket is going to be needed more than you want.

Then you take stock of your situation: Male, 17, bookishly weird looking and skinny, Big Eared Senior in High School, Art and Band Geek, only has to take a few hours of classes to graduate, no close friends, has a 1970 pea green Pontiac, working a paid part time job at the Wanamaker Branch Library and a internship at the Marion County Prosecutor’s office with Stephen Goldsmith, and you’re Gay.

Alone.

You drive and find a spot that seems innocuous to blend in and seem like your car belongs there. You cover up and try to blend in with the car interior because you can’t be found out. You can’t tell anyone because you’re smart enough to know that there are repercussions that you don’t want to happen. You just want to graduate, hidden under a blanket of normalcy.

You’re doing it. You develop a routine and you’re getting by undiscovered.

Until one day there is a knock on the window from an older stranger with a flashlight wanting to know why you are parked in the lot after hours.

Busted.

You bring forth your initial confession about doing some sketching and homework and you got too tired to drive “home” so you thought you’d catch a few and then be on your way. He lingers and notices a few things, asks to see your sketchbook, and reacts with a gentleness and kindness that catches you off guard. Before you know it, you are now indoors, wearing this blanket as a coat, sitting on a chair by a loading dock, drinking Red-pop out of paper cups, chit-chat talking to Mr. J, while he is intently looking at your school sketchbook while waiting for what seems to be an eternity of churchlike activity, all the while a transistor radio hums in the background in tune with the overhead lights.

Sanctuary.

He just looks, carefully turning each page with no judgment and no questions. Looking at each page of my sketchbook as if he was studying it for some reason only known to him. After handing me my sketchbook he speaks with a delicate tone heaping praises on my drawing skills and the maturity of my sketches while making references to paintings and artworks I should see during the open hours before announcing that he had to get back to his rounds within the museum. But not before he informs you on where you should park your car, "if I need to," and what time you should leave by in the morning. We had that same routine a couple of times: Red-pop, sketchbook, and back to his rounds until things brightened up and the days of being homeless ended with Aunt Vi having you stay with her, laying on her spare room bed, and the beginning of her tutoring that made you who you are today. She started the next thread to this blanket's journey. She reminded you that things have a story to share and a lesson to learn:

Remembrance.

Just so you know, I went on to a wonderful life. I gave him my love. I didn't hide anything from him. I stayed the same and he took care of me. I caught tears when they were shed many, many, years ago just as carefully as I cradled his leg when it was broken. I went on picnics. I traveled on car trips and kept the upholstery free of his German Shepherd Jake's hair on all those road trips to other Museums. I cradled countless articles of vintage textiles, Jean Paul Gaultier, paintings, artwork, and furniture that made his life beautiful. I watched from the back of a chair as he gave joy with his wit. I waited patiently when needed. I knew my place on the shelf, and didn't begrudge a hand when it reached for something softer. I gave him warmth when his partner said they were moving to Vermont. Then again when his partner cheated, lied, and left. I saw his joy when he started working at the place that gave us sanctuary all those years ago. I kept him warm when the heat was shut off because he didn't have the money to fix the furnace when he worked at the Museum. I was there when he gave so another may shine. I'm still here, giving.

I am still quilting and every stitch I take, I have these beautiful women and my mom in my thoughts.



Sandra Schoentrup

Shelbyville, Indiana

Creator Unknown. I bought this lap afghan from the Shelby County Cancer Society Thrift Store.

By purchasing this afghan from the Cancer Society, I helped save a cancer victim's life.



Sarah Harrigan (Sally)

Seattle, Washington

I made this afghan for my father during his final illness. After he died, my mother gave it back to me.

The idea for an afghan made of squares, knitted in the seed stitch, then sewn together, came from my sister's short-term first mother-in-law. When we visited her house outside of Chicago, Mrs. Haythorn had an afghan like this that she had made. It seemed like a good project for several reasons: 1) It was a good use of leftover small bits of yarn from other projects, and 2) since each square was knitted individually, you could carry your knitting with you easily. Both my mother and I picked up on the idea, and made multiple afghans over the years.

My mother had taught me and my siblings how to knit, at least in part to keep us occupied on car trips when we were young. I continued the habit of taking knitting projects when I travelled, as it is a way of keeping your hands occupied. But still being able to converse or watch scenery.

I made this afghan and gave it to my parents. I especially like it, as I remember the sweaters and vests that had generated the leftover yarn,

some of which were gifts to family members. This afghan was on my father's bed during his final weeks of life. My mother had taken it to the hospital, where it was on his bed, and then again on the bed in their living room after he had moved to hospice.

The holes in the afghan were made both by my father's fingernails as he plucked at it in his final illness, and also by the claws of Annie the cat, who was often on the bed with him.

After my father's death, my mother sent me a photo of him in his bed with the afghan covering him, with a note that said it had comforted him in his final days.



Sarah Harrigan (Sally)

Seattle, Washington

I believe my father's mother made the purple afghan. I received it when my grandparents died.

The purple afghan was always hanging over the back of the couch in my grandparent's living room. They rented a 2-bedroom apartment on the 2nd floor of 1840 Auburn Ave, in Dayton, Ohio. The couch in the living room was a hide-a-bed, and at least some of us (my parents plus 4 kids) would sleep there when we visited. Somehow, the rest of us would fit into the second bedroom.

I always liked the colors of the afghan, and also the way you could weave your fingers into the hole between the stitches. It reminded me of our family visits to their home, which is why I asked for it.

I'm sure my grandmother did needlework throughout her life, but when I knew her, she was knitting mainly white cotton bandages. I think she must have started knitting bandages during World War II, and that seemed to be relaxing to her.

My mother (who didn't get along all that well with her mother-in-law) had taught me and my siblings what was then a 5-hour car ride to Dayton from Cleveland. We had our knitting projects when we visited, which would also keep us occupied in the second-story walk up.

The one thing I remember learning from my grandmother was how to wind the yarn from a skein so that the loose end came from the middle of a ball. That way, the ball of yarn wouldn't roll away if you dropped it. We would take turns holding the unwound skein on two outstretched arms while one of us would practice the skill of making the ball with the loose ends in the middle.



Sarah Urist Green

Indianapolis, Indiana

This blanket was made by Ilene Cooper. She knit the blanket and gave it to my husband and I as a wedding present in 2006. It has lived with us from our first apartment in NYC to our current home in Indianapolis.

The knitter of this blanket is Ilene Cooper, a children's book author, former librarian, and also my husband's first boss at *Booklist* magazine in Chicago. When he was first hired as a temp, fresh out of college, she took pity on the poor soul and quickly became his mentor, both in life and in his development as a writer. When I came into the picture, Ilene embraced me into the fold, and knit this beautiful blanket for us as a wedding gift. We were incredibly touched, but also sneezy. Ilene loves her cat, Bing, and Bing had spent a considerable amount of time on and around this blanket during its construction. Since John and I are both allergic, we've unfortunately had to admire this blanket from afar. For us, this blanket holds so much of Ilene's love and support. It's literally thick with her care and generosity. She doesn't have biological children, but we feel like we're hers. Both of our children have Ilene baby blankets, which they would never dream of parting with.



Shelley Selim

Indianapolis, Indiana

The blanket was made by my great-grandmother, Helen DePutron, for my paternal grandmother, Barbara DePutron Selim. It was passed down to my parents after she died in 2014, and my mother, Rena Selim, gave it to me to donate to this project.

My great-grandmother, Helen DePutron—who we all called “Dadoo” or “Dude”—was born in 1887 and lived to be 101. She was a gifted textile artist and made many quilts and blankets for her home. She made this blanket for her daughter, my paternal grandmother, Barbara Louise DePutron Selim, aka Gram. I’m not sure if she crocheted the blanket herself, but she certainly added the cross-stitched embroidery that bears my grandmother’s initials (BLD) and the floral decoration. My father tells me this blanket was laid out on the foot of her and my grandfather’s bed for most of his childhood.

For me, this blanket symbolizes a long line of creative women on both sides of my family. While neither Gram nor my maternal grandmother had much interest in sewing or textile work, my mother—who is now a full-time painter—learned sewing in her home economics class in high school and fell in love with it. She made dolls and Halloween costumes for my sister and me as kids, entered quilting competitions, and taught me to sew when I was a teenager.

I loved it so much that I went on to study fashion design in college, and I still sew to this day. My mother and I have always bonded over our love of art and textiles, and this blanket represents a continuation of that bond over 100 years into the past.



Sydney Green

Indianapolis, Indiana

My quilt was made by my mother's first cousin, Bernice (rhymes with "furnace") Jones. She made it for me after my mother and I visited her during my 40th birthday trip.

My grandmother died while my mother was a teen. After her death, my mother sealed those memories in her heart and never spoke of her to me. For my 40th birthday, I asked my mother to go on a trip to her hometown in hopes of learning something about my grandmother and my mother's childhood. During the trip, we went to Bernice's for lunch. It was a true Southern lunch; fried chicken, green vegetables cooked to death, yellow vegetables, potato salad and peach cobbler. During that lunch, Mother and Bernice traded stories about their childhood. Mother told about birthday parties where everyone wore newspaper hats that my grandmother made; church meetings where crying babies were passed out the windows to the menfolk standing in the church yard; the yearly tamale party which started with the men roasting the pig one day and ending with the women making the tamales the next day. Eventually, their conversation turned to quilting. Mother and Bernice were both master quilters as was my grandmother. We spent the rest of the afternoon looking at Bernice's quilts. About a year later, I received this quilt from Bernice. I cannot think of a better way to honor Bernice, my grandmother, and my mother than to be part of the Blanket Story series.



Tatum Turner Finch

Indianapolis, Indiana

My Great-Grandmother: Helen Turner, made the blanket
Gifted to My Mother and Father: Brad and Sonyia Turner
Gifted to Me: Tatum Turner Finch

My great-grandmother was known for her knitting and crocheting. I don't believe she made a dime off it. My father spent a lot of time with his grandparents, and she was sure to knit/crochet him little house-shoes (they looked like this: *sketch of socks*) from childhood well into adulthood. She also crocheted blankets and sweaters for her family. There are pictures of me as a toddler in little knitted house-shoes of my own. Unfortunately, my great-grandmother passed away before I could learn crocheting from her. However, a lovely dear family friend taught me how to knit in adolescence. Despite not learning how to knit from my great-grandmother, I think of her love and dedication with every knitting project I complete/work on.



Teresa Pollien

Fenton, Missouri

I made the granny square crochet blanket for myself as a teen.

I was 12 years old when my neighbor, Mrs. Freeze, taught me how to double crochet. After that I saved my allowance and bought books for patterns, I would take them to her, and she would show me how to do the other stitches. She was happy to show me because her daughters were not interested in learning.

When I was 14, I started buying yarn and made lots of granny squares and decided I would make a bedspread for myself. I had a twin bed. I connected all the granny squares with pink single crochet and then hand sewed the pieces together. It took me several months, but I finally finished it. I used that bedspread until I got married and left home.

These afghans are special to me because they opened up an interest for me that has lasted a lifetime. I graduated to knitting, and while I do not crochet as much as I used to, when I do start crochet projects it makes me happy and very nostalgic. I always think of Mrs. Freeze fondly for taking the time to show a neighbor kid a craft that has given me joy for many years and continues to do so.



Teresa Pollien

Fenton, Missouri

I made the ripple pattern crochet blanket for my mother as a teen.

I was 12 years old when my neighbor, Mrs. Freeze, taught me how to double crochet. After that, I saved my allowance and bought books for patterns. I would take them to her, and she would show me how to do the other stitches. She was happy to show me because her daughters were not interested in learning.

When I was 16, I made the ripple pattern afghan for my mom for Mother's Day. I made it big enough to fit a standard-size bed. It took me months to make. I gave it to her, and she used it for a while, but I realized a few years later that she was not a fan of the gold, brown, and yellow afghan I made for her. She was going to sell it at a garage sale, so I took it and used it in my own home. It was draped over the couch in our family room, and for many years my children used it as a cozy cover when watching TV. Since that time, both crochet afghans have been in a closet not being used. I am grateful there is the opportunity for another life as a textile display.

These afghans are special to me because they opened up an interest for me that has lasted a lifetime. I graduated to knitting, and while I do not crochet as much as I used to, when I do start crochet projects it makes me happy and very nostalgic. I always think of Mrs. Freeze fondly for taking the time to show a neighbor kid a craft that has given me joy for many years and continues to do so.



Wendy Cramer

Fort Wayne, Indiana

Made by my Grandmother, Marjorie Morgan. She passed in December of 2016, and my family gave it to me. (Made in the 1990s)

My grandmother was a treasure to me as I was growing up. My relationship with my own mother was always troubled, but my time with my grandmother was so special. She was affectionate and full of amazing stories of her own youth and growing up during the Depression. She lived and worked in Washington, DC, during World War II (on P Street) and was employed as a civilian at the Pentagon. She left that life to marry my Grandfather and raise three kids in Warsaw. I miss her more each year that goes by. She made this blanket and chose blue as it was the favorite color of my grandfather.

Cover: Marie Watt (American, Seneca, Turtle Clan, b. 1967), *Skywalker/Skyscraper (Matriarch)* (detail), 2023, reclaimed blankets, steel, and paper tags, 96 × 24 × 24 in. Commissioned by the Indianapolis Museum of Art at Newfields, General Endowed Discretionary Art Fund, Museum Accession by Exchange. © Marie Watt. Photo by Kevin McConnell.

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