



The **NATIONAL MUSEUM** of the **AMERICAN COVERLET**, Inc.

322 South Juliana Street  
Bedford, Pennsylvania 15522

814.623.1588  
info@coverletmuseum.org  
www.coverletmuseum.org

## Coverlet College 2023

### Friday Afternoon - September 22

1:00 – 3:30

**Concurrent Workshop:  
Dorset Buttons (optional)**

Kathy Rug & Cassie Dickson

Dorset buttons were invented in the early 1600's by a British soldier named Abraham Case. Families in Dorset County, England, added to their incomes by making buttons that were easy to make, affordable, and laundered well. Today, there is a renewed interest in making these historical buttons. This workshop will focus on a variety of techniques and the history of the craft. Join us for a fun afternoon!

Number of students: Minimum: 4, Maximum: 12

about 2:10

Short Break

1:00 – 3:30

**Concurrent Workshop:  
Tape Loom Weaving: The Basics and Beyond (optional)**

Nikki Bosley

This class will offer an informal and fun introduction to the basics of tape loom weaving and include discussion of more advanced concepts including tape with fringe and decorative detail, such as beads. Different styles of tape looms will be on hand for display and instructor demonstration. Attendees are welcome to bring their own tape loom, however there will be practice looms available for attendee use during the workshop period.

Number of students: Minimum: 5, Maximum: 10

about 2:10

Short Break

4:00

**Coverlet Market Opens**

Attendees can offer coverlet and weaving related objects for sale in the classroom opposite the entrance to the all-purpose room. This room will be locked during presentations and off hours.

### Friday Evening - September 22

**Keynote Address and Day 1 Sessions**

Hand-Outs of Summary Information and a Bibliography will be provided.

6:30 – 7:00

**Registration**

**New-to-Coverlets Attendees Register Coverlets for the Discovery Session**

7:00 – 7:45

**Keynote Address - Coverlet Weavers of the Year:  
Brothers Henry, George, and Charles Adolph**

Ron Walter

Learn about three brothers named Adolf/Adolph who were fancy coverlet weavers. Henry Adolf arrived in New York City in 1836, became an American citizen in Ohio in 1838 and wove coverlets in Indiana from 1840 to 1854. He also wove coverlets in Kansas from 1866 to 1877 and in Missouri in 1881. Charles and George Adolph arrived in New Orleans from Le Havre, France, in 1843. George Adolf wove coverlets in Wayne County, Indiana, from 1848 to 1853. Charles Adolph wove coverlets in Wayne and Hamilton Counties, Indiana from 1844 to 1862.

7:45 – 8:30

**Reception**

Meet our presenters and other attendees.

### Saturday Morning - September 23

8:30

Registration and Continental Breakfast (fruit, Danish, coffee and juices)

9:00

**Opening Remarks and Introduction of Attendees**

Melinda Zongor

|       |  |                              |
|-------|--|------------------------------|
| 9:20  | <b>#1 – Researching Long Island Coverlets: History, Designs, and Methodology</b><br>Early nineteenth century coverlets woven on Long Island have unique patterns not found anywhere else in the country. In this presentation, Emily will give an overview of the most common coverlet styles and motifs seen on Long Island so that you can learn to identify them too. She will share her current research on Long Island coverlet designs, weavers, and mills, as well as her thoughts on what coverlets can tell us about local history. She will also talk about her research methodology and the benefits of utilizing resources like local archives and museum collections to help uncover the past. The presentation will feature coverlets that Emily has discovered within the last year from various historical societies and museums across Long Island.   | Emily Werner                 |
| 10:00 | Short Break  |                              |
| 10:10 | <b>#2 – Material Evidence: How a Family in Nineteenth Century Rural Virginia Met Its Textile Needs and Wants</b><br>A collection of twenty-one drafts from the Baer family, who lived in Rockbridge County, Virginia, sparked a project to interpret the drafts, and to weave samples based on them. The drafts were used to weave coverlets, counterpanes and table linens. Questions arose about what role the textiles played in the lives of the weavers, and how they met their other textile needs and wants. Did they weave other fabrics too? Buy them? Barter with neighbors? An examination of family papers, account books, and local general store ledgers yielded evidence that showed a glimpse into the social structure of an apparently isolated community whose transactions in fact formed a web of connections through the immediate neighborhood, and, through the local general stores, the country and the world. | Frances Richardson           |
| 10:50 | Long Break (fruit and juices)  |                              |
| 11:10 | <b>#3 – Fancy Weaving: A Figured Coverlet, A Jacquard Machine, and the Process of Recovering Knowledge</b><br>This presentation kicks off with a brief overview of how I came to handweaving and then details the history of my Jacquard equipment, how the loom works, and the entire process of recreating a coverlet woven in 1830.   | Justin Squizzero<br>via Zoom |
| 11:50 | Short Break  |                              |
| 12:00 | <b>#4 – BIG NEWS Exhibition Highlights Part 1</b><br>Highlights of coverlets in Part 1 of the Big News: Life in the Time of Coverlets exhibition will be presented. This part includes the coverlets displayed in the Red Room, Room 1 and Room 2.   | Ron Walter                   |
| 12:30 | Catered Lunch  |                              |
| 1:20  | <b>#5 – Attendees Tour Part 1 of the BIG NEWS Exhibition</b>   | self-guided                  |
| 1:50  | Short Break  |                              |
| 2:00  | <b>#6 – Another Ted talk: The Loom in Art</b><br>Coverlet College attendees tend to look at a loom in terms of its functionality – what kind of fabric/product does it produce in the hands of a weaver. But how does an artist perceive a loom – what is its function in a painting, photograph, or other artistic image. In this Ted Talk, Ted will take a look at how the loom has been treated in a series of works ranging from the 15th to 20th Century. All inspired by a presentation by Edward Maeder at Coverlet College several years ago.  | Ted Wachhaus                 |
| 2:40  | Long Break (fruit, cookies, and drinks)  |                              |
| 3:00  | <b>#7 – Monroe M. Schaffer (1840-1918): Fayette New York Weaver</b><br>It was late in 2021 that I was told that a loom existed in an old, abandoned house in the town of Fayette, Seneca County, New York. Though the thought of what might be found was intriguing, it was July of 2022 before I got to look at it. Administrative and leadership changes in the local historical society and contact with the local resident who originally informed me, finally allowed a visit to the house with a small attached shed that housed a loom. Plans were made for removal of the loom and relocation to the Fayette Historical Society in October 2022, which was done days before the house was demolished and hauled away. This is the story of the weaver.   | Marty Schlabach              |
| 3:40  | Short Break  |                              |
| 3:50  | <b>#8 – Discovery Session for Coverlets brought by Attendees New to Coverlets</b><br>Learn information about coverlets brought in by attendees new to coverlets.   | all                          |
| 4:30  | <b>Closing Remarks and Graduation</b>  | Melinda Zongor               |
| 4:45  | <b>Dinner on Own</b>   |                              |

## **Saturday Evening - September 23**

7:00 – 9:00

### **Combined Coverlet Show and Tell for Day 1 and Day 2**

all

Bring one or two of your favorite coverlets to show and discuss.

### **Day 2 Sessions**

Hand-Outs of Summary Information and a Bibliography will be provided.

## **Sunday Morning - September 24**

|       |   |                |
|-------|---|----------------|
| 8:30  | Registration and Continental Breakfast (fruit, Danish, coffee, and juices)  |                |
| 9:00  | <b>Opening Remarks and Introduction of Attendees</b>  | Melinda Zongor |
| 9:15  | <b>#1 – Walker Sisters of Tennessee</b><br>In 1926, Congress approved authorization of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Hundreds of families who had lived there for generations were paid for their land and forced to move. The five sisters of the Walker family refused to leave. In exchange for their land, they were given a lifetime lease to live in their home. We will take a look at their mountain home, their weavings, and their interesting lives.  | Cassie Dickson |
| 9:55  | Short Break   |                |
| 10:05 | <b>#2 – Tape Loom Weaving: Ties That Bind</b><br>Tape and long narrow bands of fabric were being made in ancient Egypt and possibly before. These narrow bands served many uses, from practical to decorative. This presentation will focus on the evolution of tape loom weaving from past to present, starting with the ways early homemakers used tape looms and concluding with a discussion of tape weaving as a way to ease stress and encourage mindfulness.   | Nikki Bosley   |
| 10:45 | Long Break (fruit and juices)   |                |
| 11:05 | <b>#3 – Not So Plain Weave</b><br>Coverlets are known for their brilliant displays of patterning and color that captivate the viewer. But under all the fancy birds, trees, animals and even buildings there is a more simplified structure that is often overlooked. We will take a look at examples of how plain weave can be creatively manipulated through color and weave effects to create wonderful optical illusions that support the pattern work of some unique coverlets and other homeware linens of the same period.   | Sara Bixler    |
| 11:45 | Short Break   |                |
| 11:55 | <b>#4 - BIG NEWS Exhibition Highlights Part 2</b><br>Highlights of coverlets in Part 2 of the Big News: Life in the Time of Coverlets exhibition will be presented. This part includes the coverlets displayed in Room 3 and the Hallway from Room 3 to the Gift Shop.  | Ron Walter     |
| 12:25 | Catered Lunch   |                |
| 1:15  | <b>#5 – Attendees Tour Part 2 of the BIG NEWS Exhibition</b>  | self-guided    |
| 1:45  | Short Break   |                |
| 1:55  | <b>#6 – From There to Here: Importation, Availability, and Use of Dyes in Coverlets</b><br>Romantic notions of gathering plants to dye fibers woven into coverlets was true for some home dyers and weavers. The vast majority of handwoven coverlets though that have found their way into our collections were dyed with tried-and-true sources that were often imported from other parts of the world. Such dyes were known to be colorfast and lightfast giving longevity to the appearance of these works of art. Availability of dyes varied. Some dyes were first known to tanners and later used on fibers. Some native dyes performed so well that they were exported to other countries and later packaged (as a natural dye) and sold in the States. Others had to be imported on ships while evading pirates. The stories of natural dye use on fibers did not end with the discovery of synthetic dyes in 1859. It continued for various reasons until about 1920. | Gina Levesque  |
| 2:40  | <b>Closing Remarks and Graduation</b><br><i>Class Schedule Subject to Change.</i>   | Melinda Zongor |

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## Coverlet Marketplace

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Attendees are encouraged to bring antique coverlets or related items to sell during Coverlet College weekend. Sellers will be responsible for tagging individual items with relevant details (NMAC will provide tags) and arranging sales directly with buyers prior to our closing session on Sunday. Although not required, we hope you will consider donating a portion and/or the proceeds of your sale to support the Museum's mission. Donations can be made upon the conclusion of the conference via the Donate button on our website or by cash, credit card, or personal check at the event.

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**Sara Bixler** holds a Bachelor of Fine Art and a Bachelor of Science in K-12 education; although she gives full credit for the depth of her knowledge to her apprenticeship with her father, Tom Knisely. Sara is a frequent contributor to Handwoven Magazine and Weaving Today. She is owner of Red Stone Glen Fiber Arts Center in York Haven, Pennsylvania, a mecca of weaving support and fiber arts education. Sara is best known for her work with color theory studies and surface embellishment in weaving.

**Nikki Bosley** of Johnstown PA learned about tape loom weaving when she first began interpreting women from early American history over 15 years ago. Since then, she has amassed a collection of tape looms, both modern and antique. In her spare time, she can be found hiking old Forbes Road, guiding tours at the Johnstown Flood Museum, and working for the Harpers Ferry Park Association as a publications specialist and living historian.

**Cassie Dickson** of Whittier, NC, is a member of the Southern Highland Craft Guild and a traditional pattern weaver who specializes in the weaving of coverlets and the processing of the flax plant to linen cloth. She has been spinning, weaving, and natural dyeing for over 40 years. She has raised silkworms for the past 28 years and processes silk cocoons to silk fabric. Cassie presents to museums, colleges, guilds, and regional fiber events.

**Gina Levesque** is an artist who has been working in traditional fiber arts since a young girl. Gina works with natural dye stuffs, weaving, and rug hooking. Due to her love of the outdoors and training as a biologist, she finds the natural world to be the greatest influence on her work. Many times, she works with wool to create her one-of-a-kind pieces. With biology degrees from Purdue University, University of Arkansas, and Oklahoma State University, she has also attended numerous natural dye workshops and classes. Her teachers have included Michelle Whiplinger, Lisel Orland, Laura Strand, and Elizabeth Black. Additionally, she has been blessed to work with several Cherokee artists who have been designated National Treasures. As an instructor, she has conducted classes, workshops, demonstrations, and given lectures on natural dyes at various locations throughout the country. Her fiber art business, Across Generations, provides supplies and beginning projects to those interested in natural dyeing, rug hooking, and penny rugs. Gina holds memberships in The Tulsa Rug Hooking Guild, The Tulsa Handweavers Guild, and Natural Dyes International.

**Frances Richardson**, of Lexington, Virginia, retired so that she could go back to work – circling back to focus on her enduring loves, weaving, sewing and the history of textiles. She began her working life as a textile conservator in the United Kingdom. After raising a family and teaching elementary school for many years, she is now able to indulge her curiosity about textiles and practice weaving.

**Marty Schlabach** of Interlaken, NY, and his wife, Mary Jean Welsler, have been collecting coverlets for a bit over 10 years, with Mary Jean having collected quilts and other early textiles for much longer. They have made attempts to limit their coverlet collecting to New York weavers, though sometimes other coverlets still find their way into the collection. As a retired librarian, Marty particularly enjoys researching the weavers of NY and is easily enticed to go down the rabbit holes that might produce another piece of a weaver's story.

**Justin Squizzero** of Newbury, VT, is a handweaver who recreates historic textiles on 18th and 19th-century equipment. Justin's textile training began as a child under his grandmother, followed by an apprenticeship to Kate Smith and Norman Kennedy of Marshfield, Vermont. Having previously worked at living history museums including Plimoth Plantation and Coggeshall Farm Museum, Justin returned to weaving full-time in 2013. Through his business, The Burroughs Garret, he weaves historic reproductions and linen damask using a 19th-century Jacquard loom and teaches British/American handweaving at The Marshfield School of Weaving.

**Ted Wachhaus** and his lovely wife Bonnie, of York Springs, PA, have spent 50+ years exploring their family history, antiques, and all things fiber.

**Ron Walter** of Hilltown, PA, is a respected coverlet historian with broad experience in early textile tools and techniques. He researches American textiles and textile-related tools used in the home and on the farm from about 1750 to 1875. His special interests are fiber processing tools including decorated and dated hetchels and their makers, spinning wheels and their makers, and coverlets both geometric and fancy, as well as the weavers who produced them. He is the NMAC Board of Directors president, CCGA (Colonial Coverlet Guild of America) president and the CCGA Newsletter editor.

**Emily Werner** is the Curator and Collections Manager at the Huntington Historical Society on Long Island. She recently completed her master's degree at the Fashion Institute of Technology in Fashion and Textile History. She has been studying coverlets independently, as well as through various workshops and internships for the past few years. She is also a weaver and enjoys replicating historic patterns, especially overshot, and experimenting with other historic fiber crafts. Her favorite place to be is at the intersection of textiles and history.

**Melinda Zongor** of Bedford PA, NMAC Director/Curator, has been "hanging around" coverlets for nearly 40 years. As a former collector, weaver and antiques dealer specializing in coverlets, she has authored books on the subject and has worked with collectors, the antiques trade, the feature film industry, print media and a variety of groups, large and small. She and her husband Laszlo are co-founders of the Coverlet Museum.