



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

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## Coverlet College 2025

### Friday Afternoon - September 26

1:00 – 3:30

#### **Concurrent Workshop:**

#### **Eco Printing on Paper and Japanese Stab Binding**

**Cassie Dickson**

Join me for a fun afternoon learning two new skills: eco printing on paper and Japanese stab binding to make a book. Students will gain knowledge of how mordants can affect the colors of the leaf prints. We will make our beautiful paper and then learn a bookbinding technique that has been used in Japan for centuries.

Number of students: Minimum: 4, Maximum: 12

about 2:10

Short Break

1:00 – 3:30

#### **Concurrent Workshop:**

#### **Weave Structures**

**Emily Barth**

Weaving involves interlacing two sets of threads, the warp and the weft. The way these threads interlace creates different weave structures, each with unique properties and characteristics. A number of different weave structures are encountered in 19th century coverlets, and the terminology can be confusing – from multi-shaft float-work to tied half double cloth, Biederwand to boutonné, and more. With hands-on examples and simplified weaving drafts, this class will explain the characteristics of all of the weave structures commonly used in handwoven coverlets. Students will receive a reference guide of useful tips and tricks for telling them apart. The workshop is intended to satisfy both weavers and non-weavers.

Number of students: Minimum: 4, Maximum: 12

about 2:10

Short Break

1:00 – 3:30

#### **Concurrent Workshop:**

#### **Pin Looms**

**Kathy Rug**

Have fun with these tiny looms that sit in your lap and are perfect to take with you when you want to be creative. We made potholders when we were young on small looms. Now learn how a small loom and small amounts of yarn can create a fabric both useful and beautiful. There is a Facebook page with posts from Pin loom enthusiasts! Check it out.

Number of students: Minimum: 4, Maximum: 6

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 26

#### **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: Fancy Weavers in Asbury, NJ**

**Ron Walter**

Learn about three fancy weavers in Asbury, Warren County, NJ, James J. Davidson, "Fancy Weaver," wove coverlets from 1834 to 1837 with location Asbury. Archibald Davidson, Jr. and James J. Davidson, "Fancy Weavers & Dyers," wove coverlets from 1835 to 1837 with location Asbury, and Christian Van Nortwick, "Fancy Weaver," wove coverlets from 1837 to 1849 with location Asbury. Asbury was a small village on the Musconetcong River, where a woolen factory known as the Ark Factory was established. Christian Van Nortwick advertises on August 22, 1837, "that he purchased the Fancy Weaving and Dyeing Establishment at the 'Ark Factory,' in Asbury, Warren County, N.J. where he continues to weave". It is also probable that both he and James J. Davidson worked together during this time.

7:45 – 8:30

#### **Reception**

Meet our presenters and other attendees.

## **Saturday Morning - September 27**

- 8:30 Registration and Continental Breakfast (fruit, Danish, coffee and juices)
- 9:00 **Opening Remarks and Introduction of Attendees** **Melinda Zongor**
- 9:20 **#1 – The Intersection of Canal History and Coverlet History:  
Olean Canal Coverlets Woven by J. Sherman, 1840-1844** **Marty Schlabbach**
- During the heydays of 19th century American woven coverlets, coverlets were often inscribed with some combination of date, weaver's name, client's name, or place name. Sometimes additional patriotic or political words or phrases were included. Occasionally the weaver would promote his own expertise in dyeing or weaving. Less frequently we find promotion or advocacy for a commercial interest. From 1840-1844 Josiah Sherman wove coverlets with an inscription that began WOVE AT TUSCARORA VILL OLEAN CANAL. With 2025 being the 200th anniversary of the completion of the Erie Canal in NY, it seems timely to explore this connection between canal history and coverlet history.
- 10:05 Short Break
- 10:15 **#2 – “He Can Do It Good”: Coverlet Weavers of the Central Susquehanna Valley** **Jonah Weaver**
- Pennsylvania's Central Susquehanna Valley consists of Columbia, Montour, Northumberland, Snyder, and Union counties. Throughout the fertile farmland, dense forests, and iron-rich mountains of this region arose numerous coverlet weavers. While not as common as those in Southeastern Pennsylvania, coverlets and their weavers from the Central Susquehanna Valley possess equally fascinating backstories. Their histories demonstrate the multifaceted role of a weaver in this region, as well as the importance of textile production in a mixed agricultural-industrial area. This presentation will focus on coverlet weavers including Benjamin Angstad, John Clapham, Michael Eichman, Peter Goodman, John Gramlyg, John Hamelton, Joseph Schnee, and S. Whitehead. Emphasis will be placed on connections between weavers throughout the Central Susquehanna Valley and those in surrounding communities.
- 11:00 Long Break (fruit and juices)
- 11:20 **#3 – Coverlet Care: Historic Precedents and Current Preventative Measures** **Harold Mailand**
- This presentation will discuss issues related to the care of the American coverlet including the unique conflict between protein and cellulose materials; why and how coverlets survive to this day; why, when, and how to clean a coverlet; the importance of storing your collection; and realistic goals for repair and stabilization.
- 12:05 Short Break
- 12:15 Catered Lunch
- 1:00 **#4 – Tour of the AMERICA UNDER COVER(LETS) Exhibition Part 1** **Melinda Zongor & Ron Walter**
- 1:40 Short Break
- 1:50 **#5 – The Subtle Beauty of 19th Century Southern Counterpanes** **Gay McGeary**
- Nineteenth century southern counterpanes were woven with fine natural cotton for the hot summer months. Gay has been researching and weaving the weave structures used to weave these southern beauties. They include honeycomb, dimity, spot, huck and her favorite structure called “huckaback” by the early weavers. Gay will share her interpretations of counterpane drafts found in the NMAC Collection of 19th century counterpane Drafts from Rockingham County, Virginia and compare them to other collections of 19th century counterpane drafts from four other counties in Virginia. Finally, she will share her interpretations of two counterpanes in the NMAC collection.
- 2:35 Long Break (fruit, cookies, and drinks)
- 2:55 **#6 – Silas Burton's Flowered Coverlets—How Many and For Whom?** **Sandra Rux**
- Many in the textile history community are familiar with Silas Burton's Draft Book containing his drafts for linens and “flowered” coverlets (now known as overshot) and instructions for striped woolen carpet (more often called Venetian carpet). Burton, born 1775, in Stratford Connecticut, wove and made weaving reeds from 1793-1827. Rebecca Arkenburg created a WIKI about Silas and the Draft Book, Rabbit Goody has used his stripe patterns in reproduction carpeting and Pat Hiltz has worked on identifying the names of the “flowered” patterns as they relate to other pattern names and believes these are the earliest named overshot patterns in the U.S. Sandra Rux has been working for the past two years on analyzing the ledger and account book preserved at the Stratford Historical Society, focusing primarily on reed making. This talk will focus on the coverlets woven by Silas Burton—mostly “flowered” but some plaid and some plain. While coverlets were a minor part of Burton's business, they were made throughout his career. While none of the entries specify which of the ten “flowered” drafts were used they do document the customers, cost and how payment was received. Burton's ledger provides a small window into coverlet weaving in coastal Connecticut in the New Republic.
- 3:40 Short Break

3:50	<b>#7 – Covering the Bed</b>	<b>Sharon Waddell</b>
	A look at a dozen of my favorite woven textiles from the period 1780-1850. A wide variety of different styles of coverlets will be shown including weft-faced coverlets from a Dutch homestead in the Hudson Valley, Bolton-style, double cloth, etc. The examples chosen represent the diversity of items found on the American bed during this period.	

4:35	<b>Closing Remarks and Graduation</b>	<b>Melinda Zongor</b>
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4:45	<b>Dinner on Your Own</b>	
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**Saturday Evening - September 27**

7:00	<b>Discovery Session for Coverlets brought by Attendees New to Coverlets</b>	<b>all</b>
	Learn information about coverlets brought in by attendees new to coverlets.	
7:30 – 9:00	<b>Combined Coverlet Show and Tell for Day 1 and Day 2</b>	<b>all</b>
	Bring one or two of your favorite coverlets to show and discuss.	

**Day 2 Sessions**

**Sunday Morning - September 28**

8:30	Registration and Continental Breakfast (fruit, Danish, coffee, and juices)	
9:00	<b>Opening Remarks and Introduction of Attendees</b>	<b>Melinda Zongor</b>
9:15	<b>#1 – ‘Homespun,’ ‘Homemade,’ and ‘Country Cloth’</b>	<b>Cassie Dickson</b>
	During the eighteenth century, textiles made from silk, wool, linen, and hemp were entering American ports in abundant supply. While many professional weavers marketed woven goods, some families supplemented their clothing needs by weaving at home. The cloth went by a variety of period names: tow cloth, fustian, osnaburg, diaper, dimity, linsey-woolsey, checks, bed ticks, and coverlids. A sample fabric handout will be provided to attendees to gain an understanding of these period fabrics that were highly valued from the 18th and into the 19th century.	
10:00	Short Break	
10:10	<b>#2 – Home Manufacture of Fabric in Virginia, 1800-1860</b>	<b>Frances Richardson</b>
	Following on from Cassie's description and examples of everyday fabrics in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, we will look at evidence for the production of such fabrics in Virginia based on collections of drafts and general store account books. Specifically, we will look at the recipe book of plantation mistress Betsy Morton, with its 50 drafts for utilitarian and fancy cloth, and at collections of drafts from farmhouses. We will see that despite a huge variety of fabrics being readily available in local general stores, weaving at home was widespread.	
10:55	Long Break (fruit and juices)	
11:15	<b>#3 – The Coverlet Documentation Project</b>	<b>Emily Barth</b>
	Over the past 18 months at the McCarl Gallery, we have photographed and documented over 1,500 coverlets, compiled over 20,000 coverlet records into a centralized online location, and expanded the "Coverlet Index" website to include over 500 figured & fancy patterns as well as weaver biographies with cornerblock images, pattern thumbnails, census data, and weaver's advertisements. This talk will share some of the highlights of the McCarl Gallery's ongoing initiatives and explain how you can get involved and access our growing resources.	
12:00	Short Break	
12:10	Catered Lunch	
12:55	<b>#4 – Tour of the AMERICA UNDER COVER(LETS) Exhibition Part 2</b>	<b>Melinda Zongor &amp; Ron Walter</b>
1:35	Short Break	
1:45	<b>#5 – Child-Size and Weaver Sample Coverlets</b>	<b>Ron Walter</b>
	Learn how to recognize a child-size coverlet and see the many different details the weavers used in producing them. Also see a few weaver sample coverlets and learn why I distinguish these as a different style textile. Some fancy child-size coverlets include a client name. Several examples of fancy and geometric child-size coverlets will be displayed, and many more images will be presented.	
2:30	<b>Closing Remarks and Graduation</b>	<b>Melinda Zongor</b>
	<i>Class Schedule Subject to Change.</i>	

## Coverlet Marketplace

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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**Emily Barth** of Stahlstown, PA, first became interested in historical textiles from a practical perspective when she took up spinning and weaving as a hobby during graduate school. In 2023, she became the curator of the Foster and Muriel McCarl Coverlet Gallery at Saint Vincent College in Latrobe, PA. In addition to overseeing the installation of rotating coverlet exhibits, she is currently working with students to digitize coverlet collections and resources. Her primary research interest involves tracking the use of common patterns by different weavers in "The Coverlet Index" at [coverletindex.miraheze.org](http://coverletindex.miraheze.org).

**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.

**Harold F. Mailand** of Indianapolis, IN, founded Textile Conservation Services (TCS), a private laboratory in Indianapolis in 1986. He and his associates specialized in the preservation of European tapestries, Civil War battle flags, and historic costumes for private and institutional collections from Connecticut to California. He is a Fellow in American Institute for Conservation (AIC). The Textile Specialty Group of AIC designated him as the 2015 recipient of the award for outstanding contributions to the field of textile conservation. His passions are architectural preservation and studying and collecting objects that support story lines of artistic and historic expression.

**Gay McGeary** of Sewickley, PA, has been weaving, collecting, and researching early coverlet patterns, weave structures and fringe techniques for over 30 years. In recent years she has added southern counterpanes to her research and weaving endeavors. While her weaving is inspired by her research, her research is enhanced by her weaving explorations of the early craftsmen.

**Frances Richardson** is a former textile conservator and teacher. She lives near Lexington in Rockbridge County, Virginia. Over the last few years, she has enjoyed researching and weaving nineteenth-century drafts from a local family and getting to know her old barn frame loom.

**Kathy Rug** of Getzville, NY has been collecting and rescuing coverlets as well as teaching classes about them for over 30 years. She documents coverlets to preserve the information for future weavers.

**Sandra Rux** is a graduate of the Museum Studies program of the Munson Institute, Mystic Seaport Museum. She came to Portsmouth NH in 2005 as the manager for the Portsmouth Historical Society, Warner House and Wentworth-Gardner and Lear Houses and then served as manager and curator for the Portsmouth Historical Society until December 2014. She served as Curator of the Warner House Association (2014-2019) and chairperson of the Portsmouth Athenaeum Exhibits Committee (2014-2021). A hand-loom weaver herself, she has written about nineteenth-century carpet weaving for the Dublin Seminar and in *Corsets, Clocks and Locks*, a book about the industrial development of New Haven, CT. In 2021 Sandra and her husband Alan Haesche moved back to CT. Current research is focused on makers of weaving reeds in the northeast U.S. (1750-1830).

**Marty Schlabach** of Interlaken, NY, came to coverlets through his wife, Mary Jean Welser. She has been interested in and collected textiles for many years, with a particular interest in quilts. Something more than 10 years ago, while pawing through a pile of textiles at a local estate sale, Mary Jean came across two whole cloth, early 19th century quilts and one geometric overshot coverlet fragment. Thus started their interest in exploration and collection of coverlets. As a retired librarian, Marty particularly enjoys the historical research associated with learning about coverlets. Marty and Mary Jean live in the Finger Lakes area of New York and spend substantial time gardening and working on their 1840s Greek Revival farmhouse.

**Sharon Waddell** of New Windsor, NY, has been studying antique textiles for over twenty years. Originally specializing in quilts, her interest expanded quickly to include woven textiles and the methods of producing yarns and fabrics. She now owns at least 8 looms, 3 great wheels, 5 spinning wheels, several hetchels, and 6 sewing machines. She also has an extensive collection of quilts and coverlets and has curated numerous quilt exhibits.

**Ron Walter** of Hilltown, PA, is a respected coverlet historian with broad experience in early textile tools and techniques. He researches American textiles, with coverlets both fancy and geometric, and their weavers as his primary interest. He also researches 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 and spinning wheels and their makers. He is a member of the NMAC Board of Directors, the CCGA (Colonial Coverlet Guild of America) president and the CCGA Newsletter editor.

**Jonah Weaver** of Danville, PA, is a junior Public History major at Saint Vincent College in Latrobe, Pennsylvania. A native of Danville, Pennsylvania, Jonah is an intern at the Foster and Muriel McCarl Coverlet Gallery and the Verostko Center for the Arts. His research interests include the history of coverlet weaving in Pennsylvania's Central Susquehanna Valley and the history of Pittsburgh's stained-glass artists. He is currently learning to weave.

**Melinda Zongor** of Bedford PA, NMAC Director/Curator, has been "hanging around" coverlets for about 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 late husband Laszlo were co-founders of the Coverlet Museum.