

Yarns



The Newsletter of The National Museum of the American Coverlet

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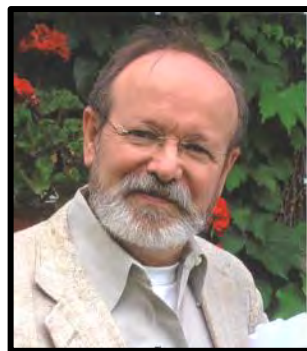
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From the President

By Edward Maeder



They say that “time flies when you’re having fun.” Well, it’s difficult to believe that I have been the president of the Board of Directors at The National Museum of the American Coverlet since its founding seven and a half years ago. What began in just one room with a small gallery for display and a limited shop/office area has developed into a full-fledged museum with excellent gallery spaces, an office, a shop, and all the other facilities that are required for public events and programs.

The permanent collection has also grown through the generosity of many donors. The core holdings of the National Museum of the American Coverlet were developed over decades by Laszlo and Melinda Zongor, who were for many years in the forefront of placing fine coverlets in collections—both public and private—across the country. Their taste and determination was certainly instrumental in the resurgence of interest in this esoteric subject.

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President, cont'd: As with so many family heirlooms, the tradition is that all textiles were grown, spun, and woven by a talented ancestor. How these seemingly ubiquitous bed covers proliferated continues to be explored in a series of museum-sponsored programs called Coverlet College. This annual event has attracted participants from ten states and Canada, and is now done in two days, the second day for more advanced students.

Coverlets have found an audience amongst those interested in the history of early American decorative arts, which we call the “colonial” period. Geometric coverlets are based on European patterns that go back centuries if not millennia. Pictorial or fancy coverlets fall into the period usually referred to as Victorian. But the vast majority were created in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. The Museum and its board are dedicated to uncovering the stories of the makers and owners, and their place in American society of the period.



The Director's Corner

By Melinda Zongor

As the Christmas season is upon us, my thoughts turn to gratitude. Gratitude for all the thoughtful and generous people who support this Museum. Gratitude for the people who believe in the mission, who contribute their good will, best wishes and kind words, their volunteer time, their repeat visits bringing friends, their purchases in the Shop, their memberships, and their donations—financial and material.

This Museum is about the stuff: our nation's heritage. It's about the handiwork of our forebears; the inventiveness, artistry, and craftsmanship of those brave, hardworking, talented, creative folk who established and secured this great country. The people who really believed that, “For every web begun, God sends thread.” [Frances Goodrich speaking of her work with Appalachian women in the 1930s.]

It is our fervent hope that this Museum will continue to meet its fiscal challenges so that it can concentrate on the important work at hand.

We'll be here as long as you are. Thank you!



Hooked Rug Month at NMAC!

By Melinda Zongor

September 2013 was hooked rug month at NMAC. The Museum hosted an exhibition of 141 primitive hooked rugs, many of which were based on coverlet motifs. In partnership with the well-known and much loved folks from Woolley Fox in Ligonier, Pennsylvania, we had an extraordinary opportunity to see these wonderful works of art displayed alongside the coverlets.

Hooked rugs lined the walls of the main hallway and were arranged on the floor around the perimeters of the exhibition spaces. It was immediately clear to all who saw them that there is a symbiotic relationship between the rugs and the coverlets. (Early hooked rugs were made from loom waste!) The exhibition was a perfect blend of color and texture, and everyone agreed that it was a beautiful pairing.

Barbara Carroll and her daughter Robin of Woolley Fox offered a three-day workshop, and people came from around the country to attend. The workshop was followed by a two-day hook-in, which brought in approximately 60 Hookers. Yes, folks, Bedford, Pennsylvania was inundated with Hookers!



Exhibition Opening Ceremony

It was all conceived, planned, organized, and led by Woolley Fox as a fundraiser for the Museum.



Publicity about the exhibition and the Museum appeared in *Rug Hooking Magazine* and other outlets, and it brought attention from a whole new segment of the public.

Perhaps most important of all, everyone had fun, and agreed that we have to do it again!

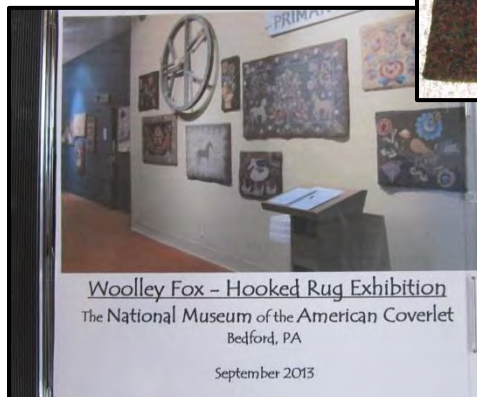
We are truly grateful to Barb and Robin Carroll for their friendship and generosity. They did an amazing job, and we cannot thank them enough.



A DVD of the exhibition, containing a 29-minute slide show of the rugs and their displays, is available from the Museum Shop at \$10 each (\$9 for NMAC members), plus \$3.50 shipping. Call the Museum at 814.623.1588 for information and orders.

The DVDs were produced by Deb Burcin and Woolley Fox as a fundraiser for the Museum.

Thank you, ladies!



New Fundraiser: Hooked Rug Patterns Inspired by Coverlets

Woolley Fox of Ligonier, Pennsylvania, is now 22 offering new patterns for primitive-style hooked rugs, all inspired by coverlets. For technical reasons we cannot show these patterns on our website (sorry about that), but you can inquire about them directly through Woolley Fox at www.woolleyfox.com or 724.238.7004. Trust us, we've seen them and they're wonderful! This is a fundraiser for NMAC and will be an ongoing project, with several new patterns released each year.

Gifts From The Museum Shop



With the holidays fast approaching, what better place to accomplish all your holiday shopping than the National Museum of the American Coverlet Museum Shop? Here, away from the hectic chaos of the malls, you can find merchandise to satisfy the tactile and intellectual needs of the most discerning textile lover—pillows, runners, rugs, and modern coverlets. We have NMAC mugs, books, ornaments, and note cards. And last but not least, the NMAC Museum Shop offers Gift Certificates in any denomination.

Use your Visa or MasterCard for in-person or telephone orders, and take advantage of your membership to receive a 10% discount on your selections. Keep in mind that every Museum Shop sale helps support the Museum, so shop early and often!



Ways to Give to the Museum



First and foremost, give the gift of your presence! Come, visit, and see the latest exhibit and new merchandise in the Museum Shop. Attend one of the upcoming 2014 events!

Your financial support is also of great value to the Museum. You can support both the near- and long-term needs of the Museum through your gifts. You may be interested in naming the Museum in your will or life insurance; creating a charitable gift annuity that pays you an attractive interest throughout your lifetime; or reducing your tax burden by creating a trust. If you are 70½ or older, you can donate up to \$100,000 from your Individual Retirement Account (IRA) directly to the Museum without treating the distribution as taxable income.

You are invited to contact Museum Director Melinda Zongor to share your ideas, your philanthropic goals, and your funding objectives. Together we can help you decide among various options and assist you in developing your plan, as you work with your attorney and other advisors in designing and making your gift. Of course, all inquiries are confidential.

All gifts to The National Museum of the American Coverlet are tax deductible to the extent allowed by the Internal Revenue Service code.



Another Lighting Grant!

NMAC has received another grant from the Community Foundation for the Alleghenies. This latest one was applied toward the installation of low-voltage halogen track lighting in the center section of our main hallway.

Lighting improvement near the entrance was completed awhile back, but the long stretch of hall that runs almost the length of the building was still (awful) fluorescent until just recently.

Happily, the grant funding arrived just in time to light the hooked rug show in September. The new lighting worked wonderfully well for that purpose, and it now makes it possible for us to use the hallway for additional exhibition space.

We are truly grateful to the Community Foundation, this time in association with the Berkey Fund, for their continued support.

ShopforMuseums.com Help Benefit the Museum through Your Online Shopping



ShopforMuseums.com is a fundraising website where you can shop your favorite online stores and, **at no extra cost to you**, have a portion of your purchase amount donated to the museum, park, zoo, aquarium, or other related organization of your choice.

You simply go the Shop for Museums website (<http://shopformuseums.com>), register, choose a museum partner to support (hopefully, us), then select a store and start shopping.

Two very important details:

- (1) You **MUST** go to shopformuseums.com first and not directly to the store website, or it won't work.
- (2) In the dropdown list of Museum Partners, we are listed under the letter **N** as National Museum of the American Coverlet (The).

An amazing variety of stores is listed—yes, even eBay and Amazon are on there—and it's easy to do. So think about this great resource for all your holiday and year-round online shopping!

New Printed Cottons

As you probably know, NMAC has partnered with Blue Hill Fabrics to produce a unique line of great cotton print fabrics, all inspired by the motifs seen in the Museum's coverlet collection.

The beautiful fabrics have been designed although the production is on hold as the company works toward completion of its orders. When we have a firm delivery date, the patterns will be available through the Museum website at www.coverletmuseum.org. We appreciate your patience, and we assure you that the prints are beautiful. They'll be worth the wait!



Membership Renewals

The National Museum of the American Coverlet is your museum. It is here *for you and because of you*. By renewing your Membership, you help this Museum continue in its mission of education, exhibition, and conservation, introducing the public to American woven coverlets. Your membership includes

- a full year of free admission,
- reduced rates for events and programs,
- a 10% discount on your Museum Shop purchases, and
- free access to the reference library.

Take advantage of these “perks”—visit frequently and make the most of your membership. Meet and greet other people who share your (and our) interests in early textiles. Come and enjoy the beautiful town of Bedford, Pennsylvania, with all its myriad attractions.



Your continued support and membership are truly appreciated. We hope to see you often. Let us know what we can do for you.

The National Museum of the American Coverlet

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We Need Your Email Address

We want to share the latest Museum news and coming events as well as interesting articles about coverlets with our members. Please send your current email address to the Museum at info@coverletmuseum.org so that we can be in touch. We promise to never give, lend, or sell your information to anyone else.



Coverlet College

By Ron Walter

The second annual Coverlet College offered by The National Museum of the American Coverlet in Bedford, Pennsylvania, was held September 21 and 22, 2013. This year, there were both basic and advanced sessions with eight presentations in each. The program lab sessions included microscopic fiber identification and extensive discussions of coverlet identification based on the coverlets brought by the attendees for “Show & Tell.”

Richard Jeryan discussed the basics of loom operation and the chronology of their development.

Sources of Coverlet Motif Designs was presented by Edward Maeder. He used examples of historic art and printed works to show the textile motifs that were available to designers of the coverlets.

Harold Mailand discussed guidelines for the proper conservation of coverlets; including their storage, display, and cleaning.

NMAC’s celebrated Weaver of the Year for 2013 is Harry Tyler. Chris Jeryan presented an extensive review of his work and the distribution of his clients in New York.

Gay McGeary gave two presentations—Block Designs/Fabric Analysis and Star Work

Coverlets. Gay showed how a basic six-block star motif could be threaded for a star work coverlet in nine different ways. She also presented a list of thirteen Pennsylvania weaver manuscripts with star work drafts for further study.

The Weaving Manuscripts of John and Christian King of Bedford County, Pennsylvania was presented by Pat Hilts. Pat created modern interpretations of the historical King patterns and showed their relationship to other weavers of the period. Pat also presented a paper on Long Island Coverlets. She proposed the use of a draw-loom with sets of “ground” shafts and “pattern” shafts to produce geometric coverlets with name and dates in the warp direction legible in only one specific place in the top border. To prove her theory, Pat designed and added a back harness with sixteen pattern shafts to her antique timber frame loom and wove a demonstration piece.

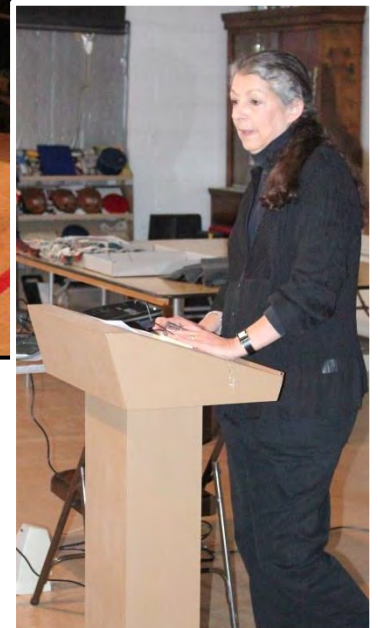
Ron Walter showed examples of several styles of geometric coverlets woven with names and dates. The earliest examples were overshot coverlets with initials and dates picked into the coverlet.

Coverlet College 3 is scheduled for September 27 and 28, 2014.

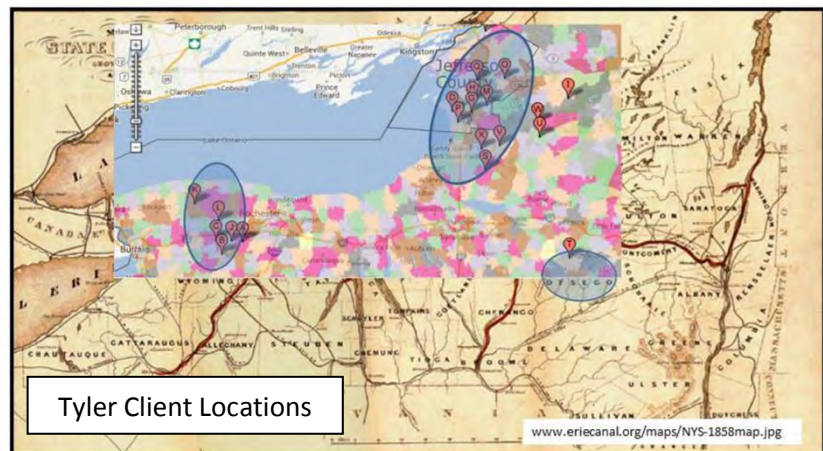


Edward Maeder, Chris and Richard Jeryan, Pat Hilts, Harold Mailand, Gay McGeary, Ron Walter

Coverlet College Photo Album

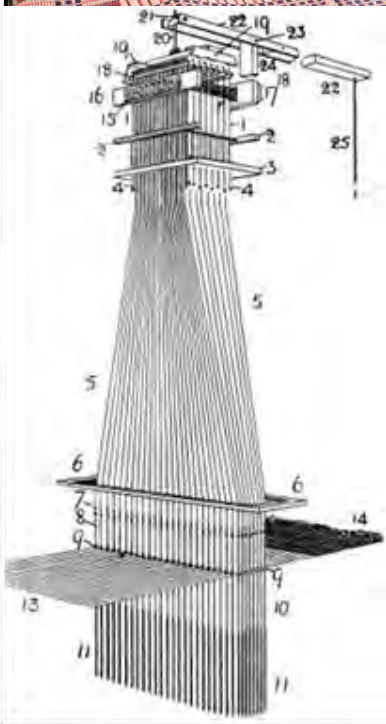
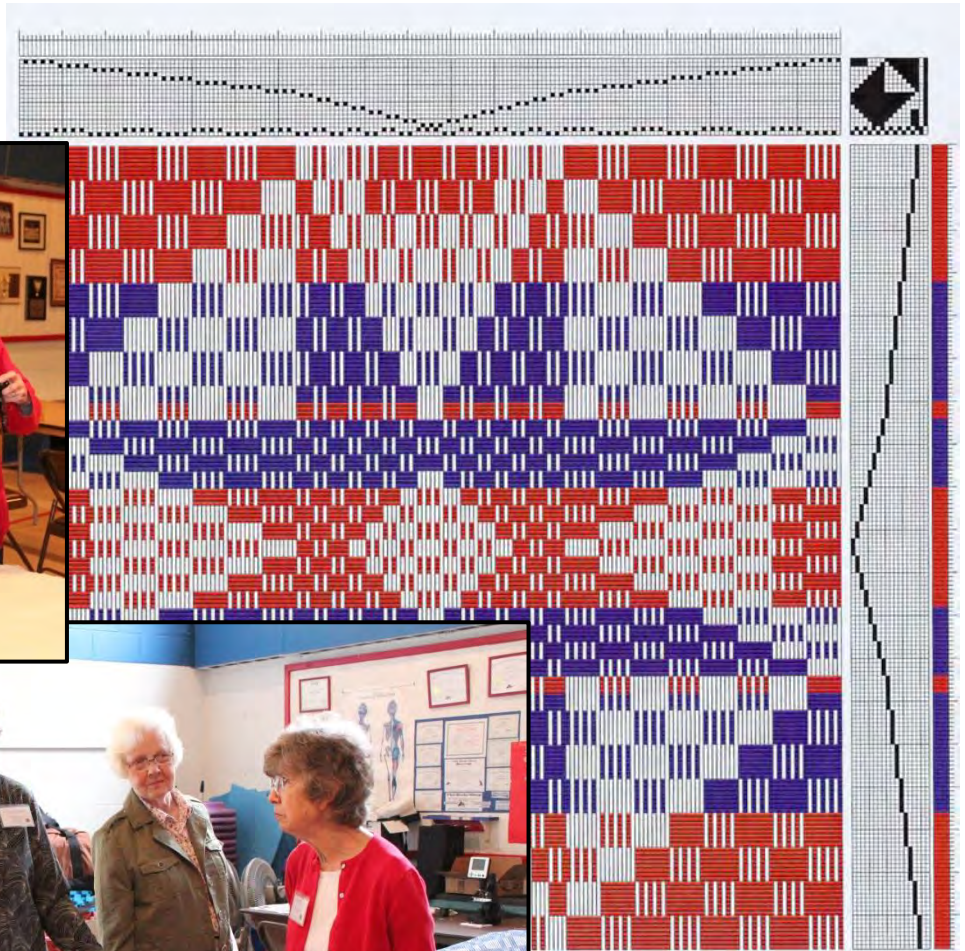


Microscopic Fiber Analysis



Tyler Client Locations

www.ericana.org/maps/NYS-1858map.jpg





Upcoming Events

Mark your calendar!!! The year 2014 will be a busy one. Here are some of the things we have scheduled so far (with more to come):

Colonial Coverlet Guild of America Annual Meeting – Saturday/Sunday, April 12-13

Come one, come all!

John Simmermaker Exhibition – April through October

2014 will be a very special year. NMAC is planning a major exhibition of selections from one of the most important private coverlet collections in the country. John Simmermaker, a well known and respected long-time collector, has agreed to make his coverlets available for an exhibition. Opening weekend will be April 12-13, at which time we will welcome the Colonial Coverlet Guild of America for their 2014 annual meeting. The meeting is open to all interested parties. The exhibition will run through the September Coverlet College, and perhaps be extended until after the fabled Bedford Fall Foliage weekends in October. Mr. Simmermaker will offer presentations at both the opening CCGA weekend and Coverlet College. This will be a “must-see” exhibition, so plan to attend when you can! We’ll be updating our website and Facebook pages as more details are available.

Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival – Saturday/Sunday, May 3-4

We will once again have our spot (#A-2) in the main exhibition building at the Howard County Fairgrounds in West Friendship, Maryland. This festival—the largest sheep and wool festival in the U.S.—is well worth seeing. This will be NMAC’s fifth year at the Festival, and it’s fun and free! Check out their website at www.sheepandwool.org for more information and directions.

Rug Hooking Week at Sauder Village – August 11 through 16

Each year in August, Sauder Village in Archbold, Ohio, hosts its renowned rug hooking week. In 2014, our own Laszlo and Melinda Zongor will be there to talk about coverlets and their relationship with hooked rugs. There will be a coverlet presentation, a discovery day, book signings, and various coverlet-related activities. Stay tuned to the Museum website for details. This will be a nice opportunity to see our Midwestern friends, so we hope to see you there.

Coverlet College – Saturday/Sunday, September 27-28

Mark your calendar and watch the NMAC website, www.coverletmuseum.org for details as they develop.

Fundraising Auction – Spring

The fundraising auction scheduled for November of 2013 has been postponed until Spring. If you have articles you no longer need, let us offer them for sale at the auction. This is an easy, tax-deductible way to support the Museum. Items need not be textile-related.

Collection Spotlight: Henry Adolf Coverlet

By Christine Jeryan

Unfortunately, most students of historic American-made textiles have come across references to itinerant weavers. As described by Eric Broudy in *The Book of Looms* (1979), itinerant weavers “traveled from homestead to homestead, some bringing their looms with them, others weaving on the household loom

for which the farmer’s wife had insufficient time, experience or interest.”

Most textile historians now doubt the existence of such itinerant weavers. Imagine hauling a timber-frame loom or Jacquard loom from homestead to homestead, and it quickly becomes clear that such itinerant weavers, traveling from door to door, are likely the stuff of Colonial Revival mythology.

However, the peripatetic career of coverlet weaver Henry Adolf (or Adolph) does bring to mind echoes of that mythic itinerant weaver. During a career that spanned more than 40 years, he lived in multiple locations in five states. Born on February 15, 1815 in Alsace, a French province, Adolf immigrated to the United States in about 1838. At that time, the population in Alsace was growing rapidly, leading to shortages of food, housing, and work, so it is likely that young Henry Adolf came to America—as so many immigrants did—seeking a better life. It appears that he settled first in Ohio and may have woven for a short time in

Germantown, Montgomery County, a center of weaving activity. By 1840, when Adolf became a U.S. citizen, he was living in Wayne County, Indiana, and it was in Wayne County that he married Pennsylvania-born Elizabeth Kline (or Clein, born in about 1818) on January 28, 1841.



The couple settled first in Cambridge City and eventually had five children—Adam (born in 1842), George (born in 1844), John (born in 1847), Mary Ann (born in 1849), and Henry (born in about 1856). By 1849, they had moved to Noblesville, Hamilton County, Indiana, where NMAC’s coverlet was woven in 1853. By 1856, the young Adolf family had left Indiana and was living in Appanoose County, Iowa, but, in 1859, Elizabeth Adolf

died. In 1860, Henry Adolf and his daughter Mary Ann are living in White Hare, Dade County, Missouri, and during that year he married his second wife, Nancy Jane Studdard (1833-1911). However, the Adolfs didn’t linger long in Missouri; by 1865 they are in Douglas County, Kansas, and they remain there until the end of the 1870s. By 1880, Henry and Nancy Adolf are back in Missouri and remain there for the rest of their lives, living first in St. Clair

County and then in Walnut Grove, Greene County. Henry Adolf died on February 14, 1907, just short of his 92nd birthday, and is buried in Pemberton Cemetery in Greenfield, Dade County, Missouri.

It appears likely that Henry Adolf had mastered the weaving craft before he arrived in America. He supported himself and his family as a weaver throughout his long life, at times combining farming with weaving. Unlike many coverlet weavers, Adolf produced both double-weave and Beiderwand coverlets—another example of his technical skill. Early in his career, he worked with John Wissler (1816-1896), who had a well-established weaving business in Milton, Indiana, near Cambridge City. After working with Wissler for several years, Adolf established his own weaving shop in Cambridge City in 1844. By 1849, he had moved again—to a farm near Noblesville—where NMAC’s coverlet was woven. After leaving Indiana, Adolf found a ready market for his coverlets in Kansas, where he wove from the mid-1860s until the end of the 1870s.

The example of Henry Adolf’s weaving skill currently on display at NMAC is particularly fine. It features a classic Indiana centerfield design known as “Frenchman’s fancy” as well as characteristically Indiana-style borders depicting Scottish bluebells on the sides and baskets of flowers along the bottom. Of special interest is Adolf’s masterful use of color in this coverlet. To the commonly used red, dark blue, and natural yarns, Adolf has added a lighter blue to highlight the coverlet’s secondary motifs. The overall effect is unique as well as beautiful. Notice too Adolf’s challenges with the English language as seen in his spelling of “Hamelton” Co. On other coverlets, the county becomes “Hamildon” or “Hameldon,” but never Hamilton.

