

INTERNATIONAL QUILT STUDY CENTER

Quilt History Timeline, Pre-History – 1800

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35th century BC

An ivory carving, found in Temple of Osiris at Abydos in 1903 and currently in the collection of the British Museum, features the king of the Egyptian First Dynasty wearing a mantle/cloak that appears to be quilted. (Colby, 4).

770 – 221 BC

Chinese silk ornamental quilts are excavated from tombs dating from the Eastern Zhou dynasty (Liddell and Watanabe, 1).

327 BC

Alexander the Great invades India and describes brilliant printed cloths seen there (Robinson, 111).

1st century BC – 2nd century AD

The earliest surviving quilted object is a quilted linen carpet found in a Mongolian cave tomb. It is housed in the collection of the Leningrad Department of the Institute of Archaeology of the Academy of the Sciences of the Union of the Soviet Republic (Colby, 5).

8th – 9th century AD

A slipper of quilted felt patched with leather discovered on the Silk Road near the present Sino-Russian border. The slipper is currently housed in the British Museum, London (Liddell and Watanabe, 3).

1297

A reference in an inventory of a Marseilles ship captain, Guillaume Ferrenc, lists a courtepointe, (quilted bedcover) (Berenson, 28).

12th - 13th Century

First mention of appliqué or pieced work on a quilt found in French poem “La Lai del Desire”. The poem mentions a "quilt of two sorts of silk cloth in a checkerboard pattern, well made and rich" (Orlofsky, 6).

c. 1395

The first surviving European bed quilts are three trapunto (or stuffed) quilts from a Sicilian atelier/workshop. Two are believed to have been made for the wedding of Pietro di Luigi Guicciardini and Laodamia Acciaiuili, while the third quilt may have been made for the royal house of Anjou (Colby, 16). All three illustrate scenes from the Tristan legend. One of the pair remains in the collections of the Victoria & Albert Museum in the United Kingdom, the other at the Bargello in Florence. The third quilt is believed to be owned by a private collector (Colby, 14).

c. 1400

A Milanese ivory carving of the Holy Family on the Flight into Egypt depicts Joseph wearing a coat quilted in a diamond pattern. The carving is in the collection of the Victoria & Albert Museum, United Kingdom (Colby, 18).

1426

The first description of quilting motifs in Provence quilts is found in the estate inventory of countess of Avelin in the Chateau des Baux. It lists bedcovers with motifs illustrating stories of Alexander and Solomon (Berensen, 31).

1488

An inventory lists a quilt in the bedchamber of King Rene of Anjou stitched with figures of men and women (Berenson, 31).

1498

A Belgium painting by Hans Memling titled *Shrine of St. Ursula* includes an image of a soldier in quilted armor. The painting is in the collection of the Museum of St. John's Hospice, Bruges, Belgium (Gwinner, 13).

16th – 17th century AD

Surviving examples of kaftans and various costume pieces from the Ottoman Empire of the 16th and 17th century are quilted in a running stitch on silk broadcloth and brocade. The pieces remain in the collection of the Topkapi Saray Museum in Turkey (Tezcan and Delibas, 47, 48).

A quilted linen blanket of this era, made in Germany, is in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (Gwinner, 15).

1500

A German painting in the Catholic church in Seefeld, West Germany, titled *The Seefeld Miracle Panel*, by Jorg Kolderer, shows a knight wearing a quilted and pieced tunic of horizontal red, black, and yellow (Gwinner, 13).

1513

The novel, *Marmion* by Sir Walter Scott of Edinburgh, Scotland, describes weapons and armor used in Battle of Flodden Field in 1513. "Dress'd in his steel-jack, a swarthy vest, with iron quilted well" (Colby, 9).

1516

Duarte Barbosa, a Portuguese traveler in India writes "They also make here very beautiful quilts and testers (canopies) of beds finely worked and painted and quilted articles of dress" (Berensen, 39).

c. 1523-1560

A silk cover, lined with a pieced fabric, is found in the estate of Queen Margareta Leijonhufvud of Sweden (Wettre, 10).

1547

The Inventory of King Henry VIII of England lists "quyltes" and "coverpointes" among the bed linens. The inventory describes the quilts as made of "holland cloth" (linen or cotton), "bockeram" (cotton)," or various types of silk (especially "sarceonett" and "tapheta," and "lynnen.") Some of the quilts were given to lesser members of the court, either as a sign of favor or a gift. Henry's fifth queen, Catherine Howard, was given two dozen quilts (Rae, 13).

1560

Rare Chinese brocade fabrics are found in a patchwork coat made for the Japanese general, Uesugi Kenshin (Liddell and Watanabe, 7).

1591-1595

John Smith's *Instructions, Observations and Ordres Militaries* states that "Archers should weare either ilet holed doublets that will resist the thrust of sword or dagger,

covered with some trim and gallant kind of coloured cloth to the liking of the Captain...or else Jackes of maile quilted upon fustian." (Colby, 86).

1596

Edmund Spenser's *View of the Present State of Ireland* describes a number of military garments. For example, "...the quilted leather jacke is English" (Colby, 86).

1600

The East India Company is established by writ of the Royal Charter of Queen Elizabeth I.

1602

The Dutch East India Company is established when the government of the Netherlands grants the company a monopoly to trade with Asia.

1609

The wardrobe account of King James I, upon the marriage of his daughter Princess Elizabeth, describes "To John Baker, our upholsterer, for 3 quilts of fustian, lined with taffeta, filled with wool, and sewed with silk..." (Colby, 99).

A report from Surat, India, states "Quilts made both of white calicoes and all sorts of painted stuffs are to be had in abundance and very reasonable" (Orlofsky, 5).

1614

The inventory of the estate of Henry Howard, Earl of Northampton, lists 'a china quilt stiched in chequer work with yealowe silk the ground white...' (Colby, 99).

1620

The first document in England in which cotton is mentioned is a petition, now housed in the London and Guildhall library, that states "...people in this Kingdome, but chiefly in the countie of Lancashire, have found out the trade of making of other fustians, made of a kind of Bombast or Downe, being a fruit of the earth growing upon little shrubs or bushes, brought into this Kingdome by the Turkey merchants..." (Robinson, 14).

1631

The Royal Proclamation of Charles I of England permits the importation of chintzes, embroideries and quilts, along with many other items, from the East Indies. (Colby, 99).

1633

Estate inventory of Samuel Fuller of Plymouth Colony, New England, lists a “fflock bed quilt”. Fflock was coarse wool or chopped-up fabric used as wadding in quilts or quilted clothing or stuffing in beds (Bassett & Larkin, 12).

1641

A letter of the East India Company reads, “The quilts of chintz being novelties, produced from £5, 5s to £6 the pair...” (Colby, 99).

1643

A date of 1643 is attributed to a silk applique quilt now housed in The Rohss Art and Craft Museum in Gothenburg, Sweden (Wettre, 12).

1660

Marseilles, France, organizes a Chamber of Commerce, (the oldest in the world), to help promote textile production (Berensen, 34). A record of the Chamber of Commerce lists “Three quilted petticoats bought from M. Francois Picquet, at the price of ten pistoles” (Berensen, 37).

1676

In England, William Sherwin took out a patent for a “new and speedy way for producing calico” (Robinson, 15).

1678

The first cotton print works is founded at Amersfoort, Holland (Robinson, 118).

1685

The household inventory of Captain George Corwin of Salem, Massachusetts lists “A quilt of calico, colored and flowered” (Orlofsky, 10).

1686

The French Council of State imposed a decree forbidding the importation and production of white and printed cotton cloth (Berensen, 43).

1687

The first Swiss cotton print works is established in Geneva, Switzerland (Robinson, 120).

1689

The expense book of John Hervey, the First Earl of Bristol reads “Paid Mary Bishop for ye use and by order of Mrs. Jane Harrison for an India quilt for a bed, 38 pounds (Colby, 103).

Inventory of Captain John Kidd, New York, lists “featherbeds, feather pillows, tablecloths, linen sheets, napkins, ten blankets and three “quilts” (Orlofsky, 10).

1695

A dated, crewel embroidered quilt is registered in the documentation project of the Quilters’ Guild in Britain (n.a, Quilt Treasures, 67).

1701

Chintz fabrics from Indian, Persia and China are banned in England because of the economic threat to the wool and silk industries (Rae, 79).

1707

The Union of Parliaments opens textile markets to Scots, which in turn leads to western Scotland becoming a major textile exporting area (Rae, 32).

1712

High use taxes are levied on printed fabrics produced in England (Gwinner, 65).

1718

The earliest **dated** example of British patchwork., a silk patchwork coverlet composed entirely of paper template-pieced fabrics, features the date and initials of the maker near the top center. It is documented as a family heirloom from the Brown family of Aldbourne. It is now in the Collection of the Quilter’s Guild of the British Isles (Smith & Osler, 24).

1720

The use and wearing of imported Indian chintz is banned in England by an Act of Parliament (n.a., Quilt Treasures, 200).

1721

Frederick William I of Germany forbids the wearing, importing or selling of painted or printed calico (Robinson, 107).

1726

The oldest surviving North American-made patchwork quilt dates from this time, housed in Montreal’s McCord Museum (Beaudoin-Ross, n.p.).

1738

The first Spanish calico print works is established by Estaban Canals in Barcelona, Spain (Robinson, 120).

1747

An advertisement in The London Tradesman notes that male master quilters and their female helpers made quilted petticoats as well as “quilts for beds” (Bassett, 12-13).

1750

First French reference to Marseilles, France, as origin of fine quilting is in Duke of Luynes’s inventory of the queen’s bedroom at Fontainebleau (Berenson, 21).

1752

Germany allows printing of calicos, but not the import or wearing of foreign printed calico and chintz (Robinson, 108).

1755

The first Russian calico printing shops are established near St. Petersburg (Robinson, 119).

1759

The prohibitions against the sale and production of printed cottons in France lifted (Berensen, 44).

1760

Christophe-Philippe Oberkampf established his cotton print works in Jouy, France (Berensen, 82).

1763

A wedding quilt composed of embroidered silk patches is housed in the collection of the County Museum of Jamtland, Sweden (Wettre, 12).

1764

A pink silk petticoat, quilted with both geometric and floral patterns, was worn by Janet Andrew, when she married John McEwan at Greenock, Strathclyde (n.a., Quilt Treasures, 70).

c. 1770

A Norwegian quilt owned by the Brekke Park Museum, Fylkemuseet for Telemark, is dated to this period (Foster, 22). No earlier example has been found (Foster, 21).

1774

The Act of 1774 in Britain requires three blue threads be woven into the selvedge of British cotton cloth (n.a., Quilt Treasures).

John Hewson opened his calico-printing business in Philadelphia (Welters, 123).

1774 and 1782

The English Parliament passed laws prohibiting export of materials and machinery for use in printing cotton fabrics (Welters, 123).

1776 and 1779

A German quilt, dated with both 1776 and 1779, with scenes of miners, hunter, soldiers, Turks, and other patterns remains in the collection of the City Museum of Bautzen (Gwinner, 61).

1785

The earliest surviving example of medallion style patchwork quilt known to have been made in America, constructed of wool fabrics and made in Maine, is inscribed: "ANNA TUELS HER BEDqUILT GIVEN TO HER BY HER MOTHER IN THE YEAR AU 23. 1785" (Bassett, 30).

1787 - 1834

Glasgow, Scotland, became the center of a cotton spinning region; the number of cotton-mills within a radius of twenty-five miles of Glasgow rose from nineteen in 1787 to a hundred and thirty-four in 1834.

1787

Production of printed cottons begins in Genoa, Italy, when Michele Speich, of Switzerland establishes a company (Robinson, 118).

1797

Silk patches, sewn together to form a cross pattern, remain in the collection of the Nordiska Museet in Sweden (Wettre, 12).

1798

Hedda Klinckowstrom of Sweden wrote in her diary "...the wedding quilt was put up last Monday and there are fittings and deliberations all day long...It is warm and insufferable up in the large weaving room where the quilting frame has been set up" (Wettre 36).

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