

Documenting Your Quilt

Hints, Tips and the Newest Techniques

By K. S. Pearce-Jones

One of the things that we hear constantly from our quilt instructors is to document our quilt. To do this we make a label for the back of the quilt. The minimum of information needed for the label is as follows:

The name of the quilt or pattern

If it is a commercial pattern add the name of the company or pattern creator.

The name of the quilt maker.

The name of the quilter if different than the maker.

Date the quilt was completed.

If you want to and have room you can add who you made the quilt for and why.

To make this easier you can purchase ready made labels and use a Micron Archival Ink Pen to write your information onto the label.

Another method is to create a label with rubber stamps and archival ink to color in and write information. Always use permanent cloth ink and heat set the label.

And yet a third method is to use your computer to create labels on already prepared fabric (You can purchase the fabric in sheets already prepared or prepare fabric your self. See hints on back of booklet.).

The newest method of documenting your quilt (listen up because this is hot off the press!) is micro chipping your quilt. Yes you can put a microchip the size of a grain of rice into the batting of your quilt and the quilt will be documented forever. The chip is encased in glass so that the quilt can be safely washed without damaging the microchip. For more information see the April 2006 issue of Quilter's World or go to www.chippedquilts.com.

This is great if we happen to know who the quilt maker is, then we can piece the history of that quilt. But what happens if you have inherited a quilt from great aunt Bessie (the family secret) whom you have never met and do not know anything about her?

Now there may be an answer, at least for more contemporary quilts. The Alliance for American Quilts has

created a network of volunteers that are interviewing quilters and including a picture of the quilter with a quilt. These interviews are transcribed and added to the website archives. These archives

are searchable by quilter's name, interviewer's name, transcriber's name, area quilter is from, or project name.

Now it is easy to take great aunt Bessie's name and search for her interview and learn about her. Your quilt now has a documented history. What a great way to add some

historical significance to a quilt that you want to share with your family and your descendants.

How important can this format be for the quilting community? The answer is simple. *"Quilts tell stories-they illustrate the history of this country. Quilts express love and sorrow-they link generations together. Quilts are community-people gather to make them and experience them. Quilts are art-these beautiful objects raise our spirits. Quilts teach-they are tools for learning about the world-they've even been used to teach math! Twenty million Americans today are involved in quilt making. Quilts matter!"*

Because Quiltsmatter, The Alliance for American Quilts, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization since 1993, brings together quilt makers and designers, the quilt industry, quilt scholars and teachers, and quilt collectors in the cause of documenting, preserving, and sharing our great American quilt heritage. We are committed to collecting the rich stories that historic and contemporary quilts tell about the nation's diverse people and communities."

We want each and every quilt that survives the next hundred years to speak to those who love our work. How often have you looked at a quilt created during the Civil War

and wondered about the person who made it? We want the museum that it resides in to say, "Yes we have the history of the quilt-maker, we know who she is."

How likely is great aunt Bessie to be interviewed? Right now, the likelihood of great aunt Bessie having been interviewed is slim. However, more and more interviews are being posted weekly. You can help by visiting the web site at: <http://www.centerforthequilt.org/> and becoming a member, volunteering to become an interviewer or just letting them know that you want to support their efforts in any way you can.

Hints for Making labels

Label making on your computer can be fun but, there are some rules to follow.

First you should prepare your fabric by pre-washing it to remove the sizing and chemicals.

This includes the fabric you purchase with label designs on them.

Next you need to reinforce your fabric and size it for your printer. You can do this by lightly ironing freezer paper to the wrong side of your fabric. You can also do this with Wonder-Under© If you want to press it onto your quilt.

Design your label using photos, graphics, fancy frames and fancy text. I like to do several labels at a time to reduce waste. Print out your labels.

Now take a solution of 1 cup white vinegar and 1 cup water in a spray bottle. LIGHTLY spray your fabric. With a very hot iron (I use the linen setting) and no steam, heat set your label. It takes about 20 seconds of pressing. Be sure to move your iron around so as to avoid steam hole indents.

Now remove your paper and turn the edges. Press onto your quilt and sew the edges using a blind hem stitch or decorative embroidery stitch. Be careful not to go all the way through!