



GEORGIA QUILTS: STITCHES AND STORIES

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John Lynch: There's no way you can replace something that a simple lady put her heart and soul into, and they're just irreplaceable family heirlooms, is the only way I can put it into words.

Sebelle Jordan: You can never forget when he was born. It's right there even to sleep under it.

Ray Barreras: I call it my therapy. Sitting down and just piecing fabric together again is why I don't go to a shrink, I guess.

Evelyn Poore: It's worse than any drugs you ever got on!

TITLE: **GEORGIA QUILTS: STITCHES AND STORIES**

Charles Burt: When grandma started this quilt, all the roads were dirt at that time and I know the house that I remember was just a board and batten house, but it was well-constructed for the times, but still would have been a very cold uncomfortable house. I know when we visited, we slept on feather mattresses and under a stack of quilts but obviously this wasn't one of the quilts that we were able to sleep under.

Mattie Elders: This is called a Streak of Lightning that was pieced by my mother and grandmother during the early part of the century. Men bought tobacco in pouches and they saved them and collected all they could and tinted the colored pieces with tea and put them together and it's called Streak of Lightning.

Narration:

IN A LANGUAGE WRITTEN IN FABRIC AND THREAD, QUILTS CARRY OUR STORIES DOWN THROUGH THE GENERATIONS, WARMING THE BODY AND THE SPIRIT. BROUGHT OVER BY EUROPEAN SETTLERS AND SOMETIMES INFLUENCED BY AFRICAN NEEDLECRAFT, QUILTING HAS PROVIDED A BACKDROP TO SOUTHERN HISTORY. ON FARMS AND IN CITIES, RICH AND POOR FOLKS HAVE USED QUILT-MAKING TO EXPRESS THEIR CREATIVITY AND TO SHOW THEIR LOVE FOR THEIR FRIENDS AND FAMILIES. TODAY THEIR QUILTS BRING TO LIFE FOR US FAMILY STORIES OF JOY AND SADNESS, SUCCESS AND HARDSHIP.

Betsy Weyburn: They say a picture tells a thousand words. A quilt can tell volumes, between the fabrics that they used or where the scraps of fabric came from or if they bought particular fabric and why. Why they made the quilt. How they made the quilt, so it just tells wonderful things about our history. It's always interesting to look at a quilt and try to imagine what the quilt maker must have been thinking when she added that bright orange piece of fabric in that pink and green quilt or what must have happened when the one block was turned crooked. Did she do it on purpose or did she run out of fabric, or what was her intent.

Narration:

FOR RURAL GEORGIANS, QUILTS WERE A VIRTUE BORN OF A NECESSITY THAT CHANGED LITTLE OVER OUR STATE'S FIRST TWO CENTURIES.

Irene Ragan: We lived out in the country and we were dirt farmers and we quilted to stay warm at night in the wintertime. My daddy he put the quilts up and he drew out our patterns and he sat down and quilted with us. The whole family.

Annie Heard: I had never seen a blanket. Mamma made all of our quilts. She took the boys old overalls and old coats and old dresses. Anything and just put it together, and do you know what? It made us warm but some of them would look nice.

Hazel Fulton: And we had fireplaces and cook stove in the kitchen and carried water from a spring. And we needed those quilts to pile on the bed. And we had no radio to tell us it's going to snow at night. We'd wake up the next morning and there'd be snow on the ground.

Mamie Hughley: My grandmother was a quilter and I had to hold the lamp. We didn't

have lights, electric lights back in those days we had to hold a lamp. And I would be so tired standing up there holding the lamp for my grandmother to sew and I'd say, Mamma my back hurts, and she'd say gal, you ain't got no back, you got a gristle, and so therefore I couldn't argue, I gotta still hold the light.

Barbara Dorn: My family made quilts growing up. I was always very aware of quilts being made. My grandmother had a quilt frame that hung from the ceiling. They would bring it down when they were ready to quilt a piece and roll it back up when it was time to put supper on the table.

Mary Ingram: We would go from house to house. You know, we would quilt a quilt for my mother, like this week and next week we'd quilt for another lady. Just go from house to house and quilt.

Janice Morrill: Quilting was very prolific in the south and I think there are particular reasons for that that have to do with southern history. A lot of quilts were created in rural environments, of course, for utilitarian purposes, and it's very southern, I think, to have a sort of ethic of frugality, comparable to using every scrap of the pig, every spare scrap of fabric.

Narration:

SCRAPS WERE SAVED FROM OLD CLOTHES, GATHERED FROM LOCAL TEXTILE MILLS OR, A PRIZE FOR QUILT-MAKERS, CUT FROM FEEDSACKS. MADE FROM STURDY COTTON AND OFTEN BRIGHTLY PRINTED TO ATTRACT CUSTOMERS, THE SACKS WERE USED FOR DRESSES, SHEETS AND MANY A PRETTY QUILT.

Hazel Fulton: Oh, it was the sweetest thing in the world to cover up with whenever you were sick and to have a quilt around you that's old, and the quilts that's made from the old sacks, the old feed sacks, they are the warmest, sweetest – they feel different from any other quilt that you can use.

Jimmie Tinch: My father James Ruston McClarty made this quilt and why I don't know. Men sewed then like ladies did, especially sitting around. My guess is he made it in the winter time when he couldn't get out and get wood or whatever outside. My aunt made the backing. It's made of feed sacks. You used to buy chicken feed, little bags of chicken feed and that's what that's made of.

Narration:

FABRICS AND DYES ARE THE CLUES HISTORIANS USE AS THEY TRY TO DATE OLD QUILTS AND TELL THEIR STORIES. WHILE RURAL GEORGIANS WERE RECYCLING MATERIAL AND QUILTING FOR NEED, MORE WEALTHY WOMEN WERE BUYING EXPENSIVE FABRICS TO SHOW OFF THEIR AFFLUENCE AND DOMESTIC SKILLS.

Betsy Weyburn: Whole cloth is one full piece of usually white cloth that was usually imported from Europe and that type of quilt was usually 1800 to 1825 although they were found a little bit later as well. And what quilters were trying to do at that time was make a beautiful quilting design with the quilting pattern rather than the fabric so it was their stitching that made the pretty design.

The Chintz, broderie perse type of quilt was also during that time. The chintz was expensive fabric and they actually cut it up, cut it out, cut out all the designs and applied those onto a base fabric. So those are usually indicative of before 1850.

About 1856 Aniline dyes came out so the fabrics were fast; the colors were fast so those are stronger colors that lasted. Often we'll see really really faded colors of the fabrics and either we can tell that they were home dyed or older.

And then of course Victorian times, with the crazy quilts, the velvets and silks, the real lush fabrics were of a certain time. At this time the quilts moved from the bedroom to the parlor. These quilts were used for lap throws and it was used to display them during the day and to display your needlework. And then, of course, the colors became more pastel in the earlier 20th century. And of course, these are generalities. There are always exceptions and people, people used their creativity and did whatever they wanted to do, but generally people are trying to do the latest thing with fabrics.

It's interesting to see how strongly people feel about their family quilts. It's a real tangible tie to their past. They can feel in some cases I think they can feel their family, touch the fabric and feel that this their ancestor made. Their hands were sewing this fabric or that they wore these dresses or wore these clothes or that they made these fabrics or they dyed the fabrics. It has all that sentimental attachment and family stories and family lore that goes along with the quilt as it's passed along from generation to generation.

Brenda Lynch: When the book "Legacy" by Nancilu Burdick, who is John's cousin,

was published, we carried a copy for my mother-in-law to read, because John had given her information and helped her with the book. So as she looked through the pictures in the book, she just looked at me and said we have a quilt like this, of which we had never seen. And I said, we have a quilt like this! It was the magnolia leaf. So she proceeded to go into her hall and to take out a box of about 30 quilts, tops, quilted quilts, just amazing and the magnolia leaf was there and it was indeed identical to the one that was in the book. We had been married probably 20 years at that time. I'd not seen the quilts, not heard anything about the quilts, they had never been mentioned, so it was total amazement that all of a sudden she was bringing them out of this box that we had walked by thousands of times.

The quilts, we found them in February of 1989. We didn't realize then the importance of it but my mother-in-law passed away suddenly on March 2 of 1989 so only for a couple of weeks, we would have missed talking to her about the quilts.

John Lynch:

Well, I'm a genealogy buff amateur and I've researched my family and I know a good bit about my great grandmother. She was born in Fayette Co in 1854 just before the Civil War. She married my great grandfather in 1872. He was a confederate veteran. There was plenty of work to do back in those days and they had a sawmill, they had a winery that they made and sold wines to local people. My great grandfather was responsible for keeping the bridge up over the river, Dixon's bridge and they just had all sorts of things that they had to do and it's just amazing to me that my great grandmother had time to make quilts and they were just busy with the farm. She experienced quite a bit of tragedy during her life so I guess that's one thing that stuck in my mind when I was looking at these quilts, that she was able to express herself through these quilts even though she had all this tragedy in her life. There's no way that you can replace something that a simple lady put her heart and soul into and they're just irreplaceable family heirlooms is the only way I can put it in words.

Akua McDaniel:

The quilts that you see here were made by my great grandmother, Mary Bowser Stewart who was born on July 7 1856 in N. Carolina. We do know from family members that she was part Native American. She married Edward Stewart and moved to Circleville,

Ohio where he was born and raised and it was there that they raised their two children, Mynah and Clara Stewart. I remember when I used to visit my grandmother as a child that these were folded in a drawer in tissue paper and that indicated that they were very precious items and only to be pulled out and used at certain very special times. And I'm sure that the maker, Mary, treated them in the same way. And that's how I've treated them since I've had them in my possession. Although I didn't know my great grandmother. I never had the opportunity to meet her and she only exists for me in a wonderful photograph in which you see her with her three grandchildren, it tells me a lot about her skill and interest in quilting. Her level of artistry and the great level of care and obviously pride that she took in these two quilts that have been left to me. And I think as a result of having these two quilts, I have in a way inherited a piece of her although I never knew her in the physical sense I know her in the artistic and aesthetic sense through these quilts that she has passed on to me.

Ann Stalnaker:

My great great grandparents lived in Philadelphia and he worked for the railroad and he was in poor health at the time and they said he needed to come south or he probably wouldn't live for more than a year. So they moved to Augusta, Georgia on 422 Calhoun Street and they moved into the house before it was even finished building. It is said that he brought the first locomotive to Augusta when he moved.

The quilt was made by our great great grandmother and her daughter Emma and we think probably Mrs. John McCann Sr., who was the great great grandmother, probably did most of the work. She was a wonderful seamstress. Even it's been told that during the Civil War she took down a pair of linen curtains and made her husband a shirt and she had 50 tiny tucks on each side.

I just marvel at it every time I look at it. It is said that some of the designs they got from a quilt that one of the soldiers in the Civil War brought to Augusta and Emma had that written on the back of the quilt one time when she entered it in the exchange fair.

Narration:

THE QUILT IS AN EXQUISITE EXAMPLE OF THE BALTIMORE ALBUM STYLE. WITH ELABORATE CARE AND DETAIL, EMMA AND HER MOTHER APPLIQUED DESIGNS FROM THEIR FAMILY'S DAILY LIFE ONTO THE QUILT.

Ann Stalnaker: I think the quilt means a lot to me because it connects me with my family in the past and I can kind of look back and kind of see how they lived. And it's gotten me into family research too. It started out with the quilt and they wanted a picture of Emma so I started out looking for a picture of Emma. And I say Emma has really gotten me into a lot of trouble because from that I've spent hours and years looking up family history.

Narration:

GEORGIA'S BEAUTIFUL HISTORIC QUILTS MIGHT HAVE REMAINED FAMILY SECRETS, WERE IT NOT FOR THE EFFORTS OF THE GEORGIA QUILT PROJECT.

Anita Weinraub: Beginning in 1990 we conducted 76 quilt history days in I believe it was 43 different sites around the state asking the public to bring their quilts in to share with us. And between 1990 and 1993 we documented more than 8500 quilts and we were swamped at every quilt history day and I think we just scratched the surface. I think there are millions of quilts in Georgia that we weren't able to document. People would wait in line for hours to have their quilts photographed and documented by us and the fact that someone was interested in hearing about their ancestors and hearing the story of their quilt I think meant a great deal to these people.

Narration:

SOME OF THE MOST POWERFUL STORIES ARE ATTACHED TO CIVIL WAR QUILTS. A SLAVE SEARCHING THE BATTLEFIELD FOR HIS MASTER'S SON RECOGNIZED THIS QUILT WRAPPED AROUND A BODY, AND CARRIED THE YOUNG MAN HOME TO HIS FAMILY FOR BURIAL.

A REFUGEE FAMILY PARTED WITH THIS BEAUTIFUL MARINER'S COMPASS QUILT IN THANKS FOR FOOD AND SHELTER AND THE GIFT BECAME A TREASURED FAMILY HEIRLOOM.

Beegee Baugh: This quilt was made for James Elam Baugh who lived in Hancock County near Devereaux and it was made by one of the slaves on the family farm before he went to the Civil War. So he took the quilt with him to the Civil War, all through the war, he was wounded several times - you can see a few blood stains on the quilt and he also wrote his name on the corner, and when he came back to Hancock County he brought the quilt back with him and it's been in the family ever since.

Joe Baugh:

My father said he was so eager to get in the war he didn't know what to do . He was just absolutely, he was just fanatic about it. He wanted to get up there before it ended. You see they had the Battle of Bull Run and he was on his way up there and he thought the war would be over before he could get in it. Our father told us that. And after he got in it he realized that he had plenty of time. The war didn't end that soon. My father said, his job was to carry the flag, the standard and in those days they carried it right in the front lines. It wasn't in the back like it is now. The soldiers followed the flag. That's the Confederate flag that they were using. As I remember as a little boy going to the home, you know, they had this cup on the mantelpiece and it contained bullets that had been gotten out of my grandfather's body and it was quite a bit. Of course, I was too small to realize the importance of it then, but later on somebody, I don't know who it was, got it and made fishing sinkers out of it. It was a great loss after we thought about it later on, not to appreciate it. But that gives you some idea how many times he was wounded in the war.

Narration:

THE BULLETS THAT RIDDLED HIS BODY ARE GONE, A DIARY HE WROTE DURING THE WAR HAS DISAPPEARED, AND NO PICTURES REMAIN TO SEE HIS PRIDE OR HIS PAIN, BUT, MIRACULOUSLY, THE QUILT HAS SURVIVED, STITCHED BY A SLAVE HE WAS FIGHTING TO KEEP AND STAINED WITH HIS OWN BLOOD ON THE BATTLEFIELD, TO TELL OF THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JAMES ELAM BAUGH.

Narration:

BIRTHS, FRIENDSHIPS, MARRIAGES AND EVEN DEATH – QUILTS HAVE BEEN LOVINGLY CRAFTED TO MARK ALL THE MAJOR PASSAGES OF LIFE. THE STORIES THEY TELL STILL TOUCH THE HEART.

Anita Weinraub:

A woman made a quilt for her coming child. She was pregnant and she made a crib quilt for her child and that child died. And three subsequent children also died shortly after birth so her quilt was left to a great-niece who brought it to one of our quilt history days and as the story got around the room people sort of drifted over to the quilt just to look at it. And it was green and white, robbing Peter to Pay Paul, just thinking about this poor woman and her four children, none of whom lived, but who had made this pretty quilt with so much hope that really

came to nothing.

Vernard Jordan: Well this quilt was made by my mother. When I was 9 months old, she finished the quilt. I was the first boy. She had been married and my daddy had been married before and my daddy had several children and had several boys but I was my mother's first boy and she made this quilt for my daddy and after his time was up then it was going to me. The quilts were the only things that we had to use as cover in the winter time because there weren't any blankets at that time and she just quilted, every winter she would quilt.

Sebelle Jordan: You have to have patience with something like that. Now there are quilts you can make with large pieces and just sew those large pieces together. But then there's so much design to be into a quilt like this. Plus the time and patience and all.

Vernard Jordan: It means a lot. It's got my birthdate on there and then as my mother made and put my birthdate on there, it's just a souvenir for me and I just want to keep it for a souvenir. I stopped using it years ago just to save it for a souvenir.

Narration:

WHETHER IN THE COUNTRY OR THE TOWN, FRIENDSHIP QUILTING OFFERED WOMEN AN OPPORTUNITY TO SOCIALIZE WITH EACH OTHER, SWAP GOSSIP AND RELAX FROM THE EVERYDAY ROUND OF CHORES. SOMETIMES THEY WOULD WORK TOGETHER ON A FRIENDSHIP QUILT AS A GIFT TO A MUTUAL FRIEND. THIS TREASURE OF 19TH CENTURY PATTERNS WAS MADE IN MACON IN 1870. THE BULLSEYE BLOCK WAS MADE BY A 10 YEAR-OLD GIRL WHO LATER GAVE THE QUILT TO THE PRESENT OWNER.

Frances Proctor: Ms Proctor said that the young girls back in those days had no recreation and nowhere to go and nothing to do and this is what they did for Mr. Proctor. The picked him out in the community – all the girls in the community pieced a square and wrote, embroidered their names on the square that they did.

Narration:

MR. PROCTOR WAS OBVIOUSLY IMPRESSED. ONE OF THE YOUNG SEAMSTRESSES, ELIZA HAM, SOON BECAME HIS BRIDE.

Narration:

THE MAKER OF THIS HOPE CHEST QUILT WAS NOT SO LUCKY IN LOVE. AT 35, LAVINIA LANDRUM WAS CONSIDERED AN OLD MAID AND HER HOPE CHEST SEEMED DESTINED TO STAY UNOPENED. TO THE RESCUE CAME HER BROTHER-IN-LAW, REVEREND JOSEPH BUTLER, WHO HAD HIS EYE ON A LIKELY WIDOWER. HIS MATCHMAKING SUCCEEDED AND IN 1856, LAVINIA WAS ABLE TO USE HER QUILT AS MRS. REUBEN COOK.

Joe Sanders: My great grandmother, we think, made this quilt way back in the 1870s because it was given as a wedding present to her son who married in 1907. And it was not used, my grandmother would not use it because

my grandfather's mother had made it. I understand from family history that she had three children and her husband and two of his brothers were in the Civil War and none of them returned home. They are all buried somewhere in Virginia. I was told that she made three of the quilts, one for each of her children, and I have tried to find what happened to the other quilts, and have not been able to trace them. It's just part of the family history and I think it's well worth protecting and saving and taking care of.

Narration:

FROM WEDDINGS TO WIDOWHOOD AND BEYOND, WOMEN SEWED THEIR PERSONAL HISTORIES INTO THEIR QUILTS. WIDOWED AT 35, ANN WINTER MADE THIS QUILT IN THE 1860S.

Janice Morrill: It's a fabulous story – she was a fairly wealthy woman living in Augusta Georgia. She cut up all of her dresses, her brightly colored dresses, and sewed them into this tumbling block patterned quilt, and the story is that she wore black for the rest of her life and she lived for more than 50 more years.

Narration:

ELIZABETH DUNN WAS PREPARING FOR HER DEATH, WHEN SHE MADE THIS MOVING QUILT OF WORDS IN 1890. AT 78 YEARS OLD, SHE FELT HER DAYS WERE NUMBERED AND SHE DEVOTED THEM TO THIS PERMANENT RECORD OF HER THOUGHTS ON DYING. SHORTLY AFTER COMPLETING THE QUILT TOP, ELIZABETH DUNN PASSED AWAY.

Narration:

EVERY QUILT TELLS A STORY, BUT SOME ARE EASIER TO READ THAN OTHERS. THIS UNUSUAL CRAZY QUILT WAS MADE AROUND 1885 BY A 12-YEAR OLD,

HOMESICK FOR GEORGIA.

Betsy Weyburn: And it's kind of a sad story. Her father died when they were in Georgia and her mother brought her and her siblings to Texas and then her mother died and so she was shipped off to Tennessee and that's where she actually made the quilt. This has all sorts of depictions of country life and her life in Georgia. It's what was important to her and that's what she embroidered. And it's kind of amazing that she was only 12 when she made this quilt. Maybe it was a good solace for her after losing her parents at such a young age.

Narration:

OFTEN SEWING AFTER LONG HOURS OF PHYSICAL LABOR IN THE FIELDS OR AT HOME, WOMEN MANAGED TO TAP INTO SOME INNER STRENGTH TO CREATE DAZZLING PATTERNS AND FINE STITCHES. WHY DID THEY MAKE THIS EFFORT?

Charles Burt:

I feel definitely that Grandma quilted it for the beauty of it because her home along with all the homes had just the necessities of life. They didn't have the art things and this to me is an art creation. My grandma Vaughters made it. She was Dora Bryce Vaughters and she completed it about 19 and 10. She would probably have started it back in the late 1800s . And there's little small pieces, there's 16,800 of them all hand-sewn and she was evidently quite a seamstress. It's just amazing to me that even though there's a vast number of different colors and materials in it of how she would ever keep the design straight as she did because when you look at it there's a definite design and all the blocks are the same through the quilt. It was entered in a fair and she won a pump organ in the fair. It was the prize and we don't know where the fair was. We assume it was Gainesville because traveling to Gainesville at that time took a day over and a day back. And they had to ford the river to get to Gainesville. I'm very proud to have it. I have four children and I don't know which one of them will be able to claim it when I pass on. But it's something that's very meaningful to us.

Narration:

MANY OF THE QUILTS DOCUMENTED WERE MADE BY AFRICAN AMERICANS. SPANNING NEARLY TWO CENTURIES, MANY ARE INDISTINGUISHABLE FROM THOSE MADE BY WHITE QUILTERS.

Anita Weinraub: It stands to reason because African Americans were exposed to the same design influences as white people were. They got all the newspapers and magazines and as the media began publishing patterns back in, I think, the late 1800s, they had access to the same kinds of patterns.

Narration:

HOWEVER, SOME OF THE QUILTS DO SHOW THE INFLUENCE OF WEST AFRICAN TEXTILE TRADITIONS, WHICH WERE BROUGHT TO AMERICA BY ENSLAVED AFRICANS.

Akua McDaniel: You know, cultures in West Africa were really very proficient in terms of textile production and decoration. We've had the opportunity to study dyed fabrics and embroidered fabrics and we know that a lot of these women came skilled.

Narration:

A PREFERENCE FOR USING RED AND BLACK, OR FOR MAKING QUILTS FROM LONG STRIPS OF CLOTH OFTEN SHOW THESE HISTORIC INFLUENCES, BUT NO RULE IS HARD AND FAST WITH A GROUP AS INDIVIDUAL AS QUILTERS.

Betsy Weyburn: This is a great example of a utilitarian quilt. It looks almost like a strippy quilt which most people look at and think, Oh an African American quilter made this, and actually a white quilter made it. The utilitarian fabric's just pieced together but still taken and put together creatively and with pride.

Narration:

AS MODERN CONVENIENCES SPREAD AFTER WORLD WAR TWO, FEWER AND FEWER WOMEN MADE QUILTS. CONSIDERED UNNECESSARY TO MODERN LIFE, MANY TRADITIONAL SKILLS, INCLUDING QUILTING, BEGAN TO EBB AWAY. BUT A NATIONAL EVENT TURNED THE TIDE FOR QUILTING – A CONTEST TO CELEBRATE THE BICENTENNIAL.

Janice Morrill: Quilting is going strong and I think one of the reasons for that is that its purposes have always been more than just creating something utilitarian, creating something as a bedcover. It was an opportunity for women to gather together as a group and this is still the case. It's an opportunity to show off one's creative abilities, handiwork skills and

this is still the case, and also an opportunity to make very personal statements.

Narration:

FOR MARTHA MULINIX, THAT PERSONAL STATEMENT WAS A RETURN TO HER SELF-SUFFICIENT, MOUNTAIN ROOTS AFTER RETIRING.

Martha Mulinix: I needed things to do that identified with who I am and who my family is and what my family means to me and to the community and that sort of thing. And quilting became that means to me.

Narration:

FOR MARTHA, THE MOST CREATIVE PART OF THE PROCESS IS THE QUILTING ITSELF, A SKILL WHICH SHE HAS PASSED ON TO MANY PEOPLE.

Martha Mulinix: I have always maintained that quilting is an art medium and any emotion that you can express with pen and ink or paint and paper, you can make with needle and thread. And see, as I quilt, the needle goes through and comes back and pull it tight and then it becomes the lights and shadows. This is what you're working with.

Narration:

LIVING WITH HIS ELDERLY BUT ABLE MOTHER AFTER HE RETIRED FROM THE POST OFFICE, JOE SANDERS FOUND TIME ON HIS HANDS.

Joe Sanders: So my sister would visit and she'd bring needlepoint or crocheting or embroidery with her and work on it while she was visiting with us, visiting my mother, and I said well, it looked like I could do that, so she taught me how to do needlepoint. And then later I said, I don't know, Mamma used to make quilts, why don't I make quilts?

Narration:

LITTLE DID JOE REALIZE BACK THEN, THAT HE WOULD TURN INTO AN AVID QUILTER, WITH OVER 40 QUILTS STACKED UP AROUND THE HOUSE.

Joe Sanders: I guess I'm too lazy to get out and do anything else. I like a sitting down job. I hope somebody will take them and enjoy them and appreciate them and take care of them.

Narration:

MANY QUILTERS ARE DELIBERATELY CREATING NEW FAMILY HEIRLOOMS THAT THEY HOPE WILL BE TREASURED DOWN THE GENERATIONS.

Nellie Giddens: I like the way you can put a lot of memories in it and keep them forever, because some of the older quilts can really tell us a lot and that was my goal to put memories into my quilts. And the traditional ones I like, but I really like to design my own and keep them to handed down to the others.

Narration:

IN HER GIDDENS FAMILY QUILT, NELLIE RECORDED MANY IMPORTANT EVENTS AND PLACES. IT GRACES HER BED AS A DAILY REMINDER OF HER PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE.

NELLIE'S UGA QUILT GOES IN TURN TO EACH FAMILY MEMBER WHO GRADUATES FROM GEORGIA.

Nellie Giddens: You are addicted to it. You don't know where to stop. Your house becomes a fabric shop. And I think the majority of quilters that get started will continue it because they like it like that. It is creative, it's an art, and when you've finished, it's you – it's part of you. I make my quilts to use. They're fine to display but I certainly want them used. There's a lot of love in them and they're not a quilt until they've been slept under. You must do that first.

Narration:

ONE OF THE FEW EXCEPTIONS TO THAT RULE IS NELLIE'S UNIQUE ADAPTATION OF THE VICTORIAN CRAZY QUILT STYLE. SHE WENT THROUGH THE FAMILY'S TREASURED COLLECTION OF MEMORIBILIA TO CREATE A WALL-HANGING SHE REFLECTS ON EVERY DAY.

Nellie Giddens: To get some of the things that I wanted, after I decided that I didn't just want to use fabric, I used the childrens baby bibs and baby gowns, just things I didn't think I could ever cut and I cut and cried and cut and cried until I had parts of dresses, gowns and my sister's first crochet. Just a lot of things you don't want to cut up, but I did do it for this.

Mattie Elders: I started quilting watching my grandmother and mother piece quilts from old clothes, bedspreads, curtains, anything kind of material they could find, because they were not financially able to buy material.

Narration:

FOR MATTIE ELDERS, HER FAMILY QUILTS PROVIDE A CONNECTING THREAD

OVER FIVE GENERATIONS.

Mattie Elders: To us they looked nice because it meant warmth to the body, but the colors were not coordinated so it made it different than it is now, when you piece your quilts, because you coordinate your colors now to make a more beautiful picture.

Narration:

SUFFERING FROM CANCER, MATTIE IS ORGANIZING AND ADDING TO A FAMILY QUILT COLLECTION THAT WILL GO TO HER GRAND-DAUGHTER, TIFFANY.

Mattie Elders: This quilt was pieced by my grandmother, Hattie Swann, along WW1 and it's made out of any scraps that they could find and use that's what this quilt was made from. And I put it together. She made the squares and I put it together and I did it in 1989. I don't think they finished it because they did not have the money for the thread or the batting or the lining but they spent their time, the spare time they had, putting quilts together and that's how they passed their time.

The quilt that's hanging in the hallway, I do not have a name for it but it was pieced by my grandmother and my mother and it's made out of old clothing, curtains and whatever they could find to use and I hung it here while I tried to figure out the pattern, because I want to copy. [Let's call that a star and here this looks like a circle, so I call it Nana's Circle of Stars and when I copy it I'm going to call mine A Circle of Dreams because I think the pattern is beautiful.

This is my favorite quilt because when I first saw the pattern it was the most beautiful pattern I had ever seen. And really that's what motivated me into quilting. But it took me five years to do it and I just like it. And a couple from New York wanted to buy the quilt for their mother and they offered me \$20,000 for that quilt which I did not accept because I wanted to pass it on to my granddaughter and to keep these quilts in the family.

Hazel Fulton: I lived by the railroad track and the trainman would throw me off, I don't know if he was the conductor or what he was, but he would throw me off papers and I saw in there where this had been chosen out of every state in the union as the one to be given to Eleanor Roosevelt, so I wanted to make one like it and this is the one I made but I was about 19 or 20 years old when I made this one.

Narration:

ORPHANED AT 13, MARRIED AT 15 AND A MOTHER SOON AFTER, HAZEL FULTON TAUGHT HERSELF TO QUILT WITH A BOX OF SCRAPS LEFT BY HER OWN MOTHER. A CREATIVE AND PRECISE QUILTER, HAZEL EXPRESSES HER LOVE FOR HER FAMILY WITH EVERY STITCH.

Evelyn Poore:

My mother quilted - for one thing, she was sick a lot and wasn't able to get out and do much so she did that for a pastime, as well as because we needed the quilts. This was something she'd rather do than anything and she'd sit there all day long and do her piecing and dare anyone to touch any of her quilt pieces. But she really loved it and I guess that's where I get my love for it. She passed away in '84 and she hadn't quilted in a good long time before then because she got Alzheimers. The last thing that she pieced, I pinned it together and cornered together and she sewed it but then she got to where she couldn't even do that. She'd come in where I was working at and she'd watch me and say "I used to do that".

Narration:

PASSING ON HER SKILLS TO NEW QUILTERS IS VERY IMPORTANT TO EVELYN POORE. CHRISTINA BEVERIDGE BECAME EVELYN'S APPRENTICE AS PART OF A GEORGIA COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS FOLKLIFE PROGRAM.

Christina Beveridge:

My great grandmother on my mother's side and my great grandmother on my father's side quilted and I have some pieces from my great grandmother on my father's side and I really liked it when I was little and I thought maybe some day I'll want to learn that and so it kind of fell into place about the right time for me to do it. It's a lot of fun. It relaxes you. It takes stress out. Man, I'm telling you. It's a great stress reliever. It's just a lot of fun. You meet new people quilting.

Narration:

THE SOCIAL ASPECTS OF QUILTING ARE JUST AS APPEALING TODAY AS THEY WERE IN THE 19TH CENTURY. ALL OVER GEORGIA WOMEN, AND SOME MEN, MEET TO MAKE QUILTS AND TALK ABOUT QUILTS AND GOSSIP AND EAT. ONE OF THE OLDEST GROUPS IS THE BUSY BEES IN DALTON. FOUNDED IN THE 40S AS A HOME DEMONSTRATION GROUP SOME OF THE BUSY BEES FAMILIES ARE INTO

THEIR 4TH GENERATION OF MEMBERS.

Irene Ragan: I love to quilt. It's just my world. I love to sew. Coming here, it's just great to be with the ladies and we eat. We all bring a covered dish. It's part of our life.

Opal Defore: It just breaks your week and if you don't come on Wednesday, then I don't know what day of the week it is.

Romye Walraven: It's very relaxing. It helps pass your time. And we just like the companionship we have with each other.

Narration:

AS WITH MOST QUILTING GROUPS THE BUSY BEES ARE COMMITTED TO COMMUNITY SERVICE, SEWING QUILTS AND OTHER ITEMS FOR HOSPITAL PATIENTS AND CHARITIES.

Irene Ragan: It's what we're here for – to do what we can for our fellow man – less fortunate people who are not as well off as we are.

Mamie Hughley: This is where we teenagers hang out three days a week, on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. And this is something that we like to do to take up our time and keep us busy. And I want to tell you something. It keep us in our right mind.

Narration:

THE REYNOLDSTOWN QUILTERS HAVE BEEN AN IMPORTANT PART OF THEIR ATLANTA NEIGHBORHOOD FOR ABOUT 20 YEARS, MAKING QUILTS FOR THE NEEDY AND SELLING QUILTS TO RAISE CHARITY FUNDS. ALL THE CURRENT MEMBERS CAN RECALL WHEN TIMES WERE HARD FOR THEIR OWN FAMILIES.

Pearl Walker: We didn't have no house water, no bathroom, we had to go way out across the field. You could sit in the outhouse and look up and see the stars, see the sky and look down and see the chickens walking up there under the house. It didn't rain. It didn't rain in the outhouse.

Annie Heard: When I was helping Mama quilt I was doing something. I felt important. I held torches for her to quilt by at night and it was done a little different from what it is now. We had frames that we put little cords on, ropes on and rolled it up at night. And let it down in the day.

Narration:

AS IT HAS FOR COUNTLESS OTHER WOMEN, QUILTING HAS CREATED A SPECIAL BOND BETWEEN THE LADIES OF REYNOLDSTOWN.

Pearl Walker:

We talk and we have more fun and they're a part of my life. I'm lonesome without the quilters. We love one another.

Linda Martin:

I started quilting in 1990 when I came across some unfinished projects that my grandmother had left after she died. And I brought them home with me, and when I had a few months and some spare time on my hands I got them out and the first one that I took up was a total disaster. I did everything wrong, and at that point I learned that there's more to this quilting than you assume by looking at it. I took a class and got hooked.

Narration:

LINDA MARTIN IS A MEMBER OF IN-TOWN QUILTERS, WHO MEET ONCE A MONTH TO SHOW AND TELL WHAT THEY'VE BEEN WORKING ON. MAKING QUILTS FOR THEMSELVES AND FOR CHARITY, THE GROUP CONSISTS OF PROFESSIONAL WOMEN – AND RAY BARRERAS, A CHEMISTRY PROFESSOR. RAY TAUGHT HIMSELF TO QUILT ONE YEAR WHILE HIS FAMILY WAS AWAY.

Ray Barreras:

And I was left in Atlanta with nothing to do for about 7 weeks. So I literally took some fabric, chopped it up, and put it back together and made a quilt. And in 7 weeks I pieced 7 quilt tops. Then I took my first lesson and learned everything that I did wrong. And so I really then started getting in to quilting in a big way. I started thinking I was only going to do piecing and I was only going to do traditional patterns and then I found them to be interesting, but rather limiting. And so I decided to take more classes and to take different approaches, started dying fabric, doing things like that. And I'm not stuck in a rut. There's always something new that I can look at and try and tackle. I guess I'm prolific because I don't let time waste. I have a cutting board on my dining room table, actually my kitchen table, and I can spend half an hour watching the news and cutting some fabric and then I can go to the sewing machine afterwards. And I don't waste time./ And then I have a very understanding family. My wife says, OK, you can go

upstairs now, and it's great. The quilters in Georgia seem to have taken to me just like everything else. When they have a meeting, they have to say "Ladies, and Ray".

Casey Green: We're all fabriholics. We all have new things that we're trying in our fabric pieces. And it's just a really nice common bond. And it's nice. It's like a family. It's wonderful.

Narration:

IN A PERFECT BLEND OF THE TRADITIONAL AND THE HIGH-COMPUTER TECH, SOME QUILTERS ARE NOW FORMING GUILDS ON THE INTERNET.

Ellen Rosintoski: There are no secrets any more. Information moves at the speed of light. We've done quilts for people who have had tragedies in their life as comfort for them and the blocks come from all around the world and a small group will put it together and present it to someone. And these things happen in a matter of weeks. I mean, it's amazing. As I say, there are no secrets. New fabrics, new tools, new books, new techniques are known instantaneously and you can shop on-line.

Narration:

AS QUILTING MOVES INTO A NEW CENTURY, THE BOUNDARIES OF THE ART ARE BEING PUSHED IN ALL DIRECTIONS, BUT THE OLD TRADITIONS REMAIN AT THE CENTER OF ITS INSPIRATION. BETTY BIVINS EDWARDS QUILTS FAMILY STORIES INTO HER LARGE 3-D SCULPTURES, WHICH CAPTURE SOME VERY SOUTHERN EXPERIENCES REVOLVING AROUND FOOD.

Betty Bivens Edwards: The piece that I'm working on at the present time will be the tenth in the series. After our family eats the men would go outside, stand underneath the pecan tree around the pick-up trucks. And first their hands go in their pockets and all the coins start jingling. The keys come out and they start jingling and pretty soon they're jingling and jingling and then come out the pocket knives and pretty soon they're doing this, cutting finger nails and grooming and this sort of thing. So this will be a piece about this. People from the family will be gathered in a circle around the truck. The perspective's not quite worked out yet. But this is going to be about satisfied people.

Narration:

FOR TEXTILE SURFACE DESIGN ARTIST, WINI MCQUEEN, QUILTING HAS BECOME

A WAY TO EXPRESS THE AFRICAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE. USING PHOTOGRAPHIC TECHNIQUES, WINI TELLS THE STORIES OF AFRICAN AMERICANS, IN HISTORY AND TODAY. WINI'S FAMILY TREE QUILT REACHES BACK TO TIMES OF SLAVERY WITH A PHOTO OF HER GREAT GRANDMOTHER.

Wini McQueen: What I did to make this quilt was first I collected all the photos, and collected fabrics that I thought would fit the mood of a particular photo so some fabric is shiny and some fabrics are commodity sacks and some are handkerchiefs. For instance, this woman is someone I remember who always loved beautiful handkerchiefs, so I could only have depicted her on this quilt transferred photographically onto a very colorful handkerchief.

Narration:

BARBARA DORN BRINGS SKILLS AS A GRAPHIC ARTIST AND ILLUSTRATOR TO HER QUILTING. A TRADITIONAL QUILTER UNTIL THE OLYMPICS, BARBARA'S PERCEPTION OF THE CRAFT WAS CHANGED WHEN SHE CREATED A QUILT FOR OLYMPIC PRESIDENT SAMARANCH, AS PART OF THE GEORGIA QUILT PROJECT'S GIFT QUILT PROGRAM. INSPIRED BY HER OLYMPIC EXPERIENCES, BARBARA NOW TRANSFORMS FABRIC INTO SPLIT SECOND MOMENTS IN SPORTS.

Barbara Dorn: In every quilt that I do I try to learn something new. I always hark back to traditional techniques and those are pretty basic. Those are straight cutting and stitching and how do you put this piece together. When I reach for something new I ask how do you put this piece together in a different way. What do I do with my traditional background to express this contemporary idea that I want to feature? Traditional background is very important to me as a quilt-maker. I know there are other people who plunge right in and that's fine, that's fine for them but for me I need the satisfaction of knowing that I've cut, that I've sewn, stitched something that's going to stay together for generations to come.

Anita Weinraub: The quilting industry is now a \$2.1 billion industry. So quilting can really go anywhere. The enthusiasm of people who quilt today seems to be just boundless and it's hard to predict when if at any time in the future it's going to fade away as it has in the past.

Narration:

CREATIVE, SOCIAL, EMOTIONALLY SATISFYING, QUILTING SEEMS TO HAVE FOUND A DEFINITE PLACE IN MODERN SOCIETY. CONNECTING US WITH OUR PAST, WITH EACH OTHER AND WITH THE FUTURE, GEORGIA'S QUILTS WILL BRING COMFORT AND JOY FOR GENERATIONS TO COME.

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