

International Costumer

Volume XVIII Issue 5

Sept - Oct 2019



President's Message

By Marianne Legume



"Marianne as Princess Asseylum from Aldnoah Zero, Photography by Tony Kazmierski

The transition from Summer into Autumn is always a time of renewal and restarting for me. For those of us in, teaching, or with kids who are in school, it's about to start. Halloween, as the marquee of costuming holidays, is coming up. Renaissance Faires are either in full swing or just starting. It's a wonderful time of year! This year I didn't get much in the way of costuming done the past couple months, but I did spend some much

needed time with my family. I also managed to include all too short visits with our estimable St. Louis and Kansas City chapters when passing through. If you happen to be travelling, be sure to check and see if any ICG members or chapters are in the area- especially if you're coming through my neck of the woods.

A few guild updates:

The Archives: Work on the Archives project has been quietly continuing and Leslie Johnston is approaching some final key steps. She's putting in considerable work coding to take the data from the old archives and translate it into a usable format in the new program.

Future Fashion Folio Deadline: The FFF deadline for CC38 is/was September 1! Let your imagination run wild with possibilities- and if you missed this year's deadline, CC39 will happily accept them while you start work stitching your FFF or Single Pattern entries .

Lifetime Achievement Award

Nominations: Costume Con is in March this year and thus nominations for the LAA are due earlier than most people expect! Nominations are due by January 13th. As ICG President, it's my responsibility to oversee the nomination and voting process but I do not write or rewrite the nominations. As a widespread organization, not everyone is familiar with every individual and their accomplishments. A proper and effective nomination should convey your nominee's accomplishments and qualifications instead of simply relying on an individual's reputation. Nominations may be written in prose or even outlines, and links to photos or websites may also be included. Seeing the Lifetime Achievement Award process through from the initial nominations to the Costume Con stage is a joy, and I would invite everyone to participate in the process - and get those nominations in nice and early!

Yours in Costuming,
Marianne Pease

About the Cover Photo:

Free stock image from pixabay.com

Co-Editor's Message

By Melina Chestley



Twiggy (Critical Role). Photo by Richard Dufault @OShutterPhoto!

For some, summer is quickly coming to a too soon end. For others, like me, the excitement that winter is coming is rapidly growing and so is the desire to trench myself in my abundance of sewing projects sitting around my sewing room. Especially with CC38 coming along in March 2020 in Montreal, Canada. I find deadlines show up quickly.

For the final newsletter of the 2019 year, I'd love to see articles on the State

of the Guild. What has the guild been up to this year? What have the chapters been doing or what future plans do you have? Are you a new chapter who'd like to introduce themselves? Perhaps we should have an end-of-year chapter check-in?

If you are interested in submitting content for the Nov-Dec 2019 newsletter, the deadline for submissions is Oct 15th. I prefer to get articles in word format or as text in an email. icg-newsletter@costume.org

Thank you to Manu Henault & the CC38 team, Lisa Ashton and Leslie Johnston for their contributions to this month's newsletter.



News from Costume-Con 38

by Manu Hénault and the CC38 Team

CONTEST TIME CONTEST TIME
CONTEST TIME

WIN ONE FREE ROOM NIGHT AT CC38

This October 31st, 2019 we will draw one free room night at the Bonaventure hôtel among all people registered at CC38.* The prize consists of a regular room night at the hôtel (value of \$169 plus taxes). The date of the chosen night must be on the 8th of March, 2020 at the soonest and cannot be later than the 20th of March, 2020 (all the dates within this period are valid). This prize does not include any other expenses incurred by the winner, including but not limited to: parking, room service, hotel's restaurant, etc.

The winner will be contacted in private and will be announced on our social media. They will then have 7 days to accept or decline the prize. The prize is not transferable. If the prize is refused, another winner will be drawn. If the winner is a minor, the presence of a responsible adult (parent of guardian) is required in the room and the reservation must be made under the name of said adult.

Room type will depend on availability or on the winner's existing reservation (if the room is already reserved).

*Convention staff are not eligible for this contest.

FAQ:

Q: How do I enter the contest?

A: If you are an attending member of CC38, you will automatically be entered.

Q: We have a room reservation, but it is not in my name, you say the prize is not transferable. How will this work?

A: As long as you are one of the people staying in the room and the hotel has your name, the room is considered yours and the free night will be credited.

At any time you can reach us at admin@costumecon38.org

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Reconstructing an antique quilt top into an actual quilt

By Lisa Ashton; photos by Lisa Aston

This antique quilt top was originally donated to my non-profit (Miss Lizzy's Traveling Historical Fashion Show) from a small community museum in Indiana as part of a bulk donation in 2017, antique textile items the museum was deaccessioning to free up storage space. Although pieced and assembled, it was never completed as a quilt with batting and quilting. My professional longarm quilter (experienced with antique quilts) believed the fabrics and color scheme (pinks and browns primarily) were typical of the 1860's, and a quilt historian who assessed the top believed that its fabrics did date from the period before and during the 1860's.

The photo of the original top shows how its pieced patches were set, not necessarily in a sequence to spread out the colors well; and the photo of the quilt back shows its 1/8" to 1/4" seams, which were not executed or pressed consistently.



Taking the quilt top apart afforded me a chance to become familiar with every stitch. Because it is entirely hand-sewn, one might expect long seams to have imperfections, but most of the pieced 9-patch blocks are very irregular as well, with bubbles, ripples, creases and spliced areas. I tried pressing the quilt top to improve it, but it did not help--there is no way this top could be quilted or even tied to make a quilt, and still lie flat and squared off.





Front and back of a pieced block, showing various brown prints and a lighter double pink print; on the back, you are able to see the hand stitches

At least two different colors and several thicknesses of cotton thread were used, most an off white or cream, rather thick single thread, and a medium brown thinner thread. Some thread transitions are backstitched instead of knotted, some have a single knot, and some have a ball-like multi-knot clump. Perhaps more than one person participated in sewing this quilt, and possibly they were all beginners.

As I carefully detached the long double-pink borders, took apart the blocks, ironed them carefully and picked out the excess thread along the edges, several things became clear. (I did not deconstruct the 9-patch blocks, only trimmed them to size).



I believe this was someone's first quilt. It is completely hand sewn, and clearly the pieced blocks are from very tiny scraps, because many of the 9 patch block pieces are pieced together even though they are less than 2" square. The corner pieces and center piece are all hand-spliced together checked cotton.

I noted that the pink full blocks and borders were TORN instead of cut to size (with the selvedge used as a straight edge), and these squares averaged $\frac{1}{2}$ " to $\frac{3}{4}$ " smaller than the 9-patch pieced blocks. Seam allowances, as expected in an antique quilt, were usually a scant $\frac{1}{8}$ " but were very uneven throughout.



Looking closely at the fabric edge, one can see the torn edge of the pink blocks

For each individual 9-patch block, repressing the seam allowances to one side and ironing the front helped a great deal to eliminate the rippling of uneven seams, even before each block was cut down.

There were many colors and prints to learn about, including some genuine fugitive purples, which have mostly turned brown (and are in quite worn condition).

The pink blocks were easily cut down to 5" true squares. The pieced 9-patch blocks were very irregular, and were also cut down to 5" blocks. Then they were alternated (as in the original quilt



Photos showing both the back and front of a 9-patch block with a purple fabric that somehow survived the years.

top) to give the most pleasing placement of colors in the pieced

blocks. For the borders I used the original long border pieces. Leftover pieced and plain blocks (the most irregular ones) were used them to create a small quilt, and some of the leftover double-pink fabric helped repair/restore another 1860's-era quilt for a friend's mother-in-law, to whom the quilt meant everything.



A plain pink block with its torn edges clearly seen; rather than a true square, these blocks were 'tilted' to be more of a parallelogram. Recutting them into true squares made the quilt lie properly.



*T: disassembled borders and block after ironing;
B: individual pieced and plain blocks before trimming and squaring up, to demonstrate irregular sizes and torn edges.*

Restoring a Nineteenth-century Family Heirloom Quilt

By Leslie Johnston; Photos by Leslie Johnston

The Carroll Family has resided in Davidson County, North Carolina, since the early eighteenth century, when three brothers emigrated from Ireland to America. Unsurprisingly, a number of family heirlooms have been collected over the years: family records, photographs, furniture, and flat-iron made by a blacksmith member of the family. Of particular interest was a quilt in the possession of my mother-in-law, Nancy Carroll Brown who passed away in July 2019.

This is the story she had written on a tag attached to the quilt: "We are told that this hand-stitched quilt was made by my great-great-grandmother Mary Newson Carroll (1939-1919) from material that the Yankees tore into strips on the March to Georgia. Her husband, Benjamin Franklin Carroll (1840-1920) was away with the Confederate Army where he became a prisoner of war."

This quilt had seen better days when I first saw it, and when I asked why it was in such sad shape, this was the answer I got: "My mother was a Yarborough and she didn't care as much about the Carroll family history, so she used to throw it in the washer and dryer rather than take care with it."

The quilt top had several large tears, places where the fabric had worn out, and the edge binding was almost completely worn through along most of the sides. The backing was in much worse shape: huge sections of the backing fabric were gone and much the batting was matted and missing.



Over 150 Years of Visible Wear and Tear

In 2018, Lisa Ashton and I decided to undertake the restoration of the quilt for the family. In the process we learned quite a bit about the quilt construction.



Worn away Backing Fabric and Matted and Missing Batting

It was not entirely hand-stitched as we had expected to find given the family story: It was a mix of machine and hand-sewing. Machine sewing was not unknown in the 1860s: Elias Howe and Isaac Singer patented their machines in America in 1845 and 1851, respectively, and manual machines were becoming widely available for home purchase by 1860.

The green ticking fabric that makes up the base layer of the quilt top was machine sewn together from several pieces both large and small into a single large oblong, and the floral pattern was machine-applied on rather than pieced. The simple pattern

is made up of abstract leaves made from a rough indigo fabric and flowers made from what is known as a “Double Pink” fabric—a pink-on-pink printed fabric—which was popular primarily from the 1860s-1880s.

It was backed with a layer of cotton batting and plain muslin, and the edges were bound with the same indigo colored fabric as used for the



Detail of the Machine-sewn Ticking Strip with a Small Triangular Insert

applique. All of the quilting is handstitched in two different colors: natural for the flowers and background, and blue for the leaves.



Detail of the Machine-sewn Appliques



Hand-stitched Quilting in Two Colors

As to substantiating the family story about the quilt, that's a bit trickier. The use of the Double Pink fabric in the applique helps substantiate that the quilt is likely from the Civil War era or the later nineteenth century. There are

two somewhat similar appliqued quilts in the North Carolina Museum of History that were made in North Carolina and dated to 1857 and to 1870-1880, which also helps to substantiate its approximate age and shows that this style of quilt was popular in North Carolina at that time. The ticking was indeed sewn together from many large strips, but there is no way of proving the family story that the fabric was torn into those strips by Union forces.



Detail of Appliqued Bed Quilt made by Emma Gifford Gudger, 1870-1880. North Carolina Museum of History, H.2015.29.1

The Restoration

When it came to the restoration the most important decision to be made



Appliqued Bed Quilt made in Madison County, North Carolina, 1857. North Carolina Museum of History, H.2002.33.1

was what to do about the batting and backing. Removing the backing and batting would mean removing all the hand-quilting, so that was not an option. Instead, all the edge binding was detached by hand and as much of the loose, matted batting and loose strips of backing were removed as possible, avoiding damage to the structure.

A new piece of unbleached muslin was laid over the original backing, and hand-tied to the original top and what remained of the original backing using small knots.



Loose Batting and Backing Removed from the Quilt

New edging in as close a match to the original color as we could find was hand-stitched onto the edge to seal the old with the new.



Detail of the Quilt Top Hand-Tied to the new Backing, and the New Hand-stitched Edging

After the quilt was stabilized with the new backing and edging, repairs were made to the front of the quilt. Lisa found vintage Double Pink fabric that, while not identical, was a close approximation of the original appliques. We hand stitched patches onto the appliques, and reinforced holes and tears by stitching them to the new backing. A conscious decision was made to keep the repairs visible, so that future owners of the quilt will be able to track its history.



Applique Patched with Vintage Nineteenth-century Double Pink Fabric



Hole in the Quilt Top Hand-stitched to the New Backing



The Complete Restored Quilt

This took several weeks of work, but the final restoration was completed in early 2019. Nancy got to have the restored quilt on display in her home for the last few months of her life, which made the entire process all the more worthwhile. Now it is in a condition where it can be preserved for the generations of Carrolls to come.

Photos by Leslie Johnston, except as marked from the NC Museum of History Collections.

About the ICG

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ICG membership benefits include participation in local Chapters and in Special Interest Groups, voting rights, eligibility for grants, online forums, learning and volunteer opportunities, and the International Costumer.

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The Marty Gear Costuming Arts and Sciences Fund provides grants for projects and activities that promote the art and science of costuming. For information on how to apply for a grant, please visit

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The International Costumer

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