

Sutter Creek Community Benefit Foundation

October Newsletter, 2020

A BRIEF HISTORY OF QUILTS **Highlighting the Sanderson Family Quilt**

The history of quilts began long before European settlers arrived in the New World. People in nearly every part of the world had used padded fabrics for clothing, bedding, and even armor. With the arrival of settlers in North America, quilting took on a new life and flourished.

The quilt, as we know it in America, was originally a strictly utilitarian article, born of the necessity of providing warm covers for beds. Quilts were also used as hangings for doors and windows that were not sealed well enough to keep out the cold. The earliest American quilts were so intimately connected to everyday life of the early colonists that no record of them exists.

Those early settlers could not afford to simply discard things when they wore out and necessity required they carefully use their resources. Therefore, when blankets became worn, they were patched, combined with other blankets, or used as filler between other blankets. These were not carefully constructed heirlooms, rather they were functional items for the sole purpose of keeping people warm.

Only in later years, when fabrics were being manufactured in America and were more affordable, did the more artistic type of quilting become more widespread. In the 100 years between 1750 and 1850 thousands of quilts were pieced and patched, and many of them are preserved.



During the Great Depression, people simply did not have the money to buy blankets, so once again women relied on their own skills and resources to keep their families warm. Saving bits and pieces of material from clothing and other blankets, using material from feed sacks, and "making do" were common practices for frugal quilters during those difficult years.

The history of America can be seen in the history of quilts: in the rich heritage left us by those thrifty, self-sufficient women who helped settle this land, in the families whose history is sewn into quilts one patch at a time, and in the legacy of the quilting arts passed on to children and grandchildren so they may carry them forward to the future.

Many of these quilts were so elaborate that years were spent making and quilting them. It is no wonder they are cherished as precious heirlooms and occupy honored places in homes and museums.

The Sanderson Family Quilt

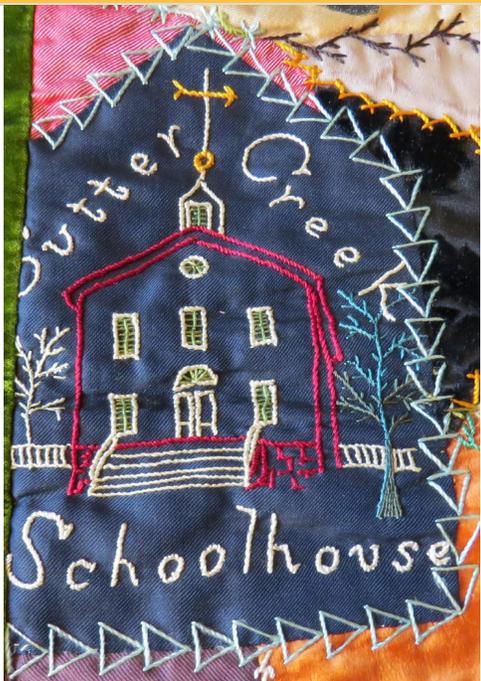


In 2019, the Sutter Creek Community Benefit Foundation (SCCBF) received the Sanderson family quilt as a donation from Mary Stavros. The quilt is a beautiful patchwork quilt over 100 years old and measuring 70 inches square. Mary received the quilt from her mother's cousin, Raymond Akin. Raymond was the grandson of Emma Sanderson, the eldest daughter and believed to be the only one to have married.

As we carefully spread the quilt out, it was obvious to us that some fabrics stood the test of time better than others. Cotton seemed to hold up very well, while silk pieces had deteriorated. Regardless, the quilt is a beautiful example of a crazy quilt and the time and effort put into this art.

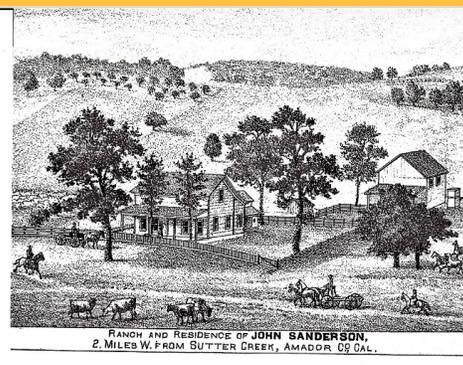


At first glance you're taken aback by the vibrant colors and the intricate stitching. There are dozens of different stitch patterns and multiple references to family members, a pet dog, and Sutter Creek landmarks. It is clear that many different people's loving handiwork is contained in the quilt's 9 separate panels. The observer is easily lost in the tapestry of fabric and meaning of the initials and notes contained within.



Notice the patch in honor of the old Sutter Creek Grammar School which the SCCBF is currently in the process of restoring.

There is also a patch for Father Moloney, who was in charge of the Immaculate Conception Church on Spanish St., in Sutter Creek for 17 years. Father Moloney built brick walls around both cemeteries and the wall in front of the parochial residence that is still on Spanish Street.



The patch above represents the Sanderson Home as depicted in the 1891 ink pen drawing. The notation under the drawing says "Ranch and Residence of John Sanderson, 2 Miles W. from Sutter Creek, Amador Co., Cal"

John Sanderson married Catherine Hughes in 1863 in Sutter Creek. They purchased the 320 acre ranch in 1869. The Sanderson's had eight children: Emma, Elizabeth, Anastasia, Catherine, Mary, Margaret, Ella, and an infant son that died. It is believed that Mrs. Sanderson died sometime between 1900 and 1905 and John Sanderson died at age 80 in 1910.

Their daughter Mary continued to live at the ranch until 1917 when she moved to a home on Amelia Street in Sutter Creek.

The Sutter Creek Community Benefit Foundation is very thankful that Mary Stavros chose to donate the Sanderson family quilt. We will be building a display which will preserve the quilt, as well as allow guests to appreciate its beauty and history.

If you have an interest in quilting, contact the Mother Lode Quilters' Guild "Promoting Friendship Among Quilters Since 2003" - info@mlqgsuttercreek.org or <http://mlqgsuttercreek.org/>

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SCCBF Community Development

Sutter Creek Historic Grammar School

The cafeteria room, now a warming kitchen, has new appliances, cabinets, flooring, a large island, and solar roller blinds. For information on renting any of the rooms at the Historic Grammar School, contact the City of Sutter Creek <https://cityofsuttercreek.org/>



Whether it's a love of our heritage, a special connection to our town's diverse, deeply rooted cultures, or a desire to improve your community, every donor's passion for Sutter Creek is unique. A gift to Sutter Creek Community Benefit Foundation is the perfect way to fund your passion and watch it prosper. By connecting people who care with causes that matter, we help ensure a stronger, healthier tomorrow. We provide a simple, powerful and highly personal approach to giving. (Donations to SCCBF are received through the Amador Community Foundation.)