

The Textile Conservation Workshop, Inc.  
3 Main Street  
South Salem, New York 10590

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(914) 763-5805

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P.O. Box 1  
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January 18, 2019  
TCW 19-8

(631) 765-5500



## **EXAMINATION AND PROPOSED TREATMENT REPORT**

**Identification:** Album Quilt

**Dimensions:** 87 ¼” H x 87 1/8” W

**Fibers:** Identification by eye and by polarized light microscopy:  
Pieced fabrics- cotton  
Ground- cotton  
Backing- cotton warp and weft  
Batting- cotton  
Sewing threads- cotton  
Embroidery flosses- wools, silks and cottons

**Tests:** Several of the brown dyes were tested for the presence of iron (II) ions. Only one of the fabrics, a red, white and brown calico, tested positive.

A dry surface sponge was tested for soil removal only on the ground fabric. It was found that the sponge removed a small quantity of surface soiling, but made no visual difference in the appearance of the quilt.

Several of the sewing threads, the blues and greens in particular, exhibit haloing or slight dye bleed. Because wet cleaning is not recommended, no aqueous testing was performed.

**Construction/Description:**

This lovely album quilt is just about square in shape. It is configured in a 7x7 grid of blocks with pieced, mostly floral, appliqués. Details such as vines and tendrils were rendered in embroidery. All of the blocks were worked on a fine undyed cotton muslin, the same material used for backing each block and for the binding. The reverse of the quilt illustrates that each block was made individually and then they were assembled to create the whole. Thus, each block was quilted separately with quilting patterns ranging from outlines of central shapes to overall diamond grids. The majority of the appliqués are rendered in shades of green and red fabrics, many of which are printed with small patterns. Accenting colors include brown, yellow, blue and pink.

Three blocks incorporate blue and brown glazed chintz fabrics printed with flowers in an appropriate scale for the block. In these areas, the printed flowers were used whole, as the motif, rather than piecing a flower from multiple fabrics. A fourth block uses a similar chintz for a butterfly.

There are three blocks that contain less overtly floral motifs. They are the upper proper right corner and the bottom proper right corner. In the upper proper left, a copper plate fabric, printed in shades of brown on a cream ground, depicting a scene of children climbing a fence, was appliquéd to the ground, with four ovals of similarly printed images filling the corners. In the bottom proper right, four brown and white printed fabric strips were used to outline the corners with an appliquéd flower in the center. Another block (second row from the top, third block from the proper left) has a lyre in the center with leaf branches in the corners. The lyre is pieced while its strings are embroidered with yellow cotton thread.

**Condition:**

Structurally, the quilt is in generally stable condition. The fabrics are aged, many displaying a threadbare appearance indicating abrasion where one woven element may be damaged or missing entirely. This is especially noted in a solid pinky-red fabric used in many of the blocks. Similar age and wear is noted in other fabrics, such as a solid gray-green and several red fabrics with printed patterns. There is additional damage to the appliqués that should be treated that is outlined below. Some of the embroidered stems and tendrils exhibit losses as well, primarily the blue-greens. Some of these are silk, some are wool. The cotton embroidery is generally intact with only minor abrasion. The binding has very small losses beginning in some of the darker stained areas; however, we do not recommend treating those damages at this time.

In terms of appearance, the ground and backing exhibit varying degrees of the yellow to brown discoloration common to ageing and acidifying cellulose. There are some tidelines as well and the back is more discolored than the face. On the back, the discoloration takes something of a checkerboard patterns, illustrating the individual nature of each block. On the face, the discoloration is more overall in tone although the

proper right side is somewhat darker than the proper left. Minor scattered red brown stains are also noted on both faces. Those on the face are not terribly disfiguring. Those on the back are larger, more widespread and more visually disturbing.

In four blocks the stitches attaching the appliqués have broken, allowing the fabrics to lift. In one of these blocks, with a chintz appliqué, some of the fabric is slightly folded and more is missing leaving the sewn outline of the appliqué and the quilting stitches in place. A fifth block exhibits the damage expected from a degrading iron-based dye. In this fabric the brown motifs have worn away, leaving the remaining surrounding printed fabric. One block, three from the top and three in from the proper right edge, has a small tear on the reverse.

### **Goal of Treatment:**

The aim of this treatment is to prepare the quilt for display, either on a wall or bed, in the Historical Society. Towards this aim, below are outlined steps to clean and stabilize the quilt before attaching a Velcro hanging mechanism that is not necessary to use, if the quilt is displayed on a bed.

Cleaning will be limited to a thorough conservation vacuuming. While the fibers would benefit from wet cleaning, we do not recommend it. The presence of iron (II) ions mitigates against it, as does the glazing of the chintzs, and haloing of several of the sewing threads. In addition, the individual nature of each block presents the chance that each block could shrink separately. Such differential shrinkage could easily cause distortion and undulations.

The majority of the stabilization will entail re-sewing lifting appliqués back in place. If necessary, an overlay of nylon net may be used instead of or in addition to the sewing. The tear on the reverse will be stabilized with an inserted support patch and couching. Where the chintz fabric is missing, it will not be replaced. No treatment for abraded embroidery is proposed.

We recommend the attachment of a header and Velcro hanging mechanism. The quilt is stable enough not to require a backing or dust cover, however, should the Historical Society wish to display the quilt on the wall, a header will help to support the quilt and distribute the weight of the quilt. If it is displayed on a bed, the header and soft Velcro strip should not interfere.

### **Treatment Proposal:**

1. Written and photographic documentation: Both written and photographic documentation are an essential part of any conservation treatment and are required by the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works in their Standards of Practice. Our policy is to write an Examination Report and a Post Treatment Report which document the treatment and materials used on your textile. Ideally, this document

should remain with the conserved artifact. A before and after digital photograph will also be taken and kept on file at the Workshop as a visual record of conservation.

2. Vacuum: Hand vacuuming of the textile will be done using the upholstery attachment of a hand-held vacuum cleaner on low to medium suction. A fiberglass screen, its edges covered with bias binding, will be held in place on the piece during vacuuming to protect it from snagging, and to prevent suction of the fibers up into the tubing. The piece will be vacuumed systematically in a slow, row-by-row pattern to both the front and the back of the textile.

3. Stabilization: Those appliqués that are lifting will be secured to the ground with stitching taken in cotton thread of an appropriate weight and color. The small tear on the reverse will have a patch of cotton fabric inserted behind the damage. The patch will be sewn around its perimeter and the frayed edges of the loss will be couched to the patch.

4. Prepare header, prepare Velcro: A cotton fabric of appropriate weight and color will be cut to the proper size for the header, then scoured and pressed. A 2" wide Velcro tape will be sewn by machine to 3" wide cotton tape, cut to the width of the piece.

5. Position and sew header: The header will be positioned across the top edge of the quilt and sewn in place by hand to the textile through all layers with a combination running/back stitch along the top edge and in vertical channels of herringbone stitch evenly spaced across the width of the quilt.

6. Position and sew Velcro: The Velcro-webbing strip will then be sewn by hand across the top edge of the quilt through all layers with a combination running/back stitch and herringbone stitch.

The opposing side of the Velcro will be adhered to a 3" x 1/16" strip of aluminum. The slat will be prepared with predrilled countersunk holes through which screws can attach the mechanism to the wall.

7. Pack for storage in the SHS box: The quilt will be packed for storage with acid free tissue to pad folds, in the box belonging to the Historical Society, in which it arrived at TCW.

RJD/pk

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Re: Album Quilt

**Estimate for Conservation Treatment:**

1. Written and photographic documentation:	1 hr	\$85.
2. Vacuum:	2	170.
3. Stabilization:	4	340.
4. Prepare header and Velcro:	2	170.
5. Position and sew header:	3	255.
6. Position and sew Velcro:	9	765.
7. Pack for storage in the SHS box:	<u>1</u>	<u>85.</u>
	22 hrs	\$1,870.00

**Materials:**

Velcro, webbing, thread:	\$90.
Header fabric:	55.
Velcro slat:	117.
Shipping of slat:	<u>40.</u>
	\$302.00

**Total estimated amount for conservation treatment: \$2,172.00**

To proceed with the above treatment, please **keep the original estimate** for your records, **sign the copy** on the back where indicated, and **return it to us enclosing 50% of the total amount**. The last 50% balance is due prior to release of the piece.

Additional Charges: Insurance at a monthly rate of 20 cents per \$100 of the evaluated amount of your piece or cost of conservation; and NYS sales tax, if applicable. Tax exempt customers should send us a copy of their form. Storage fees will be equal to the amount of insurance or a minimum of \$2 per month on pieces which remain at the TCW sixty days after the date of this report.