



Mable Otis Head Interview Transcript June 29, 1985

Interviewer: Jeannette Lasansky (J)

Interviewee: Mable Otis Head (O)

Date: June 29, 1985

Place: Farmington, New Mexico

(J) Can you tell me your first experience with quilting?

(O) Well my husband worked for the Dallas trading post and time was heavy so I just saw a pattern and I started. I think that those scraps and pieces were getting to me. Everybody sewed in those days.

(J) This was when?

(O) In 1926. I started about 1934....

(J) How had you ever seen your mother or grandmother or a neighbor lady quilt?

(O) No. I picked up the quilting reading in...Gone, Arizona. Cause we were the Peabody outpost for every railroad. Gone, Arizona those days, no paved streets. It took us eight hours in those days to get out of Gona into Flagstaff or Farmington. So you had to pass time or else.

(J) How were you passing time quilting with her?

(O) She were or less showed me how to quilt.

(J) And her name was?

(O) Dekey. I cannot remember her first name she has been dead years. See my husband has been gone twelve years so it has been forty years since I learned to quilt. This frame we borrowed my husband got the pattern off of and made my frame. I have hung onto it.

(J) So you had never quilted until you were at a reservation.

(O) Reservation was where I picked it up.

(J) And what was your first one you did do you remember?

(O) It is a good thing that we did not get down into that box because I believe that I still have it. It is a "Dutch Girl" and the stitches are about that long. And it is out in back. I have been intending to get down in there and rip it all apart and redo it. The "Dutch Girl"

COLLECTION

AR.00027 Traditional Quilt Makers in New Mexico Survey

IDENTIFIER

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DOCUMENT

DESCRIPTION

On June 29, 1985 Jeannette Lasansky interviewed quilter Mable Otis Head. The interview was transcribed into typescript circa 1985-6, and the transcript was digitized May 23, 2017.

Mable Otis was born in Farmington, New Mexico, on November 13, 1908. For a time, her parents ran a trading post at Chaco Canyon. Her family was of English and Scotch-Irish descent. She completed high school, and married Willard Henry Head, a grader operator, in Aztec, New Mexico, in April, 1932. The couple lived in Farmington; Kayenta, Arizona; and Fruitland, New Mexico.

Mable's pattern sources were her family (especially her grandmother), and magazines. She used scraps and other fabric that was given to her, and quilted "to pass time."

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DATE

June 29 1985 Date created

May 23 2017 Date modified



DIMENSIONS

11 in (length) x 8 ½ in (width)

CURATORIAL CATEGORY

Textiles-United States and Canada, Textiles and Dress

RELATED PEOPLE

Museum of International Folk Art (publisher)

Jeannette Lasansky (contributor)