



Dorothy Zopf Interview Transcript July 1, 1985

Interviewer: Jeannette Lasansky (J)

Interviewee: Dorothy Zopf (Z)

Date: July 1, 1985

Place: Arroyo Sam, New Mexico

(J) Dorothy I would like to begin with what was your very first experience with quilts?

(Z) Sleeping under them obviously. My grandmother always made a piece of wool cover for every blanket so that the blanket would not get soiled, dirty, what had you. And they were tied, and had a little mullin strip at the top so that I guess would not deal on them or something. Anyway they were always on the bed. Very very utilitarian. She did not do fancy piecing, grandma didn't until she was very elderly. She came to live with us and started a "Devonian Plate" which was never finished. And that is the only pretty one I recall from her, my father's mother.

(J) Now the plainer ones were the blankets put in? Did it have a pocket for the blanket.

(Z) Yes. Exactly. The top was kind of a double fold like a sandwich baggie, that arrangement.

(J) Now the design, did she create these in blocks and then assemble the blocks together, or was it an overall thing that she sort of...

(Z) It was an overall bit or more or less as you could go on the old treadle sewing machine and it just kept the blanket clean and nice. Now blanket was always popped into one of those lumpy old bags. But they were quilts of a sort.

(J) This would have been when and where?

(Z) This well, my grandparents were homesteaders in North Dakota but by the time I was a little girl and visiting my grandma she lived in Southern New Jersey where I was born. They had retired and sold the farm.

(J) About 1950?

(Z) About 1930

COLLECTION

AR.00027 Traditional Quilt Makers in New Mexico Survey

IDENTIFIER

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DOCUMENT

DESCRIPTION

On July 17, 1985 Jeannette Lasansky interviewed quilter Dorothy Zopf. The interview was transcribed into typescript circa 1985-6, and the transcript was digitized May 23, 2017.

Dorothy Zopf was born July 25, 1928, in Bayonne, New Jersey, to a family of English and Scotch-Irish descent. She studied art education in college, and taught art in public school from 1949-1980 "with interruptions." She married George W Zopf May 5, 1949, in Schenectady, New York. The couple lived in Ohio before moving to New Mexico in 1981.

In 1985, Zopf reported that she developed color schemes by studying old quilts. On her survey form she wrote: "I usually start with a theme i.e. oriental rugs, Indian pottery, NM landscape and do a series, each one different from another. Strip quilts and Log Cabin I use because of the many strips of fabric available." When asked why she made quilts, her answer was "I love to see 'scraps' come to life again. Something from nothing. A true heritage from the Depression."

Following the 1985 survey, Zopf published surveys of her own documenting quilting traditions in various counties in New Mexico. In 2001 the University of New Mexico press published her book **Surviving the Winter: the Evolution of Quilting in New Mexico**

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DATE

July 1 1985 Date created

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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)