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## Heirloom quilt is rare collectible

BY VICI PAPAJOHN  
Gulf Breeze News  
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"Oh, what a treasure!" were the first words out of quilt appraiser Alma Moates' mouth when she saw Gulf Breeze resident Lenn Jackson's family quilt. "This is an absolute treasure!"

The unique Victorian quilt was created in 1889 by Jackson's great grandmother, Louise 'Louisa' Henry McHaney in Lexington, TN. Jackson knew that the piece had great sentimental value, but also discovered that the family heirloom quilt is truly a rare collectible.

Quilt appraisers have examined the quilt and believe it is a perfect example of making something beautiful out of limited resources on hand. The pattern appears to be an adaptation of a Berlin needlepoint chair back pattern probably adapted totally by Henry.

Jackson is the fifth lady in her family to own the quilt which is passed down to the oldest daughter of each generation.

"Louise McHaney was 69 years old when she stitched the quilt," Jackson says. "It took 12 months and 12 days to complete it. It was shown in the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair and at the Marshall Fields Department Store in Chicago."

The quilt is a postage stamp quilt, so named because it is entirely composed of 5/8" squares. "Cotton was scarce after the civil war," Moates explains. "So they used whatever little scraps they had and made them work for quilting."

The quilt is not only a post-Civil War era collectible, its design and color are very unique and also add to its value, according to Moates. The quilt is worked with a brown background, and has a blue, green, pink, red and yellow rose pattern probably borrowed from a needlepoint pattern purchased from the New Orleans Exposition in 1884, according to Jackson's family records.

The quilt is in remarkably good condition, likely due to its unlikely background color.

"A brown quilt is definitely less likely to be popular and would've been used less frequently," says Moates. "So, it stayed protected all these years in trunks or cabinets."

The brown fabric squares are the only squares that show apparent deterioration, probably due to the fact that cotton is a cellulose fiber that required a mordant to grip the fabric and set the color. Minerals were often used as mordants,

according to Moates. In the case of brown dyes, iron was used, causing the subsequent deterioration.

The McHaney Mosaic Rose Quilt is 85 1/4" long by 76 1/4" wide, and its mosaic design depicts a bouquet of roses consisting of 12,772 pieces. The quilt is hand pieced with 625,828 stitches and hand quilted with 178,808 stitches as counted by the maker's husband. The backing is solid brown cotton.

"Though it is a marvelous heirloom, we will be donating it to a museum," Jackson says. "It just seems right that it'd be shared. In March of 2001, I was visiting with my mother, Millie Bomar, in



**ABOVE:** On October 25, 1981, The Tuscaloosa News ran this picture of Mrs. John Ben Bomar viewing her great grandmother's quilt with antique quilt collector Farley Selliger.

**RIGHT:** The Rose quilt spread out to reveal its full pattern.



Tuscaloosa, and she and I and my aunt, Mary Helen Grimes, were looking at it. We knew it needed to be shared. My cousin, Jenny Klostermeyer, is a quilter and she shared it with her friends and fellow quilters in the Washington, D.C. area at antique shows and special events.



**LEFT:** Quilt appraiser Alma Moates, right, examines the Victorian quilt with its owner, Lenn Jackson.

## Slipcovers offer the perfect style solution

● **Four Season's Upholstery offers innovative styles, solid hardwood frames, optional customization**

BY JON FORTUNA  
Special to the News

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For all your furniture needs, stop by J. Miller's Furniture located at 1149 Gulf Breeze Parkway in Gulf Breeze, Florida. Their telephone number is (850)-934-6200. For more information on Four Seasons Upholstery, or for design advice, contact Jon Fortuna at J. Miller's Furniture.

