

Museum Notes

by Kristen Parrott, curator
for the week of June 28, 2017

The annual Strawberry Shortcake Social will be held on the lawn of the Sherry-Butt House next Tuesday, July 4, from 1 to 5PM. The historic Sherry-Butt House, built by Cyrus Butt in 1870, is located at 795 N. Main Street, Viroqua, next to the Vernon County Fairgrounds. Tickets are \$5, available at the event. Proceeds benefit the Vernon County Historical Society. In case of rain, the event will move inside the Expo Center at the fairgrounds.

Strawberries, homemade shortcake, and Culver's vanilla frozen custard will be served with lemonade or coffee. Musical entertainment, provided by the Viroqua Community Band and the Viroqua Area Men's Chorus, will begin at 1:30PM. The band will include a couple of pieces from World War I – the "Black Jack March" and "Stout-Hearted Men" – in honor of the WWI centennial this year.

Enjoy tours of the house all afternoon during the social. This year the house will feature a quilt exhibit with quilts pulled from the museum's collections. One of the finer quilts in this exhibit is a blue and white quilt made in the basket medallion pattern. Kjisti Erickson Peterson Midthum (1844-1925), a Norwegian immigrant, pieced this quilt in her Towerville, Crawford County, home around 1890. Her granddaughter Inez Turner Baars (1896-1990), who was raised in Towerville, did the quilting in 1927. This quilt is featured in the book, *Gatherings: America's Quilt Heritage*, published in 1995.

A selection of crazy quilts will also be on exhibit around the house. A "crazy quilt" is made of irregularly-shaped scraps of silk and velvet and other fancy fabrics pieced together with decorative stitching. Often some of the scraps are embellished with embroidered or painted figures or patterns. One of the crazy quilts in the exhibit includes a ribbon from the Vernon County Homecoming Fair of 1909.

A few signature quilts will be in the exhibit, too. Signature quilts, also called friendship or autograph quilts, are just what they sound like: quilts covered with names of people, usually names from a particular group such as a church or a club. Sometimes each quilt block is made by a different individual or family. These quilts often commemorate a special event, or are given to someone moving away from the community as a remembrance. One of the signature quilts in the exhibit includes the name of Jane Butt, daughter of the Cyrus Butt who built the house.

Several quilts are already on permanent exhibit at the Sherry-Butt House. The bed in the child's room features a quilt done in the flying geese pattern, with red triangles (geese) on a white background (sky). The quilt was created around 1866, so it is about 150 years old. This quilt was donated by Louise De Lap and made by her aunt.

And two quilts are on permanent exhibit in the maid's room: a crazy quilt, and a quilt made in the pattern called "log cabin". Log cabin quilts are composed of blocks of light and dark strips of fabric. Each square block is divided diagonally, with the light strips on one side and the dark on the other. In America, the strips are thought of as logs, and the red square usually found in the center of each block represents the cabin's hearth.

Hope to see you on the 4th!