

# Trip Around THE World



## THE TRIP AROUND THE WORLD QUILT

The *Trip Around the World* quilt, measuring 80" x 80", was made in 1932 by Bozena and Laura Clarke of Detroit, Michigan. The quilt is a simple pattern consisting of 34 bands of multicolored and solid fabrics. The fabrics are arranged in colorways of like-colored prints followed by a coordinating solid. Small squares of fabric are sewn together and arranged by color to form a series of brightly colored concentric squares. Over 2,000 squares were hand pieced to create this quilt, which was then hand quilted in a grid of straight lines running through every square. The *Trip Around the World* quilt is an adaptation of a traditional Amish quilt design, *Sunshine and Shadow*, a name derived from the light and dark effect formed by the bands of color.

The *Trip Around the World* quilt was a cooperative effort between Bozena and Laura, a quilt that they designed together from the day they saw one like it at Hudson's downtown store. Bozena and Laura planned the quilt, making a detailed, hand-colored diagram based on a *Detroit News* pattern. Laura pieced the quilt, and it was quilted by their quilting group, the Rebecca Jane Circle from the Union Boulevard Congregational Church.



The Clarkes saved everything associated with their quiltmaking. Pictured here are a variety of hand-made templates, patterns from the *Detroit News* and ribbons won by the Clarkes for their quilting. Photo by Mary Whalen.

## THE CLARKE FAMILY

Bozena Vilhemina, born in Detroit in 1871, was a tailor before she married in 1896. She had two children – Laura May and George. Laura May never married and had no children, while George married Emilie and had two children – Harriet and George Jr. At the age of 50, Bozena learned to quilt from members of the Rebecca Jane Circle. She also produced hooked and braided rugs made from her husband's worn-out suits and overcoats. Her expertise with thread and needle was then passed on to her daughter, Laura May and daughter-in-law, Emilie.

Quilting in the Clarke family reflected the fabric and pattern of family life. Quilts were made for special occasions, such as weddings, births and graduations. Bozena Clarke made several quilts for each of her grandchildren. Activity followed the seasons of the year. Bozena saved the quilting for periods when Laura was available to help, and pieced blocks by herself during quiet times at the family cottage.



Bozena V. Clarke, Laura's mother and quilting partner



Laura May Clarke

Bozena's granddaughter, Harriet remembers that it was Bozena's "custom to piece quilts in the warmer months as these could be carried in a basket or box and taken by car to the family summer cottage." Bozena would then "set the basket by her rocking chair and piece until everyone was up for breakfast. She quilted in the winter months, usually after Christmas, about two or three hours each afternoon until spring, or until the quilt or quilts...were done."

The Clarke family quilts had been carefully stored and used through the years by Dr. Harriet Clarke, granddaughter of Bozena. Dr. Clarke greatly valued the collection of quilts, patterns, templates and paper materials as documents of her own family's history and creative process. Seeking to preserve the collection as a whole, Dr. Clarke looked for a museum home for them. She learned of the Michigan Quilt Project through her chapter of the Embroiderers Guild of America. She and her brother, George Clarke donated the entire collection to the Michigan State University Museum in 1986. Explained Dr. Clarke after she donated the quilts, "...I [feel] so good about having all [the] quilts stay together, that they wouldn't get separated and washed and become unknown..."