

Virginia Quilt Museum Exhibit

Counterpanes and White Work of the Shenandoah Valley - 1800-1850

Beverley A. and Jeffrey S. Evans guest curators

February 1 – May 12, 2012

In this groundbreaking exhibition, guest curators Beverley and Jeff Evans will examine white-work bedcovers produced in the Shenandoah Valley during the first half of the 19th century. Embellished with a variety of stitched and woven ornamentations ranging from formal and structured to naive and whimsical, the examples included in the exhibit represent the diverse cultural tendencies of the region. By their very nature, these domiciliary works of art have been underappreciated in the larger discipline of textile collecting and study. This exhibition will endeavor to remedy those prior failings by bringing to light a variety of well documented examples drawn from private and institutional collections, most of which have not been previously displayed in a public venue.

The Evanses will define and compare the terms counterpane, coverlet (coverlid) and white-work quilt (wedding quilt) by delineating the characteristics of each style including construction aspects, decorative techniques, and original usage. They will also explore the cultural background of the three styles including the overall and specific symbolism seen in each. By surveying original source materials like court records, estate inventories, diaries, ledgers and daybooks, the curators desire to present a compelling context for white work within the material culture of bed coverings in the Shenandoah Valley.

Plans are to produce an accompanying catalogue documenting the exhibit. An opening reception will be held at the museum on Saturday, February 11, 2012 from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.