

DOUBLE WEDDING RING

The motif of two interlocking rings goes as far back as the fourth century when it was used to decorate Roman cups. These cups were made of glass decorated with connecting metal rings. Another example are GIMMAL rings. These rings were popular in Europe in the 15th and 16th centuries. They consisted of rings that could be interlocked. During the engagement one was worn by the man and the other by the woman. When they married the two rings were fitted together to be worn by the wife.

It is thought this style of ring came to America through Germanic people who settled in Pennsylvania in the late 17th century. This pattern of interlocking rings was seen on coverlets, ceramics and other decorative objects in Early America.

A quilt made much like the Double Wedding Ring is in the Shelburne Museum, dated 1825-50. This quilt is titled Pincushion But the actual Double Wedding Ring pattern appears to have been rarely used until the 1920s. Part of the difficulty in tracing the earlier use of this pattern is the fact that over time it was made under around 40 different names. Just a few are; Rainbow, Around the World, Pickle Dish, Coiled Rattlesnake, Endless Chain, King Tut and Friendship Knot; see the example above to the left. The great variety of names illustrates how differently the pattern was visualized in various periods and regions. In reading an early diary or letter we might easily find the pattern under another name.

It appears that in early quilts of this pattern the pieces of the rings were first sewn together then appliquéd on solid fabric. Around the beginning of the 20th century women began to sewing it together as a pieced quilt. Whatever the method it was a difficult quilt to make.

Several newspapers and magazines published patterns and articles about it. Kits were sold with the fabrics precut. Even fairs got into the enthusiasm about this pattern sometimes putting the Double Wedding Ring quilts into a special category.

The two completed quilts were made by Alberta Cartwright, Shelbyville, Tennessee
_____DATES

The fireplace quilt top maker is unknown.

The quilt on the rack is from the _____family.