

EDITOR'S NOTE

The photo on the cover of this issue of *English Teaching Forum* displays a quilt made in the pattern known as Double Wedding Ring. This 20th Century pattern is one of the most popular quilt patterns. Unlike the quilt on the cover, with its blue background, Double Wedding Ring quilts often have a white background that accents the colorful patchwork of the interlocking rings in the design.

It is difficult to trace the history of the Double Wedding Ring pattern, as it is difficult to construct the history of any quilt pattern. Pieces of information about quilt patterns come from various sources, and along the way, they are embellished and stitched together like squares in a quilt, creating an interesting but sometimes mythical story. (These histories become even more complicated when the same quilt patterns are known by different names in different parts of the United States.)

Not only quilt patterns have histories, but quilts themselves each have their own histories. Quilts get handed down within families from one generation to the next, along with stories about the persons who made them and owned them. Pieces of the stories can be forgotten along the way, making it harder to determine the exact age and origin of a quilt, although many people are interested in doing that.

To preserve quilts and their histories, many museums in the United States include quilts in their collections. For example, the quilt pictured on the cover is housed by the Illinois State Museum. It was donated to the decorative arts collection of that institution and is estimated to date from the 1930s. Other notable museums with collections of quilts include the National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C., the International Quilt Study Center at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (which has one of the largest publicly owned collections of quilts in the world) and the Museum of the American Quilter's Society in Paducah, Kentucky, whose collection includes many award-winning quilts.

You can read more about quilts (and see photos of quilt patterns) in the feature article in this issue. The feature article is followed by a lesson plan, "Quilting with Language," that will help you share information about quilts with your students. We hope you enjoy exploring this topic in your classrooms. —MK