

Philena's Friendship Quilt: A Quaker Farewell to Ohio.* Lynda Salter Chenoweth. The Ohio Quilt Series. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2009. 104 pp.

Reviewed by Jon Kay

The popular pastimes of quilt making and genealogical research have grown into multimillion-dollar industries and the emergence of quilting retreats and scrap-booking classes complicate the stereotypical images of women gathering around a quilt frame or a grandmother leafing through a family album. In light of the growing interest in these two genres, Lynda Salter Chenoweth's *Philena's Friendship Quilt: A Quaker Farewell to Ohio* is sure to find a large audience among the growing number of quilt and genealogy enthusiasts. The information that Chenoweth reveals, including the techniques and tools for researching the story of a 19th century signature quilt, focuses on the traditions and aesthetics that produced a quilt, while tracing the family tree of the maker and of the recipient of a quilt.

Historical biographers reconstruct individual life histories by moving between the historical facts known about an individual and the information available about the social, cultural, and economic contexts in which that person lived. Similarly, scholars have embraced biographical studies of objects, which move beyond stories of the maker, but also follow an object through its life history. Chenoweth's work marries these two interpretive methods to breathe life into an 1853 signature quilt made for Philena Cooper Hambleton. The book concentrates on both the particulars of the specific quilt and the life story of the person for whom it was made.

The social story that emerges from researching the quilt reveals a hidden element in the quilt's design, which in turn sheds light on the history of the anti-slavery movement among Quakers in Ohio. Chenoweth's study also demonstrates how objects are invested with various meanings, which are later changed, lost, and (re)constructed. Since the book is brief—90 pages, including notes and an index—I am not going to spill too much about the book's story. Nevertheless, quilters, local historians, and genealogists will find this book enjoyable and encouraging. The book covers the history of signature/friendship quilts, provides instructions for making a replica of Philina's Friendship Quilt, as well as details the history of Philina's family. On the whole, the book represents the type of work that material culture scholars need to do more of, that is to present their historical and aesthetic research methods and findings in a way that reaches an audience of hobbyists, collectors, and community scholars.

Jon Kay directs Traditional Arts Indiana (TAI), Indiana's statewide folk arts program. Also, as a doctoral student in the Department of Folklore and Ethnomusicology at Indiana University, he is researching cultural representations and heritage making in Brown County, Indiana.

* This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 3.0 Unported License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, 171 Second Street, Suite 300, San Francisco, California, 94105, USA.