



Floral chintzes (upper left) or an urn with flowers (middle row, right) were highly prized for quilt fabrics. Other popular designs included a pattern sometimes called grandmother's flower garden (bottom row, right), which was first published in America in *Godey's Lady's Book* in 1835. Still popular today, the block is assembled from hexagonal pieces cut to a template before being sewn into the pattern.

## “For My Dear Mrs. Solomons”—Kinship and Friendship Stitched into a Quilt

In the early 1850s, Charlotte Joseph’s sister Eleanor Solomons moved from Georgetown, South Carolina, to Savannah, Georgia, to be near two of her sons, Lizar Solomons and Abraham Alexander (called A.A.) Solomons. Eleanor would live with A.A. and his wife, Cecilia. On the occasion of this move, Charlotte Joseph orchestrated the making of an album quilt, a striking example of the sewing arts and fancywork of the period.

The quilt is notable for several reasons—it is beautiful and well-preserved, shows a high level of needlework skill, and is a material document of the social network to which Eleanor Solomons belonged. Most of the sewers lived in South Carolina or Georgia, but cousins from as far away as New York also contributed their needlework. Inscriptions, inked in black by Eleanor, identify the makers of the quilt’s sixty-three blocks.

One of the special pleasures of my research was finding among Harry Alexander’s papers, a letter that identified the sewers of the blocks, which he used as the basis for the list he published in his book. Using Harry’s published list and this letter, I was able to identify almost all

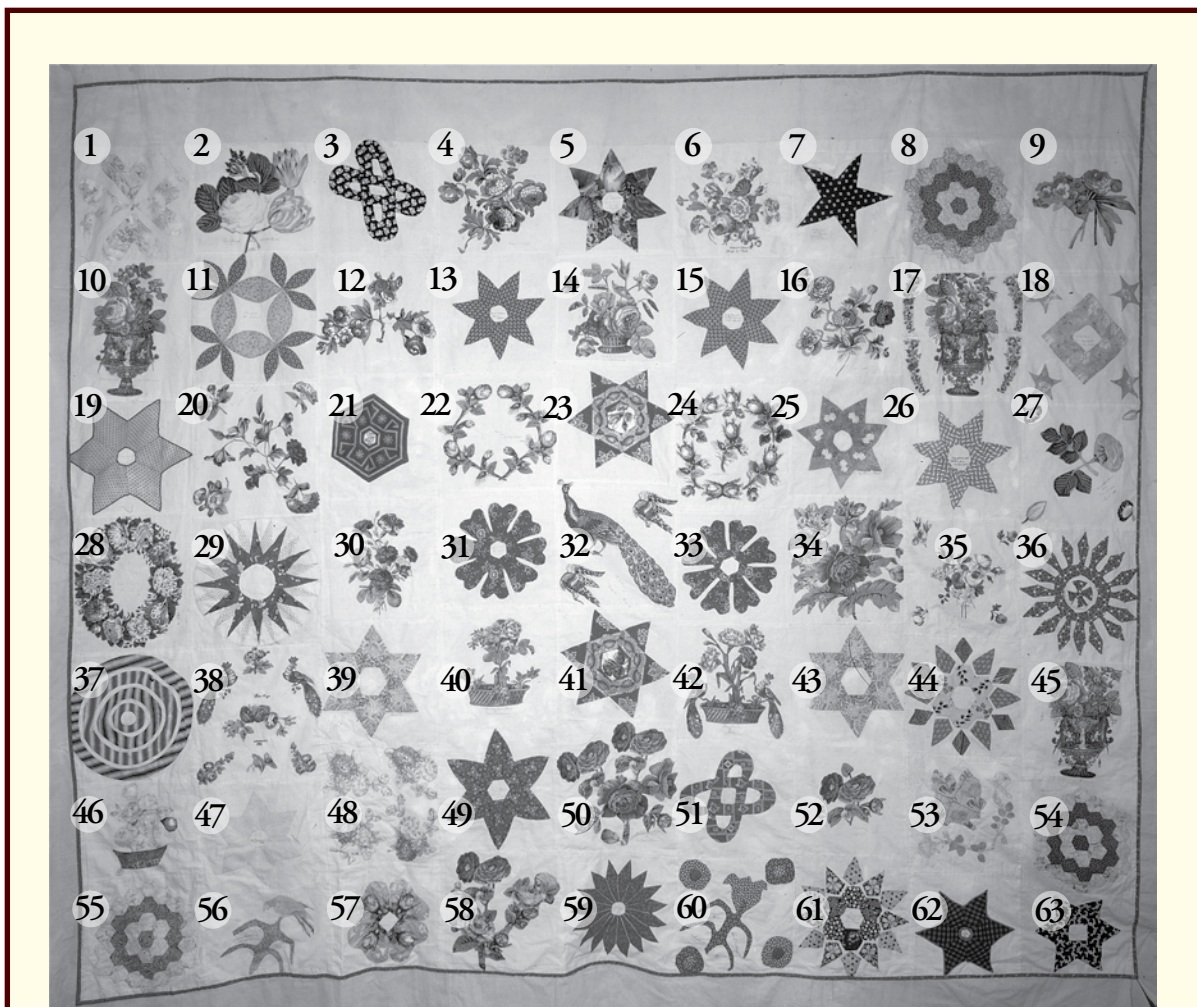
of the sewers of the individual blocks by name, location and nature of relationship to Eleanor. (See pages 44-46 for the key to Eleanor’s inscriptions and brief descriptions of the blocks.)

Family and friends, women and girls, Jews and gentiles, sewed the blocks, which then were stitched together. The overall pattern is a checkerboard. Floral chintz prints alternate with geometric patterns in calico, first pieced or sewn together, then stitched onto a white muslin background. Some of the designs are trimmed with crocheted braid, some with embroidery.

Among the blocks is one sewn by Rebecca Isaiah Moses—a seven-point red star of calico (Block #13). Two of Rebecca’s daughters, Cecilia and Leonora, also contributed blocks made of calico to the quilt.

The quilt’s centerpiece, with peacock and eagles, is signed by “C,” who likely is Charlotte Joseph herself. Eleanor’s six-year-old granddaughter Cecilia Solomons, daughter of Lizar and Perla, made one block. Rinah, the black woman who nursed Eleanor’s children sewed another, testimony to the inextricable bonds of affection and servitude that sometimes coexisted in the antebellum South.

## OLD FAMILY THINGS: AN AFFECTIONATE LOOK BACK



### Quilt Inscriptions

Key to inscriptions, from L to R, top to bottom:

1. From Mary O Conel, Savannah 1855. Friend. Victorian vogue for cut-paper design.
2. Aunt Eleanor from Sarah Maria 1853 Niece, possibly Sarah Joseph. Floral chintz.
3. Leonora, July 22, 1853. Kin. Leonora Moses Rosenfeld, daughter of Rebecca Isaiah Moses and wife of Rev. Jacob Rosenfeld. Two interlocking hearts. See blocks #13 and #51.
4. Frances A. George. Friend. Large floral chintz.
5. To Mrs. Solomons from her friend, C. F. Hayden, Savannah.
6. Mary Ehney, May 2, 1853. Friend. Name cross-stitched with heart.
7. To 'Grandma' from Cecilia 6 years old. Granddaughter Cecilia Sheftall Solomons, adopted daughter of Lizar and Perla Sheftall Solomons. See block #28.
8. Julia Emanuel, Poughkeepsie, New York. Cousin. Design called "Hexagon Patchwork" was published in Godey's Lady's Book in 1835. See blocks #54 and #55.
9. Mrs. Catherine Abrams, Feb. 14, 1853. Cousin.
10. Emily Oppenheim to Mrs. E. I. Solomons. Cousin. See blocks #17 and #45 for same fabric.
11. From a Friend. Two small-pattern calicos, each outlined in gold trim.



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12. Cousin Eleanor from Kate. Cousin.
13. To Mrs. Solomons from Rebecca. Kin. Rebecca Isaiah Moses, mother of Leonora Rosenfeld and of Eleanor’s daughter-in-law, Cecilia. See blocks #3, #51, and #59.
14. Sarah G. Oppenheim to Mrs. E. I. Solomons. Cousin.
15. To my dear Mrs. Solomons from her friend Clara M. Friend.
16. Rachel Cohen. Friend. Probably a member of the Cohen family which, like the Solomons, moved from Georgetown, S.C., to Savannah around 1840. See blocks #24 and #47.
17. From Caroline Schlviarin [or Schwerin] to Mrs. E. I. Solomons. Friend. Over-sized block with large floral bouquet in urn. See similar blocks #10 and #45.
18. Isabel Nones, New York, Dec. 25th, 1852. Cousin.
19. C. Benjamin. Friend.
20. From Rebecca Simpson, Sept. 18. Cousin. Slender stems on sprigs demonstrate exceptional needleworking skill.
21. Caroline Belitzer. Friend. Name embroidered in red in center.
22. To Mother from Zip M. Solomons 1853. Daughter-in-law and niece. Zipporah Malsey Solomons, daughter of Eleanor’s sister Malsey Solomons, married Eleanor’s son Joseph in 1848. Zip and Joe were also related through their fathers: Zip’s father, Sampson Solomons, was cousin to Joe’s father, Israel Solomons.
23. Miriam Moses. Cousin who was also the sister-in-law of Rebecca Isaiah Moses. See blocks #13 and #48.
24. R. B. B. Cohen. Friend. See blocks #16 and #47.
25. My servant Rinah. This seven-pointed calico star is a rare example of an album quilt block sewn by a bondswoman for her mistress. See page 55.
26. To my friend Mrs. Solomons from Frances M [illegible]. Friend.
27. For Grandmother Eleanor from Kate Abrams, August 1853. Granddaughter.
28. For Mother from Perla. Daughter-in-law Perla Sheftall Solomons, wife of Eleanor’s son Lizar and mother of Cecilia Sheftall Solomons. See block #7.
29. ‘Home is not home without Thee’ Ann Wendell Evans, Dec. 25th, 1852. Friend.
30. Ophelia L. Abbott. Friend.
31. Rachel Tris, Dec. 24th, 1852. Cousin. Cut-paper hearts joined at base in circular ring. See matching block #33.
32. For Mrs. Solomons from her friend C September 1853. Likely from sister Charlotte Joseph, referred to in the family as “Aunt C.” Center block of quilt, peacock with two eagles.
33. Abby Tris, Dec. 24, 1852. Cousin of Eleanor, sister of Rachel Tris. See matching block #31.
34. For Eleanor from Sally. Friend.
35. For Aunt Solomons from Henrietta S [illegible] September 1853. Niece. Henrietta Simpson Emanuel.
36. From her affectionate & true friend Caroline Triest, Mrs. Solomons. Cousin.
37. To Mrs. Solomons from Anistree Simpson, Sep. 20th, 1853. Cousin.
38. Rebecca Wingos, March 3rd, 1853. Floral chintz sprays, with two flanking small peacocks. See similar block #42.
39. Miriam Moses. Cousin. See block #23.
40. Matilda Oppenheim to Mrs. E. I. Solomons. Cousin. Pattern similar to block #42.
41. Mrs. H. Davis. Friend. Pattern same as block #23.
42. From Sarah to Mother. Daughter. Elements of pattern similar to elements in blocks #40 and #38.
43. Mrs. H. Davis. Friend. Same as block #39. See pairing of Miriam Moses and Mrs. H. Davis in blocks #23 and #41.
44. Mrs. Solomons from Mrs. De Witt. Friend. Then popular color combination of red, green, and yellow soon went out of style.
45. R. Suares. Friend. Urn same as in blocks #10 and #17.
46. [No Name]
47. E. Cohen, Savannah, Georgia, July 1st, 1852. Friend. For other Cohens, see blocks #16 and #24.
48. Rebecca 1854. Kin. See block #13.

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49. Anna Davis Nov. 4 1851. Friend.
50. To Aunt Eleanor from Henrietta, September 1853. Niece. Henrietta Abra(ha)ms Joseph.
51. From Leonore R. Sept., 1853. Kin. Leonora Moses Rosenfeld. Pattern is mirror image of block #3.
52. To Aunt Eleanor from Molcey, September 1853. Niece. May be the same as daughter-in-law Zip Molcey Solomons who made block #22.
53. With the humble regards of Lucy, Savannah, January, 1853. Friend.
54. Marion Nones, New York. Cousin. Marion Emanuel Nones. "Hexagon Patchwork" pattern same as blocks #55 and #8—also by an "Emanuel"—but different fabrics. Inked inscription at top.
55. [No name] "Hexagon Patchwork" pattern same as blocks #8 and #54 but different fabrics.
56. Mina Sheur to her much respected and esteemed friend Eleanor Solomons. Friend.
57. To a friend from Cecile Feb. 2, 1852. Friend.
58. To Aunt Eleanor from Josephine September 1853. Niece.
59. To Mother from Cecilia, February 3, 1853. Daughter-in-law Cecilia Moses Solomons, wife of Eleanor's son Abraham Alexander Solomons; also daughter of Rebecca Isaiah Moses. See blocks #13 and #48. An excellent needleworker, Cecilia made a white baby cap for her sister Sarah's children, used by each in turn when a newborn.
60. For Aunt Eleanor from E. F. Abrams, August 17th 1853. Niece. Free-form red calico tulip on bright green stem similar to stem pattern in block #56.
61. Mrs. Solomons from Mrs. Philip. Friend. Similar pattern design to block #44 except all outer circle shapes are crystals; different calicos.
62. To Cousin E. from S. A. Bery. Cousin.
63. [No name]

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The center blocks include variety typical of the overall quilt: Floral chintzes showcasing rosebuds formed into wreaths, and geometric patterns with the color “Turkey-red” dominant, so named because it originated in that country.