

Hello my name is Ben Brown and I'm the director and curator of the Clarke Historical Museum. On display at the museum and through the summer are historic local quilts. Please join us this Saturday as we are hosting a free bed turning event led by Susie Freeze beginning at 1pm. Today, I'll be talking about one of the most significant items the museum owns, the Ulysses S. Grant Banner Quilt, which is currently on display.

Ulysses S. Grant was stationed at Fort Humboldt in 1853 through 1854. As the Civil War unfolded, Grant became a war hero, eventually becoming the 18th President of the United States, and the people of Humboldt are proud that such a man had once lived here.

Before the Civil War ended, local quilters got together and formed the Ladies Social Circle to create a quilt to auction off to raise funds for wounded Civil War veterans, eventually the quilt was given to Ulysses Grant.

Work on the "Banner Quilt" began in September 1864 by the Eureka Ladies' Sewing Circle. Within the next two months several ladies' organizations came together under the umbrella organization known as the Ladies' Social Circle of Eureka which would organize a Sanitary Fair for support of Union soldiers who were sick and wounded.

The auction of the Banner Quilt at the Sanitary Festival and Fair held at R.W. Brett's Hall and Saloon on Front Street near the city wharf became the most featured event of the evening. Successful bidders on the quilt donated their money to the U.S. Sanitary and Christian Commissions, organizations that furnished supplies, medical services and religious literature to Union troops, raising \$2,500, which when adjusted for inflation, equals \$35,000 in today's money! This effort illustrates the caring patriotism from local residents.

After the auction, the people of Humboldt County gave the quilt to U.S. Grant, with a letter describing the fundraising effort, Grant wrote a reply, both of which have been preserved and are currently on display with the quilt. The quilt then passed on to Ulysses' youngest son Jessie, then his son, Major Chapman Grant, and finally to Mabel Grant Hazard, Grant's great-granddaughter. After Mabel's death, her husband, Bruce Hazard, and their children decided that the quilt should return to Humboldt County, and donated it to the museum in 1991.

Along with the Banner Quilt, which only goes on display every other year due to how fragile it is, are over two dozen historic quilts from the Clarke Museum's collection. Quilting has a long history in this nation and for this region. While quilting is rooted in the necessities of colonial, pre-industrial domestic living, it evolved into an independent art form, becoming a folk art, which is defined as the art of the everyday. These quilts use materials, themes and styles that are emblematic to the time periods they were made, and provide a window into the past, telling stories about those who made them and what was occurring in society. This exhibit closes on September 2.

Please join us this Saturday beginning at 1pm for a free bed turning event at the Clarke Museum, visit our website, give us a call, or come by for more information.