

The original documents are located in Box 32, folder “Christmas Decorations - 1974” of the Betty Ford White House Papers, 1973-1977 at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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Washington Star-News

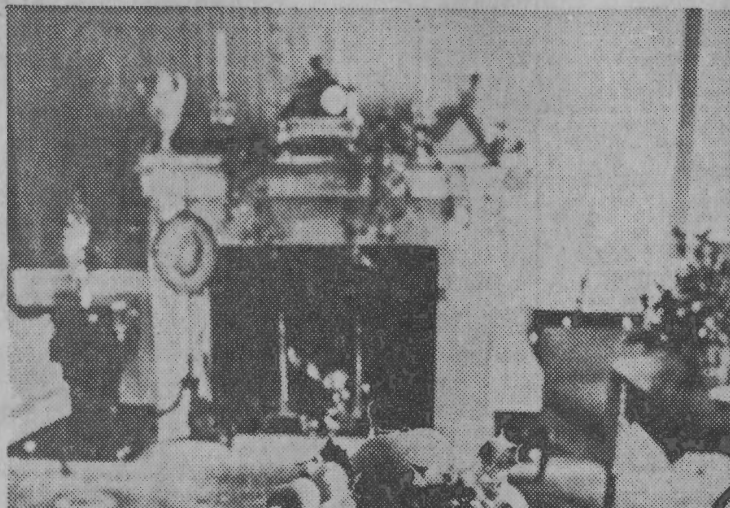
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1974

HOME

REAL ESTATE

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CLASSIFIED

ELEGANTLY SIMPLE

White House Decorations For Your Home

By Kathryn Elliott
Star-News Staff Writer

This year's elegantly simple White House Christmas decorations are easily duplicated.

First Lady Betty Ford wanted to bring an old fashioned Christmas to the White House, the kind that is a tradition with the Ford family. Her decorations, supplanting the packaged glitter of past years, create a White House that is rich and warm, a festive holiday home rather than a public place.

It was one of Mrs. Ford's basic ideas that the ornaments could be duplicated inexpensively by anyone at home from scraps and pieces



American patchwork had its beginning when the pilgrims came to America. One of the few things they brought with them on their long jounries by sea, were magnificent quilts that were solid white in color and stitched with tiny running stitches that formed intricate designs. These quilts were known as 'White on White' quilts. Because there was no fabric being brought from their home countries, the women had to repair the rips and tears on their 'White on White' quilts. They did so by using small scraps of fabric from worn clothes and patching the tattered areas. When all the rips were repaired, the entire quilt was covered with these tiny patches and since it had such a crazy look to it, it took on the name 'Crazy Quilt'.

Thus, patchwork had its beginning with the Crazy Quilt. It is the first American patchwork design. From this design came the usage of many other geometric shapes to form patchwork designs which number in the thousands. Each name is given for a specific reason, telling a story that the quilter had to tell, whether it be her religious beliefs, her husband's occupation or political feelings of the times.

This particular Crazy Quilt was obtained at an auction in Ohio by Mr. Dick Bohanish of New York City. It was purchased by Celine Mahler and is an important quilt in her collection. Not much study has been done on the quilt yet to trace its origin or maker, but it is known however, that the quilt was begun about 1865 and that it was completed around 1893. This can be documented by the fabric used in the quilt and the amount of deterioration. It was backed around 1905. The quilt has a great amount of embroidered detail within the fabric shapes. In most cases, Crazy Quilts do depict a story told by the quilter, usually a very personal one. One particular section of the quilt shows a woman in a long skirt wheeling a small barrel carrying a heart shape with the word love written within the heart. The scene depicts either her feelings for a man or toward her child. This type of feeling is often expressed in a quilt of this type. The quilt displays many fans. This makes this Crazy Quilt unusual as fan shapes are usually used in a different type of quilt. The fabric used in the quilt is primarily satin, silk and pieces of worsted wool. The areas which show great amounts of deterioration are sections that contained silk. Silk deteriorates quicker than any other type of fabric, especially in older quilts. The Crazy Quilt was usually kept for special occasions, such as holidays or for out of town guests. Crazy Quilts were always made in very elegant fabrics. They were made by cutting the fabric into odd shapes, laying them on a large sheet of fabric and stitching the shapes into place, usually with a feathered embroidery stitch. Every patchwork quilt is a sight to behold, but the Crazy Quilt

has kept many a non quilter as well as quilters mesmerized for hours on end. They are still being made today and will most likely stay the favorite patchwork design for many years to come.



Who came up with the theme for this year's Christmas decorations?

I did. I have always loved handicrafts and really became interested in them when I saw quilts being made first-hand in Appalachia.

I also wanted to use ornaments that could be easily and inexpensively made by people in their homes.

I tried to figure out how I could do both and at the same time apply a strong family feeling to the Christmas decorations. I consulted Bill Dove and Nancy Lammerding who helped implement it for me.

But weren't yours professionally done?

I wanted to utilize the talent in America, as well as put people to work--not only those people in Appalachia but senior citizens across the country. In fact, everything on the tree is hand made from American materials. But people can make these ornaments at home at practically no cost out of scraps of material, milk cartons, shredded newspaper for stuffing and the like. In fact, I have easy instruction sheets on how to make them which I know my staff would be happy to give you.

In fact, I wanted to see how easy it was and made one myself -- a lantern. I'm not a sewer, but it was easy and cost me nothing. I made it out of leftover material that had been used to make White House napkins several years ago and lace that came from my mother's sewing box that she gave me.

Did the ornaments cost alot?

I specifically asked that the ornaments not cost alot. Many, as you know, are on loan and will be returned.

Who put together the instruction sheet?

I asked Celene Mahler and Susan Hutchins to work on it for me.



Who are they?

I think all of that is in the releases but they were a great help finding fabrics, old quilts, and advising us on hand crafts. They worked with Bill Dove who is a well-known florist who lives in Washington. I've really admired his work.

Why didn't you stick with Lidden Pennoch as your consultant?

It was more a matter of being familiar with Bill Dove's work.

Who are you giving the toy ornaments to?

Underprivileged children. I have someone working on that now.

Other Economy Moves

Most people don't realize it, but we have to pay for all family means and personal entertainment out of our own pocket. So I'm very aware of food prices and have to budget like all of you.

We're working on cutting down expenses for State Dinners. For example, using American wines, borrowing centerpieces, cutting down on the number of flowers for the centerpieces. We're thinking about other things too.

What about Christmas cards? When are you sending them out?

This Friday, December 13th. You'll have a chance to see them Thursday, December 12th.

Can you tell us about them?

The card is smaller and less elaborate than those used in the White House in previous years. We wanted to cut expenses. Also, the more cards you buy, the better rate you get.



Who's paying for them?

My husband and I, for both the card and postage. It's not cheap when you have to send so many, and we're cutting back on the number previously sent out by former Presidents.

Is your card very different from the card you sent out last year?

We've always had a family Christmas card. This will be the first year we won't. It was difficult to get the family together this year. Also, I'm not certain if embassies and foreign countries want a family portrait.

Are you going tonight to the Chinese Exhibit?

Yes. I have been looking forward to it for a long time.

Are you going to China?

I have absolutely no idea.



Have you bought your Christmas Presents yet?
— but can't tell you what
they are. Otherwise they wouldn't be a
surprise.

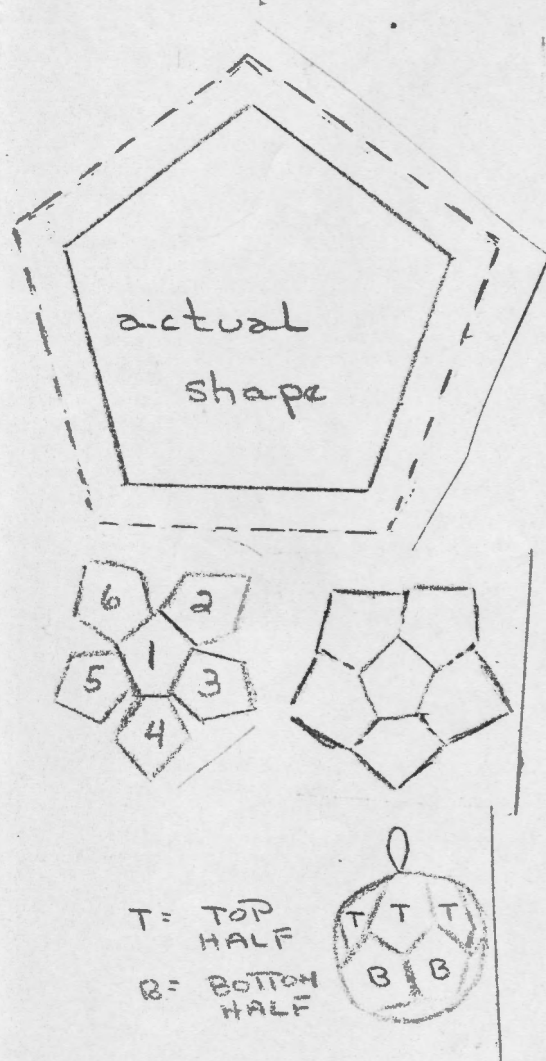
W H Turkeys stolen from ~~the~~ Salvation Army.
Will you be giving them other turkeys
to replace those stolen?

WHITE HOUSE CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS-1974

This Christmas decoration worksheet booklet has been prepared for you, based on the patchwork, applique and quilted items used to adorn the Christmas tree and its base. Its purpose is to stimulate American families into working together to create a simple, old fashioned Christmas using American crafts.

Instructions on how to use Indian baskets and how to create traditional bows are also included. These projects can be enjoyed by young and old alike. They are simple to execute and economical as they are based primarily on what can be found in the home.

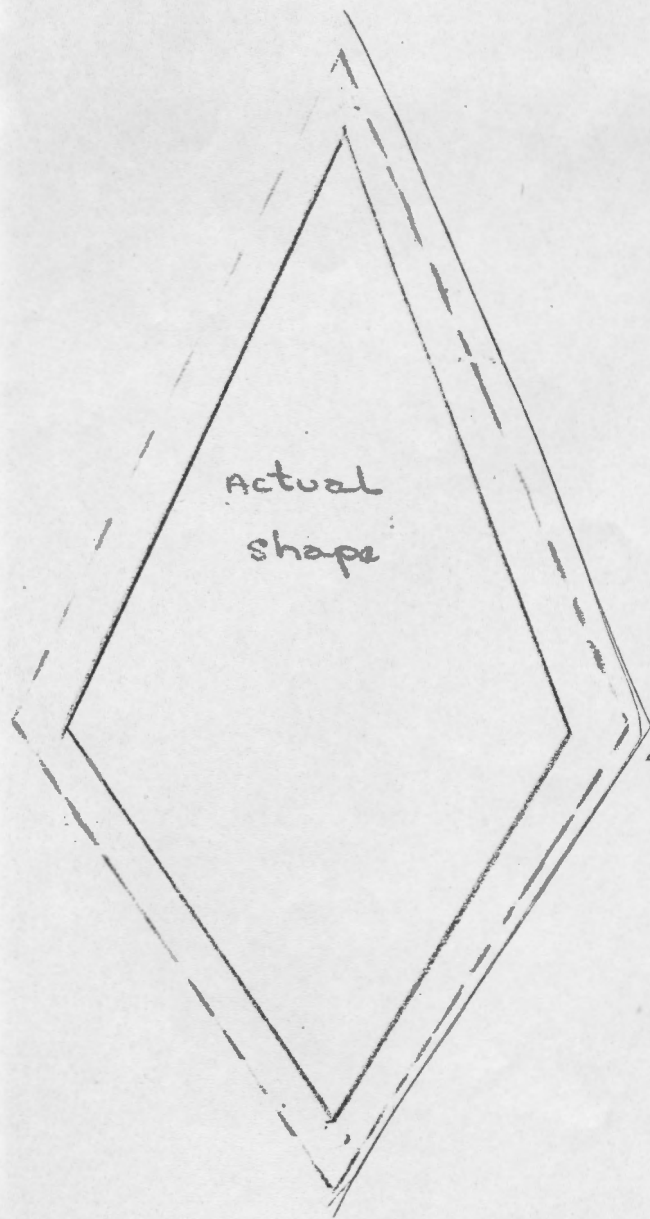
PENTAGON BALLS



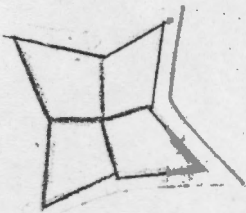
1. Using dotted line as a cutting line, cut pattern shown here and transfer it to a piece of cardboard. The cardboard used here and in all patterns can be taken from shoe box tops, egg box tops, milk cartons or you may use heavy brown paper, such as that of grocery bags. Once cut, this pattern becomes re-usable.
2. Select twelve pieces of fabric scraps, preferably small cotton prints and draw pattern with a pencil on wrong side of each fabric scrap. $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch in from cutting line, draw a second line. This becomes sewing line. Cut out each shape individually.
3. A small running stitch by hand or a straight stitch by machine will be used for all sewing. All sewing should be done on sewing lines on wrong side of fabric. Do not press seams open. Press them to one side.
4. Attach 5 shapes to sides of center shape by sewing the bottom sides of shapes 2 through 6 to shape 1, leaving side seams open forming a petal effect.
5. Now attach side seams of shapes 2 through 6. Automatically you will have a half ball shape.
6. Repeat steps 4 and 5 once again to form second half of pentagon ball.
7. Attach the ball halves by stitching the open sides of the bottom to the inverted sides of the top. It is important to leave one side unstitched so that the ball may be stuffed. Turn ball right side out.
8. Using cotton balls or first aid cotton rolls, better yet, old nylons, stuff ball through opening until firm. Attach loop of ribbon or yarn for tree hanging to one side of open seam. Turn seam in and stitch ball closed with an over cast stitch.



CHRISTMAS LANTERN ORNAMENT-(based on old street lamps)



1. Using dotted line as a cutting line, cut pattern shown here and transfer it to a piece of cardboard. Remember to use old box tops for your cardboard patterns or brown paper bags.
2. Select 4 pieces of fabric scraps. Old neckties can be used instead of regular fabric. They give a charming look to the pattern and it is a good way to use them instead of discarding them. Draw pattern on wrong side of each fabric scrap. 1/4 of an inch in from cutting line, draw a second line. This becomes sewing line. Cut out each shape individually.
3. A small running stitch by hand or straight stitch by machine will be used for all sewing. All fabric will be sewn on sewing lines on wrong side of fabric. Do not open seams. Press them to one side.
4. Attach four shapes by sewing the short side to one another forming a star shape. The short sides become the bottom of the lantern. All shapes when joined should form a perfect point at the center. Clip excess seams.
5. Now attach the longer sides or the top part of the lantern leaving one side unstitched so that the ball may be stuffed. Turn lantern right side out.
6. Using cotton balls or old nylons, stuff lantern through the opening to desired fullness. Attach ribbon or yarn to one side forming a loop for tree hanging. Turn seams in and stitch lantern closed with an overcast stitch.



shapes forming star



ball attached



SUN BONNET SUE PILLOW-(This design was adapted from an old porcelain design. It has been a favorite applique pattern enjoyed by children as well as adults. In recent years, many Christmas trees have been charmed by "Sue" at its base.)



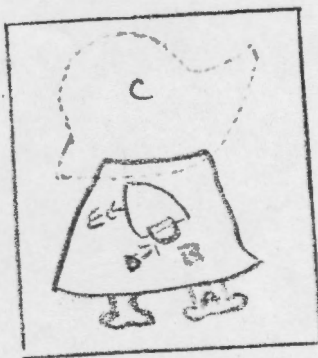
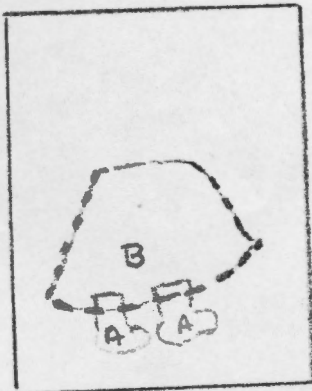
Pattern pieces are listed in their order of application. Allow 1/2 inch seam allowance or cutting lines around all shapes before cutting.

A-shoes D-hand G-hat band (optional)
B-dress E-sleeve H-pocket book (optional)
C-hat F-dress band (optional)

Lace strips may be used for accents for dress and hat bands, also for pocket book handle.

PATTERN PIECES ON PAGE THREE

1. Cut a piece of background fabric on which "Sue" will be sewn, 12 inches wide and 16 inches long. Allow 1/2 inch extra fabric on all sides for seams.
2. Cut pattern pieces on right side of fabric scraps. Don't forget 1/2 inch seam allowance. Try to use different but complimentary fabric for dress and hat. For sleeves and shoes as well as pocket book and bands on dress and hat, use a solid color fabric that blends in with the dress and hat.
3. Either baste or press the 1/2 inch seam allowance on all pattern pieces toward the wrong side of the fabric.
4. Using either a hem stitch by hand or a zig-zag stitch by machine, begin to stitch "Sue" in place on background fabric in this way:
A. Position shoes in place and stitch.
B. Overlay dress over top of shoes so that the top of shoes is slightly covered.
C. Attach hat with same overlay method as dress onto dress.
D. The excess seam allowance should be clipped. Place hand in desired location and stitch.
E. Overlay sleeve over hand.
F & G. If optional dress and hat bands are to be used, measure a strip of lace for each band and stitch on to band area of hat and dress first. The lace and bands may be applied before hat and dress are stitched to background. Now place bands along center of lace and stitch.

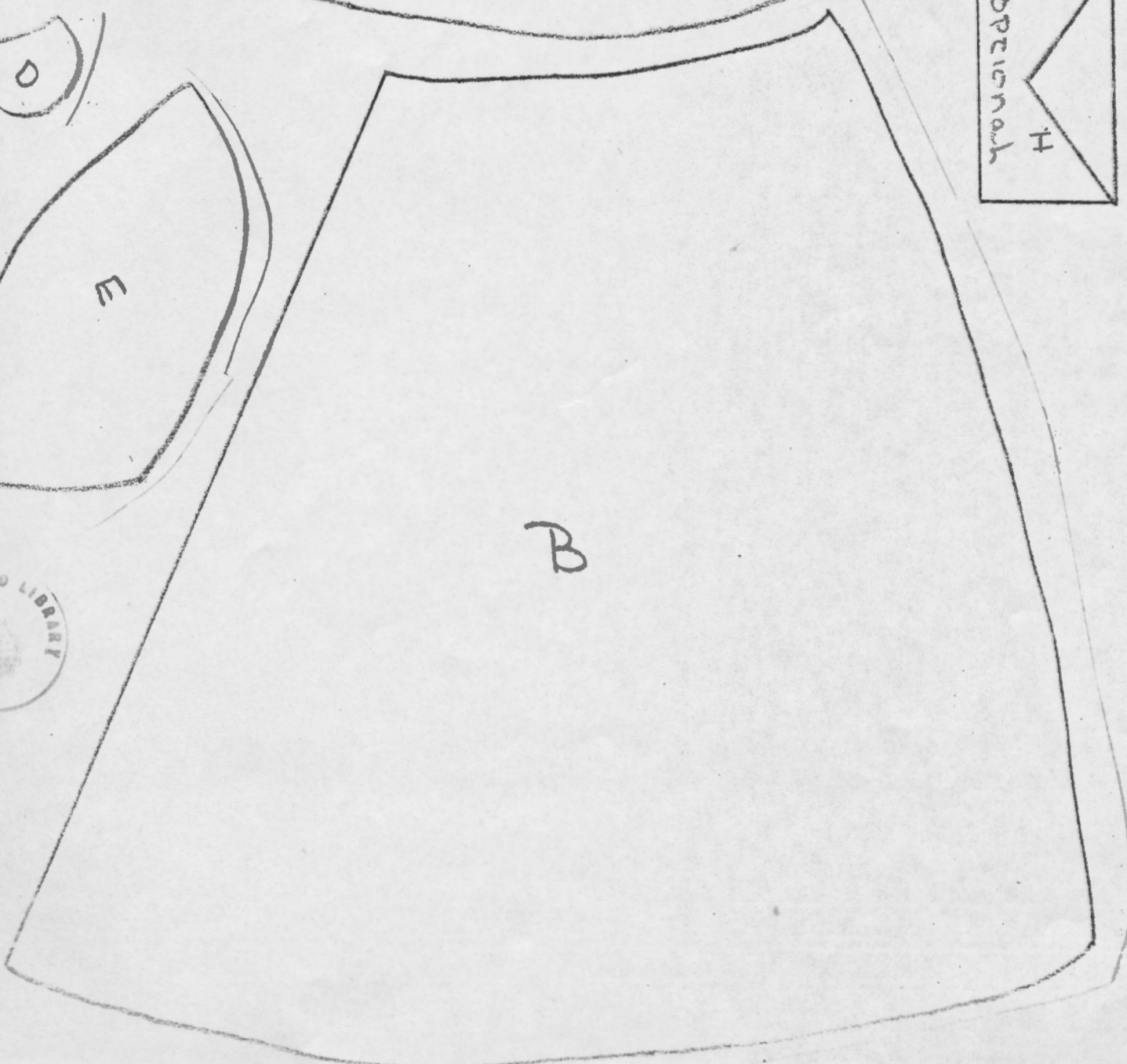
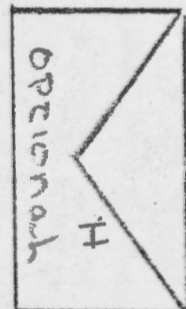
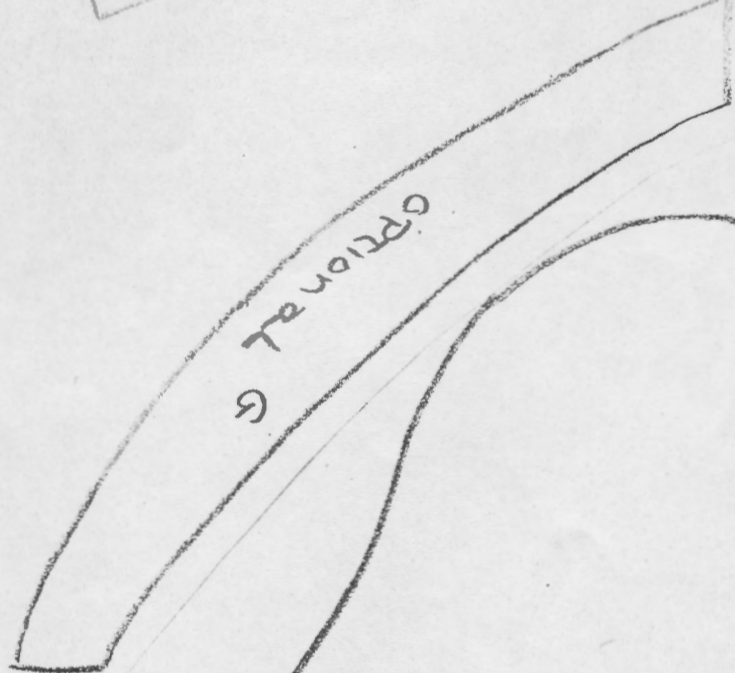
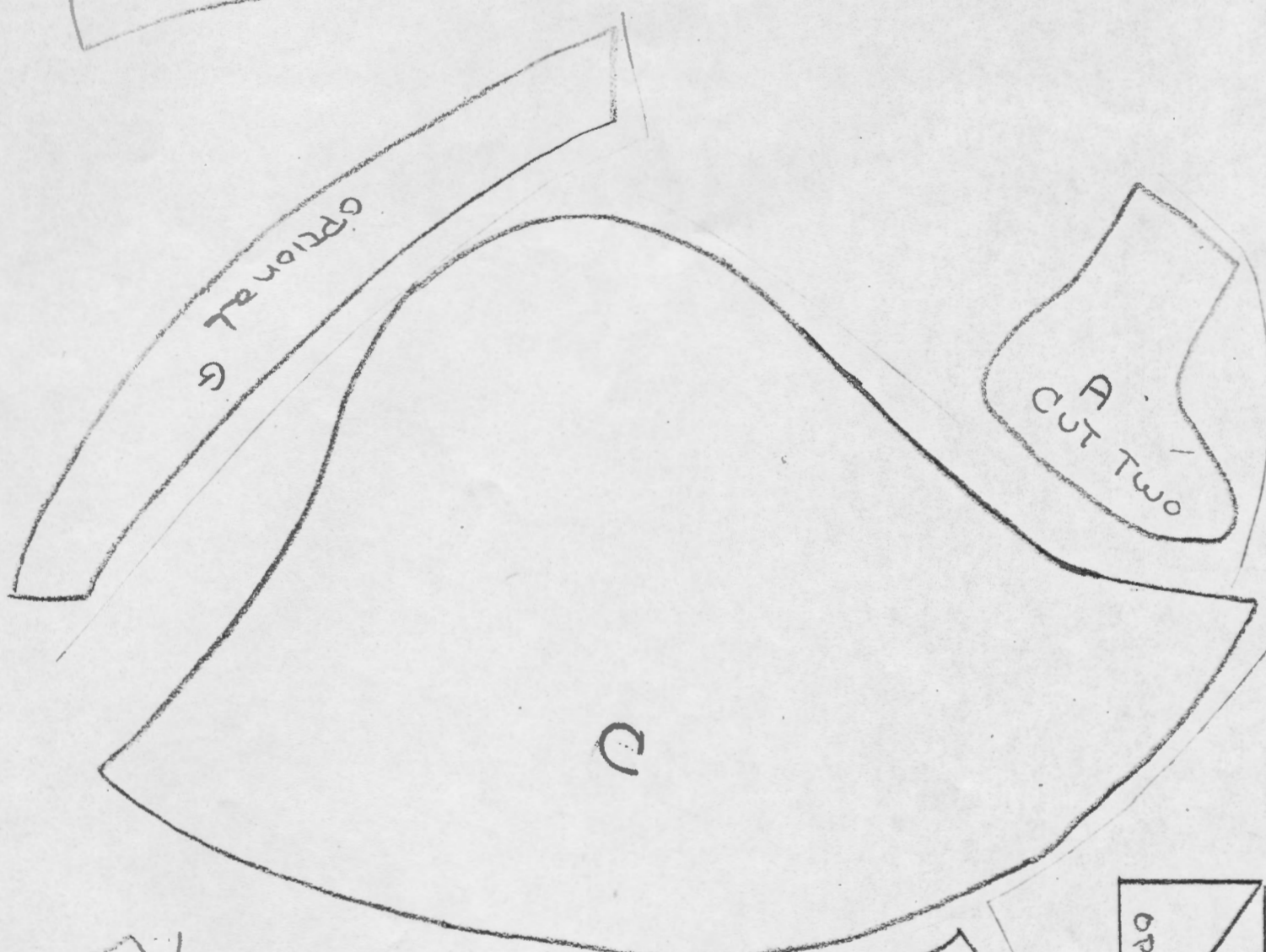
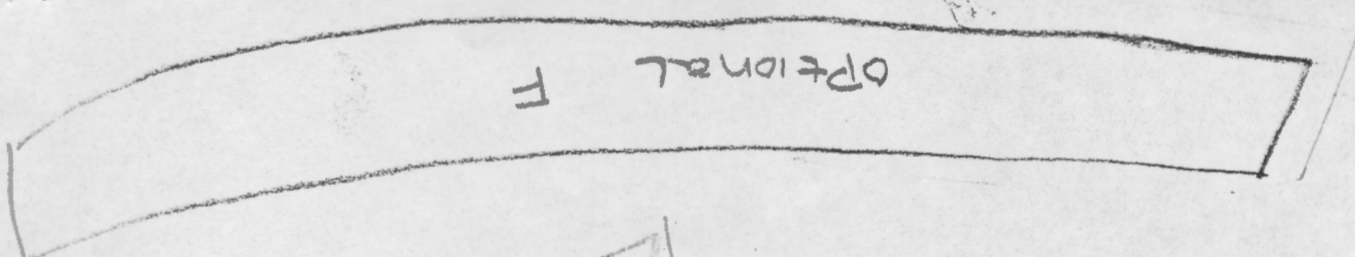


LACE
AND
BAND



- H. Make pocket book and use button or other accessory as purse clasp. Attach lace handle and secure to hand. Let purse swing free from figure.
5. Cut a pillow back the same size as background fabric with the proper seam allowance.
6. Place pillow top right side in on top of pillow back with the right side facing up. Using a running stitch by hand or a straight stitch by machine, stitch 3 1/2 sides of pillow leaving 1/2 side of one side open for stuffing. Pull pillow through to right side. Stuff with old nylons or other type of filling until firm. Tuck remaining seams in and use an overcast stitch to close opening.





CHRISTMAS GIFT WRAPPINGS

Wrapping gifts with fabric pictures can be used not only for the holidays, but for gifts at any time of the year. All that it entails is to find a pretty colored box that the fabric picture can be glued directly on to or to wrap the box with any type of fabric as you would wrap it with paper.

Select a picture whether it be a scene from nature, from the home or a figure. Sketch a drawing of your picture and cut the shapes for pattern pieces. No sewing is necessary nor is leaving seam allowances in cutting. If possible, however, a pinking sheer scissors should be used to cut the shapes. This will eliminate any fraying of fabric edges. Use bright and happy fabrics for your picture. Felt scraps adapt very well for this type of work. To give your fabric picture a really personal touch, use old buttons, pieces of costume jewelry or small toys to finish off your creation.

For the holidays, Christmas trees, such as the pattern given here, angles, Santa Claus, toy bags, snow village scenes, or a big old fashioned house are amoung ideas that can be used. But best of all, let your imagination go and have fun!

CHRISTMAS TREE, OH CHRSTMAS TREE PATTERN



1. Wrap box in fabric as you would paper wrapping or use a pretty box.
2. Cut out a Christmas tree to the dimensions of the box you will be using. Green felt would be ideal if you happen to have felt scraps.
3. For the base of the tree use a piece of brown felt or a piece of ribbon if handy.
4. Cut a piece of ribbon or rick rack the width of the box and use it along the base of the tree
5. These pieces may now be glued beginning with the base. Now place the tree slightly over the top of the base and glue the ribbon to the base of the tree along the width of the box.
6. Measure a piece of rick rack the length it would take to form an arch from the top of the ribbon used along the base, going up the side of the box, arching over the top and down the other side to the ribbon. Cut and glue it into place.
7. Trim the tree with sequins, rhinestones, buttons or whatever you have in mind to make your tree special.
8. At the base of the tree, you could create packages by cutting small pieces of fabric into the desired size.



WHITE HOUSE CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS-1974

NUT BASKETS AND GUM DROP BASKETS

Baskets of all shapes and sizes, filled with either nuts or gum drops, have been a favorite tree decoration for many years. Many times, parents would hide small gifts for the children among the nuts or candy. It was delightful for all. Baskets used need not be expensive. If you do not have any around the house, they may be purchased for a nominal cost. Gum drops may be purchased in small bags, although if too many are bought the children will enjoy snacking on them for holiday treats. Nuts must be unshelled and an assortment makes the arrangement very interesting.

NUT BASKETS

1. Select a styrofoam ball with the same diameter as your basket and cut it in half.
2. Fit it into basket, rounded side up.
3. Glue the nuts to the exposed styrofoam being careful not to use too much glue.
4. Let the glue dry then finish off the basket by adding sprigs of greens or holly. Don't forget a small surprise for the children!

GUM DROP BASKETS

1. Cut a styrofoam ball with the same diameter as your basket in half.
2. Fit it into the basket, rounded side up.
3. Attach base of gum drops to toothpicks, then insert them into styrofoam.
4. Stick a lollipop or small toy into the center of the gum drop arrangement.
5. Finish off the basket by adding sprigs of greens or holly.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!



For release at 3:00 p.m.
Tuesday, December 10, 1974

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary to Mrs. Ford

This year's White House Christmas decorations reflect Mrs. Ford's interest in American hand crafts. She has tried to emphasize decorations that can be made at home out of inexpensive materials and items around the house.

Decorations focus on a return to the crafts--centering around patchwork and quilts--and stressing the country's early Christmas customs.

The theme of crafted quilts and patchwork is carried out throughout the State Floor but is predominant in and around the Christmas tree in the Blue Room. Red quilted bows add color to various wreaths and greens, and Crazy Quilts are used in the Red Room and will be used in decorations during the Ford's Christmas parties. All fabrics are American-made.

A wreath of mixed greens appears in each window on the State Floor and in each of the windows of the Family Quarters on the north side of the White House (a total of 34 wreaths). The wreaths are 36" in diameter and are fashioned of noble and silver fir, incense cedar, and blue juniper. The firs come from Washington and Oregon.

The Blue Room

The Christmas tree, a 19 ½ foot concolor fir, is located in the center of the Blue Room. It is decorated with the following ornaments: patchwork balls made by senior citizens and Appalachian women; hand-made natural-wood baskets which contain nuts or gumdrops; hand-crafted wooden toys; patchwork bows, wreaths, and ribbon garland which cascades from the top of the tree. In addition, there are 600 tiny mirrors in oval and rectangular shapes which hang from the branches; dried statice (California heather) on the branches which creates a snow-like effect; and 50 spice sachets made from a combination of cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, allspice, and a touch of orange.

The patchwork Christmas balls. There are 550 patchwork balls in four shapes: round, pentagon, orange-peel, and Christmas lantern. They are made of two fabrics: a small-printed cotton in a variety of patchwork designs; and a water-stained moire.

The cotton patchwork balls were made by women in the Appalachian area of North Carolina who were commissioned by Blue Ridge Mountain Industries.

The moire balls were crafted by senior citizens across the country, coordinated through The Quilters Workshop in Bayside, New York. The moire was donated by Cohama Fabrics of New York. The Christmas lantern pattern of patchwork ball is a design originated for the White House this year by Mauve Greenbaum of Whitestone, New York, working through the Quilters Workshop.



The wooden toys. There are 50 handcrafted wooden toys on the tree donated by Bill Mueller Wooden Toys, Inc. of Telford, Pennsylvania.

They were selected to demonstrate hand crafts as well as an early American tradition in which toys were tied to boughs or hidden in the branches.

The toys are made from sugar pine and are assembled with glue and dowel construction (no nails, screws, metal, or plastics). Designs include turtles, mice, elephants, whales, trucks, cars, alligators, and irons. The toys are not made in a factory, but in the homes of individual craftsmen. The wheels on the trucks and train cars are made by the handicapped at the Kurtz Training Center in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania as occupational therapy.

The toys will be given to underprivileged children after Christmas.

The wooden baskets. There are 75 handmade wooden baskets. Some of the baskets are on loan from the Department of the Interior and were made by Cherokee Indians in North Carolina. Other baskets came from a retired Williamsburg craftswoman in Luray, Virginia. The baskets are filled with nuts or gumdrops, both of which were used decoratively in early Christmas celebrations. A total of six pounds of nuts and 20 pounds of gumdrops were used.

Encircling the tree is a 300-foot garland of printed cotton patchwork fabric lined with blue moire. It was put together by volunteer florists working on the decorations over the past week.

The 18 handmade patchwork wreaths on the tree were made by Mrs. Bea Starling of the Farm Womens Cooperative Market in Bethesda, Maryland. Six boxes of ribbon candy hang on the boughs.

Decorative lights have been limited to those on the Christmas tree. They are tiny white bee lights and consume about 1,000 watts of power (equivalent to 10 100-watt bulbs). They will be turned on during regular White House tours and for social events during the Christmas season.

Surrounding the tree is a braided rope of blue moire with large patchwork ribbons on each stanchion. Wreaths in the windows are suspended with blue moire ribbons, and bowls on console tables in the room contain juniper topped with patchwork ribbon.

The Green Room

The main centerpiece is an arrangement of sugared fruit. The fruit is real, but tasters will soon realize the "sugar" is not. Salt has been substituted in an economy-minded year.

Bowls contain holly arrangements, and ivy cascades loosely from the mantelpiece.



The State Dining Room

In the four corners of the room are 12-foot topiary poinsettia trees in antiqued wooden boxes. Noble fir acts as a cushion for the poinsettia plants. The poinsettia plants were grown in the White House greenhouse which is run by the National Park Service. Needlepoint ivy tops the antiqued wooden boxes. Red moire bows are attached to the base of the trees.

On the table, a loose arrangement of ivy and poinsettia plants echoes the arrangements on mantelpieces throughout the White House. Vermeil bowls on the consoles in the room are filled with Oregon holly.

The cornice around the Dining Room is garlanded with 250 feet of mixed greens. Vertical swags drop from the crown molding into the gold wall scones, which contain red candles. The gold chandelier is garlanded with mixed greens and contains 60 red candles.

Red Room

Loose ivy arrangements cascade from the mantelpiece, and holly arrangements fill the bowls. Wreaths suspended with red moire swags fill the windows.

For information on quilt, see background sheet on quilts.

East Room

Like the State Dining Room, the East Room contains four topiary poinsettia trees (one in each corner). Loose ivy and poinsettia arrangements top the mantelpieces, and a wreath of mixed green firs decorates the wall on either side of the entrance from the Grand Hall.

The focal point of the room is the 18th Century Italian Creche (see separate release) which is flanked by tall Virginia cedar trees and small juniper bushes.

The Grand Hall and Foyer

The north entryway to the White House is filled with natural greens and red berries, with a touch of patchwork and quilts.

Four ficus trees with red berries and red moire bows line the Grand Foyer. Gold torchiers throughout the Grand Hall are encircled with a garland of noble fir topped with antique gold metallic foil angels lined with patchwork fabric. Console tables are topped with holly arrangements in vermeil bowls.

The niches to either side of the Blue Room are garlanded with noble fir and topped with 5-foot angels of antiqued gold metallic foil lined with patchwork fabric.

A combination of mixed greens and quilted red moire bows garland the bannister of the Grand Staircase, and a gold angel looks down from the top of the Staircase.

The entryway from the Grand Hall to both the State Dining Room and the East Room contains a sprig of mistletoe.