

# BLACK HISTORY

## New exhibit at Delta Arts Center showcases quilt-making in African American culture

### Quilts were once used to communicate in Underground Railroad sites

BY JUDIE HOLCOMB-PACK  
THE CHRONICLE

The beauty, variety and creative expression of textile arts on display at Delta Arts Center not only reflects modern trends, but also tells the story of the long tradition of quilt-making in the African American community.

"Raw Edges III: Textile Arts by Area African American Quilters" opened with a virtual reception on Thursday, Jan. 28, with a descriptive viewing of the pieces by members of Delta Art's Monday Mixer quilters, along with a virtual interview with Teresa R. Kemp, a master quilt historian from Atlanta.

purses. The quilters have been meeting over three years every Monday night to work on their sewing projects and fellowship together.

During an interview with The Chronicle on Feb. 6, Peggy Moore discussed the various patterns used by quilters, including the "log cabin" pattern seen in the quilt made by Kathy Boler titled "Curvey Log Cabin." The log cabin quilt pattern was one of many patterns used by the Underground Railroad to communicate secret codes to slaves escaping to the North. One of the squares in the pattern would indicate that this was a safe house. The "wild geese" pattern used the wings of



photos by Judie Holcomb-Pack  
**Peggy Moore admires 'Big Ma's Strip Quilt,' hand-stitched vintage quilt exhibited by Freeda Ward.**

quilts have with Africa. She has amassed a collection of quilts and other relics from Africa that go back many generations that she discovered as she traced her family's genealogy. Quilts were hand-made in Africa for centuries and slaves brought the art form with them when they arrived in America. In Kemp's collection is a Kente "logs and rails" patterned quilt from Ghana matching American-made logs and rails quilts.

Quilts are not just made in historic patterns. Freeda Ward created her "Amy Bell's Girls' Trip 2019" quilt using squares that she asked her friends to write on with words to describe their trip together without them knowing her intention to sew them all into a memorable quilt.

Other quilters in the show have created such items as unique purses and wall hangings. Sadie Edwards created three beau-

tifully designed, hand-stitched heads of women in African headdress.

Along with the new quilts are two vintage family quilts. "Big Ma's Strip Quilt" from Freeda Ward's family is a stunning example of a hand-stitched quilt in the log and rail pattern. Peggy Moore also has a family quilt displayed, its frayed and worn parts as evidence of its many years of use keeping loved ones warm. These quilts are heirlooms to be savored for the hours of hand-work that went into making them and as treasured pieces to be passed down in families.

In discussing the quilts on display, Moore said that they ranged from quilters with years of experience to those displaying their first quilt. "I never tell a quilter that her piece is not worthy to be seen," Moore said. She said that the Monday Mixer group helps each other learn the

craft of quilting and they share their tips and talents with each member.

Moore said that Delta Arts Center has several plans for future exhibits and events and that plans for their 50th anniversary in two years are already in the works. The next big event will be Freedom Day on Feb. 21 from 12-6 p.m. Teresa Kemp will be coming in from Atlanta to give talks during the event and will bring some of her historic quilts to display. Tours for this event are by reservation only and limited to groups of ten or less. Reservations can be made by calling Delta Arts at 336-722-2625.

"We want to preserve this folk art form and want people to respect what was done in the past and value this craft," Moore stated. "We should honor and treasure this art and legacy."

For more information about Delta Arts Center, visit their website at [www.deltaartscenter.org](http://www.deltaartscenter.org).

Information on the Underground Railroad secret quilt codes can be found in the book "Hidden in Plain View: A Secret Story of Quilts and the Underground Railroad" by Jacqueline Tobin and Raymond G. Dobard.



**Peggy Moore discusses design in 'Curvey Log Cabin' quilt by Kathy Boler.**

According to Peggy Moore, program chair, this is the third showcase of quilts, which also include other quilted items, such as wall hangings and

the geese to point to a safe direction to travel.

During the reception on Jan. 28, Teresa Kemp discussed the connection

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## Agnew hired to front office of Detroit Lions

BY TIMOTHY RAMSEY  
THE CHRONICLE

Winston-Salem native Ray Agnew was recently hired as the assistant general manager for the Detroit Lions. Agnew will be working under Brad Holmes, who was hired as the general manager for Detroit.

Agnew worked alongside Holmes with the Los Angeles Rams. Agnew was with the Rams' organization for 14 years, working in several different roles. He served as director of pro scouting, assistant director of pro personnel, and the director of player development/team pastor.

As a minority, Agnew holds one of the most important and influential positions in the NFL. With the NFL being criticized



**Ray Agnew**

for their lack of diversity when it comes to head coaching and front office positions, seeing Agnew hired by the Lions is a step in the right direction.

Agnew was a standout player for Carver High School in the 1980s. He went on to star for N.C. State before being picked 10th overall by the New England Patriots in the

1990 NFL Draft. He played for the Patriots from 1990-94, then for the New York Giants (1995-97), and finally the St. Louis Rams (1998-2000). Agnew was a key contributor for the Rams in their Super Bowl XXXIV victory over the Tennessee Titans.

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The Victor Johnson, Jr. Family is so appreciative for the outpouring of support we have received with the passing of our beloved husband, father, grandfather, brother, uncle, brother-in-law, and cousin. All of us knew how much this community meant to Vic, but we could never have fathomed what he meant to so many in the community. The public and private comments, the shared stories, the offers of support, and the prayers have touched our hearts and lightened our sorrow. We are deeply grateful beyond measure for all of the expressions of condolences.

The Family of Victor Johnson, Jr.

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