

The Man of Many Vases

# JOHN HEWSON,

## CALICO

# PRINTER

By Kimberly Wulfert

If you ask a decorative arts professional or textile collector about eighteenth-century woodblock printers in America, it is almost certain you will hear about the Philadelphia printer known by his polychrome calico displaying an ornate vase filled with naturalistic garden flowers, appointed with butterflies and birds. Today, his textiles are usually seen in the center of bedcovers. That printer was John Hewson, a passionate man, an independent thinker, and a risk taker who became an important developer of the textile industry in early America. ■ John Hewson was born in December 1744 to a London woolen draper who descended from a colonel in the English Civil War of 1642–1651. This ancestor signed King Charles I's death warrant, becoming perhaps the first Hewson to fight monarchical power. John Hewson challenged the monarchy in his own way: From the American Revolutionary War through the duration of his career in Pennsylvania as a calico printer, dyer, and bleacher, he promoted America's rebirth as a free nation that could stand alone and prosper economically.

**HEWSON-CENTER QUILT**  
(detail)  
Artist unidentified; center  
block printed by John  
Hewson (1744–1821)  
United States  
c. 1785–1812  
Cotton with block-printed  
cotton piecework  
97½ × 91¾"  
The Design Center at  
Philadelphia University, gift  
of John Seder and Robert  
Blum, 1983.41





Hewson worked as a dyer and bleacher for Ollive and Talwin, a leading textiles printworks, at Bromley Hall, London.<sup>1</sup> Many printers had settled on the River Lea around Bromley-by-Bow, particularly at Bromley Hall, a brick manor house constructed in the 1490s and later converted into factories. Where Hewson learned to block print is unknown, however, because there is no evidence of woodblock printing at Bromley Hall in the early 1770s.<sup>2</sup> The locations of his children's births suggest where he may have learned the technique. His first two children were born in the parish of West Ham—John Jr. in 1767 and Sarah in 1769—and his third, James, in the parish of Crayford in 1771. Both locations had calico and bleaching factories. Mary, Hewson's fourth child, was born in the parish of Bromley in 1773.

Five months after Mary's birth, when Hewson was 29, he and his family sailed to America along with a work associate, Nathaniel Norgrove, to set up a print, dye, and bleachworks factory in Philadelphia. At the time, there were few cotton and linen printers established in the British North American colonies. No doubt Hewson was persuaded to immigrate by the absence of duties levied on cotton textiles and restrictions on printing them. The burgeoning city of Philadelphia welcomed industrious immigrants who wanted to start businesses and services in the colonies. These businessmen faced numerous opportunities without the burden of limiting practices and traditions formed over generations back in England.

Perceiving that a flourishing textile industry in America would threaten English manufacturing and exporting, and hence jobs, English manufacturers had been developing machinery and processes in secret. After the restrictions on printing cotton cloth were removed in 1774, their industries expanded. Schematics and operating procedures were kept confidential to prevent competition, and in time laws were enacted to prevent information, machinery, and trained people from crossing the Atlantic.

The challenge to compete with English fabrics in terms of quality, price, and colorfastness enticed Hewson. He used space in his first advertisement to make comparisons between his goods and those from Bromley Hall, as if to say the quality of his textiles was as high as the quality of those imported from the renowned printing and bleaching establishment.<sup>3</sup> Adding that he had worked at Bromley Hall before coming to America reinforced his image as a skilled manufacturer. This powerful marketing strategy

undoubtedly increased Hewson's customer base and helped his business succeed.

Hewson never returned to England. In 1774, his wife, Mary, died following the birth of their fifth child, Jonathan; a year later, Hewson married Zibiah Smallwood. Hewson fought for America in the Revolutionary War, and, like many Philadelphians, he quickly moved his family and important possessions away in September 1777, when notice of the British intent to besiege Philadelphia was made known. The family fled across the Delaware River to New



**BEDCOVER**  
John Hewson  
Philadelphia  
c. 1790-1800  
Block-printed plain-weave  
cotton  
104¼ × 102¾"  
Philadelphia Museum of Art,  
gift of Joseph B. Hodgson  
Jr., 1930-100-1

Jersey, where Zibiah and her brother, a lieutenant of the Patriot army, were from. With his brother-in-law and other rebels, Hewson helped get provisions to the Americans and patrolled the waters to prevent Tories from getting their provisions to the British in Philadelphia. Six months later, they were taken as prisoners of war near the mouth of Rancocas Creek. For half a year, Hewson was held captive by the British in various locations. In his diary, he described his harrowing escape across the water from Long Island to the New Jersey Shore and his overwhelming worries for his wife and children: "[M]y feelings and sensibility

of mind I then labored under, were so exquisitely painful as to prompt one to the most dangerous enterprise."<sup>4</sup> Sadly, upon his return, Hewson learned that his daughter Catherine Washington (named after his mother and General George Washington), born shortly after the family's move to New Jersey, had died while he was in prison.<sup>5</sup>

In spite of the destruction the British caused to his factory, Hewson resumed his small indigo-dyeing operation with pattern maker and block cutter William Lang. Fortunately, Hewson had taken his woodblocks, patterns,

its captain from 1780 to 1781. Exactly what they did is unknown; existing records do not list Hewson as having been injured, imprisoned, paid for his service, or given a pension.<sup>7</sup> In October 1780, Hewson petitioned to be a Vendue Master, an auctioneer or vendor appointed by the Supreme Executive Council of Northern Liberties of Pennsylvania. He explained to them his capture and escape, which left him "now so unfortunate as not to have the Income of Twenty Dollars Currency per Diem to maintain himself a wife and six children."<sup>8</sup> His petition was not accepted. In

July and August 1781, Hewson ran multiple notices in the *Pennsylvania Journal* announcing that he was re-opening his printing factory, and this time he added, "White silk handkerchiefs, new or half worn, may be printed and made to look almost as well as India."<sup>9</sup>

When the Pennsylvania Society for the Encouragement of Manufactures and the Useful Arts offered an award to encourage excellence in calico printing, Hewson took up the challenge; his work was chosen as the best in the state in 1789.<sup>10</sup> His factory was also contracted to provide bleaching and printing services for the American Cotton Manufactory. This was an experimental factory established by the society's manufacturing committee in the hope of producing cotton and linen cloth that would rival imported cloth, thereby breaking the state's dependence on England's goods, which had only grown stronger since the war had ended.<sup>11</sup> Britain glutted the market with fabrics they had stockpiled during the war, willingly selling them at a price below their cost in order to keep the competition from gaining ground.<sup>12</sup> This, coupled with England's prohibitions against exportation of textile machinery, parts, and know-how, made it very difficult for the society to meet their fiscal objectives.<sup>13</sup> In February 1793, Hewson sent several yards of his printed cotton to the president and his wife

with a letter asking if Mrs. Washington would please have a dress made of his elegant chintz to wear to social events in an effort to convince affluent Philadelphians that American-made chintz was of fine quality and they should place their orders with domestic rather than foreign printers, as was their habit.<sup>14</sup>

Unfortunately, there are no known sample books, ledgers, or records from Hewson's business to provide an accurate account of the other textiles his factory produced or sold. The only information available about his wares is what can be found in the advertisements he placed in

printing tables, and other equipment with him when the family was forced to flee Philadelphia in 1777, although much had been left behind. Unlike the 1774 advertisement, in which Hewson felt it necessary to cite Bromley Hall, his November 9, 1779, notice in the *Pennsylvania Packet* states that there was enough of his cloth in town now to prove that his product was as colorfast and durable as Europe's goods: "Little need be said as to the abilities of the subscribers, as there are numbers of yards now in wear, done by them . . ."<sup>16</sup>

Hewson rejoined the American war effort in 1780, building a militia of the Continental Army and becoming



**QUILT TOP**  
Zibiah Smallwood Hewson (1745-1815); center block printed by John Hewson Philadelphia 1790-1810  
Plain-weave cotton with block-printed cotton center and appliqué and pieced-work borders  
104 × 118"  
Philadelphia Museum of Art, gift of Miss Ella Hodgson, 1934-16-1

LYNN ROSENTHAL

Philadelphia newspapers. As a result, none of the indigo checks and prints, neat gown prints, dress goods, single- or double-purple calico prints, velverets, janes, or nankeens for waistcoat and breeches or saddle cloth he listed are recognized as his work today, if they still exist. Hewson's advertisements relate that he also offered linen bleaching, re-dyeing or printing faded linen, and preserving sailcloth with a treatment to prevent mildew formation.<sup>15</sup>

Hewson also advertised that he customized orders. This explains the variety in design layouts and color choices seen in the vase, flowers, butterflies, and birds he is identified with to this day. Ten of the center panels are printed with the same motifs and layout, and two more identical panels also have a floral vine border. This suggests that Hewson's factory preprinted panels for direct sale and customized others to specifications from the customer. Trendsetters would have enjoyed making their panels unique by picking which motifs they wanted, but if the compositions were left to the eye of an experienced designer such as Hewson, the panels probably would not have been printed as densely. The "less is more" concept would describe the repeated panels. Given the high regard in which Hewson's work was held, it is likely that women purchased center panels without having immediate plans for their use. In accordance, needle holes are noticeable around the edges of some individual panels, indicating they were removed from an earlier textile to be saved for later use in another piece or for another purpose.

In addition to inviting customers to his factory two miles outside of town, Hewson's advertisements referred interested parties to merchants conveniently located around Philadelphia who had Hewson's sample books on view for placing orders.



Twenty-eight textiles displaying Hewson's printing have been documented at this time: fourteen quilts, four quilt tops, three bedcovers, four individual panels, two handkerchiefs, and one fragment that was once a pillow top. With the exception of both quilts, the vase-and-flowers motif took center position in the panels and bedding textiles. Ten quilts, two quilt tops, and the four individual panels all display the vase and flowers as Hewson originally printed them; on three quilts and both quilt tops, the vase and flowers were cut out and appliquéd. The bedcovers, each a single layer of fabric with finished edges for use in warm weather, were completely printed, including the borders. At least three of the quilts are dated in the stitching—1807 and 1809 on one, 1811, and 1848. The finished and as-is textiles are estimated to have been made between

1780 and 1890, the majority from 1790 to 1830 as recorded by textile professionals.<sup>16</sup> The following is an overview of textiles composed of Hewson's prints, presented in an order approximating their presentation to the general public via museum and auction catalogs, books, magazines, and exhibitions.

The first two Hewson textiles to come to the attention of the decorative arts community were owned by Hewson's great-grandchildren, who donated them to the Philadelphia Museum of Art in 1930 and 1934. The earlier gift is an all-printed bedcover stylistically comparable to Indian *palampores* printed for Europeans; the second



is a center-medallion patchwork quilt top, attributed to Hewson's wife, Zibiah.<sup>17</sup> These two textiles (see pages 60 and 61) have become icons of Hewson's work and tangible illustrations of America's decorative printing artistry at the end of the eighteenth century. They were discussed and illustrated in an early quilt book, *Old Quilts*, by William Rush Dunton Jr.<sup>18</sup>

In 1953, quilt historian Florence Peto brought the two textiles to a larger audience in an article in *The Magazine Antiques*, in which she also introduced an unusual patchwork quilt in her personal collection featuring Hewson's

**QUILT TOP**  
Artist unidentified, center probably appliquéd by Mary Gorsuch Jessop (1767-1832) and corners by her daughter-in-law, Cecelia Barry (dates unknown); center block printed by John Hewson Vaux Hall Plantation, Baltimore County, Maryland  
Center panel, 1800; corners, c. 1830  
Cotton  
63¼ × 63½"  
Smithsonian National Museum of American History, Washington, D.C., 292866

center medallion printed without the vase and flower motif.<sup>19</sup> The quilt ultimately entered the collection of the Henry Ford Museum, Dearborn, Michigan, but it was destroyed in a fire in 1971.<sup>20</sup>

By the time Florence M. Montgomery published her book *Printed Textiles: English and American Cottons and Linens, 1700–1850*, in 1970, ten Hewson textiles had been identified: “two handkerchiefs, two complete spreads, and six patchwork quilts.”<sup>21</sup> Montgomery provided extensive background and details about Hewson and his textiles, which inspired historians and quilt enthusiasts to acknowledge Hewson’s place in American textile history and honor

descendants to the Atwater Kent Museum, Philadelphia. The two handkerchiefs, however, aren’t blue with white spots, as Hewson had described his handkerchiefs in advertisements. Instead, wide decorative borders surround a tiny neat print, and they average about ten inches larger than the individual panels made for quilt tops. A quilt in the collection of the Spencer Museum of Art at the University of Kansas, Lawrence, would very likely have been included in her count, but it wasn’t delineated in the text.

Four years later, Patsy and Myron Orlofsky introduced three new textiles in their book *Quilts in America: a printed-center-medallion quilt from the Orlofskys’ personal collection that contains four frames of Delectable Mountains patchwork blocks and fancy stuff-work; a quilt in the collection of the Cincinnati Art Museum, of which only a detail of the printed center medallion is illustrated, displaying the familiar vase of flowers surrounded by birds on leafy branches and butterflies; and an all-appliquéd quilt top, in the collection of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., which includes Hewson’s vase, flowers, and various bird-on-leafy-branch motifs, as well as English chintz prints of flowers and fern fronds (see opposite).<sup>22</sup> It also includes illustrations of the Spencer Museum’s quilt, which has a printed center medallion surrounded by patchwork star blocks, and a full image of Winterthur’s floral quilt, showing appliques of floral swags or festoons encircling Hewson prints cut out and appliquéd in the center.*

In 1975, Conover Hunt, the director and curator of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Museum, Washington, D.C., presented another textile at-

tributed to Hewson.<sup>23</sup> The DAR Museum considered the quilt in their collection to be one of the most important textile gifts received in their eighty-five-year history. Originally, this textile was an all-printed bedcover, but it is now a pieced quilt in a class by itself. It was printed differently than the three bedcovers identified to date.<sup>24</sup> The outer border matches the other bedcovers, but the innermost printed border is unique to this piece.<sup>25</sup> The vase-and-flowers print is centered in a large rectangle surrounded by printed motifs not seen on Hewson’s other textiles, with one exception: a bird crouched on a gnarled branch that



DENNIS COWLEY

**TEXTILE**  
John Hewson  
Philadelphia  
1780–1810  
Block-printed plain-weave  
cotton  
28 × 32¾"  
Cooper-Hewitt, National  
Design Museum,  
Smithsonian Institution,  
bequest of Elinor Merrell,  
1995–50–30

his mastery of woodblock printing. Her book includes illustrations of a printed center-medallion quilt with fancy stuff-work in the collection of the St. Louis Art Museum that bears the dates 1807 and 1809 and the initials *E.C.*; a medallion patchwork quilt featuring Hewson’s printed panel, appliques of cut-out chintz motifs, and a chintz outer border in the collection of the York County Heritage Trust, York, Pennsylvania; images of two textiles in the collection of the Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware, an all-printed bedcover and a detail of a floral appliqué quilt; and the handkerchiefs, which were donated by Hewson’s

## Hewson-Center Quilt in the Museum's Collection

In 2006, the American Folk Art Museum acquired an extraordinary quilt with fabric printed by John Hewson. Gifted to the museum by Jerry and Susan Lauren, this quilt is likely the earliest pieced example in the museum's holdings. It is constructed of ninety-four blocks around a large central medallion. At first glance, it appears highly complex, but upon closer analysis the organization is consistent with the center-medallion style associated with early American pieced quilts. Typically, a center block would be surrounded by a series of borders or frames that might be continuous printed patterns or pieced. The center medallion was often embellished with appliquéd elements cut from furnishing fabrics, but fabrics were also specifically printed for use as centerpieces in quilts. Hewson specialized in such center blocks, many of which share an impressive vase overflowing with flowers and sheaves of wheat. Additional elements of sprays of leafy branches, butterflies, and birds were carved on separate blocks, thereby granting Hewson the flexibility to arrange them in various fashions.

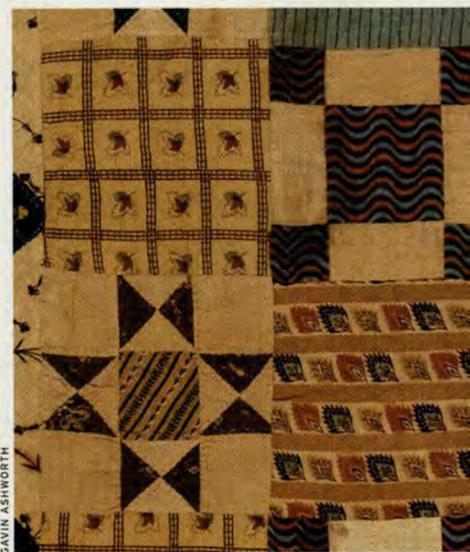
The center block on the museum's quilt is enclosed by a border of pieced triangles of alternating indigo fabric and block-printed crewel-like sprigs of flowers. This is surrounded by a border of alternating blocks of plain fabric and simple star piecing. An additional row on the left and right sides and two additional rows on the top and bottom display alternating blocks of plain fabric and pieced blocks in an elongated nine-patch pattern. The whole is framed by a floral fabric with a rich red ground and self-border in a pattern of small running leaves. The blue leaves and flowers are hand penciled using indigo dyes and may have outlasted a fugitive yellow overprinted to make a green color. The quiltmaker's ingenuity in shortchanging some pieced blocks to fit the overall width is evident

in the blocks whose patterns are incomplete. The quilt is bound at the outside edges with an elaborate and tightly woven linen tape.

Most of the fabrics in the quilt appear to be block printed. In this technique, a relief design is carved into a block of wood. The raised areas are covered with a dye or a mordant (a substance that fixes the dye to the fabric), and the block is hammered onto the surface of the fabric. Once the mordant is transferred in this manner, the cloth is passed through a dye bath. The application of different mordants produces various shades or colors from a single coloring agent. For additional colors, several blocks might be used; however, if the blocks were not perfectly registered, there might be an area of white left between the design elements. Today, these uncolored areas around a motif are a good indication that a fabric is block printed.

Little is known of the printed fabrics that Hewson produced throughout his career. Before and after the Revolutionary period, he engaged in madder-style printing with mordants and was able to produce three shades of reds and browns. During the war, when his equipment was destroyed, he was forced to abandon the madder-style mordant printing and concentrate on indigo vat dyeing, printing resist-style handkerchiefs with deep blue grounds and white spots. Many of the fabrics used in this quilt are hand-colored in a technique known as "penciling." Women and children were often employed in this aspect of calico production, especially in penciling the indigo blues. This is most easily seen in the lush fabric used as the outside border. Other than the center block, the textiles in the museum's quilt cannot be absolutely attributed to Hewson. However, they provide a wonderful window on the fabrics of the 1790 to 1810 period.

—Stacy C. Hollander



GAVIN ASHWORTH



**HEWSON-CENTER QUILT WITH  
MULTIPLE BORDERS (and details)**  
Artist unidentified; center  
block printed by John Hewson  
United States  
1790-1810  
Cotton and possibly linen  
85½ × 76"  
American Folk Art Museum,  
gift of Jerry and Susan Lauren,  
2006.5.1



GAVIN ASHWORTH

is also seen on Zibiah Smallwood Hewson's quilt in the Philadelphia Museum of Art's collection (see page 61) and in the quilt that was in the Henry Ford Museum's collection. Before this quilt came to the DAR Museum, the wide vertical borders had been cut in half, and a patchwork strip had been inserted to widen it. The patchwork features a dark-brown-background chintz printed with a small pot-shaped vase holding a large bouquet. This is similar to one of the unique motifs Hewson printed on the panel and complements the colors in the quilt so well that the alteration is not easily apparent on first glance.

Images of three more printed-center-medallion patchwork textiles, held in private collections, were published in two books recounting quilt history in the early 1990s. One, a large quilt top with glaze intact on some of the block- and roller-printed fabrics, was discovered in a heap on top of a file cabinet at Craftex Mills, a furnishings-fabric design and weaving mill in Philadelphia. After an appraisal, this important textile (see page 59) was acquired by Philadelphia University's Design Center.<sup>36</sup> The second quilt has multiple pieced and chintz borders surrounding the panel, which has fancy feathered garland quilting; this is unusual but similar to the St. Louis Museum quilt, whose quilting is also stuffed with cotton to raise the design. It was found at a Texas flea market, but it went unrecognized as a Hewson for some time; Pennsylvania textile collectors Donald M. and Patricia Herr acquired it in 1985.<sup>37</sup> The third is a wonderfully preserved quilt that was discovered in Indiana in 1989, and it is the most recent Hewson textile to change hands from a private collection to a museum: Susan and Jerry Lauren, American folk art collectors living in New York, donated it to the American Folk Art Museum in 2006 (see sidebar and illustrations on pages 64 and 65).<sup>28</sup>

Later in the 1990s, fine early chintz quilts from a private collection were displayed at the Smithsonian Institution's Renwick Gallery in the exhibition "Calico and Chintz: Antique Quilts from the Collection of Patricia S. Smith," including one with appliquéd Hewson prints in the center of a medallion-appliquéd quilt that subsequently entered another private collection.<sup>29</sup> This brought the total to nineteen documented Hewson textiles published in books, catalogs, and magazines by the century's end.

In 2001, the Winterthur Museum purchased an American-made, cut-out chintz appliqué quilt with a large Tree of Life motif and seven birds, butterflies, and flowered stems that match those printed on Hewson panels. Shortly after purchase, the quilt was illustrated in *The Magazine Antiques*.<sup>30</sup> Since then, eight more Hewson-printed textiles have been identified, and more are expected to surface as a result of greater public exposure, museum exhibitions, and published research. The public demand for and renewed interest in Hewson's work, no matter the size or form of the print, continues to this day.

Four of these textiles are individual center panels, all of which are in museum collections. They average 31½ by 34¾ inches. In 2005, one sold at auction at Bonhams & Butterfields's San Francisco venue in a frame under glass, where it had been kept over the years. It was described in the sale catalog, but it was not identified as a Hewson

textile.<sup>31</sup> In the auction house's online description of the lots, however, the panel was attributed to Hewson and said to have come from a private collection in New Jersey. There is no confusion as to where it is today—in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Another panel was purchased that same year by Historic Deerfield, Deerfield, Massachusetts, and is said to include signatures in colored inks below the panel motifs.<sup>32</sup> The remaining two panels are held in the collections of the Smithsonian Institution's Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, New York (see page 63), and the Philadelphia Museum of Art. The Philadelphia panel has a delicate printed border of a trailing vine with tiny flowers on four sides not seen in the other three individual panels; however, this border is printed on the panel in the quilt owned by the York County Heritage Trust. Although similar in delicacy and size to one of the two handkerchief's borders, it is not the same print.

A small textile fragment printed with one large bird on a leafy tree branch had been a pillow top at one time, and it was donated by a Hewson descendant to the Winterthur Museum.<sup>33</sup> The three remaining textiles of the twenty-eight currently identified are two quilts and a quilt top, each family-owned and passed down through the generations, yet there is no confirmation of their first owners or makers. All display a center medallion, but two are completely different from the others described so far and represent two different time periods. One, from the collection of Nellie Crater, descended in her husband's family in New York (see opposite). It is one of the earliest Hewson quilts and shows the most wear and noticeable color loss, appearing pink and aqua with some deterioration around the brown-dyed areas on the bird-on-leafy-branch motifs, yet the integrity of the majority of prints are intact. The custom-printed center panel is surrounded by large triangles made from a calico forming star points, which is rather difficult to see due to fading; this is a unique setting for a Hewson panel. A red copperplate toile printed in England c. 1780–1790 forms a very wide border.<sup>34</sup>

A Hewson quilt top made about a hundred years later than the Crater quilt was found in Maryland, and its condition suggests it had been safely packed away for years. The maker appliquéd the vase-and-flowers motif and a few birds and butterflies, along with many other fabrics with identifiable motifs printed on them, into the center using red floss in the herringbone stitch to finish the edges. She mixed motifs cut out of glazed chintz fabrics made in the early nineteenth century with conversation and cretonne prints, large-scale pastoral prints seen in the Victorian period. These fabrics were also cut out and appliquéd to pieced blocks that formed rows around the center portion, creating a very unusual medallion-and-block quilt. This specimen, in the Cooley family collection, has been preserved so well it offers the best visual of the original colors Hewson printed. The colors on the vase's reeds and flutes from left to right are red and brown, gold and blue, and two shades of brown. The pearls are yellow and blue, the serpent handles are brown and gold, and the figural masks are red, brown, and yellow.<sup>35</sup>

QUILT  
Artist unidentified; center  
block printed by John  
Hewson  
United States  
c. 1800  
Cotton  
86 × 75"  
Nellie Crater Collection



The last quilt to be brought to the public's attention was discovered in Vermont and displayed for the first time at the Vermont Quilt Festival, in St. Johnsbury, in 2006. In this textile, now held in New York in the same family of descendants, LeMoyné star patchwork blocks and plain squares are set around the Hewson-printed panel.<sup>16</sup>

John Hewson produced colorful and decorative textiles at a time when the industry of printing fast colors on cotton and linen was in its infancy in America. He continued through difficult political and economic times, when most printers could not, acquiring an excellent reputation. Hewson retired in 1810, passing his business to his oldest son, John Jr. Hewson's second wife, Zibiah, died on September 30, 1815, and Hewson died on October 11, 1821, shortly before his seventy-seventh birthday. He left his factory to John Jr. to carry forward and all his worldly goods to his children and close friends. His reputation as both a dedicated Philadelphian and a fine printer during a time of great change in America will live on through his cherished printed textiles for generations to come.

### Acknowledgments

I am indebted to two people for information and many explanations they shared over the course of my research, which began in 2002: Kenneth W. Milano, a Philadelphia genealogical and historical researcher specializing in Kensington, the town in which Hewson lived, and Todd Fielding, a Hewson descendant by marriage, who has become a Hewson family genealogist and recorder. ★

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### Notes

- 1 Jeremy Elwell Adamson, *Calico and Chintz: Antique Quilts from the Collection of Patricia S. Smith* (Washington, D.C.: Renwick Gallery of the National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, 1997), p. 36; and "Ollive & Talwin, 1763–1783," in Wendy Hefford, *The Victoria & Albert Museum's Textile Collection: Design for Printed Textiles in England from 1750 to 1850* (London: V & A Publications, 1992 [1999 printing]), p. 156.
- 2 Adamson, op. cit., pp. 21–23, shows the progression from woodblock printing to plate printing in the late 1750s at Bromley Hall. Florence M. Montgomery, in *Printed Textiles: English and American Cottons and Linens, 1700–1850* (New York: Viking Press, 1970), p. 97, found no block printing from Bromley Hall.
- 3 Harrold E. Gillingham, "Calico and Linen Printing in Philadelphia," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 52, no. 2 (1928): 100 (reprint published by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania).
- 4 *Ibid.*, p. 101; and Sarah Alcock, *A Brief History of the Revolution with a Sketch of the Life of John Hewson* (Philadelphia: self-published, 1843), pp. 25 and 29, courtesy Manuscript Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia. My thanks to Todd Fielding for providing a copy of these pages.
- 5 Hewson Family papers, Doc. #203, Joseph Downs Collection, Winterthur Library, Winterthur, Del. The collection includes a copy of Hewson's record of his children's information in the family bible.

- 6 Gillingham, op. cit., p. 102.
- 7 Francis B. Heitman, *Historical Register of Officers of the Continental Army during the War of the Revolution, April, 1775, to December, 1783* (1914, 1932; repr., Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1973), p. 288.
- 8 Microfiche of the original petition at the Pennsylvania State Archives, Harrisburg, Pa., RG 27 PA's Revolutionary Govts., 1775–1790, Roll 33, Frame 1192; Appointments File: Political (F–S).
- 9 Hewson's advertisements appeared on July 21, 25, and 28, and Aug. 4 and 8.
- 10 Montgomery, op. cit., pp. 93–94. Hewson announced his receipt of a gold medal for this honor in the *Pennsylvania Packet*, March 24, 1790.
- 11 *Federal Gazette and Pennsylvania Evening Post*, November 8, 1788, no. 34, pp. 1–2.
- 12 Adamson, op. cit., pp. 35–36.
- 13 Montgomery, op. cit., pp. 93–94.
- 14 John Hewson, letter to George Washington, Feb. 27, 1793; George Washington Papers, 1741–1799, Series 4, General Correspondence, 1697–1799, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
- 15 *Pennsylvania Gazette*, July 20, 1774, and July 25, 1781, and *Pennsylvania Packet*, March 23, 1790.
- 16 Kimberly Wulfert, "John Hewson's Printed Textiles—Twenty-eight and Counting," 2006, unpublished manuscript written for the Winterthur Museum's Textile History Forum seminar. The seminar, which was scheduled for Oct. 15, 2006, was canceled, and the paper is in the author's possession. The research presented furthers the understanding of Hewson's work and textiles via information and observations gathered beginning in 2002.
- 17 The announcement of Joseph B. Hodgson Jr.'s donation of the bedcover appears in "Accessions and Loan to the Museum September 1, 1930, to December 15, 1930," *Bulletin of the Pennsylvania Museum* 26, no. 138 (January 1931): 31, and it was first illustrated in Gillingham, op. cit., p. 94, fig. 1. The patchwork quilt top is illustrated in Frances Little, *Early American Textiles* (New York: Century Co., 1931), pp. 194–197, fig. 47, and in the museum's bulletin announcing Ella Hodgson's gift a few years later, in which it is referred to as a patchwork bedspread made by Hewson's wife from cottons he printed; see "Accessions of the Year. Works of Art Received by the Museum April 15, 1934–April 15, 1935," *Bulletin of the Pennsylvania Museum* 30, no. 167 (1935): 71, fig. 69. Also listed as a donation from Ella Hodgson at that time was a "Mezzaro," or shawl, of printed cotton with design copied from an East Indian palampore, made by Speich in Cornigliano, near Genoa, about 1800, and originally owned by John Hewson."
- 18 William Rush Dunton Jr., *Old Quilts* (Cantonsville, Md.: self-published, 1946), pp. 252–254. The unidentified third textile he refers to as 34-16-2 is the Italian Mezzaro referenced in the *Bulletin of the Pennsylvania Museum* 30, no. 167. Dunton incorrectly cites the donors as Hewson's great-great-grandchildren.
- 19 Florence Peto, "A Textile Discovery," *The Magazine Antiques* 64, no. 2 (August 1953): 120–121.
- 20 Before Peto sold this piece to the museum, Electra Havemeyer Webb, founder of the Shelburne Museum, Shelburne, Vt., bought it on review, only to return it a short time later when she opted to buy a different quilt from Peto. My thanks to Bets Ramsey for sharing copies of personal correspondence between Peto and Elizabeth Richardson that describes the Webb transaction.
- 21 Montgomery, op. cit., p. 92. The last detailed discussion and overview of Hewson's life appeared in this book; see frontispiece and pp. 83–96, 182–186.
- 22 Myron and Patsy Orlofsky, *Quilts in America* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974), pp. 25, 43, 46–47. A full image of Cincinnati's quilt is in Robert Bishop and Patricia Coblentz, *New Discoveries in American Quilts* (New York: Dutton, 1975),

p. 24, fig. 21; and Lacy Folmar Bullard and Betty Jo Shiell, *Chintz Quilts: Unfading Glory* (Tallahassee, Fla.: Serendipity Publishers, 1983), p. 17. The English chintz sewn to the Smithsonian quilt top is illustrated in Carleton L. Safford and Robert Bishop, *America's Quilts and Coverlets* (New York: Dutton, 1972), p. 176, fig. 258; and Doris M. Bowman, *The Smithsonian Treasury American Quilts* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution

DAR Museum's quilt (which she also refers to as a bedcover and a spread). However, fourteen textiles were known at the time and published (at minimum) in the books and magazines referenced in this article: eight quilts, two quilt tops, two bedcovers, and two handkerchiefs, in addition to the DAR quilt.

24 A third bedcover was published on the Philadelphia Museum of Art's website, accessed in 2002 ([www.philamuseum.org/collections/costumes/1930-100-1.shtml](http://www.philamuseum.org/collections/costumes/1930-100-1.shtml); page no longer available), which stated that it was held in a private collection and is similar to the two previously documented bedcovers. Dilys Blum, curator of textiles, Philadelphia Museum of Art, confirmed there are three Hewson bedcovers. She viewed the third bedcover many years ago but does not know the collector's name. Blum, e-mail to the author, June 13, 2006.

25 Wulfert, op. cit., based on personal observation and study of the three textiles at the museums where they are held.

26 Susan Jenkins and Linda Seward, *The American Quilt Story* (Emmaus, Pa.: Rodale Press, 1991), pp. 8–9. The appraisal was done by Cora Ginsburg, Inc., July 29, 1983.

27 Roderick Kiracofe and Mary Elizabeth Johnson, *The American Quilt: A History of Cloth and Comfort, 1750–1950* (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1993), p. 56.

28 *Ibid.*, p. 54. Collectors and dealers Kate and Joel Kopp, who found the quilt, identified it as a Hewson. Textile appraiser and dealer Stella Rubin put forth a Virginia provenance for the quilt in her book *Miller's Treasure or Not? How to Compare & Value American Quilts* (London: Octopus Publishing Group, 2001), p. 240, based on information that accompanied the photo held by the Kopps' America Hurrah Archive, New York, but a definitive provenance has not been established yet. The Laurens purchased the quilt from the Kopps in the early 1990s, and it was illustrated in *Architectural Digest* (October 2003): 203 and 209.

29 The exhibition was on view from Sept. 13, 1996, to Jan. 12, 1997. See Adamson, op. cit., pp. 48–49. Patricia Smith Melton did not donate this quilt to the Renwick Gallery along with others from the collection, and current collection information cannot be determined; Margarite Hergesheimer, Renwick Gallery, conversation with the author, June 5, 2003, and Melton's office, e-mail to the author, March 8, 2005.

30 Linda Eaton, "Winterthur's Hand-painted Indian Export Cottons," *The Magazine Antiques* 161, no. 1 (January 2002): 174.

31 *Fine European and American Furniture and Decorative Arts*, Bonhams & Butterfields, San Francisco, sale 13101, June 20, 2005, lot 6042, p. 28; and Alice Kaufman, "Americana at Bonhams & Butterfields," *Maine Antique Digest*, October 2005, p. 1-C.

32 Edward Maeder, "Not Just Another Pretty Quilt," keynote speech, American Quilt Study Group Seminar, Farmington, Conn., Oct. 6, 2006. This particular information was shared during dialogue with the audience.

33 Claire Herbert Hogan donated the fragment in 1982. Winterthur's object file suggests this bird motif may have been cut from a corner of a Hewson bedcover, as the motif appears in the corners of the identified bedcovers.

34 Montgomery, op. cit., p. 252, fig. 249. My thanks to Hazel Carter for referring me to Nellie Crater, and to Tim and Sherry Crater for making it possible for me to view and photograph the quilt in person in 2003.

35 My thanks to Bunnie Jordan for referring me to the Cooley family, and to the Cooleys for making it possible for me to view and photograph the quilt top in person in 2003 and 2004.

36 My thanks to Richard Cleveland for bringing this quilt to my attention in April 2006. It was also briefly displayed at the American Quilt Study Group Seminar, Farmington, Conn., Oct. 6, 2006. For an illustration, see Richard L. Cleveland, "A Vermont Quilter's Galaxy," *Quilter's Newsletter Magazine* 388 (December 2006): 32–36.



Detail of QUILT,  
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Press, 1991), p. 13. My thanks to Doris Bowman for correcting previous date attributions to this quilt.

23 Conover Hunt, "A Rare Printed Quilt by an American Patriot," *Daughters of the American Revolution Magazine* 109, no. 4 (April 1975): 286–288. Hunt states there were thirteen known Hewson textiles at the time of her article, including the

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