


A Short History of Quilling

 Quilling, or filigree work, is the result of rolling or coiling thin strips of paper into delicate-looking shapes and using these pieces to form a design. This art form is very old and is traceable to the 15th century and possibly as early as the 13th or 14th century. It is believed that quilled items were used by French and Italian nuns and monks to decorate religious objects in order to simulate more costly handiworks such as carved ivory or wrought iron.

Filigree work became popular in England in the 18th century and was taught along with needlework as a “proper pastime” for fashionable young ladies. Boarding schools of that age often featured “filigree” among the subjects taught. The 18th century *New Lady Magazine* described filigree as “the art which affords an amusement to the female mind capable of the most pleasing and extensive variety.” Signatures, dates and school names were often penciled in on the back of surviving pieces. Tea caddies, cribbage boards, wine coasters, work baskets, obelisks, urns and even pieces of furniture were commonly enhanced with filigree work.

“Quilling” as defined by Webster’s Dictionary is “a band of material fluted into small ruffles so as to re-



Licia Politis



Barbara Machado

semble a row of quills.” The term “quilling” may have been adopted when filigree work spread to the American colonies. Others believe it was called this simply because the coils were rolled over the end of a goose quill.

Early American quill work continued to be used as a decorative adornment for pic-

tures, trays, boxes, candle sconces and other practical items. Just as the woodworker carefully carved intricate patterns and designs into wood, so too the quiller would laboriously and painstakingly roll and sculpt paper with amazingly similar results. Many times quillwork would be combined with shells, wax flowers, twisted wire, and chipped mica to add a sparkling effect to designs viewed under candlelight.

Modern artisans have a greater variety of materials and papers to choose from but the basic tools and techniques remain the same. Since quilling can be made to resemble many other art forms its applications are limited only by one’s imagination.

Due to the fragile nature of paper, only a few very old pieces survive, although many museums in the USA, especially in the New England area, boast at least a few examples from the 18th and 19th centuries. Some museums having samples to display are the Metropolitan Museum of Art, NYC, NY; Essey Institute (Salem) and the Museum of Fine Art (Boston), Mass.; and Wadsworth Athenaeum, Hartford, Conn.

Compiled by Sherry Rodehaver



Sherry Rodehaver



Dema Simeri



Antonella DeFalco

 **NAQG Membership Form** 

Membership Dues (in U.S. Dollars)
 United States: \$25 Canada: \$30
 Mexico & Abroad: \$35

Please PRINT NEATLY or TYPE

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE or Province _____

ZIP or POSTAL CODE _____

COUNTRY _____

E-MAIL _____

PHONE _____

Phone number listed in the Member Directory?
 Yes ___ No ___

Email address listed in the Member
 Directory? Yes ___ No ___

Will you grant permission to use photos of your
 work in NAQG publications? Yes ___ No ___

Do you teach quilling? Yes ___ No ___







Do you demonstrate? Yes ___ No ___

Amount Enclosed \$ _____

North American Quilling Guild

IF YOU ARE A QUILLER, YOU NEED THE NAQG
 (THE KNACK)

Membership Benefits:

-  Four issues of NAQG's quarterly newsletter, "Quill America" (beginning with the next issue following receipt of dues)
-  Access to the "Members Only" section online
-  Exclusive access to "**NAQGmembers**" — a Yahoo! online group
-  Membership Card
-  Members' Directory
-  Quilling Bibliography

Just fill out the membership form on the left
 and send along with a check or money order
 (in U.S. dollars) made payable to NAQG.

Mail to:
 NAQG
 Rita Anderson
 2422 Torrington Drive, Lake Ridge
 Toms River, NJ 08755

Or you can join us online
 and pay securely through Pay Pal at:
www.naqq.org



Pat Caputo



(Background - Kate Jones)