

Antique quilt at Library has a rich history

By Sue Stafford
Correspondent

Most handmade quilts have a story to tell. The story might relate to the maker(s) of the quilt, the fabrics used, for whom the quilt was made, where it came from, or how it got to its current place of residence.

On Quilt Show Saturday, July 13, in the Sisters Library Community Room, a very special quilt over 100 years old will be displayed by the Three Sisters Historical Society and the quilt's owner, Kris Kristovich, the great-grandson of the quilt's creator, Franz Vanecek (later known as Frank Vanecek). Kris and his wife, Penny, started Sisters Drug in 1974.

Franz was born July 27, 1857 in the small Bohemian (Czechoslovakian) town of Vonsovec, district of Ledev, in the province of Cechy. Vonsovec was a small village of 26 homes and 176 residents, across the border from Vienna, Austria.

Vanecek's parents and grandparents were all residents of Bohemia. His grandfather, Wenzel, worked as a weaver. At the age of 13, during Lent season of 1871,

Franz was sent to Latz, Austria (outside Vienna) to start his apprenticeship as a tailor, an occupation that carried down through the generations. Latz was a two-to-three-day journey from his home, and he went alone.

His apprenticeship, lasting four years, involved working for Franz Neubauer in his Neubauer's Tailoring and Dressmaking shop. On April 11, 1875, having fulfilled all the requirements, Franz was awarded the Certificate of Apprenticeship from the Guild of Tailors of the Royal House of Haupf & Residenstadt of Wien (Vienna), Austria.

Around 1882, Franz left Europe with his pregnant wife for a new life in America, arriving in New York City where both his wife and their baby died. After remarrying, Franz left New York in 1888 for La Crosse, WI, where he worked as a tailor. It isn't known when or how they ended up in Spokane, Washington where Franz had a tailor shop.

Franz made quilts for his customers as a side business to his tailoring. Two of his quilts still reside within the family. Kris's aunt has one of

them and Kris has the other.

Appropriately, the background field of the quilt is made of dark fabrics that were originally salesmen's samples received by Franz in his tailor shop. The embroidery on the quilt was all done on a machine brought from Czechoslovakia when Franz emigrated to America. The quilt was featured on the front of a quilting magazine about 30 years ago. For its age, the quilt is in excellent condition.

Kristovich will be happy to share his stories of how the family all ended up in Butte, Montana, when Franz's son Frank moved there and opened a tailor shop. Kris's father, also Frank, was born in Butte as was Kris (whose given name is Frank). On a visit back to Butte a number of years ago, Kris went into Shirley's Clothing Shop where he used to buy his school clothes and the man working there remembered Frank the Tailor. He especially remembered Frank's lunch that he ate every day - raw hamburger, Limburger cheese, and onions on rye bread, washed down with a pint of beer.

That's a lot of stories packed into one quilt.



PHOTO PROVIDED

A century-old quilt owned by Kris Kristovich will be on display at Sisters Library during the Quilt Show.



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