

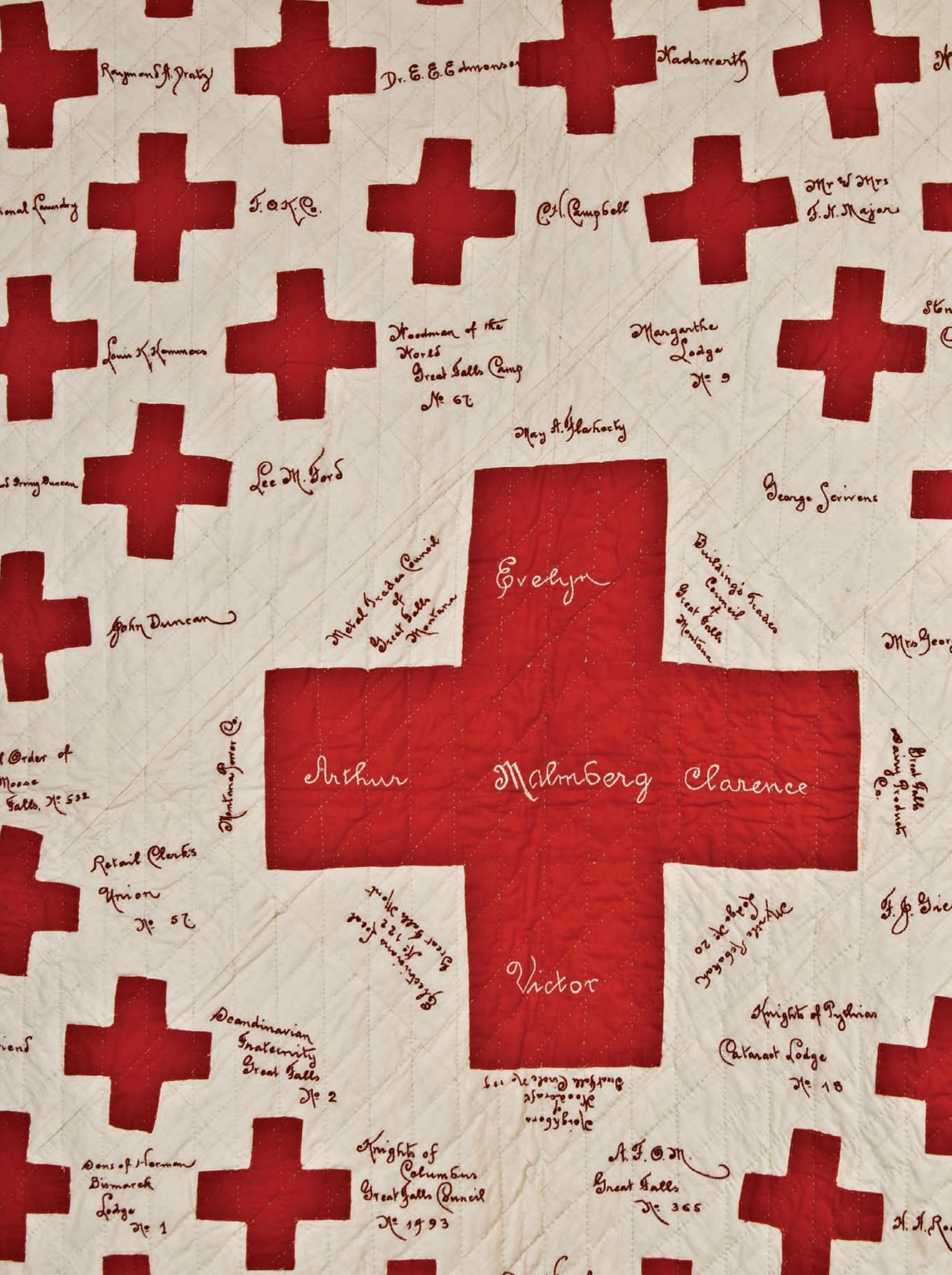
Border to Border

HISTORIC QUILTS &
QUILTMAKERS OF MONTANA

Annie Hanshew

Preliminary Excerpt





Red Cross

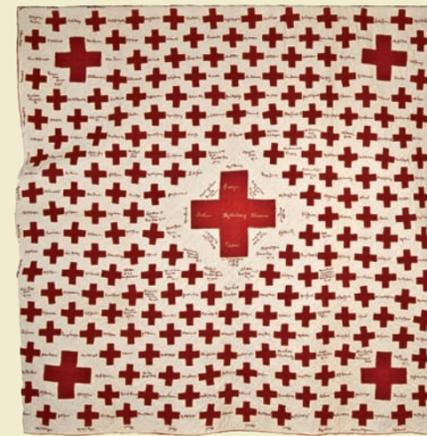
UCT LADIES AUXILIARY
1918

DURING World War I, the American Red Cross encouraged women to contribute to the war effort by quilting. Women throughout the country raised money for the organization, which was founded in 1881 by Clara Barton, by selling spaces for signatures on Red Cross-themed quilts. Often the finished quilts were then auctioned, generating additional funds.

The Cascade County Ladies Auxiliary to the Order of the United Commercial Traveler (UCT), a fraternal benefit society founded by traveling salesmen at the end of the nineteenth century, made this Red Cross quilt in 1918. The small spaces most likely sold for around twenty-five cents, but the large cross in the center may have raised as much as one hundred dollars. After raffling the quilt in April 1918, the Ladies Auxiliary was able to donate \$1,060.80 to the Red Cross.



Red Cross volunteers and sailors at the Helena train depot, ca. 1917



(opposite and above) Red Cross, UCT Ladies Auxiliary, 1918, MHS X1982.71.01 (81" x 82", cotton)
(right) reverse side



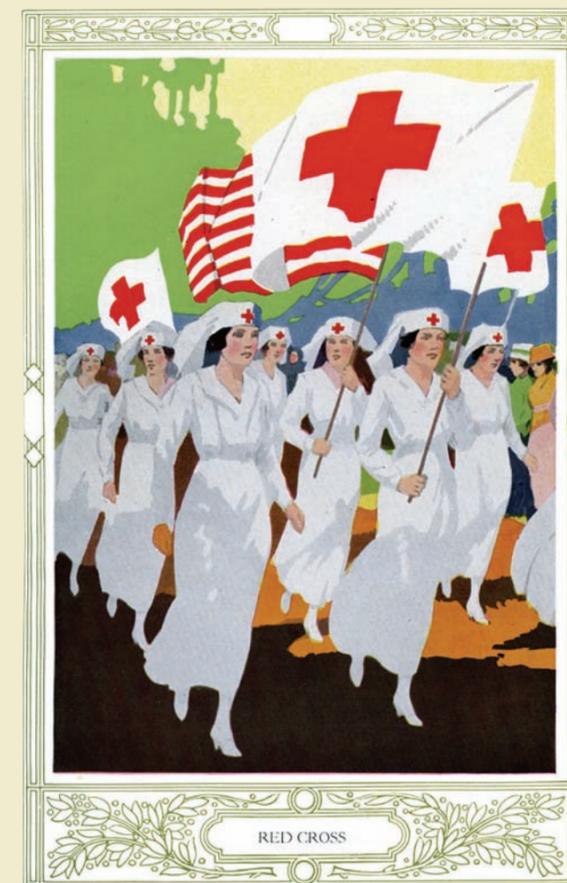
Red Cross

BIG TIMBER LUTHERAN
LADIES AID

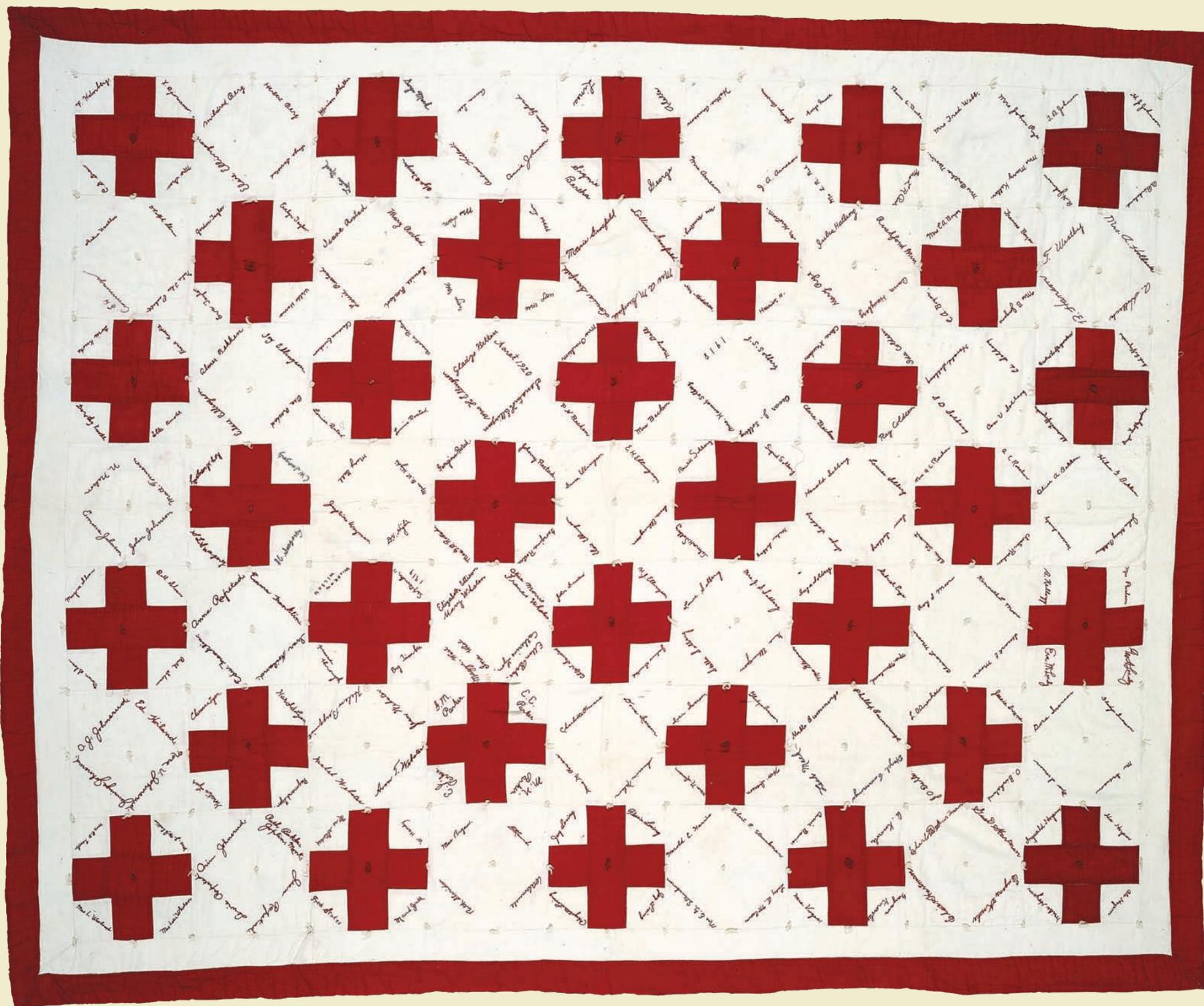
1918–1922

By the fall of 1918, the war in Europe was not the only pressing problem addressed by the Red Cross. That September an influenza epidemic swept the globe, and by June 1919, 675,000 Americans had died from the disease. The Red Cross responded to the crisis by creating a National Committee on Influenza and mobilizing professionals and volunteers to fill the void left by American doctors and nurses who were working overseas. The Red Cross's role in combating the pandemic heightened the need for the fund-raising efforts already undertaken by the country's quilters.

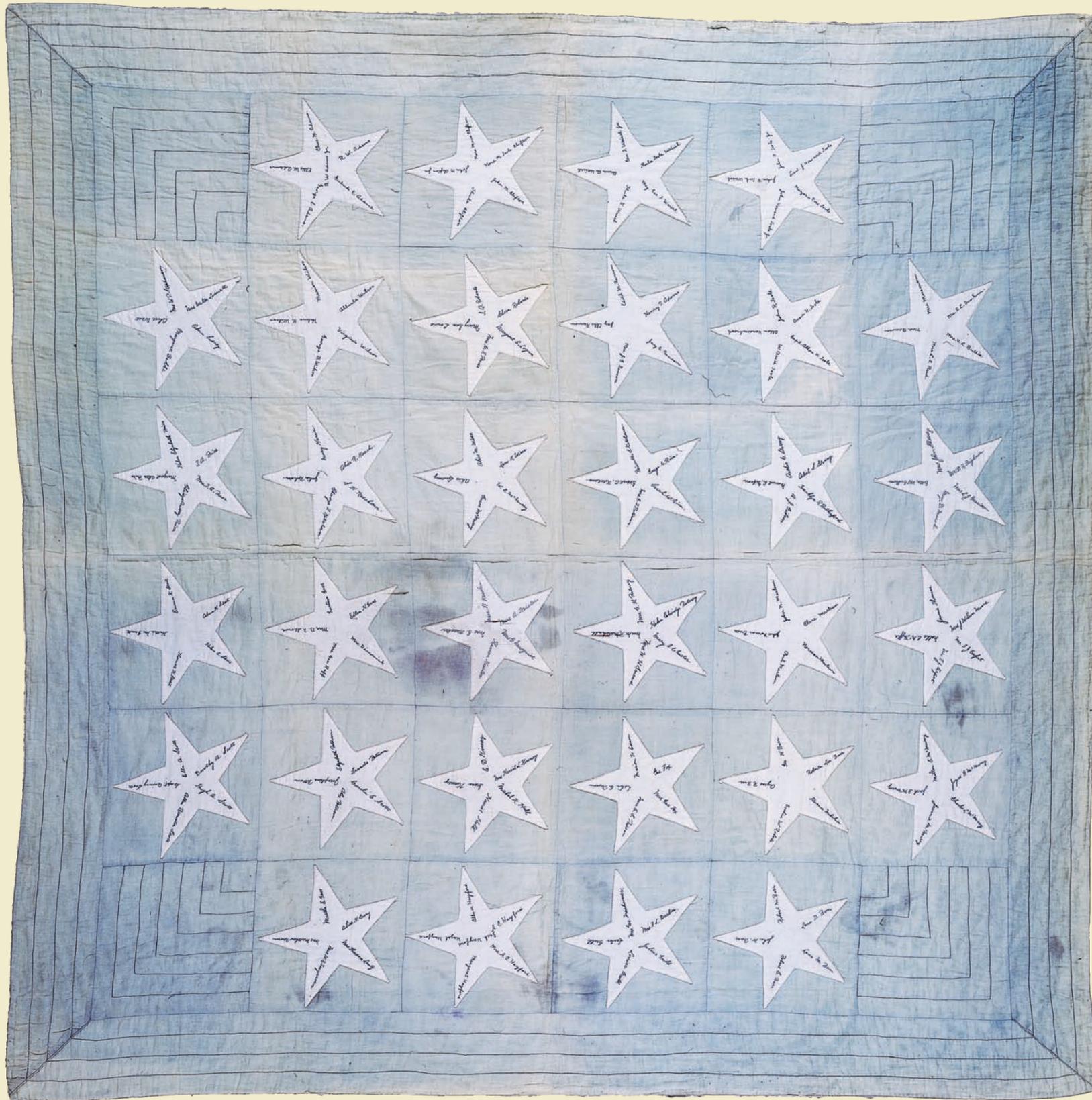
This Red Cross quilt made by the women of the Big Timber Lutheran Ladies Aid contains one very famous name. Around the second cross from the left in the fifth row these words appear: "Woodrow Wilson passed through Big Timber September 11, 1919." Wilson did indeed pass through Big Timber that day. He traveled first to Billings and then to Helena as part of a nationwide speaking tour to drum up support for American involvement in the League of Nations. His train stopped briefly in Livingston, about thirty miles east of Big Timber. The *Helena Daily Independent* reported: "It was expected the president would speak 10 minutes at Livingston, but the crowd was so dense, the cheering so continuous and the excitement so great that the train pulled out before the great crowd was quiet enough to have heard the president had he started to speak."²³ It is unclear if Wilson actually signed the quilt square, but it would not have been unprecedented. Today the American Red Cross has its own collection of Red Cross quilts, and among them are quilts signed by Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson.



This illustration of Red Cross volunteers marching in a parade appeared in *Yellowstone County Montana in the World War, 1917–1919*, edited by W. W. Gail and published in Billings in 1919.



Red Cross, Big Timber Lutheran Ladies Aid, 1918–1922, MHQP 40-04-03 (60" x 74", cotton)

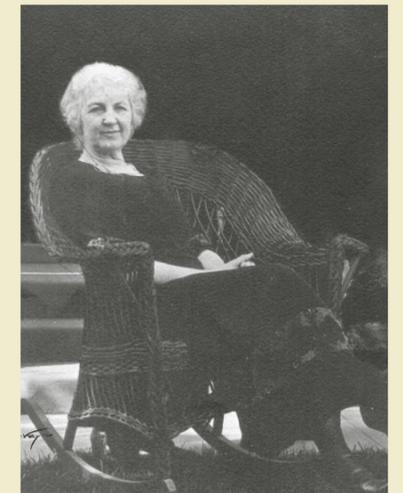


Star Signature, members of the Missoula First Presbyterian Church, ca. 1919, MHQP 04-68-05 (75" x 76", cotton)

Star Signature

MEMBERS OF THE
MISSOULA FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

ca. 1919



One of the quilt's makers was church member Jenny Thomas.

THIS elegant Star Signature quilt—featuring the signatures of several famous Missoulians—was nearly lost to Missoula's First Presbyterian Church in 1991. The church was cleaning house, and this quilt had been placed in the rummage sale. Fortunately, Gloria Anderson recognized several names stitched into the stars and understood that the quilt offered a unique glimpse into Missoula's history.

One of the stars belonged to A. J. Gibson, one of Missoula's most respected turn-of-the-century architects, and his family. Gibson designed several buildings on the University of Montana campus, Missoula's Carnegie library, the county courthouse, and numerous homes and row houses. In 1915 Gibson came out of retirement to design the First Presbyterian Church.

The signatures of several members of the John R. Toole family also appear on the quilt. An early Missoula politician and industrialist, John participated in the 1889 Montana constitutional convention, served in the state legislature, and eventually became president of the Blackfoot Milling Company at Bonner. Toole's grandson Kenneth Ross Toole became one of Montana's most famous and influential



First Presbyterian Church, Missoula, 1918

historians. K. Ross Toole's parents also had a star, but they included only the name of their oldest son John Howard Toole Jr., who was born in 1918. Since K. Ross was born in 1920, it seems likely that the quilt was made during the period between their births.

The quilt also includes the names of the pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, Reverend John Maclean, and his family. At the time the quilt was made, the pastor's eldest son Norman was probably working in a logging camp for the U.S. Forest Service. Later, however, Norman Maclean wrote *A River Runs Through It*, a collection of stories about growing up as a pastor's son in Montana. He became one of the state's most beloved authors.

Album Block

CLARISSA "CLARA" PLUM SANGUINE

1919



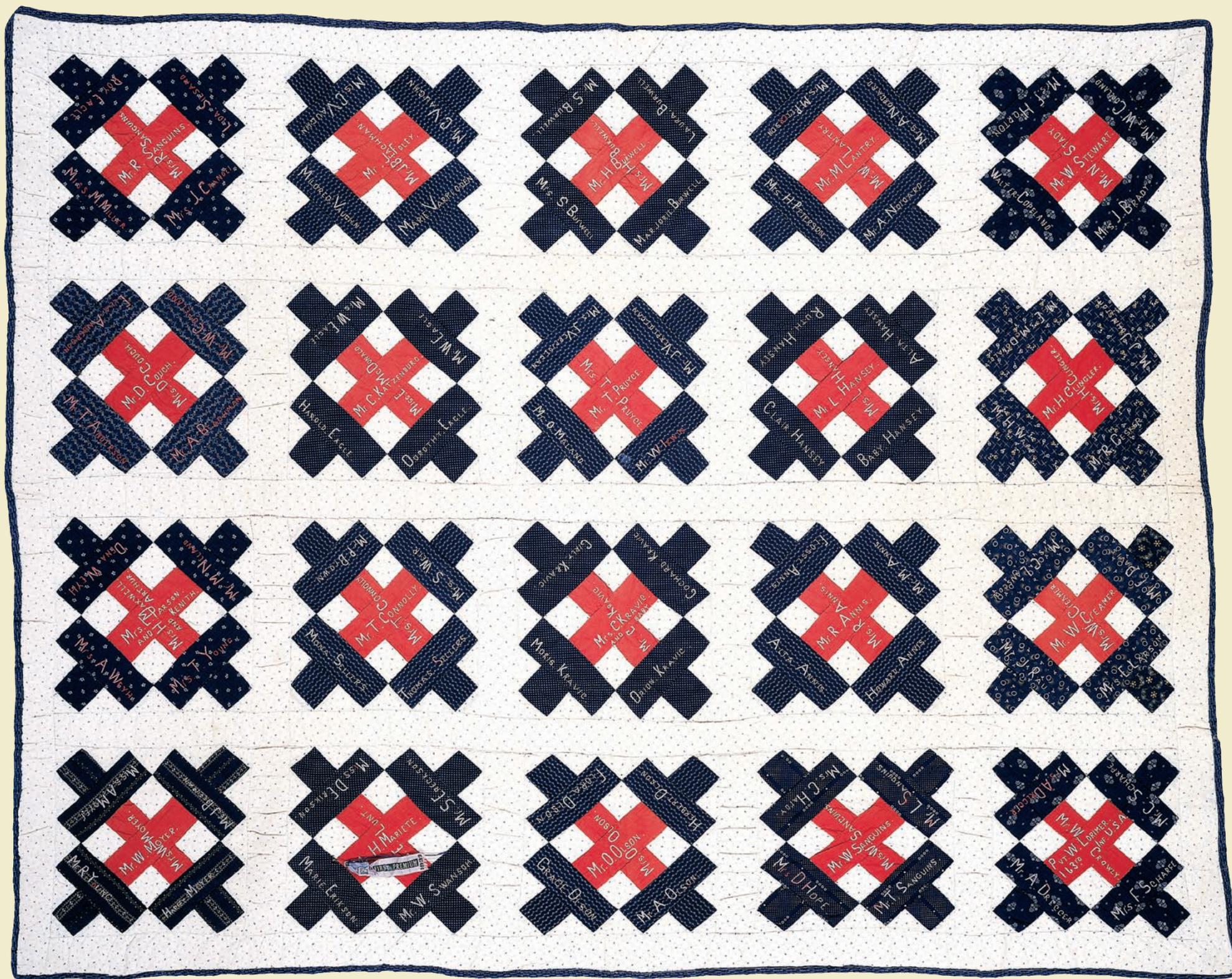
LIKE many Montana women, Clarissa "Clara" Sanguine was inspired to contribute to the war effort. Instead of making bright red crosses, however, Clara used the Christian Cross or Album Block pattern, which became a popular pattern for signature quilts in the second half of the nineteenth century.

To raise money, Clara charged ten cents for each signature and then sold the finished quilt in a local raffle. The man who won the raffle returned the quilt to Clara. The next year, with the community's blessing, she auctioned it off again, and once more, the winner returned the quilt to Clara, allowing her to keep it in the family. According to Clara's grandson, the quilt won a first-place ribbon in the 1932 Havre fair.

Clara, her husband William, and her son Russell had moved from Ontario, Canada, to Cottonwood, a small community in northern Hill County, Montana, where William and Russell farmed in the spring and summer and mined coal in the winter. A local history noted that Clara was "well known for her beautiful hooked rugs, her quilts, and her paintings."²⁴



Clarissa and William H. Sanguine (right) with (from left) their daughter-in-law Daisy Webster Sanguine (wife of Russell) and sons Leonard and Russell, north of Havre in the Simpson-Cottonwood area in 1918



Album Block, Clarissa "Clara" Plum Sanguine, 1919, MHQP 07-287-01 (61" x 78", cotton)