CROSSTOWN QUILTERS GUILD · QUILT HISTORY

The Dresden Plate

Where the name comes from



The Dresden Plate is named after the painted porcelain of Dresden, Germany. In the 1800s that china was famous for its delicate flowers and lacy, scalloped edges, and the round block of fanned petals reminded quilters of those plates.

The porcelain wasn't actually made in Dresden. It was made in nearby Meissen, then painted and sold in Dresden.

How the block began

The block grew out of the fan quilts of the late 1800s. Some early versions look like four fans sewn together into a circle.

It became hugely popular in the 1920s and 1930s and was often sewn from feed-sack scraps.

Other names

Over the years the same block has also been called Grandmother's Sunburst, Friendship Ring, Aster, Dahlia and Sunflower.

A theory about the petals

Some sources think the alternating pointed and rounded petals copy the blue crown mark that Dresden decorators stamped on the back of their plates. That's a theory, not a proven fact.

Sources: Tennessee State Library & Archives (Tennessee Virtual Archive); The American Ceramic Society, *Ceramic Tech Today*; Quilting Daily; antique-marks.com. Pictured: a Dresden-plate style art quilt.