

Bertha Stenge



(1891-1957)

*Known as "Chicago's Quilting Queen," a award winning quilter
Inducted in 1980 at the Continental Quilting Congress, Arlington, Virginia
Research Associate: Merikay Waldvogel*

Known as "Chicago's Quilting Queen," Bertha Stenge was an award winning quilter. After attending the San Francisco School of Art, she had her own art studio. While recovering from an illness in 1929, she made her first quilt, which won a prize. She entered many quilt exhibitions, including the Chicago World's Fair in 1933. Her quilt, "The Palm Leaf," won awards at the Women's Pageant of Progress in 1936 and the 1940 World's Fair. She designed most of her own patterns, which were published in the *Ladie's Home Journal*.

One of the first quilters to have a one-woman exhibit, Bertha Stenge exhibited her work in 1941 at the Art Gallery of the University of California in Berkeley. The Art Institute of Chicago presented her second one-woman show in 1943. In 1954, the Women's International Exposition of Arts and Industries in New York featured her quilts. Most recently, her work was shown at the Illinois State Museum, which has acquired seven of her quilts. This exhibit toured the state for a year. Her quilts, "The Quilt Show" and "The Quilting Party," were included in the 20th Century's 100 Best American Quilts exhibit and catalogue. Bertha Stenge and Honoree Florence Peto became friends, promoting and encouraging each other's work in exhibits and in publications.