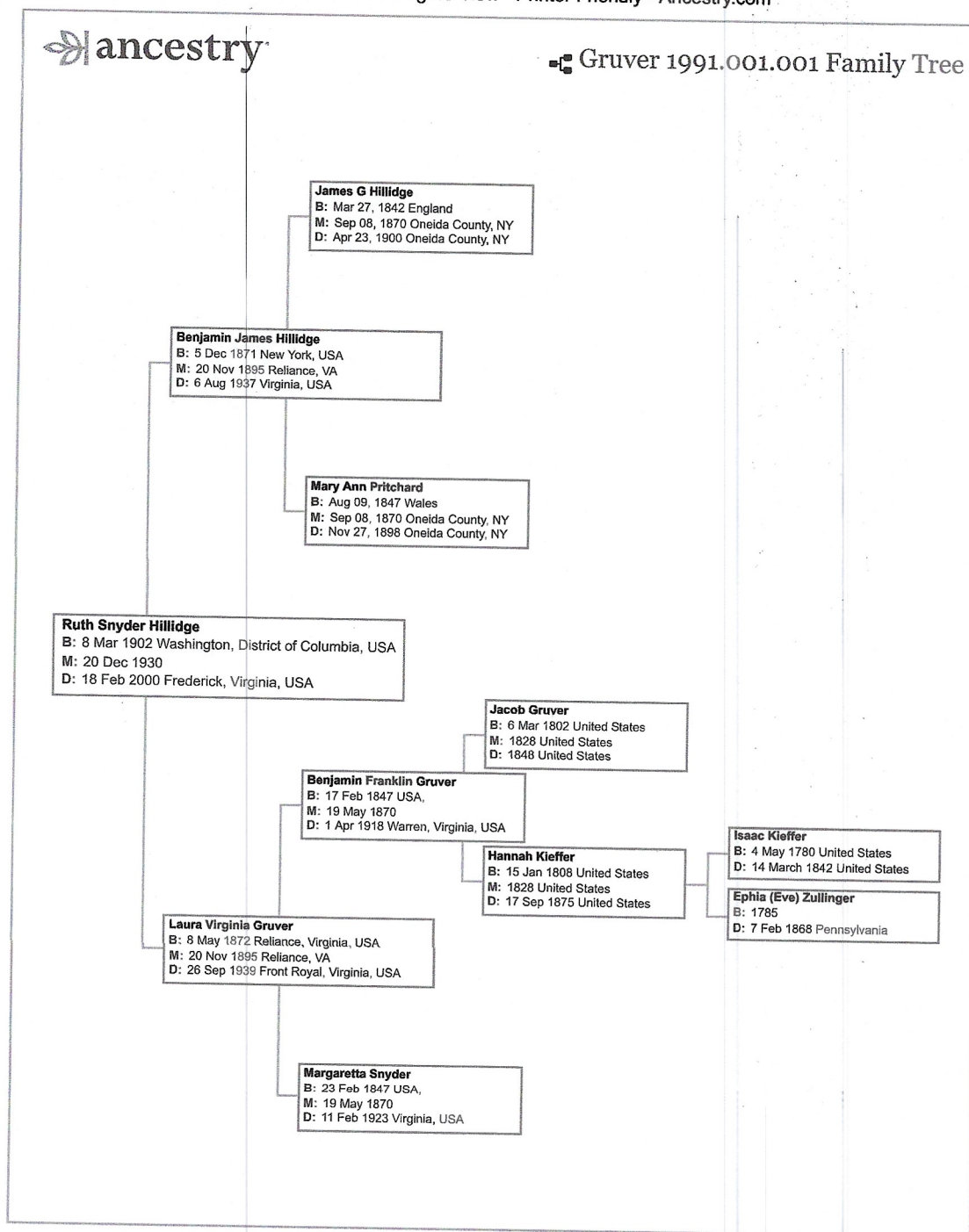




## Gruver 1991.001.001 Family Tree



## Cherry Wreath Quilt

1991.001.001 (the first quilt accessioned to the Virginia Quilt Museum)

Donor: Ruth Snyder Hillidge (8 Mar 1902 – 18 Feb 2000), wife of Alfred Darte Cone (6 Jun 1893 – 26 Dec 1964)

Ruth H. Cone donated the Cherry Wreath quilt to the Virginia Quilt Museum on September 4, 1991. It was made by her mother, Laura Virginia (Gruver) Hillidge, about 1890-1895, in Reliance, Warren County, Virginia. On October 12, 1995, the Museum received a letter from Virginia (Dicks) Gruver, the wife of Mrs. Cone's first cousin, Arthur Gruver, which detailed some family history.

Virginia Gruver's letter states that,

"Laura Virginia Gruver (Ruth's mother) was born in Reliance 9/26/1872 [note: the author mistakenly typed her death month and day; Laura was born May 8, 1872]. She was married to Benjamin J. Hillidge of Holland Patent, NY on 11/20/95. Ruth was the 4th of 6 children. She was born Ruth Snyder Hillidge on 3/8/1902 in Washington, DC. She married Alfred D. Cone on 12/20/1930.

"So, this quilt was made while Laura Virginia was a Gruver, but she later became a Hillidge. ...

"Benjamin Hillidge was a business man and one-time mayor of Front Royal. An oak tree that stood in their front yard still stands and is preserved and marked with a marker and bench by the town of Front Royal. Mr. Hillidge and later his son ran the Locust Pin factory. They made wooden pins for utility poles. Ruth is the last living member of that family. No children, nieces, nephews or spouses. That is why I became involved. My husband's father, David Gruver, was a brother to Ruth's mother."

Laura Virginia Gruver was the second of six children born to Benjamin Franklin Gruver (17 Feb 1847 – 1 Apr 1918) and Margaretta Snyder (23 Feb 1847 – 11 Feb 1923). She had one older sister Turissa May, born in 1871 in Pennsylvania, and four brothers, all born in Virginia: Harvey Snyder in 1874, Ira Kiefer in 1877, Esdras Ludwick in 1879, and David Newton in 1884. A photograph of her father posted on Ancestry.com has this notation on the back:

"BENJAMIN FRANKLIN GRUVER, b. Feb. 17, 1847, in Strasburg, Franklin Co., PA.; d. Apr. 1, 1918 in Reliance, Warren Co., VA.; buried in Reliance; m. Margaretta (Maggie) Snider, b. Feb. 23, 1847; & d. Feb. 11, 1923 in Reliance, VA.; buried in Reliance. (They had moved from the PA home to Virginia in 1872, when Turissa May Gruver was about a

year old. It was on that trip the wagon turned over crossing a stream and records were lost.)”

Benjamin Franklin Gruver’s obituary appeared in the Washington Post on April 3, 1918 and reads as follows:

“Winchester, April 2. – Benjamin F. Gruver, 71 years old, a wealthy farmer and land owner and prominent official member of United Brethren Church, died Monday at Reliance, Va., after a brief illness with pneumonia. He was a native of Franklin county, Pa., and the last member of a large family. Surviving are his wife, six sons, H. S. Gruver, assistant superintendent of schools, Indianapolis, Ind.; the Rev. J. H. Gruver, pastor Presbyterian Church, Weaverville, N. C.; E. L. Gruver, a Wall Street broker, New York; Floyd Gruver, a mining engineer, St. Louis, and Ira K. and D. N. Gruver, merchant and farmer, Reliance, and two daughters, Mrs. D. H. Scanlon, Meridian, Miss., and Mrs. B. J. Hillidge, Front Royal, Va.”

Laura Virginia Gruver, the maker of the Cherry Wreath quilt, married Benjamin James Hillidge in 1895. It is likely she made this quilt in Reliance, Virginia, between 1890-1895 as part of her hope chest. She is found with her husband and children in the 1910 and 1930 censuses in Front Royal, Virginia, where she died on 29 Sep 1939. She and her husband, who died on 6 Aug 1937, are buried in Prospect Hill Cemetery in Front Royal. They had six children, two of whom died in infancy.

Researcher:  
Becky Thompson  
September 2016



# Cherry Wreath

c. 1890

82" x 81"

Made by Laura Virginia Gruver in the 1890s, this quilt is believed to be an original open-ended wreath design. It was hand-quilted on applique blocks. It was done around the Centennial celebration of George Washington being inaugurated as President of the United States. This could be why the maker used cherries.

Some of the cherries are bright red, while others have faded to pink. The fibers of a pink cherry compared to a red cherry look to be the same, indicating they are likely from the same fabric and illustrates how different the fabric changes over time. The greens are an example of synthetic dye.

This was the first quilt donated to the Virginia Quilt Museum. Laura passed her quilt down to her daughter, the donor. The museum's opening was attended by the donor in 1995 to see her mother's beautiful and cherished quilt on display.

graphs of generals, poets, actors, and statesmen. She sent to each person small diamond-shaped pieces of silk on which they wrote their names in ink. These were set together with diamond-shaped blocks on which tiny flowers, violins, crests of arms, Chinese fans, and other figures were done in black on white silk. The border was handpainted in delicate floral pattern. Among the names are those of Edwin Booth, John G. Saxe, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Julia Ward Howe, Jefferson Davis, G. T. Beauregard, Chester Arthur, P. H. Sherman, and Queen Victoria. It took forty years to collect enough autographs for this quilt.

One of the most modern of quilts is that inspired by the "yo-yo" top. It is made entirely of circles of cloth about three inches in diameter. The edge is turned in and gathered round, then turned up on the top and the thread fastened so that there is a small center left open; this is filled with a bright colored bit and the round medallions are then arranged in any design you may fancy and fastened together at the edges with tiny stitches. The result is quite artistic but I remember that my mother made a "throw" of a similar design many years ago, so instead of this being a new pattern it is only an old pattern with a modern name.

A very unusual modern quilt of Colonial inspiration and feeling had an oval wreath of cherries and leaves for the center motif and a graceful festoon border of the same cherries and leaves. The cherries were in two shades of red and were stuffed, and the leaves were in three shades of green. The background was quilted in one-half inch diamonds with an artistic design of feather quilting in each corner. This was an especially designed pattern that curved out from each corner until it formed a wreath of quilting that inclosed the applied wreath of leaves and cherries, and was the finishing touch to a very beautiful quilt.

An unusual idea was carried out in quilting a very beautiful quilt for a hope-chest, when the prospective bridegroom drew a design or pattern of the bride-to-be's favorite flower for the white block that framed the pieced blocks. Every stitch was set by the bride and the result was much admired, but no one asked to copy it, as it was understood the pattern

COND:

GOOD

DIMENSIONS: Length: 82

Width: 81

LOCATION:

T

001

QUILT

16" SQUARE

INSIDE, 5" WIDE  
RAIN STITCH QUILT

16" x 24" HOPE  
THE SOURCE

THE MOTHER QUILT



# Cherry Wreath

c. 1890

81"x 82"

Quiltmaker: Laura Virginia Gruver

This original design was made about the time of the Washington Centennial Celebration in the spring of 1889 to commemorate the inauguration of George Washington as first President. Perhaps it was this occasion and the prevalence of the *Washington and the Cherry Tree* story that prompted her to add the cherries to her wreath pattern.

Laura lived in Reliance, Warren County Virginia. This applique quilt consists of 9 blocks of green wreaths decorated with stuffed red and pink cherries. Undulating feathers make up the border and the sashing. The family attributed the design to the maker. This was the first quilt given to the museum's permanent collection on September 4<sup>th</sup>, 1991.

Gift by Ruth Cone

VQM 1991.001.001

# CHERRY WREATH

c 1890

81"x 82"

Quiltmaker: Laura Virginia Gruver

This was the first quilt given to the museum's permanent collection on September 4th, 1991. Laura lived in Reliance in Warren County, Virginia.

This appliqué quilt consists of 9 blocks of green wreaths decorated with stuffed red and pink cherries. Undulating feathers make up the border and the sashing. The family attributed the design to the maker.