

## Spec/Text Sheet

**Hand and machine stitched bed coverings. Machine embroidered text.**

**Antique metal doll bed with wood balls at feet**

12” (W) x 21 1/2” (L) x 3 1/2” (H) (mattress to floor) x (12” headboard, 8” footboard) H

**Sham Pillowcase**

*(vintage white with green and blue flower patterned cotton comforter cover with machine embroidered ruffle)*

9” (W) x 6” (L)

**Sham Pillow** *(vintage white cotton bed sheet with pink flower pattern, cotton batting stuffing)*

6” (W) x 4” (L)

**Pillowcase** *(vintage white embroidered cotton sheet)*

8 1/4” (W) x 4 1/2” (L)

**Pillow** *(vintage off-white rose patterned pillow ticking, cotton batting stuffing)*

7 1/4” (W) x 4 1/2” (L)

**Bedsread**

*(vintage white with green and blue flower patterned cotton comforter cover with machine embroidered ruffle)*

25” (W) 24” (L) with 2” dust ruffle

**Duvet (Comforter) cover** *(vintage white cotton sheet with verticle - lined pink rose pattern, with 4 matching ties)*

25 1/2” (W) x 24” (L)

**Duvet (Comforter)** *(vintage quilted white comforter with rose pattern)*

25” (W) x 23 1/2” (L)

**Blanket** *(vintage pink and green wool blankets with polyester satin blanket trim)*

23 1/2” (W) x 26” (L)

**Top sheet** *(vintage white cotton bed sheet with pink flower pattern, with sewn fold-over top edge)*

20 1/2” (W) x 27” (L)

**Bottom sheet** *(vintage white & floral patterned cotton bed sheets)* with 2 original vintage labels:  
handwritten “*Ruth*” and stitched “*Canon Muslin Single Bed*”

22” (W) x 28 1/2” (L)

**Mattress cover** *(vintage cotton stripped pink flower pattern pillow ticking with zipper closure)*

12” (W) x 21” (L) x 2” (H)

**Mattress** *(vintage blue stripped cotton ticking fabric, stuffed with cotton batting stuffing)*

12” (W) x 20 1/2” (L) x 2” (H)

## Bibliography

***I knew them in Prison.*** By Mary B. Harris, 1<sup>st</sup> edit 1936, 1942

Mary Harris (1874 – 1957) – Superintendent of the Federal Industrial Institution for Woman  
From May 27, 1918 – Jan 1, 1925, Mary worked at the State Home for Girls in Trenton, NJ.

***I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings,*** Maya Angelou. 1969

(1928 – 2014)

More about author, poet, civil rights activist - Maya Angelou can be found at her website:

<https://www.mayaangelou.com/>

***Letters of Eliza Southgate. Mrs. Walter Bowne***

Eliza Southgate Bowne (1783 – 1809) was born in Maine, 1 of 12 children, sent to be “finished” at boarding school in Boston when she was 14 years old. After receiving this letter, her father, Dr. Southgate decided that the cramped quarters of Mrs. Wyman’s school were not suitable Eliza, and so he transferred her to Mrs. Rowson’s school in Medford, Mass.

***The Living of Charlotte Perkins Gilman: An Autobiograph,*** Charlotte Perkins Gilman, 1935

(1860 – 1935)

More about author, social reformer Charlotte Perkins Gilman can be found here:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charlotte\\_Perkins\\_Gilman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charlotte_Perkins_Gilman)

***Lowell Offering,*** Harriet Farley, 1844.

Harriet Farley’s (1812 – 1907) story, “*Susan*” letter, is based on her experiences going to work in the Lowell, MA mills.

More about writer and abolitionist Harriet Farley can be found here: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harriet\\_Farley](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harriet_Farley)

***The Maimie Papers: letters from an ex-prostitute, Maimie Pinzer,*** Ruth Rosen, Historical Editor, Sue Davidson, Textual editor, 1996-1997

Maimie Pinzer’s (1885 – 1940) story is found in a series of letters written from 1910-1922 to Fanny Quincy Howe, a wealthy and distinguished Boston philanthropist, who became Maimie’s benefactress.

Maimie came from a well-off Jewish family in Philadelphia. As a child, she was molested by uncle. She was put out to work at a store by the age of 13, when her father was murdered. Maimie picked up extra money by making “dates” on the side after work. On one of these dates, she stayed out for three days. When her mother and uncle caught up to her, they decided to have her jailed for prostitution. Once out of jail, she did work as a prostitute. During this time, and with the help of a social worker at a shelter, she met her future mentor – Mrs. Fanny Quincy Howe, who offered her friendship and support.

When the correspondence began, Maimie was recovering from a morphine addiction developed after contracting syphilis and the loss of an eye. Her last letter written was in 1922, while living in Chicago with second husband, Ira Benjamin.

*Note:* December 1922 letter to the Editor of *The World* newspaper was written by Miss Francis McCoy. Maimie sent this letter to Fanny, to give a sense of Francis McCoy’s personality.

***Out to Work: a history of wage-earning women in the US***, by Alice Kessler-Harris, 2003

*Ann Appleton*, p. 35, footnote, #41, p. 343

Ann Appleton had her own room in a boarding house of 17 other girls, while working in a factory during the 1840's.

***The Third Door; the autobiography of an American Negro Woman***. By Ellen Tarry, 1955, 1971

Ellen Tarry (1906 – 2008) was an African-American author of literature for young adults. She was born in Birmingham, Alabama and raised in the Congregational Church. She spent a part of her life passing as a white woman. Her story takes place when she was sent to Rock Castle Catholic High School in Virginia (a month after the death of her father) to live with nuns, although she was Protestant at the time. She converted to Roman Catholicism in 1922.

***Who, The Magazine About People***, “Faith that moved a Dump Heap,” vol. 1, No. 3, June 1941,

Mary McLeod Bethune (1875 – 1955), founder of Bethune-Cookman College, President 1904-1942.

In 1904, Mary McLeod Bethune, a young African American woman, opened the *Daytona Educational and Industrial Training School for Negro Girls* with \$1.50, and five girls for students. The school grew to become a junior college in 1931, known as the Daytona Cookman Collegiate Institute. Over the years it added more accreditations and is now known as the Bethune–Cookman University, in Dayton, Florida.

More about Mary McLeod Bethune and her other accomplishments can be found here:

[www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/mary-mcleod-bethune](http://www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/mary-mcleod-bethune)

**Sham Pillowcase front**

...Hattie and I Sleep on the roof! Make up a sumptuous  
couch of comforters & things on the slant.  
Very comfortable.

**Sham Pillowcase back**

So nice to wake up and see the moon and the sky.  
And flitting mosquitoes between  
me and the moon.

Charlotte P. G., 1879

**Sham Pillow front**

The institution was seriously overcrowded...  
In the meantime the colored girls were “doubling up,”  
through there was only one single bed in each room.

**Sham Pillow back**

The girl who arrived first got the bed and  
the other slept on the floor.

Mary H., 1918

**Pillowcase front**

*I tell you Sarah it is good to be a boarder.*

**Pillowcase back**

*I leave my work at seven o'clock then I come home  
and do what I please.*

**Pillow front**

*I done't even have my bed to make.*

**Pillow back**

*Quite a lady to be sure.*

Anne A., 1847

### **Bedsread top side**

*Medford, May 12, 1797*

*Honored Parents:*

*With pleasure I sit down to write to the best of parents, to inform them of my situation, as doubtless they are anxious to hear. ... I begin to feel happier, and will now gather up my philosophy and think of the duty that now attends me, to think that here I may freely drink of the fountain of knowledge... I am not doing anything but writing, reading and ciphering: there is a French Master coming next Monday, and he will teach French and Dancing ...*

*I wish you to write me very soon what you think best, for the school begins on Monday. ... Mr. Wyman says I must learn geometry before geography, and that I had better not begin either till I have finished ciphering.*

*We get up early in the morning and make our beds and sweep the chamber. It is a chamber about as large as our kitchen chamber, and a little better finished. There are four beds in the chamber, and two persons in each bed. We have chocolate for breakfast and supper.*

*Your affectionate Daughter,*

*Eliza Southgate.*

### **Bedsread back side**

Twenty-one. My own mistress at last.

This tremendous surge of free energy at twenty-one has no result in misbehavior. It found expression mainly in locking my door, actually and metaphorically.

Once I sat up all night, just to see how it felt after having been sent to bed so inexorably from infancy; no revelry, just reading and working.

Once I slept on the floor; once with a friend, on her roof—an unforgettable experience for me, to look up at the stars—to wake up in the night with a soft breadth of pure air on one’s face and look straight up into that deep glittering sky—if ever I build a house of my own (which become increasingly doubtful), it shall have a habitable roof.

Charlotte P. G., 1881

### Duvet Cover *top side*

Dear Mary:

When I left home I told you that I would write in a week and let you have my first impressions of Lowell. I will keep my promise; though, if I should defer my letter a while longer, I think I could make it more interesting...

At 10 o'clock Mrs. C. came in, and told us that it was time for us all to go to bed... I was shown up three flight of stairs, into what is called "the long attic"—where they put all poor stranger girls—the most objectionable places being always left for new comers. There were three beds in it, only two of which were occupied, for this is always the room for vacancies... I looked wofully at the strange girl who was to be my "chum." She took no notice of me, and went to sleep as composedly as if I had been still among the White Mountains; but the two girls in the further bed kept whispering together some - thing about "the old man."

### Duvet Cover *back side*

I was very nervous... but, when the house was still, a strange fear came over me, such as is created in children by telling them about the old man.

I heard the bells strike the midnight hour long before I went to sleep, and then I dreamed about "the old man."

As soon as day broke I was awakened by one of the girls jumping out of bed, and beginning to crow. That-awakened the others, and they bestirred themselves. One sung

*Morning bells I hate to hear,  
Ringing dolefully, loud, and drear...  
Then the other struck up, with a loud voice,  
Now isn't it a pity, Such a pretty girl as I,  
Should be sent to the factory,  
To pine away and die.*

I dressed myself, and followed them down stairs, where I found my place at the table, and our early breakfast was all ready for us.

Susan H.F., 1844

**Duvet (Comforter) top side**

*“Where’s my room?”*

I asked when Anna opened the dormitory  
with a gold-colored pass key and

I saw row after row of beds.  
*“This looks like a hospital.”*

*“We have alcoves.”*

Anna said as we stopped by one of the beds.

*“You pull the curtains on these rods around the  
beds and you are private. This will be yours.”*

After prayers we went to our alcoves and  
as I prepared for bed I thought about  
all the new words and phrases  
I had heard that day.

Before I pushed back the end curtain at the  
foot of my bed and retired, I took  
my Bible from the drawer of the washstand.

Just as I marked a page I wanted to read I saw a tall,  
willowy nun glide past, who looked like a  
graceful swan draped in cumbersome black.

I crawled to the foot of the bed to get a better look  
but she pulled out the light before I could see her face.

That night I dreamed Papa was standing over me  
with one of his ground-gripper shoes  
in his hand...

**Duvet (Comforter) back side**

I decided I was going to read my Bible,  
even if I had to read it by moonlight.

I went to Mass each morning,  
and catechism class when I was told to;

I deserved some time for  
my own religion, I thought.

The next night when Sister Callista  
put the light out

I put my Bible down and told her how I felt.

I could see the girls around me  
peeping out of their alcoves.

*“I’m sorry,”* Sister smiled,  
*“but you will have to do your reading  
during the day.”*

And though we both knew there was  
no free time on my daily schedule,  
there was nothing I could say.

I fell asleep trying to read by the pale light  
from my window.

Ellen T., c. 1921

**Blanket top side**

A classmate of mine..., whose mother had rooms  
for herself and her daughter in a ladies' residence,  
had stayed out beyond closing time.

She telephoned me to ask  
if she could sleep at my house.  
Mother gave her permission...

When she arrived, I got out of bed and we  
went to the upstairs kitchen to make hot chocolate.

In my room we shared mean gossip about  
our friends, giggled over boys and  
whined about school and the tedium of life.

The unusualness of having someone sleep in my bed  
(I'd never slept with anyone except my grandmothers)  
and the frivolous laughter in the middle of the night  
made me forget the simple courtesies.

My friend had to remind me that she had  
nothing to sleep in.

I gave her one of my gowns, and  
without curiosity or interest

I watched her pull off her clothes.

At none of the early stages of undressing  
was I in the least conscious of her body.

And then suddenly, for the briefest eye span,  
I saw her breasts. I was stunned.

**Blanket back side**

They were shaped like light-brown falsies  
in the five-and-ten-cent store,  
but they were real.

They made all the nude paintings  
I had seen in the museums come to life.  
In a word they were beautiful.

A universe divided what she had from  
what I had. She was a woman.

My gown was too snug for her and  
much too long, and when she wanted to laugh  
at her ridiculous image I found that humor  
had left me without a promise to return.

Had I been older I might have thought  
that I was moved by both the esthetic  
sense of beauty and the pure emotion of envy.  
But those possibilities did not occur to me  
when I needed them.

All I knew was that I had been moved  
by looking at a woman's breasts...

Maya A.

### Top sheet *top side*

September 28, 1912

I told her frankly my predicament —  
and it was she who asked to come live with me.  
We are each paying half now. She moved in Sunday.  
Miss McCoy is perhaps twenty-five – or twenty-six or  
twenty-seven – short and dark, with a pretty grey eye.  
It seems a pity to lose such a pretty eye!  
Other than her hair, which is pretty and black and  
inclined to curliness, and her one eye, she is not pretty.  
As far as I can see, thought, she is clean; and though she  
only took weekly baths, that is (I think) because she  
never had her own baths.  
She will take morning and night baths now –  
for I would hesitate about sleeping in the same bed  
with an entire stranger, unless I saw for myself  
that she is clean.  
As it happens, mine is the greater will, and while I  
wouldn't care to be domineering – still, I think she will  
not refuse to do my bidding. She did not tell me how she  
lost her eye, and of course, I did not ask her. I told her  
how I became so afflicted; but as she did not volunteer  
any information, I don't know. But I think there was a  
tragedy. For she did tell me that she is really a *Mrs.*, but  
has not had the support of her husband for two years;  
therefore, though not legally (for she had no money  
for a divorce), she took her maiden name again...  
Doesn't it seem strange for a Jewess and a  
Catholic to live together?  
*Maimie P.*

### Top sheet *back side*

WORKING-GIRLS' HOMES

December 1912

To the Editor of *The World*:

As a working-girl I read with interest the plea in your  
morning paper for another working-girls' home where  
a “helping hand” and “elevating influences” may rescue  
her from degradation. Without wishing to appear  
cynical of any good effort, I should like to say that I  
have lived in two of these places where “helping  
hands” are held out, and where they always put you to  
sleep with four or sometimes eight others in a room,  
so that rest is impossible, giving you're the poorest of  
food, making you feel like a pauper generally, and  
rounding out all material deficiencies with very  
long prayers and useless restrictions.

Isn't it time that a little sense and less sentiment be  
used in reference to this “overworked” working-girl?  
We are not an abnormal product. If we can't earn  
livable salaries we do retain enough human nature to  
want three good meals, a comfortable bed with decent  
privacy, and the right to think ourselves as individuals  
instead of an institution. The woman or women who  
will recognize this face and open a plain, unvarnished  
boarding-house for women on small salaries will not  
have to use any “helping hands” to save girls from  
immorality.

*Working Girl*

### Bottom sheet *top side*

I hope to see a Mrs. MacKenzie today – to see about getting up a new fund for girls who were in offices, to make it unnecessary for them to go *on the streets*, which seems the only resource in these horrible times.

Really – I know, perhaps better than others, how hard it is to keep from doing that. And I think if the rich people here could see it – that looking out for these girls is as important as sending Christmas boxes to the soldiers...

Recently two girls have been sleeping with me – they just really had no places, as they had no work and were asked out of their boarding places. So I shared my bed for almost a week...I felt satisfied that they could get some sort of a man if they wanted to be bad – and the fact that they preferred to be with me proved they were all right.

They were both handsome girls –one, the younger, being really beautiful. One was Scotch-Irish and the other French Canadian. Lulu, the French girl, met a man – thru another girl –who took her to luncheon...

### Bottom sheet *back side*

After luncheon the girls went to his apartment; and there they found that he had sleeping accommodations for twelve people. And every night as much as eight or ten girls sleep there – and he told them about it as though he was the Good Samaritan.

His apartment is in one of the finest and newest apartments here, and he is a member of one of the oldest and richest families here. Lulu, it appears, told him of me and Margaret, and he invited the three of us to dinner in a very fine restaurant; and I went – mainly because I was hungry for decent food and, too, because I wanted to see into this thing...

For according to Lulu he has intercourse with any or all of these girls as he fancies them and runs a regular harem there.

I found him a most suave person – but a gentleman, apparently to the fingertips. The dinner cost him \$12.00 – and we could have lived on that for a week! After the dinner, he asked if we would go to his apartment, and I went gladly, for I wanted to see the place.

*Maimie P., 1914*

### Mattress Cover top side

It is fitted out almost sumptuously, but evidently for a bachelor’s apartment – and yet there were *five Baldwin couches*, on which two or three can sleep quite comfortable, besides his own bed...

Food and a bed, any girl can get there, provided she is pretty. And if, after they’ve slept one night and eaten, and won’t have his attentions, the Chinese servant is told they can’t remain or return.

We found four girls there, and one of them a Jewess – who was really beautiful and who, it seems, is his favorite and occupies the bedroom.

He asked me to play the piano.

I said I couldn’t. He said,

*“I’ll bet you can play, though – you look like a musician.”* I smiled – I thought it was sarcasm. Presently, he went out of the room and then called,

*“Oh, Mrs. Jones, look here a moment,”*

and I neared the door, he said,

*“Here is an instrument you can play fine – all Jewesses are very adept on this.”*

And when I looked, he had naked himself and it was disgusting. As I had not removed my wraps – nor did the girls – we lost no time getting out.

### Mattress Cover back side

With this in mind, I thought:

If two large houses, with beds such as institutions or hospitals have, were thrown open for girls who are out of work, and a small sum set aside for the maintenance of it, girls could come in as they need a haven, and would find a bed and some sustenance. In return for which, they could sew, or knit, or do something for the soldiers...

They seem mad here about providing delicacies for the soldiers for Christmas – whereas girls like Margaret, Lulu, Stella and myself... will not have even food for Christmas.

I am not myself desperate, for I know very well that I can ask for and get some assistance.

But many of the girls have no one to apply to, for up to now they always contributed to someone’s support in the country towns from where they came – and the easiest thing is to accept things and a bed from some “Good Samaritan” like Mr. Vance.

...If we can secure the houses, I will personally *beg* – for coal first, then beds and chairs; and if we can’t get food, at least we can manage beds for the office girls out of work...

*Maimie P., 1914*

### **Mattress top side**

My total capital was a dollar and half...

I plunged into the job of creating  
something from nothing.

I spoke at churches, and the ministers  
let me take up collections.

I buttonholed every woman  
who would listen to me...

On October 3, 1904,

I opened the doors of my school,  
with an enrollment of five little girls,  
aged from eight to twelve...

Though I hadn't a penny left,

I considered cash money as the  
smallest part of my resources.

I had faith in a living God, faith in myself  
and a desire to serve.

We burned logs and used the charred splinters  
as pencils, and mashed elderberries for ink.

I begged strangers for a broom, a lamp,  
a bit of cretonne to put around the packing  
case which served as my desk.

I haunted the city dump and the trash piles  
behind hotels, retrieving discarded linen and  
kitchenware, cracked dishes,  
broken chairs, pieces of old lumber.

### **Mattress back side**

Everything was scoured and mended.

This was part of the training  
to salvage, to reconstruct,  
to make bricks without straw.

As parents began gradually to leave  
their children overnight,

I had to provide sleeping accommodations.

I took corn sacks for mattresses.

Then I picked Spanish moss from trees,  
dried and cured it, and...  
used it as a substitute for mattress hair.

The school expanded fast.

In less than two years I had 250 pupils.

In desperation I hired a large hall next to  
my original little cottage, and used it  
as a combined

dormitory and classroom.

I concentrated more and more on girls,  
as I felt that they were hampered by  
lack of educational opportunities....

That's how the Bethune-Cookman  
college campus started. .

Mary M.B.

### **Mattress edges**

*A woman is free if she lives by her own standards and creates her own destiny, if she prizes her individuality and puts no boundaries on her hopes for tomorrow.* Mary M.B.