

**AKM Dry Goods**  
**Andrew & Kirsten Martin**  
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AKM Dry Goods is a Louisiana-based business that specializes in the production of painted floorcloths and groundsheets. Operated by Andrew & Kirsten Martin, this business actually started during the early portion of this decade where its wares were carried by Joe Hoffman. After taking a 5 year hiatus due to 3 work related moves and 2 children, the business has been started anew.

The goods produced by AKM Dry Goods have most recently been carried by AC approved vendors Justin Morris of the Rambling Irishman and Joe Blunt of Carter and Jasper. Though we have operated as a wholesaler in the past, we felt that the personal nature of our offerings coupled with our strong belief in quality customer service makes a retail channel a great fit for us.

If approved to operate as an AC approved vendor, we would like to continue to produce some "in stock" floorcloths to post in the approved vendor section of the forum along with our painted cloth groundsheets. We would also like to use the forum as a medium by which to take custom orders for individuals who have something particular in mind. The company has put together a pricing table that will drive the costs of both the in-stock and custom orders. We felt that this was important in order to keep everything as equitable and consistent as possible.

## **Products**

### **Civilian floorcloths -**

Floorcloths appear to have originated in France in the early 1400's and this art form was adopted by the British who started painting canvas for their floors. These hand painted cloths were a way to give the illusion of high end flooring without the extravagant cost. These cloths were often used under dining room tables, in parlors, and hallways. They were also found quite often in taverns. These were in use for hundreds of years before the American Civil War and their use continued until the 1920's when linoleum rendered them obsolete.

Floorcloths have a long history in the United States and showed up on our shores very early in our country's history. In early 1720, Boston area newspapers advertised quite an assortment of styles and colors of "Floor Cloths available for your enjoyment." Additionally, Thomas Jefferson had a floor cloth made for a dining room in the White House that was described as a "canvas floor cloth, painted green." Floorcloths were treated as a "fifth wall" - a way to bring some beauty to the floor to complement the walls.

Surviving examples are not terribly common but many examples can be found in paintings of early America. Our most recent research shows that these examples seem to favor geometric patterns

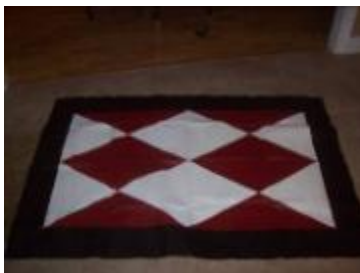
(checkers, diamonds, etc.) but also show some complexity in terms of design with some stenciling and other more elaborate patterns.

There are very few surviving period floorcloths so one has to make some educated assumptions on what some of the designs might have been. One area that we feel that we can draw some parallels to is period quilt designs. There are some parallels – made at home by individuals or small groups, very personalized, highly functional – and we feel these parallels between floorcloths and quilts should enable us to look at quilt design and see some of what contemporary design would have looked like. Some of these quilt designs have already influenced our latest floorcloths, specifically the federal eagle floorcloth that was made for Skip Evans.

The stock floorcloths that we manufacture are painted on 48" unbleached 100% cotton canvas. While we consider our painting process proprietary, I will disclose that we use oil based paints and linseed oil in our floorcloths – in short, our materials and construction techniques are period correct. These run anywhere from 6 feet to 7.5 feet in length. We do hem the edges of our floorcloths, however, evidence suggests that some were left raw edged. These are appropriate for civilian usage or for CS troops as a field expedient (and slightly gaudy) groundsheet.

While we have not submitted an example along with this application, pictures of our floorcloths can be found below.

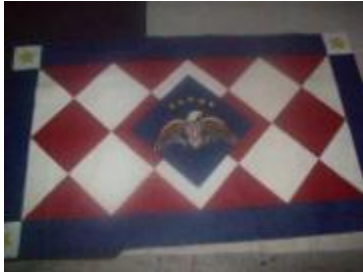
**Harlequin or checkerboard pattern:**



**Basic Pattern:**



**Advanced Pattern:**





### **CS Painted Groundsheets-**

These are the CS equivalent of the US issued gum blanket. They are, in our opinion, a key piece of a Confederate impression but there are few manufacturers of them in the hobby at present. We make these on 48" unbleached 100% cotton canvas and they are painted on one side with a proprietary oil based paint & linseed oil process (unlike the latex paint used by some vendors). Again, lengths vary from 6 feet to 7.5 feet to accommodate taller fellows.

We offer these in three styles:

Raw edged as if cut off of a roll of painted canvas

Hemmed edes

Hemmed edges with reinforcements sewn under the corners and 4 handsewn grommets

We stamp the groundsheets with grommets with a maker's mark which is a copy of a stamp placed on a CSN painted cloth seabag that resides in the Civil War Naval Museum in Columbus, GA. A picture of this stamp is attached.



We have done one special order on this in the past which was an entire bolt of 48" canvas painted at one time, left uncut, and placed on a roll for sale. People were able to purchase however many feet that they wanted and it was cut right then in front of them. It made for an interesting aspect at a living history in Fort Gaines (Mobile, AL).

As an aside, we are currently the only recommended vendor for these groundsheets for the upcoming "In the Van" event.

### **Customer Feedback**

**Pat Landrum – Custom manufactured floorcloth delivered in Oct. 09:**

*“Got home today and discovered that my wonderful painted floor cloth from Andrew and Kirsten Martin. ... Each design is unique, so you won't get into the pattern of seeing similar patterns all over camp- be it on the march or in the citizens camp. These are perfect additions to any impression and fairly priced for the time and quality involved.”*

**Skip Owens – Custom manufactured floorcloth delivered in Nov. 09:**

*“Got treated to a couple pics of the intial mock-up of the floor cloths and im looking forward to seeing the final product! Very tallented and user friendly couple willing to go above and beyond for authenticity and quality.”*

*“Andrew and Kirsten worked extra hard on these because of the particualr ideas i had. Wanted them to be documented federalist/patriotic themed floor cloths. These were taken off a combined effort from Original quilt samples from the 1850s and 1860s. Great work! They will be waiting for me then I return from my travels overseas. Kudos on a talented work of art!”*

**John Greenfield – In stock floorcloth delivered in Oct. 09:**

*“I recieved my floor cloth in the mail today from Andrew and it is incredible. As Skip said "Very tallented and user friendly couple willing to go above and beyond for authenticity and quality" and I couldn't agree more!!!”*

**Brian DesRoches – Custom manufactured floorcloth delivered in Nov. 09:**

*”I too own one of these floor cloths, and even though I stuck with a very simple design, the quality of work is still outstanding. I'll probably get another at some point.*

*It also doesn't weigh a ton like other painted cloths offered.*

*Excellent work, and top-notch customer service with this vendor.”*

**Tyler Gibson – Custom manufactured floorcloth delivered in Nov. 09:**

*“It is truely a pleasure dealing with Abner and Kirsten. In the space of around a week and a half, I went from having a vauge idea of what I wanted on my Floor Cloth's back, to what I ended up with, ready to ship.”*

**Charles Traxler – In stock floorcloth delivered in Sept. 09:**

*“Several members of my unit were helping with a teachers' workshop on civil war camp life this past weekend and I received several compliments from the visitors and my compardres on the floorcloth.”*