

More Quilt Blocks Have Been Added to the Upstate Heritage Quilt Trail in Upstate, SC

In 2009, a group of dedicated citizens came together to establish the Oconee Heritage Quilt Trail in an effort to promote Oconee County, SC. The first quilt square in South Carolina, sponsored by the Wynward Point Ladies Group, was mounted on the Oconee Heritage Center in Walhalla, SC, in the Fall of 2009.

Since then, the organization has grown into the Upstate Heritage Quilt Trail, creating over 60 quilt squares for homes and businesses in Anderson, Oconee and Pickens Counties and requests for quilt squares continue to arrive.

Each painted quilt panel is a copy of an existing quilt that usually has some historical connection with the sponsoring family or organization.

The good folks behind the Upstate Heritage Quilt Trail have been very busy adding new quilt squares to buildings in the Upstate of South Carolina. The Quilt Trail now includes 68 quilt panels on buildings in cities and smaller towns in SC's Upstate, including Anderson, Belton, Central, Easley, Fair Play, Iva, Liberty, Long Creek, Pendleton, Pickens, Salem, Seneca, Six Mile, Tamasee, Walhalla, and Westminster.

The last six to be added to the trail include: The Cotton Boll, Fenced in Dahlia, Par 3, Storm at Sea, Mariner's Compass, and Yellow Ribbon.

Mary Lou Cushman of Walhalla, SC, has sponsored a quilt block called "The Cotton Boll" to honor her parents, Rachel Turner McGuffin and John Q. McGuffin, both of whom worked in the Walhalla textile mills. It is mounted on her home located in the Mill Village in Walhalla. The pattern was originally quilted by Dixie Haywood, noted teacher, quilter and writer of books about quilting. "This is a traditional Carolina block made in the late 19th century. It's usually made on a white background with Flying Geese sashing, but I changed that part of the design with a yellow background to evoke a hot summer field. That's why I call my version, 'Hot Cotton!'"



The Cotton Boll Quilt

During the late 1800s and throughout the 20th century, the textile industry played a significant role in shaping the lives of Walhalla residents and the culture of Upstate South Carolina. Walhalla had two main textile mills in operation. Both mills were located along Walhalla's Blue Ridge Railroad line, one on the edge of town near West Union along Earle Street and the other in the heart of town on South John Street. These mills went by numerous names as company ownership changed frequently. The mill on the edge of town, which has since been torn down, was known primarily as the Kenneth Mill.

The mill in the heart of town is known best as Chicopee Mill or Avondale Mill. It is no longer in operation and is currently for sale. Mill companies were very paternalistic and built company towns for employees to live in around the manufacturing facility. These "mill hills" had dozens of houses all built in the typical "salt box" style, company stores, post offices, and even schools. The mill hills were very closely knit communities and many formed baseball teams that played against each other recreationally. Work in

the factories was reliable and many farming families from the surrounding mountain communities moved to Walhalla for work in the mills. Toward the end of the 20th century textile manufacturing slowed in Walhalla and the Upstate as work began being outsourced until all textile production stopped by the late 1990s.

One of Cushman's strongest memories is of living in the Mill Village, where her mother's friends would gather in their home to work on a quilt. Her mother's quilt frame, which normally hung suspended from the ceiling, was lowered to lap level. While the women gathered around the frame, little Mary Lou would hide out under the frame in her own secret, dark hide-away listening to all the Village gossip. Always in the background were the sounds of the textile mill. When her father came home, the cotton mill smell would be clinging to him.

Dixie Haywood has been quilting professionally since the early 1970's, but made a quilt for her first child in 1955 - a "totally impractical small satin whole cloth with pink on one side and blue on the other. It became a 'cozy' for all three children and accompanied my daughter to college. It's now in her family archives."



Fenced in Dahlia Quilt

The Fair Play Presbyterian Church in Fair Play, SC, joined the Upstate Heritage Quilt Trail in October 2011 with the addition of a "Fenced in Dahlia" quilt block made by church member Ola Coombs, sponsored by the Mountain Lakes Region of the South Carolina National Heritage Corridor (<http://www.sc-heritagecorridor.org/sites/mountain-lakes-region/>) and the South Carolina National Heritage Corridor (<http://www.sc-heritagecorridor.org/>). Designs composed of a single flower with multiple petals are some of the most recognizable quilt patterns of the 20th century. Quiltmakers find numerous ways to combine colors and printed fabrics in ways that enhance the patchwork, including adding a patchwork "fence" as a border for this Dahlia pattern.

According to Coombs, "My sewing life began over 75 years ago. I made my first quilt at the age of seven. Fabric, scissors, needles, thimbles and thread have always been a part of my life. My mother would invite friends who quilted like she did - she was known for her tiny stitches and high quality quilts. Flour sacks and sugar sacks were used to make bed linens and covers in our home. Mother would find 3 cents and use it to buy a package of dye to make the sacks a little more colorful. Red and blue dye cost 5 cents, so we had to settle for an ugly brown or green. I still have one of those early quilts and I treasure it."

Fair Play Presbyterian Church is celebrating its 108th year. Early in its history, a huge storm blew the church off its foundation. Within a very short time, members were out with horses and mules, lifting the building back on its feet and it's been serving the community of Fair Play ever since. The Church is small but very involved in the community. There have been, and continue to be, many community outreach programs. Ola Coombs, Music Director, created an annual Christmas program for the Church and community which has drawn hundreds of visitors from every part of Oconee and Anderson counties while providing an evening that

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is entertaining but also uplifting and spiritual. This little Church continues to have a huge impact on the lives of people in the area. This block will have a temporary home at the entrance of the new nature trail and its permanent location will be on the activity shelter once completed.



Par 3 Quilt

The Blue Ridge Golf Center in Walhalla recently became a part of the Upstate Heritage Quilt Trail with the addition of a quilt block. Designed and sponsored by Jenny Grobusky, the quilt she calls "Par 3" is in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph T. Grobusky who bought the land on Hwy. 28 in 1922. Mr. Grobusky was a farmer and carpenter by trade and served in the Spanish-American War in Cuba in 1898. The property was first used for farming wheat and cotton. Mrs. Grobusky used her skills as a seamstress to create many quilts to warm her large family. As Jennie tells it, "I don't think that the Joseph Grobuskys knew anything but hard work on the farm, children and their religion. I only knew Mrs. Grobusky, who was a wonderful mother-in-law. She loved her children and grandchildren."

Robert Grobusky, a grandson, who now owns the land, grew Christmas trees for many years before transforming the entire farm into a 10-hole par-3 golf course. Except for renovating a couple of rooms to accommodate the present day pro shop, the house remains much the same as it has been for the past 80 years.

Jenny Grobusky is well known in the Upstate for her needlework skills. She was a teacher of sewing, quilting and helping others learn these skills and was the first recipient of the Upstate Heritage Quilt Trail's Quilter of the Year award in 2009.



Storm at Sea Quilt

The Old St. John's Meeting House in Walhalla has received a quilt block and is now a part of the Upstate Heritage Quilt Trail. The church began serving parishioners of the Episcopal Church in 1889, having been constructed in the Rural Gothic architectural style by 'master builder' John Kaufmann. The founder and first president of the American Institute of Architects, Richard Upjohn, introduced Gothic Revival to the United States. His book, "Rural Architecture" (1852) provided patterns for countless buildings throughout the country. Deconsecrated in 1957, Jack Kelley moved the church at his own expense from Short Street to North Pine Street in 1982. The building was moved once again to 301 N. Catherine Street, near the Walhalla City Park, Kaufmann Square, in March 2009.

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Carolina National Heritage Corridor and the South Carolina National Heritage Corridor, the quilt pattern is called "Storm at Sea" and was originally quilted by Alberta Ramey Bowers (1926 - 2007), a native of Oconee County, for her oldest son, James. She made many quilts over the years as fundraisers for the Walhalla Civic Auditorium and the Meeting House. She had made quilts for each of her children and grandchildren, and became interested in the fate of the little church after it was vandalized at its previous location. Her husband and two sons placed hard mesh wire over the windows to prevent further damage. Her first quilt for the church was called "Ties That Bind" since it was made from a collection of men's neckties. Bowers was a trained nurse, the mother of three and a skilled seamstress. Quilting became her passion on her return to Walhalla.

The Iva Quilting Ladies Group has added their second quilt to the Upstate Heritage Quilt Trail. Called a "Mariners Compass," it is located on the Peoples Bank located on the corner of Green Street and Highway 81 in Iva, SC. It too is on the SC Heritage Corridor and is a pattern that was used by many of the older ladies in the quilting club of years gone by. They met faithfully each week to quilt in the old Iva High School Cafeteria. Shawn McGee, CFO of the Peoples Bank, told us that one of those ladies was a member of his church as well as his Sunday school teacher. Another was his family's "nanny" babysitter/housekeeper. "This is an excellent memorial to them, in appreciation for their faithful work." Students of Sara Jordan, art teacher at Starr-Iva Middle School, assisted in the painting of this quilt block.



Mariners Compass Quilt

The complexity of the Mariners Compass pattern, appealed to skilled quiltmakers of the mid-1800's. The radiating designs appeared in many variations under such names as "Compass Rose", "Chips and Whetstones", "Sunburst" and "Sunflower". These patterns require the quilter to measure, cut and sew accurately, so that the points are sharp and all the pieces lie flat without bunching or rippling. Many girls studied geometry in school, learning the use of the drafting compass, an ancient tool for measuring and reproducing arcs. Compass patterns typically contain an even number of points, usually 12, 16 or 32, but some women showed off their skill by carefully crafting blocks with 11 or 13 points.

Patriots' Hall: Oconee Veterans Museum in Walhalla has joined the Upstate Heritage Quilt Trail. Sponsored by the Patriots' Hall Association, the quilt pattern is a 'Save Our Troops Ribbon' and called "Yellow Ribbon". Marilyn Delay of Edwardsville, IL, originally quilted this pattern.

The origin of the yellow ribbon most likely came from our Puritan heritage. The English Puritan Army wore yellow sashes onto the battlefield. Yellow is the official color of the Armor Branch of the United States Army, was usually worn by the Cavalry, and was associated with the yellow neckerchief attributed to various artists in Hollywood films. The symbol was first used as a popular military marching song in 1917 - "Round Her Neck She Wears a Yeller Ribbon". These lyrics were somewhat altered in 1949 to "She Wore A Yellow Ribbon".

Currently, we see yellow ribbons

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