

Quilt Quality More Important Than Quantity



Eshelman has also made many braided rugs.

BONNIE BRECHBILL
Franklin Co. Correspondent
FORT LOUDON (Franklin Co.) — Edna Peck Eshelman has completed 23 quilts in her lifetime. That doesn't sound like a lot, considering she's 70 years old. But if you saw the quilts, you'd realize that this is a case of quality taking precedence over quantity.

Each of Eshelman's quilts is a signed, dated and titled work of art. She keeps a record book with a photo and explanation of each quilt.

Her most celebrated quilt to date is one titled "Burgoyne's Surrender." Around the border, spelled out in red and white blocks are "Fort Loudon," "1911" (the year of her birth), "1981" (the year she made the quilt), "Edna Peck" and "Eshelman."

In 1987, the quilt was entered in a national contest sponsored by the Daughters of the American Revolution and held in Tacoma, Washington. It earned a fourth place ribbon. The DAR, of which Eshelman is a member, then sent it to Washington, D.C. to be displayed during the Continental Congress. It was then sent back to Eshelman.

A year later, the DAR asked for it again, and sent it to Philadelphia to hang in Independence Hall for a week.

One of Eshelman's favorite quilts is a sampler of various flowers in which each hand-appliqued block is named. "The latticework was hard to quilt," she said.

She created her own patterns for a Month Quilt, made in 1984-85, in which each 15-inch block depicts a scene from a different month.

She learned the art of quilting from her mother, who had made quilts for each of her own nine children.

"Quilting has always been my favorite hobby, from my early teens," Eshelman wrote in her record book. "I can always learn from others and find my mistakes, then try to better myself."

"We can't find any," her friend, Ethel Rotz, said of the mistakes to which Eshelman referred.

Eshelman recently donated a quilt to the St. Thomas Lutheran Church, where she and Rotz are members. The quilt was displayed at Chambersburg Mall. "We had an auction," Rotz said, "and it brought over \$300."

Eshelman knows where all her quilts are except that one. "They're all in the family," she said. She has one daughter, four grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

She and her husband, Merle, farmed for 35 years near St. Thomas. Eshelman said she didn't do as much needlework during those years as she does now.

Quilts are not Eshelman's only

artistic pursuit. Over the years, she has made at least 200 Crazy Patch velvet top pillows completely by hand. Many of them have been awarded first place ribbons at local fairs.

She also makes hooked rugs, sometimes using a printed pattern and sometimes drawing the pattern herself.

"I learned hooked rugging from remembering how my mother did it," she said. She has sold a few rugs to neighbors, but "I can't (make) enough for them and the family," she said. One large hooked rug in soft, muted colors took her two years, "on and off."

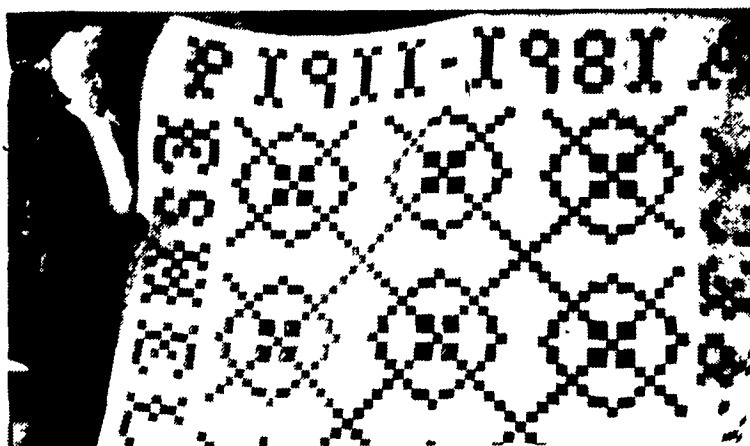
Her braided rugs lie perfectly flat. "I took some lessons," she explained. "The woman who taught me said, 'Your first one won't be right, but don't give up.'"

Eshelman once made an 8-by-10-foot braided rug of all new wool.

"I'll never do another one," she said. "It was too hard on the arms. My sewing room was too small, and I had to take it to the basement after a certain point."

Besides the quilts, pillows and rugs, Eshelman also makes dolls and stuffed animals, paints designs on old irons, and creates pictures with sea shells.

Her current project is piecing an Improved Nine Patch quilt entirely by hand. "The curved work is hard to do on the machine," she explained. A Log Cabin quilt top, already pieced, awaits quilting.



Eshelman's most celebrated quilt is "Burgoyne's Surrender," which has been displayed in Washington, D.C. and Philadelphia.



Eshelman made all the patterns for this queen-sized quilt, "Sampler of Flowers."

See your nearest
NEW HOLLAND
Dealer for Dependable
Equipment and
Dependable Service:

PENNSYLVANIA

Anville, PA
BHM Farm
Equipment, Inc.
RD1, Rte. 934
717-867-2211

Hughesville, PA
Farnsworth Farm
Supplies, Inc.
103 Cemetery Street
717-584-2106

Beavertown, PA
B&R Farm
Equipment, Inc.
RD 1, Box 217A
717-658-7024

New Holland, PA
A.B.C. Groff, Inc.
110 South Railroad
717-354-4191

Oley, PA
C.J. Wonsidler Bros.
R.D. 2
215-987-6257

Carlisle, PA
R&W Equipment Co.
35 East Willow Street
717-243-2686

Pitman, PA
Schreffler Equipment
Pitman, PA
717-648-1120

Davidsburg, PA
George N. Gross, Inc.
R.D. 2, Dover, PA
717-292-1673

Quakertown, PA
C.J. Wonsidler Bros.
R.D. 1
215-536-1935

Elizabethtown, PA
Messick Farm
Equipment, Inc.
Rt. 283 - Rheem's Exit
717-367-1319

Ringtown, PA
Ringtown Farm
Equipment
Ringtown, PA
717-889-3184

Gettysburg, PA
Yingling Implements,
Inc.
3291 Taneytown Rd.
717-359-4848

Tamaqua, PA
Charles S. Snyder, Inc.
R.D. 3
717-386-5945

West Grove, PA
S.G. Lewis & Son, Inc.
R.D. 2, Box 66
215-869-2214

MARYLAND

Greencastle, PA
Meyers
Implement's Inc.
400 N. Antrim Way
P.O. Box 97
717-597-2176

Churchville, MD
Walter G. Coale, Inc.
2849-53
Churchville Rd.
301-838-6470

Hallfax, PA
Sweigard Bros.
R.D. 3, Box 13
717-896-3414

Frederick, MD
Ceresville
Ford New Holland, Inc.
Rt. 26 East
301-662-4197
Outside MD,
800-331-9122

Hamburg, PA
Shartlesville
Farm Service
R.D. 1, Box 1392
215-488-1025

Hagerstown, MD
Antietam Ford Tractor
301-791-1200

Honey Brook, PA
Dependable Motor Co.
East Main Street
215-273-3131
215-273-3737

NEW JERSEY
Bridgeton, N.J.
Leslie G. Fogg, Inc.
Canton & Stow Creek
Landing Rd.
609-451-2727
609-935-5145

Honey Grove, PA
Norman D. Clark
& Son, Inc.
Honey Grove, PA
717-734-3682

Washington, NJ
Smith Tractor &
Equip., Inc.
15 Hillcrest Ave.
201-689-7900

Woodstown, NJ
Owen Supply Co.
Broad Street &
East Avenue
609-769-0308