



Quilt Blocks showing the Tunnel at Tunnel Road and Recreational Steamers on Snipsic Lake

Remembering the Bicentennial Quilt Made by Vernon Quilters

By Jean Luddy

With the approach in 1976 of the 200th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, towns, schools, civic and social organizations made plans to commemorate this significant historical event. Members of the quilting class in the Vernon Adult Education program devised a Bicentennial project that employed their special skills and talents. Quilter Cathy Kalber suggested that the class create a quilt that depicted scenes unique to our town's history. The group contacted the Vernon Historical Society for ideas. Several members of the Society selected an assortment of significant people, notable events, and important landmarks in the history of Vernon and Rockville. Each selection was researched to provide background information to the quilting class. Members of the class of fifteen quilters reviewed the topics from the Society and each woman chose one topic of interest for her contribution to the finished quilt.

In a recent interview, Mrs. Karen Thibert, the instructor of the class at the Vernon Adult Education program, explained the process involved in designing and assembling the quilt. She emphasized that other town quilting groups made quilts for the Bicentennial, but that they had an artist design the quilt patterns for the quilters to sew. Each member of the Vernon class chose her own subject for her block and created the design herself.



Members of the Vernon Adult Education Class Assembling the Bicentennial Quilt

The blocks depict scenes from local history, ranging from the early Native Americans, through the Colonial period, and into the era of the Industrial Revolution. In addition to an applied image, information about the subject of the quilt block is embroidered around the

outside edge. Each quilter embroidered her name on her finished block. Once the designs had been prepared and material gathered, quilt construction began.

Completion of the blocks took 10 weeks. Then, the layers of the quilt were assembled and sewn together over a period of 14 weeks. After the quilt was finished, it was displayed at the Rockville Library and in several locations over the years. In 2009, Mrs. Thibert donated the quilt to the Vernon Historical Society.



Karen Thibert donates the Bicentennial Quilt to the Society

During Mrs. Thibert's 30 years as the instructor for the Adult Education Quilting Class, the quilters designed and completed several other quilts as group projects to benefit others. One quilt was sent to be joined to the large quilt assembled as part of a national AIDS/HIV awareness project. Another quilt was given to a child who lost a parent in the September 2001 attack on the World Trade Center.

Traditionally, quilts represent the values of home and family. The Vernon quilters established a tradition of using their needles to create quilts to benefit the local community and beyond.