

She was a neighbor from whom you wouldn't borrow a cup of sugar. You wouldn't want to disturb her from her rocking chair. Getting out of it was most difficult. And getting back into it, even cushioned by two flattened homemade designer pillows, was hard on the eyes.

Edna was the most gracious person in our neighborhood. She didn't mind getting out of her chair. She even was happy to answer the doorbell, even though the visitor on the outside could sweep away the cobwebs while she waited. "Come in," she would chime. "Would you like a cup of tea?" she would offer. "It would go great with the cookies you brought over," Only two houses away this visitor, minus a broom, would usually call first. However, Edna had invited me to visit. We were to discuss the quilt she was to make for me. She needed to find out what pattern, what colors of fabric and how big the quilt-to-be would eventually make me a happy camper. Edna was old hat at piecing quilts. My hands had yet to thread a quilting needle. Owning a quilt was only a dream for me. She knew what questions to ask, though. In-between bites of cookie and sips of tea we pieced together a probable quilt.

She and a handful of friendly farm wives would gather in Edna's antique filled living room/dining room and quilt. Each friend of 50 years or so would bring her own needles and thread. Each set of wash and wear hands would thread their needle and with deftness place the quilting needle into the perfect spot for the planned quilting design. With each stitch these five women would solve all the problems of the community, leaving the problems of the country to the President of the United States of America.

These country wives working on traditional county-style quilt patterns put smiles on their faces while gleaning and giving news from each other about family and happenings surrounding them. The quilters were each holding their country together with every stitch, starting with their tiny Oregon community. The home-made quilt frame, made by the husbands, was put on the family-style table. A quilt pattern took on life as the needles did their walking. Would my treasure be hand quilted by these wonderful ladies? And would my quilt soon cover the full size bed at my home?

Edna and I had resided near each other for eight years. Usually, I would visit her since walking was getting more and more of a trial for her. One day I had asked if she made quilts to sell and would she make one for me? She screwed up her nose while she thought about the ordeal of sewing for someone else. "I guess, I could," she consented. "It may take awhile, though," she concluded.

After we decided on pattern and a color way she got to work. She wouldn't take money until she knew that I was happy with the outcome. She and a couple friends drove into the big city coming back with lots of fabric. She washed and ironed those bundles of blues, pinks and maroons before she cut the desired pieces with a pair of silver scissors. Her hands were strong. The "Log Cabin" pieces were machine sewn. I never ever noticed a sewing machine in her always spotless home.

The quilt soon was constructed, perhaps in the dark of night, in the quiet of her home, behind closed doors. No whirring of a sewing machine was heard. It was magical. The quilt was pieced then tied. I was soon wrapped in the most beautiful quilt in the community. After I paid her for her creative work we munched our cookies and sipped our tea not even aware that the quilting bug had bitten a new victim.

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