

WHERE ARE THEY NOW? Founding Member - Eva Knight

She watched as the bolt of fabric flipped over and over on the cutting table. She was gray haired, wiry, and alive with energy. I clutched my bolt, material for a blouse, and asked, "Are you going to make curtains?"

"No, honey," she replied. "This is for the back of my quilt."

"Oh!" I bubbled. "I love quilts. I am going to make quilts when I retire."

She looked at me appraisingly, 29 or so that I was. Then she fixed me with her eye and fired the words that launched my adventures in quilting, "Honey, if you are going to make quilts, get to making 'em. You got no guarantee of your eyes."

Happenstance. A random meeting, if one believes in that sort of thing. I have no idea who she was, but that day I bought a slim bolt of orange and white check--polyester. Polyester was the latest and greatest back then. I added a few yards of muslin. After all, the Little House girls in the stories that made me dream of making a quilt always had muslin. What did I know? (Nothing.) And didn't quilting save money? (Laugh.) I would make a quilt instead of buying a bedspread. The Sears catalogue pictured one with a design I liked.

Years later I learned that the design was Ohio Star. Today my very first quilt, is in my closet, unfinished but replete with stories and additions through the decades. The scissor-cut blocks are hand pieced with points that remind us that our foremothers didn't get points to match either. The blocks are sashed with Flying Geese, soaring reminders of the places quilting has taken me and the friends I have made along the way.

My mind takes me to the back seat of a car speeding down I-80 towards Rawlins many years ago. Cheyenne friends drive and talk of plans for a Wyoming State Quilt Guild. I sketch on a small piece of graph paper what will become our logo--Indian Paintbrush, Cowboy colored 9-patches. We wonder who will come to the meeting--Wyoming is so vast. If I have an agenda, it is to be sure quilters in every corner of our state have a chance to participate in the Guild. We arrive, and quilters from all over have come. Plans are made. In a matter of months the Wyoming State Quilt Guild has taken form. The format moves the annual meeting through five geographical regions. The first QuiltWyo-

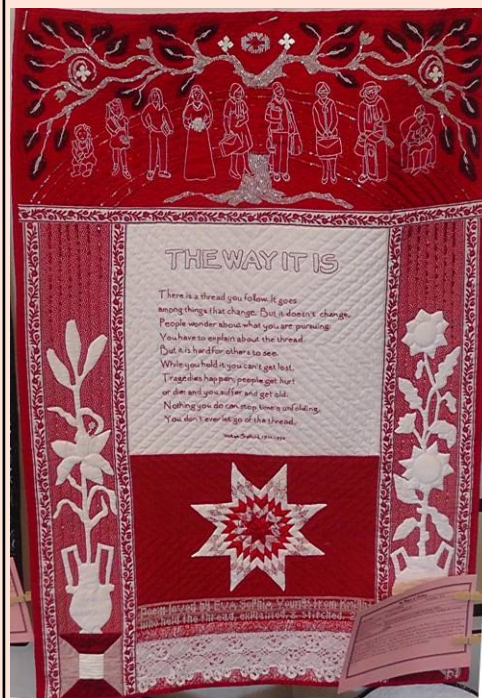
ming is scheduled for Casper. The founders hold our collective breath that quilters will come and everything will come together. Whew! It did, and the rest is history. Wonderful history--and each of you reading this is part of it.

Quilting connects us. We share the frustrations of puckered seams and the triumphs of points that match. Our quilts bind us to centuries of quilt makers and join us to far continents whose cultures find expression in quilts. I was privileged to visit the Yokohama International Quilt Festival last year. Hand piecing and quilting are dominant in Japan, understandable for homes tend to be tiny. One quilter told me that a long arm machine would fill her house. She showed a fabulous quilt--hand pieced, fussy cut, and exquisitely hand quilted through innumerable seams. Her investment of time was humbling.

After 40 years, it is time to finish my first quilt while I "still have my eyes." The Wyoming State Quilt Guild helps me pay forward my debt to the random woman who started me quilting--WSQG is here to help us all "Get to making 'em." I am blessed to remember how it all started.

Eva Knight

Eva Knight served as the first President of the WSQG. She drafted many WSQG documents (including applying for non-profit status for the organization) and was instrumental in starting the book project for county libraries. She was active in Cheyenne Heritage Quilters, but now cheers for WSQG from her home in Loveland, Colorado.



Eva's first-place, winning entry in the 2013 Quilt Wyoming Quilt Challenge.