

“There are places I remember”

The Village of Aurora Bicentennial Quilt



“The Bicentennial should turn our hearts to our ancestors and strengthen family ties.” This was the late Joan Wagner’s inspiration to gather a group of 25 women - some experienced quilters, some not - to create an Aurora quilt in 1975. The quilters, ranging in age from about 16 to 80 and including three mother-daughter teams, worked through the spring in the “Whimsey” shop (in the basement of St. Paul’s Episcopal Church) to preserve their favorite views in fabric and thread.



The Citizen-Advertiser (Auburn) June 22, 1975 (above)

Left to right: Ingrid Thoburn; Joan Wagner and Kurt; Claire Morehouse and Nathaniel; Caroline Burch.

The Post-Standard (Syracuse) June 15, 1975 (below)

Left to right: Helen Sullivan; Cindy Avery-Rogers; Joan Wagner and Kurt (age 4); Ingrid Thoburn; Claire Morehouse and Nathaniel (6 mo.) Sandra VanBuskirk; Rita Barnette.





CHIMNEY CORNER <small>PAUL LEFFINGWELL NORMA JONES</small>	ST. PATRICK'S RECTORY <small>JANE / KATHY FINN</small>	AURORA I.G.A. <small>LINDA KABELAC</small>	ICE CONES ON CAYUGA LAKE <small>SARAH VAN BUREN</small>	THURSDAY CLUB <small>VERA VAN BUREN</small>
THE MANSE <small>ROSEAL KUENIGER</small>	AVERY WILLOW GLEN PARK BRIDGE <small>CYNTHIA AVERY ROUSE</small>	JANE MORGAN'S LITTLE HOUSE <small>LUCINDA A. WINTER</small>	SHAKELTON'S HARDWARE <small>NANCY GILL</small>	AURORA VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT AUXILIARY <small>LINDA WOODRICK</small>
THE OLD R.R. STATION <small>WILL BARNETT</small>	AURORA VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT <small>MARION SULLIVAN</small>	AURORA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH <small>PAUL BURNETT</small>	FIRST NATIONAL BANK OF AURORA <small>ROSE AUSTIN</small>	WELLS FARGO STAGE COACH <small>WILL BARNETT</small>
ORDER OF THE EASTERN STAR <small>BARBARA MORTIMER</small>	ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH <small>MARION HOPKINS</small>	VILLAGE SEAL <small>NANCY SWANSON</small>	ST. PATRICK'S CATHOLIC CHURCH <small>HELEN SULLIVAN</small>	THE OLD MILL <small>MARION HOPKINS</small>
GLEN PARK HENRY WELLS <small>PAUL SWANSON</small>	AURORA PUMPKIN HILL <small>MARY EDITH PERRY</small>	AURORA POST OFFICE <small>MARION HOPKINS</small>	SHAKELTON'S FUNERAL HOME <small>JANE WOODRICK</small>	WELLS COLLEGE DOCK <small>CLARA MORGAN</small>
MASONIC TEMPLE <small>ELEAN SWANSON</small>	WELLS COLLEGE BARN <small>NANCY GILL</small>	RIFORD HOUSE <small>JANE FINN</small>	THE FARGO <small>SARAH MORTIMER</small>	MAIN BUILDING WELLS COLLEGE <small>PAUL SWANSON</small>
COMMUNITY MEDICAL CENTER <small>SARAH MORTIMER</small>	TAYLOR HOUSE <small>JANE WOODRICK</small>	MACK'S BRANCH STORE <small>JANE WOODRICK</small>	AURORA INN <small>PAUL SWANSON</small>	AURORA PUBLIC LIBRARY <small>SARAH MORTIMER</small>

The completed quilt was first displayed in 1975 and entered in the Bicentennial Quilt Exhibit in Ithaca NY in 1976. Here are the memories of some of those who created the quilt, with pictures of the time. This is how Aurora looked forty years ago.

Ed and Shirley Maassen owned and ran the Fargo for 36 years. Shirley, who sewed the quilt block, was “chief cook and bottle washer” in the kitchen. They lived upstairs for ten years.



There was no porch, and the narrow stairs ran down parallel to the building. Downstairs was a two-pump gas station, owned by Dave Brooks from 1959-1968.



Here's the Fargo in 1973. That's Tudy Kenyon's car out front, with "Brother" guarding the back seat.

The Fargo in mud season (below, early 1970s) and winter (mid-1960s).
Forbidden? Maybe, but...



the forbidden Fargo Restaurant ...



Clark's IGA was across the street from the Fargo. The building was constructed in the early 1920s by John Vanderipe on the site of the Morgan store, which had been destroyed in the 1919 fire.



The IGA was a well-stocked store, and Charlie Temple kept a fine meat counter. The Vanderipe building was torn down and replaced by the current Aurora Market.

Linda Kabelac, who worked at the IGA when she first came to Aurora, sewed this block, duplicating the shape of the sign in the mid-70s.



Across the parking lot was the Aurora Volunteer Fire Department; its building is now the Post Office. Martha Sheldon, also a recent arrival, sewed the AVFD block.



Back 'er in, Ken! 1973

You can still see the outline of the truck bays on the front of the Post Office, just to your right.



Linda sewed the block for the Aurora Volunteer Fire Department Auxiliary, founded in 1970.



Another good view of the old fire station: the kiosk is right about where Linda Kabelac is standing.



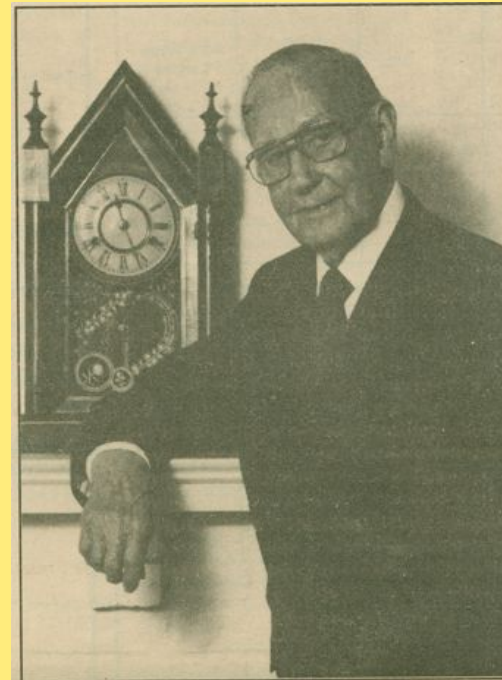
Some of its original members celebrated the thirty-fifth anniversary.

Top row: Sandi Hilliard, Linda Kabelac; middle row: Faye Marion, Judy Bailey; front row: Faith Bailey, Alice Bradley,

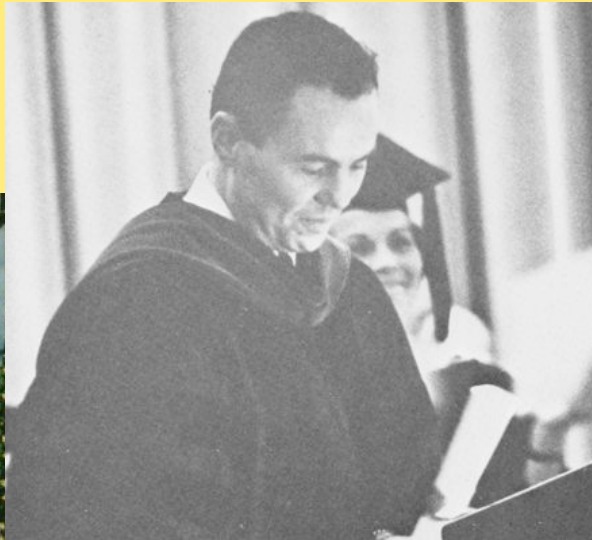


Nancy also recalled, “The quilters got a crash course on quilting and then we just did it! And it turned out beautiful! It was a lovely experience.”

Nancy Gil, then new to Aurora, chose Shakelton’s Hardware as her subject. It reminded her of “an old-timey hardware store from my childhood, with wood floors, tin ceiling, and a kindly old gent behind the counter.”



Charles Shakelton, “Shak”, 1990



Pres. Wilson, Anne and the boys.

Anne Wilson sewed the Taylor House block. We remember John D. Wilson, President of Wells College from 1968-1975, and his family most fondly. He died March 2nd, 2013.

**“There are places I remember
All my life, though some have changed
Some forever, not for better;
Some have gone and some remain....”**

John Lennon, Paul McCartney

Come see the quilt and read the newspaper stories! They are on display all this month in the lobby of the Aurora Free Library, across the street. Watch for more quilt memories coming in September.

Concept, interviews and research by Linda Kabelac, Historian’s Assistant, with Linda Schwab, Village Historian. Special thanks to all the amazing women who made this project possible: those interviewed, and those no longer with us.