

Bernice Sargent [1932 -2015]
Quilt Owner - Anne Swanson
CQG #091

Bernice Sargent was a founding member of the Cranbrook Quilters Guild. She was the guild's "master hand-quilter". For years Bernice lead the hand-quilters on Tuesday Morning becoming the "official" coordinator from 2009-2011 when the position was formalized - meaning it was a budget item and separate activity. The hand-quilters had always gathered to quilt the guild's raffle quilts, but by 2009 the yearly guild raffles were no long happening and the majority of members were finishing their quilts with machine quilting, either doing it themselves on their domestic sewing machine or sending the quilt to a longarm quilting service.

As with all the early members, Bernice took her turn at being on the Executive: she was President 1988-89 and Treasurer 1999-2001. She also assumed many of the 'lesser roles' such as Historian with Juananne Wales in 1989, Quilt Show Coordinator with Lisa Sharpe and Wendy Litz in 1990, Memberships with Pam Falk in 2001, Telephone 2002. Along the way she shared her expertise by teaching topics like bias binding, hand-quilting, and how to tie a quilt. And of course she was on a 'raffle quilt committee' - the pattern that she, Erika Schulz and Judy Wright chose was 'churn dash'. When Bernice joined the guild she was still working as a registered nurse, plus she played the organ at the Sunday Mass and weddings and funerals. Also she was a 'hockey fan' supporting the local team. Plus, for a few summers she donned a turn-of-the-century costume to become one of the 'Fort Steele ladies' that held a weekly quilting bee in the Lambi House. To quote Bernice (~2008): "I like sitting around a quilt on a frame, socializing and seeing the the group effort and the sense of satisfaction when the quilt is finished ready to give someone comfort."

Bernice was one of a few members who came from a quilting family, so when she joined the guild in 1984 at age 52, she had already been quilting for some 40 years having made her first quilt at the age of nine. There were some lull years as she didn't quilt as steadily when her three children were young, but Anne remembers there was always a quilt on her frame. Bernice's first quilt was a doll's quilt using 2" squares - Bernice hand-sewed the squares together and her dad made a small frame so that she could hand-quilt it. At age 10, an aunt started Bernice on a Butterfly Quilt. She blanket-stitched the butterfly motifs to a plain block. In grade 6 (age 12), she used her mom's treadle machine to make a nine-block Ohio Star quilt. In an interview with Ev Buterman ~ 2008, Bernice described that there was always a quilting bee when she was growing up and she naturally learned to go along and help as this was a common social event. When she was young "quilts were deemed a necessity. Many girls preparing their 'hope chest' of linens would have as many as six quilts made to show off at the trousseau tea, which would be held prior to the wedding."

Despite her early introduction to appliqué with the Butterfly Quilt, Bernice was not fond of the technique, preferring simple patchwork patterns and hand-quilting. She was especially fond of scrap quilt patterns, with muslin or white backgrounds. She did start to photograph and label her work, though many creations had been given away by then. She consistently made a donation quilt or two each year for the guild's Community Quilts project. Bernice felt that despite her early start, joining the guild was where she learned a lot of tricks and solid techniques that made the work easier. The guild formed and she joined at the time when interest in quilting was surging in Canada and tools like mats and rotary cutters, which made piecing more accurate, were available and quilting magazines/books were being marketed, many with coloured pages. Her most challenging project was the quilt she made for her oldest son and his bride. The pattern was *Oriental Elegance* with 16 Chinese characters meaning "a beautiful and lovely individual". Bernice found the help she needed to figure out this pattern among the guild members.

Bernice's quilting area was three rooms - her sewing room plus the rumpus room and parlour. She had a large cutting table made by her son that could fold away if needed. Her quilting frame was always set-up and also 'home-made'. This is still the common style with 2"x 2" or 2"x 4" boards with cloth/canvas leaders attached, that are C-clamped together and rested on saw-horses or specially made wooden/metal stands. Bernice's sewing machine was a classic *Singer* and she still had her mother's treadle machine. For a time Bernice and Paul, who was a handy carpenter, lived in one of Cranbrook's two "turret" houses. This Victorian style house made an ideal backdrop for Bernice's quilting and other hand-work (see Parkin Residence/ Tower House¹). Paul was another of the husbands who helped with the quilt shows. His carpentry skills were used to make the stands in 1989-90 with Terry Leggett (Janet) and Ed Shaw (Linda).

In that interview with the guild's Historian/Profiles member Ev Buterman ~ 2008, Bernice ended with this message: *I love quilting...It's my time for me. Be creative and follow your own leanings; always be on the lookout for new ideas."*

Quiltmaker	Gladys "Bernice" Sargent (nee Brander)
Date and place of birth	February 16, 1932 Petrolia, Ontario
Father Occupation Place of Birth	Roy Taylor Brander Farmer 1893 Unknown
Mother Occupation Place of Birth	Harriett "Floy" Curran Homemaker Unknown
Date and place of death	February 3, 2015 Cranbrook, BC
Date and place of marriage	October 12, 1957 Ontario
Spouse Occupation	Paul Frances Douglas Sargent Self-employed, Construction, Grocer, and others
Quiltmaker Occupation	Registered Nurse
Children	Daughters 1, sons 2
Education of Quiltmaker	Sarina General Hospital - School of Nursing (1954)
Where quiltmaker lived	Petrolia, ON; Wattford, ON; Sarina, ON; Hazelton, BC; Quesnel, BC; Cranbrook, BC.
Ethnic/ancestry background	English - Norfolk County

¹ See the Columbia Basin Institute of Regional History - Subject: Buildings at www.basininstitute.org.

CQG#091 - Little Dutch Girl²

Quiltmaker: Bernice Sargent's mother Floy Sargent

Owner: Anne Swanson

Bernice entered this quilt in the *Quilts of Yesteryear* category of the guild's 2009 Quilt Show. The story: Bernice's mother made this quilt using fabric left-over from dresses she had made for herself and Bernice. She hand-appliqued the blocks and then pieced these and the sashing on her 'new second-hand' treadle sewing machine. The quilt was hand-quilted by Bernice's mother, grandmother, her mother's sisters and friends at a quilting bee. The 'Prairie Point'³ binding was completed by Bernice's aunts."

Bernice was given the quilt by her mother. Anne remembers that it was always in their home, She inherited it when Bernice died. Celia, Bernice's granddaughter will be the next owner.

Pattern	<i>Little Dutch Girls</i> vintage appliqué block possibly from a newspaper and designed by "Laura Wheeler" whose patterns started appearing around 1936. Quilters could order a pattern from "Old Chelsea Station Needlecraft Service" out of New York. (Source Conroy & Brackman - see fn#1)
Subject	Young girls in period dresses
Date	Early 1940's (1930 - 1949)
Size	L 70½" x W 64"
Overall style	Finished quilt Appliqué blocks, Realistic, Repeated blocks
Blocks	Sash and block layout Feature block: L 9½" x 10½", rectangle Appliqué figure Number of blocks: 20 appliqués (See Brackman#2097 "True Lover's Knot" ~ 1931)
Sashing	W 4½", straight Block pattern - 3 equal bars/strips & equal 9 patch cornerstone (See Brackman #2097) Feature colour: yellow, white

² From Mary Conroy, "300 Years of Canada's Quilts": Griffin House, Toronto, 1976, p 91. "The Little Dutch Girl as she was known in Canada (Sunbonnet Sue or Sunbonnet Baby as she is generally known elsewhere), made her debut in the early 1900's and reached a peak of popularity during the 1930's. A close runner-up was the Colonial Lady pattern, sometimes called Umbrella Lady or Old Fashioned Girl. It survives to this time. From Barbara Brackman (barbara.brackman.blogspot.com/2011) "In the 1930s Sunbonnet Sue evolved into a sunbonnet woman with a grown-up figure..."

³ Prairie Point edge finishing: this is a decorative edge finishing where fabric squares are folded into triangles and attached to the quilt edge. The 'prairie point' is sewn between the top and back fabric making a knife edge seam so that the triangles are projected on the quilts edge.

Border/frame	Border 1: W 1½" Top; 1 ⅝" Sides, straight, one piece, Colour: yellow Border 2: W 1⅜", sides only, straight, one piece, Colour: yellow
Edge finishing	Prairie Points L (to triangle tip) 1⅜", knife edge closure
Batting	Unknown, thin
Top fabric	Cotton, plain weave, "Dress fabric" Fabric motif: plain/solids, geometric, flowers Feature colour: blue, coral, green, red, yellow Background colour: white plain/solid Quilt specific colour: yellow
Top piecing method	Machine piecing Pattern templates and Hand-appliquéd
Appliqué	Motif: 'girls with bonnets and old-fashioned dresses' Method: turned edge, blanket stitch, cotton Thread colour: black
Backing	Pieced blocks Cotton, plain weave Specific fabric: muslin, Colour: white Motif: plain/solid
Quilting	Hand-quilting, 5-6 stitches/inch Patterns: cross-hatch, criss-cross, outline Thread: cotton, white
Condition n	Used (has been laundered)
Label	Hand printed on muslin <i>"Little Dutch Girl" Quilt made by Floy Brander - hand appliquéd and machine sewn. Quilted by hand by Floy, her sisters, mother and neighbours & Given to daughter Bernice who will pass it on to daughter Anne Made -early 1940's</i>