

Hilda Pingitore - (1915 -1995) - CQG #045,162 and #151  
Quilt Owner: Susan Little

Quilter: Catherine "Hilda" May Pingitore (nee Gillis) - Hilda was born in Cranbrook, May 16, 1915, to Malcom and Annie Gillis. Hilda was the second child. Hilda's parents were both born elsewhere - Nova Scotia and Boston - but their marriage took place in Cranbrook at Malcolm's parents' home. Malcolm worked as a Teamster for CPR. Annie was a housewife. Hilda's older brother, Larry died in WWII leaving a wife and one child, Roland (1938- 2012). Hilda would have gone to school at the Cranbrook Grammar School. We know that she had "infantile paralysis" and that the community rallied to send her to Vancouver for treatment. She used walking aids or a wheelchair.

In 1948 at age 33, Hilda married Vittorio Pingitore in a small ceremony at the Cranbrook Presbyterian Church Manse officiated by Reverend Tom Roulston. Hilda and 'Vic' did not have children. Vic was a mechanic at Pioneer Motors garage and he was a volunteer fireman. He died in 1966; Hilda was only 51. She owned her house, but Vic would not have had a pension and Hilda did not work outside her home. Hilda's father lived with her after Vic died. Hilda belonged to the *Presbyterian Church Ladies Aid* and according to the local *Courier* her quilts were shown at that groups tea in 1958. Hilda had been a winner of the *Toronto Star Weekly Quilt Contest* in both 1956 and 57. The first for a quilt "Morning Glory", which was the 75th quilt that she had quilted. She had made 45 quilts herself and did earn money by hand-quilting pieces. Some of Hilda's customers were in Eastern Canada. Hilda used a quilt frame for the larger pieces and a lap frame for the smaller pieces. The frame was set-up in her parlour. None of the collected quilts made by Hilda were sewn my machine, though she did have a treadle sewing machine and apparently sewed her own clothes.

We cannot find a picture of any of Hilda's winning quilts. The quilt in 1957 was 82 x 98" and was her 81st quilt. Hilda won \$100. The contest was sponsored by *T Eaton Company Limited*. This piece was displayed at the Canadian National Exhibition and exhibited across Canada. She indicated then that quilting was a hobby that she started 22 years earlier, in ~1935. In 1967, Hilda's entry into the *BC Centennial Quilt Contest* won second prize. The call was for an appliqué quilt. The theme was to be the "Centennial" or a historical theme and the piece was to be hand quilted. What we know is that she worked on her entry for 519 hours between April and May 1967. It won first prize in the district contest judged in Creston, BC. The second place provincial award was given at the PNE's (Pacific National Exhibition) Women's Day Tea in August 1967. The first place quilt, made by Mrs Elda Robertson of Clinton, is now held by the Quesnel Museum and Archives.<sup>1</sup>

It's probable that Hilda and her mother Annie made quilts to send overseas in the Second World War as there was a nation wide call for quilts, knit items, sheets and bandages, and Lawrence (brother/son) had enlisted. Articles in the local papers of the 1937 - 1945 years, indicate that area women were part of this war effort and Hilda had started quilting by then, in 1935.<sup>2</sup>

Quilt Owner: Susan Little, Cranbrook BC  
Susan's connection with Hilda was through her maternal grandmother, Violet Clarke (Robertson). Violet and her first husband William, Susan's mother's father, were married at the

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on the 1967 Centennial Quilts see: Judy Lyons, "Canada's Forgotten Artifacts: 1967 Centennial Quilts" :Carruthers Printing Ltd, Smithville ON, 2024

<sup>2</sup> Joanna Dermenjian, "Quilting as to War", Suture & Selvedge, 2024 ([sutureandselvedge.com](http://sutureandselvedge.com))

home of Hilda's grandparents on Fenwick Avenue in Cranbrook in 1909, the same year that Hilda's parents married. William was killed in action in 1917. William and Malcolm Gillis worked together on the CPR. Susan's family were members of the Presbyterian Church. Her grandmothers and mother were Ladies Aid members with Hilda and her mother. Susan has four of Hilda's quilts/tops. All are completely hand-stitched. The baby quilt has been described # 162, the "crazy block" quilt # 045, and two tops, pieced but not quilted. Susan's mother may have picked these up from the Thrift Shop after Hilda died as some of her belongings were sent there. These tops have both since been hand-quilted by the Fort Steele Quilters (#151), a group that Susan quilts with.

One top was made from "scraps" but organized into a flying squares block (Brackman 2581) with a yellow centre block and 4 spokes with the same fabric used at the end of each two-patch spoke. This block likely originated in the catalog of the Ladies Art Company with a LAC # 233 so dates about 1895 to 1897. This quilt was finished by the Fort Steele Quilters in 2018. Hilda may have found the block pattern in a newspaper or women's magazine such as Women's Day. The second quilt top is a one patch-square, meaning it is made up of only squares. Hilda has chosen colours to make a basket with roses (Brackman 2281a, Crossword Puzzle,) and another to make a bow. Each has 144 squares finished at 1 inch. These blocks are alternated with an unpieced/setting blocks. This quilt was hand-quilted by the Fort Steele Quilters in 2019. The pattern is attributed to a syndicate writer of the Chicago Times in the 1930s. As these patterns were reprinted in some magazines in the 1960s-70s, it is likely that Hilda found it in something like Better Homes and Gardens, which was popular in town.

Quiltmaker	Catherine Hilda May Pingitore (nee Gillis)
Date and place of birth	May 16, 1915 Cranbrook, BC
Father Occupation Birthplace	Malcom Gillis Teamster/Canadian Pacific Railway Skye Glen, Nova Scotia
Mother Occupation Birthplace	Annie Belle Gillis (nee Matheson) House wife Boston, Massachusetts
Date and place of death	December 12, 1995 Cranbrook, BC
Date and place of marriage	October 21, 1948 Cranbrook, BC
Spouse Occupation	Vittorio (Victor) Pingitore (died 1966) Mechanic/ Pioneer Motors
Quiltmaker occupation	Housewife/Quilter-for-hire
Education of Quiltmaker	Grade 12, Cranbrook, BC
Where quiltmaker lived	Cranbrook, BC
Ethnic/Ancestry Background	Scottish

CQG #045 - *Hilda's Crazy Quilt*  
Quiltmaker: Hilda Pingitore

Owner: Susan Little (#020)

Susan's mother Mary Little gave Susan this quilt because she liked "old things". The quilt was made totally by hand. It's likely that Hilda bought a box of fabric pieces from *T Eatons Catalogue* as that was a popular source of small patches of printed cottons for quilting in the 40s - 50s. (see Fn 1). Some of the fabric scraps may have come from dresses or aprons that Hilda made for herself.

Pattern	Public domain. Crazy Quilt block
Subject	"Crazy"
Date	1930 - 1949
Size	L 75½" x W 63"
Overall style	Finished quilt Hand-pieced/Hand Quilted "Crazy", Scrappy
Block	"Crazy" L 10" x W ¼", rectangle Spacing: side-by-side/slightly off-set, straight Number of blocks: 56 Patches per block: ~ 24 to 30 (straight edge)
Border or Frame	W 3", straight, one fabric (wraps to form edge finishing) Colour: blue print
Edge finishing	Turned, front turned to back/hand stitched, straight, square corners, one fabric (border fabric) W ½"
Batting	Unknown, possibly cotton, low loft
Top fabric	Cotton, Unknown Weave: plain, seer-sucker Motif: plain/solid, geometric, print, yarn dyed, gingham, polka dots, conversation, floral, plaid, stripe
Top piecing method	Hand piecing
Backing	Cotton, plain weave, one fabric Colour: cream Motif: plain/solid
Quilting	Traditional Hand Quilting Stitches/Inch: 5, some knots showing Thread: cotton, cream Pattern: edge-to-edge, cable
Condition	Well used, Holes/fragile

Label	Alberta Quilt Study Society 3-0965
Comment	Documented by: Alberta Quilt Study Society on the Quilt Index ( <a href="http://quiltindex.org">quiltindex.org</a> )

## CQG #162 - "Depression Era Crib Quilts"

Quiltmaker: Hilda Pingitore

Owner : Susan Little (blue) #020, Carolyn Shepherd (light &amp; doll quilt) (Cranbrook, BC)

Susan understood that Hilda had a wee supply of these embroidered baby quilts that she sold to friends when a new grand-child arrived. In Susan's family, her mother, Mary Little, bought one for the first child of each of her four daughters. In the group, they had five because one daughter had twins. Of these, three are still in the family. Susan's would be the newest - 1975 and the oldest would be 1964. Each version is totally hand-made. Hilda did have a sewing machine, but this quilt was embroidered, pieced, and quilted by hand in the style of *Art Embroidery*. The second sample owned by Carolyn Sheppard came to her in a similar fashion. Carolyn knew Hilda through her work as a Community Nurse. Hilda made the wee doll blanket especially for Carolyn's first child.

The motifs on both quilts are typical of "art embroidery": rabbit with cello, Dutch girl & boy, flowers, butterflies, rabbits, windmill, chicken, squirrel, puppy, sailboat, Indian with headdress, cactus with man wearing a sombrero, Chinese man in a tub, elephants, camel, skater, rocking horse (see also #156). Suzanne McNeil, has collected examples in her book: "Vintage Stitching Treasury" ( New Designs Originals Corp, Singapore, 2015.) Of the style - *Art Embroidery* - she explains: *For nearly a century, the wonderful relaxing pastime of art embroidery entertained women through the U.S. and much of the world. No one thought much of it while they were doing it; after all, it was just something to pass the time, making a thoughtful gift for a friend or a treat for oneself. So little consideration has been given to this facet of textile history that some experts cringe when they hear "art embroidery" applied to the stamped goods and transfers our mothers and grandmothers bought for a dollar (or a penny!) from the variety store. But art embroidery is indeed what the magazines and pattern publishers and catalogs called those fanciful designs. As textile historians tend to focus on rarer things ...[t]hose of you who cherish bluebird-covered dresser scarves and scotties-chasing-kitties tea towels know how compelling the untold story of the woman who made them is. Imagine her story multiplied by millions - that is the scope of art embroidery...The designs provide a record of attitudes, humour, and culture, much of it from a woman's point of view. Everyone who is lucky enough to have a small collection of old linens embroidered by mothers or grandmothers feels the hand reaching across the years. Decorative embroidery was (and is) used on so many household items: linens, pillows, doilies, potholders, kitchen towels, button bags, silverware holders, etc.—you name it and it was probably decorated at some time or other with a bit of embroidery and possibly a touch of tinting...The styles are unique to their eras ...*

Pattern	Possibly: Vogart Transfer Patterns, New York (~1950-1970)	Possibly: Vogart Transfer Patterns, New York (~1950 - 1970)	Children's' Colouring/ Story Book ~ 1978. Design by Quiltmaker
Subject	Art Embroidery	Art Embroidery Alphabet	Embroidery "Humpty Dumpty"/Fairy Tale

Date	1950 - 1975	1950 - 1975	Specific date: 1978
Size	L 44½" x W 33½" Directional	L 46" x W 32¼" Directional	L 14¼" x W 11¼" Directional
Overall style	Finished crib quilt "Art Embroidery" Repeated blocks/ Setting blocks	Finished crib quilt "Art Embroidery" Wholecloth	Finished 'doll' quilt Embroidery Appliqué Pictorial
Block	L 3½" x W 3½", square  Spacing: side-by-side w setting squares  Number of blocks: 108 (Art - 54)	Wholecloth L 40" x W 32¼" Number of art— embroidery motifs: 49	One block/Pictorial Appliqué
Border		Top/Bottom edges W 2½", straight, one fabric Colour: novelty print green	
Edge finishing	Binding: W ½", straight Square corners Hand front/hand back Colour: white print	Binding: W ½", straight Square corners Hand front/hand back Colour: white	Turned - W ½" Backing brought to front/hand stitched Mitred corners
Batting	None	None	None
Top fabric	Cotton, plain weave Motif: plain/solid Colour: white, blue	Cotton, plain weave Motif: plain/solid, novelty Colour: white, green, coral	Cotton, plain weave Motif: plain/solid, novelty, leaves Colour: white, red, mauve, pink, yellow
Top piecing method	Hand piecing	Hand piecing	Hand appliqué
Appliqué			Motif: Novelty Method: hand, turned edge
Backing	One fabric Cotton, plain weave Motif: novelty/children Colour: white, blue, green, orange	One fabric Cotton, plain weave Motif: novelty/frogs Colour: white, green, coral	One fabric Cotton, plain weave Motif: flower/dots Colour: red

Embellishments	Art Embroidery Motif - variety of baskets, animals, people (54 different motifs) Stitches: chain, satin, stem, buttonhole Embroidery floss - various colours	Art Embroidery Motif - alphabet on blocks + variety of baskets, animals, people (49 different motifs) Stitches: chain, satin, stem, buttonhole Embroidery floss - various colours	Embroidery Motif - "Humpty Dumpty" Fairy Tale figure, star, butterfly, lettering Stitches: chain, satin, stem, buttonhole Embroidery floss - various colours
Quilting	Traditional Hand - 5 stitches/inch  Thread: cotton, white Pattern: outline, diagonal cross-hatch, circular/daisy motif	Traditional Hand - 5 stitches/inch  Thread: cotton, white Pattern: outline, diagonal cross-hatch	Traditional Hand - 5 stitches/inch  Thread: cotton, white Pattern: outline, echo diagonal cross-hatch
Condition	Used (has been laundered) Two small stains	Used (has been laundered)	Used (has been laundered)
Label			Embroidery on top <i>1978 Alex Xmas</i>
Comment			Given to Alex by the Quiltmaker for her 1st Christmas