

Judy Wright (1947 - 2024) - #043 and #160 (Dear Jane's)

Judy was a founding member of the Cranbrook Quilters Guild when she joined her friend Lisa Sharpe and 22 other quilters in the fall of 1984 to talk about forming a guild. Her talents were missed when she moved on from the guild in 2017 to other creative pursuits - painting and lapidary. She left the guild when she saw that members were stalled in their attitude: "Many were not willing to branch into new techniques". She wasn't dismayed, she just decided it was time to move on. Judy was the guild President 1987-88. The guild had 33 members then and was busy being a "hobby group" planning workshops for members to advance their quilting skills, starting a library, already creating a third raffle quilt to raise funds for activities, and reaching out to the community by donating baby size quilts to the hospital and the Crisis Centre. A raffle quilt (double size bed quilt) brought in about \$550. The yearly membership fee was \$10. In 1987-88, Judy taught Seminole Patchwork (Brackman #4177), Lisa Sharpe (#023) taught a six week beginner class, and Joan Hodgeboom of the *Quilt Gallery* in Kalispell, Montana, travelled to Cranbrook to teach "Curved Two Patch" (Brackman#1456 (v))and "Attic Window" (Brackman #1366). Judy took on the role of workshops coordinator for 1990-91 and again 1994-95 and taught many techniques. In 1998-99, Judy along with Lisa Beaulac (#084) and Peggy McGowan coordinated the Fort Steele Quilt (#001) project. In 2004-5 she was one of the members that drafted, pieced, and quilted the Cranbrook Centennial Quilt (#080). She also took her turn at producing the newsletter (2000-1, 2006-7), which she turned into the guild's first website, 2009-12.

Judy came to quilting from weaving, and pottery. The *Cranbook Weavers Guild* 'volunteered' as one of living exhibits at *Fort Steele Heritage Town*. Judy would demonstrate weaving on the old Swedish Loom at the Lambi House. Here she encountered the hand-quilters who held an old style quilting bee as one of the other living heritage displays. Soon she added that craft to her repertoire. She taught herself to make quilt tops, having learned some of the basics, starting when she was 4, from her Grand Aunt Sara (see #042), her grandmother and other relatives when she lived in Calgary and Langdon. She remembers the quilt frame that was on pulleys so it could be moved to the ceiling when the room was needed for something other than hand-quilting. Judy had always sewn her cloths and even made suits for her young sons. She learned that trade from her grandfather who was a tailor and an aunt who sewed for Holt-Renfrew. Judy had inherited her grandfather's treadle sewing machine.

Judy's first quilt was a simple "Right and Left Block" (Brackman 2406a) in a sash and block layout with sashing cornerstones. She used broadcloth prints, a plain weave cotton in red and pink. Her assessment: the binding was too wide and the mitred corners were askew. She joined the guild to learn all the facets of quilting as there wasn't a lot of instructional materials available. Most quilting magazines were in black and white with maybe a coloured centrefold. The evening meetings were attractive as she and husband Tim had a business and two growing boys so her daytime hours were full. The family moved house several times and in each Judy found a quilting/sewing space. Besides teaching quilting workshops, she taught a course on making blue jeans and lingerie.

Judy was an entrepreneur with fellow guild member, Linda Shaw(#300). When Judy started quilting in ~1980, most of the prints were calico and the solids were broadcloth. This lead Judy and Linda to start a home-based quilt shop in Linda's basement called *Mountain Threads*. In town there were a few fabric stores - *Sew & Sew*, *Sew Unique*, *Shannon's* and of course fabric could be ordered through the Sears catalogue (until 1993). None of these outlets featured quilter's cotton. Judy and Linda offered courses and brought in a small inventory of quilting supplies and cotton quilters fabrics. Two notions they sold to local quilters were rotary cutters and mats. Linda eventually became the sole owner when they needed to expand so that each could make a bit of a salary.

Over the years, Judy acquired quite a stash of fabric - and she pre-washed a lot before using it in a quilt. Her last quilting space included a small room upstairs where she kept her computer, books, a small sewing machine, and did all her planning plus her genealogy searches - another hobby. Her big domestic machine and cutting table were in the basement 'den'. She enjoyed the delights of a *Janome Horizon* and she quilted smaller projects on a *PFAFF Hobby Grand Quilter* that was on an *Inspira Q Frame*. As she was more into painting and lapidary than quilting, she sold this set-up in 2023. Judy also collected vintage machines and repaired treadle machines.

Judy was an excellent quilter. A few of her finished pieces were featured in a US based magazine. Sadly we don't have the details to add to this story. For a few years (2000-12) Judy was an active member of the international *Dear Jane's* group. That story is told under #160 and features a signature quilt of Judy's. Judy also participated in a small *Fibre Friends* group with quilters, weavers, and felters. The group met once a month to share their creations and talents. Through this group, Judy went to a cloth doll making workshop at the Quilt Gallery with Elinor Peace Bailey. Judy's pattern choice was *Zelda*. Members were from Cranbrook and Kimberley.

Quiltmaker	Judy Wright (nee Lloyd)
Date and place of birth	October 28, 1947 Calgary, AB
Father Occupation	James C Lloyd Pump/Compressor Business
Mother Occupation	Cathleen Harney Housewife
Date and place of death	June 17, 2024 Cranbrook, BC
Date and place marriage	1966 Calgary, AB
Spouse Occupation	Timothy Wright Tire/Super Lube Business
Quiltmaker Occupation	Clerical; Drafter
Children	2 sons
Education of Quiltmaker	Drafter apprenticeship
Where Quiltmaker lived	Calgary, AB; Langdon, AB; Burnaby, BC; Cranbrook, BC.
Ethnic/Ancestry Background	English

CQG#043 - *Brands of Southern Alberta*

Quiltmaker: Judy Wright

Owner: Tim Wright

This is Judy's prize quilt. It is a replica of two quilts made by her Grand Aunt, Sara(h) McKinnon (nee Whitney) - or Mrs Lachlan McKinnon of Langdon and later Calgary AB. Sara came with her parents to the Langdon area from Ontario in ~ 1890. Sara and Lachlan met and married in Langdon in 1891. They lived on adjacent spreads and met at a Chuck Wagon event.

Sara's two brands' quilts are medallion styles. The first one she made has 180¹ embroidered blocks around a centre picture of the family ranch, the LK Ranch in Langdon. The article describing this piece espoused that "most of the brands have been passed, like quilts, from owner to owner" (Esso Farm News, March -April 1959). This quilt was owned by Sara's grandson Neil McKinnon. A 1955 Calgary Herald article describes Sara's second brands' quilt as a "large patchwork made from britches of some of Alberta's best known cowboys and ranchers" (July 15, 1955). It features a centre block that is a painted picture of Lachlan on horseback - Lachlan "went to his last great round-up" in 1948 at age 83. The centre is surrounded by 144 blocks where Sara "painstakingly embroidered" the brands of family and neighbours onto small squares of trouser fabric. This quilt was made for one of Sara and Lachlan's six sons. Sara was 80 when she finished the second quilt.

Judy started her version around 1975, long before she actually took up quilting as a hobby. She was obsessed with 'Granny McKinnon's' brands quilt, but didn't see herself becoming a quilter. Judy collected the jeans of her husband and sons to make the patches. She admitted that she never really gave any thought to buying old jeans from a thrift shop, which would be a common source of the denim patches today. Judy completed the quilt in 2020, 45 years after she started: "I didn't work on it full-time. It was very hard on my fingers to embroider through denim. I didn't have any help - nobody (meaning her husband and sons) wanted to embroider, though one son made saddles." At the start, she used the pictures in the newspapers as the pattern. A chance meeting with a relative, Angus McKinnon (a 2nd cousin to her dad) got her a detailed pattern. He had stopped at Tim and Judy's "Super Lube" in Cranbrook not knowing the owners were relatives, and Judy recognized him. Back home in Alberta, he located one of the quilts and sent a diagram of all the brands. In 1980, before Judy really got going on the quilt, she and family went on vacation down the Oregon Coast so that Judy could go to the *McMinnville Fabric Depot* where she knew she could buy the embroidery floss in large spools. The specific colour is close to the common colour of stitching used on blue jeans. On Judy's version, the LK Ranch (Lachlan McKinnon) brand is in row 12#7. Judy's initials as the quiltmaker are Row 1#12 - JLW (Judith Anne Wright, nee Lloyd). The famous Calgary Stampede is represented by the brand Row 9#8.

The quilt graces the feature wall in Judy's sewing room. Tim will keep it there. Eventually it will go to Judy's youngest son who is a rancher in Alberta - the SR Ranch. Judy and Tim longarm quilted the quilt at *Sew Creative Chalet* in Kimberley, BC. Cost ~\$38.

Pattern	Replica of brands quilts made by Mrs Lachlan (Sara[h]) McKinnon
Subject	Ranch cattle brands
Size	L 66" x W 66"
Date	Started 1975. Completed 2020

¹ 1970 - Official Livestock Brand Book of the Province of Alberta, 1970, Calgary Livestock Identification Services

Overall Style	Finished quilt Embroidery, Realistic One patch-square, Repeated blocks
Block	L 5¼" x 5¼", square Number of blocks: 144 (12 rows/12 rows) Brackman#2283 (V)
Edge finishing	Binding: ½", machine front, hand back, double fold, straight. Colour: red (cotton)
Batting	Polyester, low loft
Top fabric	Cotton, twill weave Feature colours: blue, navy (indigo) Motif: denim
Top piecing method	Machine piecing
Quilt Embellishments	Hand Embroidery - one cattle brand/block Stitch: plain back stitch (similar to stitch on Lee jeans) Floss: 3 strands. Colour: golden yellow
Backing	Cotton 'ticking', herringbone weave, vertical pieced Motif: cows, stripes Feature colours: cream, black Handing sleeve
Quilting	Mid/Longarm Pattern: stipple
Condition	Unused

Label	<p>Computer generated with picture of quiltmaker and the quilt</p> <p><i>The Brands of Southern Alberta</i> 144 brands of ranches in southern Alberta. Judy's family ranch is LK Ranch in Langdon, AB. Brand: LK</p> <p><i>Created by Judy Wright (nee Lloyd, 1947-2024) of Cranbrook, BC beginning in 1975 and completed in 2020. "I didn't work on it full time. It was very hard on my fingers too embroider through the denim. I didn't get any help-nobody wanted to embroider." This quilt is a replica of two quilts made by Judy's grand aunt, Sara(h) (Whitney) McKinnon (Mrs Lachlan McKinnon) of Langdon and later of Calgary, AB. The denim for the patches came from "old jeans" of Judy's husband and two sons. She bought the embroidery thread on a family trip to McMinnville Fabric Depot, in Oregon. Judy said she was "obsessed with Granny McKinnon's quilts". She started making the quilt from a news article about Sara McKinnon's quilts, and later received a detailed diagram from cousin Angus McKinnon. Judy was a volunteer weaver at Fort Steele Heritage Town before joining the hand-quilters there. She seriously started quilting in 1985 when her friend Lisa Sharpe gathered quilters to form the Cranbrook Quilters Guild. Judy rented the Gammill longarm quilting machine at Sew Creative Quilt Shop in Kimberley to stipple quilt this piece.</i></p>
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1/4"1/2"