

The late Mrs. Flossie Pearson with two of the quilts she designed. She named one "O Canada," the other "Home Sweet Home."



Quilts That Tell a Story

By Flossie Pearson

Editor's Note: This article was written by the late Mrs. Flossie Pearson of Simcoe county, where the Quilt and Rug Fair and its educational program has encouraged women to create their own quilt designs.

"FLOSSIE YOU ARE SINGING A TUNE." This is a strange way to commence telling about quilt making.

About the year 1895, a small girl by the name of Flossie Gallagher commenced her school career by being enrolled as a pupil at S.S. No. 8 Tossorontio. The teacher, Miss Letitia Kavanagh was a very busy person with more than fifty pupils to teach, but she took time to teach our national song, "The Maple Leaf Forever" by Alexander Muir. Each line of this patriotic song was so imprinted on my mind that I could not refrain from letting my mother know what I had learned. My father was not a singer but my mother was, and I was always thrilled right down to my toes when I heard her melodious voice in solo or duet at Jenning's Church. Secretly I longed to be able to sing as she did, and that is why my first tune, "The Maple Leaf" seemed so important to me.

Time marches on and in my being there seemed to be something in me urging me to give expression to my love for the song which I had learned in my childhood. It was not until the year 1947 that I took action. Our Women's Institute group in Everett had been invited to a fashion show at Camp Borden and while wandering around the large building where we were guests I noticed the "Coats of Arms" of the provinces of Canada. I was really excited about it and I knew then that I

was going to commence a quilt and what part of the ornamentation would be. These ten provincial emblems would be interspersed with maple leaves. Just about this time we chanced to receive a calendar, printed by the Southam Press, which contained the necessary pictures, and soon I was engaged in designing my first quilt. It was later exhibited at the Quilt and Rug Fair in Midland and received a good deal of publicity. A former teacher, Mr. McGuire of Penetang who had read about this quilt in local papers, and knowing that I was a former pupil, was on hand to greet me when the fair opened. This quilt I named "O Canada."

My second patriotic idea was named "Royal Canadiana." It was made in Coronation year 1953. This one was centred with the British crown encircled by a wreath of autumn coloured maple leaves. Around it were placed the floral emblems of the provinces with some maple leaves thrown in for good measure. There was the "Dogwood" of British Columbia, the "Wild Rose" of Alberta, the "Tiger Lily" of Saskatchewan, the "Crocus" of Manitoba, the "Trillium" of Ontario, the "Fleur de Lis" of Quebec, the "Violet" of New Brunswick, "Trailing Arbutus" for Nova Scotia, the "Wild Orchid" for P.E.I., and lastly, the "Pitcher Plant" for Newfoundland. This one is my husband's favorite.

A third quilt which I think should be included in the patriotic list is called "Sugar Time", which was the title of a popular song when this one was in the making. It is a winter scene in the sugar maple bush. It is centred with the sugar cabin. Back of it are the naked trees, many of them having the addition of a sap bucket and spile. In one corner two huge