Barn Quilts

Upstate Heritage Quilt Trail
South Carolina
http://www.upstateheritagequilttrail.org/

By Kim Bearnes, Extension Educator
Stanton County Nebraska
Early Beginnings

• 300 years ago –
  • Religious Freedom - immigrants settled in Pennsylvania (Rhine region of Germany - Amish, Mennonites, Lutherans and other Reform groups)

• Small design decorated barns – paint was expensive
  • Designs - to protect the farm f- bring good fortune
  • Good way to direct travelers – look for particular design

• 1830 to 1840’s – began artisan trade - paint less costly

Marilyn Carrigan-Truman Museum, Truman, MN
Barn Quilt Origination - 2001

- Donna Sue Groves, Manchester, (Adams County OH)

- To honor her mother & Appalachian heritage

“Launched largest grassroots arts movement in USA & Canada.”

Suzi Parron, Historian & Author
Documentary (2015-16)

Pieced Together: A Documentary about Donna Sue Groves

www.piecedtogethertocdoc.com
Suzi Parron: Barn Quilt Historian, Author, Speaker

http://barnquiltinfo.com/

Geneva, NE - April 9, 2014
Quilt trail began in Ohio, then Kentucky & south east – and then westward – 47 states have Barn Quilt Trails

http://barnquiltinfo.com/map-US.htm & http://visitsoutheastnebraska.org/counties/
Movement West
Greene County, Iowa
Design Application

Painted board

Painted directly on the barn
Barn Quilts of Pender, Nebraska

Threads from the Past

Communities are like quilts
Lives pieced together
Stitched with smiles and tears
Colored with memories
And bound by love.

How Did the Barn Quilt Project Start in Pender?

Inspiration came when a group of women from Pender met on a road trip through Iowa—and spied unique, eye-catching quilt block creations on barns. Seeing the quilts planted the seed for duplicating the project in the Pender area—and to beautify our own community. After thinking about how this project could become a reality, the committees planned and designed the first eight quilt blocks as a summer project in a member’s garage. From designing, cutting, and then piecing the blocks, the hours spent together in friendship, conversations, and a spirit of working on a collaborative project was launched. Many months of preparation were spent. The first quilt blocks were hung, and the interest of the community was immediate. Even before they were cut and sewn together, the impact of the quilt blocks on the community was immediate. Even before they were completed, the blocks were put on display throughout Pender and the countryside in celebration of the Pender Quilt Block Challenge. The committee finds that this project was a beginning point that brought people together, creates a sense of unity throughout the community and demonstrates the value of the artistic use of quilts beyond Pender’s Quilt Blocks.

What are Barn Quilts?

First, a little history about quilts in general. Quilts are undeniably a craft that has been practiced by women of all ages, in all stages of life and in all cultures. It is a universal craft — the making of warm bedding from available materials to help keep the family warm through cold winters. Many quilt patterns can be closely related to the regional people who made them, whether they were native or immigrants. The word "quilt" comes directly from the Latin word "tectum," which means to cover, and "tectum." Since barn quilts involve the joining of materials over a batting or cushion of some sort and then a bottom layer, it is an appropriate translation. Cloth was likely scarce in the early settlement of America and colonists would save every piece of clothing, even after it no longer fit or became tattered and worn. Pieces were cut and sewn together to create colorful patterns for the quilt tops and shades for the interior family as well as being made for gifts upon weddings, births, and special occasions. Even old quilts that were soon beyond use were used as the inside batting for other quilts. In the making of quilts, the art of the quilt was born. Women started using shared patterns in their work, creating new designs and beginning the art of applique on many of them. It has been said that the applique art was born out of the need to repair a torn or worn quilt that otherwise was still useful. Yet, differences in the use of color and stitching techniques developed. Quilts had come into their own as an art form. Quilts are now considered a true folk art genre.

The Barn Quilt Emerges

Arenas who recognize barn quilts for what they are known to be originally created by Donna Sue Snyder of the Ohio Arts Council. The story goes that on a long road trip, she said to her family they would paint oversized regional signs, such as Clear Valley Post, when driving through Pennsylvania, she loved looking at the sign on the barn of the Pennsylvania Dutch. Donna Sue and her mother purchased a farm in Adams County, Ohio, so she placed these oversized signs every piece of clothing, even after it no longer fit or became tattered and worn. Pieces were cut and sewn together to create colorful patterns for the quilt tops and shades for the interior family as well as being made for gifts upon weddings, births, and special occasions. Even old quilts that were soon beyond use were used as the inside batting for other quilts. In the making of quilts, the art of the quilt was born. Women started using shared patterns in their work, creating new designs and beginning the art of applique on many of them. It has been said that the applique art was born out of the need to repair a torn or worn quilt that otherwise was still useful. Yet, differences in the use of color and stitching techniques developed. Quilts had come into their own as an art form. Quilts are now considered a true folk art genre.
200+ Barn Quilts - Pender 125\textsuperscript{th} Celebration

Celebration June 2010

Population 1002
Nuckolls County Nebraska

Duane (Tub) Drohman in the Massey-Harris Museum in Ruskin, NE

Dennis Schoff farm, Ruskin, NE
Jefferson County, Nebraska

Philip Heidemann Farm
Daykin, NE

William Ebke - Daykin, NE
4-H and FFA Quilt Blocks - Jefferson County Fairgrounds - 2012
Fillmore County Fairgrounds
As the Barn Quilt movement progresses – designs seem to become more complicated
More Complex Pattern

Renae Kamler’s Barn Quilt - honor of her grandmother

Painted by Shickley NE art students
Gage County

National Homestead Movement
150th Anniversary - 2012

Scavenger hunt on grounds/trails for quilt blocks

GPS – Geo caching

Barn quilt workshops
Gage County Fairgrounds

So, What’s a Barn Quilt?

Each one of us probably has a memory associated with a quilt. Perhaps you received one as a gift to commemorate a special occasion, or you slept under one when you visited Grandma.

For hundreds of years, quilts have played an important role in the lives of people and families around the world.

In 2003, an Ohio woman, Donna Sue Groves, wanted to honor her mother, who was a 5th generation quilter and draw attention to an historic tobacco barn on her property. So...she painted a quilt block on the side of the barn...and the Barn Quilt was born!

Before long, people were asking how they could paint one on their barn or granary. From that simple beginning, the idea has grown.

Consisting of wood and paint instead of fabric and thread, barn quilts serve as reminders of our pioneer heritage, our agricultural roots, and at the same time, add beauty, color and folk art to our landscapes.

Today, Barn Quilts can be found in a variety of sizes, and not only on barns. They are found on garages, in flower gardens, parks, along roadsides, and in front yards.

The Gage County Agriculture Society, along with Gage County 4-H clubs, members and families, has one of the first fairgrounds in the state of Nebraska to have a Barn Quilt Trail, honoring both our agricultural and quilt heritage. Follow the trail to discover the beauty and variety of the patterns, each with a tie to our past...and to our future.

Thanks to the following organizations, businesses and individuals for development and support of this Barn Quilt Project:

- Larry and Kay McKinzie, Beatrice
- Don and Bev Ewer, Beatrice
- Ann Reimer, Beatrice
- Lucas and Mary Gleason, Beatrice
- Beatrice High School Auto Cad Class
  
- Austin Goossen, Student
- Charles Brockman, Instructor
- Kristine Dorn | Bahr-Vermeer-Haecker Architects, Lincoln
- Sack Lumber, Beatrice
- 4-H Clubs and Families of Gage County
- Women for Racing
- Gage County Agriculture Society

Fun Facts:

- 14 different colors were used
- 91 containers were used to hold the paints needed for the 18 quilt block kits used by the painters
- Most used color: Red, followed by blue and green
- Least used color: Pink, used only in Carnival Time and Rosebud
- Smallest number of colors used in a block: 2
- Largest number of colors used in a block: 6

18 Barn Quilts made same year as Homestead 150th Celebration
Specialized

Enlarged heritage picture of family applied as barn quilt

Workshop Preparation

- Planning
- Promotion
  - Flyer/brochure
  - Facebook
  - News Articles written
  - Registration Fees
  - Timing (length) of workshop
  - One day or two evening workshops
- Workshop supplies (see following slides)
- Power Point Presentation
- Handouts
Barn Quilt Size

- Large – 8’ x 8’ (two full boards)
- 48” x 48” (1/2 sheet of purchased board – cannot get into car trunk/SUV tailgate)
- 40” x 40” – can get into car trunk
- 24” x 24”
- Tiny (mailbox)

(Check on cutting capabilities before boards are cut)
Miscellaneous Supplies

- Computer/projector to show ppt;
- Handouts (shortened version of ppt; “formula” for designs
- Tarps for floor; table covering
- Painters tape – 1 roll per two participants (if they work on 4x4’ boards)
- Pencils, paper; plastic cups; sandwich bags;
- Foam brushes … or
- Paint brushes (cheap brushes leave streaks)
- 3’ and/or 4’ yard sticks (straight edge); transparent quilting ruler
- Sharp edge tool (xacto knife, razor blade)
- Rulers or popsicle sticks to burnish tape down
- Hair dryers (to dry paint between coats)
- Trash containers;
- Container/Water for cleanup
Design Ideas

http://www.ohiobarns.com/otherbarns/quilt/quiltbarns.html
http://www.grundycountyia.com/play/barn-quilts/barn-quilts-sites

• Quilt Design Software (Electric Quilt, Quilt Pro etc.)

• Google Images (type in “Barn Quilts”)

• Pinterest (search for Barn Quilts)
Design Formula...

- Participants may be intimidated by quilt designs

- Analyze blocks
  - Most blocks can be easily dissected –
  - Help ease participants mind for designing their board
Divide Pattern by 1/3s
Design by $\frac{1}{4}$ths
Design by $1/5^{th}$, $1/6^{th}$

Abstract Flag is $1/4$ of Barn Quilt Block
Making Your Barn Quilt

Supplies:
- Two—4 x 8 foot 3/4” MDO board, sometimes called sign board—available at some lumber yards, call to reserve
- Cardboard or plastic to cover the floor
- Saw horses or table top
- Diamond Vogel Sure Grip Latex Primer
- Pencil for drawing pattern
- Measuring tape, yard stick, or framing square
- Painters tape or masking tape
- Razor blade or craft knife
- Can opener
- Self-Adhesive dots of your design colors
- Foam roller and paint tray
- Brushes 2” angle for Latex paint
- Paint
- Diamond Vogel V-Cote 222 Maintenance Semi-Gloss
- Diamond Vogel Nu-Cling Latex Enamel Satin Finish
- Plastic containers used for paint
- Paint stir stick
- Paper towel or rags
- 6-8 foot cedar 2 x 4’s
- Gorilla Glue
- Clamps
- Two inch torque screws
- 3 3/4” wide, 5 foot thin strip to cover top ledge
- “L” brackets

Steps:
1. Select your quilt pattern or design your own.
2. Set up a work area that is dry and dust free for painting.
3. Prime the two Medium Density Overlay (MDO) boards using a foam roller and the high quality primer.
4. Enlarge the quilt pattern using graph paper or another preferred method to scale leaving a three inch border on all sides. Then draw the pattern on the primed boards using a pencil and measuring device.
5. Using the tape, outline the areas that will receive the lightest paint color and press the tape firmly to ensure a good seal.

Hint: Use a razor blade or craft knife to cut definite angles in the tape. To help designate which areas receive which color you can place corresponding colored self stick notes in those areas. This would be very helpful with a pattern using multiple colors. If you do not connect the two boards it will be easier to paint the center.

MDO (Medium Density Overlay-resin on one or both sides often used for outdoor signs –
- Small town lumber yards may not know about MDO
- NOT MDF

OR USE -- Exterior Grade Plywood Sheets – one side smooth

Iowa State University handout found at http://www.extension.iastate.edu/nr/rdonlyres/ba0ae05f-eb22-4944-a8d2-7cf99885f3a9/77655/flplymouthcountyisubarnquiltdirections.pdf
Prime Boards First

- Need 5 gallons primer for 36 - 4x4’ boards
- Kilz Exterior Grade Primer –  (not product endorsement but suggestion by lumberyard personnel – be sure to use “outdoor” grade)
  - Exterior grade (protect wood & prevent stain seeping)
- 2 coats on flat (top/bottom) surface; 4 coats on edges
- For darker colors – put some black into white primer

Nuckolls County – 34 Barn Quilts – primed & ready
Saves a lot of time
Exterior Grade Paint & Color

• Primary & Secondary colors are noticed better from a distance

• Your Choice of Paint Brands

• Exterior/Outdoor Paint
• Exterior “COLOR”
  ▪ “Interior” colors can fade faster
  ▪ Little House indicates color can be used on Exterior Color.
Straight Lines > Simpler with Painters Tape
Curves – More Challenging

Difficult to outline with painters tape
Border

- Some believe a border around the outside edge looks “professional”
  - Border “stops the design”

- If adding border – do it first – THEN MEASURE space for block design inside

- 3” on larger size
Draw Design on Board
Measure, Measure, Measure

‘Transparent’ quilt ruler is helpful
Measuring will be your biggest challenge to teach!!!
Tape Area to Paint
Mark areas for different paint colors with sticky notes
Burnish Tape Edges

Press tape down with fingers first – then burnish with straight edge

For rough edges … paint over the edge of the painters tape with base/background color first – if seepage it will be same as background – then add another color
Paint first section

Sticky Notes to tell color for each section
Preferred -
Let dry/cure overnight
then tape
next section
Paint more than one coat

In workshop setting - use Hair Dryer to dry paint

Some paint does not cover well
Drop clothes work great.
Add Second Color of paint...
Additional Colors
Hair dryers and fans help dry the paint!!
Older 4-Hers are great mentors, let them help!!!
Final Coating...

Your Determination…..many people do not add additional coating

- May help prevent crackling & peeling
  - Catalyzed Lacquer (one contractor recommends)
  - Water based polyurethane
  - Boat sealer – Yellow?
  - Spray acrylic enamel – clear coat interior-exterior (Suggested by artist who creates motorcycle helmet designs.)
Hanging the 8x8’ Quilt

Use appropriate tools

Kamler Barn Quilt
Side of a Sturdy Structure

Betty & Larry Edzards
Bruning Nebraska
Reinforce Structure If Necessary

Reinforce back of barn door before application

Quilt reinforced to hang in one piece
In Pawnee County NE – local power company partnered with 4-Hers to use boom equipment at not cost for 4-H Barn Quilt project.
Barn Quilts

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