

Scrap Quilt

Block Number: H 1
"Scrap Quilt"
By Nora Worthen

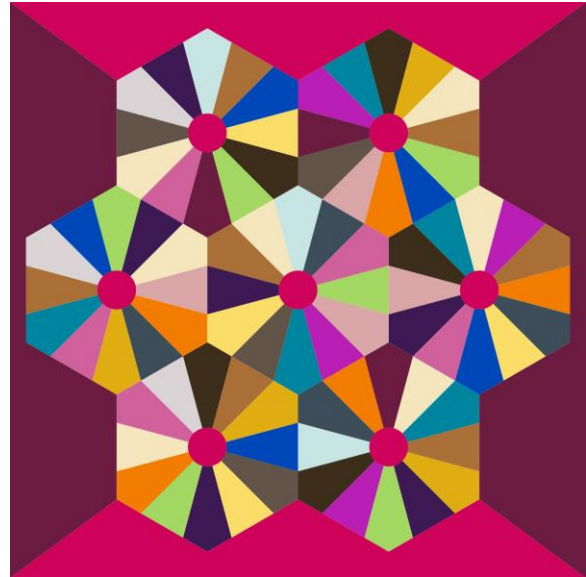
As Mike Lucas used a rag to make the last swipe across the quilt block to wash off the dust and fingerprints, one could almost see the rustic old feed shed stand up a little taller and proud, as if to say, "I may have some age on me, but just look at me now!" Even the aged roof with the copper and red rust colors in the tin seemed to gleam in the sunlight.

Prior to the quilt block being installed, the 84-year-old building's real usefulness was a thing of the past. Some might think it needed to be razed, with all its well-used farm equipment and plunder stored inside going with it.... But not any more. That feed shed now has a new purpose. It, like people who are given a second chance, with its new look, seems to stand straighter on its foundation, showing off all its features from top to bottom, telling an important story about a way of life in rural McDowell County in the early part of the twentieth century.

This feed shed was an essential part of the Reid Holland General Store and Grocery for forty years. It stored everything from canned foods to nails to chicken, cow and horse feed to fertilize, and other supplies needed in all the farming communities surrounding Glenwood. This building, with its quilt block, tells a story of multi-generational families that is representative of a way of life in rural McDowell County during the early 1900s.

The McDowell Rural Heritage Quilt Trail installed its first quilt block named "Scrap Quilt" on a cold February afternoon at the family home of Ruby Holland, where she and her sister Lorene and two brothers Alvin and Harry grew up in Glenwood.

Placing quilt blocks on these rustic buildings is also a way to reminisce about a way of life that was void of today's technology with the hustle and bustle of the twenty-first century: A time when horses and/or mules pulled the



plow, water was drawn from the well by manpower, homes were heated and meals were cooked using coal or wood stoves, the toilet was located out back, and folks went to town on Saturdays and to church on Sundays.

"Scrap Quilt" is the first such quilt block to be placed on the Rural Heritage Quilt Trail, and it can be found at the intersection of Old Highway 221 South and Glenwood Baptist Church Road on what was once the feed shed just behind the Reid Holland General Store and Grocery.

In the latter part of the 1800s, Glenwood, being six miles from Marion, was a prosperous little village boasting a school, its own flour mill, a depot for the Peavine passenger train service, a post office, a general store where one could also buy a casket, a Woodman of the World club house, with freight train railroad tracks bordering the village to the east. The village, laid out in a city block fashion, had a good many two-story frame homes, and enough parishioners to fill two churches.

Reid Holland had a dream of being in business for himself. He left his childhood home in Glenwood, like many other young men in the early nineteen hundreds, and went to Detroit, Michigan to work in the automobile manufacturing industry. He lived in a boarding house and "saved every dime he made,"

according to Ruby and Harry. After two years, he returned home with his savings, and in 1927 married a Harmony Grove girl named Josie Pyatt. With the popularity of the automobile, and U.S. Highway 221 South becoming a major north/south corridor, Reid Holland, the young entrepreneur, recognized an opportunity and capitalized on it.

By 1928 Reid had bought property alongside 221 South and built the store building and feed shed, with the three rooms in the back providing living quarters, until he could earn enough money to build a home and begin his family. The Hollands were living in those three rooms and operating the store when the first baby was born. Interestingly enough, after purchasing the land and erecting the store and feed buildings, he had to borrow \$500.00 from a neighboring family in order to stock the store.

After several years of prosperity selling gas, groceries, hardware, feed, fertilizer, overalls, cloth, etc., hauling wood and farming, the loan was paid back, and by 1931 he was able to build a proper house for his family where the other three children were born and where Ruby lives today.

Reid had a lot of credit business, and once took in a sewing machine on a bad debt and made a space in the store where Mrs. Holland could sew while minding the store if no customers were about. She often used feed sack material to make their clothes, and many, many quilts to keep the family warm. Ruby remembers her grandmother Susie Pyatt living with the family, cooking and helping with the household duties. One of these quilts made by Ruby's mother and grandmother was used for the pattern for the quilt block design called "Scrap Quilt."

The entire family worked in the store. Ruby remembers when her grandmother came to live with the Holland family; she brought with her a milk cow. Bantam chickens were raised in an enclosure underneath the feed store. The Holland children's college education was paid for with eggs, milk and butter money that Josie Holland and Susie Pyatt saved by placing it in a jar earmarked for that very

special purpose.

Ruby taught sixth grade in the Charlotte/Mecklenburg School System for 39 years. Harry served in the U.S. Army and was stationed in Korea for a period of time. He worked at Broyhill Furniture Company in the Rutherfordton and Marion plants for a total of 41 years. Upon reflection, Ruby says, "One of the things I am most grateful for is that I grew up in a family where we were taught to work, and if you needed something, you knew you had to work for it. If you didn't have the money for it, you didn't need it." This philosophy was taught in many homes and is reflected by the offspring of those families in McDowell County today as a result of those hard times.

Reid and Josie Holland were married for 65 years and both lived into their ninth decade. Everything was saved and used, with nothing being thrown away. The scraps Josie Holland saved from her dressmaking were used in her quilts. These particular scrap quilts were made using various scraps of fabric cut into wedges sewn together to form a hexagon, with a disk of red fabric appliquéd over the center points of the wedge. These quilts were made for warmth, but today are heirlooms to be treasured.

The Rural Heritage Quilt Trail is a part of the McDowell Quilt Trail and gives those that might have been considering hosting a block another avenue of obtaining a block if their building qualifies. This Rural Heritage Trail is funded by grant money coming from private and business contributions, raffle proceeds and other fundraising activities. The main goal of this trail is the preservation and promotion of the rural history of McDowell County by installing quilt blocks on barns and other farm-type buildings using the traditional quilt patterns used by quilters whose families farmed and lived off the land.

