

THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY QUILT GUILD

A HISTORY

The First Ten Years 1981-1991

by

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1995

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## CHAPTER I

### THE BEGINNING

As the result of the 1976 Bicentennial there was much interest in creating quilt guilds. People wanted to join together to learn and share quilting.

In the fall of 1981 a notice was put in the McAllen Monitor calling for a meeting of anyone interested in quilting to meet at the McAllen library. Ten people attended and agreed to have a second meeting. The next meeting was at the McAllen State Bank in October where a film was shown. A chairman, Fran Hansen, was chosen and the form of the group was outlined. By-laws and policy were written and officers were elected and committeemen appointed.

At first to accommodate those who worked and who didn't drive at night, the group met one month on Tuesday afternoon, next month Tuesday night and the third month on Saturday afternoon. The Valley Garden Center offered their meeting room, free of charge. Those who remember those days can still smell the fertilizer that was stored nearby. It was pretty strong but the price was right.

Later the Garden Center wanted to charge rent and impose some restrictions that couldn't be met. By March of 1985 accommodations were found at the McAllen State Bank's third floor cafeteria. Except for a few meetings in a church, the Guild stayed there until September 1988 when we had outgrown the room. In April 1986 the group voted to meet only on second Saturdays. Meetings were held during the winter of 1988/89 at Camelot Retirement Center who served lunch. Prior to this time members were brown baggers taking turns bringing desserts and preparing coffee.

Much time and effort were spent trying to locate other meeting places that would meet the group's needs. By December 1989, the Palmaire Motel in Weslaco was selected as the best choice with lunch and enough meeting space for the growing Guild.

In the first year a newsletter was started and a library established.

The first newsletter Vol. 1 no. 1 was printed in February 1982. It has been produced every two months since. In January 1984 a contest was held to name the newsletter and "Patches & Snatches" was chosen. With interchanges of newsletters with other guilds a network has been formed.

## CHAPTER II

### QUILT SHOWS

One of the first projects of the newly organized Rio Grande Valley Quilt Guild was a Quilt Show. The Guild was only 15 months old when the first Show was produced.

It was held in the First United Methodist Church in McAllen on Mar 13, 1983. The first show was for members' quilts only.

Subsequent shows have been open to whoever wished to display a quilt or quilts. There have always been approximately 100 full sized quilts and wall quilts and other quilted items have been added. We have always had a raffle quilt made by members.

The first year aprons with the logo were made by Gelane Mittlstaedt and Edna Baldwin for the "White Glove" ladies to wear.

In 1989 the first Challenge was issued. Blocks were to be made from an "ugly" fabric donated by Nancy Lenz. Marvel Rushton won the blocks in the drawing.

CHAIRMEN			
Mar 12,13	1983	1st Meth Church	Lorraine Barkley
Mar 9,10	1984	"	Nancy Lenz
Mar 8,9	1985	"	Cleeta Cox
Feb 21,22	1986	"	Cleeta Cox
Feb 21,22	1987	Holidome	Virginia Hartnell
Feb 20-21	1988	Royal Palms Design Center	Cheryl Olson
Feb 18,19	1989	McAllen Tourist Center	Hazel Glassel, Cheryl Olson
Feb 17,18	1990	"	Ruth Rose
Feb 16,17	1991	"	Ruth Rose

(All locations are in McAllen)

## CHAPTER III

### GUILD BANNER

The Banner was designed and constructed by Denise Sansing in December 1981. It is a picture of a woman cultivating her quilt garden with a large needle. The first newsletter has this design on the front. Inside the editor (Denise) calls her "Granny" and has a column "Dear Granny" and asks for answers to members' questions. This column does not appear again.

At the Christmas meeting at the Valley Garden Center, members signed the banner and the names were embroidered later.

Size: 38"x56"      Background: White muslin, letters in green  
Figure of woman in hat cultivating her quilt garden with a needle.

Names embroidered on banner.

Virginia Bazar  
Evelyn Gray  
Fran Hanson  
Virginia Hartnell  
Lorraine Barkey  
Denise Sansing  
Elsie Dorigo  
Debbie Daw  
Alice MacWhirter  
Pat Gaines  
Hannah Eddy  
Dee Revnik  
Dorothy Talbert  
Margaret Williamson  
Margaret Vaughan  
Gelane Mittelstaedt

Oralia Torres  
Joyce Rains  
Esther Willman  
Ann Hann  
Janet Hartnell  
Fran Veltman  
Alicia Gonzales  
Frances Gonzales  
Leone Pearce  
Joann Olgetree  
Trici Smethers  
Doris Young  
Clelia C. Rocha  
Erna Meyers  
Celia R. Arredondo

## CHAPTER IV

### LOGO

The logo is a grapefruit and orange and two green leaves with Rio Grande Valley Quilt Guild printed on the orange.

How was the Logo selected? A contest was held in the spring of 1982. Deadline was June. Winner was The Thicket Bee and Gelane Mittelstaedt. A membership pin of this logo was from then on available to each new member.

For the tenth anniversary a new pin was designed. It has an outline of Texas in blue and a Lone Star quilt with name and 10th Anniversary 1981\*1991. Everyone who paid their 1991 dues got one. A contest was held with the winner to receive a year's membership in Guild. The winning design was by Donna Randolph and Louise Scheisler.

## CHAPTER IV

### SESQUICENTENNIAL QUILT

1986 was the Sesquicentennial year for the state of Texas. Many activities were planned for the year. One of the Rio Grande Quilt Guild's projects was a quilt. The winter of 1984-85 was spent by many of the members making individual blocks of various Valley locations. These blocks surrounded a map of Texas made up of individual "county" blocks of different fabrics in various gradations of greens and browns to indicate the climate of the various parts of the state. Angie Stearns spearheaded making of the blocks, giving out pictures or ideas to be made into a block. The top was completed by the June meeting and was passed around to various people to be quilted. The quilt was entered in the Great Texas Quilt Roundup.

#### History and Symbols (from Angie Stearns)

Our quilt represents the history of the Rio Grande Valley of Texas. The center map is a portrait of the 254 counties individually appliqued in topographic colors. The counties of the Rio Grande Valley are outline embroidered in gold.

Each of the twenty blocks around the map of Texas represent various aspects of the history of Texas. Techniques used in the six inch center blocks are applique, embroidery, reverse applique, shadow trapunto, pieced, and painted. The six inch blocks are the center of log cabin blocks which form Texas T's around the quilt. The following is a list of each block starting in the upper left hand corner continuing around clockwise.

1. Rio Grande Valley Quilt Guild Logo shows the orange and grapefruit grown in the valley. (Margaret Valverde)

2. Texas Wildlife represents the various wildlife prevalent in the Rio Grande Valley. (Eileen Hamilton)

3. LaLomita Mission meaning "little hill" was established around 1865 near Mission, Texas. (Janet Hartnell)

4. Mariachis represent the distinct flavor of a rich musical heritage of the Valley. The influence of Mexican music and festivities is an integral part of the performing arts. (Angie Stearns)

5. Port Isabel Lighthouse was completed in 1846 and continued its services until 1905. It is located in Port Isabel. (Cleeta Cox)

6. Six Flags Over Texas represents the flags flown over our state. (Angie Stearns)

7. Pan American University is located in Edinburg. (Joanne Ogletree)

8. La Posada Hotel established in 1918 as the Casa de Palmas Hotel for the broomcorn buyers. After a fire it was rebuilt and renamed La Posada Hotel. (Margaret Shewbert)

9. Confederate Airforce has its headquarters in Harlingen. (Nancy Lenz)
10. Mockingbird and Bluebonnet state bird and flower. (Virginia Hartnell and Viola Keck)
11. Valley Sunset depicting the palm trees and vegetation of the Rio Grande Valley. (Cheryl Olson)
12. Shrimp Boats. Shrimp industry is very popular in Brownsville. (Margaret Williamson)
13. Marine Military Academy located in Harlingen. (Angie Stearns)
14. Texas Ranger Badge is a miniature replica of the Texas Ranger Block. (Angie Stearns)
15. Shary Memorial a tribute built in memory of John Shary known as the Valley's "Father of Citrus" (Stella Krafka)
16. Texas Sesquicentennial Logo (Mary Louise Shelby)
17. Gladys Porter Zoo located in Brownsville. (Viola Keck)
18. South Padre Island the Gulf Coast Vacation Wonderland provides surf, spectacular sunrises, fishing at the jetties and swimming. (Hazel Glassel)
19. Los Ebanos Ferry this hand-pulled ferry is located between Los Ebanos, Texas and Diaz Ordaz, Mexico (Virginia Bazar)
20. Santa Ana Wildlife Refuge Colorful Green Jays and Chachalacas inhabit Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge near Alamo. (Viola Keck)

Workers:

- Art Designs: Margaret Williamson, Denise Sansing, Angie Stearns
- Blocks: Margaret Shewbert, Mary Loise Shelby, Marge Steward, Eileen Hamilton, Angie Stearns, Janet Hartnell, Cleeta Cox, Joanne Ogletree, Viola Keck, Virginia Hartnell, Cheryl Olsen, Margaret Williamson, Stella Krafka, Hazel Glassel, Virginia Bazar.
- Color Coordination of Texas Map: Fran Hansen.
- Appliqued Texas Map: Mary Ascheman, Celia Arrendondo, Marvel Rushton, Martha Waldez, Maurine Corbridge, Jan Williams, Margaret Valverde, Angie Stearns, Nancy Lenz.
- Pieced Blocks: Merle and Ben Bland.
- Quilting Designs: Nancy Lenz
- Basting Quilt: Elizabeth Smith, Hazel Glassel, Dee Revnik, Nancy Lenz, Joanne Ogletree.
- Quilters: Fran Hansen, Stella Krafka, Nancy Lenz, Angie Stearns, Virginia Bazar, Ruth Melton, Elizabeth Smith, Eileen Hamilton, Merle Bland, Donna Randolph.
- Binding: Merle Bland



## CHAPTER VI

### QUILT SEARCH

You have all heard of Quilt Searches. Nearly every state has or is having statewide Quilt Days to find and record their quilt history.

In 1981, Kentucky held the first statewide quilt search. Meetings were held all over the state to document quilts. Their experiences provided the format for later state quilt projects. The result of these searches was published in a book. (Kentucky Quilts 1800-1900) A traveling exhibit of these quilts came to the McAllen Memorial Museum in 1984 and Rio Grande Valley Quilt Guild members served as white glove ladies during the show.

As one of the state's projects during Texas' sesquicentennial, Quilt Searches were held throughout the state and in McAllen on Saturday, January 12, 1985. Our Guild members took information and measured quilts which were photographed and evaluated by Karey Bresenhan and Nancy Puentes. This was one of the worst days of the year with a cold north wind and rain. But over 80 people came. One of the winners was our own Jean Fox who exhibited her Great Grandmother's quilt dated 1854. Over 3500 quilts were documented state wide. 50 of those were chosen to be in an exhibit (including Jean's) which was hung in the state capitol building in April of 1986.

A book was published illustrated with photographs of these quilts. Three Valley quilts are in this book. Besides Jean's there are those of Pam Moore of McAllen, and Sue Kriedler of McAllen.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE QUILTERS

In 1977, Patricia Cooper and Norma Buford wrote a book "The Quilters, Women and Domestic Art". It is a collection of stories of West Texas and New Mexico women who tell of their experiences as quilters. This book was made into a musical which played off Broadway and throughout the country. The Pan American Theater produced the play in 1987. Several pioneer women tell and sing of their experiences and illustrate them with a quilt block such as The Dugout, Log Cabin, Rail Fence, Baby Blocks, Schoolhouse, etc. The Rio Grande Valley Quilt Guild made the blocks for this production and for the finale when a big quilt is unfurled on the back of the stage which includes the blocks used in the drama. There were 16 24" individual blocks with sashing surrounding a Lone Star that was 72 inches. The total size was approximately 10 ft by 10 ft. All of those who participated in the quilt were honored guests at the opening. This play was given all over the country by other groups with the help of Guild-made quilts. At the Houston Quilt Show the following year several of the quilts including the one from the Rio Grande Valley Quilt Guild hung from the ceiling of the exhibit hall. The quilt and blocks were given to the Pan American Drama Department.

Blocks-	Rocky Road	Dugout
	Baby Blocks	Shadow Block
	Rebel Patch	Windmill
	Robbing Peter to Pay Paul	Schoolhouse
	Four Doves	Double Wedding Ring
	Secret Drawer	Log Cabin
	Country Crossroads	Crosses and Losses
	Tree of Life	Butterfly

## CHAPTER VIII

### WORKSHOPS

Workshops have always been an important part of the Quilt Guild, giving the members the opportunity to meet and learn from teachers from around the country.

The first workshop was held in February of 1982. It was Texas Quilting Designs by Beverly Orbelo and was held at the Sheraton Fairway Resort.

Subsequent workshops were on Hawaiian, Seminole, Log Cabin and Amish quilting.

Following is a list of those held the first ten years:

Feb. 1982	Texas Quilting Designs	Beverly Orbelo
Feb. 1983	Hawaiian Quilting	Ethel Howey
	Stenciling	Mary Grunbaum
Jan. 1984	Seminole Patchwork	Nancy Moore
	Strip Piecing	Pat Dial
Nov. 1984	Log Cabin	Flavin Glover
Mar. 1986	Texas Independence Star	Jackie Reis
	1987 Amish Quilts	Catherine Anthony
	1988 Applique	Anita Murphy
	1989 Expressive Triangles	Kathryn McCready
	1990 Demystifying the Mola	Lori Weidlich
Jan. 1991	Crazy Quilting	Judy Montano

## CHAPTER IX

### COMMUNITY SERVICE

Community service has always played an important part in the Guild. The members have helped other organizations put on quilt shows, taken part in community activities, demonstrated and displayed in schools, museums and libraries.

The members provided docents for the Kentucky Quilt Show in the McAllen museum, manned booths at the Springfest in McAllen and RioFest in Harlingen, sponsored the Quilters play and displayed at the Harlingen Cultural Center. The first patchwork bears to be given to hospitals and emergency services were made in 1986. In 1983, the group took part in the Christmas Tree Forest sponsored by the Junior Service League at the McAllen Museum and won fourth place of \$50. In 1989 their entry won first place and \$125.

They have sponsored TV programs on quilting and helped with group quilts. Now they are making ABC quilts and are giving scholarships to students who going into sewing related careers.

CHAPTER X  
RAFFLE QUILTS

The first raffle quilt (called donation quilt before the state legalized gambling) was ready for the first Quilt Show in the spring of 1983. Various members made the blocks. There have been 13 raffle quilts counting the one for 1995.

1983	American Ambassador
1984	Pella Tulip
1985	Thicket Rose Quilt
1986	The Yellow Rose of Texas
1987	Divine Lady of the Lake
1988	Esperanza Star
1989	Blue Feathered Star
1990	Floral Applique
1991	Log Cabin Sampler
1992	Irish Chain
1993	Flower Applique
1994	Lone Star
1995	Celtic

## CHAPTER XI

### CONCLUSION

In the 10th year there was a celebration. All members who paid their dues in 1991 had an anniversary pin to add to their collection of pins. There was a party honoring charter members and past presidents. There was a cake and a remembrance of times past.

## CHARTER MEMBERS

Celia Arrondondo  
Lorraine Barkey  
Virginia Bazar  
Mary Davidson  
Debbie Daw  
Elsie Dorigo  
Hannah Eddy  
Pat Gaines  
Evelyn Gray  
Alicia Gonzalez  
Berta Gonzalez  
Francis Gonzalez  
Ann Hann  
Fran Hansen  
Janet Hartnell  
Virginia Hartnell  
Vivian Johnson  
Alice McWhirter

Gina Meyers  
Gelane Mittelstaedt  
Joann Ogletree  
Leona Pearce  
Marianne Powell  
Joyce A. Rains  
Dee Revnik  
Clelia Roche  
Denise Sansing  
Trici Smethers  
Dorothy Talbert  
Oralia Torrez  
Margaret Vaughan  
Frances Veltman  
Becky Williams  
Margaret Williamson  
Esther Willman  
Doris Young

## PAST PRESIDENTS

Fran Hansen.....	Oct.	1981-Oct.	1983
Joann Ogletree.....	Nov.	1983-Oct.	1984
Hazel Glassel.....	Nov.	1984-Oct.	1985
Jean Fox.....	Nov.	1985-Oct.	1987
Virginia Hartnell.....	Nov.	1987-Oct.	1989
Marge Steward.....	Nov.	1989-Oct.	1991
Stella Krafka.....	Nov.	1991-Oct.	1992
Betty Beutell.....	Nov.	1992-Oct.	1994