



June 5, 2007
Denton Hill

*'The Peoples' Quilt'
(Of the People, by the People, for the People of Wawayanda)*

April 2005, Lottie Dombroski and I went to an art show at Orange County Community College. There being held, was an exhibit of quilts depicting Towns in Orange County. Unfortunately, our town, Wawayanda, was not represented. After discussing this fact with Lottie, I went back, as a member, to Wawayanda's newly formed Recreation Committee and explained that a town quilt was needed and would be a good community relations project.

February 2006, Shirley Flynn, Ruth Telgheder, Karen Volpicella, Mary Ellen Calta and I met at Shirley's home. We formed the Wawayanda Quilting Committee and devised a plan, Ruth and Shirley would be Co-Chairs of the committee. Karen's role would be the artist/designer and I would act as the liaison between the committee, town hall, and the community. Mary Ellen offered her expertise as an outside advisor because she had just finished helping with the Minisink Town Quilt. We decided, early on, that only Wawayanda residents would work on the quilt.

We then turned to the Wawayanda history book, 'Our Town' which had been written during the Town's Sesquicentennial for ideas. We also met with the Town's Historian, Betty Kirby, her husband Charles, and Historian, Gladys Hall, for additional ideas and suggestions.

The quilt started taking form. There would be 21 blocks representing the Town's eight hamlets placed around a center section portraying 19th Century Wawayanda.

About six weeks later we met again at Shirley's after Karen had completed the illustrations.

All of us reached out to friends and neighbors about the quilt. Through the Town's website, television and flyers, news of the quilt filtered out into the community. We met at the Town's Senior Center several times and the 21 blocks were chosen. Shirley, as a long time quilter, agreed to tackle the center section. We met at various individual's homes where corrections and additions were made. Seventeen Wawayandan ladies worked on the quilt and with patience and guidance, Shirley helped us all. Ruth also, a long time quilter, in turn, was Shirley's back up and support. It had been her suggestion to have Karen Volpicella help.

(Please Turn Over)

Time marches on.

Fast forward to January 2007. A call was made to everyone, explaining that their block was to be completed by January 20th. Sure enough, everyone met at the Senior Center that Saturday afternoon, with their finished block(s). Our efforts had paid off. The quilt was truly going to be beautiful. Karen suggested color choices for the lattice and binding. Together we chose that which we thought would be appropriate.

The quilt was assembled in April of 2007, two years after it's initial conception. It was then delivered to a Professional Quilter, Cheryl Simonis, to be machined stitched. Operating this stitching machinery takes a tremendous amount of talent and patience. Shirley, Ruth, Karen, and I were invited to view the operation of Cheryl's equipment.

Late May 2007, we received the nearly finished product, with only a few finishing touches left to be done by Shirley.

Scheduled for June 14, 2007, a pre-viewing of the completed quilt is planned for the entire quilting committee. At which time, we will discuss the plans and preparations for a public unveiling and dedication party to be held July 15, 2007, at Wawayanda Town Hall.

It is my hope, that the creation of this quilt has resurrected an old fashioned sense of community for our town. In addition, it is my desire that the quilt be an inspiration for all Wawayanda residents, present, future and for anyone else who may see it displayed outside our town. It is truly a symbol of art, dedication and love.

With God's Love

M.R. Lowry
ks/MRL