

shows how the development of the being expanded. Forty-eight valescent hospital, valued at between \$100 and \$200,000, being horizontally at the bottom right corner. gas tax apportionment, they said.

Quilt-Maker Still Practices Fine Art After 70 Years

By Margaret Koch

"Some women quilt all their lives but you can still catch your toenails in their stitches."

Mrs. Mary Hudson of Porter Gulch road set her quilting standards nearly 70 years ago back in Iowa. Today, at the age of 82, her work is just as fine. That word "fine" may be taken literally; a row of her tiny hand stitches looks like fine beading.

Mrs. Hudson for a number of years made her living by hand stitching quilts brought to her by other people. She still loves to quilt but today most of her work goes as heirloom gifts to her family. And there will be no toenails caught in any of it, although she must now wear glasses when she sews.

Each delicate stitch is nearly

as invisible as back in her girlhood days when her mother taught her the two main ingredients of good hand quilting—patience and perfection.

"She would not let me learn to sew on a sewing machine until I had mastered fine hand sewing first," Mary Hudson recalled.

She estimates that one large-size quilt in a fairly simple pattern takes about five weeks of 8-hour-per-day work.

For this she used to get paid \$1 for each spool of quilting thread used. It takes anywhere from 8 to 10 or 12 spools per quilt, according to the pattern).

Back in 1919 when "Porter Gulch road was a cow path" and she and her husband moved there onto the farm, this was considered pretty good quilting pay. Of recent years the charge has gone up to \$5 or more per spool used.

Patterns range from fairly simple block and diamond designs to the more intricate Sunburst, Friendship, Rising Sun and Wedding Ring. Most popular with Santa Cruzans over the years, she says, have been the Sunburst and Wedding Ring.

Generally the design has been sewed together (by machine) before she receives it for quilting. The owner brings it, and also furnishes the filling and plain backing material for the quilt as well as the thread.

Mrs. Hudson mounts all three layers of material on her quilting frame which she made for herself, by the way, then starts sewing through the three thicknesses with her tiny, perfect hand stitches. She sometimes goes around, sometimes through and

There will be no toenails caught in her quilting stitches! Mrs. Mary Hudson of Porter

into the colored blocks to form a raised design. Instead of a thimble she wears a little leather finger protector which she calls a "finger stall."

Mrs. Hudson has actually made whole quilts by hand, even sewing the colored blocks together that way to form the original design.

"But it's too much work and takes too long," she said.

Quilting, as one of the embroidery arts, has been known for thousands of years in Europe, Northern Africa and Asia. Early Colonial women of America made bed quilts at parties that were known as "quilting bees." Quilt-

Gulch road is 82 years old and now must wear glasses when she sews. But the tiny stitches

ing was used for warm winter clothing, chair backs and many other purposes. Otherwise useless scraps of materials were made into beautiful and useful articles.

Mary Hudson has had a bookful of interesting experiences during her quilting career.

Once during depression days when money and work were scarce, a woman brought a quilt to be worked. It was a pattern of white clusters of grapes and green leaves on a pale blue background.

"Most beautiful thing I ever saw," commented Mrs. Hudson.

But it turned out to be the worst job she ever tackled.

"I had to quilt around every single little grape—there were hundreds—and I was getting just \$35 for the whole job," she recalled.

It was a back-breaking bit of work. Shortly afterward she raised her price-per-spool.

Today she lives alone in a little "cabin" built for her by friends and neighbors of Soquel and Aptos 23 years ago after the Hudsons' home burned to the ground. Her husband died as a result of the fire.

"They came and worked on



are as perfect as they were more than 70 years ago when she learned the art of quilting.

the cabin on Sundays—I tell you I have the finest neighbors a person could have," she declared.

There's even a "quilt story" connected with that tragic fire of so many years ago.

"I was working on one for my sister at the time. I grabbed it, rolled it up tight—and threw it clear of the house. Saved it, too," she added with satisfaction.