



RUBY WARD-CUNNEEN

Ruby Ward-Cunneen was born Ruby Harris, the third born of eleven children. She grew up on a farm in Mississippi. She learned to sew and quilt as a youngster from her mother, a very talented person, who could cut a pattern from a picture. Ruby machine-appliqued a quilt top called "May Basket", with embroidery around the flowers and leaves, at age 15-16. After her marriage to Lacy Ward, she hand-carded the cotton she picked from the field to "fill" her May Basket, and quilted the entire quilt alone. (This quilt was shown at our SFQG 1998 quilt show.)

Then came a family of four children. She made many quilts for warmth and cover, cutting her patterns from pictures as her mother did. At age 34, Ruby was widowed and had to assume work outside the home to provide for her family. She has done much needlework, such as embroidery, cross-stitch, count-cross-stitch and also dressmaking for the public. There was a span of about 40 years that no quilting was done.

In 1964, Ruby moved with her youngest son to California, to the Los Angeles area. She got a job in a hospital office, went to college, and got a degree in Medical Records. She passed (with honors) the National examination and became registered as an Accredited Record Technician.

In 1978, she moved to San Francisco and started work at Kaiser Permanente. In 1980, she bought several quilt kits from a store going out of business. By 1981, she had appliqued the "Tree of Life" and finished the quilting. Of the kits, she embroidered three and appliqued two. By this time, she was "hooked" on quilt making and started making patchwork quilts.

In 1984 she became unable to see to do her work at the hospital and retired with a diagnosis of Degenerated Macula of the eyes. That same year, she married Frank Cunneen. Even though she is barely able to read and can do very little other needlework, Ruby is thankful that God has given her the ability to see enough to make a large number of quilts.

She is thankful also for the talent to be constructive and at peace in making her quilts. She loves doing this so much that she quilts all the time sometimes even when she travels. That is when she is not busy keeping the house, tending-to and seeing after her 90 year old husband, and working in her large vegetable and flower garden. She has made 200 quilts and given away many quilts to relative and dear friends. Her family has now grown from four children to eight grandchildren and eleven greatgrand children.

[Information from an interview, 1998. SFQG "With Love and Friendship" November 14-15, 1998 Quilt Show Program. Featured Quilter]