

Quilt: #170 Courthouse Steps

Quilter: unknown

Sponsor: Historic Old Pickens Foundation

Sponsored by The Historic Old Pickens Foundation, the quilt block is called *Courthouse Steps* and is done using the log cabin quilt design. The painted panel was mounted on the informational kiosk close to the church. The church is located on the site of the town of Pickens Courthouse and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This old church no longer serves a congregation, but the church and surrounding cemeteries are preserved and maintained by the board of directors of the Foundation. It is constructed of soft handmade brick formed on the banks of the Keowee River and then hauled up by wagons to construct the church.

The name of the original quilter is unknown. However, the design of the quilt represents the history of the town which was established in 1828. It seems to mirror the wildflowers, blue sky, lakes, rivers and streams of the Upstate. There is even a suggestion of a cross, recalling the Christian heritage of the Old Pickens Presbyterian Church.

After the Civil War, Pickens District was split into two counties. Pickens County and Oconee County became the new counties and the new county seats were in Walhalla and New Pickens. Homes and other buildings were moved by wagon and then re-built in the new towns. The Historic Old Pickens Foundation welcomes visitors on Sunday afternoons during the summer, tour groups by arrangement and also presents events several times each year in the ongoing effort to promote the history of the old town and maintain both the church and surrounding cemeteries.

The town of Pickens Courthouse is no more - it was disbursed. The location of Historic Old Pickens is in Oconee County and is near the employee entrance to Duke Energy on the same side of SC highway 183 going toward Pickens.

History of Log Cabin quilt pattern by **Karen Griska from *Log Cabin Library Block***.

"The Log Cabin quilt pattern is one of the most beloved and recognized of quilt designs. However, it may be both older and newer than you might think. While it's natural to assume that this traditional block originated in the United States during the pioneer days, the origins of the block seem to go back much further in time and location. Similar designs have been found on ancient Egyptian mummies and in an English quilt predating 1830.

Log Cabin quilts first made a wide-spread appearance in the United States in the 1860s during the time of the Civil War. The block name may very well have had a connection to the presidency of Abraham Lincoln. The Log Cabin quilt became wildly popular and was identified with the pioneer spirit and values of America.

Early Log Cabin blocks were hand-pieced using strips of fabrics around a central square. In traditional Log Cabin blocks, one half is made of dark fabrics and the other half light. A red center symbolized the hearth of home, and a yellow center represented a welcoming light in the window. Anecdotal evidence, based on oral folklore, suggests that during the Civil War, a Log Cabin quilt with a black center hanging on a clothesline was meant to signal a stop for the Underground Railroad.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century many Log Cabin quilts were made by the foundation method with a muslin base. Wools, velvets, satins, and other nontraditional fabrics were used. Log Cabins of this period often had strips that were folded and laid down, creating a three-dimensional effect. For this reason, many late-nineteenth-century Log Cabins do not have batting, but are backed and tied like Crazy Quilts.

Variations of settings appeared with names reflecting the themes of the times. The White House Steps, Court House Steps, eight-sided Pineapple, Barn Raising, and Sunshine and Shadows are just some of the hundreds of name and pattern variations.

As Victorian quilts of wool and silk fell out of style in the twentieth century, Log cabins were more often made of cotton prints and pieced with a running-stitch seam, either by hand or machine.

Today, Log Cabin quilts are natural candidates for strip-piecing and can be made in a fraction of the time it took our ancestors. Log Cabins are still a favorite choice for scrap quilts and there is even a resurgence of Crazy Quilts made using Log Cabin blocks.”