

#55 Happy Quilt

Quilter: Christine Christensen

Sponsor: Happy Berry Farm

The Happy Quilt was created by Christine Christensen of Seneca. It celebrates this popular pick-your-own fruit farm located on the eastern shore of Lake Keowee, off Gap Hill Road in Pickens County. This land has had a long and varied history. It began as part of an original 2600-acre land grant from the king of England. The driveway was part of the Keowee Trail used by the Cherokee to travel from Charleston to their eastern capital in Keowee Town. Arrowheads and old musket balls can be found among the berries. Later, the woods surrounding the farm became cotton fields in the late 1800's but were abandoned because of erosion and the boll weevil.

Ann and Walker Miller founded the fruit farm in 1979. They work out of the old tenant farmhouse dating back to the mid 1800's and survive today despite fires and time. The Happy Quilt hangs on the farmhouse where the Millers sell blueberries, blackberries, grapes, figs, peaches and other products seasonally. They also raise Moyer Reds, a friendly type of chicken who will beg for berries.

Christine Christensen grew up in Chicago and worked in graphic arts, advertising, and print media. She began quilting about 23 years ago after a visit to Great Expectations, a quilting store that sponsors the Houston Quilt Show in Texas. She's been hooked ever since. She found that quilting combines all the talents needed during her career – math, design, even a little engineering. Quilting allows her to think on both sides of the box – technical and creative. Her first quilt was a basket “without handles,” followed by other traditional patterns. Today, her style leans toward contemporary design and bright colors. She's engaged right now in making wall hangings. “You can use only so many bed quilts, and I really believe that my quilts should be used – on the bed or hanging on the wall- and that they should provide interest and beauty.