

Quilt: #247 Mariner's Compass

Quilter: Ellie Elzerman

Sponsor: Greater Pickens Chamber of Commerce

Ellie Elzerman, veteran quilter and Pickens County resident, lives in the rural Central area and has a long fiber arts history beginning with learning her sewing skills from her mother and aunt. Ellie has also been a weaver and spinner who experiments with natural dyes. As a teacher working with children she has shared her passion for fabric and design with her community.

The history of the Mariner's Compass pattern dates back to 1726, when it was adapted from the ancient compass rose that Portuguese sailors used to navigate the seas that dated back to the 13th century. The first use of the pattern in a quilt did not use the name "mariner's compass." A variety of other labels were used for many years: Chips and Whetstones, Explosion, Sunburst and Rising Sun, until the mid-twentieth century. This pattern refers to quilters' use of star designs that radiate from the center of a circle as opposed to star designs that grow from a square. It is one of the oldest named quilting designs in America.

When Kim Smagala, executive director, decided to add another quilt block to the Greater Pickens Chamber of Commerce site, the choice of pattern was an easy one. The Chamber building was being re-branded as the Pickens Visitors' Center and will celebrate a new partnership with the Lake Hartwell Regional Tourism group. Kim states, "We want to be a source of direction for visitors looking to explore the greater Pickens County area and all it has to offer. The Mariner's Compass symbolizes direction and clarity during a journey and it spoke to us. Our ultimate goal is to bring travelers and businesses together during their exploration in our area. We know that the placement of this block on the eave of our building will speak to the visitors passing by."

The building that houses the new Visitors' Center is located at 222 West Main Street in downtown Pickens, South Carolina and is owned by the City of Pickens. Prior to its current use, it functioned for a time as the local library. It was erected in 1975 on the home site, (1896-1957) of Lena Stewart Cox and her son, P. Vernon Cox, who was born at the home in 1908.

For additional information about the Greater Pickens Chamber of Commerce visit <https://www.pickenschamberofcommerce.com/> or call 864-878-3258.