

Preface

There were two main events that got me excited about unfinished vintage quilt tops and blocks. The first was a gift from Betty Phelps, an exceptional needlewoman and horticulturist who lives in Churchville, Maryland. I am one of the few quilters that Betty knows, so, when she was downsizing to a senior living residence, she gave me two boxes filled with “quilting stuff” belonging to her mother-in-law. Quilting stuff is a very loose term and by no means describes the wonderful treasures tucked away in the boxes. Betty’s mother-in-law was Eva Mae Paugh who lived in Palmyra, Missouri. Based on her boxed legacy, she was a talented and accomplished quiltmaker. Unpacking, I discovered 100 plus quilt block clippings from the Kansas City Star starting in 1931, 200 pieces of original 1930s’ fabric, a wool crazy quilt in progress, 40 plus Spider Hexagon blocks, and a partially assembled Double Irish Chain, all with handmade templates and notes. In addition, there was a stack of letters to her daughter from Eva Mae’s mother who lived in Kansas City, Missouri.

The second event occurred when my dear friend and personal antique shopper, Barbara Herron, located 30 Feathered Star blocks in the back of an antique shop near Salem, West Virginia. I can still remember her whispering to me on the cell phone as we negotiated a reasonable price for the collection. By the time Barbara made her second visit to West Virginia, she was personal friends with the shop owner and had obtained 15 sets of blocks, four quilts, and three tops. The funniest part was when she called to inform me of my expenditure! And that “we” needed to return to the shop as if Salem, West Virginia was not eight hours from my house. I couldn’t resist Barbara’s enthusiasm over the newest acquisitions and we spent the long car ride home conceiving this book.

While all of this seems like destiny, I still needed help to get the quilts finished and set out to locate Beth Hanlon-Ridder whose machine quilting I had admired for years. Beth, with wit and creativity, provided advice as the tops were being transformed into quilts, especially about how they should be machine quilted. She pondered thread type and color and quilt density. Beth clearly had no angst when it came to machine quilting vintage textiles and shared my vision that these unfinished tops and blocks deserved to be finished. Our journey had commenced, and, finally we could see the ending.

Friends are the common thread throughout *Quilts* and there are dozens to thank. My life is interwoven with theirs and with the quiltmakers whose creativity inspired me to tell their stories.



Table of Contents

Introduction	10
Untold Stories	11
To Finish or Not to Finish	51
Journey to Finishing	55
Reflections	83
New Beginnings	89
Resources	123
Acknowledgements	125
About the Author	127