



What do "Leap Frog", "Wampus Block" and "One Dozen Napkins" have in common? They can all be found at the Crawfordsville, OR home of quilt pattern collector Wilma Smith.

Mrs Smith, a veteran of 24 years service at the Sweet Home Post Office, retired... in 1978. Like many, she found retirement a challenge. Instead of allowing stagnation to set in, she let her eight- year hobby of quilt pattern collecting take over. "It's one of those things I fell into," she says with a smile. "But it's kind of gotten out of bounds."...

Her hobby started out modestly enough in 1970, "not very long for a quilt (pattern) collector, really," she notes. But then (Leona Rhodes), a friend of California who had been a collector for decades loaned Mrs Smith her entire collection... (to copy) and her own collection "has grown by leaps and bounds since. It started out... a hobby, but now it's closer to a full time job."

Two rooms of her home are devoted to quilts and quilt patterns. Shelves stacked with copies of quilt patterns line one wall, and files of other patterns are stacked up to the window on another wall. Shelves overhead contain clippings of quilt patterns she has taken from (various sources), and a work area complete with adding machine and typewriter where she handles her growing correspondence finishes out the room...

Mrs Smith, a widow, professes to have no real idea of exactly how many quilt patterns she has on hand. "I stopped counting at 7,000 but I figure I have somewhere

between 20,000 and 30,000 now. Lots of times I get up at four in the morning and work... here to about 8:30 when I start working on my brother's breakfast. Then I work some more in the afternoon and in the evenings as well. "In fact" she confides, "it's a full time job seven days a week sometimes."

Her pattern collecting has been hurt by format changes in American newspapers and magazines over the last few decades, she says. Her clippings of quilt patterns from those sources has been limited mainly to publications 50-60 years old and copies are becoming scarce. "Back in the 1920s and 1930s quilt patterns were a prominent feature in most papers," she says. That's when most of these I have collected... came from. People have been good enough to send me prints of newspaper clippings for copying, but they're hard to find now."

A few years ago she felt it would be possible to expand her number of contacts and friends in the quilt pattern world, and put together a booklet of patterns which she offered for sale in a magazine ad. "I felt it was a shame not to share all this material with other interested persons," she says. "So I decided to make up the booklets. I have tried to make them as inexpensive as I could..."

Now, she says, she corresponds regularly with several hundred quilt makers all over the country. Interestingly, she has found that those in the Pacific Northwest seem to be the least interested in quilt patterns, if her mail is any sort of judge. "Most of the people I hear from are in the Midwest, on the East Coast and in California."

She has been aided by a favorable review of one of her quilt pattern booklets in a handworkrelated magazine, although she says most of the people who contact her heard about her through word of mouth. "Quilting pattern collectors throughout the country have round-robins..."

Even so, she says, her cost to produce the booklets is so high that she doesn't make any profit from selling the patterns she collects. "That's not the main thing, anyway," she adds. "It gives me something I enjoy doing."

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Ed note: Mrs Smith extensive collection has been acquired by your editor. The only problem is where to put it.