

In Celebration of the Great Canadian

by Rosemary Rosier

In 2017, Canada is celebrating its 150th Anniversary of Confederation. In keeping with festive events across the country, the Oakville Quilters' Guild challenged its membership to design and stitch a red and white quilt for the occasion. The result is a wonderful, one-of-a-kind, Canadiana quilt, depicting the vast areas of the Canadian landscape through pictorial, appliquéd and pieced blocks.

The name came first, *The Great Canadian Red & White Quilt*, fabric and instructions came next; the creative ideas began to flow. Everyone was free to create their favourite block. Members were given some block size requirements and a very clear *No-No List*—no beaver, no moose, no raccoons, no skunks—you get the idea! We wanted a quilt that would represent Canada the country, not the wildlife.

Guild members submitted their blocks to the design team and those ladies went to work. They began to see a pattern emerging from the 94 blocks. Remember—blocks were a variety of sizes and putting them together was not an easy task! Guild members were forewarned, "Your block now belongs to the project, so be prepared to see it front, back, sliced or diced. We may need to enlarge or trim your block—all in our quest for an excellent design."

The assembly team took over from the design team. They were kept fortified with tea, coffee and banana bread as the team worked for several days putting the quilt together. After consulting with a couple of longarm quilters, a lovely all-over pattern called *Maple Syrup* was chosen. Nothing like a little sweetness to complete the meal!

The quilt perimeter consists of wonderful blocks of *Prairie Flowers*, *Rose of Sharon*, *Storm at Sea*, the Canadian poppy, *Feathered Star*, *Flying Geese*, *Hovering Hawks*, *Friendship Stars*, *Bear Paws* and *Crossed Canoes*. There is a *Log Cabin* block, *Court House Steps*, oak and maple leaves, silver birch, evergreens and much more.

The nine centre blocks of the quilt depict the areas of the Canadian landscape from West Coast to East Coast, from far North to the Great Lakes. The Fleur-de-lis represents our French history. The canoe, inukshuk and feather represent the Inuit and First Nations people, who inhabited the wilderness and travelled the rivers and lakes long before others were here. What a vast and beautiful land we all share. 🍁



ABOVE *The Great Canadian Red & White Quilt*; TOP Centre detail.