



12-15-1989

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Recommended Citation

North, Margie Snowden (1989) "Special Quilt - Special Quilter," *Westview*: Vol. 9: Iss. 2, Article 11.
Available at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/westview/vol9/iss2/11>

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ERICKS

SPECIAL QUILT — SPECIAL QUILTER

By Margie Snowden North

An artisan from Erick, hometown of Roger Miller, is working on a project that will make the singer-composer warm all over. The project has involved many hours of work, talent, and even a sense of humor.

Sue Forgay, who once lived across the alley from E.D. and Amelia Miller (Roger's uncle and aunt, both now deceased), was visiting in their home a few years back. They were discussing Roger in general and quilts in particular when it was suggested that Sue should make a quilt especially for Roger. That sounded like a project worth taking on to the Erick resident, whose crafting interests are many and varied.

"I looked in quilt books and drew off several patterns," Sue said. "Then I threw them all away. I kept drawing and asking Mrs. Miller for advice."

Mrs. Miller, who, along with her husband, reared Roger Miller after the death of his father, suggested four motifs depicting incidents in the singer's eventful life. These would be placed at each corner of a large square on which Miller's name was centralized.

Sue chose a musical staff with notes, the slogan "Erick, my hometown," and a fiddle. It seems Miller once played that instrument for Minnie Pearl. Mrs. Miller supplied the final suggestion: a horse.

"King of the Road" gets quilted.

When Sue questioned her about the significance, Mrs. Miller explained that when her nephew first began dating, he went on horseback for lack of more up-to-date transportation. She added, "But just between me and you, this horse could represent a mule. You know, he's always been as stubborn as one!"

The final product contained white square blocks embroidered with the name of some of the more popular of the eight hundred songs Miller has written, such as "King of the Road," "Dang Me," and "England Swings."

These are bordered with red and positioned around the larger central square. After the first quilt was finished, Sue, a longtime friend of the family, presented it to Miller. He promptly commissioned her to do eight more. But he, too, was curious about the horse. Sue answered his question innocently, "That was just a suggestion from Mrs. Miller."

Sue took a sample of the quilt with her on a recent trip to Nashville and approached several singers with it. Said Conway Twitty, "Design one for me!"

But she figures that the eight quilts for Miller will keep her busy, along with her other crafts and activities. She is presently dressing a complete wedding party of dolls and serves as ombudsman at the local nursing home.

"I guess one day I'll have to tell Roger what that horse really stands for," she laughed. If she does, let's hope he still has his famous sense of humor. ●

MARGIE SNOWDEN NORTH, who resides near Erick, has been writing for most of her life. Her free-lance work has been published by denominational houses and local journals, including several times in WESTVIEW. For about a year, she did a weekly column called "Something to Think About" for the OKLAHOMAN.

Photo courtesy of the author.

