

# The Ashtabula County Antique Engine Club, Inc.

The 175th anniversary celebration of the settling of Wayne Township held in 1978 brought together many exhibits reminiscent of the township's past history. Among them was a collection of old gasoline engines displayed by Don Dillon, Don Bryan, Ralph Littler and others. These engines not only recalled memories for the viewers, they spawned the idea for furthering interest in plans for an organization to collect and preserve power equipment of yesteryear.

In 1980, a historical meeting and fall farm tour stop at Don and Edythe Dillon's was an occasion for another antique engine exhibit. This time several interested engine enthusiasts from the south county area were invited to participate. Again the response was most encouraging.

On Saturday, July 25, 1981, Don Dillon and Don Bryan, with the help from an expanding group of exhibitors, staged an antique engine and equipment show at the Dillon Farm for public review. The response from participants and the public was most gratifying.

As a result of these experiences, a small group of dedicated individuals gathered on January 9, 1982 at the home of Don and Edythe Dillon, for the purpose of organizing an antique engine club. Don Dillon served as chairperson to organize the group consisting of: Joe Barrett, Don Bryan, Ralph Daniels, Francis Day, Dan Lazor, Ralph Littler, James Kaipainen, and George Nicholas.

It was agreed that the purpose of this club membership should be the collection, restoration, preservation, and exhibition of engines, machinery or equipment of historical interest and value. To focus the public interest and enable members to share their equipment and accomplishments, the club would hold an annual public show and invite exhibitors with like interests to join. An election of officers resulted in Don Dillon as president, Don Bryan as vice president and Francis Day as secretary-treasurer. A monthly meeting schedule and an annual show date, the first weekend of July, were established.

From its modest beginning when members gathered at member's homes, the Ashtabula County Antique Engine Club has grown to nearly four hundred members spread over 14 states. The monthly meetings have grown in attendance to about seventy people and are held in the Wayne Town Hall ten times a year. The rest of the meetings are held at the club grounds east of Route 193 on Route 322 by the railroad tracks. This land was purchased in 1988 after the show outgrew the Dillon Farm. The first show was held there in 1989. In 1990 the Don Dillon Memorial Pavilion was built by the members and dedicated July 7, 1990.

Present officers in 1991 are Francis Day, president; W. Windell Such, Sr., vice president; Dan Lazor, secretary and Wendy Riley, treasurer.

At the July 1990 Ashtabula County Antique Engine Club Show I decided to do a quilt show. The idea came about when my brother, Lewis J. Lipps, built a replica of our father's implement building where he operated a machinery business for 50 years. So in memory of our parents, Lenna and Lewis Lipps, I told my

sister, Shirley Siekkinen, I would display a quilt our parents had won in a raffle in 1950-51 here in Wayne. It was a signature quilt of just names and embroidery designs. I told her I wanted my squares to say more than a name. I wanted to know little things about the person - children, hobbies, etc. I then sold the squares at the show, telling people to write whatever they wanted to.

I have driven school bus for Pymatuning Valley Schools for 25 years. As I was driving one afternoon I hit a hole in the road and another idea bounced into my head - base the quilt on the club founders. As I have grown up in this town I knew all of the founders. Don Bryan was my brother-in-law, Don Dillon my landlord for a while, Joe Barrett my school bus mechanic for years. Dan Lazor & Francis Day were my bosses our school board. Ralph Littler and that nice smile he always had for everyone. Ralph Daniels and Arlene at one time lived on Depot St. in Williamsfield with all of their young family. George Nicholas who just amazes me how he can take a piece of metal and make a part for a tractor or an engine and it runs.

So from this came the idea to do the club grounds and the engines. Elaine Bryan, my sister-in-law, suggested Kitty Brauns to paint the pictures and the rest is history! Kitty kept telling me, "I can't do it". But she did it. Her fine detailing is something else. I kept her busy from February thru June 1991. Some of the scenes traveled to New Jersey, back home and then on to North Carolina - so we have a traveling quilt!! Kitty is one talented lady and I've had a great time working with her. She also took the pictures for me for our history on our founders, delivered them to the drug store and picked them up for me. She was a great help all the way around. Thanks, Kitty, without you I couldn't have done it.

Another girl, a fellow bus driver, is Diane Spellman, my quilter and seamstress. My sewing machine was giving me problems so Diane came to my rescue. Between bus runs I would go home with her, work until bus time then repeat it all again the next day, 7 days and 1 evening a week we worked. Thanks, Diane, you were great.

Diane's friend, Connie Taft French, saw the starting of the quilt and wanted to help quilt so we were joined by another great helper. Through Connie, we met Rita Lindo (a niece of Elaine Bryan) who did our calligraphy for the quilt. Thanks, Rita. Rita is also an artist and quilt designer. She has a lot of talent and 3 cute little boys I got to babysit one morning while mom was writing on the quilt for me.

So I really had a great group of girls to work with me on this project. Diane and Connie have worked together so much the last two months, they say they are a company called Di-Con Productions. So who knows, maybe my little dream did some good after all. We'll watch to see what becomes of them in the future. Good Luck.

Arden and I have 5 children and 10 grandchildren. I'm a fabric nut, love antiques, doll babies, children's toys and cooking and baking pies. Arden likes coffee shops and thinks I'm crazy most of the time with my ideas. (P.S. I think he's right most of the time.)

Martha Bryan