



Leona, Trisha, Rosalyn and Bonnie (from left) became good friends.

## The Stitch and Chatter Club

Quilt squares found at a yard sale in California come home to Iowa.

By **Trisha Faye**, Roanoke, Texas

**M**any American women quilted their way through life, especially following the Great Depression. The women and girls from Athelstan, Iowa, were no different. Quilts to stay warm. Quilts to bring beauty. Quilting as a community activity, joining the women together in a creative and useful way.

They formed the Stitch and Chatter Club and met regularly to quilt and socialize. At some point in 1934, they sat down to create blocks with Sunbonnet Sue and Overall Bill (or Sam). The blocks never made it into a quilt; member Nellie Morris collected them and passed them on to her daughter Doris. I doubt Nellie and the other women knew how important those blocks would become years later for me and the people of Athelstan.

That set of 30 blocks remained stacked together in a pile. Doris married Clarence Shackelford and they raised a family in Iowa. After retiring, they moved to the California desert, where Doris passed away in 2005.

One day in 2005, I stumbled upon the set nestled in among three quilt tops at a yard sale in Palm Springs, California. The muslin blocks were all embellished with calico pieces, and names were embroidered on 27 of the 30 blocks—many with the same surname.

Years later, transplanted to Texas, I spent hours searching the Internet before I made a connection between the names and the small town of Athelstan. Now unincorporated, the community straddles the Iowa/Missouri border. I found seven of the names listed



Trisha donated the squares below to a museum, where little Sabrina (left) holds a square sewn by her ancestor. Top: Quilts at the Farmer's Dotter retreat, where Trisha stayed.



**"I doubt they knew how important those blocks would become years later for me and the people of Athelstan."**

in a 1925 census of Athelstan. Once I had a location common to several names, more research yielded more links to different families from Athelstan.

Most of the 27 people represented on the squares were now deceased. My boys weren't interested in old relics from the past, especially from someone else's past. I feared that once I wasn't around anymore, the squares from so long ago would end up in another yard sale.

So I decided to return the quilt squares to the descendants of the women who sewed them. This city girl was about to make some new country friends. My story with this small farming community was just beginning.

I contacted the Taylor County Historical Museum. Housed in Bedford, it's about 20 miles from Athelstan. Helen Janson, the museum director at the time, was delighted with my treasure. She said that one of the women named on the squares, Evelyn Bownes (Sickels), had been a volunteer at the museum before her death. Evelyn's daughter Rosalyn was also a volunteer.

Rosalyn then led me to Leona Stephenson, who was 18-month-old Leona Mae Byrns when her mother stitched her quilt block in 1934.

Four years passed before I was able to deliver these precious squares to the museum, where everyone could treasure them. That's when I discovered what country hospitality is all about. For four days in the Hawkeye state, I was a welcomed guest wherever I went. Rosalyn, her cousin Bonnie Polston, Leona and I spent the day touring Bedford and Athelstan. Bonnie's mother, Maxine Bownes, stitched a square as a girl in 1934.

Seventy-two people attended the presentation of the squares to the museum. Many of them were descendants of the Stitch and Chatter Club members and had come from far away. A year later, Rosalyn reports that descendants still visit the squares. These muslin pieces from the past have patched together the community spirit, as people honor the stitches their mothers and grandmothers sewed so many years ago. 🌻

## Thanks to BetterWOMAN, I'm winning the battle for Bladder Control.



Frequent nighttime trips to the bathroom, embarrassing leaks and the inconvenience of constantly searching for rest rooms in public – for years, I struggled with bladder control problems. After trying expensive medications with horrible side effects, ineffective exercises and undignified pads and diapers, I was ready to resign myself to a life of bladder leaks, isolation and depression. But then I tried **BetterWOMAN**.

When I first saw the ad for BetterWOMAN, I was skeptical. So many products claim they can set you free from leaks, frequency and worry, only to deliver disappointment. When I finally tried BetterWOMAN, I found that it actually works! It changed my life. Even my friends have noticed that I'm a new person. And because it's all natural, I can enjoy the results without the worry of dangerous side effects. Thanks to BetterWOMAN, I finally fought bladder control problems and I won!



### ALL NATURAL

Clinically-Tested Herbal Supplement

- Reduces Bladder Leaks
- Reduces Urinary Frequency
- Safe and Effective – No Known Side Effects
- Costs Less than Traditional Bladder Control Options
- Sleep Better All Night
- **Live Free of Worry, Embarrassment, and Inconvenience**

You don't have to let bladder control problems control you. **Call now!**



Also Available: **BetterMAN**<sup>®</sup>  
The 3-in-1 Formula Every Man Needs –  
Better **BLADDER**, Better **PROSTATE**, and Better **STAMINA!**  
Order online at [www.BetterMANnow.com](http://www.BetterMANnow.com).



Call Now & Ask How To Get A **FREE BONUS BOTTLE**  
CALL TOLL-FREE **1-888-765-5584**  
or order online: [www.BetterWOMANnow.com](http://www.BetterWOMANnow.com)

These statements have not been evaluated by the FDA. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease. Use as directed. Individual results may vary.  
BetterMAN and BetterWOMAN are the trademarks of Interceuticals, Inc. ©2016 Interceuticals, Inc.