

She Brings a



—Journal-Bulletin Photo by LAWRENCE S. MILLARD

DISPLAYING the blue ribbon and the quilt for which she won it is Mrs. Rita Danese. It took 650 hours, 1,300 spools of thread and 51,292 squares to make.

IT TOOK 650 hours, 13,000 yards of thread, 1,300 spools (all saved) and 51,292 $\frac{3}{4}$ inch squares to make Rita Danese a world record holder, but she's not complaining. World records are hard to come by these days and Mrs. Danese is the architect and owner of the world's most "piece" quilt.

A year ago Mrs. John B. Danese was just a housewife doing another kind of piece work —on the night shift at a local factory. Then one night, she said, "I woke up. I looked around and thought, 'What am I doing here? Nothing.' So I got up and walked out." In the middle of the shift.

Not being the type of woman to remain idle, Mrs. Danese decided to embark on something constructive. In previous years she had done some quilting, but now she wanted to tackle it in earnest.

At the library Mrs. Danese took out as many books on the topic as she could find and began reading. It was the same procedure she followed when she took up gardening, knitting, rug braiding, crocheting and crewel.

"I got to learn in a lifetime everything there is to know," she admitted matter-of-factly. "Why not? It's free for the asking. Everything I know I learned myself, out of a book."

It was while reading a text on American quilts that Mrs. Danese discovered an obscure piece of information that sparked her imagination. "I always read the histories," explained. "It's no fun to keep working if you don't know the history of what you're doing. Anyway, I read that a lady in Mississippi made a quilt with 10,000 pieces and someone else with 22,000.

"Some way," she continued with severity. "I had to make a quilt with more pieces. And bring to Rhode Island that record."

But first Mrs. Danese had to be sure what the world's record was. A determined and resourceful woman, she wrote to the Bureau of Information in Washington, D.C. There is no definite record, they told her, of the greatest

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Record to R.I.

By ANNE YETTER

However, at the National Quilt Contest in 1930 at which practically every state was represented, the winning quilt numbered 28,152 pieces. Entitled "Old Maid's Dream," it was believed to be the world's most "piece" quilt.

Mrs. Danese's work was cut out for her. On Dec. 8, 1966, after spending two months and a box of crayons on her blueprints, she began her multi-colored "Mosaic."

At first Mrs. Danese, an industrious woman with enough energy for two people who speaks with animation in parentheses and run-on sentences, kept a log of the hours she worked. The project finally became too tedious, but she estimates 650 hours of labor over a six-month period. The other statistics she knows precisely —and by memory. Not only is Mosaic the most stitched, but probably the most statisticized quilt in history.

The finished product required 30 yards of material in 19 colors including three shades of pink and three of green. There are 8,000 squares in the border alone, and 25,804 pieces of white. In all there are 252 rows of squares forming a gigantic 'X' which crosses in the middle of the blanket.

The quilt measures 82 inches by 94 inches and if you add the strips of binding on the border and the outer edge there are 51,300 pieces, "on the dot." It took some doing, but because the quilt is believed to establish a world's record, Mrs. Danese had it insured for \$5,000.

At the Brockton Fair, held

recently in Massachusetts, Mosaic won a blue ribbon, but Mrs. Danese has even greater things in mind for her quilt. She hopes to enter it in the Rocky Hill Fair and, the real test, in the Eastern States Exhibition to be held next month. If Mosaic cops a blue ribbon in that competition, its dimensions will be officially submitted to the Washington Bureau of Information.

Quilting is not Mrs. Danese's only accomplishment, however. In the summer she braids rugs, in the fall she knits, in the winter crochets and makes at least two quilts, and raises flowers in the spring, prize winning posies of nearly 20 varieties. At the Brockton Fair Mrs. Danese's flowers and arrangements won six blue ribbons, five red and one white ribbon.

But of all her hobbies Mrs. Danese enjoys quilting the most. She gives her original creations as gifts and has one of her first, "Lone Star," in her bedroom. "Quilting is closest to my heart," she admitted, "because no one does it anymore."