

Quilting

A “Learn From Home” Activity

Quilting has been an important craft in the American home from the very beginning, and became especially popular during the mid-19th-century. Quilts not only provided a layer of warmth, but also represented hard work and a necessary skill set for young women. In a society where nothing went to waste, they also offered the opportunity to re-use scraps of extra material.

One of the earliest versions of a quilt, which was essentially layers of padding and fabric stitched together can be dated back to 3400 BCE. As time progressed, quilts became more intricate with dedicated patterns that were shared by different families and organizations. Some of these quilt patterns include the Log Cabin; Crazy Quilt; Nine Patch; Pinwheel; Eight Pointed Star; God's Eye; Sunbonnet Sue; Double Wedding Ring; Single, Double and Triple Irish Chain; Honeycomb, and Rose of Sharon.

Creating a quilt was a primary social activities in which women could participate. Often gathering for quilting bees, women would travel to the homes of friends, family and neighbors with their pieces of fabric to take part in a bee. Quilting bees are believed to have originated in the 19th century and continued to gain popularity over time, extending beyond the home to community groups including Ladies' Aid groups and Women's Institutes. Not only would this be a chance to develop their craft and learn new patterns and skills, it would allow for socialization, an opportunity to chat, exchange recipes and household tips while working on a collective project. For many young women, quilting was seen as a necessary skill for the next part of her life. Young women were expected to complete a collection of quilts by a marriageable age. The social element of a quilting bee would allow the chance for a group of women to assist with the completion of these important marriage quilts.

In addition to everyday use and commemorating a marriage, quilts were also created for centennial celebrations, war efforts and the donation of utilitarian quilts, especially during the Civil War, fashioned as family heirlooms using special pieces of fabric, and crafted by church groups,

institutes and more. Many of the quilts at The Dudley Farm Museum were created for everyday use and placed on the beds of family members. Quilts ranged in size from a lap or crib quilt to generously cover a full-sized bed.

Activity

To create a quilt, pieces of fabric would have to be perfectly cut and carefully hand sewn together. Without developing sewing skills, we've found a method to assemble a quilt of your own! Download the template, follow the instructions and add some color and designs to make it unique.

Supplies

Template - see below

Paper (additional sheet)

Scissors

Crayons/Pencil Crayons/Markers

Decorating Materials; ie. Stickers

Glue

Instructions

1. Make sure you have a copy of the attached template.
2. Before cutting out your pieces, color and decorate them.
3. Cutting as close to the black line as possible, cut out your pieces.
4. Using the example as a guide, arrange and glue your pieces onto another piece of paper to create your own quilt block. We recommend using cardstock or a thicker piece of paper, if you have it!
5. If you print more than one template, you will be able to create an even bigger quilt block. Continue the pattern or create more to make an interlocking quilt.

And there you have it!

(adapted from Sharon Temple National Historic Site and Museum, Ontario)

