



Quilting at Liberty Hall Museum

Quilting has been an important part of American life for over 200 years. Quilts are common household objects and are usually treasured family heirlooms. Throughout history, women have not always had the right or the ability to voice their opinions. Quilt-making was one way that women gave themselves a voice and a means of expressing themselves creatively. Quilts tell us a lot about the different time periods in which they were made. Explore below some of the quilts in Liberty Hall Museum's collection. Each quilt is different and reveals something unique about its maker's personality and about her place within her community and society.

Check out some of the quilts from our collection:

Quilting During Colonial Times:

Everyday life for a colonial woman was hard work. *What types of chores did colonial women have to do?*

They would have to cook, clean, take care of the children, make candles, and do the laundry. Women not only had to wash the clothes, but they would also have had to make clothes. Girls would start learning how to sew around the age of five or six. They would create samplers like this one in our collection. Children would use samplers to practice their stitching, and learn the alphabet and numbers.

Do you know how to sew? If so, when did you learn?

Sampler, circa 19th century



Quilting was an expensive and time consuming task. *Why was fabric so expensive during the colonial era?*

Most women had to make fabric themselves during the colonial era. Quilting was actually more common for wealthier women because they had money to buy fabric and the time to spend sewing it. Average colonial women used scraps of cloth from outgrown clothing or strips from damaged blankets to create new quilts. These quilts would often be quite simple without many decorations or colors and patterns.

Quilt, circa 19th century



Quilting During the 1800s:

During the 1800s, fabric became cheaper so women began to buy fabrics in different colors and patterns more regularly. *How do you think cheaper fabrics affected quilting?*

With cheap fabrics, women had more time to quilt and more time to be creative with patterns and colors. One common quilt pattern was the central medallion style. The central image was a star, and then carefully cut pieces of printed cloth would surround the star. People started giving these patterns names such as Jacob's Ladder or Flying Geese. Quilting became extremely popular, and in the early 1800s a young girl was expected to make 13 quilt tops before getting engaged to be married!

Central Medallion Style Quilt, circa 19th century



Quilting During the 1900s

During the early 1900s women worked to gain the right to vote. This was known as the suffrage movement. *What are some ways that women worked to gain the right to vote?*

Women used quilting to spread their message. One type of quilt that women made during this time is called a crazy quilt. Instead of geometric shapes arranged in a specific way, these quilts used all different kinds of fabrics cut into irregular shapes and sizes. Quilts that supported women's suffrage often used the colors of the movement, purple, white, and gold. *Which do you prefer, traditional geometric quilts or crazy quilts?*

Crazy Quilt, circa, 20th century



This year, 2020, we're celebrating the 100th anniversary of women's suffrage. Quilters all across America are participating in quilting challenges to create and exhibit quilts that represent women's rights and equality. Even today, people are designing new quilt patterns to a way to voice their opinion.

Are you ready to design your own quilt pattern?

What you will need:

- 1 piece of card stock, poster board or stiff paper (about 8"x8")
- Colored construction paper (several different colors make it more fun)
- Glue stick
- Scissors
- Pencil

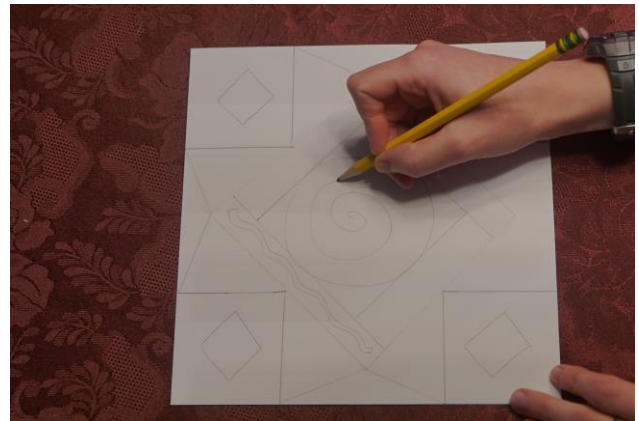


Steps:

1. Cut the colored construction paper into triangles and squares. Make the shapes different sizes. (Kids, have grown-ups help you with the scissors.)



2. Use the pencil to draw a pattern outline onto the piece of cardstock.



3. Attach the construction paper shapes to the cardstock with the glue stick.



4. Make sure to give your quilt pattern a title!



Want to do more?

- Do you have fabric markers at home? Use a piece of muslin or an old t-shirt and draw your quilt pattern on fabric.
- Write a letter to a family member or friend and tell them about your quilt pattern. What did you name your pattern? Why did you give it that name? Put the letter in the mail and send it!
- Read your favorite book about quilting! Some of our favorites include:
 - *The Keeping Quilt* by Patricia Polacco
 - Youtube Read Aloud: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MWR_ON8x1QM
 - *The Quilt Story* by Tony Johnston and Tomie dePaola
 - Youtube Read Aloud: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cDFYVPei0R0>
 - *The Patchwork Quilt* by Valerie Flourney, Pictures by Jerry Pinkney
 - Youtube Read Aloud: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JGMfSLEer3c>
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Tag us on Social Media!

If you had fun learning about quilts and creating your own quilt pattern, we'd love to hear about it! Please share your stories and pictures of your quilting adventures by emailing the museum or tagging us on our social media platforms!

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