

Co-Manager Training

January 2012

Quilt

The term “quilt” comes from the Latin word culcita, meaning a stuffed sack. The word has come to have two meanings. It is used as a noun, meaning a three-layer stitched bedcovering. It is also used as a verb, meaning the act of stitching through the three layers to hold them together.

A quilt is a cloth sandwich, which consists of a decorated top, a back, and a filter in the middle.

There are three different types of quilts:

Plain or whole cloth quilts

Appliqué quilts

Pieced or patchwork quilts

They were used for:

Warm covers over beds

Hangings over doors and windows that were not sealed

Early settlers could not afford to throw any materials or fabrics away. Out of necessity, they used everything. When blankets became worn, they patched them. It wasn't until years later that quilts became art pieces.

Over time, quilting became elaborate. Family histories can be traced through quilts. Quilts even give us a glimpse of America's history.

Patchwork Quilts

Though there are examples of elaborate patchwork quilts that took enormous amounts of time to make, pieced (patchwork) quilts were generally simple bedcovers. Since even small cloth remnants could be used in patchwork quilts, every scrap of fabric and usable portion of worn garments were saved and used.

With the invention of quilting and sewing machines in the 1900's, quilting began transforming from a necessary art into a creative one. When the United States entered World War I in 1917, quilt making became more important than ever. The U.S. government urged citizens to "Make Quilts—Save the Blankets for Our Boys over There." The government took all the wool produced for commercial use in 1918 and instituted "heatless Mondays." Following the war, interest in quilting as an art was renewed.

During the Great Depression, people simply did not have the money to buy blankets. So once again, women relied on their own skills and resources to keep their families warm.

During World War II, quilting was used to raise money to support the Red Cross. The "signature quilt" was especially popular. In a signature quilt, business people, store owners, and citizens of a community would pay a small fee to have their names embroidered on quilt blocks. The blocks were then sewn together and quilted, and the finished quilt was raffled off with all proceeds going to the Red Cross. These quilts now serve as fascinating community records.

Through the 1950's and 1960's, there was less general interest in quilting than at any other time in American history. The quilt had become associated with lean times and "making due". Quilt making was viewed as dated and old-fashioned. It was primarily older quilters—those who had always quilted—who kept the art of quilt making alive during this time.

Douglas Malloch reminisces with a hint of sadness about this trend in his short poem, "A Crazy Quilt" from The Romance of the Patchwork Quilt in America.

They do not make them any more,

For quilts are cheaper at the store

*Than woman's labor, though a wife
Men think the cheapest thing in life.
But now and then a quilt is spread
Upon a quaint old walnut bed,
A crazy quilt of those old days
That I am old enough to praise*

*Some women sewed these points and squared
Into a pattern like life's cares.
Here is a velvet that was strong,
The poplin that she wore so long,
A fragment from her daughter's dress,
Like her, a vanished loveliness;
Old patches of such things as these,
Old garments and old memories.*

*And what is life? A crazy quilt;
Sorrow and joy, and grace and guilt,
With here and there a square of blue
For some old happiness we knew;
And so the hand of time will take
The fragments of our lives and make,
Out of life's remnants, as they fall,
A thing of beauty, after all.*

You were hired as part of the patchwork quilt called Hobby Lobby. Look around. We are about as diverse in all areas as you can get.

Each of you has a story. Some may have told you that your story has ended...you have told yourself it's over. But while you were trying to figure out what to do next, where to go, where you'll fit in...people were praying.

God, this is your company. We need men and women who are honest and hard working; men and women of industry; men and women who can follow instructions and fill spot that needs to be filled; men and women who will help add to the quilt. Hobby Lobby already has a rich heritage through the Green family, but each of us as little pieces are helping take the legacy forward to the future.