

# Quilts



American Folkart

# Quilts: American Folk Art



- œ People in nearly every part of the world have used padded fabrics for clothes, bedding and even armor.
- œ When European settlers arrived in North America they brought their traditions of quilting with them.

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- ❧ Quilts were an essential supply for the pioneers' travels.
- ❧ Women made quilts for their daughters, sisters and friends before heading west. They were treasured items from people they may not see again for a long time.
- ❧ In addition to being used as blankets, they also provided padding on seats for the bumpy journey and protected the passengers in the wagon from dust.

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- ❧ Woolen blankets were scarce and expensive.
- ❧ Frontier women used fabric scraps from dressmaking, other sewing projects, old clothing, and even feed and flour sacks to create patchwork quilts.
- ❧ A popular style among frontier women was the “Medallion Quilt”.

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- ❧ Members of rural communities frequently joined together to help their neighbors with big projects, such as barn building or finishing quilts.
- ❧ The *quilting bee* was a social event that allowed the finishing of several quilts in a single day.
- ❧ Quilting bees were also social events for pioneer women.



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- ❧ In many communities it was a custom that a young girl make a collection of quilts as teenager to prepare for her future family.
- ❧ Another custom was for mothers to make several quilts for each of her children to have when they left home to start life as adults.

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- ❧ The handwork involved in quilting was often a form of relaxation for pioneer women, a relief from the physical labor of family life on the frontier.
- ❧ Finely made quilts were a source of pride and status.

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- ❧ Quilts continued to have a role in American culture beyond the pioneer times.
- ❧ When the United States entered World War 1 in 1917, the U.S. government urged citizens to “Make Quilts - Save the Blankets for our Boys over There.”

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- ❧ During World War 2, quilting was used to raise money to support the Red Cross.
- ❧ To create a “signature quilt”, businesses or individuals would pay a small fee to have their names embroidered on quilt blocks. The blocks were sewn together and quilted, and the finished quilt was raffled off with all proceeds going to the Red Cross.

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