

PRESERVATION SUGGESTIONS

Loving Care of Antique, Heirloom, Vintage and Well Loved Quilts

EXAMINATION

Carefully inspect your quilt noting stains, wear and age deterioration on the front, back and binding. If you discover any sign of pests (insects such as moths, silverfish, etc.) you may consider freezing fabric for six weeks in a plastic bag to kill infestation. Check frequently for condensation. Do not use mothballs; they are dangerous to humans and harmful when in contact with fabric.

REINFORCING

Reinforce worn or deteriorated areas with silk or crepe line. Cut reinforcement to the size of the worn area. Use cotton or silk thread, a fine needle and neat stitches to secure reinforced sections.

CLEANING

Do not try to remove stains and brown or age spots.

You can vacuum your quilt by using plastic mesh or screening. Place over sections of quilt and gently vacuum quilt with low suction vacuum. Carefully vacuum in small areas doing both front and back.

Air your quilt. If you wish to do it outdoors, choose a warm day and an area out of the sun. Lay your quilt flat on sheets or towels in a protected area (away from birds and insects). Indoors do the same way using fans to circulate the air.

Do not wash fragile or older quilts (you may end up with thread and loose batting). Wool or silk quilts should not be washed at home. Seek help from professional cleaners who specialize in antique quilts. Check with your local quilt shop or museum for recommendations.

If you decide washing is the way you wish to clean your quilt you should test for color fastness. Use a damp swab or cotton ball and dab the colored fabric pieces, then blot. If color comes off you probably should not attempt washing. Again, you may wish to seek out an expert's advice.

To hand wash your quilt, line a bathtub with large towels or a sheet. Fill tub with cold water and add Orvus or other cleaner. Soak your quilt. Do not agitate or scrub. Rinse repeatedly until the water is clear. Support quilt as you remove from the tub and roll in towels or sheets to remove excess water. Dry flat on layers of towels or a sheet. You can do this outdoors out of the sun or inside with fans. **NEVER HANG A WET QUILT.**

You may choose to machine wash a quilt of contemporary washable fabric, one of manageable size, and less than 50 years old. Use the delicate/gentle cycle, cold water and soap. Let soak. Use short cycle.

STORAGE

Store your cleaned or aired dry quilt with great care. Fold in thirds with acid free tissue in the folds and store in acid free boxes if possible. You may also wrap and layer your quilt in a cotton sheet and store in a cotton pillowcase. If your quilt is stored on shelves, make sure the shelves are painted with polyurethane, latex or acrylic, to protect the quilt from acids in wood. Make sure your storage area is dry and has an even temperature. Basements and hot attics are not good storage sites.

DISPLAY

You can display your quilt on a quilt rack, on the bed or on a shelf. To hang it on a wall, sew a cotton sleeve to the back of the quilt and insert a dowel or slat.

When choosing a display site consider light levels. Excessive light can cause damage, so do not consider an area where sun and strong light would be on the quilt. Protect your quilt from excessive temperatures and humidity. Do not keep your quilt near a heat source, air conditioner or humidifier. Never expose quilts to working fireplaces, wood stoves, smoking or cooking areas.

SHIPPING

If it is necessary to ship a quilt there are special considerations. Place your quilt in a cotton sheet, pillowcase or wrap in acid free tissue and then place in a plastic bag. PLEASE NOTE, THIS IS THE ONLY TIME YOU SHOULD EVER PLACE A QUILT IN A PLASTIC OR POLYETHYLENE BAG. This should protect the quilt if it gets wet in shipping. Then box it with address and return address inside and outside the box. Insure it and let the recipient know it is on the way.

QUILT HISTORY

Make sure your precious quilt has a label if possible and keep its history with it. Gather as much information as possible about the quilter, where it was made, the circumstances and other owners. Your family will love you for it.

ODDS AND ENDS

When making a quilt consider adding washing instructions to your quilt label, the recipient will be grateful.

Most of all, enjoy!!!!

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