

Heirloom Sewing Class



What is Heirloom Sewing?

Heirloom sewing refers to various techniques that you can do on the sewing machine mimicking French hand sewing techniques. These techniques include embroidery, tucks, and lace insertion on fine fabrics. Looking at pictures of Edwardian era fashion, especially undergarments and children's clothing, you'll see where the inspiration for heirloom sewing comes from.

Heirloom sewing is also among the oldest sewing techniques being started in the 1800s. The French stitching was delicate and originally made for Royal families, and these garments and projects were preserved from generation to generation, hence the name "heirloom".

Heirloom sewing is characterized by fine, often sheer, usually white cotton or linen fabrics trimmed with an assortment of lace, insertions, tucks, narrow ribbon, and smocking, imitating such hand-work techniques as whitework embroidery, Broderie Anglaise, and hemstitching.

1980s Fashion Trends

Heirloom sewing regained popularity within the sewing community when fashion trends in the late 1970's and 1980s were inspired by the Victorian and Edwardian eras. (Google Gunne Sax dresses.)

Smocking was also a trend in the 70s and 80s; although, smocking wasn't especially popular in the Victorian/Edwardian era. Today, you'll often see heirloom sewing and smocking in the same sentence when describing classic sewing styles.

Fun fact: Examples of smocking can be found in garments over 200 years old. An October 1887 edition of Godey's Lady's Book says this about smocking:

Smocking is a very favorite needlework for the clever lady who can perform miracles of grace with thread and needle and stuff. It is too long to describe here, but you know it as the revived

Fabric for Heirloom Sewing

Fabrics preferred for heirloom sewing are plain weave, lightweight, natural fiber fabrics like Cotton Batiste, Voile and Linen. Preferred trims are Cotton Lace, and silk ribbon although crochet lace can also be used. Fabrics that gained popularity in the 1980s are still favorites to be used today like Imperial Batiste, and Imperial Broadcloth.

In this class you will learn:

- ✓ Lace Edging and Insertion
- ✓ Beading
- ✓ Fagoting
- ✓ Pintucks
- ✓ Hemstitching
- ✓ Pleats, gathers and ruffles
- ✓ Wing Needle, Twin Needle Techniques
- ✓ Lace Shaping and Ruffle Shaping
- ✓ Fabric Folding

We will be making a simple Heirloom Quilt in 12 to 14 weeks.

Class starts on Thursday October 5th 6 – 8pm.

This class is for adults only. Class is for beginners to experienced sewers.

You need to know how to sew.

Sign up at the Westernville Library. Call Mary Jo Miller on

No charge for the class but would appreciate a donation to the library.