



**Mrs. Norman Hess**

**Quilting Instructions, Encouragement From An Expert**

By Sally Bair  
Feature Writer

The old-fashioned art of quilting is rapidly becoming a very popular hobby.

It's time-consuming and requires patience, but the effort seems well worth it when the finished product is considered as a potential heirloom to be passed on from generation to generation.

Mrs. Norman L. Hess, who teaches a course in quilting at the Pennsylvania Farm Museum at Landis Valley, is very enthusiastic about quilting today because "you can take advantage of the miracle fabrics, and modern frames are more usable." She says "more leisure time" is the reason for the growing interest in quilting.

The only prerequisite for quilting, according to Mrs. Hess, is a "basic knowledge of sewing."

The first step in making your own quilt is to select a pattern. Patterns traditionally have been designed to tell a story, whether historical or biblical. Some popular local quilt patterns are the Log Cabin and Orange Peel, both of which are pieced quilts, the Rose of Sharon, the Double Wedding Ring and the Distelfink, which Mrs. Hess considers the "aristocrat of Lancaster County quilts."

But for an interesting change,

you could design your own pattern. For instance, a cherished quilt could be made by depicting events from your child's life.

Mrs. Hess says there are people who will trace traditional patterns on your fabric for you. She suggests that if you trace your own pattern, you should outline the pattern with a felt tip marker to make it show through the fabric. It can then be easily traced with pencil or tailor's chalk onto the fabric. Plain white paper or waxed paper can be used for the original pattern.

The pattern which Mrs. Hess selected to teach in her course is the "Lancaster County Rose." The original design was created by a Lancaster County woman and had been sold as the "Ohio Rose." Mrs. Hess said she felt the pattern should reflect the home of its designer, so with a few modifications, she is teaching it as the "Lancaster County Rose," and it has become very popular. This pattern is done in squares, so the students can make either individual squares to be used as pictures or pillows, or they can continue and make enough squares to do an entire quilt.

When selecting materials to be used in a quilt, select the solid color you want to use first, then choose prints to match. Mrs. Hess stresses that you can use



Mrs. Harry G. Brubaker (left) and Mrs. C. Edward Snavelly work at the quilting frame on a Lancaster County Rose pattern. Mrs. Snavelly is Mrs. Hess's sister-in-law and

learned to quilt at Mrs. Hess's class at Landis Valley. The frame belongs to Mrs. Hess.

quilts in rooms with wallpaper if you just take a little care in selecting harmonizing colors and small prints.

Traditionally, white or off-white is used for the backing, but any color is acceptable today. Mrs. Hess suggests using a dacron and cotton blend, broadcloth or soft muslin as the fabric. She adds that you should "tear everything" when preparing the fabric.

Most popular batting used today is a 100 percent dacron polyester fiberfill, which can be purchased. It is possible to use old sheets or blankets as batting for your quilt, but the desired puffiness will not be achieved, and the ease of care which the dacron fill provides will not be possible.

When binding your quilt, it is customary to use a bias strip. Mrs. Hess says that while this is preferable, a straight strip can be used with good results, and a great deal less material.

An important consideration, of course, in making your quilt is a frame. You can purchase a quilting frame from various stores in this county, from about \$20, or you can improvise one of your own. Your boards will need to correspond to the size of your quilt, and should be 2½ inches wide. The boards need to have a fold of denim or featherticking attached to them so that the bak-

ing can be fastened to hold the quilt in place while you're working on it. Saw horses could be used to hold the boards, but a quilting frame has height adjustment built in. There must also be a provision for rolling the quilt as you progress.

If you don't want to buy a frame, can't borrow one, or have limited space, a large hoop can be substituted. This makes the quilting process a little more difficult, but it serves the purpose of keeping the fabric stretched and is ideal if your work area is

small.

When applying your quilt to the frame, you pin the backing to the denim on the board, then add the fiber fill, then pin the top (the marked piece) to the backing. Now you can begin work.

The quilting itself is done with short even running stitches.

Mrs. Hess suggests that a good way to get started and to practice the necessary steps is to quilt around flowers on a sheet, and add a solid color sheet for the backing. Or, she says, you could

(Continued On Page 36)



Mrs. Hess poses with some of the many quilts in her collection.



Mrs. Hess examines a Lancaster County Rose quilt.