



# The Art Of Quilting

If you ask Ida Borntrager or her daughters about quilts, you will be absolutely delighted by the array of hand-quilted blankets the women have to display. Members of the Amos Borntrager family at Tripp, the women have created a wide range of eye-catching colors, patterns and sizes.

sold many of them.”

The women’s quilting tools are what you would find on most any quilter’s table. A well-worn rotary cutter, cutting mat and plastic template are all part of their tool box.

Treadle sewing machines are common in the Amish household because they don’t require electricity. Because they do so much sewing – quilts, potholders, wall hangings and all their clothing – the Borntragers maintain about seven sewing machines all the time.

“When one of us starts working on a quilt, we try to finish it,” Ida says. “We use the same sewing machine for the quilt because if you change machines there is a difference in the stitching.”

Hand quilting the elaborate patterns that make the quilts so sought after is done using a quilting frame.

“The hand stitching is what draws people to the Amish quilts,” Martha says. “People also seem to like the variety of colors found in Amish quilts.”

Materials for the quilts come from various places. On occasion, people bring material to the family. Other pieces are purchased at mill end factories and major fabric stores.

“We don’t use any special thread,” Ida says. “Thread colors are matched to the quilt. Before we begin the hand stitching, we use a pencil that’s similar to chalk to mark the hand stitching pattern.”

The art of quilting dates back to 1395. Historic records have long documented that Europe’s kings and members of royal families maintained quilts in their homes and received quilts as gifts.

*One big difference in their quilting work is the sewing machines. Because they don't have electricity, they use treadle sewing machines to create their quilts and all sewing projects.*

*To prepare quilts for the hand-sewn quilting patterns, the women use a chalk-like marker to outline hand-quilted patterns before they start sewing. The hand-quilting binds the quilt's batting and backing to the pieced top.*

“Quilting work is done in between other daily household chores,” Ida says. “We don’t just sit and work on a quilt until it’s done. But we quilt nearly every day of the week.”

Ida, who recently came from north-central Iowa when she married the widowed Amos, brought a green quilt with her that her family had sewn.

“All girls receive a quilt when they marry,” Ida says. “Amish girls are usually about 13 when they begin learning how to quilt.”

Martha Borntrager’s first quilting project was a full-sized Fiesta quilt pattern that consisted of dozens of two-inch pieces of cloth. She cut the cloth with a rotary cutter, then carefully stitched them together on one of the family’s treadle sewing machines.

“It seemed like a challenge,” Martha says now. “It was a quilt that someone had ordered. Mom helped me get the blocks together and I finished it.”

Patterns for the quilts come from a variety of sources, including books and magazines that feature both standard and unique quilting patterns.

“The Fiesta pattern seems to be a favorite,” Rachel says. “When we lived in Wisconsin we



## Better teen driving, bigger discounts.

**Rhonda L. Wesseln, Agent**  
 Corner of 9th & Jackson  
 1 Blk North of Yankton Medical Clinic - Yankton  
 Bus: 605-665-4411  
 www.rhondainsuresyou.com

### Check out our Steer Clear® Program.

When your teen gets ready to drive, we’re there. They learn safe driving and you get lower rates.

**Like a good neighbor, State Farm is there.®**

**GET TO A BETTER STATE™. CALL ME TODAY.**

