

## 1876 Walnut Hill Town

**General Store:** By the middle 1870s, railroads crossed Iowa bringing manufactured goods to small town stores. Threads, yarns, embroidery silks, buttons, and printed fabrics by the yard could be purchased from general mercantile stores all over Iowa.



**Millinery:** A milliner designs and constructs women's hats. The front showroom displays models of 1870s hat styles reproduced from descriptions and prints in period fashion magazines.



## Tangen House

This home represents a middle-class businessman. Each of the rooms was decorated to show the variety of floor, window, and wall treatments available to Iowans in 1876.

**The Parlor:** Brussels carpeting would be laid in strips and was meant to show off the family's wealth. Door curtains, called portieres, added texture and softness to the room. Lace curtains are pooled on the floor for texture and show.



**Sitting Room:** The sewing machine in the back corner marks this as a work room as well as a room for resting. Berlin work is stretched in the wooden frame in the sewing basket. This needlepoint technique was popular for chairs and stool coverings. Above the door, the perforated paper motto is typical of the late 1870s and early 1880s.



## Flynn Mansion

The Flynn Mansion is the original home of Martin and Ellen Flynn. Built in 1870, the house was a showpiece for entertaining as well as a functioning farm house for 10 children and over 600 acres of farm land. Textiles here had to impress guests in the public rooms and be child friendly in the family rooms. Here are some items to look for during your tour of the house!



**Parlor:** This room was meant to impress and entertain guests. Drapes and lace panels are long and allowed to pool on the floor. This was a Victorian conceit to show off the wealth of the homeowner. The wall to wall carpet would be an imported wool ingrain woven in strips and then sewn together. Many of the black chairs shown here are upholstered in woven horse hair fabric.

**Sitting Room:** Berlin work and needlepoint were favorite Victorian handwork styles. The chairs around the game table are covered in reproduction needlepoint patterns. This room also displays a Victorian hair wreath and hair weaving table. Human hair was fashioned into flowers for shadow boxes such as the one on the wall.



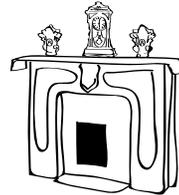
**Dining Room:** The Victorian ideal for table linens was a crisp white cloth and napkins, often covered by a white lace over cloth. These linens would be hand starched and bleached. The red drapes and red accents in the rug were meant to stimulate the appetite.



**Girls' Bedroom:** Young girls wore shorter dresses than their older sisters. This room features two reproduction play dresses for young ladies. Quilts in many of the bedrooms were pieced and quilted by Living History Farms volunteers.



**Guest Bedrooms:** The two bedrooms at the front of the house on the second floor are furnished as guest bedrooms. The mantel runners in these rooms and throughout the house were sewn from period patterns. Draping on tables and mantels added another layer of texture to Victorian decorating, as well as protected the surface.



**Master Bedroom:** The master bedroom is decorated in blue and white wallpaper. The cornice drapes in this bedroom were adapted from a pattern in a period ladies' magazine and show the Victorian taste for fringe and tassels.



Living History Farms'  
Visitor Guide

# Historic Textiles

LIVING  
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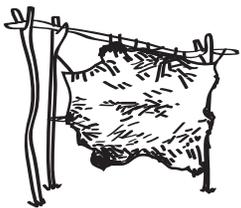
## Welcome to Living History Farms!

The various people who settled in Iowa over the past three hundred years have a rich handwork and fiber history. From Native American cultures to pioneer farmers, Iowans have used natural fibers to create useful and beautiful clothing, household goods, and decorations. As you tour the museum today, explore the historic and reproduction textiles in our museum collection!

### 1700 Ioway Farm

The Ioway culture used both plant and animal resources to create twine, clothing, bags, and other textiles. Ioway women tied, twisted and sewed with animal sinew and buffalo hair. Plant fibers from the soft inner bark of basswood trees, stinging nettles and milkweed fibers, cattails and other reeds and grasses could all be twisted, woven, and crafted. Ioway textiles were functional, but also very decorative.

Look for these artifacts at the 1700 Ioway Farm!



**Hide Racks and Trade Furs:** Ioway women tanned animal hides to create soft leather for clothing and bags. Sometimes fur was left on for winter clothing and sometimes it was removed.

The Hide Rack stretched the hide for fleshing and scraping.

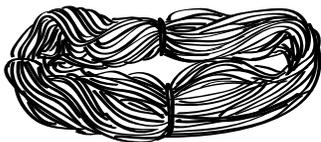
**Cattail Mats:** Matting on the floors of the lodges and covering the winter lodge would be sewn and woven from cattail reeds. Women ground bone awls and needles to pull sinew and twisted fibers through the reeds to secure them.



**Finger woven Belts and Bags:** Ioway women used natural twines to knot and weave bags and other textiles. As European trade fabrics entered their culture, the Ioway unraveled wool from trade blankets and clothing to add to their own weaving projects.

### 1850 Pioneer Farm

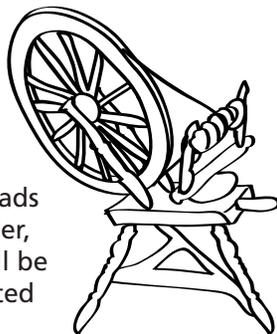
Pioneer settlers brought much of the clothing and textiles they needed with them from their former homes in the east. Trading posts and general stores provided factory woven cloth, but clever farm women might spin yarn for hand knitted socks, caps, and mittens. Explore the 1850 Pioneer log house to find these textiles.



**Hand Spun Yarn:** The yarn hanging under the stairs came from sheep at the museum. It was hand spun and dyed. In the 1850s,

homespun wools were dyed with a variety of natural dyes such as walnut hulls, marigolds and onion skins. Dyes such as indigo and cochineal could be purchased at a general store. Indigo was listed in an Iowa City store for 15 cents per ounce in 1847.

**Spinning Wheel:** In the eastern United States, spinning wheels were obsolete by 1850. Wool was sold to textile mills for manufacture into cloth, threads and yarn. On the Iowa frontier, a frugal housewife might still be spinning some wool for knitted items for her own family.



**Bed Linens:** Factory woven wool, cotton and linen fabrics were purchased for making clothing, bedding, towels and curtains. Woven bed coverlets, such as the blue and white coverlet on the bed, were often woven in decorative patterns. Sheets and towels were commonly given simple monograms or embroidery figures to mark all items as belonging to the same set.

**Pioneer Clothing:** The period clothing worn by interpreters at the 1850 Farm is made in the same styles typical of the 1850 frontier Iowa time period. Wool and cotton outerwear and sturdy leather boots were the daily dress code. By 1850, yard goods were purchased rather than home produced.



### 1900 Horse-Powered Farm

By the turn of the century, farmers were buying their clothing and yard goods at a local store or mail ordering them from a catalog. Montgomery Ward began their mail order service in 1872 and Sears followed in 1888. Frugal housewives balanced their reliance on stores which saved time with home sewn items that saved money. Decorative crafting materials, such as silks for embroidery and threads for crochet, were easily available from stores and catalogs by this time as well.

**Sewing Machine:** The treadle sewing machine at the 1900 Farm is a Wheeler and Wilson No. 9. It was manufactured in the 1890s. Wheeler and Wilson were early competitors of the Singer Company, known for their elegant designs and factory innovations. Singer purchased the Wheeler and Wilson brand in 1905.



**Bed Quilts:** Quilting in 1900 was both practical and decorative. The quilts on the beds at the 1900 farmhouse were pieced and quilted or tied by staff and volunteers at Living History Farms. By 1900, many women

were using the sewing machine to piece the quilt tops; even though the actual quilting or tying would still be done by hand.

#### 1900 Farm Clothing:

Interpreters at the 1900 farm are wearing period style reproduction clothing for everyday wear. Single piece wrapper dresses were practical garments for farm wives with work to do. These could have been sewn at home or ordered from a catalog. Men's work clothing was often ready made by 1900; although shirts may still be sewn at home.



**Wall Sampler:** The "Friendship, Love, and Truth" sampler is an example of a craft popular in the later 19th century. Designs and instructions were charted or printed on perforated paper and worked in wools or silk threads.