

Techniques for Traditional 19th Century Binding

During the 19th Century, quilters were more concerned about the amounts of fabric they used in making their quilts than we are today. Seam allowances were usually smaller than ¼ inch--usually ranging from 1/8 to 3/16 of an inch. Another way they saved on fabric was to use smaller amounts of fabric for applied binding than is common now. They also frequently just folded over the back fabric and used it to bind the quilt.

To make your quilt “authentic”, you need to use the traditional 19th Century Binding technique and here are some guidelines for doing so:

1. Cut your binding strip 1 ½ inch wide with two strips being slightly (a couple of inches) longer than your shorter side of the quilt and two strips being slightly longer than the longest side of the quilt. **(picture)**
2. Do not sew the four strips together.
3. 19th Century quilters applied binding one side at a time.
4. Taking your four strips, turn them over and run a sewing line ¼ inch all the way down one side. This is your sewing line. **(picture)**
5. Take one of the long binding strips and pin it even with the long edge of the quilt on the top side of the quilt, from one short edge to the other (you will have excess at the end of the pinning--just leave it.) **(picture)**
6. Using a running stitch, sew down your sewing line, going through the binding and the top layer of the quilt. **(picture)**
7. When you reach the other end, knot. Then trim off excess fabric. **(picture)**
8. Turn the quilt over. Fold up so that you back side of the binding shows above the quilt, when looking at the quilt from the back. There should be approximately 1 inch of binding showing. Fold the binding down towards the edge of the quilt and then fold over once again onto the back of the quilt. This will result in only the top side of the binding showing. Pin down. **(pictures)**
9. Use applique/ needle turn stitch for sewing the back side down.
10. Repeat for the other long side. **(picture)**