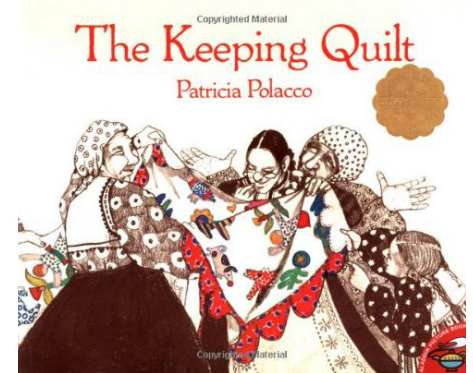


The Keeping Quilt by Patricia Polacco

Book Synopsis: *The Keeping Quilt* by Patricia Polacco is the story of how a family's clothing were pieced together to become an heirloom. Beginning with a babushka, shirt, nightdress and an apron, the pieces of clothing are combined to create a quilt "to help us always remember home." The story follows the journey of the quilt over four generations and how each generation uses the quilt differently while still remembering those who came before.

A recorded reading of this book is [available here](#).



Connection to Iowa History

European settlers heading west to Iowa would often receive quilts as a farewell gift from their friends and family. These quilts used many different designs and materials. A popular style of quilt design was called nine patch. This common design is nine different squares of fabric sewn together to form a larger square. As an added detail, some nine square quilts would be embroidered with the names of friends and family members to serve as a reminder of people left behind. These quilts are commonly called friendship or signature quilts.

The State Historical Museum has almost 300 quilts in the collection. Some examples include:

- [Mary Barton Heritage Quilt](#)
- [Iowa Sesquicentennial Quilt](#)
- [Fundraiser Quilt for St. Paul's AME Church](#)

Goldie's Kids Club Storytime Activity

After reading or listening to the book, ask your friends and family to help create your own paper friendship quilt.

Instructions

- 1 **Cut.** Using scissors, cut the two pieces of paper into nine, equal-sized squares.
- 2 **Share.** Share the squares with your friends and family and have them color, draw or design. If you would rather design your own squares, color and decorate each square differently. Maybe you could design each square about something you like about Iowa.
- 3 **Autograph.** If you are having others design their own squares, make sure they sign their names on their squares!
- 4 **Combine.** After all the squares have been decorated and signed, lay them upside down (design side down) in three rows of three squares each. Tape the squares together on the backside to create a nine square grid.
- 5 **Display.** Flip the grid over to show the designs and enjoy.

Materials

- Two sheets of paper
- Scissors
- Crayons, colored pencils, or marker
- Tape

Instructions continued on next page

The Keeping Quilt by Patricia Polacco

Instructions continued

- 6 **Share!** If you would like to share your friendship quilt with the State Historical Museum of Iowa, please email photos to museum.education@iowa.gov. We want to share your creation with other young historians!
- 7 **Questions to Spark Learning**
 - Why do you think autograph or friendship quilts were popular with early Iowa settlers?
 - Quilts were not only used to help keep settlers warm. What are some other ways quilts could have been used?
 - Why do you think people wanted or needed to move westward during the 1800s?