

Victorian Handcraft Demonstrations at the McLoughlin House

You are invited to step back in time and join NPS Volunteers and staff at the McLoughlin House Unit of Fort Vancouver NHS for a very special demonstration series featuring crafts that were popular in the early to middle years of Queen Victoria's reign.

Throughout history, women have used their skill with their hands to clothe their families and decorate their homes. However, the changes that came with the Industrial Revolution of the 1800s meant that many ladies of the middle class now had leisure time to fill. New materials, patterns and magazines for women became widely available, and needlework and other crafts became all the rage as never before!

Needlework and the arts became a standard part of education for girls - a proper education included sewing, knitting, and embroidery, and often watercolor painting and drawing as well as musical training. Poor girls were taught knitting, crochet and sewing at charity schools, so that they might earn a better living. Rich or poor, girls and women were expected to be busy and productive all the time, to demonstrate their virtue and industriousness. After all, it was said that "the devil finds work for idle hands."

Each month, our demonstrations feature a different type of art or craft - some that are currently popular, and some that have nearly been forgotten. Most of the demonstrations include hands-on opportunities for you to try something that is new to you! All of them will be entertaining, interesting, and educational, and all programs are free of charge. For more information, call (503) 656-5146.

We hope that you will enjoy this opportunity to glimpse into the lives and skills of Victorian ladies!

2009 Victorian Handcraft Demonstration Schedule

Spinning

Saturday, February 14, 12:00-4:00 p.m.

Before you can knit or crochet, you need to spin yarn! Learn how to create yarn from wool.

Hair Work (demonstration)

Saturday, March 14, 12:00-4:00 p.m.

Hair jewelry was the ultimate token of affection. Come see how this delicate art form is done!

Shell Work

Saturday, April 11, 12:00-4:00 p.m.

Nature crafts of all sorts were enjoyed by Victorian ladies. Come and try your hand at this delightful craft.

Antique Buttons (display/lecture)

Saturday, May 9, 12:00-4:00 p.m.

Plain or fancy, buttons have an interesting role in the history of fashion. Join us for a fascinating display and lecture!

Quilling

Saturday, June 13, 12:00-4:00 p.m.

Dainty strips of paper are transformed into a lovely garden. Join us and try this form of creative expression for yourself!

Lucet Cord-Making

Saturday, July 11, 12:00-4:00 p.m.

Come and learn this ancient technique for making braided cord.

Ribbon Flowers

Saturday, August 8, 12:00-4:00 p.m.

Flowers were very important to Victorian ladies. Try your hand at creating lovely blossoms from ribbon!

Potpourri

Saturday, September 12, 12:00-4:00 p.m.

What Victorian home would be complete without a bowl of fragrant potpourri? Learn the secrets of making it yourself!

Teneriffe Lace

Saturday, October 10 12:00-4:00 p.m.

Learn how this unique form of needle lace is created!

Ribbon Trims

Saturday, November 14, 12:00-4:00 p.m.

Ribbon trims are the perfect finishing touch for a day dress or a ball gown. Come and learn how it is done!