



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Harpers Ferry National
Historical Park

P.O. Box 65
Harpers Ferry, WV

304-535-6063 phone
304-535-6244 fax

Harpers Ferry NHP News Release

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Contact(s): Melinda Day
Phone number: 304-535-6063
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Learn to Knit Mitts!



A Women's History Month Workshop : "Knitting A La Mode" Historic Trades Weekend 19th Century Techniques for 21st Century Knitters

In honor of Women's History Month, Harpers Ferry National Historical Park invites the public to register for a special weekend historic trades workshop called "*Knitting A La Mode: 19th Century Techniques for 21st Century Knitters*", March 23 and 24 from 9am to 4pm at Mrs. Stipes Boarding House Living History Exhibit.

Join Expert Polly Steenhagen to explore the world of 19th century needlework, that spoke volumes about a woman's ability to become a suitable wife, mother, and skilled needlework artist. The industrial revolution was slowly replacing women who made hand made goods, such as knitted socks, with knitting machines. Step back with Polly to the quiet 19th century parlor life and the clicking of knitting needles combined with good conversation and excellent instruction will engage the artistic side of the brain!!!

What You'll Need to Bring

Polly will teach you how to knit an 1863 Women's Mitts pattern. You'll need to bring size 1 and size 9 needles, one skein of fingering weight wool and a matching skein of sport weight wool. Brown Sheep Nature Spun is one brand of wool that comes in both fingering and sport weight in matching colors. The original pattern calls for black wool, but any color will do. Participants should also bring matching silk or satin ribbon, sewing thread, and a sewing needle, embroidery yarn (needlepoint wool or fingering weight wool work very well), and even small beads to decorate the mitt. Polly will also provide some ribbon and needlepoint yarn for participants to use. Pre-registered students may contact Polly for assistance with needles and wool.

Level Of Students

Students are recommended to know how to "knit, purl, and cast off."

Number of Students and Cost

\$40.00 per student ages 12 years and older. 10 slots are open in this workshop.

To Register:

Contact the Harpers Ferry Historical Association at [living history workshops](#). 304-535-1523.

About Our Expert:

Polly Steenhagen has been knitting since age 6, and learned to crochet several years later. When she began Civil War Public History about 10 years ago, she immediately became interested in period patterns. She, along with Dr. Silvana Siddali, have written three booklets on patterns from the French publication *La Mode Illustree*; the mittaine for the workshop, is one of these patterns. She is also the moderator of the yahoo group "cwnneedleworkers." Her day job is associate professor of mathematics and science education at Delaware State University, and she often uses her math skills to interpret and size period patterns.

For additional information call the park Living History and Historic Trades Office at 304-535-6063. See other upcoming park events on our website at www.nps.gov/hafe.

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