
ACME CORPORATION

Quilt Washing Before Machines

Interview Date: September 25, 1978

[START OF AUDIO]

MS. GERALDINE N. JOHNSON: How do you wash a quilt?

MS. TODD: I don't put it in my automatic washer; I wash it in my wringer machine. I try not to use too strong a detergent, I don't let it wash too long, and I rinse it several times.

The old quilt batting that you used to get—I think it was about three pound to the bunch that you put in one quilt—if you didn't have that quilted close enough, it would knot up in there. It just wasn't good. But this cotton-polyester blend, if you quilt it close enough, you can launder it, take it out, and it's just beautiful! Makes a lot of difference in what you use in it.

Before we got washing machines, we did it by hand. When we'd do it by hand, we'd always soak the quilts—put them in a big tub of water, put our detergent in there, and let them sit for so long. It was hard to rub them or anything; you just had to jiggle them up and down.

There weren't too many people, I don't think, washed their quilts back then. I tried to wash mine once a year, but that's about all they got—once a year. I learned from experience later on that I'd rather have two lightweight quilts than one heavy one because you can take care of them so much better.

MS. JOHNSON: How could you make some lightweight and one heavyweight? What made the difference?

MS. TODD: If you piece these quilts on the sheet—linen, like I told you—you would need a very thin blanket, like a sheet blanket, and then your lining. [By the] time you put your top on it, that made it just right. It made it not too heavy and not too awful light.

If you use this batting that you could buy at that time, I believe it weighed 3 pounds. [By the] time you take 3 pounds of batting, your quilt top would weigh a pound and a half or something, your lining probably a couple of pounds / a pound and a half... You've got a lot of weight there.

Now, they make this Mountain Mist® in this polyester-cotton blend. I think there's a little over a pound in it. That makes it so much lighter weight. You can launder it and take care of it so much better. The heavier it is, the harder it puts a strain on it, washing it and handling it and everything.

[END OF AUDIO]