Activity Overview: Iowa has brutal, freezing winters, and homemade quilts have been a great way for families to stay warm over the years. This Goldie at Home activity was created in partnership with the Western Historic Trails Center in Council Bluffs, Iowa, and focuses on the creation of a friendship quilt. Although this quilt will not be able to fight the cold, it will give you warm memories.

Connection to Iowa History
European settlers heading West through Iowa would often receive quilts as a farewell gift from their friends and family. Early settlers would use different designs while making quilts to tell a variety of stories, and the nine patch design was one of the simplest and quickest to sew. One type of nine patch quilt early settlers brought with them is called signature or friendship quilts. This is because family and friends signing or embroidering their names on the fabric squares. Those fabric squares would be sewn together in larger nine patch squares to create a full-size quilt which served as a fabric autograph album.

The State Historical Museum of Iowa 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

Western Historic Trails Center
Follow in the footsteps of early travelers to Iowa at the Western Historic Trails Center. See what they saw during their travels on the Lewis and Clark, Oregon, California and Mormon trails. Families can enjoy exhibits, films and maps at the Lied Historical Building on the Path of Names. Walk or bike along the trails to the banks of the Missouri River and other destinations around Council Bluffs and Omaha, Nebraska. The National Park Service designed and built this as a center for exploration.

Instructions
1. Print. Print the attached Square Quilt Pattern worksheet or cut out nine equal size squares.

2. Cut and share. Cut out each square. Share the squares with your friends and family for them to color, draw or design. If you would rather design your own squares, color and decorate each square differently - possibly design each square about something you like about Iowa.

3. Autograph. If other people are designing their own quilt squares, be sure they sign their names on their work!

Instructions continued on next page

Materials
- Square Quilt Pattern worksheet or plain paper
- Crayons, colored pencils or markers
- Tape
Goldie at Home: Western Historic Trails Center

Instructions continued

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.

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 European settlers warm. What are some other ways quilts could have been used?
   • Western Historic Trails Center tells the stories of settlers heading West. Why do you think people wanted or needed to move westward during the 1800s?

8 Additional Resources
   Explore these resources below to learn more about the Western Historic Trails Center and the creation and use of friendship quilts by early Iowa settlers.
   • Western Historic Trails Center Site Guide
   • National Museum of American History: 1851 - 1855 Ripley Family’s “Friendship” Quilt
   • National Park Service: Quilt Discovery Experience
Square Quilt Pattern Worksheet