

# Town & Country Antiques Mall

## Article Archives



## LOVE YOUR LINENS AGAIN!

**Nothing** says summer like the days of long ago when white, crisp linens lined every backyard. On washday, it was fun to lie in the grass and watch the fabrics twist and twirl in the gentle breeze, much like the clouds in the sky. Modern times have replaced much of this, but antique linens and lace are treasured items sought after today.

Many people love to collect these cherished items because they help connect us to our past and to our history. Another reason is the high quality and craftsmanship used to meticulously create them. Long ago, women would grow and harvest their own flax, spin it and make their own linens. Many of the items created were to celebrate a birth, marriage or a community celebration such as a World's Fair. Young girls preparing their wedding trousseau made sure to include household linens and lace.

These wonderful items can be used for many things. The first is to use them for what they are intended, such as a pillowcase for a pillow. But what are some of the other interesting ways to incorporate these items of long ago into your life today?

Tablecloths are one of the most popular items, especially damask or printed ones from the 1940s. They make a lovely table or can be turned into new items such as clothing, napkins or placemats. Windows come alive when you use them for a unique window treatment and bathrooms look pretty when they are made into a shower curtain.

Vintage handkerchiefs can be incorporated into a quilt, stuffed into a suit pocket to add a feminine flair or used as trim on other items of clothing. Place over a lamp or simply dress up a table.

Don't pass up the antique lace that has some rips and tears. It can be mended and used as trim as well. Shawls are excellent accent pieces and look fantastic draped over a chair, couch or bench.

One of the most popular ways to display lace, collars and cuffs and smaller pieces of fabric is to lay them under the glass top covering your furniture. Another idea is to frame them, whether alone or in a collage, they add a great finishing touch to your walls.

Be sure to use care when washing. Although every situation is different and dependent upon the fabric, here are some general rules of thumb. Never use bleach as it is much too harsh. Small items should be washed by hand and large items washed separate. A mixture of a mild detergent and vinegar works best. Never wring or twist wet fabrics, roll in a dry towel instead.

And remember the days of lying in the sunshine beneath the swaying linens? Hanging them on a clothesline to dry will finish the job by using the natural power of the sun to brighten them – just as it did many long years ago.