**Beatrice Taylor Quilting**

I love to quilt.  I feel cheerful when I’m making quilts.  I can sit there day after day after day. It’s a way to pass the time away.  It keeps you busy so you’re not at loose ends.  And you make something that you will use in the future.

Quilts are used in our Ojibwe drum ceremonies.  When you go to a drum ceremony and you put in your offering, usually it’s a quilt or quilts. This is a way of asking for a good life for yourself and your family, and thanking the Great Spirit for what he has given you. It’s a good tradition.  I always make a couple quilts to put in.

And I use quilts a lot for gifts, too.  I say that’s the best gift I can give you because there’s love in every stitch.

Some people have heard of star quilts.  That is a pattern that is popular with many Native American people, from the southwest up to Canada.  But Indian people don’t just make star quilts.  There are so many patterns you can make with different arrangements of blocks, stars and triangles.  Star quilts are harder than some other patterns because there is more sewing involved in them.

But I think your blanket has more to do with the colors you choose than the pattern.  If you want a spring blanket, then you use spring colors.  In the winter, I use white for some of the blocks, but then I put in the brighter colors.  I like bright colors – they’re more cheerful.

I sew my quilts by hand.  I know how to use a sewing machine, but I think with hand sewing, the pieces come out more even.  With a machine, sometimes my seams want to crawl under, and then I have to take the whole thing out!

First I cut all my pieces out, then I stitch the blocks together, and then I applique the blocks onto a piece of material.  After that, I put the runners around the edge.

Once I’ve got the top all done, then I put bought blankets in between the top and bottom.  I don’t like quilt batting – the stuffing that you can buy to go inside the quilt’s top and bottom – because it comes apart in the wash.

It’s not easy to make a quilt.  People think, oh, that must be easy, but you try it once!  It’s hard on the eyes, the fingers, the upper back, and the neck.

But I love to do it.  It’s a good past time.  You can make a different design when you think of it, and put different colors together.  And when you’re done, you have something you can give to someone else.  The world is for giving.  I like to give, I like to share.  I would rather give than receive.  It’s such a good feeling.