1. Before you start, put on a pair of gloves to protect your hands.

2. Next, use an oil pastel to create your image onto the linoleum block. Be aware that this image and any words will be printed in reverse.

3. Third, prepare the printing ink by using a palette knife to place a small amount of ink onto a piece of Plexiglas.

4. Roll the brayer back and forth over the ink to load an even amount of ink onto the roller.

5. Rub the printing block with a moist sponge. The water will create a barrier that will only allow the ink to stick to the marks made with the oil pastel.

6. While the block is still wet, quickly roll your loaded brayer over the surface multiple times.

8. The ink should have stuck to the lines made with the oil pastel. If there is any ink where there shouldn’t be you may use a paper towel to wipe it clean.

9. Carefully lay a piece of printing paper over your design, and with a clean brayer firmly roll over the back of the paper.

10. Carefully remove the printing paper to reveal the transferred image.

11. Finally add color to your print using watercolor paint. The oil ink of your print will resist the watercolor so you can paint directly over the black lines.
Currier and Ives were the front runners of mass media, creating lithographic images that were sold for as little as five cents each. Before this time it was rare for people to have images in their homes, especially those that were not part of the upper class.

Nathaniel Currier began making prints as an apprentice at age 15. By the age of 20 he was made partner and was making certificates, sheet music, and other "job prints". This partnership was not especially successful and Currier decided to set out on his own.

In 1835 Currier illustrated a fire that had swept through New York City's business district. The print was wildly popular and he quickly realized the demand for pictures of current events. He was soon regularly making images of national events and disasters.

The firm was not called "Currier and Ives" until 1857, when James Ives was made a partner. Ives was married to the sister-in-law of Nathaniel's brother, and was brought into the company as an accountant.

Ives proved to be an innovator when it came to organizing the company finances and operations, and he had a keen insight to the public appeal of images. As a partner Ives began to introduce quaint images of the country, home life, and leisure.

Currier and Ives promoted their firm as "Publishers of Cheap and Popular Prints" and "Prints for the People". They employed many artists who would design two to three new images every week. Between 7,000 to 8,000 compositions were created.

Dozens of women were hired as colorists. These women, often German immigrants, would paint the printed images in an assembly line. Each colorist would add a single color and pass the print down the line.

The firm's presses were running for 64 years, creating millions of prints. After the deaths of Nathaniel and James the business was run by their sons, but with the development of offset printing and photoengraving lithography was no longer in demand and the business ended in 1907.

**WHAT IS LITHOGRAPHY??**

1. Lithography emerged at the end of the 18th century and was widely popular by the 1830's. It was the first new printing technique in 300 years and it allowed artists to create immediate images on a printing stone using greasy pencils, crayons, or paint. This image could then be reproduced again and again.

2. Once the artist had created the design on the stone it was treated to set the image within the stone. A gum arabic and nitric acid solution, called lithotine, was applied to cover the entire stone. This solution would react with the greasy image to lock it in the stone, and made it so that the dark areas would accept ink and the light areas would not. The solution was allowed to sit for a while and then it was buffed off.

3. With the stone prepared it was time to prepare the ink. Ink was evenly spread onto a roller, then the stone was sponged with water. The water would attach only to the light areas of the stone, and would repel the ink the oily ink. Working quickly the ink was rolled onto the stone while it was still wet, filling the dark areas of the stone with ink.

4. When the stone had been inked the printer was ready to print. Paper was carefully laid overtop of the stone and it was run through a mechanical press. The press applied even pressure to create a uniform print. After being pressed the paper was pulled off of the stone to reveal the transferred image, which would be printed in reverse. Hundreds identical of prints could be made from a single stone.

This scene of everyday life is an example of the ideas Ives brought to the partnership.

Currier & Ives, American Country Life: October Afternoon, 1855

This naval battle is an example of the pictures of current events that were popular prints.

Currier & Ives, Brilliant naval victory on the Mississippi River, near Fort Wright, May 10th 1862, 1862

This is an image of a 19th century lithography workshop. You can see a lithographer preparing the stone, a colorist adding color at a desk, and printers running prints.