Quilt Documentation Projects 1980-1989: Exploring the Roots of a National Phenomenon

Christine Humphrey
University of Nebraska at Lincoln, christine@dlkeh.net

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cehsdiss
Part of the Education Commons

http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cehsdiss/84

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Education and Human Sciences, College of (CEHS) at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Public Access Theses and Dissertations from the College of Education and Human Sciences by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.
QUILT DOCUMENTATION PROJECTS 1980-1989:
EXPLORING THE ROOTS OF A NATIONAL PHENOMENON

by

Christine Humphrey

A THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of
The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska
In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements
For the Degree of Master of Arts

Major: Textiles, Clothing, & Design

Under the Supervision of Professor Patricia Crews

Lincoln, Nebraska

July, 2010
The documenting of thousands of quilts by small groups throughout the United States was one of the most notable parts of the 1980s surge of interest in quilt history. The purpose of this study was to examine the phenomenon of quilt documentation projects of the 1980s and to gain a better understanding of the social and cultural factors that influenced the organizers and the participants. Inspired by the success of the Kentucky Quilt Project, Inc. in 1983, organizers in thirty-five other states initiated or completed statewide documentation projects by 1989. This study examined five of those statewide projects—the Kentucky Quilt Project, Inc., the Texas Sesquicentennial Quilt Association’s Texas Quilt Search, the North Carolina Quilt Project, the Nebraska Quilt Project, and the Kansas Quilt Project. Utilizing archival materials (project proposals, grant proposals and reports, training materials, and correspondence) for each project and media coverage (local, state, and national), this study investigated the goals, objectives, and motivations of the project organizers and the project participants. In order to gain insights into the motivations of the participants in the projects, the content of media coverage prior to documentation days was compared to the media coverage after documentation days. In addition correspondence between the general public and project organizers was examined. The findings of the study point to a convergence of cultural
influences in the 1970s and 1980s that created a climate for the statewide quilt
documentation projects. Specifically, the project organizers responded to the success of
the Kentucky Quilt Project, the increased interest in family, state and national heritage,
the increased interest in ethnic and women’s history, and the quilt revival of the 1970s.
Participants responded to the opportunity to share and record their individual family
histories in a permanent archive, the opportunity to celebrate their own accomplishments
or those of their female ancestors, and to the nationwide revival of interest in quilts and
quiltmaking traditions.
# CONTENTS

**INTRODUCTION**
- Background  1
- Purpose  3
- Significance  5
- Sources  6
- Organization of Thesis  9
- Scope and Limitations  10

**CHAPTER 1: LITERATURE REVIEW**
- The U.S. Centennial and the First Quilt Revival  13
- Works Progress Administration and the Search for an American Folk Art  15
- The Seventies  17
- The Eighties  19
- The Quilt Revival of the 1970s and 1980s  20
- The Quilt Documentation Movement  23
- Quilt Scholarship and Quilt Documentation Projects 1980-2009  26
- Participation in the Quilt Documentation Projects  35
- Summary  38

**CHAPTER 2: KENTUCKY QUILT PROJECT, INC.**
- Bruce Mann’s Proposal  42
- Launching the Kentucky Quilt Project  45
- Newspaper Publicity and Coverage  52
- Responses to the Kentucky Quilt Project  62
- Passing the Torch  66
- Summary  67

**CHAPTER 3: TEXAS QUILT SEARCH**
- The Texas Sesquicentennial  72
- Two Quilt Documentation Projects  73
- Newspaper Publicity and Coverage for the Texas Quilt Search  81
- The Exhibition: “Lone Stars: A Legacy of Quilts”  89
- Summary  91

**CHAPTER 4: NORTH CAROLINA QUILT PROJECT**
- The North Carolina Quilt Project  93
- Motivations for Initiating the North Carolina Quilt Project  97
- Newspaper and Broadcast Coverage  101
- Motivations and Reactions of Participants  105
- Summary  108
ILLUSTRATIONS

Table 1: Kentucky Quilt Project, Inc. Documentation Days 48
Table 2: Texas Heritage Quilt Society Project Documentation Days 74
Table 3: Texas Quilt Project Documentation Days 79
Table 4: North Carolina Quilt Project Documentation Days 96
Table 5: Nebraska Quilt Project List of Goals and Objectives 113
Table 6: Nebraska Quilt Project Documentation Days 119
Table 7: Kansas Quilt Project Documentation Days 135
Table 8: Goals and Objectives of the KsQP 140

Figure 1: Publicity for the KyQP Round-Up Day 59
Figure 2: Kentucky Quilt Project Documentation Days 59
Figure 3: Publicity for Quilt Day at the Louisville Museum of History and Science 62
INTRODUCTION

Even today, we are in the midst of one of several quilting revivals in America. When many traditional crafts seem to be dying, interest in quilting itself has been a recurrent phenomenon…

--Lorre Weidlich and Susan Roach (1974)\(^1\)

Writing in 1974, Lorre Weidlich, a folklorist with an interest in quilts, was making note of a quilt revival that had started during 1960s America when handmade crafts and products experienced a resurgence of interest. Even with the widespread interest in quilts and quiltmaking encouraged by the Whitney Museum of Art’s exhibit in 1971, “Abstract Design in American Quilts,” and the explosion of quilt-related publications, Weidlich was not writing at the height of the quilt revival. While the 1970s were certainly a significant period for quilts signaled by the formation of the American Museum of Quilts and Related Arts (now the San Jose Museum of Quilts and Textiles) in 1977\(^2\), the 1980s experienced another wave of quilt enthusiasm, centered on the academic study and documentation of quilts. Legitimized by the new, highly popular fields of material culture study, cultural history, and women’s history, quilt scholarship changed in significant ways. In 1980 the American Quilt Study Group, the first membership organization dedicated to the serious study of quilts and quilt history, was organized and remains the primary avenue for peer-reviewed publication today. In 1981 The Rocky Mountain Quilt Museum in Golden, Colorado, opened as the second museum in the nation dedicated to the fiber arts.

A significant part of the 1980s surge in quilt history was the documenting of thousands of quilts by small groups throughout the United States. Between 1980 and 1989, a total of thirty-six statewide quilt documentation projects were either completed or
in progress.  Arkansas, South Carolina, Virginia, and Washington, D.C. completed a regional project, sometimes in addition to a statewide project, and Pennsylvania had begun an intensive county-by-county documentation effort that continued well into the 1990s. Although some projects included the documentation of public collections of quilts and large private collections, the majority of quilts documented by state projects were still owned by the makers or descendants of the makers.

The quilt documentation projects did not end in 1989. By the end of the twentieth century, almost every state in the United States and multiple other nations including Great Britain, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand had conducted some form of quilt documentation project. In fact, Australia conducted its first quilt documentation program in 1982. The overwhelming response from quilters and quilt enthusiasts within the United States surprised many of the project coordinators and the interest in documenting quilts and in the resulting publications seems to continue unabated almost thirty years later, as exemplified by the continued publication of books cataloguing the findings of statewide quilt documentation projects. The current estimate of quilts documented through these projects is over 177,000.

Unlike the projects hosted in other countries, the United States is unique in that the documentation projects were a grassroots phenomenon. There was not an overarching national entity or private group that encouraged or led the projects. Small organizations within each state made the decision to initiate a statewide documentation project. The organizations ranged from groups established for the purpose of documenting quilts such as Kentucky Quilts, Inc. to museums like the Museum of
American Folk Art in New York and to individual quilt guilds like the Lincoln Quilter’s Guild in Nebraska or the Boise Basin Quilters Guild in Idaho.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this study is to examine the phenomenon of quilt documentation projects of the 1980s and to gain a better understanding of what social and cultural factors influenced the organizers and participants. Considering the unanticipated level of public interest and participation in the quilt documentation projects, the fact that they ultimately swept the entire United States, and the recognition of their importance to quilt scholarship, it is surprising that there is almost no literature that examines the quilt documentation projects as a national phenomenon. Other than an article written by Shelly Zegart that reflects on the success of the documentation projects fifteen years after she co-founded the first project in Kentucky in 1981, there is nothing that focuses on these projects as an historical and cultural phenomenon, which had a profound impact on the information available to quilt history scholars.

By treating the documentation projects as a set of related occurrences, this study seeks to find points of comparison between the projects and to identify the social and cultural influences on the projects individually and as groups. Looking for the influences on the projects allows this study to go beyond the disagreements over the value of the information gathered by non-academically trained volunteers and to examine why such a diverse range of people—academics and non-academics, quilters and non-quilters—chose to participate in these projects. As groups continue to document quilts or other forms of craft and folk art, it is important to understand what motivated the organizers as
well as what enticed the public to participate. Writing in 1947, historian Theodore Blegen stated the need for this kind of research when he wrote *Grass Roots History*. He noted that grass roots history “grapples, as history should grapple, with the need of understanding the small, everyday elements, the basic elements, in large movements.”

Since the quilt documentation projects did not depend upon museums or avid quilt collectors to provide the objects for study, the individuals who brought in their family quilts to be documented are an extremely important part of the story. So far, their motivations have gone unexamined. By studying both groups (participants and organizers) together in one place, one can gain a better understanding of why the documentation projects happened in the late twentieth century and why they were successful. A deeper understanding of the significance of homemade, handmade quilts to their owners can also be achieved. Specifically, this study focuses on the following questions:

1. What were the motivations of the documentation project coordinators? What social or cultural influences do these motivations reflect?
2. What were the motivations of the general public who brought their quilts to the documentation days?
3. How did local, state, and national newspapers and magazines describe the projects?
4. Do the reasons described in the press releases, advertisements, and media coverage correspond with the stated motivations and goals set forth by the documentation project coordinators?
Significance

This study is significant because the quilt documentation projects are unlike any other documentation effort undertaken for craft, folklore, or folk art. Documentation projects of other types of folklore and folk art are similar to that of the Works Progress Administrations’ Index of American Design in the 1930s in which trained artists recreated exemplary forms of American folk art through paintings and drawings or Laurel Horton’s thesis work on quilts in three regions of North Carolina in 1977. In these projects, academically trained individuals (Laurel Horton was working on her masters of arts in folklore, the WPA project was initiated by an archivist and used trained artists) conducted the research. They located individuals known for a particular type of craft or folk art, went to the person’s home or studio, documented that person and his/her work, then went on to the next research site. While these methods have solid academic practice behind them, they are time-consuming to implement. The organizers of the quilt documentation projects wanted to capture a larger picture of quilts and quiltmaking traditions in their individual states. Therefore, they developed a new approach by inviting individuals to come to designated locations on announced dates and have their quilts documented. This approach for collecting information allowed larger numbers of quilts and quiltmakers to be documented.

In the quilt documentation projects, the project organizers sent press releases to the local newspapers announcing a date, time, and location for members of the general public to bring their quilts and have them documented. The general public responded to the local media coverage and came to the researcher who documented basic information all of the quilts that fit the parameters of the project. The researchers then sometimes
made follow up visits to individuals who owned a particularly interesting quilt. By doing research in this way, the project organizers saw a significant number of quilts that might never have been brought out of the closet or attic by the usual method of referrals. People would not have referred their friends or other community members because they may not have known about their quilts. The quilt documentation projects thus created an extensive database of quilts in each state that could then be used as comparison material for the quilts and stories they chose to investigate more thoroughly.

The documentation projects represent a non-political, short-term grassroots movement run almost exclusively by women documenting women’s work. These projects represent the only time that women’s work—other than paid work in the job market—has been documented in such an all-encompassing manner. Although conducted primarily by individuals who were not academically trained in the methods of historians, folklorists, and material culture scholars, these projects succeeded in collecting important information concerning surviving American quilts. Much of this information remains untouched in archives and private hands waiting to be examined and analyzed.

Sources

Determining the motivations for why people or a group of people participate in an event is a challenge unless there is a reliable way to ask them why. Fortunately, a majority of the documentation project coordinators and organizers provided their personal and/or professional motivations for being involved. The starting point for this study was an examination of the themes described in the books and catalogues published
at the conclusion of the thirty-six projects completed or in progress at the end of the 1980s to identify the motivating factors shared by the quilt documentation projects. Primary source research was limited to five states: Kentucky, Kansas, Texas, North Carolina, and Nebraska. Each project started and either completed its project or conducted the bulk of its research prior to the end of 1989. In Kentucky, Texas, and Kansas, there were two projects documenting quilts during this time period. I limited the research, given the time available, to the projects that were most visible to the public or that have become identified as “the” statewide quilt documentation project.

Primary sources include local, state, and national newspapers and periodicals. Local periodicals disseminated information, not only about the projects, but about general attitudes towards preservation, heritage, and quilting. State and national periodicals served to spread word about the projects, their success, and the excitement about them in individual states. Additional primary research includes any documentation project records available in archives or through personal contact with the coordinators. The North Carolina Quilt Project’s board of directors also archived some of the television coverage of its project, so it is included in the analysis.

Each of the five projects chosen for in-depth research has characteristics that are representative of the projects as a whole or of a group of the projects. Each one also has some characteristic that makes it unique and independent from the other projects. In 1980, enthusiasts from two states began planning quilt documentation programs for very different reasons and with somewhat different goals in mind. In Kentucky, Bruce Mann, a quilt dealer, decided that it was time to document the state’s quilts because he believed that state heritage was being lost as the undocumented objects were being sold out of
state without accompanying history by dealers like himself. Although Mann passed away before initiating his project, Shelly Zegart, Eleanor Bingham Miller, Eunice Ray, and Katy Christopherson picked up the torch and organized the first statewide quilt documentation project. The success of the Kentucky Quilt Project, Inc. inspired people in many other states to document their quilts.

Simultaneously, an organization of a different sort was forming in Texas. Karey Bresenhan, Nancy Puentes, and Suzanne Yabsley founded the Texas Sesquicentennial Quilt Association. In the fall of 1984, the Texas Sesquicentennial Quilt Association became a recognized organization of the larger state Texas Sesquicentennial Organization. Taking into consideration the size of the state and the logistical and financial challenges that it could face, the committee gave itself three years to plan and three years to document.¹⁰

North Carolina’s documentation project is probably the most typical of the thirty-six documentation projects from the decade of the 1980s; however, it stood apart from the rest in terms of the number of quilts that the North Carolina Quilt Project staff documented. The project’s staff documented over 10,000 quilts at seventy-five documentation days in about fourteen months. North Carolina’s coordinators were among the few who considered their project a part of a larger phenomenon. George Holt, Director of the Folklife Section of the North Carolina Arts Council, stated: “This study is part of a larger movement, among scholars and lay people, that has become increasingly appreciative of the contributions of ordinary folk, and of women in particular, to the cultural heritage of America.”¹¹
Compared to other projects during the 1980s, the Nebraska Quilt Project took a more scholarly approach to the study of quilts and quiltmaking. Nebraska began its documentation project after a few others had been completed, and they learned from those other projects. The coordinators of this project were all members of the Lincoln Quilters Guild. After setting up their committee, they enlisted the help of local university faculty to serve as advisors to the program. These advisors helped to set out the documentation plan, analyze the data gathered, and write a final publication.

The Kansas Quilt Documentation Project is exemplary of the planning and implementation that went into many of these documentation projects. After establishing a board of directors, creating a set of by-laws and an organizational chart, and developing a manual for the documentation days, the board of directors of the Kansas Quilt Documentation Project: Documenting Quilts and Quiltmakers recorded over 13,000 quilts in sixteen months through seventy-two documentation days. In addition to a reputation as a locus for quilting in the United States, Kansas was the home to many of the quilt history scholars already respected and known in the early 1980s. One of these scholars was Barbara Brackman, known for the first comprehensive guides to dating quilts and identifying patterns, served on the board of directors.

**Organization of Thesis**

Chapter one provides a literature review that focuses on quilt scholarship during the twentieth century and American cultural history of the 1970s and 1980s. It provides the contextual background for situating the quilt documentation projects as a cultural movement that should not be removed from the debates within the field of quilt studies or
from the larger cultural movements of American history. The quilt scholarship sections describe the progression of quilt scholarship through the twentieth century and highlight some of the debates surrounding how quilts should be studied and who should be studying quilts. The sections on American cultural history of the twentieth century focuses on the larger cultural and social influences of the 1970s and 1980s with some discussion of cultural movements that directly relate to quilts or quilt studies prior to the 1970s.

Chapters two through six individually analyze the five selected projects. Each chapter provides a short history of the project with a focus on the goals and motivations of the project organizers. The remainder of each chapter analyzes the publicity and media coverage concerning the project and sometimes the exhibition put together by the project organizers in order to illuminate how the projects encouraged people to participate in the project. Finally, when possible, each chapter includes a section examining how the public responded to the project through their correspondence with the project organizer(s) or through interviews published in newspaper articles after a quilt a documentation day.

Chapter seven summarizes the findings of the previous six chapters. The purpose of the concluding chapter is two-fold. First, it summarizes the common motivations and goals of the five projects in relation to the other statewide quilt documentation projects conducted during the 1980s. Secondly, it summarizes the common responses of the general public to the projects. Finally, chapter seven identifies avenues for future research based upon the findings of this study.
Scope and Limitations

This study focuses on the documentation projects conducted between 1980 and 1989 because it was thought that they were likely the most susceptible to the influence of events and attitudes that initially spurred an interest in quilts. This decade witnessed massive interest in the study of quilts and an increase in the standards of that scholarship. The social and cultural influences leading to the projects conducted during the 1980s were more likely related to changes in the larger world. It was believed that the early documentation projects were less likely to have been sparked primarily by the success of previous documentation efforts. The statewide quilt documentation projects conducted during the 1980s encompassed more than half of the states. Because most quilt documentation project books are quilt histories of each state or catalogues of quilts from the state and their makers rather than an in-depth analysis and history of the project itself, the authors of the books and directors of the project rarely analyze their motivations for undertaking these ambitious surveys or the motivations of the participants who brought in quilts to be documented. This means that there is very little in writing that says, “I wanted my quilt documented because (fill in the blank).” Consequently, this study draws on a variety of sources—newspapers, correspondence between the project organizers, correspondence between the projects and private individuals, and archived records—in order to tease out the connections between the quilt documentation projects and the wider scope of American cultural history and values. Ultimately, the lack of previous research means that this study, because it is the first, must make some speculative connections based on currently available information. This research will lay the groundwork for further research as we gain more distance from the events over time.
This study focuses on five of the projects conducted in Kentucky, Texas, Nebraska, Kansas, and North Carolina. They provide a basis for making comparisons between the motivations of the documenters and the motivations of the participants. Future researchers may discover additional motivations if they examine additional projects.

Finally, this study was limited by what was recorded or reported by the project coordinators and workers and by what questions were asked in the questionnaires and the oral history interviews. These resources, in addition to the coverage in the local newspapers before and after the documentation days, provided the most reliable answers to the questions set forth to guide this study. Neither oral history interviews nor questionnaires were attempted for two reasons. The first is that the organizing committees generally disbanded at the completion of the documentation projects and did not maintain contact records for the participants, or the organizing committees promised participants that their identities would remain confidential. After almost thirty years, tracking down individuals would be very difficult given the mobile nature of the U.S. population. Secondly, asking participants to remember their reasons for attending a documentation day would either be colored greatly by hindsight or not remembered distinctly at all. While oral histories are still an important source of information regarding the documentation projects, this study is concerned with the information published about the documentation projects either in their books or in the media coverage at the time. Although important at the time to these participants, the documentation days were not likely to have been such memorable events that they would be remembered with clarity.
CHAPTER 1
LITERATURE REVIEW

Over the course of the last one hundred years, quilts and quiltmaking have become iconic representations of American values, yet they have been one of the least closely studied objects of Americana until the last three decades. The following essay charts how quilts and quiltmaking have been placed into the larger framework of American social and cultural history and how the most recent quilt revival sparked the scholarly study of quilts. Secondly, it explores the development of the study of quilts as an academic field and introduces the quilt documentation projects of the 1980s and 1990s as a phenomenon, which fueled the burgeoning field of quilt studies.

The U.S. Centennial and the First Quilt Revival

Throughout its relatively short history, the United States has struggled with notions of identity and culture. As a community of immigrants formed into a nation based on needs for security, independence, and commerce rather than a shared ethnicity, language, or religion, the United States has had a much more difficult time defining an American culture that embraces and satisfies all members. This has not stopped some groups from trying to define American culture in one set of terms or another. The Colonial Revival of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was a response to the end of the Civil War and the celebration of the American Centennial in 1876. A part of that response was the search for a common identity and history upon which to define American culture.

In his introductory statement to a series of essays originally presented over two conferences at Delaware’s Winterthur Museum and Country Estate in 1981 and 1982,
Kenneth Ames, Chairman of the Office of Advanced Studies at Winterthur Museum and Adjunct Associate Professor of Art History at the University of Delaware at the time, analyzed the Colonial Revival in relation to three sets of historical movements he defined as responses to modernization, expressions of nationalism, and strategies to cope with America’s social and cultural diversity.  

The time period that Ames was referring to began during the years following the Civil War and ended in the first decades of the twentieth century. He identified the Colonial Revival as having manifestations of all three historic phenomena. Examples of responses to modernization according to Ames were the creation of period rooms and the focus on domesticity showcasing such things as spinning wheels and other artifacts in kitchens and creating period rooms for museums and fairs. He noted that although the language of the colonial as a “vehicle for national identity” may have been largely accidental, its use demonstrated that people understood the “necessity of preserving relics in order to keep ideas and ideals alive.”

Finally, he argued that the Colonial Revival became the primary way to “expedite acculturation and socialization” to the millions of immigrants flocking to the United States from all over the world because it created a set of shared symbols and values.

Quilts were just one of the many decorative arts affected by the Colonial Revival. Robert Shaw in *American Quilts: The Democratic Art, 1780-2007*, presented this time period as the “greatest era of quiltmaking in American history—or, for that matter, the history of the world.” In his discussion of the influence of Centennial celebrations on quiltmaking, including the Centennial Exposition held in Philadelphia, Shaw noted that the celebrations were public expressions of a renewed sense of national pride and national identity.
Virginia Gunn, historian and professor at the University of Akron in Ohio, clarified the connections between the Colonial Revival, renewed national pride and sense of identity, and quiltmaking in her analysis of the Colonial Revival for a recent book, *American Quilts in the Modern Age: 1870-1940*. She argued using examples from *Godey’s Lady’s Book* and *Good Housekeeping* magazines that women “insisted that traditional quilts be prominent in the Colonial Revival memory” in order to honor their foremothers. She stated that this insistence and use of quilts to remember their female ancestors was women’s way of placing women into the “story of history.” Quilts were presented in the literature of the time period as family history and objects worthy of “study and imitation.” Gunn cited early quilt history book writers Marie Webster and Ruth Finley Hall as well as numerous magazine articles that encouraged women to preserve old family quilts or make new ones in the styles of old quilts in order to preserve the heritage of the objects and the craft. In this process, women established quilts as symbols of the historical roles and contributions of American women.

**Works Progress Administration and the Search for an American Folk Art**

After the Colonial Revival, the search for an American culture and art continued in programs such as the Works Progress Administrations’ (WPA) Index of American Design. Virginia Tuttle Clayton in a 2002 exhibition catalogue on the Index of American Design noted that a major purpose in the undertaking, other than providing jobs to out of work artists, was using the program to “provide background materials needed to stimulate the development of American culture.”
By documenting American folk art, the creators of the Index of American Design hoped to identify the uniquely “American” characteristic(s) of American design so that future artists could develop the style and create a uniquely “American” art. Clayton referred to this as “a uniquely American creative idiom or sense of design.”

Ideally, the WPA hoped to find a visible version of “the collective spirit of a nation.” Erika Doss in this same catalogue pointed out that the New Deal arts patronage programs were as much about encouraging national unity and restoring national confidence as they were about providing jobs. They were focused on documenting Americana, preserving Americana, and demonstrating the need for support of Americana. Quilts were a part of the Americana and the American folk art they were documenting.

Even prior to the WPA’s work during the Great Depression, American folk art had become a symbol of the American culture that the nation felt it was lacking. Modernist artists were the ones who originally decided that there must be a link between folk art and an American art tradition they were attempting to create. Between World War I and World War II, cultural nationalism originating in Europe and permeating through the United States played a role in the development of the idea that there must be something uniquely American about American folk art. Collectors of folk art including Electra Havermeyer Webb, Holger Cahill, Edith Halpert, and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller were some of the first to add quilts to their collections. By the end of the 1950s, every single one of these four collectors had turned his or her collection into a museum. Electra Havermeyer Webb created the Shelburne Museum in Vermont, and with the help of her friend, Florence Peto, became one of the first American folk art collectors to include quilts in her collection.
The Seventies

Politically and culturally, the 1970s were a significant period for women and the visual arts. Often portrayed as a decade of retrenchment from the liberal swing of the Sixties, the Seventies were not a return to normalcy. Politically, the United States dealt with its first crisis of faith in a president in addition to facing the deepest national recession since the Great Depression.

A decade long fight over the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) defined the battles that women fought against each other as well as against a nation that many felt had ignored or oppressed their needs, rights, and contributions. As much as the pro-ERA groups were battling the state legislatures for ratification, they were fighting an internal battle against women who felt that the leading ERA support groups were too radical and were demanding too much. Organizations such as the The Martha Movement (formed by Jinx Melia in 1976) and authors like Marabel Morgan (Total Woman and Total Joy) contributed a different set of opinions on the liberated woman from those of Phyllis Schlafly and her organization STOP-ERA on what a liberated woman’s rights ought to be.15 By the end of the decade, the ERA had not been ratified and the government and pro-ERA groups were in a contested battle over the constitutionality of extending the deadline for ratification.

At the same time as this political upheaval, minorities in the United States were practicing a revised version of the nationalism first practiced in the early twentieth century. Kelly Boyer Sagert referred to this process as cultural nationalism in minority activism referring to minority groups’ search for national identity within the larger national identity of white America.16 Alex Haley’s Roots aired in 1977 as one of the
most public manifestations of the desire for searching out one’s ancestral roots. Interest
in personal background and family histories did not stop in the minority communities. President Jimmy Carter’s genealogy also stirred public interest. Searching out one’s family history and ancestral roots became the third most popular hobby in the United States. A lasting side effect of the Bicentennial mixed with an increasingly mobile society and greater amounts of leisure time was a rise in the hobby of genealogy.

The United States as a country and individual states began celebrating national and state anniversaries. The Bicentennial of the Declaration of Independence in 1976 stands out as one of the most well known. Celebrations of the Bicentennial included festivals, parades, and contests. Additionally, the entire population was encouraged to remember the nation’s history and celebrate its patriotism despite the political doubts raised by the resignation and illegal activities of President Richard Nixon, the oil embargoes of the Oil and Petroleum Exporting Cartel (OPEC), and continued tense relationships between minorities and whites and men and women.

Presidents Richard Nixon and Jimmy Carter both placed official stamps of recognition on the contributions of those in the fields of folk art. As a staunch anti-elitist, President Nixon increased the budget more than ten-fold for the National Endowment for the Humanities but placed additional requirements on that budget to support small museums and historical societies throughout the country. President Carter continued to make changes to the workings of the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts. He also established the White House Collection of American Craft.
In the world of visual arts, the 1970s saw a continued rise in the popularity of pop art. Andy Warhol, as the most prominent figure of this movement, had been collecting American folk art since the 1950s and specialized in art of the common subject. Abstract Expressionism and Cubism were also significant influences in the art world of the 1970s.

Folk art and the collecting of folk art, although not generally listed with the visual arts, had also regained their popularity of the 1920s and 1930s. Although folk art had never quite gone out of style, its place in the public eye had decreased during the decades immediately following World War II.

The 1971 exhibition at the Whitney Museum of Art in New York City entitled “Abstract Design in American Art” refigured the quilt, or at least those most resembling modern art of the period, permanently in the eyes of the art community as a valid form of expression. Writing in 1974, Patsy and Myron Orlofsky, quilt collectors and historians, stated that the quilts hung in “Abstract Design in American Art” amazed modern artists and art critics because of the similarities between the quilt designs and the much newer traditions of minimalism, pop art, op art, and color-field painting. The publicity for the exhibition heightened the already increased interest in quilts and quiltmaking.

The Eighties

The decade of the 1980s continued the trend of being dominated by presidential politics. The election of Ronald Reagan marked a conservative shift in the attitudes of the population. His calls for a return to the patriotic past and the nationalistic attitudes of the late 1940s and 1950s appealed to a nation searching for its moral and cultural compass.
One of the most conspicuous aspects of patriotism during the 1980s was the return of 1950s Cold War rhetoric. As Bob Batchelor and Scott Stoddard note in their overview of the 1980s, the decade was a return to patriotism, conservative family values, and conspicuous consumption all embodied in the persona of the President. Reagan adopted the phrase “Evil Empire” to remind the nation that the Soviet Union was an enemy that the country could join together to fight.

The women’s movement was a continuation of the debates over women working outside the home, child-care, reproductive rights, and equal rights both politically and on the job. The ERA was never ratified by enough states and the deadline passed for ratification in 1982.

The visual arts held little new for America. Pop Art maintained its popularity. Batchelor and Stoddard noted that one of the significant changes in 1980s American art was the ability of collectors and investors to pay “outrageous prices for masterworks.” The economic security of the Reagan years prompted investors to turn the collecting of art into a business.

The Quilt Revival of the 1970s and 1980s

The cultural, social, and political happenings of the 1970s and 1980s laid the foundation for the quilt revival that occurred during these two decades. The term “quilt revival” refers to everything from the rise in interest in learning to quilt, to the formation of quilt guilds, to the multi-million dollar quilt industry of the mid-1980s. According to Karey Bresenhan, the quilt revival could be traced to the back-to-land movements of the 1960s in which young people were looking for a simpler lifestyle, one characteristic of
which was learning how to make things by hand.\textsuperscript{25} Sparked by Holstein and van der Hoof’s exhibition at the Whitney Museum of Art in 1971, art collectors began to collect quilts by the hundreds. The price of quilts began to sky rocket. By the mid-1980s, good quality pre-1940 Amish quilts were becoming hard to find under $1500. According to collector David Pottinger, Amish quilts had increased ten-fold in value since 1974.\textsuperscript{26} Companies like IBM, Chase Manhattan Bank, and Esprit Corporation had quilt collections and displayed them in corporate headquarters.\textsuperscript{27} Collecting antique quilts, or for that matter, contemporary quilts, was a thriving business in the early 1980s despite the slump in the art market according to Claudia Ricci’s 1982 article for the \textit{Wall Street Journal}.\textsuperscript{28} In 1980, a quilt auctioned at Sotheby’s went for $10,000, and in 1984, a nineteenth-century Baltimore album sold through American Antiques & Quilts in New York City for $26,000, a record for the time.\textsuperscript{29}

The interest in quilts was not wholly defined by the passion for collecting. Over the 1970s and 1980s, the business of quilting became a multi-million dollar industry defined by classes, new products, quilt shops, quilt shows, and quilt exhibits. It also attracted millions of participants, primarily women. By 1982, quilt making had become a “$50 million to $100 million business.”\textsuperscript{30} Jean Ray Laury, noted quilt artist, teacher, and historian, wrote in 1985 that she believed quilting had experienced such a large revival because of the interest in the past inspired by preparations for the 1976 Bicentennial, interest in women’s work and contributions inspired by the Women’s Movement, the ability for quilters to break from the traditional quilt molds and still be accepted by the quilting community, and the attention gained through museum exhibits and shows.\textsuperscript{31} The 1976 Bicentennial has often been cited as a turning point for quilts in America. Louise
Lione, writing for the *Oldham Weekly*, quoted Bonnie Leman, editor of *Quilter’s Newsletter Magazine*, as stating that quilts received so much attention during the Bicentennial because historical societies, groups, and communities were looking for projects that they could do together to document their histories. Quilts provided a good solution. *Good Houskeeping* magazine’s contest, which attracted almost 10,000 participants, also gave prominence to quilts. Robert Shaw noted that quilts provided “something positive about their country and its heritage” at a time, when politically, there might not have been much to celebrate. He also wrote that learning about quilts and participating in quilt making activities helped women discover and reclaim an almost lost artistic heritage that personified the American story and American values.

In addition to the Bicentennial and quilt collecting, quilt making was experiencing a revival because there was genuine interest in learning the craft. Quilt guilds made up of groups of people interested in sharing knowledge about quilting or interested in quilting with other people began to form throughout the United States. Suzanne Yabsley, quilt historian and author, wrote that in Texas in 1979, there were four quilt guilds. By 1984, there were fourteen. Quilt shows, mostly small, had become a standard way of showcasing the accomplishments of local quilters or of displaying antique quilts. In some cases, these shows became synonymous with the quilting industry. In 1974, Karey Bresenhan, Nancy O’Bryant Puentes and their mothers formed the Quilt Festival in Houston. By the end of the 1970s, this quilt show attracted participants and attendees from across the country and from many parts of the world. In 1979, the organizers of Quilt Festival established Quilt Market, the first quilting trade show, held in conjunction with Quilt Festival (both are still in existence and still are held in conjunction with each
other every year).\textsuperscript{36} In the late 1970s, quilt guilds in Kansas and Nebraska hosted symposiums that attracted quilters from throughout the United States.\textsuperscript{37}

By the middle of the 1980s, quilts and quiltmaking had excited not only an interest in learning the craft for personal use but an interest in the historical study of quilts and quiltmaking. By the end of the 1980s, quilts had made their debut in films, had their own museums, and had a scholarly society dedicated to their study and preservation. In 1977, Patricia J. Cooper and Norma Bradley Allen’s book, \textit{The Quilters: Women and the Domestic Art: An Oral History}, was a selection of the Notable Books Council, a yearly list of books recognized as outstanding by the American Library Association. In 1981, Patricia Ferrero’s film, \textit{Quilts in Women’s Lives}, was the highest-ranked entry at the American Film Festival. The American Quilt Study Group formed in 1980. In 1986, the Museum of American Folk Art sponsored, along with 3M Corporation, the Great American Quilt Festival. By the end of 1987, quilt museums had opened in San Jose, California; Golden, Colorado; and Lowell, Massachusetts. In 1989, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art opened the American Quilt Research Center. Beginning in the 1980s and continuing to the current day, the academic and scholarly study of quilts has become an increasingly large part of the quilt revival.

\textbf{The Quilt Documentation Movement}

In 1981, Shelly Zegart, Eleanor Bingham Miller, and Eunice Sears developed and executed the Kentucky Quilt Project, Inc. They organized documentation days, and through publicity in local newspapers, they invited the general public to participate in them by bringing in their nineteenth-century Kentucky-made quilts. After conducting
twelve documentation days throughout the state and documenting approximately 1200 quilts, the organizers of the project published a catalogue of a select group of documented quilts and organized an exhibition that traveled across the United States. The success of the Kentucky project and the national attention it received inspired quilt enthusiasts in states across the country to conduct their own quilt documentation projects.

Although established in 1980, the Texas Quilt Search Project did not begin documenting quilts until 1983 about the same time as the opening of the Kentucky Quilt Project’s exhibition. About the same time four other states (California, Missouri, Tennessee, and South Carolina) also had initiated quilt documentation project. All five of these states chose to model their quilt documentation days after the model developed by the Kentucky Quilt Project. By 1986, an additional thirteen statewide quilt documentation projects had been established; by 1989 a total of thirty-six statewide projects were in progress or completed.

The major goals and set-up for the documentation days was consistent throughout the projects. Members of the public brought their quilts to the documentation site and registered their quilts with the assistance of volunteers on site. Most documentation projects asked participants to complete questionnaires about the quilter’s history and the history of the quilt. Some projects had volunteers who assisted participants individually in order to complete these forms with greater thoroughness and consistency and so that they could follow up immediately on unusual or interesting stories. After the participants completed the basic genealogical information about the maker, the physical aspects of the quilt were documented. Trained volunteers measured quilts, identified pattern names, recorded fabric colors and styles, and recorded quilting, binding, piecing,
and appliqué techniques. Some projects were more specific or detailed than others. For example, the Kentucky Quilt Project’s form consisted of half a page for genealogical and basic quilt information. The other half of the page was blank, allowing space for the documenter (usually Shelly Zegart) to record additional physical or historical information about the quilt or to make note of interesting aspects about the quilt or quiltmaker. In other projects, like the Nebraska Quilt Project, the form for recording the physical characteristics of each quilt was two pages in length and included detailed questions about piecing methods, quilting methods, fabric styles, and other physical aspects of the quilt.

After the documenters recorded the quilt and the quiltmaker, a photographer hung the quilt vertically on a frame to photograph it accompanied by its registration number. As participants were leaving the site with their quilts, they often received information on the proper care and storage of quilts. Many project committees also decided to supply quilt owners with a muslin label for each quilt documented that could be attached to the quilt without causing damage. The label usually included the name of the project, the registration number, and the anticipated location of the permanent archive so that future owners would be able to contact the archive for information about the quilt. The label was a new addition to the process, which the earliest projects including Kentucky and Texas had not used.

**Quilt Scholarship and the Quilt Documentation Projects 1980-2009**

During the last thirty years, scholars from numerous academic fields have weighed in on the subject of quilt scholarship—where it stands, how it needs to develop,
and who should be doing the work. Although not recognized widely as a seminal year, 1991 was a significant year for quilt scholarship. That year the Kentucky Quilt Project, Inc. sponsored a conference on quilt scholarship as part of its tenth anniversary celebration of the state’s documentation project and the twentieth anniversary of Holstein and van der Hoof’s exhibition at the Whitney Museum of Art. That same year the Kentucky Quilt Project, Inc. also launched the publication *The Quilt Journal*. Finally, in 1991 Virginia Gunn published the first paper describing the history of quilt scholarship in the American Quilt Study Group’s annual monograph, *Uncoverings*.

*The Quilt Journal*, a periodical published biannually for four years (1991-1995), broached the topic of quilt scholarship in its “Mission Statement” for the first volume (it was a full length article). The editors argued that 1) quilt scholarship was still in its infancy, 2) the future study of quilts must be interdisciplinary, and 3) international participation was needed. The journal editors included Shelly Zegart and Eleanor Bingham Miller, who were the key figures in the Kentucky Quilt Project, and Jonathan Holstein, who was the curator of the 1971 Whitney Museum of Art exhibition, “Abstract Design in American Art” and co-author of the Kentucky Quilt Project’s final catalogue. These editors noted that the field of quilt studies was still in its infancy because the number of academic historians in the field in relation to the number of independent scholars in the field was very small. In addition, at the time of publication of the first *Quilt Journal*, they noted that there was only one quilt curator in an American art museum (the Los Angeles County Museum of Art), that most scholars were women, and that few made a living as scholars within the field. They pointed out the gender of most
scholars in the field of quilt studies because it was and is unusual to find a field in which
the scholars are primarily women.

The published collection of papers from the Kentucky conference, *Expanding Quilt Scholarship: The Lectures, Conferences, and Other Presentations of Louisville Celebrates the American Quilt*, addressed these same ideas of newness of the field, the need for more research, and the growth of scholarship. Presenters Judith Reiter Weissman, Jonathan Holstein, and Virginia Gunn analyzed some of these issues. In her presentation, Judith Reiter Weismann, Associate Professor of Art and Art Professions and Director of the Ph.D. program of Arts and Humanities and of the Decorative Arts M.A. program at New York University, connected quilt studies to multiple fields by focusing on the milestones including the 1971 Whitney exhibition, the quilt documentation projects, and the formation of the American Quilt Study Group. She observed that the rise of interest in quilt studies and artifact studies paralleled the rise of interest in women’s studies and African-American studies beginning in 1971. Although some criticized the quilt documentation projects as primarily focused on data collecting and engaged in only limited historical analysis and interpretation, Dr. Weismann argued that they were a form of research necessary to lay the groundwork for the continued study of quilts.40

Holstein offered a detailed critique of quilt scholarship of the day. He expressed particular concern about the lack of historical or art historical training of most quilt scholars, a market that published almost anything quilt related, and the acceptance of myth or folklore as truth. Using examples from both historical and current scholarship, Holstein argued that these characteristics of the field were problematic because they
created an atmosphere that “denies it (the field of quilt studies) the corrective of the often rigorous competition to be heard, to be right, to be noticed, to be published, which exists in other fields.” He called the field “collegial” and attributed the lack of corrective competition to the fact that most scholars did not earn their livings as quilt scholars. He also stated that one of the end results of the collegial atmosphere and a market that would buy almost anything published about quilts was the carelessness of some scholars, both professionally trained and amateur, in their research methods that led to the publication and dissemination of incorrect information, folklore as fact, and unsubstantiated research. Additionally, he argued that the identity of quilts as an iconic image of women in American history reinforced a hesitancy to question the origins of that imagery. Although not addressing the quilt documentation projects directly, his comments and critiques of the field of quilt studies were applicable to the information collected during the projects. He warned that family histories should be investigated and corroborated rather than taken at face value and that scholars in the field, primarily women who had grown up surrounded by the iconography of quilts, should be especially careful to question previously accepted scholarship and document the evidence. Although by no means stating that quilt scholars should be academically trained historians, art historians, or folklorists (he mentioned at the beginning of his lecture that he was not), he did support the use of consistent and rigorous methodologies in conducting research.

In her paper “From Myth to Maturity: The Evolution of Quilt Scholarship,” published in Uncoverings in 1991, Virginia Gunn presented similar arguments as those in her presentation for the Kentucky conference. At the time Gunn, a professor in the
School of Family and Consumer Sciences at the University of Akron, was a doctoral candidate in history at the University of Akron. Unlike many other quilt scholars, Gunn had an academic affiliation and was trained in the historical method. She chose an historiographical approach and presented what she believed to be the stages of quilt study.

As a first priority in her paper, Gunn addressed the role of mythology in quilt history. Dealing with the mythology created by the romanticized versions of early writers like Ruth Finley and Marie Webster, Gunn argued, was absolutely essential to setting up a framework for what quilt scholarship had really been studying. Marie Webster and Ruth Finley wrote the first quilt history books during the heyday of the Colonial Revival with limited historical resources and helped to create the myth of the industrious, pioneering woman gathering every available piece of scrap to piece quilts in order to keep her family warm. Gunn asserted that myths “serve as shared truths which help members of society identify with each other and work together for the common good.” This idea came to be a key component of her advice for distinguishing objective history from perceived history. She asserted that scholars must identify commonly held beliefs that are “deficient, romanticized, and inaccurate”, be willing to reject these beliefs, and document true facts with accuracy. She also pointed out that getting rid of the mythology around quilts was not the answer to the problem because the mythology is part of the history and studying that mythology to understand how it came to be part of the literature is important to the progress of quilt studies as a whole.

Once Gunn dealt with how to handle quilt mythology, she outlined what she considered to be the three phases of quilt scholarship. The pioneer period from 1890 to
1930 created the quilt mythology that scholars are still battling today; the practical period from 1930 to 1970 saw the rise of pattern books, catalogues, and the quilt industry as a whole; and finally, the third phase—the revival period of 1970 to 1990—she posited was characterized by the quilt documentation projects, the beginnings of scholarly research, and the positioning of quilts in the public eye primarily that of the art world and the academic world. Gunn’s article was the first to address quilt scholarship in a positive, methodical, objective manner, one that did not focus primarily on the controversies and problems within the scholarship, but instead, examined a century of quilt scholarship and analyzed it for signs of progress and finally dealt with the need to include the mythology within the overall framework of scholarship.

Since 1983, scholars have questioned four aspects of quilt studies in general and the quilt documentation projects in particular—the preeminence of amateur quilt scholars rather than academically trained historians, the validity of information collected by amateur scholars, the lack of consistency of the information collected, and the limited analysis and interpretation of findings. In 1983, Jonathan Holstein wrote one of the first articles expressing concern about the quilt documentation projects and other quilt studies. At that point, only the Kentucky Quilt Project had completed a project, but other states were planning projects. His concern was for consistency in the data collected and for access to the collected data so that it could be available to scholars for analysis. Part of his concern about the consistency of the data was the range of knowledge about quilts (technical, historical, and aesthetic) known by the amateur quilt scholars and volunteer documenters. He included a data collection sheet that he had created in the hopes of encouraging consistency. There is some evidence that quilt documentation projects
were aware of this article and based their own documentation forms on his suggested form. Marsha MacDowell of the Michigan Quilt Project, for example, in a letter to Shelly Zegart of the Kentucky Quilt Project wrote that their forms were based on Holstein’s forms.⁵¹

Patricia Keller in an article for *The Quilt Journal* in 1993 connected the lack of academically trained scholars in the field of quilt studies to the newness of material culture studies as an academic field and called upon independent quilt scholars to “move beyond mass documentation efforts and ‘quilts with histories’ anthologies to more comprehensive historical reconstruction.”⁵² She criticized quilt scholarship as focusing primarily on collecting data rather than analyzing the data and placing quilts within social, historical, and cultural contexts. She argued that material culture studies provided a “thoroughly integrated view of the diverse aspects of American culture contributing to the evolution of artifact form and multilayered functions.”⁵³ She stated that quilt scholars should borrow and adapt models from other academic disciplines including social history, cultural history, women’s studies, economics, sociology and more in order to gain a better understanding of quilts as objects and texts made in a particular time and place that hold meanings that could be interpreted across time and space. Incorporating methodologies from multiple disciplines would allow quilt scholars to study and explore quilts and quiltmaking on multiple levels.

In the 1990 edition of *Uncoverings*, scholars Elizabeth Richards, Sherri Martin-Scott, and Kerry Maguire also supported the use of material culture studies as a methodology for quilt studies. They viewed current quilt documentation projects and the published materials related to them as proof of what they claimed to be weaknesses in the
study of quilts. Like Keller, they argued that the study of quilts seemed to have ended with the documentation process and the publication of the project’s book or exhibition catalogue. They pointed specifically to an emphasis on collecting data on pattern, design, and construction without the additional step of analysis. Confirming Holstein’s prediction from 1983, they also noted a lack of consistent documentation procedures. Richards, Martin-Scott, and Maguire encouraged and emphasized the importance of collecting and presenting material through a consistent methodology that could lead to analysis, interpretation, and discussion. The concern was not that documentation projects were collecting the wrong kinds of information; the concern was that documentation projects were not collecting the same kinds of information or not collecting the data in the same way at all locations. A second kind of concern was that the documenters were from such varied backgrounds that they were collecting the information in different ways. In a more simple way, those critiquing documentation projects were arguing that the adoption of standard methodologies in quilt documenting would serve as quality controls.

In 1992, Laurel Horton expressed concerns of another type about the data collected by the quilt documentation projects. In her article “Rethinking Quilt Projects: A Folklorist’s Perspective” for The Quilt Journal, she recognized the important strategy of quilt documentation projects for folklorists. Thousand of families brought quilts to common locations instead of the volunteers having to hunt down quilts within individual families. The families were already eager to share their stories; however, the lack of training for both project organizers and for volunteers conducting the documentation and interviewing process were a concern for Horton. The removal of the quilts from their context within the home also was discomforting to her as folklorist because looking at
objects, practices, or rituals within their context is essential to the folklorist’s approach. Horton also questioned the way volunteers might ask questions, the way that answers might be recorded, and the lack of follow up and analysis. While recognizing the potential gains and benefits of quilt documentation projects, many of the academically trained scholars questioned the methodologies or lack thereof of the amateur quilt scholars and volunteer field workers.

In “Quilt Scholarship: The Quilt World and the Academic World” published in The Quilt Journal in 1994, folklorist, Lorre Wiedlich identified two groups of scholars working in the field of quilt studies and compared the two. She stated: “What do these two clusters of quilt-research activity have in common? The answer is, nothing. Not only is there no overlap between the people involved, the contexts out of which these activities grew are entirely different.”\textsuperscript{56} The two groups to which she was referring were the largely independent scholars of the American Quilt Study Group publishing articles primarily in Uncoverings, the group’s annual monograph, and academically-trained folklore students writing theses and dissertations in the 1970s and publishing articles in Folklore Feminist Communication. She noted that they had different origins. The independent scholars, while college educated, did not have formal academic training in history or folklore or a related field. Instead, they had a passion for quilts and quilt history. The academically-trained scholars had interests primarily in women’s studies, folklore, or art. Weidlich also noted that the two groups defined themselves differently. Independent quilt scholars defined themselves by their subject matter (i.e. geographical region of interest or quilt style of interest), while academically-trained scholars referred to their training (i.e. folklore, history, anthropology).\textsuperscript{57} She based her comments on the
Judy Elsley provided a contrasting viewpoint to Keller’s and Weidlich’s of the relationship between the academic world and the independent quilt scholar. Trained in literary criticism, her article for *Uncoverings 1995*, “Making Critical Connections in Quilt Scholarship”, also looked to this separation between the two worlds as one of a theoretical framework; however, she claimed that the separation did not mean a lack of common ground or that there were not people who bridged the gap. She was in agreement with Weidlich that there are two different worldviews on quilts, but she thought that both academically-trained and affiliated scholars and independent quilt scholars could work together in ways that scholars in other fields could not. Most independent quilt scholars came to the field of quilt studies through a love of quilts and quilting, and they often participated in the field initially as quiltmakers. Although they held college degrees, history, oral history, and folklore was not their field of study. According to Elsley, many of the academically-trained scholars did not quilt or sew, which independent quilt scholars found created a disconnect between the academic and his/her studies. Elsley believed that a relationship between academic and independent scholars could be mutually beneficial. Academic scholars could provide the focus on critical theory, careful reasoning, and facility with writing while independent scholars could provide the passion and practical expertise for the field. Elsley also pointed out that many academics who relied more on theory than on the quilts themselves had propagated mythology about quilts that quilt scholars have been trying to debunk. One of her examples of myth propagation came from the text of an English professor, who made credentials of the authors of papers published in the first volume of *Uncoverings* in 1980.

58

59

60
the observation that quilts were traditionally made from recycled clothing and household material and demonstrated the “art of making do” when writing about the movement of quilts from “cultural trifles” to a metaphor of the melting pot for Americans. Elsley pointed out that current research had proven that, historically, women had often used new fabrics rather than recycled fabrics for quiltmaking.

**Participation in the Quilt Documentation Projects**

One of the many gaps in the literature about the quilt documentation projects is a discussion of participation in the projects as a volunteer phenomenon and/or as a grassroots movement that attracted the attention and participation of thousands of individuals in communities across the United States. In ten years, over half of the states in the United States had initiated or completed some form of a quilt documentation project. An assortment of individuals, quilt guilds, and museums organized these projects with no particular help from an overarching national or academic organizational body. The groups depended upon grants and individual donations for financial solvency, volunteers for staffing, and local quilt experts including folklorists, dealers, collectors, museum professionals, and university professors for training. Fifteen years into these projects, Shelly Zegart wrote that the quilt projects were the “largest grassroots phenomenon in the decorative arts in the last half of the twentieth century.” Each group made its own decisions on training, documentation methods, goals, parameters, and organizational set-up. The quilt documentation projects as individual state projects and as a part of a larger movement required the participation of an astounding number of individuals both as volunteers for organizing and as participants bringing in their quilts.
Unfortunately, the current literature is woefully lacking in descriptions of public participation. Since the books focused primarily on telling the story of quilting and quilters in their respective states, the participants in the documentation days themselves are rarely mentioned. What the literature does convey is the profound astonishment of the documentation project committees over the number of quilts brought in for documentation in their states. George Holt described the documentation days in North Carolina as being more like festivals or quilting bees, not academic exercises. That could be an understandable description since the North Carolina Quilt Documentation Project documented more than 10,000 quilts during seventy-five documentation days over a fourteen-month period (an average of 134 quilts per day). The committee interpreted this outpouring as a reflection of the public interest and welcomed it. The committee also felt that the diversity of participants is “virtually impossible to describe.” An article printed in Southern Living magazine in 1986 seems to have had considerable influence as it convinced quilt owners from Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida to take their quilts to documentation days in North Carolina. Groups even called into the North Carolina Quilt Documentation Project to request a documentation day in their communities. Barbara Brackman called the response to the Kansas Quilt Documentation Project “tremendous”. Kansas documented over 13,000 quilts during seventy-two documentation days over a sixteen-month period (an average of 183 quilts per day). Laurel Horton called the results of the South Carolina project that she participated in “tremendously gratifying” after documenting 1,300 quilts.

The projects relied on the participation of history museums, historical societies, quilt guilds, arts organizations, crafts organizations, cooperative extension groups, and
even homemaker councils to publicize and host quilt documentation days. The host organization was responsible for local advertising in newspapers and on the radio. They also sometimes arranged for volunteer training days. Volunteers from all of these organizations also worked on the documentation days filling in wherever needed whether it was giving directions, working the check-in tables, or handing out information. Some states had a crew of volunteers who attended the documentation days to work as documenters, photographers, and interviewers. Other states relied on the local organization hosting the event to provide these personnel. State coordinators such as Ricky Clark from Ohio were effusive in their praise of the volunteer staffs that helped with the projects. Ricky Clark stated that the hundreds of volunteers prove the widespread interest in quilts and the support of the public in these projects.

One book aimed to focus attention on the importance and influence of the volunteers who helped with the quilt documentation days. *Gatherings: America’s Quilt Heritage*, published in 1995, is the catalogue for an exhibition that celebrated the time and efforts of the volunteers who organized the quilt documentation projects, worked on documentation days, and helped with the follow up research and oral history interviews. The catalogue is actually very similar to the individual documentation project books and catalogues. The introductions and the first chapter provided some interesting information about the projects and the volunteers, but then the book turned into a catalogue of the exhibition. Each quilt has an extensive entry attached to it that addresses the importance of the quilt or tells the story of the quilter in a particular state.

The most interesting information that the book provided is that there was a Quilt Documentation Conference in 1984 that attracted the attention of project coordinators.
and provided them a place to air their challenges and successes while listening to presentations on sound methodology and the importance of developing computer systems for maintaining quilt databases.\textsuperscript{72} Significantly, this book represents the only place so far in which the projects were presented as a group, and it was the first place that a listing of all the projects and their pertinent information was published.\textsuperscript{73} Author Kathlyn Sullivan addressed the diversity of the organizations and admits to the possible problematic public perceptions—exposing valuable quilts and their owners to dealers and concern by owners that showing the quilt could ignite other family members’ claims to ownership.\textsuperscript{74} The first chapter of the book also established the actual connections between the projects. Although they made their decisions independently, the projects did consult with one another officially and unofficially throughout the 1980s in order to learn what did and did not work.

**Summary**

Early quilt history has already started being placed into the larger social and cultural frameworks of the time period. Much of the interest in the early twentieth century corresponds to the interest in creating a common history for the American people sparked by the celebration of the nation’s Centennial. As Kenneth Ames pointed out, changes in the decorative arts were physical manifestations of the invention of a homogenous American colonial heritage. The revival of quiltmaking also corresponded to the beginning of women’s activism, and quilt historians like Virginia Gunn and Robert Shaw noted that women used quilts as a way to place themselves, their work, and their contributions to American heritage into the history of the United States propagating the
image of industrious, pioneering women piecing together scraps to keep their families warm and to decorate their homes. The role of quilts as part of the American folk tradition was confirmed by their inclusion in the WPA’s Index of American Design and folk art collectors of the 1930s.

The decades surrounding the celebration of the nation’s bicentennial once again sparked an interest in the heritage of the nation. The political battles over women’s rights and minority rights were reaching a crescendo. There was a new focus on the immigrant heritage of the United States in contrast to the efforts after the Centennial to create a homogenous heritage. The hobby of genealogy became the third most popular hobby during the 1970s as people began looking for their family history and ancestral roots. In the art world of the 1970s and 1980s, the importance of pop art, minimalism, and modern art created an atmosphere open to the idea of quilts as both folk art and art. Having already been established as a form of folk art and as evidence of women’s work, industriousness, and artistic capabilities, quilts took on more complex roles as bearers of familial history and American culture.

The quilt revival of the 1970s and 1980s has also started being placed within the larger social and cultural frameworks of the anti-technology, anti-industrialization movements of the late 1960s and the celebration of American heritage, values, and history during the 1976 Bicentennial. Introduced to the public again as folk art that could be compared with abstract art of the modern artist, quilts became collectors’ items. A general trend towards the desire for hand-made and home-made objects rather than the generic, mass-produced products available at department stores made quilts an appealing form of home decoration and bedcovering. Jean Ray Laury summed up well the forces
contributing to the quilt revival—a convergence of interest in women’s work, the 1976 Bicentennial celebrations encouraging people to learn about the nation’s past, quilt exhibitions and museums, and the ability to break out of the mold of traditional versions of the craft created the basis for the multi-million dollar quilt industry and quilt revival.

The interest in creating a well-researched history of quilts that formed in the 1980s is a result of this quilt revival. People like Sally Garoutte (co-founder of the American Quilt Study Group), Jonathan Holstein, Patsy and Myron Orlofsky, Barbara Brackman, Jean Ray Laury, and the organizers of the quilt documentation projects were not content with the histories written in the early twentieth century during the first quilt revival. They were interested in creating a body of knowledge that would answer their questions about the history of quiltmaking, about the development of quilt aesthetics and patterns, and about the role of quiltmaking in women’s lives. The research that they began conducting through individual projects and through the quilt documentation projects sparked debate about how to conduct the research and who should be doing the research. Although these discussions are important, they have not addressed, other than through brief references, how and why the quilt documentation projects became a nationwide phenomenon. This project seeks to fill that gap in the literature.
CHAPTER 2
THE KENTUCKY QUILT PROJECT, INC.

In People Magazine on April 30, 1979, Suzy Kalter introduced the nation to the quilt dealer, Bruce Mann. Since 1979, Mann has become known not just as a quilt dealer, but as the man behind the quilt documentation projects—at least in Kentucky. By 1979, according to Kalter, Mann was traveling about 50,000 miles a year between Kentucky and both coasts. He was purchasing quilts made in Kentucky and selling them to celebrities. He told Kalter that quilts were “American folk art” and that they were “great investments.” He started collecting in 1970 when he purchased fifty quilts at an auction for $320. By 1979, he was selling individual quilts for about the same price as his first group of fifty.¹

Sometime between the interview with People Magazine and his death in a car accident in November 1980, Mann decided that, in addition to selling Kentucky quilts, he ought to be documenting the quilts first. Between 1981 and 1983, the Kentucky Quilt Project, Inc. (hereafter KyQP) fulfilled Mann’s dream of recording Kentucky’s quilts through images and stories. The KyQP was the first statewide quilt documentation project to be completed, and it ignited a nationwide phenomenon.² This chapter examines the history of the project, the goals and motivations of the project organizers, how the project was publicized, and finally the kind of responses that the KyQP received from participants and from those who read about the project in other states.
Bruce Mann’s Proposal

In 1980, Bruce Mann wrote a short outline for a project to document Kentucky’s quilts, exhibit them, and publish an encyclopedic style catalog of the findings. Although he did not live to see the project to completion, his proposal served as a guiding document to The KyQP. Later proposals written by Eleanor Bingham Miller and Shelly Zegart for the KyQP incorporated his goals and much of his rationale for the project that they organized. Although he laid out possible funding sources at the end of the proposal, there was no evidence that he had progressed to the point of presenting his project for funding. His methodology for finding these quilts was fairly standard. According to his project outline, he planned to identify possible owners of early quilts (pre-1900) by contacting “the county courthouse and/or local historical societies in each of the 120 counties” in addition to local museums and collectors. He hoped to gather photographs of the quilts that he identified through these different sources and visit the owners of the quilts he thought were the most promising for his exhibition and catalog. After confirming that these quilts were appropriate for his goals, he planned to document them by having them professionally photographed, describing them, and recording the provenance. His second goal was to select the “most important and definitive pieces for a major museum show.” Finally, he intended to write a catalog of the quilts that “would have reference significance beyond what would be expected regionally.”

His rationale for choosing Kentucky for this project was interesting. He thought that Kentucky was of particular interest because it was the first state settled west of the Alleghenies, thereby making it far enough removed from the European-dominated coastal states to develop its own unique quilt forms. Although later scholarship has shown this
not to be true, it was a reasonable supposition at the time. He noted in his proposal outline that “the textile industry was the cutting edge of the industrial revolution,” and quilts were a perfect example of the influence of the textile industry as well as good documentary evidence of the changes taking place in the industry during the nineteenth century. He also recognized what he called their “artistic folk sensitivity” and their connection to women’s history. Although hyperbolizing to some extent, he wrote that quilts “provide nearly the only record left by pre-suffrage housewives and pioneers.” This comment underscores the perceptions held about quilts by the general public and many experts then and now. They were seen as exemplars of women’s virtue and industry.

In his proposal, Mann was also the first person to address the question of why a documentation project was important. He titled the section “Why Bother?” His answer to that question was that there was an ongoing debate over whether or not there were regional differences in quilts and quiltmaking practices. He thought that a documentation project of this type might help to resolve some of those debates. He also considered a documentation project with a photographic element incorporated into it one of the best ways to preserve the quilts that would inevitably deteriorate over time. His third reason for documenting quilts was to complete a “scientific study” that would help to identify the styles and design elements of the American quilt.

Finally, he hit a note with Kentuckians that seemed to resonate. He wanted this documentation project to give Kentuckians the chance to establish a “Kentucky identity” among folklorists and material cultural scholars. This last reason for proposing a quilt documentation project might be deeply rooted in Kentucky’s personality and history as a
state. Kentucky already had a “craft” reputation outside of the state. In 1975, three quilters from the Appalachian Fireside Crafts group of Kentucky had their quilts hung in Washington, D.C. for an exhibition. Another quilt made by a member of the same group was exhibited in the White House, and one was sent to Bath, England, as part of a United States bicentennial display. Bruce Mann capitalized on this in his successful business of selling Kentucky quilts on both the east and west coasts. The Kentucky state government made 1974 an important year for the state because it chose the year 1974 to celebrate its bicentennial. Although the bicentennial of Kentucky’s statehood was not until 1992, the Kentucky government chose to celebrate the state’s birthday in 1974 because they feared they would be overlooked in the U.S. Bicentennial celebrations in 1976. Ms. Dell Courtney who served as the special events coordinator for the Louisville Chamber of Commerce’s Bicentennial Committee told the *Louisville Courier-Journal* that the real reason Kentucky was celebrating so early was “in 1976 the 13 Eastern Seaboard states are going to get all the publicity and everything, so frankly we just wanted to get our share ahead of them.” Kentucky was a part of Virginia’s territory in 1776 and did not become a separate state until eighteen years later. The first settlement in what became Kentucky was a fort established in 1774, hence the selection of 1974 for a bicentennial “statehood” celebration. Mann too seemed to understand the desire to celebrate Kentucky’s unique heritage and establish its crafts as a unique state tradition. Documenting Kentucky quilts, which were already becoming popular throughout the United States, was another way of separating Kentucky from the thirteen original states. The need to celebrate Kentucky’s history separately from Virginia and the desire to
document Kentucky’s quilts in hopes of discovering a distinct Kentucky characteristic
seem to have some parallel motivations.

Launching the Kentucky Quilt Project

After Bruce Mann’s death in November 1980, his friends Shelly Zegart and
Eleanor Bingham Miller enlisted the help of Eunice Sears to ensure the realization of the
project that he had envisioned. The three of them served as the board of directors; Katy
Christopherson, chairman of the Kentucky Heritage Quilt Society, served as a
consultant. Of the three women on the board of directors for the KyQP, Zegart was the
only one with a direct connection to the quilting world, and she was fairly new to it.
Unlike most of the later quilt documentation projects, none of the three women, who
organized the KyQP, seems to have been a quilter. According to an interview with
attending an event at which Bruce Mann had shown his quilt collection. Soon after, she
became a quilt collector and quilt dealer in her own right learning from Mann as she went
along. Her educational background was not in history or art history; it was in elementary
education. However, Zegart had worked for a number of non-profit organizations
gaining organizational experience that would serve the KyQP well. She had served as a
member, on the board of directors, or officer for groups as wide ranging as the Woman’s
Guild of Jewish Hospital, Brandeis University National Women’s Committee, and the
Arts Center Association at the Water Tower (a Louisville Art Gallery).

Eleanor Bingham Miller’s background was in television production as a
programmer and producer. She had a bachelors degree in American Studies from Sussex
University in Brighton, England. Eunice Sears was an organizer and a fundraiser. She had worked in sales, advertising, and as executive director of the Tri-State Fair and Regatta, Inc. prior to becoming a member of the board of directors for the KyQP. She had also been a founder and president of an organization for working women in Eastern Kentucky called the “Network.” Once these women undertook the project, they made progress quickly and used their combined skills in advertising, promotion, fundraising, non-profit work, and organizing to great effect. They held the first quilt documentation day in Ashland where they documented fifteen quilts in July 1981, only eight months after Mann’s death. Although the KyQP had low turnout on the first documentation day, over 1200 quilts were documented by the end of the documentation days.

Katy Christopherson served as a consultant to the project due to her involvement with the Kentucky Heritage Quilt Society, another group that had begun documenting Kentucky quilts and quiltmakers in 1981. The Kentucky Heritage Quilt Society formed in January 1981 with three primary goals. One of those goals was to document quilts and quiltmaking in Kentucky. To accomplish this goal, they set up a two-fold project—documenting quilts in private and public collections and recording the oral histories of living quiltmakers. These two projects were respectively called The Kentucky Quilt Registry and Quilters-on-File. When the Kentucky Quilt Project began its documentation of quilts, the two projects worked together. Katy Christopherson, chairman of the Kentucky Quilt Registry, worked as a consultant to the Kentucky Quilt Project. The Kentucky Heritage Quilt Society provided trained volunteers for at least some of the Quilt Days. They also conducted a multi-tiered set of training courses for their volunteers beginning in a September 1981 seminar with folklorist and quilt historian

One of the primary differences between the Kentucky Quilt Registry and the Kentucky Quilt Project was the method used for finding quilts. The Kentucky Quilt Registry did not host Quilt Days where they invited the public to bring in family quilts for documentation; rather, they approached museums or individuals and documented museum collections on site or private collections in people’s homes. In an article that Christopherson wrote for *Uncoverings*, she explained that being split between the two projects had slowed the process, but she also noted that the methodology for the Kentucky Quilt Registry was a much more time-consuming method due to the social customs and expectations in place when visiting someone’s home. She felt, however, that splitting her time between the two groups would ultimately benefit the Kentucky Quilt Registry because the Kentucky Quilt Project had publicly stated that they would be giving their research and findings on over 1200 quilts to the Kentucky Quilt Registry for further research. This does not appear to have transpired because there is no mention of the final location of the Kentucky Heritage Quilt Society Quilt Registry records in the Kentucky Quilt Project records at the University of Louisville Archives. The Kentucky Historical Society has the Kentucky Heritage Quilt Society’s oral history project records (Quilters-on-File) in its archives. The Kentucky Quilt Registry, however, is not the focus of this study except in those areas where it intersects with the KyQP.

A total of twelve Quilt Days were held across the state between July 1981 and March 1982 (Table 1). In choosing the locations of the Quilt Days, the board of directors aimed to ensure that everyone living in Kentucky could reach at least one day without
having to drive more than an hour each way.\textsuperscript{22} The Quilt Day originally scheduled for January 1982 in Somerset was canceled due to weather and rescheduled for March 23\textsuperscript{rd} making it the last documentation day of the twelve originally scheduled days. A final thirteenth Quilt Day was held on February 5, 1983, the opening day of the exhibition, “Kentucky Quilts: 1800-1900,” at the Louisville Museum of Natural History and Science. It had not been scheduled as one of the original Quilt Days. Surprisingly, this was actually the most successful of Kentucky’s documentation days with a total of 177 quilts documented on that day.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City/Town</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>No. Quilts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ashland</td>
<td>7/3/1981</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisville</td>
<td>7/21/1981</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexington</td>
<td>9/16/1981</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paducah</td>
<td>10/6/1981</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitesburg</td>
<td>10/20/1981</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covington</td>
<td>11/10/1981</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowling Green</td>
<td>11/17/1981</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owensboro</td>
<td>11/18/1981</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somerset</td>
<td>11/23/1981</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hopkinsville</td>
<td>12/9/1981</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisville</td>
<td>3/8/1982</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somerset</td>
<td>3/23/1982</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisville**</td>
<td>2/5/1983</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Number of quilts was unavailable in the records for all days.
**This documentation day was not one of the original 12.

A cash prize of $100 dollars was offered to the owner of the oldest and most well-preserved quilt documented at each of the first twelve documentation days and $250 was offered at the thirteenth documentation day. The amount of the cash prize offered on the final documentation day may explain, in part, the large number of quilts (177) brought to that site. Unlike later projects, the KyQP board of directors hired one project coordinator, Janet Rossano, to organize and coordinate the documentation days. KyQP
did not depend primarily upon a local contact for organizing and publicizing the day’s activities. Shelly Zegart, herself, attended each documentation day as the primary quilt documenter, which helped ensure consistency in the documenting process. The project coordinator contracted with a site—museum, art center, or guild—in each of the thirteen locations that provided space and helped to find volunteers. The KyQP did not have a local coordinator responsible for locating the site, finding volunteers, training volunteers, and disseminating publicity. Katy Christopherson provided trained volunteers from the Kentucky Heritage Quilt Society; and the board of directors handled the press releases.

By the end of 1981, the KyQP had developed a new proposal that focused on an exhibition and publication. At this point, the KyQP had already conducted ten of the twelve quilt documentation days and had successfully documented about 700 quilts. The new proposal expanded upon Bruce Mann’s original ideas of an exhibition and catalog. It also included a discussion of how the project committee had gone about finding the quilts that it documented. The original three goals of Mann’s proposal were included in the 1981 proposal—document authentic, outstanding Kentucky quilts from the nineteenth century, publish a book, and organize an exhibit. By this time, a few things had changed, however. The documentation project did not depend upon the knowledge of historical societies, quilt dealers and collectors, or courthouses. Rather, the KyQP board of directors had marketed their plan through the print media locally and nationally. They had, for the first time ever, created a statewide quilt documentation project that invited the public to participate by capturing their interest through newspaper and magazine articles first and later by word-of-mouth. The second change was that the details of the exhibit in this new proposal were more developed. An independent curator, Nancy
Comstock, had been hired, the Louisville Museum of Natural History and Science (less than five years old at this point) had agreed to exhibit the quilts, and dates had been set. Additionally, the KyQP had a goal of exhibiting fifty quilts, and they were already in discussion with SITES, the Smithsonian Institute Traveling Exhibit Service, for sponsorship of a traveling exhibit. The project even set the criteria for the quilts that would be chosen for the exhibit. “Each quilt featured in the Exhibit will be chosen because it tells the story of its maker or because it commemorates specifically or connects generally to an historic event.”

As far as the third goal, the KyQP had found a graphic artist and changed the purpose of the book. While Bruce Mann had intended an encyclopedic-style book that catalogued different types of Kentucky quilts and pointed out the distinctive features of Kentucky quilts, the new version became a catalogue of the quilts that had been chosen for the exhibition and the stories of why they were made. According to the new proposal, the book would trace the history of quilting in Kentucky women’s lives.

The motivations for the project expressed in this new proposal were a shortened version of Bruce Mann’s statements in his outline from November 1980. The board of directors was interested in the role of the Industrial Revolution in quiltmaking practices, in how women recorded important events in their quilts, and in how Kentucky’s role as a border state between the settled Eastern seaboard and the West influenced Kentucky quiltmaking traditions. The significant additional motivating factor in conducting the quilt documentation project was Bruce Mann’s death. Although probably not necessary to gain funding for the project, the story of his death and his ambition to document the
quilts because of their historic and artistic significance were a large section of the proposal.  

The exhibition of quilts was probably the most successful part of Kentucky’s project. It was physical evidence along with the catalog of what the KyQP had accomplished in about two years. After the cash prize, the exhibit was the other piece of information most often mentioned in the coverage of the documentation days.  

_Americana_ journalist Nick Taylor wrote a lengthy article about the project and the planned exhibition in the January/February 1983 edition. Jon Finley, author of the exhibition catalogue, wrote a lengthy article for _The Courier Journal Magazine_ about the process of documenting the quilts, and more interestingly about how quickly the information about a quilt can be lost from generation to generation based upon the personal experiences he had during his research for the catalogue. The exhibition and the project were publicized in _American Collector’s Journal, Americana, Handmade, House Beautiful, Southern Living, Quilter’s Newsletter Magazine, Quilt, St. Louis Post Dispatch, Ohio Antique Preview, The Houston Post, The Arizona Republic_, and in Ruth Roberson’s monthly quilting article for North Carolina’s _News and Observer_.  

After the exhibition closed in Louisville at the end of March 1983, it was displayed for a couple of months at the University of Kentucky in Bowling Green and then went on an international tour through the Smithsonian Institute Traveling Exhibits Service. Over the next two years, the quilts went to Ireland, Tennessee, Texas, Kansas, Alabama, Missouri, Ohio, and West Virginia. The Texas Sesquicentennial Association planned their quilt documentation day in Wichita Falls to correspond with the closing weeks of the KyQP’s exhibit at the Wichita Falls Museum and Art Center. Additionally,
other exhibits of Kentucky quilts were put together by the KyQP for other locations. One such exhibit went to Australia while a separate one hung in Houston, Texas at the Quilt Festival 1984. The Texas Sesquicentennial Quilt Association was careful to host a quilt documentation day at that same festival and connected the success and influence of the KyQP to the importance of their own project.30

Newspaper Publicity and Coverage

Prior to each Quilt Day, the KyQP sent out a press release. Although some of the Quilt Days like the first one in Ashland were not as successful as the project organizers had hoped, the project quickly gained people’s attention and by the end of 1981, the staff of the KyQP had documented over 700 quilts.31 By the conclusion of the documentation phase of the project, 1200 quilts had been documented. Considering that there were only twelve official documentation days, that this was the first statewide quilt documentation project, and that the Quilt Days occurred over the short period of time between July 1981 and March 1982, this is an impressive number. Journalist Nick Taylor, writing for an Americana magazine article in early 1983 just prior to the opening of the exhibition, told his readers that the KyQP had not spent a penny of their over $100,000 budget on advertising.32 For other quilt projects getting started about this time, this fact probably caught the attention the organizers’ attention, and they were probably very interested in knowing how Kentucky had managed to publicize its quilt documentation days without spending money on advertising. Clearly, the connections that Eleanor Bingham Miller, Eunice Ray, and Shelly Zegart had in the Louisville and Kentucky communities helped them gain the attention and desired coverage in newspapers and magazines.
The Quilt Days generated a considerable amount of publicity considering that they were sponsored by a non-profit group documenting quilts. Although quilts had gained in popularity as art investments, they were still considered primarily utilitarian items made by home makers for warm bed coverings. There were no paid advertisements in the print media for the project. Instead, most of the publicity resulted from the press releases sent out in advance. The newspaper coverage of the project was usually much more than a simple listing in the local calendar of events. Typically, it was an article, sometimes on the front page of an inside section of the newspaper, ranging from a short fifty-word article, providing the bare minimum information, to a full page article. Usually, the full-page articles ran after the Quilt Day.

The articles about Quilt Days had consistent messages due in large part to the fact that the press releases were prepared and distributed by the project organizers or staff rather than a local project coordinator as was the case in other states. The most common content for the articles was general information about the upcoming Quilt Day, the cash prize ($100 for the oldest, most well-preserved Kentucky-made quilt) being offered at each Quilt Day, and the planned exhibition that would include quilts found at the Quilt Days. Publicity for the first ten Quilt Days was a mixture of information about the history of the KyQP, the reasons why documenting quilts was important, stories about quiltmaking traditions in Kentucky history, and the proposed book.

The story of Bruce Mann, his ambition, and his untimely death was an integral part of the newspaper coverage of the Quilt Days. Because he was a known figure in the antique business and quilt world in Kentucky, journalists and the project organizers recognized that he provided a human connection to the origins and reasons for the KyQP.
One-quarter of the articles published in 1981 and 1982 mentioned Bruce Mann and his untimely death. They usually did one of two things—mentioned that he was the person who originally envisioned this type of project and/or mentioned his death as the galvanizing event that spurred Shelly Zegart and Eleanor Bingham Miller’s decision to conduct the project when they did. Additionally, some articles, like the one from *The Paducah Sun*, gave Mann’s reasons for wanting to conduct the project.\(^{34}\)

On the day after the Quilt Day in Louisville in July 1981, the *Louisville Times* gave the whole front page of their “Times 2” section to coverage of the KyQP. The first article, “Kentucky Quilts: Pieces of History,” gave a synopsis of the previous day’s documentation activities, the basic history of the project, and stories about some of the quilts documented.\(^{35}\) Underneath that article, however, was a second article about Bruce Mann by the same journalist, Nina Walfoort. She presented Mann as a successful quilt dealer. Near the end of her article she pointed out that just before his death, Mann had proposed a documentation project to “collect, preserve, and document the quilts and try to identify the traditions that were particular to Kentucky quilting.”\(^{36}\) She then told the sad story about how Bruce Mann had died before accomplishing his goal of documenting Kentucky’s quilt heritage. Although the reasoning for tying the Bruce Mann story so closely to the publicity for the KyQP is unclear from written records only, it is clear that his story and his failure to accomplish his goal because of his untimely death supported the argument that it was necessary for the public to participate in the preservation of Kentucky’s heritage now and not wait.

In fact, just over a quarter of the articles written about the KyQP announcing Quilt Days mentioned that the purpose of the project was to preserve Kentucky’s cultural
The KyQP organizers presented what they saw as a problem (loss of the state’s heritage through the loss of the physical quilt or the stories about the quilt or its quilt maker) and then provided the project as the best solution for preserving the state’s heritage by encouraging quilt owners to document their quilts. Lucie Blodgett, a journalist for the Voice Newspapers, reinforced these ideas for the project. In one article, she wrote: “The project has rescued quilts ‘from the dogs’ beds’ and attics and closets all over the state.”

On the same page as the article about Bruce Mann mentioned previously, Nina Walfoort quoted Shelly Zegart: “We hope to tell some of Kentucky’s history via its quilts. Unfortunately, commercial business is stripping this state of its antiques.” An article in The Mountain Eagle used slightly less dramatic language: “Handmade quilts have told the story of Kentucky and the people who settled it, but many of the earliest and best examples of Kentucky quilting have been lost or destroyed, and many have deteriorated beyond repair.” Other articles contained stories about quilts demonstrating how interesting the heritage could be and how important it was to share those stories with other people in order to preserve the heritage. Dependent upon what the project referred to as a “heritage-conscious audience,” these articles conveyed the message that the project needed quilt owners to bring in their historical quilts to be documented so that the state’s heritage would not disappear.

What may have intrigued some people enough to participate in the project is how the organizers presented the importance of quiltmaking to women in the nineteenth century. The Mountain Eagle quoted the KyQP in identifying the purpose of the project as the need to document quilts as women’s art:
Originally an article of warmth and comfort on the frontier, the quilt, while retaining this role, developed into a medium of art, communication, and celebration for women and a very few men...Denied many channels of expression and communication by tradition and domestic obligation, women of the era took full advantage of the social aspect of quilting. Quilting became as important to them as the quilts themselves were to their families.\textsuperscript{42}

The same article went on to state that quilts were often the “only record left by housewives and pioneers prior to suffrage” echoing the original proposal by Bruce Mann.\textsuperscript{43} Although scholars knew then and now that there were diaries and journals and some other written records left by women, this statement seemed to resonate with the public and excited them about the idea of having their family quilts documented. Many people may have looked at the quilts that had been handed down to them from their mothers and grandmothers with a new respect or admiration.

\textit{The Cash Prize}

The cash prize was probably the most influential factor in bringing people out to a Quilt Day or in encouraging them to mail a photograph and information on their quilts to the project. The contest was a part of the Quilt Days from the very beginning. The very first article written about the Ashland Quilt Day stated that there would be a $100 prize for the “quilt judged best in show.”\textsuperscript{44} The prize was mentioned in seventy-one out of eighty-one articles written prior to or just after a Quilt Day. It was also mentioned in articles that summarized the project after the exhibition was installed at the Louisville Museum of Natural History and Science in 1983 and while it traveled.\textsuperscript{45}
Between July 1981 and December 1981, there were ten Quilt Days that according to articles advertising the Louisville Quilt Day in March 1982, had documented about 700 quilts. Since articles written after the Quilt Days in Ashland, Whitesburg, and Louisville (July 1981) gave the number of quilts that had been documented at each of them, it was simple arithmetic to figure out about how many had been documented at each of the other days. The other seven Quilt Days held during 1981 must have averaged about 85 quilts per day if none of the quilts documented had been done by mail or other means. Of the twenty-four articles found about the Louisville Quilt Day in March 1982, eighteen of those articles mention the cash prize being offered for the “oldest, best preserved quilt,” but only one of those eighteen mentions the cash prize in the title for the article.

The catalog meant to accompany the exhibition and fulfill one of the three goals set forth by the KyQP was published in late 1982. By the time that it went to print, 1200 quilts had been documented. The project quit documenting mailed-in quilt information, according to newspaper articles, on March 4, 1982. That means that 500 quilts were documented between the time that the KyQP sent the press release (probably in January 1982 as it is undated) concerning what it intended to be its final documentation day in Louisville on March 8 and the eventual end of its documentation period with a rescheduled Quilt Day in Somerset on March 23, 1982 (the original Somerset Quilt Day had been scheduled for January but was cancelled due to weather). In other words, almost half of the total number of quilts documented were recorded over a three month time period in which there were only two documentation days and the difference between
the print coverage of those two days and the previous ten was the emphasis on the cash prize.

The Louisville Quilt Day scheduled for March 8, 1982 was held at the Water Tower, an art gallery, and had been publicized under a special title as “Round-Up Day,” since it had been planned as the final Quilt Day. Ultimately, the last documentation day was the rescheduled one in Somerset on March 23, 1982. However, publicity for the March 8th Louisville “Round-up Day” would have already been disseminated when the Somerset Quilt Day in January had to be rescheduled.

The coverage for “Round-up Day” was virtually statewide as shown in Figure 1, a map of the locations of fourteen articles published outside of Louisville publicizing the last Quilt Day. When compared to a map showing the locations of each Quilt Day held throughout the state (Figure 2), the newspaper coverage seems concentrated in the part of the state where the documentation days had been furthest apart in distance. The eastern part of the state was more heavily populated than the western side, and this suggests that the Kentucky Quilt Project focused its attention on the most populous region of the state, which would be a reasonable strategy. The eastern side of the state included some of the most populous counties including Jefferson, Fayette, Kenton, and Pike. Even removing the population of Jefferson County and its surrounding counties because it would make sense to concentrate promotion of the event in the county in which Louisville is situated, the population of the eastern side of the state was twice as large as the western side of the state.\footnote{Cities and towns like Pikeville, Greenup, Edgewood, and Inez were as much as three and a half hours away from Louisville; however, articles promoting the final “Round-Up Day” were different from the earlier ones.}
The articles publicizing “Round-Up Day” did not mention the story of how Eleanor Bingham Miller and Shelly Zegart carried on the project after Bruce Mann’s death nor how pioneer women quilted to keep their families warm or to get through the lonely days of the Civil War. Instead, the newspaper articles for this final day focused on
the cash prize, using the word contest and describing how to enter a quilt either by attending the documentation day or by mailing-in the information. Of all the newspaper articles printed prior to these, only one had mentioned that people could mail in information and a photograph about their quilts. All fourteen of the articles concerning “Round-Up Day” gave readers the information about when and where it would be held and then told them that if they were unable to attend in person, all they had to do was mail in a photograph of the quilt, a detailed description, their contact information, and as much history about the quilt as possible. The newspaper articles also gave a deadline of March 4, 1982, for all mailed information. Eight out of the fourteen articles use the words “contest”, “$100 prize”, or “$100” in the title of the article. Twelve of the fourteen articles made the contest a major focus for the article. A sampling of the titles follows: “Oldest Quilts Being Sought, $100 Prize,” “Quilt Contest Is Scheduled,” “$100 for Oldest Kentucky Quilt,” “Your Antique Quilt May Fetch $100 Prize.”

An additional 500 quilts were documented between January 1, 1982 and March 31, 1982. Since the articles after the two “final” Quilt Days in Louisville and Somerset did not mention the number of quilts documented at each, it either means that these two Quilt Days were very successful or a large number of people responded to the invitation to mail their quilt’s information in order to be entered into the contest. Almost half of the overall number of quilts were documented in the last two and a half to three months of the documentation phase of the project. The focus on the contest in both the title and the content of the articles as well as the inclusion of mailing information increased participation considerably.
The only other Quilt Day that was publicized as heavily as the “Round-Up Day” in 1982 was a Quilt Day held in conjunction with the opening festivities for the “Kentucky Quilts: 1800-1900” exhibition at the Museum of Natural History and Science in Louisville on February 5, 1983. Although the publicity was statewide, it was concentrated on the eastern half of the state like that for the “Round-Up Day.” (see Figure 3). The information in the newspaper articles focused on two things—the quilt contest with a $250 cash prize sponsored by First National Bank and the opening of the exhibition. There were at least 45 newspaper articles written about this Quilt Day in addition to the statewide publicity done for the exhibition itself. It emerged as the single most successful Quilt Day with a total of 177 quilts documented. Attendance was the highest for a single day in the five-year history of the museum. According to reports, over 1,000 visitors paid admission on the opening day of “Kentucky Quilts: 1800-1900”.53 Unfortunately, since the project’s book was published prior to the opening of the exhibition, this Quilt Day has not been listed in the records of the documentation project as a planned documentation day. Shelly Zegart’s articles reflecting on the project and articles talking about the project written during the exhibition and during the SITES traveling exhibition talk about twelve Quilt Days possibly because the quilts chosen for the exhibitions came only from those 1200 quilts documented prior to the end of March 1982.
Response to the Kentucky Quilt Project

The KyQP received an assortment of feedback regarding the quilt documentation project and the exhibition. There was feedback from participants in the coverage of the Quilt Days, letters sent directly to the KyQP offices in response to articles—both magazine and newspaper—about the project or exhibit, reviews of the project and the exhibition in other states’ newspapers, and requests from all over the country for help in designing more projects. Although not much information directly from people who participated is available, there were a few articles that wrote about why people took their quilts to be documented. An article written in January 1983 for the *Bowling Green Daily News* just before the exhibition opened interviewed three of the women including Novice Robinson and Julia Neal from Bowling Green who had quilts hanging in the exhibition. Novice Robinson, who had won the $100 prize in Bowling Green for her family’s quilt, said that it was accidental that she went. A friend had called her and convinced her to
attend. Julia Neal told journalist Debi Wade that she had taken her quilt to the documentation day because she wanted to know what the pattern was. According to Eunice Sears, most of the participants were older women who were simply proud of their quilts. She also referred to these women as the “keepers of family history.” Nick Taylor, who wrote the article in which Sears makes these comments, noted though that there was a definite sense of competition among the participants. Kate Hammond seems to have responded to the idea that “some women from Louisville” wanted to find quilts for an exhibit and they were offering a $100 prize for “the best nineteenth-century quilt.” If these responses can be treated as representative, some people attended documentation days out of curiosity, pride in their family history and heirlooms, or an interest in the prize money.

As the first statewide quilt documentation project and as a well-publicized project, the staff and board of directors for the KyQP received mail from all over the country and were often referenced in articles about quilts. Florence Evans, a novice quilt maker from California, wrote a letter in January 1983 asking for advice on how to start a documentation project and especially on how to get grants. In a letter from November 1983, Karen O’Dowd included a request for information about a project in Michigan and an outline for a recommended procedure in addition to requesting KyQP’s book. Ruth Roberson in March 1984 wrote that she wished a North Carolina museum had been included as a site for the traveling exhibition, that she was poring over Kentucky’s book and hoping for a similar project in North Carolina. She also made the statement that other states and areas should follow Kentucky’s vision so as to contribute to the knowledge base about quilts and quilt makers. Roberson became the director of the
North Carolina Quilt Project, another incredibly successful project, in 1986. Helen Mershon writing for The Oregonian also in March 1984 wrote that Kentucky’s project had become the model for ten other states, and Zegart told her that she had received many invitations to speak because even though other groups had talked about a project, Kentucky had actually done it.  

An article in Quilting Today in 1989 provided an exuberant view on the influence of Kentucky’s project, “The Kentucky Quilt Project has acted as a beacon lighting the way for all subsequent state quilt documentation projects.” Quilters Newsletter Magazine in 1984 and Lady’s Circle Patchwork Quilts in 1983 published articles about the Kentucky Quilt Project. The Lady’s Circle Patchwork Quilts Spring 1983 edition was dedicated to the story of Kentucky quilts. The articles included descriptions of both the Kentucky Quilt Project and the Kentucky Heritage Quilt Society. Authors of later documentation project books also credited the KyQP as an impetus behind their projects. Of the thirty-six documentation projects initiated during the 1980s and considered for this study, ten of the projects gave the KyQP credit for motivating the organizers to conduct projects in their own states. An additional five sets of organizers credited the success of all of the quilt documentation projects prior to theirs for inspiration to initiate a project. For example, the Arizona Quilt Project organizers noted in their book Grand Endeavors that they had studied other projects—Kentucky, Texas, Missouri, and others—before finalizing plans for their project. 

The organizers of the KyQP were often asked for advice by other groups and people about how to start, fund, and promote a documentation project. The project’s organizers quickly learned that what they had done would become a model for other
groups. Darlene Stevens representing the Mountain Heritage Quilt Guild in West Virginia wrote for advice in setting up a pilot project. She was especially concerned about gathering the correct information. Although Stevens did not become an organizer with the West Virginia Heritage Quilt Search, Barbara Howard was an organizer for West Virginia’s project and probably worked with Stevens on the earlier pilot project.66 Marianne Woods of the Ozarks Quilt Project, a regional survey of Arkansas quilts, Jane Frazier of the Idaho Quilt Project, and Bettina Havig of the Missouri Quilt Project sought out advice from the KyQP.67 The response from the organizers of the KyQP became a standard response. They had not written a set of guidelines, an outline, or a list of recommendations to send out in response to these requests. Instead, they responded that the book written by the KyQP provided a simple overview of their project and that if they wanted further advice or help, Shelly Zegart was available to act as a paid consultant.

This response became standard for the KyQP. In fact, this refusal to put into writing a set of guidelines and recommendations sometimes generated discussion between the organizers of the KyQP and others. For example, Katy Christopherson, who acted as a consultant to several other documentation projects, expressed her concern to Shelly Zegart about her refusal to create a pamphlet or brochure for others interested in developing a project. In correspondence between Christopherson and Zegart, two issues came to light. The first was that the KyQP was very particular about how they were connected to other projects and in how they were presented to other groups (to museums, in lectures, and to documentation projects). The organizers were very careful to maintain their unique identity and were protective of their reputation.68
The second issue that came to light in the correspondence between Christopherson and Zegart was that the KyQP organizers were determined to be careful about putting too much organizational and process information into writing because they recognized that each individual project would have different needs. In a reply to a letter from Christopherson asking them to put something in writing to help other projects, Zegart and Eleanor Bingham Miller wrote: “We want to be of help, and the office is operating as a referral service for all groups doing projects. As each group has its own unique set of assets and problems, we feel it best to deal with each on an individual basis through the office.”

Christopherson responded that a detailed written description of the experiences of the project members themselves and how they did the planning and execution of the project would still go a long way to helping other projects. She also noted most of the projects would respond to their individual situations and concerns on their own. Despite these pleas and cajoling, the KyQP organizers chose not to develop a documentation project guide.

**Passing the Torch**

Given the fast growing interest in documentation projects and the debates evolving around methodologies and procedures and the limitations of using one project as the primary clearing house for information and news, coordinators of other documentation projects began to take on the responsibility of sharing information and creating networks. In October 1984, Katy Christopherson of the Kentucky Heritage Quilt Society and Ricky Clark, later director of the Ohio Quilt Research Project, spearheaded the organization of a conference on quilt documentation in Knoxville, Tennessee. For
this two-day conference, they invited both current documentation project staffs and people interested in starting a documentation project to participate in lectures, hands-on training, and discussions. Speakers for the seminar included experts on data computerization, oral history methods, methodologies for quilt studies, and resources for social historians. In 1987, at the request of Audrey Waite from the Arizona Quilt Project, Karey Bresenhan, director of the Texas Sesquicentennial Quilt Association (1981-1986) and president of Quilts, Inc., agreed to provide free display and booth space during the 1984 Quilt Festival in Houston, Texas, to any quilt documentation project wishing to hand out literature and meet members of other projects. In 1988, Barbara Brackman developed a survey of the quilt documentation projects for Quilter’s Newsletter Magazine. By this time Barbara Brackman was also deeply involved in the Kansas Quilt Documentation Project.

Summary

None of the other projects had exactly the same motivations for initiating a project as the KyQP. Bruce Mann’s untimely death and the creation of this project as a memorial to him is unique. The use of that kind of personal story in the publicity for the project is also unique. On the other hand, the goals expressed by the KyQP of wanting to document a part of Kentucky’s heritage that was deteriorating physically or being forgotten became a regular mantra of the other quilt projects.

These goals were not significantly different than those listed by later projects because of the influence of the KyQP on those other projects. The goal, although not often expressed in the publicity and only mentioned in the KyQP proposals, of wanting to
document the state’s heritage found in quilts before they were sold out of family hands was a motivation mentioned in only a few other projects. Producing a catalog about the state’s quilts and organizing an exhibition of selected quilts became the usual culminating outcomes of the other documentation projects. Because the KyQP was the first documentation project to complete its statewide survey and produce a publication and exhibition, its influence on future projects is undeniable. Multiple projects specifically cited the KyQP’s success as a factor in choosing to conduct their own project. The KyQP also created what became the standard modes of publicity and documentation methodology. The KyQP organizers developed the concept of documentation days that almost every other project chose to imitate.

The reasons the general public participated in the projects were clearer in Kentucky than they were in other state projects. The $100 cash prize and the possibility of having a family quilt in a large exhibition both seem to have been important motivating factors. However the motivations of documenting Kentucky’s heritage and honoring the memory of Bruce Mann may have encouraged participation in the project as well.
CHAPTER 3

TEXAS QUILT SEARCH PROJECT

Texans are known throughout the United States for the pride they carry in their state’s history, independence and size. While other states were celebrating anniversaries for their entrance into the United States during the 1980s, Texas was celebrating its 150th anniversary as an independent republic. On March 2, 1836, sixty Texas men gathered to sign the Texas Declaration of Independence at Washington-On-The-Brazos. Texas did not join the United States of America as a state until February 1846 (a full ten years later).¹

The Texas Legislature passed a bill to create The Sesquicentennial Commission in 1979 establishing the planning committee for the state’s 150th anniversary to be celebrated seven years later.² Quilt enthusiasts were not far behind in their plans to celebrate the state’s sesquicentennial anniversary. In 1980, Karey Bresenhan, Nancy Puentes, and Suzanne Yabsley established the Texas Sesquicentennial Quilt Association and began planning for a statewide quilt documentation project, which would locate quilts for an exhibition that they intended to install at the state capital in Austin in 1986.

This connection between celebrations of national and state heritage and quiltmaking or quilt history was not first observed in Texas. The United States had been celebrating anniversaries of national events since the early 1960s. From 1961 to 1965 the United States commemorated the Civil War. In 1976, the United States celebrated the 200th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence; in 1986, the centennial of the Statue of Liberty was observed; and from 1988 until 1991, the bicentennial of the Constitution and related developments in U.S. history were
commemorated. In post World War-II America, the list of anniversaries and celebrations of a common heritage and history is extensive.

Quilts and quilt making had a role in these celebrations of American history. It is widely acknowledged that the Bicentennial celebrations in 1976 were among the factors that sparked a renewed interest in quiltmaking. According to Vivian Ritter writing for *Quilter’s Newsletter Magazine*, women were exposed to quiltmaking during the years surrounding the 1976 Bicentennial through the creation of “community quilts” celebrating local history, quilt shows, and quilt contests.³ *Good Houskeeping* sponsored a contest in 1976 focused on the creative aspects of quiltmaking and disallowing the entry of kit quilts. The contest drew almost 10,000 entries.⁴ The Museum of American Folk Art scheduled the Great American Quilt Festival for the spring of 1986 to coincide with the year celebrating the centennial of the Statue of Liberty. There was no lack of publicity surrounding this exhibition and contest. The Museum of American Folk Art dedicated an entire issue of its publication, *The Clarion*, to this four day show. A symposium including workshops and lectures were held in conjunction with the contest at one of the most respected folk art museums in the United States.⁵ Barbara Bush, wife of then Vice-President George Bush, served as the honorary chairperson, and she wrote an introduction to the book published for the Great American Quilt Festival.⁶

Americans were opening museums and historical societies throughout the country as another way to remember and preserve their national and local history. In 1983, Charles Phillips and Patricia Hogan surveyed historical organizations in the United States. They noted that there was a state and local history movement in the mid-twentieth century sparked by a combination of factors including a new interest in family and ethnic
roots and ancestry, the American bicentennial, and favorable legislation in the late 1960s and 1970s. According to their survey, only eight percent of America’s historical organizations were founded by 1900. The largest percentage, 53.2 percent, were founded between 1960 and 1981. Hogan and Phillips also noted that more than 70 percent of preservation organizations were organized after 1960. In addition to the expansion of preservation organizations and historical societies, Phillips and Hogan also pointed to a separation between two groups that they identified as the academic historians and the historical society professionals. Phillips and Hogan recorded that the historical society professionals were beginning to emphasize the study of objects rather than the study of documents, trends, and events in the late 1950s.

Both the desire to celebrate American history and local history and the blossoming need to document the objects representative of that history come together in the quilt documentation projects. Some statewide quilt documentation projects focused on the need to document the state’s heritage while others focused on the need to document women’s contributions to the state’s history or the need to preserve a visual art history of the state. The idea of preservation through documentation as a part of celebrating state history became a common theme in the quilt documentation projects and mimics the rise in local historical societies whose missions were to preserve state and local history through the documentation, storage, and preservation of common objects. States like Texas, Michigan, and Kansas timed their projects to coincide with statehood anniversaries. Kansas was celebrating 125 years of statehood while both Michigan and Texas were celebrating 150 years. Marsha MacDowell, the head of the Michigan Quilt project, wrote, “A quilt is a textbook of information… Personal or family history, art,
community life, religious beliefs, and practices, business and political history, and more can be gleaned from these textiles, their makers, and their owners.” In Illinois, the motivating factor was finding stories of state and local history. New York was interested in the artistic legacy of its quilters. Although not all of these states were necessarily celebrating an anniversary, they had the same motivation to create a documentation project that would honor the history of the state or the contributions that women made to that history. Nowhere else was the connection between a state’s celebration of its history and a documentation project more obvious than in Texas.

The Texas Sesquicentennial

Texas began planning for its 1986 celebration in 1979. The Texas Legislature passed a bill to create The Sesquicentennial Commission essentially charging them with planning and executing a grassroots celebration. Preparing for Texas’ birthday included a wide range of responsibilities. There were celebrations to plan, exhibitions to organize, money to raise, and flags to rescue. The celebrations depended upon the organization and participation of over 200 smaller groups that applied for and were granted permission to use the Texas Sesquicentennial Commission’s logo. In order to do this, the Sesquicentennial Commission created the Association Handbook of Organization for the Texas 1986 Sesquicentennial laying out the guidelines for creating a project, providing the forms required to apply to be a recognized organization of the Texas Sesquicentennial Commission, and providing ideas for ways that different groups and businesses might celebrate.
In 1986, all of Texas was focused on the celebration of the state’s anniversary. The *Austin American Statesman*’s feature “This Day in Texas History” presented a piece of state history or trivia every day throughout the year. Trivia ranged from the opening of Texas colleges and universities to significant events to the creation of new buildings.\(^{16}\) Additionally, the *Austin American Statesman* published schedules of Sesquicentennial events and featured articles on the variety of events that had the official stamp. The coup for the paper was a special edition printed on March 2, 1986 that included more than 200 pages of Texas history.\(^{17}\) For those who had not already read James Michener’s *Texas* (fictional, published in 1985) or who could not remember their second grade Texas history course, this edition of the newspaper provided most of it. Houston’s newspaper, *The Houston Chronicle*, published a 56 page special section on the same day covering Texas history, politics, economics, and culture.\(^{18}\) The title “Sesquicentennial” was adopted by sporting events, rodeos, art and cultural exhibitions, special ballets, and symphonic events. Texas even had a special stamp printed to commemorate its 150\(^{th}\) anniversary.\(^{19}\)

**Two Quilt Documentation Projects**

According to its final report, The Sesquicentennial Commission oversaw the activities of 235 organizations and 1,012 local committees during the course of the celebrations.\(^{20}\) At least two of those organizations were focused on documenting the quilts made in or brought to Texas. These two organizations seem to have been similar in purpose and methodology, but they were very different in focus, parameters, and goals.
The Texas Heritage Quilt Society

The Texas Heritage Quilt Society (THQS) formed in early 1984 with the goals of locating, photographing, and recording the stories about quilts. Through eighteen quilt documentation days, the THQS worked to document more than 1800 quilts made in or brought to Texas prior to 1950. In addition to documenting the quilts, the society recorded oral histories about the quilts from living quiltmakers and from descendants at these documentation days. The intention was to store the information and oral histories gathered at a university somewhere in Texas.

Table 2: Texas Heritage Quilt Society Project, Quilt Documentation Days, partial listing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City/Town</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>No. Quilts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jasper</td>
<td>10/6/1984</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>12/1/1984</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beaumont</td>
<td>1/16/1985</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Augustine</td>
<td>3/16/1985</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henderson</td>
<td>3/30/1985</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nacogdoches</td>
<td>4/27/1985</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas</td>
<td>5/6/1985</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Arthur</td>
<td>June-85</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

THQS had a board of directors, all women, located primarily in east and central Texas. All of these women were quilters and most identified themselves as having some level of expertise in quilt history or quilt making. Kay Hudec of Kingwood served as the chairman; she described herself as a “collector of Texas quilts and quilt histories,” a member of American Quilt Study Group, and vice president of the Kingwood Area Quilt Guild. Laverne Mathews, serving as co-chairman for the project, also identified herself as a quilt historian who had collected Texas quilts and oral histories for several
years. Additionally, she was a quilter who had been “winner of numerous Best-of-Show awards” including one at the Houston Quilt Festival. Anita Murphy was a nationally-known quilting teacher and had authored articles for *Quilt*, a magazine published by Harris publications. Beverly Orbelo was the author of *A Texas Quilting Primer* as well as a teacher and lecturer on Texas quilts. Bonnie McCoy was a National Quilting Association certified teacher and master judge, and Mary Grunbaum had twelve years experience as a collector, appraiser, historian, judge, and lecturer in addition to owning a quilt shop.²⁴

Their motivations were similar to the motivations of organizers of many of the other quilt documentation projects. The committee wrote in their catalogue that they had recognized “that art serving a function can become lost through use.”²⁵ They believed that quilts had historical significance to the study of artistic and cultural activities of women. They also believed, like Bruce Mann from Kentucky, that quilts deserved a scholarly and systematic documentation to create a base of information for students and academics interested in studying women’s history, women’s culture, and women’s art.²⁶ Kay Hudec wrote that the THQS saw itself helping quilters validate their attempts at immortality by documenting the work that they had done. This statement immediately followed a quote she had inserted into her article by Thomas Jefferson that “deeply felt” experiences should be passed on to the next generation.²⁷ Their ambitious long-range goals were to build a quilt archive and quilt museum.²⁸

The THQS was established as a membership organization. Some projects had a small paid staff (Kentucky Quilt Project, the Texas Sesquicentennial Quilt Association, North Carolina Quilt Project) as well as volunteers while others worked exclusively
through a volunteer staff and volunteer documentation teams (Nebraska Quilt Project, Kansas Quilt Project). The Texas Heritage Quilt Society worked through a board of directors and through its membership that paid annual dues. The principle at work was that members would come from cities and towns across the state and would take on the documentation work in their area. As became standard in many groups across the United States, THQS asked that the local contact or society member take on the responsibility of organizing a documentation day including the publicity, location, and staffing. THQS provided its name for the project, the forms and supplies for hosting a documentation day, press releases, and sometimes quilt historians. They also offered a prize of $100 to the oldest, best preserved quilt brought in on each day.\textsuperscript{29} The wording describing their cash prize echoed that of the Kentucky Quilt Project. In at least one case, local groups sponsored the prize.\textsuperscript{30}

\textbf{The Texas Sesquicentennial Association}

In 1980, Karey Bresenhan, Nancy Puentes, and Suzanne Yabsley founded the Texas Sesquicentennial Quilt Association (TSQA).\textsuperscript{31} Prior to initiating the project, Karey Bresenhan had established her name in the quilting world as the owner of the Great Expectations quilt shop in Houston, Texas, as the woman who founded International Quilt Festival in 1977 in Houston, Texas, and as a co-founder with Nancy O’Bryant Puentes and their mothers of the South/Southwest Quilt Association in 1979. The South/Southwest Quilt Association, now the International Quilt Association, is a non-profit organization “dedicated to the preservation of quilting, the attainment of public recognition for quilting as an art form, and the advancement of the state of the art throughout the world.”\textsuperscript{32} Karey Bresenhan was also a quilt collector. Puentes had also
founded the Austin Area Quilt Guild in 1978 and served as its first president. \(^{33}\)

Suzanne Yabsley was a quilt historian with degrees from the University of Texas at Austin and the University of Ottawa. \(^{34}\) In the fall of 1984, the Texas Sesquicentennial Quilt Association became a recognized organization of the larger state Texas Sesquicentennial Organization.

Taking into consideration the size of the state and the logistical and financial challenges that it could face, the committee gave itself three years to plan and three years to document. The documentation days began in February of 1983 and ended in March 1985. \(^{35}\) Two catalogues were published and an exhibition of the best quilts was set up in the capital building in 1986 during the year-long celebration of Texas’ statehood. \(^{36}\) Additional exhibitions, including the Great Texas Quilt Round-Up and an exhibit in West Texas were part of this organization’s Sesquicentennial activities. The Great Texas Quilt Roundup was an exhibition of contemporary Texas quilts with a Texas theme. Advertisements and announcements in local papers as well as in *Quilter’s Newsletter Magazine* invited quilters from across the country to join in the exhibition. \(^{37}\) The quilts were judged, and one hundred of the best quilts made up the exhibition.

The TSQA also sponsored a Quilt Conservation Seminar in 1985. Seminar participants learned about quilt conservation. The seminar was geared primarily towards members of the Texas community who had an interest in preserving and conserving quilts although there were a few out of state participants. \(^{38}\) Suzanne Yabsley, one of the project coordinators, also published a separate book *Texas Quilts, Texas Women* in 1984, which serves as a concise history of quilting in Texas and an overview of quilting throughout the United States during the twentieth century. \(^{39}\)
Although cautioned that they were unlikely to find any quilts worth recording because Texas had been a pioneer state and all of the good quilts remained on the East Coast, the TSQA documented about 3500 quilts during the course of twenty-seven quilt documentation days (Table 4). The organizers called the documentation project “The Texas Quilt Search”. Their overarching goal was to document the contributions of women’s quilting and set up an exhibition using the best quilts found for the celebration of the Texas Sesquicentennial in 1986. The goals of TSQA were to “heighten the awareness of quilts as art”, “recognize the achievement of quiltmakers” and “ensure that the quilt heritage of the state was preserved”, and ensure that the research on both the artistic and cultural heritage of the state was available to future generations.

Texas was not the only state that sought to document quilts as a way to document and preserve the state’s artistic heritage. Phyllis Tepper, director of the New York Quilt Project, noted the importance of preserving the state’s artistic heritage as reflected in quilts. She stated, “The New York Quilt Project is an art museum’s undertaking with a mandate to discover the unique art of the quilt as well as social and individual history. The visual impact of a quilt as art was the primary consideration for inclusion in this book.” In Texas, one of the three criteria for receiving the cash prize from a Quilt Day was having not just the oldest or the most well preserved quilt, but having the most aesthetically pleasing quilt.

Quilt Days for the Texas Quilt Search Project were held across the state between February 1983 and March 1985. According to their information packet, the Quilt Days were to document quilts and to educate the public on the proper care and storage of quilts. Using a successful tactic from the Kentucky Quilt Project for generating interest
and participation, the Texas Quilt Search offered a $100 prize to the “oldest, best preserved, and most beautiful quilt discovered.” Karey Bresenhan served as the head documenter for each Quilt Day, Nancy O’Bryant Puentes served as photographer.

Table 3: Texas Quilt Search Project Documentation Days

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City/Town</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>No. Quilts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>2/6/1983</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austin</td>
<td>5/5/1984</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wichita Falls</td>
<td>8/4/1984</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houston*</td>
<td>8/24-25/1984</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Antonio</td>
<td>9/29/1984</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houston</td>
<td>11/2/1984</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Worth</td>
<td>11/10/1984</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tyler</td>
<td>12/1/1984</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McAllen</td>
<td>1/12/1985</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Paso</td>
<td>1/26/1985</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abilene</td>
<td>2/23/1985</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galveston</td>
<td>2/8/1985</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houston</td>
<td>2/9/1985</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huntsville</td>
<td>2/9/1985</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lubbock</td>
<td>2/16/1985</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midland</td>
<td>2/23/1985</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LaPryor</td>
<td>2/9/1985</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waco</td>
<td>3/1/1985</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Braunfels</td>
<td>3/2/1985</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas</td>
<td>3/8/1985</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Del Rio</td>
<td>3/19-20/1985</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lufkin</td>
<td>3/9/1985</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corpus Christi</td>
<td>3/14/1985</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Angelo</td>
<td>3/15/1985</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amarillo/Canyon</td>
<td>3/16/1985</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nacogdoches</td>
<td>3/18/1985</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Prairie</td>
<td>3/30/1985</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Media coverage did not consistently provide data of the number of quilts documented

Mary Reddick, the coordinator for quilt documentation days, enlisted the help of local organizations as co-sponsors. Quilt guilds, art museums, and history museums were the usual co-sponsors. Quilt guilds were particularly targeted for involvement. The
information packet includes a description of a TSQA Quilt Guild Liaison Council intended to include representatives from guilds through the exhibition in 1986. Other groups included the Wichita Falls Embroiderers Guild, the Lufkin Historical & Creative Arts Center, Quilt Festival (Houston), and Grand Prairie Public Library. As with most quilt documentation projects, the TSQA depended upon these local organizations to help with advertising and volunteers.

Summary of the TSQA and THQS

These two groups, although working in Texas at the same time, did not work together. Where the Texas Heritage Quilt Society archived its project is unknown at this time, but they did publish their book, *Texas Quilts, Texas Treasures*, in 1986 during the Sesquicentennial. Kay Hudec explained the difference between The Texas Heritage Quilt Society and the Texas Sesquicentennial Association in a letter to Shelly Zegart, director of the Kentucky Quilt Project. The relationship between the two Texas-based projects seems to have been rocky at best, and Hudec was very clear that the THQS was not copying the TSQA. The two groups had formed separately and the TSQA had only just begun its publicity and documentation days in 1983. Hudec seems to have taken the stand that the board of directors of THQS had not been aware of the existence of the TSQA until 1984 despite the statements from the TSQA that TSQA had held Quilt Days beginning in February 1983.

The two groups had slightly different goals. Although they were both interested in documenting quilts and preserving women’s contributions, the THQS had stated the intention of a long-term project that it hoped would continue beyond the Sesquicentennial. The two groups had different ideas about how to go about
accomplishing their respective goals. The THQS became a recognized association of
The Sesquicentennial Commission in August 1984 shortly before the TSQA. The
THQS was very clear in their information packet that their affiliation with the
Sesquicentennial activities was peripheral. Although it provided them a focus by giving
them a date for which to plan an exhibit of some of their findings, the intention of the
board of directors was to create a long-term network that would continue the
documentation project and recording of oral histories after the Sesquicentennial
Commission finished its project in 1986. The goals of the TSQA had been similar to
the Kentucky Quilt Project’s—to document quilts, to select the best for an exhibition, and
to publish a catalogue. From the beginning their stated motivation was to do this for the
celebration of the Sesquicentennial. They accomplished that goal.

Another characteristic that Hudec pointed out separated the two groups was in
their choice of cities and towns to hold documentation days. The THQS had chosen
primarily smaller towns with a few exceptions like Dallas in May 1985. The TSQA
concentrated on the larger cities such as Houston, El Paso, Dallas, Texas, and McAllen. In this way, they may have documented two different views on quiltmaking in Texas
historically.

Newspaper Publicity and Coverage of the Texas Quilt Search

Publicity for the Quilt Days of the Texas Quilt Search usually appeared in the
local newspaper on the day of the event and occasionally the day prior to the event. The
amount of publicity and newspaper coverage of the events varied. In some places, like
Dallas, the Quilt Day received only a few lines in a tiny font at the bottom of the Arts &
Entertainment Guide on the day of the event. The bare minimum amount of information was provided to the reader—only the location, times, and phone numbers to call for information. In other cases the newspaper coverage might be an announcement with more detailed information about purposes and goals of the project and sometimes the newspaper coverage might be a quarter-page article on the Texas Quilt Search.

In Houston, where there were three documentation days, the amount of publicity in the newspaper depended on the sponsoring group. When the Quilt Guild of Greater Houston co-sponsored the documentation day, the Quilt Days were listed in the calendar, once with a picture and once without. Unlike Dallas, however, both of the announcements provided more information about the event and encouraged participants or “visitors” to bring in their quilts for evaluation by an expert. The third of the three days was co-sponsored by Quilt Festival (now International Quilt Festival) in November 1984 and was held during the event, which attracted visitors from all over the country. In this case, quarter-page and half-page articles rather than calendar listings described the Quilt Day as part of the plans for the Quilt Festival. Usually Quilt Days were publicized only in the community in which they were going to be held. In the case of the Quilt Day held in conjunction with Quilt Festival, other newspapers such as the San Marcos Daily Record featured articles on Quilt Festival and included detailed descriptions of the Quilt Day component of the festival. This is also the only Quilt Day where a charge was associated with participation. The San Marcos Daily Record reported that in addition to the $1 admission charge for festival, there was a $1 charge for each quilt brought to the documentation day.
The publicity for Fort Worth’s Quilt Day was different from all of the others. The first article written prior to the Quilt Day was a short article very similar to the ones found in other cities. It was short giving only the pertinent details. Another article, “Why Not Try Your Hand at Quilting,” was on the front page of the Home/Living section the day of the Quilt Day. This article discussed quilting as a family tradition that had nearly died but was experiencing a revival with the help of quilt shops throughout the states. Journalist Raymond Teague focused on quilt shops—The Quilt Box and The Calico Cupboard—for his information. Sandy Barker, co-owner of The Calico Cupboard, told Teague that “There has been a big comeback in the last five years, mainly because today’s woman was not left with a tradition.” Although the article seemed primarily like nice, free publicity for the quilt shops, it also provided some interesting information about why women were returning to quilting and why the tradition may have slowed down so much during the 50s, 60s, and even 70s. Teague connected quilting with the pioneer tradition and to continuing family traditions. He also noted that quilts are family heirlooms, which connect the current owner with his or her ancestors. He wrote, “Without these women, where would we be? How would we have kept warm all these years? What would we have of our ancestors to pack away or display?” All of the mythology and connections to past generations are wrapped up in those three sentences. The article continued with a description of how current generations can carry on the tradition using modern techniques and tools that allow the working woman to have time to take on such a time-consuming hobby. The end of the article discussed how quilts have changed from being used for warmth on a bed to being hung as art on a wall. The article even made the connection between quilts and modern home décor.
least, the reader found a small announcement “Experts available to examine old quilts” in the corner of the page next to a photo of a hexagon pieced six-pointed star.  

Although the amount of newspaper coverage and timing of the publicity depended upon the group that was co-sponsoring the Quilt Day, there were general themes that emerged in the articles. The relationship to the Texas Sesquicentennial Association was important. Kentucky was regularly mentioned especially in locations like Houston, Wichita Falls, and McAllen where the “Kentucky Quilts: 1800-1900” exhibition or another related Kentucky quilt exhibition was on view either at the same time as the documentation day or just prior to the documentation day. The publicity also had a tendency to appeal to the owners’ senses of artistic value in their quilts.

“A stitch in time—if the stitch is in an heirloom quilt—serves as a documentation of our heritage.” Unlike the other quilt documentation projects included in this study, the relationship between the documentation project and the Texas Sesquicentennial Commission is inescapable. Even before the TSQA had official recognition from the Texas Sesquicentennial Commission, the directors used the name Texas Sesquicentennial Association directly relating everything that they did to the 1986 celebration. Most of the articles, announcements, and advertisements do not even mention the actual project, The Texas Quilt Search, by name. Rather articles and other publicity mentioned the Texas Sesquicentennial Quilt Association or the Texas Sesquicentennial Association. The paragraph usually read something like the following:

Quilt Day here is part of an overall statewide plan of activities sponsored by the Texas Sesquicentennial Association that will culminate in establishment of the Texas Quilt Archives, displayed in the capital in Austin, and a traveling exhibition of the 50 best antique quilts to be circulated in 1986, 150th birthday of Texas.
Quilts brought to each Quilt Day in Texas may be considered for inclusion in these projects.\textsuperscript{60} 

This one paragraph actually gave a few incentives for people to bring in their quilts. By participating in this documentation project, quilt owners were participating in celebrating the Texas Sesquicentennial and showed the pride that they had in Texas history and culture. At best, their quilt could be chosen for display at the state capital during the big birthday celebration and travel around the state to be seen by other people. Records of each person’s quilt would also be part of a permanent record held in an archive.

Although the projects in Kentucky and Texas set up their documentation projects at the same time, the Kentucky Quilt Project had a significant influence over the success of TSQA’s because Kentucky Quilt Project completed its project just as the TSQA began its Quilt Days. By 1984 and 1985, Kentucky’s exhibition of quilts, “Kentucky Quilts: 1800-1900”, was touring Texas and elsewhere. The exhibit made appearances in key places at key times.

The Wichita Falls Museum and Art Center was in the final weeks of displaying “Kentucky Quilts: 1800-1900” when the Texas Quilt Search took place in Wichita Falls. In Wichita Falls there were two calendar announcements included in the “Out & About” section the two Fridays prior to the event.\textsuperscript{61} There were also two newspaper articles prior to the Quilt Day.\textsuperscript{62} In three out of four of these announcements and articles, there was also a mention of the exhibition going on at the same time. In the remaining article article, the announcement of the exhibition was directly adjacent under the “Playbill” section.\textsuperscript{63} Prior to hosting the documentation day, the Wichita Falls Museum and Art
Center had held a quilt evaluation day with Shelly Zegart as the featured guest. She lectured on quilt history and provided verbal evaluations rather than written documentation for quilts brought to the museum. Although it only attracted fifty attendees, the event received a large article in the local paper describing what Shelly Zegart’s goal for the day was as well as Zegart’s role in the Kentucky Quilt Project. The coverage of Shelly Zegart’s visit and the exhibition as well as the publicity prior to the Quilt Day played a role in attracting people for the Quilt Day. A total of 168 quilts were documented during the Texas Quilt Search Quilt Day.

The “Kentucky Quilts: 1800-1900” exhibition itself attracted attention from around the state. The Austin Area Quilt Guild had even sponsored bus trips to Wichita Falls for its guild members. It was a 5-hour trip each way. In an article written in the *Austin American Statesman* in May 1984 the day before Quilt Day, the paper also made a direct connection to the Kentucky project that could have had more influence there than in any other place. The journalist wrote, “Quilt Day is patterned after similar affairs held in Kentucky, which led to the quilt collection now touring the country under the sponsorship of the Smithsonian Institute.” Whether or not Texans cared about what the Kentucky Quilt Project had done or whether their quilts might possibly tour in an exhibition in Texas, the idea that the Smithsonian Institution had sponsored a traveling exhibition of quilts certainly gave credence to the idea of documenting quilts and pulling them out of closets, attics, and cedar chests. By connecting the Texas Quilt Search to an institution as reputable to the Smithsonian, that article may have helped attract a larger crowd to Austin’s Quilt Day. On that Quilt Day, 246 quilts were documented.
The McAllen International Museum also hosted “Kentucky Quilts: 1800-1900.” The show hung in McAllen from late October to early December 1984. The Quilt Day in McAllen did not coincide with the show (it was in January 1985); however, the McAllen International Museum may have done enough publicizing for the exhibit to still have the idea of documenting quilts fresh in the minds of area residents. The exhibit seems to have been very popular. According to a press release from the museum publicizing upcoming events related to the exhibition, opening day had attracted 400 visitors. Local quilt guild members had set up a quilt frame in the Main Gallery of the museum and were quilting four days a week.66 One of the final events during the exhibition was a lecture titled, “How to Document Your Family Quilts.”67 According to one article reporting on the exhibit, the museum had extended its hours on Thursday evenings to accommodate out of town visitors.68

The articles for Houston Quilt Festival in 1984 also featured a related exhibit as one of three showcases for the weekend’s events. In both articles, the journalist gave a detailed description of the Kentucky Quilt Project. The Houston Post wrote, “The Kentucky project is being copied in other states including Texas.” The writer then followed up the statement with “to help in that effort, the public…” which directly encouraged the public to bring quilts in for documentation by making the connection between giving members of the community the opportunity to help preserve their state’s physical heritage and the success of the Kentucky Quilt Project.69 The San Marcos Daily Record connected Kentucky and Texas in this statement: “‘Covering Kentucky, 1800-19--,’ one of three special exhibits as (sic) Quilt Festival, will present excerpts from the
Kentucky Quilt Project, the nation’s first statewide quilt search and the prototype for the Texas Sesquicentennial quilt search now underway.”

Some of the publicity for the Quilt Days appealed to the owners’ idea of the artistic value of their quilt rather than to their interest in preserving cultural heritage. Since the 1920s, quilts had been collector’s items usually collected by those who considered them folk art. When Jonathan Holstein and Gail van der Hoof’s exhibition in 1971 connected quilts to abstract art and the art world embraced that idea, the quilt took on a whole new image for many people. The *San Antonio Express-News* began its article about the Quilt Day in San Antonio in September 1984 this way:

> While you weren’t looking, a recently recognized art form has crept out of the closet and into the gallery. The status of Grandma’s homely old patchwork quilt may have been elevated to objet d’art and great-great-grandmother’s could be a pearl practically beyond price.

The article went on to tell quilt owners to bring their “quilted treasures” to the documentation day so that they could be analyzed, assessed, and recorded. Statements like the one above also went well with the promise that each quilt would be considered for the exhibition that the TSQA would be putting together to celebrate the state’s sesquicentennial. Not only was grandma’s quilt a treasure, it could be a piece of art that gets to travel the state.

Unfortunately, the coverage of the Quilt Days rarely went beyond announcing the Quilt Day itself. Only on rare occasions were there follow up articles in which participants were interviewed. Consequently, there is limited evidence of why people chose to participate in the Quilt Days. In Wichita Falls, there were two articles following the Quilt Day. The first article was an overview of the process and an interview with
The second article was about the woman whose quilt won the cash prize. The exhibition, however, did receive a fair amount of media coverage in 1986, which provided some insight as to the response of the public to the exhibition and the impressions that some of the journalists had about the quilt owners whose quilts had been chosen for the exhibition.

The Exhibition: “Lone Stars: A Legacy of Quilts”

Instead of tales of Indian battles and conquest, these quilts tell of pioneer women who spun their own fabrics, dyed it, stitched it, then quilted it with hand-carded cotton they picked from the fields. The quilts tell of traveling overland from Tennessee and Kentucky to a new land of opportunity in Texas. And they tell of German settlers who landed in Galveston and settled in Central Texas.

The TSQA Texas Quilt Search Project’s exhibition hung in the rotunda of the Texas capital building on San Jacinto weekend. San Jacinto weekend, April 19-21, 1986, was the 150th anniversary of Texas’ defeat of Santa Anna, and as independence weekend for Texans, it was almost as important as July 4th is for all Americans. Governor Mark White proclaimed April 18-26, 1986, Texas Quilt Appreciation Days. Other quilt exhibitions hung in Austin and other cities during the same time period. Kathleen McCrady had an exhibition, “The Continuing Thread,” at the Dougherty Arts Center that hung through April 30, 1986. The exhibition was a documentation of the history of quiltmaking in her family by her grandmother, mother, mother-in-law, and herself. Prior to “Lone Stars: A Legacy of Texas Quilts,” the Texas Memorial Museum showed “From Our Hands: A Sesquicentennial Celebration of Quilts.”
Bonnie Leman, the editor of *Quilter's Newsletter Magazine*, wrote half of her monthly Editor’s Letter “The Needle’s Eye” on her experiences of participating in the Texas Quilt Appreciation Days held in Austin, Texas. She wrote this about the exhibit, “It was the first time that a major quilt display—the art of the people—has hung in a seat of state government in a building owned by the people.” She gave rave reviews of Kathleen McCrady’s exhibition, of The Great Texas Quilt Roundup exhibition, and of “Lone Stars: A Legacy of Texas Quilts.” She served as a judge for the Great Texas Quilt Roundup. Although she noted that the quilts for the contemporary quilt contest were difficult to judge due to the level of excellence in workmanship and design, she saved her highest praise for the exhibition of historic quilts:

At the opening ceremony, it was a joy to me to witness the love and pride on the faces of the family members who were descendants of the quilters. They were clearly thrilled to have their ancestors remembered through the quilts they had discovered in family trunks. The expressions of wonder and awe on so many faces revealed that perhaps, until that moment when they saw the quilts hanging in their full glory and impact, they hadn’t realized the extent of their great-grandmother’s or great-aunt’s accomplishment. They seemed to be seeing their foremothers in a new light, as a person of unknown strength and talent.78

The exhibition in the state capital attracted more than 12,000 visitors during the three days that it hung.79 The Texas Sesquicentennial Association’s newsletter gave the exhibition a glowing review as well calling it “a dizzying kaleidoscope of color and patterns.”80 The exhibition traveled the state to Wichita Falls, Tyler, La Porte, San Angelo, and McAllen. Although not on the Texas Sesquicentennial Association’s schedule, the exhibition also showed at the Panhandle Plains Historical Museum in Canyon, Texas, attracting over 20,000 visitors. The curator, JoAnne Arasim told *Quilter’s Newsletter Magazine* that the exhibit “awakened a pride among the ladies here,
many of whom quilt” and that twenty-five percent of the visitors were from out of state. The showing at the Wichita Falls Museum and Art Center attracted 7500 visitors while the Tyler Museum of Art hosted about 3100. The American International Quilt Association even gave the TSQA a grant in 1986 to help pay the costs of a traveling exhibition.81

Summary

The presence in Texas of two quilt documentation projects working at the same time but with slightly different long-term goals and not working together certainly presents some interesting avenues for future research. It also speaks to a desire on the part of Texas’ quilters to document what was becoming a recognized object of artistic, cultural, and monetary value. While the Texas Sesquicentennial Quilt Association may have taken its goals of documenting quilts, creating an exhibition, and publishing a catalogue straight from the Kentucky Quilt Project, the project organizers publicized their project in a different way. The cash prize was mentioned in the publicity, but it was not a major focus of the publicity. Instead, the organizers of the Quilt Days appealed to people’s desire to celebrate Texas’ 150th anniversary and to preserve the cultural and artistic heritage of the state in a permanent archive.
CHAPTER 4

NORTH CAROLINA QUILT PROJECT

Currently, only two statewide quilt documentation projects—Kansas and Illinois—rival the North Carolina Quilt Project (NCQP) in terms of the number of documentation days and number of quilts documented. The NCQP documented over 10,000 quilts in fourteen months during 75 quilt documentation days. The Kansas Quilt Project: Documenting Quilts and Quiltmakers held a similar number of days in about the same length of time and documented 13,107 quilts. The Illinois Quilt Research Project documented 15,809 quilts; however, the Illinois project coordinators conducted their statewide project in at least two documentation phases.¹

The outcome of the North Carolina Quilt Project raises some interesting questions. Why did some projects document two or three times as many quilts as others? Was it differences in state population, number of documentation days, publicity, or some other factor? This chapter explores the history, motivations, and publicity of the NCQP in order to gain a better understanding of why the NCQP was so successful. The chapter begins with a short history of the North Carolina Quilt Project emphasizing the reasons for initiating the project and the goals of the project, followed by an analysis of the publicity surrounding the project. The final sections analyze the responses of participants, journalists, and other interested observers to the quilt documentation days and to the exhibition found in newspaper articles, interviews, and correspondence with the NCQP organizers.
The North Carolina Quilt Project

The NCQP began with the Forsyth Piecers and Quilters Guild in Winston-Salem in 1983. The guild formed a committee to explore the feasibility of a state-wide project and created a steering committee of five women from around the state—Kay Clemens of Greenville, Kathlyn Sullivan of Raleigh, Ruth Roberson of Durham, Karen Pervier of Winston-Salem, and Sue McCarter of Charlotte. These same women became the first board of directors for the NCQP. The North Carolina Quilt Project incorporated in March of 1985. By the end of 1986, the board of directors had organized and overseen more than seventy quilt documentation days and established the North Carolina Quilt Project as the most numerically successful quilt project as of that date.

Although membership on the board changed somewhat over the eight years that it operated the project, the initial members were very influential in the success of the project and the directions that it took. Sue McCarter of Charlotte had a bachelors degree in history from Queens College and a masters degree in education from the University of North Carolina. Additionally, she founded the Charlotte Quilter’s Guild in 1977 and implemented a series of quilt documentation days in Mecklenburg County in 1981. Kathlyn Sullivan had a history degree from Wagner College, was a National Quilting Association certified judge, and worked as a documentation coordinator for the project as well as curator for the NCQP’s exhibition and a contributing author to the NCQP project book. Ruth Roberson began quilting in 1977, wrote a monthly article for the Raleigh News & Observer from 1980 through 1984, and taught quilting at the Craft Center at Duke University where she also worked part time as an editorial assistant for the Duke Mathematical Journal. She graduated from East Carolina University with a degree in
The educational backgrounds of Karen Pervier and Kay Clemens, the other two women on the organizing committee, are unknown. They were both quilters and members of quilt guilds in their respective areas.

The North Carolina Museum of History became a co-sponsor of the NCQP early on. Martha Battle, the museum’s registrar, worked part-time for the NCQP and served as a member of the board of directors. The Museum of History also became the repository for the archives from the NCQP as well as the site of the exhibition. The Durham Arts Council provided office space, and the NCQP successfully received grants from the North Carolina Quilt Symposium, Inc., the North Carolina Arts Council, and the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, Inc. The North Carolina Arts Council awarded the NCQP nearly $10,000 which was the largest grant the Council had ever awarded. Other funding came from quilt guilds throughout the state.

According to the NCQP grant proposal for the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, Inc., the purpose of the project was to “illuminate the ways in which quilts and quiltmaking have been a part of life” in North Carolina. The NCQP’s plans to accomplish this purpose were to locate and document quilts and quilt makers in North Carolina made prior to the Bicentennial of 1976, create an exhibition of North Carolina quilts, and write a book about quilt making in North Carolina. They also intended to create a permanent collection of information about North Carolina quilts and quilt making for use by future researchers, historians, and genealogists. The reason for documenting quilts made up to 1976 was that the board of directors wanted to make sure they recorded quilt making prior to the boom in quilt making that happened after the Bicentennial. Although collecting oral histories from living quilt makers was an
important part of the project, they were afraid that if they did not put the date limit of 1976, participants would bring in too many contemporary quilts and not enough historical quilts. Unlike many of the other quilt documentation projects, however, the NCQP’s board of directors invited the public to bring quilt tops, blocks, and any quilts that they owned. The quilts did not have to be made in North Carolina. The board of directors for the NCQP put in writing that they were interested in sharing information collected about quilts from other states with the quilt projects in those states.12

The NCQP board of directors split the state into seven regions and found a regional coordinator for each region. The regional coordinators signed agreements with the NCQP board that listed their responsibilities. The primary responsibility was to work with local groups, especially guilds to schedule, organize, staff, and publicize the Quilt Days. Additionally, they were required to attend each Quilt Day in the region and a one and a half day training session. In return, each coordinator was paid a $500 stipend and an allotment for postage, mileage, and phone charges.13

Although the NCQP initially planned for only fifty documentation days, eventually seventy-three documentation days were held due to the popularity of the project. Documentation days began officially in November 1985 and continued through December 1986 (see Table 4). Unofficially, there was a training documentation day in March 1985 where 150 quilts were documented. Regularly, there were two documentation days held in different areas of the state on the same day. On two occasions—April 26, 1986, and May 17, 1986—there were three documentation days happening on the same day. Each region held eight to twelve documentation days. Region A covering the North East section of the state documented the largest percentage
of quilts (21%) over the course of eleven documentation days. The most quilts documented at a single documentation day was in Hendersonville in December 1985.

Table 4: North Carolina Quilt Documentation Project Documentation Days

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Quilts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charlotte**</td>
<td>3/23/1985</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winston-Salem</td>
<td>11/2/1985</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asheville</td>
<td>11/8/1985</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenville</td>
<td>11/9/1985</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greensboro</td>
<td>11/9/1985</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salisbury</td>
<td>11/16/1985</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junaluska</td>
<td>11/16/1985</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sylva</td>
<td>11/17/1985</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bryson City</td>
<td>11/22/1985</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statesville</td>
<td>11/23/1985</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hendersonville</td>
<td>12/2/1985</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Bern</td>
<td>12/7/1985</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hendersonville</td>
<td>12/7/1985</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raeford</td>
<td>1/4/1986</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapel Hill</td>
<td>1/11/1986</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alamance</td>
<td>1/12/1986</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelby</td>
<td>1/18/1986</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laurinburg</td>
<td>1/25/1986</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winston-Salem</td>
<td>1/25/1986</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morehead City</td>
<td>2/1/1986</td>
<td>315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Pines</td>
<td>2/1/1986</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union Grove</td>
<td>2/3/1986</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salisbury</td>
<td>2/8/1986</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth City</td>
<td>2/22/1986</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durham</td>
<td>3/1/1986</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pembroke</td>
<td>3/8/1986</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nashville</td>
<td>3/15/1986</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yadkinville</td>
<td>3/15/1986</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raleigh</td>
<td>3/22/1986</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dobson</td>
<td>3/22/1986</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shallotte</td>
<td>4/5/1986</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilson</td>
<td>4/12/1986</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plymouth</td>
<td>4/19/1986</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth City</td>
<td>4/26/1986</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monroe</td>
<td>4/26/1986</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frankline</td>
<td>4/26/1986</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snow Camp</td>
<td>5/1/1986</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whiteville</td>
<td>5/17/1986</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiddenite</td>
<td>5/17/1986</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franklin</td>
<td>5/17/1986</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilmington</td>
<td>6/7/1986</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folk Art Center</td>
<td>6/14/1986</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winston-Salem</td>
<td>6/28/1986</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelby</td>
<td>6/28/1986</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hayesville</td>
<td>7/19/1986</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smithfield</td>
<td>7/24/1986</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbinsville</td>
<td>7/26/1986</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ocracoke</td>
<td>8/2/1986</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alamance</td>
<td>8/16/1986</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabethtown</td>
<td>9/6/1986</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brevard</td>
<td>9/13/1986</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roanoke Rapids</td>
<td>9/27/1986</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilksboro</td>
<td>9/27/1986</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Jefferson</td>
<td>10/4/1986</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnsville</td>
<td>10/6/1986</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yanceyville</td>
<td>10/10/1986</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rockingham</td>
<td>10/11/1986</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goldsboro</td>
<td>10/18/1986</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas</td>
<td>10/18/1986</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas</td>
<td>10/25/1986</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brevard</td>
<td>10/25/1986</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durham/Orange</td>
<td>10/27/1986</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concord</td>
<td>11/1/1986</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlotte</td>
<td>11/8/1986</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hickory</td>
<td>11/8/1986</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raleigh</td>
<td>11/13/1986</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilmington</td>
<td>11/15/1986</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waynesville</td>
<td>11/15/1986</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlotte</td>
<td>11/18/1986</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winton</td>
<td>11/22/1986</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burgaw</td>
<td>11/22/1986</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fayetteville</td>
<td>11/23/1986</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinton</td>
<td>12/6/1986</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Motivations for Undertaking the North Carolina Quilt Project

From the very beginning, the board of directors had a very clear sense of their motivations for undertaking the statewide documentation project. Their motivations ranged from admiration of quilts to personal curiosity to a desire to document women’s art and history and to preserve state heritage. The quilt revival of the 1970s and 1980s as manifested in the form of quilt symposia, new quilt guilds, and quilt exhibitions all brought quilts before the public eye during the late 1970s and early 1980s. The North Carolina Quilt Symposium and the establishment of new quilt guilds were also visible manifestations of the number of people who had become involved in quiltmaking in North Carolina.

Many quilt documentation project committees wrote of the rise of interest in quiltmaking during the 1970s as an influence on their projects. Karey Bresenhan and Nancy Puentes called it a “renaissance of interest” and stated that museums throughout the country had received astonishing responses to their quilt exhibitions. A number of committee organizers cited quilt exhibitions in and around their states as motivating factors for their state’s documentation project. Laurel Horton wrote that the South Carolina documentation project was a direct result of the excitement and interest generated by a 1982 quilt exhibition at the McKissick Museum. The museum organized the project as part of its commitment to documenting the state’s folk art traditions. North Carolina’s museums had three quilt exhibitions during the 1980s that attracted many non-quilters as well as quilters.

Other evidence of what has become known as the quilt revival were the increased number of quilt guilds and quilt shows, the rapid growth in the popularity and success of
the International Quilt Festival, and the establishment of quilt and textile museums throughout the United States over the last thirty years. The International Quilt Festival, originally Quilt Festival, began in Houston, Texas in 1974. Within ten years newspapers in Texas were touting it as the largest festival featuring sewing and quilting in the United States. It quickly began attracting attendees and teachers from all over the United States. The first quilt museum, the American Museum of Quilts and Related Arts, opened in San Jose, California in 1977. The museum remains open today under the name San Jose Museum of Quilts and Textiles. The Rocky Mountain Quilt Museum opened in 1981 in Golden, Colorado; The Museum of the American Quilter’s Society (now the National Quilt Museum) opened in Paducah, Kentucky, in 1984; and the New England Quilt Museum opened in 1987 in Lowell, Massachusetts.

Although the NCQP was not the first quilt documentation project that took place in North Carolina, it was the first statewide quilt documentation project in North Carolina. In 1977-1978, three masters students from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill documented quilts in a small region of North Carolina. One result of their projects was a quilt exhibit at the Ackland Art Museum entitled “North Carolina Country Quilts,” in 1978.

In 1978, Ruth Janesick established the North Carolina Quilt Symposium, Inc. She created a board of directors from the members of six Raleigh groups: The Museum of History, The Museum of History Associates, the Raleigh Fine Arts Society, Modecai Historical Society, Capital Quilters Guild, and Meredith College. After receiving a grant from the Raleigh Arts Council, they organized their first symposium in May 1979. They have hosted a symposium with the help of other local organizations throughout North
Carolina every year since.21 Ruth Roberson wrote in her preface to the NCQP book that this symposium was a motivating force for the documentation project.22 The North Carolina Quilt Symposium, Inc. also became a supporter and funder for the project. Roberson also saw the North Carolina Quilt Symposium, Inc. as the reason for the strong network created by the quilt guilds in North Carolina. The NCQP relied upon these guilds to help with local publicity, volunteers for documentation days, and for regional coordinators. Roberson, as an active member of one of these guilds, understood how effective guilds could be as local contacts.

Other factors that led to the NCQP were the success of three quilt exhibitions held at North Carolina museums during the 1980s and also the success of the Kentucky Quilt Project. Ruth Roberson, director of the NCQP, noted in her preface to the NCQP book that these exhibits held in 1983, 1984, and 1985 and the crowds that they attracted were signals that North Carolinians were interested in the role that quilts played in the history of the state.23 The success of the Kentucky Quilt Project at about this same time signaled to Roberson that a statewide project in North Carolina could be successful as well.

Ruth Roberson had been documenting quilts for a few years before she spearheaded the NCQP. Roberson, who acted as the director of the project, had begun quilting in 1977 after her daughter had gone to college. She went on to write a monthly article on quilts, quilt making, quilt history, and quilt current events for Raleigh’s News and Observer from 1980 to 1984. In this series of articles, her desire to document quilts as part of state history became evident as she shared the research that she was conducting on her own. Along with the interest in the actual craft of quiltmaking that she acquired in 1977, she had an avid interest in the history of North Carolina quilts.
Roberson wrote in 1980 that she wanted to add to the information available about North Carolina quilts. In this same article she told her readers about a set of letters she had found in an archive that portrayed a relationship between two women who had never met but who shared a passion for quilting.\(^{24}\) She regularly asked her readers to participate in the conversation and in the research that she was doing on North Carolina quilts long before she decided to undertake the NCQP.\(^{25}\) When her readers did send in information about quilts or information on quilt making that Roberson felt added to her research or would interest her other readers, she included it in her articles. For example, in November 1981, Roberson included a photo and description of a pieced sunflower quilt that she had received in response to her requests for information about East North Carolina quilts.\(^{26}\) She also followed up on the information that her readers sent to her by visiting with many of them individually. In the same article from November 1981, she told short anecdotes of women she had spoken to who remembered holding lamps for their mothers to quilt by or who remembered the first quilts they had made.\(^{27}\)

By the middle of 1982, she established herself as a documenter of quilts in her articles. Having grown up in eastern North Carolina, she was especially interested in quilts and the quilt making traditions of that region of the state. She told her readers in June of 1982 that she had begun a “written record” of quilts made in the region and went on to encourage her readers to document their family’s quilts as extensively as possible. She included advice on how to document the quilts even to the point of advice on how to interview family members about the older quilts.\(^{28}\) In March 1984, she devoted her entire article to the Kentucky Quilt Project. She wrote about her regard for the project, her disappointment that the Kentucky exhibition would not be showing anywhere in North
Carolina, and her hope that other states would follow suit because of the amount of information that could be collected for scholars to use.\textsuperscript{29} It seems only natural that Ruth Roberson, who joined the original steering committee, ended up as the director and a driving force for the project and editor of the NCQP publication.

**Newspaper and Broadcast Coverage**

Publicity for the North Carolina Quilt Project ranged from paid newspaper advertisements to full-page articles to a segment on the *CBS Evening News*. The staff of the NCQP provided the regional coordinators with press releases and informational flyers. The NCQP provided its regional coordinators with money for mailing, and based on notes written across the tops of some of the press releases and flyers, the regional coordinators used this money to mail information about the NCQP to radio stations, guilds, churches, senior centers, and home extension agencies.\textsuperscript{30} The flyers, press releases, and paid advertisements all had the NCQP logo and name across the top.

During the course of the documentation days, the quilting magazines also took note of the North Carolina Quilt Project. For example, the NCQP board of directors was proud that the project was receiving a lengthy article in *Lady’s Circle Patchwork Quilts*.\textsuperscript{31} The *Perquiman’s Weekly* reported on the upcoming article about the project and the visit from the editor, Carter Houck, of *Lady’s Circle Patchwork Magazine* as part of an article about the upcoming documentation day in Hatteras. Carter Houck, the author for the *Lady’s Circle Patchwork Quilts* article, traveled for two days with Ruth Roberson and one of their stops was the documentation day in Hatteras.\textsuperscript{32} There was even an article in the German magazine, *Deutsches Textilforum*.\textsuperscript{33} Although not a quilting magazine,
Southern Living was a national magazine that also included an article about the NCQP.34 The NCQP saved 150 letters that they received in response to this article.

The NCQP was very proud of its broadcast publicity as well. In the archives, the archivist for the NCQP included video taped copies of some of the news reports and television shows that featured the NCQP. The broadcast publicity widened the influence of the NCQP as well as created a high level of awareness for the project throughout the state. Georgia Bonesteel, the North Carolinian host of her own quilting television show, did a special feature on the NCQP. She attended the Wilkesboro Quilt Documentation Day. Ruth Roberson wrote to her fellow directors that Bonesteel intended to include a segment on the NCQP in early 1987.35 Linda Dawson of the Asheville Evening News in Asheville, North Carolina, did a three minute segment featuring the NCQP in which she identified quilts as art and treasured antiques. She attended a quilt documentation day and interviewed Ruth Roberson. She noted that family members “hovered lovingly” over their quilts and wanted other people to love their quilts as much as they did.36

On a national and international scale, the NCQP was on the CBS Evening News with Tom Brokaw and on the Voice of America, a radio show for overseas Americans. Kenley Jones did a three minute feature for CBS Evening News. He interviewed some attendees to a documentation day and spoke with Ruth Roberson. He pulled the ideas of quilts as memories and as parts of a state’s cultural history out of his interviews. He noted that a quilt “reminds of us of the old days that we might want to bring back.”37 There was not a copy of the recording of the Voice of America broadcast; however, Ruth Roberson did include mention of it in a letter to the regional coordinators.38
The publicity itself was interesting. The NCQP supported multiple views on quilts. Quilts were art, craft, family treasures, part of family history, part of state history, cultural artifacts, and antiques. Although these are not mutually exclusive, other projects like Kentucky and Texas had a tendency to focus on one aspect over the others. The publicity for the NCQP was varied in its presentation of quilts and in its presentation of the project. The only agenda for the NCQP was to document as many quilts and quiltmakers in North Carolina as possible during the short amount of time they had allotted for the documentation phase of the project.

Publicity was primarily informational about what the project was looking for and the one limitation (that the quilt be made prior to 1976). Unlike both Texas and Kentucky, the coverage rarely provided a history of the project or full discussion of the plans and motivations of the NCQP. Approximately half of the newspaper articles and newsletter coverage did not provide the name of the project, North Carolina Quilt Project, in association with the documentation day. The phrase “in connection with a state-wide program” was regularly used to refer to the project. There was even one article that renamed the NCQP the North Carolina Quilter’s Association. Instead of associating the documentation day for the area with the North Carolina Quilt Project, the articles seemed to associate the documentation project more with the North Carolina Museum of History.

As the future home for the permanent records of the NCQP, the North Carolina Museum of History received a lot of recognition for the project itself. While it is true that the North Carolina Museum of History provided one of its own staff members to serve on the board of directors for the project and committed to doing the exhibition at the very beginning of the project, the North Carolina Quilt Project and the North Carolina
Museum of History were separate entities. In discussing the documentation day process, newspaper articles stated that the quilts would be documented and photographed “for the Museum of History in Raleigh.”

The name of the group organizing the documentation days and collecting the information was not the only place where the articles varied. There were at least eight different wordings of the purpose and goals for the NCQP. They all said basically the same thing or emphasized some aspects of the project more than others. For example, thirty-two articles stated the primary purpose of the project was to “locate, document, and photograph” while thirty-four articles said the purpose was to “document quilts and quilters.” These two wordings express basically the same purpose stated differently. Other purpose statements focused on preserving “irreplaceable heritage” or encouraged research into family history and included information on the care and preservation of quilts. The most interesting purpose statement was that the NCQP had as its purpose to make a “permanent record of the folk art from scrap bags and the women who plied needles to warm their families and create heirlooms.” Even as similar as this last statement is to the first two using the word document, it relies more on images people already held about quilts and the purposes of quilts. It sounded folksy, and perhaps the writer thought it would have broader appeal if stated in those terms.

The varied wording implies that a diverse group of people worked together in this documentation project. It also implies that regional coordinators had greater leeway in how they presented the project to the public than the leeway accorded to local or regional coordinators in other statewide projects. Whereas the Texas Sesquicentennial Quilt Association and the Kentucky Quilt Project ensured that there was a single voice for the
projects in their publicity, NCQP worked through multiple voices that geared the publicity in each area to what they believed the people in their locales would better respond. It also allowed them to appeal to the many different attitudes that the general public held about quilts.

One area of consistency was a focus on the historical role that quilts played, their cultural value, and their importance to family history. Twenty-seven of the articles either stated that there would be information available about caring for quilts or included storage and care information in the article. An additional twenty articles directly stated the importance of quilts to the history of the state or the family. The most consistent information provided in articles was the importance of providing genealogical information on the quiltmaker and stories about the quilts themselves. Nine articles also mentioned that the NCQP would like to see written records or photographic records that documented quilts and quiltmaking. They requested that participants bring diaries, journals, letters, and photographs. They also deliberately solicited quilts made by African-Americans and utilitarian quilts. The board of directors really wanted the full range of the history of quilt making and quilt makers in North Carolina.

**Motivations and Reactions of Participants**

This focus on the historical aspect of quilts and quilt making was probably a big draw for the participants to the project. Genealogy had become the third most popular hobby in the United States during the 1970s. The connection between quilts and family history and remembering the work that women did for their families is undeniable. Quilt documentation projects, like the NCQP, provided a permanent home for the genealogical
records stored within the family histories of quilts that participants brought to
documentation days.

The responses to the quilt project through newspaper articles published after the
documentation days and letters in response to those articles and articles published about
the project in national magazines support the idea that family history was a motivating
factor for people to have their family quilts documented. In articles written after a quilt
documentation day, the most common theme was interesting stories about quilts that had
been documented. People who participated in the documentation days expressed pride in
their quilts, love for the women who made them, and respect for the skill that went into
the quilt making process. Ruth Roberson told the Raleigh News and Observer that
“studying quilts tells us about the small events of the our past.” One man drove 275
miles to a documentation day in Plymouth in order to have his grandmother’s quilts
documented. Another man went without his wife to have the family quilts documented.
He told the High Point Enterprise about the quilt that his mother had made for himself
and his wife when they got married. The story was one of respect for the quilt maker and
for the skills that she possessed to create the quilt. Mary Kilgore, from that same
documentation day, took her grandmother’s quilt in because she was proud of it. Pauline Davis told The Smithfield Herald that she had come to the documentation day
with her grandmother’s quilt because she “thought a whole lot of her grandmother.”
Lula Gunter told the Fayetteville Times that she loved quilting and had since she was a
little girl. Many other quilt owners and quilt makers told stories about their pride in the
work that had been done and about how pulling out the old quilts brought back memories.
The volunteers and regional coordinators at the documentation days noted how excited
people were. Kay Bryant, a regional coordinator for the NCQP, said that “the older ladies are just dying to tell those old stories,” and she thought the documentation days were successful because it gave women an opportunity to show off their work and gain attention. Erma Kirkpatrick, another regional coordinator, felt that people brought quilts in to be documented because it showed that they cared about their possessions.

Another source for information on why people took quilts to documentation days comes from the letters written to the NCQP in response to a short article from the September 1986 issue of *Southern Living*. A letter from Debra Wood Pressley stated in regards to her grandmother’s quilts that “there would be no greater tribute to her work than for her quilts to be recognized by the state museum.” Most of the letters expressed an interest in future documentation days and told short stories about the quilts they wanted to document. Ellen Queen wrote that although she lived in Georgia, she had quilts made by women in her husband’s families that came from North Carolina. She was willing to travel to have the quilts documented. Mae Harris was also willing to travel to have her quilts documented, this time from Tennessee. Another woman, also from Georgia, ignored the limitation on quilts made in or currently residing in North Carolina and asked for information on documenting her Georgia-made quilts. Finally, letters came in from people interested in documentation projects in their own states or requesting information on how to start a documentation project. The responses to the article show the wide-spread interest in having a permanent record of quilts.

Additionally, North Carolina was celebrating the quadricentennial of its first settlement. Although the quadricentennial was never mentioned in relation to the project, other festivities that centered on the history of the state going on at the same time may
have drawn people to the documentation days as well as the organizers of the project. On August 14, 1983, Ruth Roberson wrote her monthly article on a quilt planned by the Durham Arts Council to celebrate the 400th anniversary of settlement. In the same article, she mentioned other quadricentennial happenings that had already begun to take place including the building of an Elizabethan ship in Manteo, North Carolina and an exhibition on the Roanoke voyages to be exhibited in London and North Carolina. In 1985, *Raleigh News & Observer* was published as a commemorative edition for two Sundays in July. Like the *Austin American Statesman* from Texas celebrating the sesquicentennial, this newspaper was a short course in North Carolina history covering everything from history to sports and arts & crafts to business. This emphasis on local history permeating the news in both 1983 and 1985 may have added to the NCQP board of directors’ commitment to the project and to the general public’s enthusiasm to participate.

**Summary**

The responses to the quilt project reveal how much various aspects of the national quilt revival influenced the people who took quilts to documentation days. While a renewed interest in quilts as objects of artistic and cultural value is the most often cited reason for the formation of the NCQP, expressions of respect and love for the quiltmaker were more prevalent in the responses by the general public as to why they participated. Other aspects of the quilt revival such as the increased value of quilts and the connections between state history and quilting were less often mentioned as reasons for participating.
The documenters were concerned with developing a base of knowledge for a new way to look at North Carolina’s history through the work that women had done. Based at least partially on Ruth Roberson’s desire to go beyond simply learning how to quilt, the North Carolina Quilt Project set out to record the quilts and quilt makers of North Carolina. In response to the publicity encouraging members of the general public to preserve a part of their past by permanently recording their quilts, the people who took quilts to be documented shared much more than simply technical information about the quilts and the people who made them. They recorded their own respect, love and pride for the objects and the makers.

Although the publicity varied in its information or wording because regional coordinators were given latitude, that same fluidity allowed the publicity to be tailored to the interests of the local population. NCQP documented over 10,000 quilts in sixteen months. By publicizing the importance of the artistic, cultural, economic, and historic aspects of quilts, the NCQP drew a varied group of participants from near and far including some small museums and participants who drove 275 miles to have a beloved relation’s quilts documented.
CHAPTER 5
NEBRASKA QUILT PROJECT

In September of 1984, members of the Lincoln Quilters Guild sent a letter to quilt guilds in Omaha, Fremont, Cottonwood, Nebraska City, Beatrice, and Kearney expressing interest in a statewide quilt documentation project and asking for cooperation from these other guilds. The Lincoln Quilters Guild formed the Nebraska Quilt Project (NQP) committee in 1985, and developed a quilt documentation project unlike any of the others included in this study. The project organizers along with consultants studied Nebraska history, immigration, and demography to create a strategy that would target the rich immigrant history of Nebraska’s settlement period prior to 1920. They identified thirteen areas to host quilt documentation days that would represent the major immigrant groups.

The guild had participated in promoting quilts, quiltmaking, and the preservation of quilts since its inception in 1973. Over the eleven years between 1973 and 1984, the guild had sponsored eight quilt shows including a 1974 exhibition at the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery in Lincoln, Nebraska. They sponsored a symposium in 1977 and worked with the Nebraska State Historical Society in 1981 to catalog the society’s quilt collection. In 1984, the president of the Lincoln Quilters Guild asked Pat Hackley, a member of the guild and a member of NQP committee, to conduct a feasibility study for a statewide quilt documentation project. Pat Hackley had seen the Kentucky Quilt Project’s exhibit and knew of its book. She also knew Bettina Havig who organized and directed the Missouri Heritage Quilt Project. Once the guild decided that the project was
feasible, the board of the Lincoln Quilters Guild asked Frances Best to direct the project. She had gained valuable experience organizing and chairing the successful Nebraska Quilt Symposium in 1977.

The Nebraska Quilt Project: Uncovering the Art of Common Folks officially began in January 1985 with the first planning meeting of a small group of members of the Lincoln Quilters Guild who would become the directors and documenters for the project. Twenty-one of the 150 members of the Lincoln Quilters Guild served on the NQP committee and became the trained volunteer staff. By November 1985, the project committee had laid out its plans for the NQP including its purpose for the study, a list of twenty-two goals and objectives, a location for archiving the records once the project was complete, a list of training sessions, and a list of scholars who would serve as consultants for the project. The documentation phase of the project was completed in May 1989. An exhibition at Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery (now Sheldon Museum of Art), a culminating event for the project, was held in 1990. The publication of the project’s book, *Nebraska Quilts & Quiltmakers*, in 1991, concluded the project. During that six year period, the project committee planned the project, organized twenty-eight documentation days, held an exhibition, and assisted the editors in researching, writing, and publishing the book.

**Motivations and Goals of the Nebraska Quilt Project**

Frances Best stated in the preface of *Nebraska Quilts and Quiltmakers* that members of the Lincoln Quilters Guild recognized that there was a lack of information available about quilts from the Midwest. The celebration of statehood was not a
motivation for the project as Nebraska’s centennial was in 1967. For the members of
the guild, the lack of information about Midwestern quilts served as a major impetus for
developing their own statewide quilt documentation project. The success of other
projects was also a motivation. The list of goals and objectives provided in their plans
from November 1985 and recreated in Table 5 gives further insight into the rationale for
the project.

The first seven goals centered around the preservation of family and state heritage
and encouraged passing quilts and quilt stories down in families as heirlooms. Selling
quilts to individuals outside the family or outside the state and the loss of associated
information about the quiltmaker was of great concern to the organizers of the project.
The first objective of the project outlined in the original proposal was to encourage
families to keep their quilts or donate them to museums “if that is not possible.” The
second objective was to encourage people who had to sell their quilts “to do so at fair
prices.” Objective number four was “to stay the flow of Nebraska quilts on the back seat
of dealer’s vans to other parts of the country.” The organizers seem to have been so
concerned about the possibility of dealers and collectors showing up at quilt
documentation days that they wore “identifying smocks” to the Quilt History Days.

In addition to questions about aesthetics, trends, ethnic influences, and historic
influences, the committee listed some very specific questions that they hoped to answer
through the data collected. One of the most interesting questions that they hoped to
answer was how and when “white woman’s work influenced native woman’s work.”
Their final goals for the project included a permanent archive, publication of findings,
and encouraging further research on quilts. According to committee member Pat
Hackley, the NQP organizers had not initially planned to publish a book, but the amount of information that they were collecting and the interest of the project’s consultants encouraged them to plan a book.⁹

Table 5: List of Goals and Objectives from Proposal Outline “Nebraska Quilt Project: Uncovering the Art of the Common Folk,” November 1985, Private Collection of Pat Hackley

| 1. To encourage quiltowners to keep quilts within their own family, and if that is not possible, donate them to a suitable museum within the state. |
| 2. To remind quiltowners that if they must sell their quilts to do so at fair prices. |
| 3. To encourage quiltowners to plan a secure passage of their quilts onto [sic] the next generation and also to pass along all pertinent information regarding each quilt’s legacy. |
| 4. To stay the flow of Nebraska quilts on the back seat of dealer’s vans to other parts of the country. |
| 5. To convey to the general public information concerning conservation and preservation of quilts. |
| 6. To appreciate these crafts so that preservation and conservation become natural and permanent responses to the handwork of our forefathers. |
| 7. To encourage Nebraskans to trace their heritage and to honor this heritage. |
| 8. To learn the significance of this social dynamic work of art of the common people of the prairies. |
| 9. To identify trends, styles, and characteristics of existing quilts and quiltmaking traditions inherent in this Nebraska craft. |
| 10. To examine the technology of quilting, i.e. what is good quilting, evenness of stitches, etc? |
| 11. To survey the aesthetic parameters that embrace Nebraska quilting. |
| 12. To examine historic and geographic influences upon quiltmaking traditions. |
| 13. To analyze the cultural, socio-economic, and ethnic traditions on quiltmakers and their quilts. |
| 14. To determine the routes that textiles took to penetrate the Nebraska frontier. |
| 15. To determine the similarities of the trade goods bound for Nebraska on the Bertrand in 1861 with the textiles seen in early Nebraska quilts. |
| 16. To learn through trade how quickly technological advances in the East reached Nebraska. |
| 17. To determine through quilts if any early Nebraskan produced his own silk and/or flax. |
| 18. To determine if, when, and how white woman’s work influenced native woman’s work. |
| 19. To make data available to serious scholars and researchers in fields of folklore, local history, art, women’s studies, textile technology, genealogy, and other related fields. |
| 20. To establish a permanent data file containing slides and documentation materials on these Nebraska quilts and quiltmakers and to supply Nebraska colleges, universities, and museums with this data. |
| 21. To interpret compiled data through exhibits, lectures, and writings in an effort to educate the general public to historic, aesthetic, and personal values. |
| 22. To join other states in like projects in cooperative effort to study quilts in the U.S. |
Mary Ghormley’s passion for quilts also influenced the goals and objectives of the NQP. As a collector and appreciator of quilts, Ghormley saw quilts as folk art. She had written an article in 1984 for *The Nebraska Humanist* on the development of quilting in Nebraska as having started out of economic need but ending up providing a social and artistic outlet for the women and some men in Nebraska. The focus on the ethnic influences that the documenters hoped to find in Nebraska quilts and the objectives of the project that sought to identify stylistic characteristics and aesthetics of Nebraska-made quilts highlight the interest that the NQP committee had in the folk art nature of the quilts that they were documenting.

Linda Ulrich, in an article for the *Sunday Lincoln Journal Star*, quoted Francis Best as saying, “We’re not just looking for art, we’re looking for history and meaning and sentiment.”

As a reflection of this interest, the documenters at Quilt History Days asked the families for and recorded the family name of the pattern prior to looking for the pattern in reference books. Other quilt documentation projects had similar policies because they were also interested in the folk art and folk lore aspects of quilts and quiltmaking. These projects made note that quilts had become widely recognized as American folk art or that they were cultural icons. The Virginia Quilt Project committee focused on the folklore side of the tradition. According to Hazel Carter, director of the Virginia Quilt Project, the project volunteers did not research the patterns unless specifically requested to do so by a participant. The primary focus for their project was recording what the participants said about their quilts and how they named their quilts. Laurel Horton and Lynn Robertson Myers wrote that the South Carolina Documentation
Project was responding to an increased interest by folklorists and material culture scholars in the state’s folk traditions.¹²

### Organization and Composition of the NQP Committee

One of the most notable features of the NQP was the emphasis on professionalism and academic integrity inherent in the project from the very beginning. With a few exceptions, the members of the Lincoln Quilters Guild who worked on the NQP committee were not academically trained historians, folklorists, or material culture scholars. Frances (Frankie) Best, NQP director, was a trained nurse who had become a quilter after her daughter had begun quilting.¹³ Her superior organizational skills were key to the success of the project. She had proven her abilities in organizing the Lincoln Quilters Guild 1977 Quilt Symposium. Pat Hackley stated that Frankie Best “could inspire people” and had “the ability to organize and to raise money and to make things fit together.”¹⁴ Mary Ghormley, who worked closely with Frankie Best in all aspects of the project, was a graduate of Monmouth College, a liberal arts college in Illinois. She was a quilting teacher, a quilter, a founder and past president of the Lincoln Quilters Guild, and a quilt collector.¹⁵ Kari Ronning, who was a contributing author to four of the seven chapters in *Nebraska Quilts and Quiltmakers* was the exception. She held a masters degree from George Washington University in American Studies and a doctorate in English from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She was also an active member of the Lincoln Quilters Guild having served as president and vice president.¹⁶ Most of the Lincoln Quilters Guild members who served on the NQP committee held college degrees, but not in history.¹⁷
Recognizing their desire to put together a body of information that would be useful for scholars and researchers, the organizing committee contacted faculty members from the history department of Nebraska Wesleyan University and the textiles department of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to serve as consultants to the project. They also put into place a rigorous series of training programs, at least in comparison to other projects in this study. The training sessions included oral history interviewing techniques, photography, quilt documentation procedures, and quilt studies (fabric analysis, dating of quilts, and quilt pattern identification). In 1985, the planning committee met with Dr. Ronald Naugle, chairman of the History Department of Nebraska Wesleyan University, and Lynn Ireland, Coordinator of Museum Programs and Public Relations for the Museum of Nebraska History, and John Carter, Curator of Photography of the Nebraska State Historical Society for advice on how to choose the documentation sites.  

Since the purpose of the NQP was “to analyze and record the influences which molded the lives of Nebraska quilters,” the consultants recommended that the planning committee choose sites based on “ethnic, cultural, and economic makeup” in order to document a full picture of quiltmaking in Nebraska.  

Having received a planning grant from the Nebraska Committee for the Humanities (now the Nebraska Humanities Council), the project organizers asked Dr. Naugle to help determine in which counties documentation days ought to be held in order to get the most representative view of the quiltmaking traditions of the various ethnic groups that settled Nebraska. Dr. Naugle used census records from 1900 to identify the counties in which twenty-nine “foreign-born groups” tended to concentrate. According to his findings, only five groups comprised more than one percent of Nebraska’s
population in 1900. He then went on to identify the counties in which each of these
groups should be most represented and in which counties the groups overlapped.22 The
locations for thirteen documentation days were held either in one of these counties or in a
nearby county.23

In addition to John Carter, Lynn Ireland, and Dr. Ronald Naugle, Dr. Patricia
Crews served as a consultant for the project on textile analysis, identification, and history.
She was a new assistant professor in the Textiles, Clothing, and Design Department of
the College of Home Economics at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.24 In addition to
serving as a consultant on documentation days and as lead editor and co-author for the
project’s book, she conducted a three-day training session for NQP committee members
on textiles—fiber, yarn, and fabric analysis—prior to the beginning of the documentation
days.

Although the NQP depended upon local volunteers to help with the
documentation days, there were always trained members from the NQP committee of the
Lincoln Quilters Guild who served as the documenters, interviewers, and photographers.
According to the final report for a grant provided by the National Endowment for the
Arts, the training for volunteers from the Lincoln Quilters Guild created a “shared core of
knowledge, techniques, and goals” that the volunteers could use on the quilt
documentation days.25 The original grant proposal and some of the media coverage of
the documentation days used the term “para-professional” to reference this core group of
trained volunteers.26 Training for these volunteers covered all aspects of the
documentation process not only the textile identification and history provided by Dr.
Crews. Katy Christopherson, consultant to the Kentucky Quilt Project and chairman of
the Kentucky Quilt Registry, provided a training session on how best to complete documentation forms. Dr. Ronald Naugle and Margaret Cathcart, a Nebraska Wesleyan University history instructor, provided workshops on oral history interviewing processes. John Carter taught workshops on optimum photography procedures for quilts. Barbara Brackman, author of the *Encyclopedia of Pieced Quilt Patterns*, and Sue Ellen Meyer of Missouri lectured on pattern identification and quilt dating techniques. Laurel Horton, director of the South Carolina Quilt Project, presented a lecture on her experiences in the South Carolina Quilt Project.

In contrast to other states, Nebraska sought first to achieve ethnic representation and secondarily geographic representation. Because the primary decision making factor for site location was the desire to represent as many of the ethnic groups that had settled in Nebraska before 1900 and that might have influenced quiltmaking practices during the formation of the state, sites were chosen based on the results of Dr. Ronald Naugle’s research identifying the counties with the highest concentrations of immigrants in 1900. All quilts made in Nebraska during any time period would be documented. The interest in early influences on the quiltmaking practices in Nebraska also supported the NQP organizers’ decision to limit the documentation of non-Nebraska made quilts to those brought to the state prior to 1920. This particular year was chosen because it was after all of the homesteading acts that would have encouraged immigration into the state.
Table 6: Nebraska Quilt Project, Quilt Documentation Days

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City/Town</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln</td>
<td>13-Mar-87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ogallala</td>
<td>27-Apr-87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benkelman</td>
<td>29-Apr-87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottsbluff</td>
<td>18-May-87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chadron</td>
<td>20-May-87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bassett</td>
<td>22-May-87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorchester</td>
<td>30-May-87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Paul</td>
<td>22-Jun-87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kearney</td>
<td>24-Jun-87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Cloud</td>
<td>26-Jun-87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bancroft</td>
<td>20-Jul-87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blair</td>
<td>22-Jul-87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wahoo</td>
<td>28-Aug-87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nebraska City</td>
<td>11-Sep-87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln</td>
<td>30-Mar-88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln</td>
<td>2-May-88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln</td>
<td>21-May-88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln</td>
<td>25-May-88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln</td>
<td>4-Jun-88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln</td>
<td>11-Jun-88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln</td>
<td>15-Jun-88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln</td>
<td>8-Mar-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omaha</td>
<td>11-Mar-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln</td>
<td>23-Mar-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papillion</td>
<td>1-Apr-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omaha</td>
<td>15-Apr-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omaha</td>
<td>4-May-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elkhorn</td>
<td>20-May-89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Quilt History Days were conducted in two phases following a pilot documentation day held in Lincoln in March 1987. The first phase from April to September 1987 included thirteen quilt days held at locations in rural Nebraska that fulfilled the objective of representing the ethnic heritage of the state as well creating a body of evidence that represented possible geographical influences on quiltmaking. The second phase consisted of fourteen days held in the Lincoln and Omaha areas between March 1988 and May 1989, in order to include the most populous regions of the
state. According to the NEA Final Report, Omaha and Lincoln had been left out of the original plans for documentation because of the “ethnic complexity” they portrayed as areas of rural migration and due to a lack of time and money. The first Quilt History Day was held in Lincoln on March 13, 1987, to provide practice for the newly trained volunteers of the planning committee. A second Quilt History Day held in Lincoln on March 23, 1988, documented the quilts of the Nebraska State Historical Society’s collection.

In total, nearly 5000 quilts were documented during the twenty-eight Quilt History Days. The thirteen Quilt History Days held in rural Nebraska elicited 3000 of the 5000 quilts. The information acquired through the documentation days led to multiple publications and research projects and an exhibition in 1991. The project book, *Nebraska Quilts & Quiltmakers*, won the 1993 Smithsonian’s Frost Prize for Distinguished Scholarship in American Crafts. University of Nebraska-Lincoln graduate students in textile history Elizabeth Shea, Michelle McClaren James, and Sherry Haar completed theses in which they analyzed data collected during the Nebraska Quilt Project. Joseph Stonuey co-authored an article with Dr. Patricia Crews analyzing the results of the thirteen 1987 documentation days that was published in *Uncoverings*. Elizabeth Shea also had an article published in *Uncoverings* based upon the research she had completed for her masters thesis. Dr. Crews and graduate student Michelle McClaren James wrote an article published in *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal* that analyzed the characteristics of quilters over four time periods based on the documentation forms of the Nebraska Quilt Project. Dr. Crews and Wendelin Rich co-authored a paper published in the *Great Plains Research: A Journal of Natural and Social Sciences* in
1995 expanding upon the previous analysis done on the quilts documented by the NQP. Their article included data collected at the twelve documentation days in Lincoln and Omaha during 1988, as well as the thirteen documentation days held in out-state Nebraska. 39

Newspaper Coverage and Participant Motivations

Most of the media coverage for the NQP was done for the thirteen documentation days held between April and September 1987. The Quilt History Days were major events in the rural areas of the state and received much media attention in those locations, whereas, in Lincoln and Omaha, it proved more difficult for the organizers to get the desired media coverage. 40 As in the other states included in this study, the newspaper coverage for the NQP included calendar announcements and articles ranging in size from two short paragraphs to a complete description of the project taking up half a page. Since there were so few documentation days throughout the state, documentation days were often publicized in the county newspapers as well as in city’s newspaper. For example, the Dorchester Quilt History Day held on May 30, 1987, was publicized in both the Friend Sentinel and The Crete News. 41 The Papillion Quilt History Day (one of the later quilt days documenting quilts in the Omaha area) held on April 1, 1989 was included in both the Gretna Breeze and the Springfield Monitor. 42 The Nebraska Quilt Project received good attendance at each Quilt History Day. By one-thirty in the afternoon on the Bassett Quilt History Day, 144 quilts had been documented. 43 The Quilt History Day in Benkelman added 226 quilts to the records. 44 Dorchester’s Quilt History Day was the busiest with 450 quilts documented. 45
The NQP organizers used the publicity and newspaper coverage primarily to convey the basic information about the location, date, and time of the Quilt History Days to the general public. They usually included some sort of statement regarding the project goals as well and information about where the records would be stored permanently. The goals statement was usually one of two statements. One goal statement focused on the importance of collecting information about quilts and quiltmakers in order to “document and preserve the ethnic background of various groups of people,” while the other one was a more general statement about increasing awareness of the importance of quilts and quilters to Nebraska history by documenting the quilts and the stories of the quiltmakers. One newspaper even printed an article titled, “The History and Sociology of Quilting on the Plains,” in which the author (not listed in the newspaper) wrote about the importance of Nebraska’s immigrant heritage that must have shaped the quiltmaking tradition. The author supported the idea that Nebraska quilts must be in some way unique because of “the blend of ethnic, occupational and cultural groups in the state coupled with the area’s distinctive geographic conditions.” Like the other projects in this study, the importance of preserving both cultural and artistic heritage were recurrent themes stressed in the publicity about the project.

Information supplied by participants in response to some of the questions on the documentation forms on Quilt History Days conveys the sense of heritage—more personal than artistic, cultural, or community—that brought participants to the event. A question on the “Quiltmaker History” form asked the owner to explain why quilts appealed to the owner or the owners’ family and friends. One owner wrote that handmade items had “historic importance” and they were created with “artistic talent.”
Often, the connection to a family member, whether dead or still living, influenced an owner’s perception of the importance of the quilt and may have been the reason that an owner chose to bring the quilt to be documented. A Lincoln quilt owner wrote on her forms that her husband’s grandmother had made the quilt and that quilts were important because it was a tradition “for future generations to cherish” and from which to “gain insight to past generations.” A quilt owner from Ogallala answered that quilts “show many hours of love and patience” implying rather than directly stating the connection to family. Gerry Peregrine Zingg had a long history for her quilt which included a pattern of inheritance and family history beginning with her grandmother and extending to her own daughter who would receive the quilt upon her death. Irene Modrell of Benkelman wrote that she treasured the memory of her mother-in-law, her “second mother,” and the quilt that she had received as a gift from her. Finally, other owners referenced the use of scraps in the quilts that reminded them of old clothes and loved ones.

The NQP organizers appealed to the sense of community at the thirteen documentation sites. Other than the emphasis on documenting the ethnic heritage, the NQP used two other techniques that may have enticed people to attend the documentation days. The first tool that they used was photographs of local quilters with quilts that they planned to bring to a documentation day. This same tool was also used in Kansas; however, when the NQP committee did not have a photograph of a local quilter, they used a stock photo of Mary Ghormley and Francis Best and two quilts in order to put a personal face on the project’s goals and objectives. The second technique the NQP used was to make this a community event. The newspaper articles often noted that the community was one of only thirteen that would have a documentation day.
point in the documentation project, there was no discussion of either Omaha or
Lincoln as documentation sites. Suzi Schulz writing for the Red Cloud Chief, wrote,
“The community of Red Cloud is honored…”

In many locations, there were often additional activities planned around the event.
In Benkelman, the Dundy County Council of Home Extension Clubs sponsored a folk art
display. In Bancroft, the Senior Center offered food and local businesses donated the
money needed to rent the hall for the documentation day. Newspaper coverage for
Bancroft also presented the Quilt History Day as a “museum for a day” in which people
who attended the documentation day could view the quilts as they were photographed in
addition to viewing quilts that had been loaned for display purposes only. Local
businesses also created lunch time specials in the hopes of encouraging people to
participate. In Red Cloud, the Catherland Federated Woman’s Club sponsored a special
quilt show coinciding with the documentation day.

The “museum for a day” concept was publicized in locations other than Bancroft
as well. The concept stemmed from the use of a slide show that was created before each
documentation day to include the quilts that had been documented at previous Quilt
History Days. In addition to the slide show, there was often a lecture about quilt history
and quilting demonstrations. Attendees were also able to watch the quilts as they were
being photographed. This seems to have been a popular enough aspect of the Quilt
History Days that it caused some problems. In the newspaper coverage for Dorchester,
Jan Stehlik of the NQP committee was quoted giving a reminder to people who were
attending the Quilt History Days that because the event was a work session, quilts would
only be hung on the photography frames for as long as it took to photograph. Sue
Kneale wrote in her article announcing the Quilt History Day for Nebraska City that due to the level of participation at the previous quilt days, the quilting demonstrations were going to be canceled in Nebraska City. Based on these two articles, it seems that participants enjoyed immensely seeing the quilts hung to be photographed and that the response had been high enough to the project that they had to make adjustments to the regular programming for space considerations.

The only other technique that the NQP organizers used to entice participation was an “incentive” as they called it in their proposal outline or “small prize” as it was called in some of the publicity. Like Kentucky and Texas, the organizers for the NQP seemed to recognize that they might achieve greater participation if they offered an incentive, rather simply appealing to people’s desire to help record family or state histories. The NQP, however, never stated what the actual incentives or prizes were; it is also unclear who supplied the prizes. Nevertheless, two prizes were offered at a number of Quilt History Days. One prize was for the person who brought in the oldest quilt with the most complete documentation in the form of photographs of the quilter, templates used, or newspaper articles referencing the quilt, and one prize was for the person who brought in the most quilts. The prize was mentioned in the proposal for the project as well as multiple newspaper articles; however, it was not publicized for all of the documentation days. A newspaper article written after the Benkelman Quilt History Day recorded who had brought in the most quilts and who had brought in the oldest quilt.

One aspect of the newspaper coverage that was unique to the NQP was the consistent inclusion of a statement that personal information would not be made public. Considering the organizing committees’ objectives to reduce the number of quilts being
sold out of state and to encourage the current owners to maintain ownership and establish an inheritance plan, the inclusion of this information served two purposes. It notified dealers that they were not welcome at the Quilt History Days and were not going to be given information about the quilt owners. It also alleviated any concerns that people interested in participating might have had about their personal information being given out by the project organizers to dealers. The wording for this information was direct and protective. For example, “The whereabouts of each quilt and the identity of the quilt owner will be guarded from the public” and “While the information and photographs gathered will be made public, the quilt owners’ names and addresses will not be distributed without permission” were two statements conveying the intention of the project organizers to protect personal information.

Summary

As unique as the Nebraska Quilt Project’s organizing committee was in planning the site selection for the project based on the ethnic backgrounds of early settlement and in securing consultants and securing training from professionals, their overall goals and objectives were much like the other projects. They wanted to find out what was unique about Nebraska quilts and record the quilts and quiltmakers before the heritage was lost due to a variety of reasons. They aimed to encourage quilt owners and quilt makers to value their quilts, take care of them properly, and pass them down as unique heirlooms.

What made the Nebraska Quilt Project different from other projects was the decision to select sites based on concentrations of ethnic groups so as to discern whether or not quilts made by the various ethnic groups that settled in Nebraska held distinctive
characteristics. The design of the questionnaire and thorough training of the volunteer field workers to achieve consistency in data collecting were also defining characteristics. These actions showed a level of sophistication in planning and implementation achieved by some of the documentation projects that was overlooked in some of the critiques of the projects. Elizabeth Richards, Sherri Martin-Scott, and Kerry Maguire argued in their 1990 *Uncoverings* article that documentation projects needed to go beyond the documentation phase and conduct the analysis and interpretation of the information collected. Other scholars including Lorre Weidlich and Patricia Keller, in the early 1990s, critiqued quilt studies in general for this same problem attributing it primarily to the lack of academically-trained historians, folklorists, and American culture scholars conducting the research. Perhaps the scholars writing during the early 1990s were as yet unaware of projects like the NQP. The NQP committee started with a clear set of goals and objectives, planned the project with the help of academically-trained consultants, trained a core set of volunteers as documenters to maintain consistency in the quality of information collected, and did extensive analysis and interpretation of the collected data. In these ways the organizers demonstrated a clear desire to make their project as academically sound and useful to future researchers as possible given the available resources.

The NQP organizers also used techniques not used by the other projects to entice interest in the general public to participate. They encouraged the idea of a “museum for a day” theme in which people who were attending documentation days and waiting for their quilts to be documented could see other quilts as they were photographed and listen to lectures about quilt history. They also supported the efforts of local organizers to get
the rest of the community involved whether it was with separate quilt shows, folk art displays, or potluck lunches and dinners. The importance of recording heritage was a common theme in both the media coverage and in the answers to the documentation questionnaires. Finally, the commitment of the organizers to training and professionalism and to protecting the identities of the owners of the quilts may have aided greatly in the interest shown by the people.
CHAPTER 6

THE KANSAS QUILT PROJECT

“Everyday history slips away—deaths, people moving away, memories becoming
dinner, records are lost. There is no better time than now.”¹ This quote comes from a
newspaper article publicizing the Quilt Discovery Day in Hoxie, Kansas on August 8,
1987. The article was set up in a question and answer style, and this was the answer to
the question of why people should attend that particular Quilt Discovery Day. More than
that, this quote reflects the motivations of the organizers of the Kansas Quilt Project:
Documenting Quilts and Quiltmakers (KsQP).

In 1984, the Prairie Quilt Guild of Wichita held a Quilt Day to find historic quilts
for an exhibition for the Heartland Quilt Symposium in 1985. Members of the
community brought in 220 quilts that day. Nancy Hornback and Eleanor Malone,
members of the Prairie Quilt Guild who organized that documentation day, were amazed
at the response they received considering they had only requested historic quilts and not
contemporary quilts. Their opinion on the reason they had received that response was
that quilts owners “would like to share and learn about the care of their quilts.”² In 1986,
Nancy Hornback and Eleanor Malone spearheaded the Kansas Quilt Project:
Documenting Quilts and Quiltmakers (KsQP). This quilt documentation project was one
of the most successful at documenting the largest number of quilts in one state during one
of the shortest time-spans. The KsQP documenters and volunteers hosted seventy-two
quilt documentation days over a sixteen-month period beginning in 1986 and documented
13,107 quilts by the last documentation day on April 16, 1988. This chapter describes the
development, goals and motivations of the KsQP and analyzes the newspaper coverage of
the KsQP both before and after Quilt Discovery Days to gain a better understanding of how the KsQP presented itself to the public and why the public responded so enthusiastically.

**Development of the Kansas Quilt Project**

Prior to the initial planning meeting, Hornback and Malone developed a short one page proposal for their vision of what the Kansas Quilt Project: Documenting Quilts and Quiltmakers would be. They included this proposal with their letter to Jennie Chinn, Curator of Folklife for the Kansas State Historical Society, on February 6, 1986, inviting her to attend the meeting. Initially the parameters of the project would limit the quilts documented to those brought to or made in Kansas before 1945, using the end of World War II as the cut-off point. Their intention it seems was to focus first on the pre-1945 area and then to document quilts made up to the present time.  

Before the documentation days started in January 1987, however, the parameters changed to include all quilts made in or brought to Kansas. From the very beginning, the organizers of KsQP made it clear that the Quilt Days were not going to be places in which appraisals, buying, or selling of quilts would be taking place.

Malone and Hornback, the project organizers, already had a long list of goals outlined for the project prior to the first planning meeting. In addition to the standard goals of documenting quilts, developing an exhibition, and writing a book or catalogue, they wanted to take oral histories of living quiltmakers, heighten public awareness of quilts as both American and Kansan folk art, establish a repository for the data, contribute to quilt owners’ sense of pride in their family heirlooms, add to the knowledge that quilt
owners had about their quilts, encourage quilt owners to pass information on to the next generation, and teach the proper care and storage of textiles.\textsuperscript{5} 

In her final report to the National Endowment for the Humanities, Jennie Chinn provided a more focused set of goals. These goals were primarily a restatement of those from that first outline provided at the first planning meeting, but Chinn rewrote them into a more focused and succinct format. The KsQP was meant to accomplish four things: “increase respect for Kansas quiltmaking,” “record the ongoing traditions,” “encourage conservation,” and “provide a basis for continuing documentation.”\textsuperscript{6} 

The KsQP records show a well-planned, organized, and executed documentation project. The board of directors for the project included not only quilters but a nationally-known quilt historian, Barbara Brackman, and an authority on Kansas folklife and folklore, Jennie Chinn. Eleanor Malone and Nancy Hornback brought their organizational experience as past presidents of the Prairie Quilt Guild and their documentation experience from the documentation day they had organized and conducted in Wichita in 1984, as well as their knowledge and expertise as quilters. Mary Madden was the assistant director of the Kansas Museum of History and held a masters degree in American Studies from the University of Kansas.\textsuperscript{7} Barbara Bruce was a quilter. Mary Margaret Rowan was a textile curator at Watkins Community Museum.\textsuperscript{8} Helen Storbeck was a quilter who also received a Kansas Folkart Apprenticeship position for quilting in 1987.\textsuperscript{9} Additionally, she was a member of the Kansas Quilt Organization (KQO), an organization that documented quilts in museums rather than in private hands. Storbeck also served as a liaison to this group to help ensure that the goals of the two organizations would not conflict.\textsuperscript{10} Barbara Brackman was a nationally-known expert on dating quilts
and author of the *Encyclopedia of Pieced Quilt Patterns.* She also served as a trainer for the North Carolina Quilt Project among others prior to serving on the board of directors for the KsQP. Finally, Jennie Chinn served on the board of directors as an authority on the folklore and folklife of Kansas, and she served as the liaison between the KaQP and the Kansas State Historical Society through her position as its Curator of Folklife. In addition to the Board of Directors, the KsQP consultants included Dr. Gayle Davis, assistant professor of Women’s Studies and American Studies at Wichita State University, who served as a consultant for the project with a specialization in oral history research.

The Kansas State Historical Society was not a silent partner in the project because Jennie Chinn did not serve as merely a liaison and consultant. Due to her experience with grant writing and with granting agencies like the National Endowment for the Arts, she played a significant role in securing funding for the project. The Kansas State Historical Society agreed to be a partner with the KsQP from the beginning, acted as the venue for the exhibition that opened in 1990, and became the permanent repository for the archives of the KsQP records. The Kansas State Historical Society through the efforts of Jennie Chinn also helped to ensure there was funding to complete the computerization process of the documentation phase of the project. The KsQP had not expected to document over 13,000 quilts and quickly got behind in the computerization process.

By the beginning of February 1987 before Quilt Discovery Days had gotten into full swing, members of the KsQP board of directors had already begun working out the kinks in their organizational chart. They had a fully developed organizational flow chart, they had developed three committees, and written job descriptions for each position on
The board of directors had also decided to split Kansas into 10 manageable regions each with a regional coordinator who would be responsible for organizing and scheduling Quilt Discovery Days, finding volunteers to serve as staff on those days, and publicizing the Quilt Discovery Days for their individual regions.

The ten regional coordinators had a high level of support from the board of directors of the KsQP. By November 1986, they had already had a day’s worth of training and received a letter late in the month that provided them with their job responsibilities, guidelines for developing documentation days in their areas, and sample proposals for presenting possible documentation days to the board of directors. Although the KsQP board of directors oversaw the project, each individual regional coordinator was responsible for promoting the project in her region. This included contracting with locations, setting dates for the Quilt Discovery Days, finding volunteers, and publicizing the project. Part of their responsibility was writing a proposal for each Quilt Discovery Day to be submitted to and approved by the board of directors. Prior to the first documentation days, Mary Margaret Rowan, as the Volunteer Training Coordinator, asked each of the ten regional coordinators to develop proposals for their first two Quilt Discovery Days in order to give them an opportunity to practice writing their proposals. She also gave them a three-page checklist of “Considerations for QDD Proposals” and two sample proposals. The three-pages checklist for regional coordinators to consider was very thorough and some of her considerations and suggestions showed up in later newspaper articles demonstrating that the regional coordinators also took the KsQP project and their responsibilities seriously. For example, one suggestion for publicity was to include a picture of a local quilter and her quilts for the local or county newspaper.
The regional coordinators in two of the eastern-most regions used this technique. In the *Abilene Reflector-Chronicle*, there was an article about the upcoming Quilt Discovery Day with a photo of three local women and the quilts they planned to take to the documentation day. Coverage for the Dodge City Quilt Discovery Day also included a picture of a local woman showing one of the quilts she planned to take to upcoming documentation day. Another suggestion was to emphasize how the participant would benefit from bringing a family quilt to the Quilt Discovery Day such as recording a family treasure for posterity, helping to compile information about Kansas quilt heritage, and reminding people that quilts with interesting stories might be included in exhibits and publications of the KsQP. The coverage for Lindsborg’s Quilt Discovery Day demonstrates how this suggestion was used. An article in the August 6, 1987 edition of the *Lindsborg News-Record* reads, “Quilt Discovery Days being held statewide are not an exhibit or commercial event, but rather an opportunity for quilt makers or owners to make a contribution to the recorded heritage of Kansas.”

An additional piece of support that the board of directors for the KsQP provided to its Regional Coordinators was an extremely thorough manual. The manual included information about everything the Regional Coordinator might need to know. Among other helpful things included in the manual were a sample of the information sheet that would be provided to each person attending a Quilt Discovery Day detailing each station, job descriptions for volunteers, guidelines for job training, and a checklist of supplies that would be needed. Another very important part of this manual was a section on how to fill out the forms required for each quilt documented. The writers of the manual broke
down the documentation forms into a seven page step-by-step guide that included descriptions, definitions, and drawings of the visual elements of quilts.²¹

Table 7: Kansas Quilts and Quiltmakers, Quilt Documentation Days

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City/Town</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>No. Quilts</th>
<th>City/Town</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>No. Quilts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peabody</td>
<td>1/24/1987</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>Dodge City</td>
<td>8/15/1987</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas Quilt Contest</td>
<td>2/1/1987</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>8/15/1987</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wichita Guild</td>
<td>3/10/1987</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Lawrence</td>
<td>8/19/1987</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chanute</td>
<td>3/21/1987</td>
<td>554</td>
<td>Cottonwood Falls</td>
<td>8/22/1987</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holton</td>
<td>3/21/1987</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>Lindsborg</td>
<td>8/22/1987</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seneca</td>
<td>4/25/1987</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>Abilene</td>
<td>9/19/1987</td>
<td>283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McPherson</td>
<td>5/2/1987</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>Halstead</td>
<td>9/26/1987</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wichita</td>
<td>5/2/1987</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>Winfield</td>
<td>9/26/1987</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parsons</td>
<td>5/16/1987</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>Greensburg</td>
<td>10/7/1987</td>
<td>278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iola</td>
<td>5/30/1987</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>Oberlin</td>
<td>10/10/1987</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belleville</td>
<td>5/30/1987</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>Eureka</td>
<td>10/17/1987</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howard</td>
<td>6/6/1987</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>Garden City</td>
<td>10/17/1987</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junction City</td>
<td>6/6/1987</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>Olathe</td>
<td>10/17/1987</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fredonia</td>
<td>6/13/1987</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>Logan</td>
<td>10/24/1987</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabetha</td>
<td>6/15/1987</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>Scott City</td>
<td>10/31/1987</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alden</td>
<td>6/20/1987</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>Wamego</td>
<td>11/7/1987</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ottawa Guilds</td>
<td>6/20/1987</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>Goodland</td>
<td>11/14/1987</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wakeeney</td>
<td>6/20/1987</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>Yates Center</td>
<td>11/14/1987</td>
<td>257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ottawa</td>
<td>7/18/1987</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>Johnson City</td>
<td>4/9/1988</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hesston</td>
<td>8/1/1987</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>Wyandotte Co.</td>
<td>4/11/1988</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoxie</td>
<td>8/8/1987</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>Hill City</td>
<td>4/16/1988</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Although all of the regional coordinators had attended training, there would be many volunteers who had varying knowledge concerning quilt making and quilting techniques. Volunteers for each individual Quilt Discovery Day were not required to have any knowledge of quilts or quilmaking and were not required to attend a training session. In addition, the organizers recognized that the volunteers and Regional Coordinators would need to be able to explain the forms to people who brought in their quilts and might have no knowledge of the terminology. Therefore, page-by-page, line-by-line guidelines for completing the forms also served to remind regional coordinators of how important consistent information would be to the final results of the project.

The KsQP was a five-year endeavor. The documentation days which spanned a sixteen month period were only the first phase of the project. The project hosted Quilt Discovery Days throughout Kansas, virtually one in every county, beginning in January 1987 and finishing in April 1988 (see Table 7). Like the North Carolina Quilt Project before it, there were often several Quilt Discovery Days happening in several locations on any given day. In fact, three Quilt Discovery Days occurred simultaneously on June 20, 1987, August 22, 1987, October 17, 1987, and March 12, 1987. With multiple events occurring in the state on the same date, the board of directors of the KsQP had to remain organized and efficient. The seventy-two Quilt Discovery Days averaged 182 quilts at each location; however, the numbers ranged from twenty-eight at the Kansas Quilt Contest in Wichita on February 1, 1987, to 554 quilts in Chanute on March 21, 1987. Special documentation days were held for members of quilt guilds in Ottawa, Emporia, Manhattan, Winfield and Wichita.
After the Quilt Discovery Days were completed, the board of directors chose to conduct a period of extended research that included follow up oral history interviews and in-depth research on selected quilts or quilt maker topics that the board felt had not been covered thoroughly enough during the documentation phase. Jennie Chinn recognized a dearth of information on the African-American quilt making traditions, while Gayle Davis, a consultant to the project, decided to do more in-depth research on the quilt guilds that had begun to appear throughout Kansas. Although Gayle Davis’ chapter about Kansas quilting groups in the project’s book *Kansas Quilts and Quilters* is informative, of even more interest with respect to this study were the statistical results of the survey of the guilds she conducted on the histories, perceptions, spending habits, and volunteer habits of those guilds. They shed some light on the reasons for the success of the project in terms of number of quilts documented.

Davis sent surveys to 36 guilds in Kansas, 31 responded. All thirty-one guilds had been founded between 1975 and 1987 corresponding with the quilt revival in the United States. Her chapter focused on an analysis of answers to questions about motivations for quilting and for joining quilt groups, time spent in these activities, and the different aspects (traditional versus contemporary) of quiltmaking supported by these groups. Some of the other questions that she asked had relevance for this study. Forty-two percent of the guilds responded that they had used some of their funds to support the KsQP, and thirty-two percent indicated that they used funds to support historical museums or societies. The guilds’ responses to Davis’ survey, although not a gauge for the public’s interest, do demonstrate some of the grassroots support that the KsQP had. The responses also show how willing the guilds were to participate in the KsQP as
volunteers and as financial supporters. Almost 1,000 quilts were documented during
guild member only Quilt Discovery Days. These quilts accounts for 7.5% of the quilts
documented, and the number does not include other guild member quilts documented
during the other Quilt Discovery Days.

The remaining phases of the KsQP included a symposium held in 1988 and an
exhibition of a select group of the documented quilts at the Kansas Museum of History in
1990. The symposium was a full event with 245 participants. Papers from the
symposium were published two years later in Kansas History, a quarterly publication of
the Kansas State Historical Society. As part of their commitment to increase the
awareness of quilts and quilt making activities in Kansas, the KsQP board of directors
helped the Regional Coordinators develop regional programs that included quilt shows,
lecture series, or small symposiums. These regional programs occurred between August
and October 1988. The final phase of the project was the writing and production of the

Motivations for Initiating the KsQP and Project Goals

Eleanor Malone and Nancy Hornback decided to launch their state-wide quilt
documentation project during the 125th anniversary of Kansas’ statehood, similar to the
Texas Sesquicentennial Quilt Association’s timing with Texas 150th anniversary. In
addition, the board of directors was encouraged by the success of other projects. Helen
Storbeck wrote in her Baldwin Ledger article before the start of the Quilt Discovery
Days, “Two women, Eleanor Malone and Nancy Hornback, both of Wichita, got their
heads together and decided if Kentucky could have a state project, Kansas could join the
Mary Margaret Rowan’s letter to the Regional Coordinators took this one step further in stating that although the other states’ quilt documentation projects provided some successful models, the KsQP wanted to “go even further.”

Barbara Brackman was more clear about the meaning of this statement. She stated that the board of the KsQP wanted to go beyond creating a publication that was primarily photographs of quilts that were documented. They were interested in trying to answer the question of “how they came to being [sic] made like that.”

Like other projects, the KsQP organizers included an exhibition of a selection of the documented quilts and publication as two of their goals.

The outline of the proposal that Hornback and Malone had presented to the first planning meeting offered insight into the goals of the project. At the end of the page-long proposal, they listed what they deemed to be the “merits of the project.” They felt that the research they were spearheading would be of interest to students of quilt design and history as well as to teachers of history and art. They wanted to appeal to those people who loved folk art, culture, genealogy, and history while strengthening the general “awareness of state and family backgrounds.” These merits of the program hit on goals that have already been seen in some of the other projects. Hornback and Malone believed that documenting quilts and quilt makers would record the history of the quilts and by archiving the records at the Kansas Historical Society, they would be available to future generations. They hoped that the documentation process might spark interest in the quilt owners to take pride in their own history and pass it along to future generations.

The KsQP book stated well some of the goals that the board of directors had in creating a documentation project (see Table 8). They were primarily concerned with
preserving all of the information about quilts and their makers still surviving with living makers or descendants.\textsuperscript{32} Organizers in Kansas and Illinois both stated that they wanted to document quilts made even up to the day of the documentation in order to encourage women to continue talking about quilts and quiltmaking in both an historical context and a contemporary context.\textsuperscript{33} One of the reasons that the parameters for the project changed to include all quilts in Kansas was the desire of the board of directors to understand the transmission of the quilt making tradition from generation to generation.

Table 8: Goals and Objectives of the KsQP

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>To document the quilts and quiltmakers of Kansas in order to preserve the state’s cultural heritage and to understand the transmission of the quilt making tradition from generation to generation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>To heighten the public awareness of quilts as examples of Kansas folk art (exhibition and lectures).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>To document the lives of Kansas quiltmakers and to record oral histories with living quiltmakers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>To collect data and establish a repository at the Kansas State Historical Society that will be available to people interested in conducting further research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>To promote the art of quiltmaking through public programs (lectures, exhibitions, and publications).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>To promote the conservation and preservation of quilts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textit{Source:} Data from the Kansas State Historical Society’s Annual Report, 1988; Proposal: Kansas Heritage Quilts & Quiltmakers Project; and Brackman and Chinn, \textit{Kansas Quilts & Quilters}.

Part of the motivation behind these goals—to record and preserve the oral histories of living quiltmakers, to encourage the discussion of quiltmaking, and to better understand how the tradition was transmitted over time—was that the board of directors for the KsQP was mindful of the information that had already been lost by previous generations’ lack of interest in the women who created quilts and their products. Other quilt documentation project organizers created their projects along similar lines of reasoning. They also understood that the ways that contemporary women were learning to quilt were different than the ways that previous generations had learned. Suzanne Yabsley of the Texas Sesquicentennial Quilt Association noted that a change had
occurred during and after World War II in the relationship between mothers and daughters. As more and more women were going to work outside of the home, mothers were not teaching their daughters sewing and quilting skills. Project organizers believed that the quilts of earlier generations served as links between generations who were only beginning to learn the value and thrill of making something by hand and the generations of women who grew up doing it out of necessity, love, and artistic expression.

**Newspaper Publicity and Coverage Prior to Quilt Discovery Days**

Given the many motivations and goals the KsQP organizers seemed to have for documenting quilts throughout Kansas, one has to wonder how they publicized the project and what caused the great response. The “Publicity Package” that Barbara Brackman created for the Regional Coordinators was yet another sign of the efficiency, organization, and professionalism of the group and made the publicity portion of the job very straightforward for the regional coordinators. In an undated memo to the regional coordinators, she wrote that the KsQP board had already sent a letter to every newspaper in Kansas announcing the project and identifying the regional coordinator. The packet itself included some general articles that Brackman had found regarding how to publicize an event and sample press releases for television, radio, and newspapers. She made the Regional Coordinators’ jobs even easier by providing them a list of the television and radio stations and newspapers in Kansas.

The press releases developed for and disseminated to the regional coordinators included only very basic information. They were meant to provide the time, date, location, and a quick overview of the purposes and goals of the project. Regional
coordinators by and large used these press releases. They also submitted notices for
the “Calendar of Events” or the community calendar for their local newspapers.\textsuperscript{36}
Besides the Quilt Discovery Day information, the press releases and the newspaper
articles based on the press releases “encouraged” owners and makers to “bring their quilts
to be identified and registered.”\textsuperscript{37} In return for bringing their quilts to the documentation
sites, answering questions about the history of the quilt, and providing the biographical
information about the quiltmaker, participants would receive “information about quilt
care, age and pattern name.”\textsuperscript{38} Publicity for the Quilt Discovery Days presented the goal
of providing information on the preservation and care of quilts as a service to the
participant rather than as a goal of the project.\textsuperscript{39}

Three of the six goals showed up in the newspaper coverage that announced the
Quilt Discovery Days as goals or purposes of the overall project (refer to Table 8 for the
six goals). These included the publication of a book on the history of Kansas quilts, an
exhibition of Kansas quilts, and the organizers’ desire “to learn something of the lives of
quiltmakers of the past.”\textsuperscript{40} The way that the exhibition was presented was interesting. In
some articles, the wording followed the press releases provided by Barbara Brackman.
These articles stated, “The Kansas Quilt Project is looking for antique and new quilts to
borrow for a future exhibit at the Kansas Museum of History.”\textsuperscript{41} Others referred to the
exhibition goal as a “traveling collection of quilts.”\textsuperscript{42} This statement makes the
exhibition sound more like a trunk show in which quilts would be pulled out for
observers to see during an afternoon at the local quilt guild or at a craft fair rather than a
full exhibition hung in a museum. No other newspaper articles from the states included
in this study presented the exhibition in this manner.
Even when the newspaper coverage did not closely follow the press releases provided by Brackman, the goals of the project were still used as important selling points of the project. For example, the goal to preserve the history for future generations was mentioned regularly. An article publicizing a Quilt Discovery Day in Abilene described the day as “a chance to have data on an important piece of history preserved for future generations.” An article publicizing the Chanute Quilt Discovery Day presented the project as a “search of the state’s quilt heritage.” Publicity in the *Ottawa Herald* also supported this idea of preserving history and heritage by reminding readers that “the history also provides a way of passing along information about quilts from one generation to the next.” “Quilts are a special piece of the history of Kansas women, and history will be recorded Saturday…” The organizers for the KsQP were very successful with this tactic of appealing to the individual owner’s or maker’s desire to have a permanent record made of their achievements or the achievements of their family members to be passed on for future generations. The project’s goals clearly resonated with the public.

The only other information that the newspaper articles consistently included was the request to prepare biographical information prior to arrival at the documentation site and that there was a limit on the number of quilts per owner that could be registered at each documentation day. Additionally, a warning that there was often a wait of at least an hour was included in the publicity. Interestingly, the maximum number of quilts per person seems to have depended to a certain extent on the regional coordinator. The first few documentation days did not have a maximum, but Quilt Discovery Days like the one in Chanute that documented 554 quilts surprised the board of directors and the
documenters. Kansans were really interested in the project, and in order to properly respond to this interest, there would have to be limitations. The limit on the number of quilts was not consistently listed in the newspaper coverage of the days. Many articles did not mention a maximum number of quilts allowed per person, while the ones that did were not always consistent on the number. Manhattan, Dodge City, and Halstead wrote that eight quilts was the requested limit; Bird City and Goodland listed seven quilts; and Hesston listed four. Even these limitations were not set in stone. Rather than stating an absolute maximum, readers were invited to call the regional coordinator if they wanted to bring more than the recommended number.

Participant Motivations and Responses

Over one-third of the Quilt Discovery Days attracted more than 200 quilts. Only seven of the seventy-two documentation days recorded fewer than one hundred quilts. An article published after the Quilt Discovery Day in Abilene created this image for readers: “Laundry baskets full of quilts lined the floor…” This is a clear indicator that the project goals appealed to the public. The only other available information describing how the public responded and why they might have participated in a documentation day comes from the newspaper coverage after the Quilt Discovery Days in some of the cities.

Unfortunately, the journalists who wrote articles describing the Quilt Discovery Days after they happened very rarely examined the reasons why people brought in their quilts. Only one article addressed the question directly. Summarizing the Quilt Discovery Day in Yates Center, Debby Cauley and David Powls wrote that some people were there to tell stories about their quilts, while others were there in hopes of getting
more information about their quilts. This description of reasons for attending a documentation day showed that some people responded to the goal of the KsQP organizers to document the history of the quilts and quiltmakers and others responded to the offer of information that the KsQP organizers made in their publicity. Although the motivations of the organizers were to preserve the history, the motivations of some of the participants may have been primarily the pleasure of sharing their stories with an interested audience.

Four newspaper articles that appeared after the Quilt Discovery Days helped the KsQP staff and board of directors fulfill their goal of disseminating information about Kansas quilt history and quilt makers and in this way may have encouraged participation in future documentation days. The article after the very first Quilt Discovery Day in Peabody told the story of how a woman who had always liked her old family quilt “saw a lot more” through the documentation process. The article goes on to discuss the history of the quilt. Articles from the Iola Quilt Discovery Day, the Hoxie Quilt Discovery Day, and the Cottonwood Falls Quilt Discovery Day also featured one particularly interesting quilt to help convey the excitement and information that could be found at a documentation day. These three articles demonstrated the focus of the project on preserving the memories and information associated with the quilt and its maker, as well as preserving an image of the quilt through documentation for future generations.

The remaining articles provided some hints about how the public responded to the program and why they responded. The level of description by the writers of the articles varied widely. Sometimes, the article gave a simple recount of the number of quilts documented and the number of volunteers and participants in the day’s events. At other
times a more detailed description was provided. Whereas detailed descriptions of the process and of the overall documentation project were usually provided in the articles published prior to the documentation day in the other states in this study, it was the newspaper coverage published after the documentation days in Kansas that actually provided the most information about the project. Not only did these post-documentation day articles tell how many quilts had been documented, they told in step-by-step fashion the process followed for documenting the quilts.53 The articles described the anticipated end results of the project and sometimes even the funding sources.54

A few articles helped show the appeal of the Quilt Discovery Days by recounting what cities and communities or at least how many cities and communities had been represented at the Quilt Discovery Day. In Manhattan, Janet Saunders wrote that 274 quilts from thirteen communities had been documented.55 After the Quilt Discovery Day in Johnson City, the article provided a short list of the cities represented by the quilts and quilt owners at the Quilt Discovery Day.56

**Summary**

The number of quilts documented in Kansas shows that interest in recording and preserving the history of quilts and quiltmakers existed and was just waiting to be tapped. The KsQP did not need to convince, prod, or entice people with cash prizes or other incentives to attend the Quilt Discovery Days. Although it is true that on any given documentation day, the number of owners might have been only one third the number of quilts, this is no different than in other states. No cash prizes were necessary in Kansas,
and the newspaper coverage focused on the goal of preserving Kansas history and heritage more than any other in order to ignite interest and participation in the project.

The KsQP board of directors recognized that appealing to the sense of history of the people and the state and the need to document that history was an effective way to attract participation. The project staff did not feel the need to provide a full listing of its goals and motivations and history in order to entice people to participate, although most of the goals were covered as general information in the newspaper coverage. The book and exhibition were secondary goals of the documentation process rather than the major goals. The primary goals were to record history and document the quilts.

Project goals, other than to preserve the history before it was lost, were rarely mentioned in the publicity. Other state-wide documentation projects were rarely mentioned in the publicity as an influence on the KsQP’s interest in documenting quilts. The connection for the project organizers between this project and the celebration of the 125th anniversary of statehood was not mentioned once in the newspaper coverage either before or after the documentation days.

Since this particular study was limited to the information available currently in the Kansas State Historical Society Archives and the newspaper microfilms, a further study to find out how much publicity was done through television and radio broadcasts would be very interesting. A comparison between them of content to see how they differ and correspond might serve to enhance the discussion of methods used to interest people in the project and might provide more direct responses from the participants as to why they chose to have their quilts documented.
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Each project’s organizer(s) brought a unique set of experiences and backgrounds to their individual projects. Some were quilt dealers (Shelly Zegart of the Kentucky Quilt Project) and others were collectors (Mary Ghormley of the Nebraska Quilt Project). Some were quilt historians (Barbara Brackman of the Kansas Quilt Project); others were folklorists (Laurel Horton of the South Carolina Quilt Project). Zegart was new to the quilt world, whereas Ruth Roberson and Karey Bresenhan had been involved with quilts for years. Roberson and Bresenhan had grown up with quilts, and Bresenhan had created multiple thriving businesses based in the quilt revival of the 1970s. Most of the organizers held college degrees though few majored in history, folklore, or American studies. All of the organizers were quilters or quilt enthusiasts. Shelly Zegart wrote in her article for *Folk Art* in Spring 1996 that “There is no such thing as a ‘typical’ quilt project—the shape of each project is deeply influenced by the interests and backgrounds of its organizers and the goals they set for the project.” The findings of this study support that observation.

**Project Goals, Objectives, and Motivations**

Although each project had some unique characteristics, motivations, or goals, there were many similarities among the goals, objectives, and motivations of the thirty-six documentation projects started or completed prior to 1989. One of the most common shared goals was that of preservation. The projects sought to preserve quilts or records of quilts by capturing images, recording information about the physical characteristics of
each quilts, recording the maker’s family history, and recording stories about the quilts and quiltmakers. In addition, the projects supplied educational materials to participants on the proper care and storage of quilts. A second shared goal was to document the contributions of quiltmakers (primarily women) to state and local history. Although there are and were men who quilt, the vast majority of quilters were and are women. By focusing on quilts rather than on crafts, folklore, or folk art in general, the projects were inherently focused on the often neglected contributions of women to state and local history. Another shared goal of the documentation projects was to preserve family history. By encouraging participants to provide genealogical information on the quiltmakers and provenance for the quilts, they reminded participants of the importance of recording and preserving family history for future generations. Finally, the documentation projects shared the goal of raising awareness of quiltmaking in their individual states by planning and producing exhibitions and publications about quilts and quiltmakers.

In addition to finding that most documentation projects conducted during the 1980s shared similar goals and objectives, two factors seemed to motivate most projects organizers. The first was the success of the Kentucky Quilt Project in the early 1980s. Its success and national recognition served as an important motivating factor to at least ten other projects. It also served as a model for many states in conducting their own projects. The second most commonly mentioned motivation for undertaking a statewide documentation project was the desire to preserve information concerning the quiltmakers and in turn the cultural heritage of the state. They expressed concern about the number of quilts being lost due to use and inevitable deterioration, as well as the loss of information
concerning the makers due to the sale of quilts out of family hands and due to the
migration of families and the loss of family connections. The selling of quilts and lack of
documentation included in the sale was rarely addressed directly in the actual project
books. It was usually implied.

In addition to the two motivating factors described above, there were several other
motivating factors that were unique to each state. The Kentucky Quilt Project had one of
the most unusual motivating factors—the untimely death of a premier quilt dealer who
had developed a proposal to document the quilts of Kentucky and the desire to carry out
his plans as a way to honor his memory. The Texas Quilt Search was developed in order
to celebrate women’s work at the Texas Sesquicentennial. Other projects, including
those in Kansas and Michigan, were timed to coincide with or were in some way
influenced by the celebration of state anniversaries as well.

Although some scholars have been critical of what they perceive as a lack of
academic rigor in the collection of data by the state documentation projects, the results of
this study revealed how carefully some of the projects’ organizers considered the site
selection and the data collection process. For example, a factor that influenced the site
selection of the Nebraska Quilt Project was an interest in whether or not various
immigrant groups influenced the quilt styles and traditions of the state. In order to
accomplish that, the group sought experts to serve as consultants to the project.

Additionally, a goal of many of the projects was to collect information that could
be used by future researchers. Each of the five projects in this study looked for experts
and created training programs for their volunteers. The Kentucky Quilt Project worked
through their consultant Katy Christopherson to get volunteers for their documentation
days trained by the Kentucky Heritage Quilt Society. In Texas, although volunteers helped on documentation days, the organizers of the projects completed all of documentation work and the photography work in order to ensure consistency of the information collected. The Kansas Quilt Project, the North Carolina Quilt Project, and the Nebraska Quilt Project created core groups of trained volunteers to examine and record the physical characteristics of each quilt. In addition, they carefully designed questionnaires to achieve consistency in the type of information collected for each quilt. In the Kansas Quilt Project, the regional coordinators made up the core group, whereas in the Nebraska Quilt Project, the large organizing committee made up the core group of trained documenters.

A Convergence of Cultural Influences

The organizers of the quilt documentation projects responded to a set of cultural influences that converged during the 1970s and 1980s to create an atmosphere in which the general public responded enthusiastically to quilt documentation projects. Through an overall analysis of the quilt documentation project books and an in-depth study of the archives, records, and media coverage of five of the projects spanning the decade of the 1980s, this study shows that there were common cultural influences that the projects drew upon in designing and implementing their projects. The first of these, and most prevalent, was the desire to document heritage. Rooted in the search for one’s family history that became the third most popular hobby in the United States during the 1970s, the quilt documentation projects recorded the histories of thousands of quilts and their makers for the use of future researchers and in the process encouraged families to
maintain their own heritage. Through media coverage, exhibitions, and publications, the quilt documentation projects took this interest in the preservation of family heritage one step further by encouraging and teaching participants to record and care for their family heirlooms. The organizers of the projects publicized the projects as a way for the histories of individual people, primarily women, to be represented in the history of the state.

The documentation projects also were by-products of the many celebrations of national and state heritage during the 1970s and 1980s. The desire after World War II to commemorate and celebrate a common American heritage through commemorations of the centennial of the Civil War, and celebrations of the 1976 Bicentennial, the 1986 Statue of Liberty Centennial, and the 1988 Bicentennial of the Constitution combined with the desire of individual states to celebrate their own statehood anniversaries. Although some of the states—Michigan and Kansas—were celebrating anniversaries of statehood, others were much more individual—Texas’ Sesquicentennial as an independent nation (not statehood) and North Carolina’s Quadricentennial of English settlement.

A similar desire to record a common heritage and a national identity had occurred earlier following the 1876 Centennial. This desire had manifested itself in the Colonial Revival of the last three decades of the nineteenth century and first two decades of the twentieth century which was at least partially a response to the influx of immigrants during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, which threatened what many Americans considered an established way of life and culture. The initial interest in quilts as symbols of American values and attributes had occurred during this period. They were easily
accessible objects that represented both womanly virtues of needlework and patience as well as the pioneering spirit of industry and hard work. The early books on quilts and quiltmaking focused on these ideas and created the mythology of quiltmaking in early America. The quilt history, *Quilts: Their Story and How to Make Them*, by Marie Webster in 1915 coupled with the encouragement by newspapers and women’s magazines to participate in quiltmaking as women’s national pastime and the preservation of family quilts as a way to preserve heritage, established a place for women to contribute to the history of the United States.

Some of these same factors—the desire to record and preserve the nation’s heritage—motivated the organizers and participants of the quilt documentation projects, but in different ways. By the 1970s, rather than striving to create a homogenous American identity and common heritage, varied groups—women, minority, and ethnic groups—were working to have their contributions incorporated into the history of the nation. The quilt documentation projects represented one way for these groups to record their contributions to American history not recorded in the national narrative. The major contribution was the story of women’s contributions to the larger social and cultural history. The quilt documentation project books record stories of resourceful women who quilted to keep their families warm as they settled into new homes, plantations, homesteads, and new states. Although this version of women’s contributions to American history did not differ much from the earlier version espoused in the Colonial Revival, it was now based upon the information gathered through the documentation days and provided a more complete, complex, and nuanced version based on available textiles, surviving quilts, and family stories about quiltmakers.
In 1992 at the “Louisville Celebrates!” conference, Jonathan Holstein stated: “Quilts have become in this generation such important icons in the women’s movement, emblematic of past oppressions, symbolic of present and future liberation, sacred to women’s history...” He observed that quilts were contradictory icons. In the modern day women’s movement in which women believed that equality meant the same rights to work, equal pay for equal work, and sexual equality, the quilt revival and the quilt documentation projects could have been seen as contradictory to the purposes of the women’s movement because they could be seen as representative of the social constraints requiring married women to stay at home. However, rather than viewing quilts as icons of oppression, the project organizers presented quilts as avenues for women into the artistic, social, political and economic history of the nation. The organizers worked with the premise that women’s history and women’s contributions to local, state, and national history were important, and that quilts, as women’s work, were imbued with their political and artistic voices in time periods when other outlets were unavailable or less available to them.

The documentation projects were a result of both the earlier women’s movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and the contemporary women’s movement. They publicized themselves as recording women’s history and women’s art. Media coverage often highlighted the stories that demonstrated the connections that quilts and the women who made them had to well-known events in American history. One story from North Carolina was about a quilt that had been used to cover a dead horse during the Civil War, but was rescued by the ancestors of the family who currently owned it. One from Kansas was the story of a contemporary signature quilt made by the
local Republican women’s club that had blocks with signatures from local, state, and national Republican politicians. The quilt project books featured stories of quilts made for soldiers during the Civil War and quilts made for fundraising for the Women’s Christian Temperance Union and other causes, in addition to stories of the pioneering and industrious spirit of women. Quilt documentation projects that recorded contemporary quilts as well as antique quilts included quilts made for modern day causes and quilts that fit into the new art quilt genre.

Another twist to the earlier Colonial Revival that signaled a change in the nation’s focus from one homogenous identity to a more fluid concept of national identity was a rising interest in the history of the nation as a nation of immigrants representing multiple ethnicities. Also of increased interest was the importance of minorities, especially African-Americans, in the history of the nation. The quilt documentation projects responded to these interests in a variety of ways. The media coverage for the North Carolina Quilt Project specifically stated an interest in documenting quilts made by African-Americans. The Kansas Quilt Project organizers also expressed an interest in documenting quilts made by African-Americans and conducted an additional research project to add to information gathered during documentation days in order to write a chapter on the contributions of African-American women in Kansas to quilt making. The Nebraska Quilt Project organizers held documentation days in Lincoln and Omaha after surveying the rural areas of the state in order to document minority and ethnic groups in the metropolitan areas of the state. Projects including those in Nebraska and California used the settlement patterns of the state as a starting point for selecting the sites of their documentation days. The Nebraska Quilt Project was centered on the idea that
Nebraska’s multiple immigrant groups might bring distinctive quiltmaking traditions into the state.

The Quilt Revival of the 1970s

One of the primary influences on the quilt documentation projects was the overall increase in interest in quilts as objects during the 1970s. Women had returned to quiltmaking starting in the late 1960s. During the 1970s and 1980s, they had created guilds centered around the social aspects of quiltmaking and the sharing of knowledge. Shops had formed that catered to quilters as hobbyists and professionals, quilt shows had become a common way to display newly created quilts, and museums were exhibiting quilts in a variety of ways. Symposia and conferences brought quilters together from larger geographical areas. The business of quilts had taken off as well. Quilts were collectors’ items; they were treated as art investments. New products making quilting easier and faster were sold at the new shops. Fabric companies began to cater to the quilters in terms of quality and fabric design.

Part of this quilt revival was the new interest in studying quilts as art objects and as historical objects. The quilt documentation projects were a response to this new interest. They recorded patterns, techniques, fabrics, and measurements in an effort to determine whether or not state and regional styles or characteristics existed. They also recorded stories about quilts and quilters. Interested researchers, like Ruth Roberson, realized that they needed larger samples of quilts than they had readily available in order to conduct their research. They needed to find out what was available. Although the
organizers themselves may not have gone beyond the documentation phase, they understood and publicized that they were collecting data for future researchers.

**Reasons for Public Participation**

The reasons that the public responded enthusiastically to the appeals of the project organizers and participated in the documentation projects in record numbers remain elusive. The decision to have a quilt documented was probably more individual than the organizers’ reasons for conducting documentation projects. The evidence found in media coverage and other documents for this study points to a few common themes. Family members recognized quilts as family heirlooms, otherwise, families would not have saved them or taken them to be documented. In some cases, the newspaper coverage quoted participants who expressed pride in the maker or pride in the maker’s abilities as the reasons for having saved the quilts. Documenting contemporary quilts showed the maker’s pride in her own accomplishments. In many cases, an interesting story behind a quilt may have prompted the owner to save the quilt and have it documented. Sometimes, the owners were simply curious about the kind of information that the documenters might be able to provide to them about patterns, skill, and time period.

Participation in projects may have been related to pride in the state’s heritage and the interest in documenting the work that women had contributed to the survival of the state. The media coverage regularly stated the connection that the organizers wanted to make between quilts, women’s work and state heritage. Some states were more direct than others. For example, participation in the Texas Sesquicentennial Quilt Association was associated with a general pride in Texas history and Texas culture. The project was
linked in all media coverage to the state’s celebration of its 150th anniversary of independence from Mexico.

In some cases, participation in the project was related to the cash prize and contest atmosphere. Participation in the Kentucky Quilt Project was clearly linked to the cash prize being offered. Four out of five of the projects included in this study—Kansas being the exception—offered an incentive of some sort in the form of a contest or prize at each documentation day.

Avenues for Further Research

In writing the chapters concerning each of these five projects and in trying to situate the quilt documentation projects into the larger social and cultural influences of the 1970s and 1970s, I realized that this study examined only a small part of a much larger movement—the quilt revival of the last quarter of the twentieth century. The quilt revival that began in the late 1960s and early 1970s has been written about primarily in the popular press, a few general quilt history books, and some of the quilt documentation books. The academic research on this topic has just begun. Suzanne Yabsley broached the topic briefly in her book *Texas Quilts, Texas Women* in 1984. Robert Shaw provided a longer overview and presented some of the influences on the quilt revival including the 1976 Bicentennial and the Whitney exhibition, “Abstract Design in American Art.” The Nebraska Quilt Project and the Kansas Quilt Project included chapters in their quilt documentation books that gave brief overviews of the quilt revival. The Alliance for American Quilts has begun documenting the quilt revival through oral histories with
some of the most well-known figures of the movement including Bonnie Leman, the founder and editor of the first quilt magazine in 1969.

In-depth research on large quilting events such as *Good Housekeeping*’s Great Quilt Contest for the 1976 Bicentennial and the American Folk Art Museum’s Great American Quilt Festival in 1986 could provide some insights into both the quilt revival and the quilt documentation projects. These large events share some similarities to the quilt documentation projects. They both invited the general public to participate in a quilt related event by publicizing it. In both large quilting events, quiltmakers responded enthusiastically to the appeals just as quiltowners responded in the quilt documentation projects. Writing histories on the national quilting organizations (American Quilt Study Group, American Quilter’s Society, International Quilt Association), on the large quilt festivals (International Quilt Festival, Vermont Quilt Festival, International Quilt Market), on the quilt museums (San Jose Museum of Quilts and Textiles, Rocky Mountain Quilt Museum, New England Quilt Museum), on quilt guilds that formed during the 1970s and 1980s, and on quilting as an international business would all add further insights. Research on all of these topics would provide additional context for understanding the cultural influences behind the quilt revival and the quilt documentation projects.

Although this study is a useful first step in understanding how the quilt documentation project organizers perceived their projects and presented their projects to the public, it is also just a beginning—an exploratory study. More project archives and media coverage should be studied in depth to expand upon the findings of this study and to test the preliminary conclusions of this study. Future research should include oral
histories with project organizers and directors, in addition to examining the archived materials and media coverage. Oral histories should examine the relationship of the organizer with the project, the relationship of the organizer to the quilting world, and the relationship of the organizer to other artistic, political, and cultural movements of the time period. Interviewing volunteers for the project and participants, if they can be found, who had their quilts documented would be useful in gaining a better understanding the appeal of the quilt documentation projects to the general public. Another study could be conducted to look at what the effects of the quilt documentation projects were and are. How many of the project organizers went on to conduct independent research on quilts? What kind of connections have project organizers and volunteers maintained with each other? What were the long-term effects of the project, as seen by the individual project organizers? There are lots of questions to ask those who were involved in the project.

This study focused on the quilt documentation projects of the 1980s in the United States. Quilt documentation projects continued in the 1990s in the United States, and multiple countries have conducted documentation projects as well. These projects may reflect other cultural influences, especially those in foreign countries. Of additional interest would be a study that looks at the states that had more than one statewide documentation projects. There were two projects in both Kentucky and Texas that were being conducted at the same time. Kansas also had two projects during the 1980s. The Kansas Quilt Project volunteers documented any quilts brought to documentation days, and the Kansas Quilt Organization members documented quilts in museum collections. In Nebraska, the Nebraska Quilt Project of the Lincoln Quilter’s Guild was conducted in
the 1980s. In 1991, the Nebraska State Quilt Guild established the Quilt Preservation Project to catalogue quilts in public collections.

Yet another avenue of research would be to study and document on-going quilt documentation groups. There are numerous projects still going on at the national, state, and local levels. The Alliance for American Quilts has a project called “Boxes Under the Bed” that encourages people to find and preserve items that are related to quilt history such as letters, news clippings, patterns, and diaries. The Oregon Heritage Quilt Project just recently started Oregon’s first state-wide quilt documentation project. The Austin Area Quilt Guild in Austin, Texas, provides forms for documenting quilts although they do not currently provide a central repository for that documentation.

This study was originally intended to include an analysis of the quilt documentation projects as a grassroots movement; however, a tighter focus was deemed best for this study. Consequently, such an analysis was excluded from this study. Analyzing the documentation projects as a grassroots movement and as part of the women’s movement, however, could prove useful to a better understanding of quilt history, grassroots history, and women’s history. The projects were primarily designed and executed by women with varying educational backgrounds and work experience. Each state project was conducted separately from all of the other projects. Although there was some crossover between the projects as far as consultants, training methods, organization, questionnaires, and documentation procedures, each project was a stand-alone project. Together, though, they create a movement that may share points of comparison with other grassroots movements. Further study relating research done on
grassroots movements in the United States and the quilt documentation projects is required before drawing any conclusions.

These research topics only look at the phenomenon of the quilt documentation projects. They do not include research that would complete the statistical analysis of data collected in each state or research that would begin comparing the findings of each state. So far the data collected in most states has not been subjected to a meta-statistical analysis. This would be a huge undertaking because many projects’ findings have not been computerized. Very few research projects have been undertaken in which the findings of one state were compared to another.
APPENDIX A

QUILT DOCUMENTATION PROJECTS ORGANIZED BY STATE

Information compiled from the quilt documentation project books and The Quilt Index

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Name</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Year Started</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Parameters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alabama Quilt Search Project</td>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>pre-1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alaska Quilt Survey</td>
<td>Alaska</td>
<td>State</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arizona Quilt Project</td>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>pre-1940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>State</td>
<td></td>
<td>cut-off date 1940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas Regional Survey</td>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>statewide, cut-off date 1936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California Heritage Quilt Project</td>
<td>California</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>cut off date 1945--those who came to California due to massive migrations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado Historical Documentation</td>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>pre-1950; includes quilts from 26 historical societies, museums, and private collections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Connecticut Quilt Search Project</td>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>State</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delaware Folklife Project</td>
<td>Delaware</td>
<td></td>
<td>County</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delaware Quilt Documentation Project</td>
<td>Delaware</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>State</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made in DC Quilt Search</td>
<td>District of Columbia</td>
<td></td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Quilt Heritage Project</td>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>State</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Quilt Project</td>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>State</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia Quilt Project</td>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>State</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawaiian Quilt Research Project</td>
<td>Hawaii</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>pre-1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boise Basin Quilters Guild Registry Project</td>
<td>Idaho</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>State</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois Quilt Research Project</td>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>pre-1950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois Quilt Research Project, Part 2</td>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>State</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiana Quilt Registry Project</td>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>State</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Name</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa Quilt Research Project</td>
<td>Iowa</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>State</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas Quilt Project: Documenting Quilts and Quiltmakers</td>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>State</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas Quilt Organization</td>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>documented quilts held in public collections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky Heritage Quilt Society Quilt Registry</td>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>19th Century quilts (made 1800-1900), Kentucky quilts with provenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky Quilt Project, Inc.</td>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>19th Century quilts (made 1800-1900), Kentucky quilts with provenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana Quilt Project</td>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>pre-1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana Quilt Documentation Project</td>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>State</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masur Museum Project</td>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maine Quilt Heritage</td>
<td>Maine</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>pre-1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland Association for Family and Community Education Quilt Documentation Project</td>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>1634-1934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MASS Quilts: The Massachusetts Quilt Documentation Project</td>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>pre-1950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan Quilt Project</td>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota Quilt Project</td>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>State</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage Quilt Search Project</td>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>made prior to 1946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri Heritage Quilt Project</td>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>cut off date 1900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montana Historic Quilt Project</td>
<td>Montana</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nebraska Quilt Project</td>
<td>Nebraska</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>cut-off 1920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quilt Preservation Project</td>
<td>Nebraska</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>documented quilts in Nebraska museums and historical societies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nevada State Heritage Quilt Project</td>
<td>Nevada</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>State</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Hampshire Quilt Documentation Project</td>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>State</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Name</th>
<th>State/County</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Additional Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Heritage Quilt Project of New Jersey</td>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>pre-1950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Mexico Heritage Quilt Search</td>
<td>New Mexico</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>pre-1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Mexico Quilt Documentation Project</td>
<td>New Mexico</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>96 interviews completed by Nora Pickens and Jeanette Lasansky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Mexico Survey of Hispanic Quiltmaking</td>
<td>New Mexico</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>County</td>
<td>Survey of Taos County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York State Quilt Project</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>cut off date 1940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina Quilt Project</td>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>pre-1976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiltmaking Traditions in Selected Areas of North Carolina</td>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>3 counties, interviewed quiltmakers as part of graduate work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Dakota Quilt Research Project</td>
<td>North Dakota</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>pre-1969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio Quilt Research Project</td>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oklahoma Quilt Heritage Project</td>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>cut-off 1940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adams County Quilt Project</td>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>County</td>
<td>Cut-off 1940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berks County Quilt Harvest</td>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>County</td>
<td>15 counties, cut-off 1940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chester County Quilt Project</td>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>County</td>
<td>Cut-off 1946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goschenhoppen Quilt Round-Up</td>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>County</td>
<td>15 counties, cut-off 1940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lancaster County Quilt Harvest</td>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>County</td>
<td>Cut-off 1950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral Traditions Project</td>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Multi-county</td>
<td>15 counties, cut-off 1940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schuylkill County Quilt Heritage Project</td>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>County</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>York County Quilt Documentation Project</td>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>County</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhode Island Quilt Documentation Project</td>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>includes 18 collections from public institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina Quilt Project</td>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>3 counties, cut-off date of 1970;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Dakota Quilt Documentation Project</td>
<td>South Dakota</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>made prior to 1930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quilts of Tennessee</td>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>State</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Name</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas Quilt Heritage Society Project</td>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>State</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas Quilt Search Project</td>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>focused on quilts made prior to 1936, but documented quilts made through 1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utah Quilt Heritage Corporation</td>
<td>Utah</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>no parameters although book includes only those made prior to 1950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermont Quilt Search</td>
<td>Vermont</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>made prior to 1941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Virginia Search – Beginning in Northern Virginia</td>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>focused on Northern Virginia but documented anything brought to them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia Quilt Research Project</td>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>pre-1976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Virginia Heritage Quilt Search</td>
<td>West Virginia</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>made before 1940 located in the state or taken to another state but made in W.VA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisconsin Quilt History Project</td>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>pre-1950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyoming Quilt Project</td>
<td>Wyoming</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>State</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX B

**AFFILIATIONS OF QUILT DOCUMENTATION PROJECTS**

Information compiled from the quilt documentation project books and *The Quilt Index*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Name</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Affiliations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alabama Quilt Search Project</td>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>Gastineau Channel Historical Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alaska Quilt Survey</td>
<td>Alaska</td>
<td>Exhibition quilts chosen by quilt experts outside of project; additional research completed by quilt experts outside of project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arizona Quilt Project</td>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>Exhibition quilts chosen by quilt experts outside of project; additional research completed by quilt experts outside of project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>Arkansas Quilter's Guild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas Regional Survey</td>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>Rogers Historical Museum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California Heritage Quilt Project</td>
<td>California</td>
<td>Consultants to selection committee: Jean Ray Laury, Linda Otto Lipsett, Roderick Kiracofe, Julie Silber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado Historical Documentation</td>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Connecticut Quilt Search Project</td>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>Fashion and Apparel Studies--University of Delaware and Delaware State Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delaware Quilt Documentation Project</td>
<td>Delaware</td>
<td>Delaware Folklife Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delaware Folklife Project</td>
<td>District of Columbia</td>
<td>Museum of Florida History (Alberto Meloni on the project board--development officer), museum collection ultimately benefited from donations; Quilters Unlimited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Quilt Heritage Project</td>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>Sunshine State Quilter's Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Quilt Project</td>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>Sought advice from Georgia Folklife Program, Georgia Department of Archives and History, museum personnel, and academics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia Quilt Project</td>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawaiian Quilt Research Project</td>
<td>Hawaii</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boise Basin Quilters Guild Registry Project</td>
<td>Idaho</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois Quilt Research Project</td>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>Combined effort of Land of Lincoln Quilter's Association and the Early American Museum; Congress of Illinois Historical Societies and Museums</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Name</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>Additional Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiana Quilt Registry Project</td>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa Quilt Research Project</td>
<td>Iowa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas Quilt Organization</td>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas Quilt Project: Documenting Quilts and</td>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>Prairie Quilt Guild, Kansas State Historical Society, Wichita State University, Phillips University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiltmakers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky Heritage Quilt Society Quilt Registry</td>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky Quilt Project, Inc.</td>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana Quilt Project</td>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana Quilt Documentation Project</td>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>Louisiana Regional Folklife Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masur Museum Project</td>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>Masur Museum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana Regional Folklife Program</td>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maine Quilt Heritage</td>
<td>Maine</td>
<td>Pine Tree Quilter's Guild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland Association for Family and Community</td>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>Maryland Association for Family and Community Education (MAFCE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Quilt Documentation Project</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MASS Quilts: The Massachusetts Quilt Documentation Project</td>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>New England Quilt Museum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan Quilt Project</td>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>Developed by Michigan Traditional Arts Program at Michigan State University Museum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota Quilt Project</td>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage Quilt Search Project</td>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>Mississippi Quilt Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri Heritage Quilt Project</td>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montana Historic Quilt Project</td>
<td>Montana</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nebraska Quilt Project</td>
<td>Nebraska</td>
<td>University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Nebraska Wesleyan University, Lincoln Quilter's Guild, Nebraska State Historical Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quilt Preservation Project</td>
<td>Nebraska</td>
<td>Nebraska State Quilt Guild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nevada State Heritage Quilt Project</td>
<td>Nevada</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Hampshire Quilt Documentation Project</td>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Heritage Quilt Project of New Jersey</td>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Mexico Heritage Quilt Search</td>
<td>New Mexico</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Mexico Survey of Hispanic Quiltmaking</td>
<td>New Mexico</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Mexico Quilt Documentation Project</td>
<td>New Mexico</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Name</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>Organization/Institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York State Quilt Project</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>American Folk Art Museum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina Quilt Project</td>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiltmaking Traditions in Selected Areas of North Carolina</td>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Dakota Quilt Research Project</td>
<td>North Dakota</td>
<td>The Quilters Guild of North Dakota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio Quilt Research Project</td>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>Ohio Arts Council's Traditional and Ethnic Arts Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oklahoma Quilt Heritage Project</td>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>Central Oklahoma Quilter's Guild, Inc.; Oklahoma State Quilter's Guild; National Cowboy Hall of Fame, Western Heritage Center, and OK Historical Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goschenhoppen Quilt Round Up</td>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>Goschenhoppen Folklife Museum and Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lancaster County Quilt Harvest</td>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>The Heritage Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral Traditions Project</td>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>Union County Historical Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhode Island Quilt Documentation Project</td>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
<td>Textiles, Fashion Merchandising, and Design Department at the University of Rhode Island</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina Quilt Project</td>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>McKissick Museum, University of South Carolina, South Carolina State Museum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Dakota Quilt Documentation Project</td>
<td>South Dakota</td>
<td>Pharmacist, University of South Dakota State Museum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quilts of Tennessee</td>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas Heritage Quilt Society Project</td>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>Texas Heritage Quilt Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas Quilt Search Project</td>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>Texas Sesquicentennial Quilt Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utah Quilt Heritage Corporation</td>
<td>Utah</td>
<td>Utah Quilt Guild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermont Quilt Search</td>
<td>Vermont</td>
<td>Vermont Quilt Festival Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia Quilt Research Project</td>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>The Continental Quilting Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Virginia Search—Beginning in Northern Virginia</td>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quilt Heritage Washington State</td>
<td>Washington</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Virginia Heritage Quilt Search, Inc.</td>
<td>West Virginia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisconsin Quilt History Project</td>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyoming Quilt Project</td>
<td>Wyoming</td>
<td>Wyoming</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C

NUMBER OF QUILTS DOCUMENTED AND NUMBER OF DOCUMENTATION DAYS BY PROJECT

Information compiled from the quilt documentation project books and The Quilt Index

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Name</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>No Documentation Days</th>
<th>No Quilts Documented</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alabama Quilt Search Project</td>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alaska Quilt Survey</td>
<td>Alaska</td>
<td></td>
<td>1523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arizona Quilt Project</td>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2774</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas Regional Survey</td>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California Heritage Quilt Project</td>
<td>California</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>3300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado Historical Documentation</td>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>2700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Connecticut Quilt Search Project</td>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delaware Folklife Project</td>
<td>Delaware</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delaware Quilt Documentation Project</td>
<td>Delaware</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made in DC Quilt Search</td>
<td>District of Columbia</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Quilt Heritage Project</td>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>5000+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida: Sunshine State Quilter's Association</td>
<td>Florida</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia Quilt Project</td>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>8500+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawaiian Quilt Research Project</td>
<td>Hawaii</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>1200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boise Basin Quilters Guild Registry Project</td>
<td>Idaho</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois Quilt Research Project</td>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15809</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois Quilt Research Project</td>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>3000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiana Quilt Registry Project</td>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa Quilt Registry Project</td>
<td>Iowa</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2558</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas Quilt Project: Documenting Quilts and Quiltmakers</td>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>13,107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Name</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>Quilts</td>
<td>Funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky Heritage Quilt Society Quilt Registry</td>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky Quilt Project, Inc.</td>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana Quilt Project</td>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>2600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana Quilt Documentation Project</td>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>2600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masur Museum Project</td>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maine Quilt Heritage</td>
<td>Maine</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>2600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland Association for Family and Community Education Quilt Documentation Project</td>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MASS Quilts: The Massachusetts Quilt Documentation Project</td>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>290+</td>
<td>5922+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan Quilt Project</td>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>75+</td>
<td>9000+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota Quilt Project</td>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>4000+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri Heritage Quilt Project</td>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montana Historic Quilt Project</td>
<td>Montana</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>3000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nebraska Quilt Project</td>
<td>Nebraska</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>3000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nebraska Quilt Project</td>
<td>Nebraska</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>3000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Hampshire Quilt Documentation Project</td>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Mexico Heritage Quilt Search</td>
<td>New Mexico</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Mexico Quilt Documentation Project</td>
<td>New Mexico</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Mexico Survey of Hispanic Quiltmaking</td>
<td>New Mexico</td>
<td>96 interviews</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York State Quilt Project</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>6000+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina Quilt Project</td>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>10106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina Quilt Search Project</td>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Dakota Quilt Research Project</td>
<td>North Dakota</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>3521</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio Quilt Research Project</td>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>7000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Information pulled from Documentation Project website: www.mainquilts.org/mainequiltheritage.htm, accessed February 28, 2010*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quilt Project</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oklahoma Quilt Heritage Project</td>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4000+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adams County Quilt Project</td>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>692</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berks County Quilt Project</td>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chester County Quilt Project</td>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goschenhoppen Quilt Round Up</td>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lancaster County Quilt Harvest</td>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral Traditions Project</td>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schuylkill County Heritage Quilt Project</td>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>686</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>York County Quilt Documentation Project</td>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhode Island Quilt Documentation Project</td>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina Quilt Project</td>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>2600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Dakota Quilt Documentation Project</td>
<td>South Dakota</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quilts of Tennessee</td>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas Heritage Quilt Society Project</td>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas Quilt Search Project</td>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>3500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utah Quilt Heritage Corporation</td>
<td>Utah</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermont Quilt Search</td>
<td>Vermont</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Virginia Search--Beginning in Northern Virginia</td>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia Quilt Research Project</td>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quilt Heritage Washington State</td>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>7500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Virginia Heritage Quilt Search, Inc.</td>
<td>West Virginia</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>3830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisconsin Quilt History Project</td>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>7000+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyoming Quilt Project</td>
<td>Wyoming</td>
<td></td>
<td>2300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Notes

INTRODUCTION

3. A complete list of quilt documentation projects—statewide surveys, regional surveys, county surveys, and others—is in Appendix A. The statewide quilt documentation projects that were completed or in progress by the end of 1989 are: Alabama Quilt Search Project, Arizona Quilt Project, Arkansas Quilt Project, California Heritage Quilt Project, Colorado Historical Documentation, Florida Quilt Heritage Project, Boise Basin Quilters Guild Registration Project (Idaho), Illinois Quilt Research Project, Indiana Quilt Registry Project, Iowa Quilt Research Project, Kansas Quilt Project: Documenting Quilts and Quiltmakers, Kentucky Heritage Quilt Society Quilt Registry, Kentucky Quilt Project, Inc., Louisiana Regional Folklife Program, Maine Quilt Heritage, Michigan Quilt Project, Minnesota Quilt Project, Missouri Heritage Quilt Project, Montana Historic Quilt Project, Nebraska Quilt Project: Documenting the Art of the Common People, Nevada State Heritage Quilt Project, New Hampshire Quilt Documentation Project, The Heritage Quilt Project of New Jersey, New Mexico Heritage Quilt Search, New York State Quilt Project, North Carolina Quilt Project, North Dakota Quilt Research Project, Ohio Quilt Research Project, South Carolina Quilt Project, Quilts of Tennessee, Texas Heritage Quilt Search, Texas Quilt Search Project, Vermont Quilt Search, Virginia Quilt Research Project, Quilt Heritage Washington State, Wisconsin Quilt History Project. A few quilt projects, including Georgia Quilt Project, formed in the late 1980s but did not actually get started on their project until the 1990s.
4. See Appendix A for a full listing of the quilt documentation projects, their dates and parameters. Appendix C provides the number of quilts documented in each project.
7. This number is only an estimate. In adding up the numbers provided in the books or on The Quilt Index, the number comes to just over 177,000 quilts. Maryland, for example, has done a project, but no information was provided on The Quilt Index about their project. Other projects have continued documenting quilts and have not published their numbers yet.
8. The actual content of the article will be discussed in the Literature Review. Zegart, “The Quilt Projects.”

CHAPTER 1

2. Ames, 12.
10 Clayton, 2.
11 Clayton, 2.
14 Stillinger, 45-60.
16 Sagert, 67.
18 Sagert, 136.
20 Sagert, 221-231.
21 Suzanne Yabsley, Texas Quilts, Texas Women (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1984), 40.
22 Patsy Orlofsky and Myron Orlofsky, Quilts in America (New York: Abbeville Press, 1992), 86. The original publication date was 1974.
24 Batchelor and Stoddard, 188.
30 Ricci, October 11, 1982.
33 Shaw, 281. He was referring to the Vietnam War and the scandals of the Nixon administration.
34 Shaw, 277, 281.
35 Yabsley, 73.; 135 quilt guilds in Texas are currently listed on “Quilt Shows, Quilt Guilds Worldwide,” http://www.quiltguilds.com/texas.htm (Accessed July 17, 2010).
36 Shaw, 284.
38 Shelly Zegart also served as advisor to multiple other projects, lectured throughout the country, and curated at least two quilt exhibitions. Jonathan Holstein is a well-known and in many ways beloved member of the scholarly quilt community as one half of the pair that created the exhibition which jolted quilts into the spotlight of the artworld. Since then, he has been an active member of the quilting community as a collector, curator, lecturer, and author. Both are currently Associate Fellows of the
International Quilt Study Center and Museum at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln. Holstein has also served on its Board of Directors.


41 Jonathan Holstein, “Problems in Quilt Scholarship” in Expanding Quilt Scholarship, 52.

42 Holstein, “Problems,” 52.

43 Holstein, “Problems,” 59.

44 Holstein, “Problems,” 58.

45 Holstein, “Problems,” 60.

46 Virginia Gunn, “Curriculum Vita.”


48 Gunn, “Myth to Maturity,” 193


51 Marsha MacDowell to Shelly Zegart, undated, Kentucky Quilt Project records, University of Louisville, Louisville, Ky. The forms that MacDowell planned to use in the Michigan project were attached to the letter.


53 Keller, 4.


57 Weidlich, 2

58 As will be evident in the rest of this study, academic backgrounds of the organizers often came from archival research not from the project books. Of the five projects included in this study, the North Carolina Quilt Project and the Kansas Quilt Project were the only projects that put academic credentials of organizers into publications about their respective projects. The Nebraska Quilt Project published the academic credentials only of the organizers and consultants who contributed the chapters to the book.


60 Elsley, 230-231.

61 Elsley, 237-239.

62 Elsley, 239.

63 Shelly Zegart, “The Quilt Projects,” 36


65 Roberson, North Carolina Quilts, xv-xvi.

66 Roberson, North Carolina Quilts, xiii.


72 Sullivan, 16.
73 Sullivan, “State Quilt Projects: Basic Data as of February 1995,” 207-215. The projects were discussed as a group in the Introduction and in the prefaces to each chapter.
74 Sullivan, 24-25.

CHAPTER 2

2 There could be some debate about whether the Kentucky Quilt Project, Inc. established in 1981, or the Texas Quilt Search of the Texas Sesquicentennial Quilt Association (established in 1980) was the first project. Since the KyQP was the first project to produce a book and organize an exhibition and was the project that spurred others to initiate similar projects, the KyQP will be treated as the first statewide quilt documentation project in the United States in this study. The Texas Sesquicentennial Quilt Association though established in 1980 did not actually begin documenting quilts until 1983; whereas, the KyQP was completed and the exhibition was traveling around the country to various museums in 1983.
3 It is unclear to whom the outline was given or whether anyone other than his friends might have known about his ideas prior to his death. I assume Eleanor Bingham Miller and Shelly Zegart knew about his intentions for the project since they organized the project so quickly after his death.
4 Bruce Mann, “The Old Kentucky Quilt Project,” November 2, 1980, Kentucky Quilt Project records, University of Louisville Archives and Records Center, Louisville, KY, 3.
5 Mann, “The Old Kentucky Quilt Project,” 1.
6 Mann, “The Old Kentucky Quilt Project,” 1.
7 Mann, “The Old Kentucky Quilt Project,” 3.
9 Embedded quotations from last three sentences: Mann, “The Old Kentucky Quilt Project”, 1-2.
10 Although this perception of quilts as women’s “only record” was held by many experts then and now, other quilt enthusiasts and historians recognized then and now that there are multiple ways to learn about women’s history. The quilt documentation projects from North Carolina, Nebraska, and Kansas all included requests for additional records both about the women and about the quilts including letters, journals, diaries, newspaper articles, and photographs. North Carolina Quilt Project organizer, Ruth Roberson, had been asking for family records that mentioned quilting in her monthly column for the *Raleigh News & Observer* for years prior to actually organizing the North Carolina Quilt Project. See Chapter 4: North Carolina Quilt Project for more analysis of her column and sources.
11 Mann, “The Old Kentucky Quilt Project,” 2-3.
12 Shelly Zegart gives a history of the development of craft-based cottage industries and cooperatives in Kentucky in the twentieth century in an exhibition catalog. She also provides information and evidence of
the popularity of Kentucky crafts outside of the state. Shelly Zegart. *Kentucky Quilts: Roots and Wings* (Morehead, KY: Kentucky Folk Arts Center, 1998).


15 Sources: Kentucky Quilt Registry file, Kentucky Quilt Project records, University of Louisville Archives and Records Center, Louisville, KY.; Katy Christopherson, “Documenting Kentucky’s Quilts: an Experiment in Research by Committee,” *Uncoverings 1983* (1984): 137-149.


17 Resume for Shelly Zegart, “Goals and Objectives: The Kentucky Quilt Project; A Celebration of Kentucky’s Heritage and History Through the Art of Quilting,” The Kentucky Quilt Project records, University of Louisville Archives and Records Center, Louisville, KY.

18 Resume for Eleanor Bingham Miller in “Goals and Objectives.”

19 Resume for Eunice van Winkle Sears, “Goals and Objectives.”


21 Christopherson, “Documenting Kentucky’s Quilts,” 139.


23 The Kentucky Quilt Project, Inc., “Goals and Objectives,” 1-2.


25 The Kentucky Quilt Project, Inc. “Goals and Objectives,” 3.

26 Approximately 68 out of 81 articles note that one of the goals of the project was to put together an exhibition of 50 of the quilts. It was always written as being part of the contest.

27 Taylor, 48-50.


31 Janice Rossano to Alexis Tibbs, August 14, 1981, Kentucky Quilt Project records, University of Louisville Archives and Records Center, Louisville, KY. Janice Rossano was the Project Coordinator organizing the Quilt Days. Alexis Tibbs was a member of the Kentucky Heritage Quilt Society. She had written to KyQP to invite them to have a Quilt Day at a local festival. Rossano’s response was that the KyQP board had been disappointed with the turnout in Ashland, and they were concerned that the turnout had been due to the inclusion of the event with the large Tri-State Regatta and Fair and so it got lost in the other events.


“Tuesday is ’Quilt Day’,” October 15, 1981.


“heritage conscious audience” comes from “Quilt search at Paducah Art Guild,” October 6, 1981.


Mann, “The Old Kentucky Quilt Project,” 2.


Subtracting the number of quilts documented at Ashland, Whitesburg, and Louisville (July 1981), there were about 597 quilts remaining to be accounted for. This meant an average of 85 quilts were documented on each of the other seven days during 1981. Since mailing information was possible and since the project also was contacting museums, collectors, and other individuals who came to their attention, it is likely that the other quilt days elicited fewer than 85 quilts apiece and that the 597 quilts was at least partially composed of quilts mailed in to the KyQP or documented at other times from private and public collections.


U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, “Characteristics of the Population: Number of Inhabitants, Kentucky,” *1980 Census of Population*, http://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/1980a_kyABC-01.pdf. (Accessed June 13, 2010). I pulled a map of Kentucky with the county lines drawn in and marked the locations of each Quilt Day. I then sectioned out the state based on county to determine which Quilt Day each county might have attended. I then added up those populations for each region based on the population by county statistics provided by the Bureau of the Census. The drawings are rough, and I made speculative guesses as to where each county might attend a Quilt Day. The eastern side of the state which would have included Quilt Days for Covington, Ashland, Lexington, Somerset, and Whitesburg had an approximate population of 1.8 million while the western side of the state which would have included Quilt Days for Paducah, Hopkinsville, Bowling Green, and Owensboro had a population of approximately 850,000.

See “$100 Prize Offered for Oldest Kentucky Quilt,” *Jackson Times*, February 11, 1982 as representative for all 14 articles.


As with the earlier numbers (see footnote 14), there is the possibility of some of these coming from other sources such as museums and collections both in-state and out-of-state. Either way, it is a large proportion of the quilts documented considering the time frame—6 months in 1981 compared to 3 months in 1982.

“Kentucky Quilt Project Final Report,” Kentucky Quilt Project records, University of Louisville Archives and Records Center, Louisville, KY.


CHAPTER 3

8 Phillips and Hogan, 27.
9 Phillips and Hogan, 18.
11 MacDowell and Fitzgerald, ix
20 Texas 1986 Sesquicentennial Commission, 5.
21 “Texas Quilts Preserve Heritage,” *Stars Across Texas* 2, no. 2, Fall 1986, 2. Because I did not learn about the Texas Heritage Quilt Society until very late in my thesis research, I have incomplete information on this project. The book published by the project did not include a list of documentation days or the number of quilts documented.
22 Texas Heritage Quilt Society flyer, Kentucky Quilt Project records, University of Louisville Archives and Records Center, Louisville, KY.
23 3 from the Beaumont and surrounding area, 3 from the Kingwood/Houston area, 2 from San Antonio, and 1 from Dallas
24 Credentials for the directors: “Texas heritage Quilt Society Directors,” Kentucky Quilt Project records, University of Louisville Archives and Records Center, Louisville, KY.
26 Texas Heritage Quilt Society Brochure, Kentucky Quilt Project records, University of Louisville Archives and Records Center, Louisville, KY.
27 Kay Hudec, “A Welcome from Kay Hudec,” *Texas Heritage Herald*, 1st edition, Winter 1984, 2. Thomas Jefferson’s quote: “Every experience deeply felt in life needs to be passed along—whether it be through words or music, chiseled in stone, painted with a brush, or sewn with a needle—it is a way of reaching for immortality.”
29 Texas Heritage Quilt Society, “What is a ‘Quilt Day’?,” Kentucky Quilt Project records, University of Louisville Archives and Records Center, Louisville, KY.
“Texas Sesquicentennial Quilt Association,” information packet found in Kentucky Quilt Project records, University of Louisville Archives and Records, Louisville, KY.; Bresenhan and Puentes, 1986, 149.


Suzanne Yabsley, Texas Quilts, Texas Women (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1984), backflap.

Bresenhan and Puentes, 1986, 149


It is unclear why she published a book separate from the project. The content of the book was focused on the history of quilting in Texas and on the quilt revival of the 1970s and early 1980s whereas, the TSQA focused on documenting quilts and stories about quilts and quilters and creating a catalogue.

Bresenhan and Puentes, 1986, 21

Bresenhan and Puentes, 1986, 9, 11, 149.

Tepper and Atkins, 5.

“Texas Sesquicentennial Quilt Association,” information packet found in Kentucky Quilt Project records, University of Louisville Archives and Records, Louisville, KY, 1.

Texas Sesquicentennial Quilt Association information packet, 2.

Some of the differences mentioned in this letter should be discussed in a different arena after much more extensive research has been done. Hudec claimed that the TSQA was not recognized by The Sesquicentennial Commission when it began using the name and information. She also seemed to have some deeply personal feelings and attitudes about Karey Bresenhan. This discussion could be left to a more complete study of the documentation of quilts in Texas by both projects.

Kay Hudec to Shelly Zegart, October 10, 1984, Kentucky Quilt Project records, University of Louisville Archives and Records Center, Louisville, KY.

Randy M. Lee to Kay Hudec, August 9, 1984, Kentucky Quilt Project records, University of Louisville Archives and Records Center, Louisville, KY.

Texas Heritage Quilt Society information sheet, Kentucky Quilt Project records, University of Louisville Archives and Records Center, Louisville, KY. I did not conduct extensive research on this project, so I have no evidence to support whether or not they accomplished this goal.

Kay Hudec to Shelly Zegart, October 10, 1984.

This section focuses exclusively on advertising for the Texas Quilt Search. Since I found out about the Texas Heritage Quilt Society so late, I had already made my trip to Texas and was unable to return to look for research on their project. Additionally, the Texas Quilt Search as part of the Texas Sesquicentennial Quilt Association is more widely known and identified as the project done in the state of Texas. This, of course, shows the need for further and more careful research on the documentation projects as a whole.


“Houston Quilt Festival is Largest in the Nation Now,” San Marcos Daily Record, exact date unknown—late October 1984.


Teague, “Why not try your hand at quilting?”

Teague, “Why not try your hand at quilting?”


CHAPTER 4


4 “Note on the Authors,” 212.

5 “Note on the Authors,” 212.


14 Region A: 2076 quilts, 11 days; Region B: 1226 quilts, 11 days; Region C: 1542 quilts, 12 days; Region D: 1100 quilts, 8 days; Region E: 1642 quilts, 11 days; Region F: 1555 quilts, 9 days; Region G: 966 quilts, 10 days.

15 Bresenhan and Puentes, 1986, 11


22 Roberson, Preface to North Carolina Quilts, xii.

23 Roberson, Preface to North Carolina Quilts, xii.


29 Roberson, “Kentucky Project Preserves.”


34 “Calling All Quilts,” Southern Living, September 1986, 40.


38 Ruth Roberson to Sue, Karen, Kathy, Annie, Martha, and Beverly (Board of Directors), April 14, 1986, North Carolina Quilt Project records, North Carolina Museum of History, Raleigh, NC. Roberson wrote that she was lucky to get an interview and that the Voice of America was doing a 2 minute segment on the NCQP.


40 "Quilt Day to be Held," April 7, 1986.
43 "Quilt Day To Be Held," April 7, 1986.
44 Duane Hall, "Sewing up History.".
45 Dixon, "Ideas Have Changed on Value of Quilts."


52 Westarp, “Piecing Together History.”

53 Morrison, “Quilts: Project is Preserving State’s Colorful Past.”

54 Edgerton, “They’re Turning Quilts Into Historic Documents.”

55 Price, “Quilt Project Patches Together Bit of North Carolina History.”

56 Price, “Quilt Project Patches Together Bit of North Carolina History.”


58 Debra Wood Pressley to North Carolina Quilt Project, August 18, 1986, North Carolina Quilt Project records, North Carolina Museum of History, Raleigh, NC.

59 Ellen M. Queen to North Carolina Quilt Project, August 22, 1986, North Carolina Quilt Project records, North Carolina Museum of History, Raleigh, NC.

60 Mae B. Harris to Ruth Roberson, August 1986, North Carolina Quilt Project records, North Carolina Museum of History, Raleigh, NC.


Lincoln Quilters Guild to Quilters, September 1, 1984, Private collection of Pat Hackley, Lincoln, NE. The letter is signed “Lincoln Quilters Guild” so it is unknown if the letter came from a specific group of people or from the guild’s officers. The other quilt guilds that the letter was sent to are listed by city in the “cc”.

Last two sentences from a proposal outline provided to guilds, “Nebraska Quilt Project: Uncovering the Art of Common Folks,” November 1985, Private collection of Pat Hackley, Lincoln, NE.

Pat Hackley, 2010, interview by Barbara Caron, Associate Director of the International Quilt Study Center, Lincoln, NE, July 5, Private collection of Barbara Caron.

Proposal outline provided to guilds, “Nebraska Quilt Project: Uncovering the Art of the Common Folks,” November 1985, Private collection of Pat Hackley, Lincoln, NE.

Embedded quotation in last three sentences: Proposal outline provided to guilds, “Nebraska Quilt Project,” 4.

Proposal outline provided to guilds, “Nebraska Quilt Project,” 1.

This was objective 17. Proposal outline provided to guilds, “Nebraska Quilt Project”.

Pat Hackley, 2010, interview by Barbara Caron.


Horton and Myers, Social Fabric, 3.

Patricia Cox Crews and Ronald C. Naugle, eds., Nebraska Quilts & Quiltmakers (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), 241.

Pat Hackley, 2010, interview by Barbara Caron.


Crews and Naugle, 241.

For a list of the other eighteen members, please see: Crews and Naugle, 238. Confirmation that most held college degrees was provided by Dr. Patricia Crews.

Proposal outline provided to guilds, “Nebraska Quilt Project.”

Proposal outline provided to guilds, “Nebraska Quilt Project.”

Crews and Naugle, vii.

“Planning Grant Report,” unknown date, Private collection of Pat Hackley, Lincoln, NE.

Dr. Naugle identified five groups—German, Swedish, Czech, Danish, and Irish—and provided between one and three counties for each where each might have had the most influence. He also identified Saunders County as a county where four out of five of the groups were represented in 1900 and 65.3% of the population was first or second-generation persons.

Documentation days in Dorchester, St. Paul, Blair, Wahoo, and Nebraska City were held in counties identified by Dr. Naugle. Others, like the day in Kearney, were in counties close to counties identified by Dr. Naugle.

Dr. Patricia Crews is currently the Willa Cather Professor of Textiles for the Textiles, Clothing, and Design Department in the College of Education Human Sciences at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She also serves as the director of the International Quilt Study Center & Museum in Lincoln, Nebraska.


Embedded quotation in last three sentences: Proposal outline provided to guilds, “Nebraska Quilt Project.”

Crews and Naugle, vii.

Barbara Brackman of Kansas was a nationally recognized authority on pattern identification, wrote for Quilters Newsletter Magazine, and had published Encyclopedia of Pieced Quilt Patterns. She had also authored an article published in each of the first four issues (1980, 1981, 1982, 1983) of Uncoverings, the journal of the American Quilt Study Group. Sue Ellen Meyer, an assistant professor of English at St. Louis
Community College, was also a nationally recognized quilt historian, lecturer, and author. Her article “Characteristics of Missouri-German Quilts” had been published in the 1984 edition of Uncoverings.

31 Proposal outline provided to guilds, “Nebraska Quilt Project,” 2.
32 These cities were Bancroft, Bassett, Benkelman, Blair, Chadron, Dorchester, Kearney, Nebraska City, Ogallala, Red Cloud, St. Paul, Scottsbluff, and Wahoo. The dates for these and the Quilt History Days held in the Lincoln and Omaha areas are Table 6.
33 “Final Report,” NEA Grant #86-5533-0184, 3.
34 There is no direct reference for this statement. The assumption was made on the basis of a recommendation in Dr. Naugle’s report to hold a pilot session before embarking on the rest of the project. Other media coverage of the thirteen Quilt History Days held in 1987 after the documentation day in Lincoln only references the thirteen with no mention of the first day in Lincoln. The last fourteen days were not included in the NEA grant proposal or the NEA Final Report.
35 Vicki Miller, “Explore History of Nebraska Quilts,” UNL Bulletin Board, December 2, 1988, 4-5.
40 I found only three articles about the NQP in the Omaha and Lincoln newspapers: Ulrich, “History Big Part of Nebraska Quilt Project”—coverage about the upcoming project; “Reflections of Nebraska Culture: Guild Will Collect Histories of Quilts and the Quilters,” Omaha Sunday Journal-Star, February 15, 1987.—coverage that included dates for the 13 Quilt History Days in rural Nebraska; Kathryn Cates Moore, “Researchers Record Quilter’ Statement,” Lincoln Journal-Star, April 29, 1988.—coverage of success of the project and some initial findings as well as listing of the six public Quilt History Days in Lincoln during May and June 1988.
42 “Sarpy Quilts Registered,” Papillion Times, April 6, 1989 and “Lincoln Quilter’s Guild To Sponsor…,” Papillion Times, March 30, 1989; Gretna Breeze, March 30, 1989 and April 6, 1989; Springfield Monitor, March 30, 1989 and April 6, 1989. The three newspapers seemed to be exact reprints of one another under three different titles. Both articles in all three newspapers were printed the same day on the same page. The significance is that all three communities were informed about the project and the upcoming Quilt History Day.
49 Question 20: “Can you explain why quilts have appeal to you and your family/friends?”, Nebraska Quilt Project records, University of Nebraska Lincoln Archives, Lincoln, Nebraska.
50 Quilt #69 and #72, By Correspondence, April 15, 1987, Nebraska Quilt Project records, University of Nebraska Lincoln Archives, Lincoln, NE.
51 Quilt #12, Lincoln, March 13, 1987, Nebraska Quilt Project records, University of Nebraska, Lincoln Archives, Lincoln, NE.
Quilt #84, Ogallala, April 27, 1987, Nebraska Quilt Project records, University of Nebraska, Lincoln Archives, Lincoln, NE.

Quilt #73, Ogallala, April 27, 1987, Nebraska Quilt Project records, University of Nebraska, Lincoln Archives, Lincoln, NE.

Quilt #180, Benkelman, April 29, 1987, Nebraska Quilt Project records, University of Nebraska, Lincoln Archives, Lincoln, NE.

Quilt #20, Lincoln, March 13, 1987; Quilt #156, Benkelman, April 29, 1987, Nebraska Quilt Project records, University of Nebraska, Lincoln Archives, Lincoln, NE.


Whetstone, “‘Quilt History Days’.”; Thiessen, “Blair 1 of 13 Cities.”


Schulz, “One of Thirteen Quilt.”


Kneale, “Nebraska City to Host.”


Whetstone, ‘Quilt Turnout ‘Overwhelming’.’


Thiessen, “Blair 1 of 13 Cities.”

CHAPTER 6

2 Nancy Hornback and Eleanor Malone to Jenny Chinn, February 6, 1986, Kansas Quilt Project records, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, KS. Jenny Chinn was the Folklife Curator for the Kansas State Historical Society. Hornback and Malone were inviting her to a preliminary meeting to consider the needs for a state-wide quilt documentation project.
3 “Proposed: Kansas Heritage Quilts & Quiltmakers Project or Kansas Heritage Quilt Project,” in Hornback and Malone to Chinn, February 6, 1986.
4 None of the newspaper coverage lists a cut-off dates that the project was willing to document implying that the change in parameters was made sometime between the first planning meeting and the first documentation day in Peabody. The newspaper article after the Peabody Quilt Documentation Day does not mention any limitations on the quilts—date or number: Adam Rome, “Event Sows Interest in Quilts: Embroidered Family Artifacts are Catalogued,” Wichita Eagle-Beacon, January 25, 1987.
6 Jennie Chinn, “Kansas Quilt Project: Documenting Quilts and Quiltmakers,” NEA Final Report, September 6, 1988, Kansas Quilt Project records, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, KS.
8 The credentials for Barbara Bruce, Mary Madden, and Mary Margaret Rowan were found in an article: Helen Storbeck, “Stitch and Chatter,” Baldwin Ledger, October 2, 1986.
10 Barbara Brackman to Shirley Wolf, March 16, 1987, Kansas Quilt Project records, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, KS. Shirley Wolf was owner of The Quilting Bee and a member of the Kansas Quilt Organization. She had written a letter dated March 5, 1986 (probably a typographical error that should have been 1987) expressing concerns about the relationship between the two groups and other rumors about the project.
12 Hornback and Malone to Chinn, February 6, 1986.
13 Chinn, NEA Final Report.
14 Memorandum from Helen Stornbeck to Eleanor Malone, Jennie Chinn, and Mary Margaret Rowan, February 5, 1987, Kansas Quilt Project records, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, KS.
15 Mary Margaret Rowan to Regional Coordinators, November 24, 1986, Kansas Quilt Project records, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, KS.
16 Mary Margaret Rowan to Regional Coordinators, November 24, 1986, 6.
22 “Quilt Guild History questionnaire results,” Kansas Quilt Project records, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, KS.
23 Chinn, NEA Final Report, 4.
24 Marilyn J. Holt, ed., Kansas History, vol 13, Spring 1990. This edition included only articles that had come from research related to the KsQP. Authors of articles were Mary Madden, Gayle Davis, Barbara Brackman, Mary Margaret Rowen, and Jennie Chinn.
26 Hornback and Malone to Chinn, February 6, 1986.
27 Storbeck, “Stitch and Chatter.”
28 Mary Margaret Rowan to Regional Coordinators, November 24, 1986.
29 Miller, “Quilt Pro Quo.”
32 Atkins and Tepper, New York Beauties, ix; Madden, 3.
34 Suzanne Yabsley, Texas Quilts, Texas Women (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1984), 41.
35 The Publicity Package was included as an Appendix to the “Regional Coordinator’s Quilt Discovery Day Manual,” Kansas Quilt Project records, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, KS.
announcement can also be found in the Community Calendar on September 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19, 1987; “Happenings,” Garden City Telegram, October 16, 1987.

37 This listing is a selection of articles incorporating this wording as it was a standard part of most of the publicity: “Quilt Project To Be Hosted In JC,” Junction City Daily Union, May 27, 1987; “Kansas Quilts Are Sought,” Hesston Record, July 30, 1987; “Quilts Sought By Project,” Anthony Republican, October 7, 1987.

38 This listing is a selection of articles incorporating this wording or something very similar as it was a standard part of most of the publicity: “Quilts Sought By Project,” October 7, 1987; “Quilters Invited,” Halstead Independent, September 24, 1987; “Quilt Day Set at Senior Center,” Hays Daily News, March 7, 1988; “Volunteers Prepare For Discovery Quilt Day in Johnson,” Johnson Pioneer, April 7, 1988.

39 Most of the coverage copied the press releases on this point. It does not seem to have been an individual paper, regional coordinator, or journalist’s wording. The wording was consistent: “Volunteers will examine quilts, record them and give owners information about quilt care, age and pattern names.” “Sample Press Release,” from the “Publicity Package”, Kansas Quilt Project records, Kansas State Historical Society. An example of the newspaper coverage can be found in “Kansas Quilts Are Sought,” July 23, 1987.

40 “Kansas Quilts are Sought,” July 23, 1987; “Quilt Discovery Day To Be Held In Bird City,” Bird City Times, October 22, 1987; “Volunteers Prepare for Discovery Quilt Day in Johnson,” April 7, 1987; “Quilt Day Held in Dodge City,” August 11, 1987.


54 Nugent, “Project Patches Together Information.”


CHAPTER 7


2 Holstein, “Problems in Quilt Scholarship,” 58.
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS

Kansas Quilt Documentation Project records, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, KS.
Kathleen McCrady Quilt History Collection, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas, Austin, TX.
Kentucky Quilt Project records, University of Louisville Archives and Records Collections, Louisville, KY.
Nebraska Quilt Project records, University of Nebraska Archives and Special Collections, Lincoln, NE.
North Carolina Quilt Project records, North Carolina Museum of History, Raleigh, NC.

QUILT MAGAZINES


NEWSPAPERS—KANSAS

Available on microfilm at the Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas. Author searched for articles from one month prior to the documentation day to two weeks after the documentation day.

Abilene Reflector Chronicle
Anthony Republican
Atchison Daily Globe
Belleville Telescope
Bird City Times
Coffey County Today
Chanute Tribune
Chase County Leader-News
Dodge City Daily Globe
Eureka Herald
Fort Scott Tribune
Garden City Telegram
Sherman County Herald
Goodland Daily News
Kiowa County Signal

Halstead Independent
Hays Daily News
Hesston Record
Hoxie Sentinel
Independence Daily Reporter
Iola Register
Johnson Pioneer
Junction City Daily Union
Lawrence Daily Journal-World
Lindsborg News-Record
Manhattan Mercury
Ottawa Herald
Topeka Capital-Journal
Wichita Eagle Beacon
Yates Center News
NEWSPAPERS—KENTUCKY
Available on microfilm at the University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky. Author searched for articles from one month prior to the documentation day to two weeks after the documentation day.

Appalachian News-Express
Art Center News
Ashland Daily Independent
Barbourville Mt. Advocate
Berea Citizen
Booneville Sentinel
Cadiz Record
Caldwell County Times
Citizen-Voice
Danville Advocate-Messenger
Falmouth Outlook
Flemingsburg Gazette
Floyd County Times
Franklin Favorite
Greenup News
Hazard Herald-Voice
Herald-News
Hickman Courier
Hodgenville Herald News
Jackson Times
Kenton County Recorder
Kentucky New Era
Kentucky Post
Lexington Courier-Journal
Louisville Times
Mt. Sterling Advocate
Marshall County Messenger

Martin Countian
Mayfield Messenger
Montgomery News
Monticello Reporter
Morehead News
News Herald
News Outlook
Owensboro Messenger-Inquirer
Paducah Sun
Paintsville Herald
Park City Daily News
Record Herald
Richmond Daily Register
Richmond Register
Russell County News
Scripps-Howard Press
Sentinel Echo
Shively Newsweek
Somerset Commonwealth Journal
Times-Tribune
Tri-State Trader
Troublesome Creek Times
Voice Newspapers
Wayne County Outlook
Weekly Messenger
Whitesburg Mountain Eagle
Winchester Sun

NEWSPAPERS—NEBRASKA
Available on microfilm at the Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln, Nebraska. Author searched for articles from one month prior to the documentation day to two weeks after the documentation day.

Bancroft Blade
Benkelman Post
Blair Pilot-Tribune
Chadron Record
Crete News
Friend Sentinel

Gretna Breeze
Kearney Hub
Keith County News
Lincoln Journal Star
Nebraska City News Press
Omaha World News
Papillion Times
Red Cloud Chief
Rock County Leader
Scottsbluff Star Herald

Springfield Monitor
St. Paul Phonograph Herald
West Point News
Wisner News Chronicle

NEWSPAPERS—NORTH CAROLINA
Available on microfilm at the North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina. Author searched for articles from one month prior to the documentation day to two weeks after the documentation day.

Albemarle Stanly News & Press
Asheville Citizen-Times
Beaufort Eastern Weekly
Benson Review
Bertie Ledger-Advance
Bladen Journal
Brunswick Beacon
Burlington Daily Times-News
Carteret County News Times
Chapel Hill Newspaper
Charlotte Observer
Chowan Herald
City-County Newspaper
Clayton News
Columbus County News
Davie County Enterprise Record
Durham Morning Herald
Durham Sun
Elizabeth City Daily Advance
Elkin Tribune
Fayetteville Observer
Fayetteville Times
Fremont News Leader
Forest City Courier
Gastonia Gazette
Goldsboro News Argus
Greene County Standard Laconic
Greensboro News Record
Hamlet News Messenger
Hendersonville Times News
Hickory Record
High Point Enterprise
Jacksonville Daily News
Journal-Patriot

Kannapolis Daily Independent
King’s Mountain Herald
Kinston Free Press
Laurinburg Exchange
Lenoir News Topic
Manteo Coastland Times
Monroe Enquirer Journal
Morehead City-Beaufort News-Times
Mount Airy News
Mount Olive Tribune
Murphy Cherokee Scout
News-Journal
Newton Observer News Enterprise
Paraglide
Pender Chronical
Pender Post
Perquiman’s Weekly
Raleigh News and Observer
Reflector
Richmond Journal
Roanoke Beacon
Robesonian
Salisbury Post
Sampson Independent
Shelby Star
Scotland Neck Commonwealth
Smithfield Herald
Smoky Mountain Times
Southeastern Times
Southern Pines Pilot
Statesville Record & Landmark
Swansboro Tideland News
Tarboro Daily Southerner
Thursday Magazine
NEWSPAPERS—TEXAS
Available on microfilm at the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, Austin, Texas and various other local libraries. Author searched for articles from one month prior to the documentation day to two weeks after the documentation day.

Austin American Statesman
Dallas Morning News
El Paso Times
Fort Worth Star-Telegram
Houston Chronicle
Houston Post
San Antonio Express News
Tyler County Booster
Wichita Falls

QUILT DOCUMENTATION PROJECT PUBLICATIONS (1980-1989)
This list includes only those books published concerning the quilt documentation projects organized and mostly completed between 1980 and 1989.


