

The Quilt Index Discovery Day

Documentation Procedure:

At the registration desk:

1. Quilt owners sign in on a registration list.
2. Each quilt is assigned a tracking code used to coordinate the quilt with its Quilt Index (QI) form and digital images. The code should be a letter or two to identify the documentation site, and a number. Example: EL-39 would be the code given to the 39th quilt registered at an East Lansing documentation day.

The code goes in four places:

- a. On a card pinned to the quilt. It needs to be written boldly enough to be readable in a photograph.
 - b. At the top of each page of the QI form.
 - c. On a receipt, given to the owner, which also serves as a claim check.
 - d. As the file name of the digital image of the quilt. Cameras auto assign numbers, rename the file with the tracking code number. The digital images must be renamed by the host group. It is best done soon after the documentation day when memories are fresh. It is why the code should be readable in the photograph.
3. Owner fills out Section A: Owner's Information, of the QI form (page 8).

At the quilt description table:

This is where the quilt is measured and described (pages 1-5). Two people work together. One takes the lead in reading off the form and filling in the information. The other measures and describes the quilt. At least one person should be an experienced quilter. You may want a third person to help unfold and measure the quilt (the owner often likes to help with this).

Hints and suggestions:

- Ask the owner for the name or title they use for the quilt ([Owner's name for quilt](#)). **It's not our job to insist on the 'correct' name for the quilt pattern.** We have another line on the form for commonly recognized names ([Name\(s\) for quilt's pattern in common use](#)). Quilt historians who will be looking at this material are interested in regional differences in pattern names, and finding an unusual name can tell us something about the distribution of quilt patterns or about the family who made it.
- It is important to use **pencils** rather than pens around the quilts, as loose pens can easily leave stray ink marks on the quilts. The last thing you want is to damage somebody's quilt! Silk fabrics in Victorian crazy quilts and log cabins are usually very fragile and must be handled carefully – no tugging or pulling on them.
- Quilt dimensions should be measured through the middle rather than along an edge. Quilting stitches per inch are counted as visible stitches **on the surface only**. An index card with a 1" square window cutout is a great help in stitch counting.
- You are not limited to the descriptive choices given in the check boxes on the form if they don't seem appropriate. Extra information is welcome.
- If the owner has brought in more than one quilt, they may wish to continue filling out the QI forms for the quilts waiting to be described. An extra clipboard or two is useful to have on hand at this station.
- Refer to the [Quilt Index Guide to Documenting Quilts](#) to help with describing the quilt.

The Quilt Index Discovery Day

After description, the quilt goes to the photographer and the owner goes to the history table (pages 5-6).

At the photography area:

1. Quilts are brought to and from the photography area by a runner.
2. The quilt is hung, and the tracking code card attached to the front so it will show in the photograph. Quilts should be photographed in the order received.
3. Digital images are taken for each quilt. If the quilt has interesting details (e.g. commemorative ribbons in crazy quilts, unusual appliqué patterns, etc.) then close-up photos should also be taken. See the attached document [Quilt Index-Image Prep.pdf](#) for best practices when photographing quilts for the Quilt Index.
4. If the quilt owner is also the maker of the quilt, take a second portrait photo (a “head-shot” and/or “upper body”) of the quilter in front of the hung quilt.
5. The quilt is returned to the owner. Be sure to check the tracking code against the owner’s receipt.

Hints and suggestions:

- Seeing the quilts hanging will attract a lot of attention from bystanders, so you may want to leave enough room so onlookers can stand and watch without interfering with the photographers. Some groups ring a bell to alert people to a particularly fabulous quilt.
- It will be much easier to match quilt images to QI forms if the quilts are photographed in numerical order. Images must be matched with QI forms before they are turned in. The image files should be renamed with the tracking number.
- We have seen a number of different quilt hanging systems, all successful. If you have questions, please call. The important thing is that the hanging system be able to show all four edges of the quilt (draping them over a clothesline or curtain rod may cut off the border, or an entire row of blocks), and be tall enough to hang a big quilt. Modern-day queen size quilts can be 108” long. We use photography backdrop stands (very portable) and skirt hangers (most quilts won’t have sleeves).

At the quiltmaker history/information tables:

The quilt owner continues filling out the QI form, pages 7-8. **Keep extra blank QI forms on hand here.** If the owner wants to take the form home to finish filling it out, give them a new form with the tracking code written on it, and keep the initial form with the owner’s name and the descriptive information. Include your address on the form so the owner can mail in the form they took home. For multiple quilts by one maker, fill out the maker form only once, then fill out just the maker’s name on the remaining forms. The same can be done for multiple quilts by one owner.

Many owners take one look at the size of the QI form and decide it’s more than they want to deal with. Very often, if a volunteer can get the owner talking about the items on the form, wonderful stories emerge and the form looks far less intimidating. We really want to know the stories that make each quilt special: why the maker chose this pattern, what memories they have about it or the person who made it, why this quilt is important to them (page 1).

The Quilt Index Discovery Day

You will probably want to keep extra blank paper on hand, as the QI forms don't allow much space - just be sure to attach any extra pages to the form or write the tracking code on each extra page.

Supplies and equipment needed	
<input type="checkbox"/>	QI Inventory Forms (we provide one, you photocopy as many as you'll need)
<input type="checkbox"/>	On-site receipt forms
<input type="checkbox"/>	One digital camera
<input type="checkbox"/>	Index cards
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pencils
<input type="checkbox"/>	Black marker
<input type="checkbox"/>	Straight pins
<input type="checkbox"/>	Clipboards
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tape measure (120" or longer)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Clean white sheets for table covers and photo backgrounds
<input type="checkbox"/>	White cotton gloves for handling quilts
<input type="checkbox"/>	Legal pads for registration sign-in
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sturdy tape for hanging signs and fastening table covers
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rack to hang quilts for photography. We use two racks.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Photo lighting equipment and extension cords
<input type="checkbox"/>	Reference materials (i.e. <i>Brackman's Encyclopedia of Pieced Patterns</i>)

Facilities Needed	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Photography area: It is best to have this area out of the mainstream of activity.
1.	Space enough to photograph the quilts in their entirety.
2.	1-2 tables as a holding area for quilts coming and going.
3.	Rack to hang quilts
<input type="checkbox"/>	Registration area: 2 tables and 4 chairs.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Quilt Description area:
1.	2-3 tables set together to make a space large enough to lay a quilt out flat. Tables should be covered with a clean sheet to protect quilts from dirt and snags. If you are expecting a lot of quilts, it is useful to have two or three description areas.
2.	2-3 chairs per area.
3.	One table as a holding area for quilt coming and going.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Quiltmaker history /information table: table and chairs for filling out inventory forms and place to collect completed forms. One table and two chairs for each station filling out this portion of the form. If you are expecting a lot of quilts, it is useful to have two or three stations.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Waiting area for those waiting to begin the process or receive their quilts back.

The Quilt Index Discovery Day

Personnel needed	
Prior to the event	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Discovery Day Manager: oversees and coordinates all phases of planning and production, including maintaining communications with QI staff, any needed fundraising, space rental, supplies and equipment, publicity, and volunteer coordination.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public Relations Coordinator: to advertise event to community members.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Volunteer Coordinator: to recruit and coordinate volunteers.
Day of the Event	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Assistant Manager: one person to assist QDD manager in making sure everything runs smoothly.
<input type="checkbox"/>	1-2 registrars to greet people, have them sign in, assign the tracking code to each quilt and its QI form, give owners a receipt, and direct them to the next station.
<input type="checkbox"/>	2-3 runners to carry quilts to and from the photography area and help direct people from station to station as needed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	2 people per quilt description table. This is where you really need at least one person familiar with quilt patterns, quilt history, and quilting techniques.
<input type="checkbox"/>	1-2 photographers who can take good digital images
<input type="checkbox"/>	2 photographer's assistants per hanging rack to hang and take down quilts and make sure tracking number is clearly displayed. Depending on the rack system used, they will probably need to be able to go up and down ladders repeatedly.
<input type="checkbox"/>	1 'historian' for each quiltmaker history/information table to help people fill out the QI forms and to receive completed forms. This is also a good place to have someone who knows about quilting, as many owners don't know much about their quilts and would like to ask questions. Some sections of the QI forms may be intimidating to some individuals who are tempted to leave the whole thing blank rather than give spotty answers. Those individuals can be encouraged to provide as much information as they can, even if it is just a little. Even the little stories provide us with clues to quilting history.
<input type="checkbox"/>	2 people to collect forms, double checking to make sure no steps of the process were missed and that quilts are returned to the proper owners.

The Quilt Index Discovery Day

Reception area: WELCOME & THANK YOU ; quilt chat and show and tell area. Chairs for people waiting; handouts or literature available.

quilt &
owner



Registration Table: Sign in;
Fill out Owner section (page 8);
Assign Tracking Code to quilt, QI form, and
owner's receipt.

2 volunteers, extra chairs for people waiting in
line

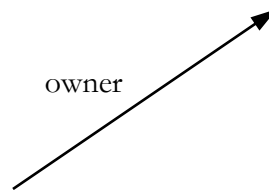
quilt &
owner



Quilt Description Tables:

Fill out Description section (pages 1-5)
1 caller, 1 scribe per table; clipboards for scribe &
owner; 3 chairs. **PENCILS ONLY!**
2-3 tables set together and covered w/ clean sheet;
holding table for waiting quilts. Cotton gloves for
handling the quilts. Measuring tapes.
You may need 2 or 3 sets of description tables.

owner



QI Form collection:

Turn in forms, double check
to make sure no tables were
missed and exit.

1 volunteer, 1 table, 1 chair

quilt & owner



Quiltmaker History/ Information Tables:

Fill out Sections, B, C
Return quilt to owner check tracking code on quilt
against owner's receipt.

1 volunteer for each table, plenty of chairs; extra
QI forms for people who want to take them home
to finish.

You may need 2 or 3 sets of history/information
tables.

quilt



Photography area:

1 photographer & 2 assistants per hanging rack.
1-2 hanging racks, 1 table for incoming quilts, one
table for exiting quilts.

quilt

