



The Quilters' Research Network was founded in 1982 at the Land o'Lincoln symposium by Barbara Brackman and Joyce Gross. The purpose was to develop a network of researchers through a series of informal discussions at major quilt conferences. Lists of individuals and their interests were developed and put on labels for participants' convenience and meetings were continued to promote further discussions among researchers and historians.

Katy Christopherson (left) and Mary Cross discuss a quilt top at the Ames, Iowa meeting. Joyce Whittier is in the background.

QUILTERS' RESEARCH

Notes from the Iowa Meeting July 9 '83

During the meetings in Iowa about 20 participants discussed ideas on how to better organize researchers, what their own priorities were and how to interest others in research and conservation.

-Joyce Whittier mentioned an idea for a Quilt Conservancy modeled on the Nature Conservancy in which members' dues went to purchase quilts (both old and new) for museums which had good records for storage and display.

-Marilyn Woodin of the "Woodin Wheel" brought up a recent case where as a dealer she found a collection of ten Iowa Amish quilts. She tried to interest an Iowa museum in purchasing the collection but there no funds available. The quilts went to a New York dealer where the collection was broken up.

Sun July 10, 1983 - The discussion of priorities continued:

-Joyce Gross mentioned a microfilming project which she intends to carry out. They will record published materials (e.g. NEEDLECRAFT MAGAZINE and Carrie Hall's scrapbooks) and thus disseminate inexpensively some of the old published material on quilts. -Continuing the discussion of access to research materials, Katy Christopherson mentioned that there is much available in public (and private) collections but only a few people know what is there. Nancy Rowley suggested that collections be catalogued.

- Quilt Museums and Central archives were discussed. Joyce Gross reported plans by New England Quilters' Guild for a quilt museum and preliminary discussion for a national quilt archive. Since museums and libraries require money and the Network's major asset is volunteer time, participants agreed to begin by cataloging existing museum collections of use to quilt research.

Mary Cross agreed to develop a form for recording pertinent museum collections. Participants offered ideas as to what they wanted in the directory. Researchers would then volunteer to explore museums, libraries, archives etc in their regions.

There was a discussion of possible duplication of efforts, e.g., there are guides to textile collections, but these do not focus on quilts, do not mention related research materials and only mention large museums. The American Quilt Study Group has also proposed such an index to collections of quilts, fabrics and related materials and they will be contacted so efforts are not duplicated.**

The majority of the participants stated they were interested primarily in fabric and dating quilts by fabric. They indicated an interest in dated swatch books and everyday antique clothing like Mary Barton had shown.

* The AQSG has no plans for the index.

- Participants (who had spent the week working with the research material of fabric, quilts and published material belonging to Mary Barton and Betty Blagen) expressed their interests in having access to similar collections. This was a theme that participants continued to return to throughout the two days.

- Mike Wigg and Bettina Havig volunteered to begin chronological records of the fabrics that come into their shops with contemporary swatch books.

- Participants discussed ways to communicate about fabric. Ideas discussed included a round robin where actual swatches would be sent, mailing photocopies of fabrics and concentration on a particular period, e.g. 1876, with all participants focusing on fabrics printed at that time. The consensus seemed to be that participants wanted to initially focus on developing an index to research collections. They were also interested in every day clothing, fabrics, dated swatch books, women's diaries and journals, magazines with quilt patterns, actual quilt patterns and block collections.

- Discussion about reaching other quilts and interesting guilds in putting money into conservation and research. Suggestions made included 1) writing free material on quilt history for guild newsletters which might need copy, 2) bringing in outside experts to speak to guilds as "prophets" in their own country are seldom heeded 3) personally interesting one other person in doing quilt research during the coming year.

- Bettina Havig and Joyce Gross proposed a history convention in Columbia Mo in 1985. Ideas for programs, exhibits, workshops etc are solicited.

- Joyce Whittier described an educational project started by the Kansas City Guild in which high school home economics teachers are being taught to quilt. They will then teach their students this fall with help from guild members who will go into classes.

NOTES FROM SEATTLE MEETING JULY 20 '83

Barbara Brackman conducted the meeting. Participants introduced themselves and told of their specific interests. Many were interested in quilt history in general and had not yet focused on a specific area. There were approximately 20 people at the meeting.

Several of the ideas discussed in Iowa were outlined by Joyce Gross. Participants

said they would be interested in working on a group project such as the directory to institutions with quilts and quilt related research materials.

NOTES FROM CONTINENTAL QUILTING CONGRESS Nov 5, '83

Our meeting was held at the same time as as the Quilting Bee, which caused some confusion because of the noise and distractions.

The ten participants each introduced herself and briefly discussed her interests and concerns.

The group wrote a letter to Hazel Carter, coordinator of the Congress, suggesting that more antique quilts be shown next year.

Suggestions were made to interest others in quilt history. 1) Bring antique quilts for Show & Tell at guild meetings and give information about them. 2) Review old quilt/textile books for newsletters. 3) Put together a five minute slide show with a narrative on antique quilts for guilds. 4) Urge others to bring antique quilts to meetings.

Sue Hannon suggested we start collecting 1976 (Bicentennial) fabrics. Lee Porter volunteered to collect them. Her address is 3407 36th St NW, Washington D.C. 20016. It was suggested that we send a 4" square with the manufacturer's name on the selvedge and any information about the provenance attached.

Several questions were asked and discussed. "Was Nancy Cabot a real person and if so who was she?" Pat Nichols asked if any one knew if using the color red had some special significance.

FOR INFORMATION:

Survey of Sources and Resources for Quilt Research, send SSAE* to Mary Cross, P.O. Box 10212, Portland, OR 97210

Quilters' Research Network, send SSAE* to Barbara Brackman, 500 Louisiana St, Lawrence, KS 66044

SSAE: stamped self addressed envelope.

