

Uncoverings 1999

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Edited by Virginia Gunn



Authors and Editor

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Valerie S. Rake holds bachelors and masters degrees in Women's Studies and is completing her Ph.D. in Women's History at the Ohio State University. Her dissertation research explores gender and the commodification of quiltmaking in Wayne County, Ohio. Her personal interest in quiltmaking and quilt history helped her decide to focus on quiltmaking as a way to study women with traditional/conservative approaches to life.

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Alma Wallace Lesch

(1917-1999)

Alma Wallace Lesch was recognized internationally as a fiber artist who created innovative art works from discarded textiles and objects. She gained national attention in 1969 when her *Bathsheba's Bedspread* was included in the American Craft Council's exhibition, *Objects: USA*. The following year her book, *Vegetable Dyeing*, became a standard text for the time.

A native of McCracken County, Kentucky, Alma Lesch made her first quilt at age 12. After retiring as a third grade teacher in 1961, she began making art quilts and teaching the textile arts. Her innovative art, that pioneered the use of clothing as portraits, filled her students with a high level of enthusiasm and respect for the oddities she treasured—garments old and mended, lace and embroidery and rich colors—the stuff of people's lives. One student wrote, "She got me out of the kitchen and the laundry. She made my life bloom."

Alma Lesch taught at Arrowmont School of Crafts, Haystack Mountain School, the Chicago Art Institute, the Indian School in Santa Fe, and the Philadelphia College of Art and Science. In 1974, she was named a Master Craftsman by the World Crafts Council. Her works are in private and public collections, including The Speed Art Museum in Louisville, the American Crafts Museum in New York, and Arrowmont School in Gatlinburg.

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The American Quilt Study Group is a nonprofit organization devoted to uncovering and disseminating the history of quilt-making as a significant part of American art and culture. AQSG encourages and supports research on quilts, quiltmaking, quilt-makers, and the textiles and materials of quilts.

The American Quilt Study Group is dedicated to preserving the story of quiltmaking—past, present, and future. We invite you to join our ranks!

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