

Uncoverings

2014

Volume 35 of
the Research Papers of
the American Quilt Study Group

Edited by Lynne Zacek Bassett



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of the American Quilt Study Group

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Cover photo:
Kate and Joel Kopp in their first shop, 1972. (seen on page 18)
Photo courtesy of Kate and Joel Kopp.



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 *Preface*

The theme of this year's *Uncoverings* could be "Researching Outside the Box." Typically, the majority of papers published in any volume of the American Quilt Study Group's annual journal will focus on types of American quilts, or study a specific American quilt, quiltmaker, region, or period of quilting. In this year's volume, however, every paper falls outside those common parameters, with studies of social phenomena, non-quilt bed covers, and other-than-American quilting cultures.

In a happy coincidence, two papers in *Uncoverings 2014* examine intertwining aspects of the late twentieth century's Quilt Revival. Nancy Bavor, who published her study of "Nine California Art Quilt Pioneers" in *Uncoverings 2012*, offers another perspective in her investigation of the Quilt Revival with "Knockers, Pickers, Movers, and Shakers: Quilt Dealers in America, 1970–2000." Her interviews of nineteen prominent quilt dealers illuminates the awakening of interest in antique quilts in the latter decades of the twentieth century, the stratification within the profession of antique quilt dealing, and the business and personal philosophies that drove these dealers in their quests to find the right quilts for their customers. Some of these same dealers initiated the state quilt documentation projects—a grassroots effort that has now spread not only across the country, but even across oceans to other parts of the world. In her paper, Christine E. Humphrey examines five of the earliest state quilt documentation projects (Kentucky, Texas, North Carolina, Nebraska, and Kansas), using media coverage and



documentation project archives to examine the social and cultural factors, including the growing interest in selling and collecting antique quilts, that drove the quilt documentation project movement.

Two more papers in this volume are connected by their focus on quilts that combine Western and non-Western textile traditions. In *Uncoverings 2011*, Phyllis Herda provided an overview of the history and art of Cook Islands *tivaevae*. In this volume, Joyce D. Hammond expands our understanding of Polynesian quilting with her study of Tahitian *tifāifai*—a regional spelling variation for the same quilting tradition (and occasionally without the long mark over the “i,” depending on the source). Hammond examines the tradition of change within Tahitian quilting that has allowed the art to evolve and flourish, while still maintaining its core cultural significance. Marin F. Hanson examines a new American quilt tradition inspired by a (mis)understanding of a Chinese patchwork practice, the creation of the “One Hundred Good Wishes” quilts for American families adopting Chinese children. Hanson’s study reveals how quilts serve as “metaphors for socio-cultural phenomena”—in this case, how these quilts represent the embrace of a child’s birth culture by the adoptive parents, their extended family, and friends.

Laurel Horton, who has sat in the *Uncoverings* editor’s chair through many volumes over the years, shifts to being an author in this year’s publication. Her essay examining weft-loop woven counterpanes of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries offers context for studies of quilts from the same period. Not every bed was covered by a quilt in the era of the New Republic. What were the other options? And how might their manufacture and design relate to quilts? What cultural and economic issues were represented in bed cover choices? The Bolton spreads were an important element within the neoclassical whitework tradition, connecting them to the elegant stuffed work and Marseilles spreads more commonly studied by quilt historians. As Horton rightly points out, “As quilt researchers, we need to expand our awareness to include other textile traditions and the human behaviors associated with them.”

Every volume of *Uncoverings* offers at least one or two “outside the box” papers. And of course, studies of American quilts by region, culture, date, style, maker, and designer will always form the core of the research produced by AQSG members. Remarkably, the founders of AQSG published their first volume of *Uncoverings* the same year that the organization was founded,

in 1980. The papers published in this volume were presented at the thirty-fifth annual conference of the American Quilt Study group in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Thus, there are now thirty-five volumes of quilt scholarship—a variety of research offering information and insight for scholars of American history, economics, material culture, and beyond.