

Quilt Index Funded for Major Expansion

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Institute of Museum and Library Services Leadership Grant Awarded to Expand the Quilt Index

EAST LANSING, MI and ASHEVILLE, NC, October 11, 2007 - Thanks to a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), The Quilt Index will expand to include quilt ephemera records, new tools for educators, and social networking features that will increase its usefulness for quilters, teachers and students. The Quilt Index (<http://www.quiltindex.org>) is a joint digital collections project of The Alliance for American Quilts and Michigan State University, through MATRIX: Center for Humane Arts, Letters, and Social Sciences Online and Michigan State University Museum.

This three-year grant totaling \$911,809 catapults an already groundbreaking digital collection to a whole new level. The Quilt Index already features thousands of quilts and will soon contain images of 50,000 quilts, along with related historical information. These quilts come from 23 museums, libraries, universities and state documentation projects. The amassing of this unmatched virtual collection is of national importance because most valuable quilts spend most of their time in storage, unseen to both historians and interested citizens.

“The Quilt Index is a model for doing history and public outreach online,” says Mark Kornbluh, Chair of History at MSU and Director of MATRIX, a digital library research and education center. “Digital library tools, paired with such a rich and extensive resource, will allow teachers, curators, researchers, and the general public to explore quilts in-depth and across time and geography. It allows us to see new things in the history and ask new questions of this quintessential American art form.”

This new IMLS funding will let Michigan State University and The Alliance for American Quilts both broaden this invaluable collection and make it easier to explore in depth. The ephemera to be added will include such items as old diaries, quilt patterns from newspapers, photographs and quilt catalogs. Online access allows these items to be easily studied without harming the often-fragile originals.

“We are very excited that this grant will further our mission at The Alliance by allowing us to expand upon the rich stories of quilts and quilters,” said Linda Pumphrey, co-president of the Alliance for American Quilts, a national nonprofit whose website, www.centerforthequilt.org, offers free resources related to quilts and quilters. “Through this funding The Quilt Index