

**The Quilt Index**  
**An Application for Funding**

Presented to: The National Endowment for the Humanities, Division of  
Preservation and Access

From: Michigan State University and MATRIX: The Center for Humane  
Arts, Letters and Social Sciences OnLine

In partnership with:

The Alliance for American Quilts and H-Net: Humanities and Social Sciences OnLine

With the participation of:

The American Folklife Center, Library of Congress

The Illinois State Museum

The Michigan State University Museum

The Tennessee State Library and Archives

The University of Louisville Archives and Records Center

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## ***Project Summary***

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Michigan State University, in partnership with The Alliance for American Quilts and H-Net: Humanities and Social Sciences OnLine, are seeking funds from the NEH Division for Preservation and Access, to support the development and deployment of the **Quilt Index**. The Index will be an trans-institutional, comprehensive on-line research tool and reference work to provide access to information about North American quilted bed coverings that will be of immense value to students, scholars, and researchers in the humanities, as well as the general public. Utilizing the power of the Internet, the **Quilt Index** will provide unprecedented access to unpublished documentation on American quilts and quilt making, materials that are now widely scattered and largely inaccessible due to location or fragility.

When complete, the **Quilt Index** will be a central resource that provides access to contextual documentation and images of quilts from a wide variety of sources including (1) images of and documentary information about quilts in public museum and library collections; (2) aggregate information about privately held quilts compiled during the past 17 years by 56 state and regional quilt documentation projects in the United States; (3) bibliographies of secondary materials relevant to quilt study; and (4) finding aids developed to assist researchers with locating hard-to-find quilt-related primary and secondary materials in public collections.

This resource will be tailored to meet the needs of academic and lay researchers in a diverse array of humanities fields. From analyses of material culture in literature, to studies by art historians of the development and dissemination of particular patterns or techniques, to explorations by women's, ethnic, and social historians, the **Quilt Index** will be used by a wide range of humanities scholars and teachers.

Taking full advantage of the potential of the World Wide Web to cross institutional boundaries, the **Quilt Index** is an open-ended, consortial project that is designed to ultimately incorporate documentary information from any and all institutions that collect and document quilts. In this development and deployment phase of the **Quilt Index**, for which we are requesting NEH funds, the Alliance for American Quilts, Michigan State University, and H-Net are working with five partner institutions -- the Library of Congress' American Folklife Center, the Illinois State Museum, the Michigan State University Museum, the Tennessee State Library and Archives, and the University of Louisville Archives and Records Center. Chosen for both the strength and range of their collections, each of these institutions has developed a distinct project to put quilt documentation on line through the Index. These partners will provide feedback and direction throughout the development and deployment of the Index. By the conclusion of

this phase of the project, the **Quilt Index** will be fully operational and available for use by all institutions that document quilts, as well as a wide range of researchers, teachers and a general public. Cumulatively, the documentation projects of the five partners in this phase will demonstrate the academic value of the Index and ensure it's immediate usefulness even as it grows through expansion to other collections.

### ***Project Significance***

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Over the course of the 20th century, investigations into the history and meaning of American quilts have evolved from the stereotypical antiquarian and romanticized efforts prevalent at the turn of the century, to extremely sophisticated studies meeting academic standards in the century's last quarter. New attention to the historical, cultural, and sociological role of quilts in American society spans a wide range of disciplines. Scholars are increasingly focusing on quilts as a window to understand many historical and contemporary aspects of American life, including women's work, family, and community. Scores of grassroots state and regional quilt documentation projects -- conducted in almost every state in the Union -- have focused on documenting quilts' personal and community contexts, as well as capturing the history of their production, ownership, and use, and describing their physical appearance. Yet, these resources remain widely disperse, and largely inaccessible to scholars and researchers at the present time. Enabling both scholars and a broad general audience to access information about these collections is central to furthering the number and scope of quilt studies, and increasing public understanding of the history and culture of our nation and world.

Michigan State University and H-Net: Humanities and Social Sciences OnLine, in partnership with The Alliance for American Quilts, are seeking funds from the NEH Division for Preservation and Access to support the development and deployment of the **Quilt Index**, as called for by The Alliance's 1997 *Request for Partnership*. This project will create a research tool and reference work to provide access to contextual documentation and images of quilts from the 56 state and regional quilt documentation. Finding aids, images and documentary information about the quilts, as well as bibliographies of secondary materials will ultimately be included in the **Quilt Index** as well. Through a web-based interface, the materials will be freely available to individuals and institutions around the country, and the world.

This Internet-accessible, database repository will allow for a range of inquiries and uses, and can be easily expanded and applied to additional projects. The **Quilt Index** will for the first time make it possible for researchers, students, quilt makers, genealogists, and a wide public audience to locate and reference these materials easily. Scholars from a variety of fields, including women's studies, cultural studies, art history and criticism, folklife studies, material culture studies, textile history, racial and ethnic studies, political and religious history, American social history, and state, regional, national, and

international studies will be able to use this information as documentary source materials. Students fulfilling classroom assignments in the humanities could use these materials in lessons on ethnic and racial studies, examining documentation of African-American, Native Hawaiian, and Mexican-American quilting, for example. Contemporary quilt makers seeking pattern identification and technical information, and family members tracing the social and cultural contexts of an heirloom quilt will also benefit from this research tool.

Equally important, the **Quilt Index** projects discussed here form the seed of what will grow into an extensive network of digital documentation, images, and aggregate information, as well as K-12 curricula materials, online exhibits, and forums for scholarly exchange. The database format selected for this project is specifically designed to facilitate distribution of educational and exhibition materials. Maintained and preserved over the long-term by resources committed by Michigan State University, the **Quilt Index** will be assured a long life, and play a central role in the refinement and professionalization of American quilt scholarship within a wide range of humanities fields. The Index will also become a model for the development of other online resources for the fastest growing areas of research in the humanities, material culture studies, and cultural studies.

### **The Need for a Quilt Index: A Brief History of American Quilt Study and Documentation**

#### Quilts and Quilting in Humanities Scholarship

Studying American quilts is both an old and a new enterprise, as historian Virginia Gunn has noted (1992, 1994). Over the past one hundred years, scholars have produced a wide variety of documentation on quilts, spanning a broad range of topics. A brief survey of this literature demonstrates both the varied applications of this scholarship for studies of American history and culture -- particularly in the areas of women's, family and community studies -- as well as the importance of making this material available for public and scholarly use. Providing access to this wealth of scholarship for research and teaching is the central aim of the **Quilt Index**.

Quilts are extremely valuable primary resources that provide a wealth of information for art historians, women's, ethnic and social historians, lay and academic researchers, family geneologists, practicing artists and craftspeople. Scholars first began to take quilt studies seriously at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Stimulated by the Colonial revival, scholars looked to quilts in their studies of the "pioneer period" in much the same way they studied fine furniture, silver, glassware and ceramics, seeking links and divergences between early American arts and those of medieval, renaissance and early modern Europe.<sup>1</sup> Interest in quilts as part of Americana heightened with the opening of the

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<sup>1</sup> Two key works from this period include Eliza Calvert Hall's romanticized account of quilt making in *Aunt Jane of Kentucky* (1898) and Marie Webster's 1915 publication of *Quilts: Their Story and How to Make Them*. Hall's work received a large public audience because it fit well with late-19<sup>th</sup> century Americans'

American Wing at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1924, and by the 1930s, patterns for quilts appeared in newspapers, catalogs and magazines in astonishing numbers.

Between 1930 to 1970, a large body of literature emerged that emphasized quilt patterns and included a large number of how-to-books. Many Depression-era women began to make quilts in increasing numbers. Folk craft specialists also continued to bring quilts and quilt-making traditions to the attention of American folklorists and to examine the relationship between English and American quilts, contributing much to the understanding of the development of a distinct American culture in North America.

Thanks in large part to an increasing emphasis on women's and family history, material culture, and a growing interest in interdisciplinary pursuits, after 1970 scholars began to integrate quilt studies more fully into a broad range of humanities fields. As scholars turned their attention to "new voices," and placed increasing emphasis on incorporating gender, ethnicity, and class into their work, quilts provided important material for research and information about families, labor, and communities that have not been maintained through written or more traditional archival records. Growing sophistication and expansion of the study of folklore also renewed interest in quilts.

Access to information about American quilts, however, has remained limited and widely dispersed despite scholars' ongoing and growing interest in such materials.<sup>2</sup> Development of an Internet-accessible **Quilt Index**, and related tools, will play a central role in making these materials widely available to humanities scholars and a broad public for the first time. This project is very timely because of a growing scholarly interest across the humanities, in quilts as windows on American history and culture. As literary critics Cheryl B. Torsney and Judy Elsley write in *Quilt Culture* (1994):

Once quilting was redis- "covered," as it were, by the art community and shortly thereafter, by historians, it took nearly fifteen more years for literary scholars to recognize the relationship of quilting to women's writing and usefulness of the quilt as a metaphor for textuality. When Elaine Showalter first noted in 1986 that "the strongly marked American women's tradition of piecing, patchwork, and quilting has consequences for the structures, genres, themes, and meanings of American women's writing in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries," many scholars and students found a new tactic to employ in their readings of women's texts. At last, the intimate connection between quilting and writing had been made by a noted literary theorist and critic.<sup>3</sup>

Humanities scholars have used quilts to explore women's attitudes about phases of their lives as well as what their lives were like. Films such as *Hearts and Hands: The Influence of Women and Quilts on American Society* (1987) are shown in women's studies classes

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growing disenchantment with the socially disruptive and unsettling aspects of industrialization and urbanization. Webster's work marks one of the first attempts to apply art historical methodology to American quilt making by tracing the history of American quilted bed coverings through the medieval, renaissance and early modern periods.

<sup>2</sup> Two humanities scholars who have pioneered the fields of literary criticism and women's history has submitted letters in support of this project. See attached letters by Judy Elsley and Laurel Thatcher Ulrich.

<sup>3</sup> Cheryl B. Torsney and Judy Elsley, *Quilt Culture*, 1994, p.3.

across the country as a source of women's history and a way of recalling women's voices. From sibling rivalry of sisters to swapping 19<sup>th</sup> century abortion "receipts," major events in women's lives are represented and preserved through squares of a sampler quilt as displayed at the end of the film.

Women's and economic historians are increasingly turning to quilts as important examples of women's home production, and key to family economies. Scholars interested in women's role as producers have used quilt contests run by such early 20<sup>th</sup> century farming magazines as *Farm and Fireside* or *Capper's Farmer* to learn more about rural home economies. Works such as Eleanor Arnold's edited collection, *Voices of American Homemakers*, a collection of oral histories from Home Demonstration Club members, have documented quilting as central to women's household work. Scholars interested in technology have emphasized how the history of quilting is inextricably bound to the history of technology.<sup>4</sup> Others have used quilts as a case study in the relationship between gender and aesthetics.<sup>5</sup> Marxist scholars such as Ruth Roberts have examined the quilting tradition in the context of the American economic system.<sup>6</sup> Still other scholars including Elaine Hedges, one of the first scholars of quilt culture, have moved beyond a sentimentalized relationship between women and their quilts to reveal the oppression and ambivalence of nineteenth century quilters.<sup>7</sup>

Although quilting has recently become an important subject of discussion within literary criticism, quilting has long been key to subjects within American literary works. References to quilting or quilts have appeared in the work of such late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century women writers as Louisa May Alcott ("Patty's Patchwork," in *Aunt Jo's Scrap Bag*, 1872), Susan Glaspell (*A Jury of One's Peers*, 1917), and Harriet Beecher Stowe ("The Minister's Wooing"). Twentieth-century writers such as Margaret Atwood (*Alias Grace*, New York: Doubleday, 1996), Bobbie Ann Mason in "Love Life" (*The New Yorker*, October 29, 1984) and Alice Walker in *Everyday Use* and *The Color Purple* used quilting as the premise for larger social commentary. Patricia Bell-Scott and Beverly Guy Sheftall underscore their view of the quilt as a metaphor for exploring relations between African-American women in *Double Stitch: Black Women Write About Mothers and Daughters* (1993). "Fashioned from the materials of everyday life and associated with love and family, quilts in all their various textures and splendid beauty have been a central part of African-American material culture for generations, especially the womenfolk," they write. "As an essential element of women's culture, quilts offer a framework for conceptualizing mother-daughter relations."<sup>8</sup>

These are just a few examples of the ways in which quilts and quilting are being used by a wide range of humanities scholars. Cultural geographers, such as Henry Glassie, have

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<sup>4</sup> See Susan Behuniak-Long, "Preserving the Social Fabric: Quilting in a Technological World."

<sup>5</sup> See Susan Bernick, "A Quilt is an Art Object when It Stands up like a Man."

<sup>6</sup> Ruth Roberts, "Quilt Value and the Marxist Theory of Value."

<sup>7</sup> Elaine Hedges, "The Needle of the Pen: The Literary Rediscovery of Women's Textile Work" from *Quilt Culture*, edied by Cheryl B. Torsney and Judy Elsley (1994).

<sup>8</sup> Patricia Bell-Scott and Beverly Guy Sheftall, eds. *Double Stitch: Black Women Write About Mothers and Daughters* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1993).

examined the dispersion and distribution of quilt patterns, quilting techniques and other traditions. Religious historians like Mary Cross, have studied Methodist quilts as a tool for understanding traditions within this community. Other scholars have centralized quilts in their studies of ethnic communities. Robert Ferris Thompson has analyzed the African characteristics in the work of African-American quilts. Marsha MacDowell has focused on the history, characteristics, and meaning of North American Indian and Native Hawaiian quilting. Scholars have examined quilts and quilt-related materials in order to understand better their production, type, use, marketing, and distribution. Quilts also have provided researchers with cultural information on as such diverse topics as social activist movements and protest causes (as in temperance quilts, “green” quilts, the Boise Peace Quilt Groups, the NAMES Project quilt, etc.), indigenous ceremonies (such as in the Sioux honoring and Hopi baby naming ceremonies) and cultural identity. Indeed, Elaine Showalter suggests that “The patchwork quilt [has come] to replace the melting-pot as the central metaphor of American cultural identity. In a very unusual pattern, it transcended the stigma of its sources in women’s culture and has been remade as a universal sign of American identity.”<sup>9</sup>

## Documentation Projects and Organizations

In response to this growing interest, across a wide range of humanities fields, the past 20 years have seen a range of efforts -- both nationally and locally -- to formalize and increase access to American quilts. In November 1980, a series of research papers on aspects of American quilting were presented at the first meeting of the American Quilt Study Group held in Mill Valley, California. This landmark occasion constituted the beginning of the first organization in the world devoted to the study of quilting. As its mission statement reads, "The American Quilt Study Group establishes, sustains, and promotes the highest standards for quilt-related studies. We stimulate, nurture, and affirm engagement in quilt studies and provide opportunities for dissemination." Nineteen years later, the organization has over 1200 members drawn from around the world, issues a quarterly newsletter, subsidizes research and paper presentations, has served as the model for quilt research organizations in Canada and Great Britain, and continues to hold an annual seminar which now attracts over three hundred attendees.

The Mill Valley meeting also sparked a widespread effort to collect and document quilts on a state and regional level. The first of these pioneering endeavors, the *Kentucky Quilt Project* (1981) is among the partners in this development and deployment phase of the Quilt Index, with records housed in the University of Louisville Archives. The Kentucky project sparked a run of local efforts that attracted quilts from closets, beds, and trunks to events held at schools, museums, and other public places and spread to encompass 56 projects sponsoring more than 1,000 Quilt Days. At each meeting quilt owners told stories about these quilts, and the quilts were photographed and documented. Oral

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<sup>9</sup> Showalter, “Common Threads,” *Sisters Choice*, p. 169

histories on detailed forms delineating the quilt's history, fabric, style and construction were taken (See Appendix A – Sample Quilt Documentation Forms) and filed in the collections of local archival repositories.

In 1995, the Museum of the American Quilt in Paducah, Kentucky, invited all state quilt project directors to nominate quilts to be included in an exhibition, *Gatherings: America's Quilt Heritage*. Exhibition organizers surveyed the state quilt publications and sampled project directors to compile estimates of the number of quilts surveyed and the number of volunteers involved. At that time, of the 50 states and the District of Columbia, 47 had one or more quilt documentation project underway. In the aggregate, these projects had documented more than 165,000 quilts around the country, most of these belonging to private individuals and families.

Many books, exhibitions, seminars and conferences have resulted from these documentation efforts, focusing on a selection of the quilt projects. However, access to full collections of images and text, as well as the oral histories of the quilts collection through these 56 regional endeavors remains extremely limited. Although comprehensive data on the history, regional distribution, artistic variation, and cultural variety of quilting in America are essential for comparative study, the information is currently dispersed and disorganized to the point of being virtually irretrievable. State and regional quilt documentation projects' photography and documentation data are not centralized, being either scattered and held by individual project directors, or housed in public collections lacking funding to process these records for public use. Catalogs must be searched individually, and few are databased or available in electronic form. Even those materials that are computerized encompass a variety of incompatible formats (See Appendix C – State Quilt Projects, Basic Data as of February 1995).

Various museums and libraries around the country devote some or all of their resources to specific aspects of quilts and quilt making. Yet no one entity or center actively draws together all of the information available. Many important quilts are stored in public collections, often in small local historical agencies, where only a few local or regional enthusiasts can view them (if limited exhibition space allows), and where staff members may have few resources for properly managing and making information about these quilts accessible. Even quilt-related websites, from <http://www.QuiltersVillage.com> to <http://quilting.miningco.com/hobbies/quilting/>, provide only limited access to knowledge about selected museum collections and exhibitions, quilt history publications, and related resources. Further, despite the burgeoning bibliography on American quilts and quilt making, few standard texts exist to provide a common base of widely shared knowledge on the subject. While listservs such as Quilters' Heritage List (QHL@cuenet.com) have provided forums for online sharing of common quilt-related interests, existing electronic resources remain few and are severely limited in the data they contain and their usefulness for interactive quilt scholarship.

Despite some significant steps in recent years toward rectifying these problems, these efforts have not adequately addressed the needs of quilt researchers, nor created a centralized and widely accessible research tool. It will require a digital, searchable



database such as the **Quilt Index** to accomplish this aim. In addition to the state and regional quilt projects, a national survey by the American Folklife Center of quilt collections in public museums and archives yielded *Quilt Collections: A Directory for the United States and Canada* (The Library of Congress, 1987), revealing the range and location of quilts and quilt documentation in North American institutions for the first time. Small portions of these collections are currently available online via the American Folklife Center/Library of Congress' American Memory project "Quilts and Quiltmaking in America" <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/qlthtml/qlthome.html>. The locations and holdings of some of the outstanding public and private quilt collections have also been identified and described in Shelly Zegart's 1996 publication, *American Quilt Collections/American Quilt Masterpieces*. As useful to scholars as these volumes are, they have inherent limitations because neither included all of the quilts that exist in U.S. public and private holdings nor the contextual data on each of the thousands of quilts needed for scholarly analyses.

With a centralized research tool, the more than 165,000 quilts -- historical and contemporary -- represented in the documentation projects' data could provide a truly comprehensive national profile of quilting traditions in the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The **Quilt Index** addresses the need in a variety of humanities fields, including women's studies, art history, literary studies, ethnic and social history for a unified research and reference tool, providing access to the rapidly growing array of texts, images, and recordings about quilts and quilting. Making data about quilts and quilt history more accessible through the **Quilt Index** will greatly enhance researchers' ability to increase the number and scope of studies, and fits squarely with current curricular emphasis on gender, cultural, ethnic, studies at both K-12 and post-secondary levels. This project will make these rich resources widely available for the first time, and will make an important contribution to how scholars and a broad general audience understand the history and culture of our nation and world.

## ***Project History***

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The impetus to build the **Quilt Index** began during a series of celebrations, exhibitions, lectures, events, and conferences organized by *The Kentucky Quilt Project* in 1992 to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the landmark Whitney Museum quilt exhibit. The meeting led to the founding of The Alliance for American Quilts in 1993.<sup>10</sup> The Alliance

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<sup>10</sup> The need to centralize information about quilts and quilt making was recognized by four women whose efforts led to the founding of The Alliance for American Quilts in 1993 as a non-profit organization to unite the varied elements of the quilt world. This project drew together Shelly Zegart and Eunice Ray of the non-profit Kentucky Quilt Project, and Karey Patterson Bresenhan and Nancy O'Bryant Puentes of Quilts, Inc., and the non-profit Texas Quilt Search. The Alliance's four founders embody long experience and dedication to quilts, and a history of shaping the quilt industry and quilt scholarship in this country. The challenge taken on by the founders of The Alliance was to gather and coordinate the great body of information about quilts, make it accessible to a variety of users, and facilitate its interpretation through programs that tap the full potential of quilts to inform the study and understanding of history, the arts, and

has worked since to meet the field's need for an accessible, independent, expanding resource of quilt documentation, and in 1997 the Alliance issued a call for institutional partnerships. The **Quilt Index** has been unanimously endorsed by the Advisory Council of the Alliance, whose members represent a wide range of humanities scholars and activists (see Appendix D for list). Drawing on the strengths and range of collections in the Illinois State Museum, Michigan State University Museum, Tennessee State Library and Archives and University of Louisville Archives and Records Center, with guidance from the Library of Congress's American Folklife Center and the Michigan State University Museum's Great Lakes Quilt Center staff, this project will use the technical expertise of MSU's internationally recognized MATRIX: The Center for Humane Arts, Letters and Social Sciences OnLine and H-Net to build a lasting resource of value to humanities scholars, researchers and educators across the nation.

### **Institutional Context: The Quilt Index Partnership**

The strength of this ambitious endeavor rests on the careful planning and guidelines for partnership established by The Alliance for American Quilts as well as the demonstrated expertise and skill of its selected partners. Through a *Request for Partnership* issued in Fall 1997, The Alliance solicited the participation of a cross-section of institutions who would agree to work collaboratively to:

- \* Develop specific strategies and plans for creating a standardized quilt database (The **Quilt Index**)
- \* Address issues of terminology for classifying quilts and quilt documentation
- \* Develop the technical specifications for the **Quilt Index**
- \* Identify and coordinate projects, including collections located at the partner institutions
- \* Begin the digitization of the project data collection and the creation of searchable, on-line access to the materials
- \* Administer the **Quilt Index** development and deployment process
- \* Identify and secure resources for the **Quilt Index**

The selection process aimed to locate a variety of partner institutions that would both provide a solid representation of the types and range of distinct quilts and quilt-related collections, and whose collections would demonstrate unique problems and opportunities for use that are associated with many different kinds of collections. Based on the information provided by potential partners through written questionnaires and phone interviews. Decisions about the specific information and institutions included in this first

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culture. For example, The Alliance, working with the Library of Congress's American Folklife Center, created Boxes Under the Bed™, a new grassroots documentation effort focusing on documenting the papers, other primary materials, and oral histories of elderly quilt makers who were prime movers behind the 20th century quilt renaissance.

phase of the **Quilt Index** were made by members of the Advisory Council and project partners during several planning meetings held in Houston and in Washington, D.C..

The Illinois State Museum, Michigan State University Museum, Tennessee State Library and Archives, University of Louisville Archives and Records Center, and the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress were chosen as the result of this search.

Collectively, this selection of **Quilt Index** partner institutions provide a solid representation of various types of holdings including quilts, audio recorded interviews with quilters, videotaped quilting activities, state quilt inventory records, quilt ephemera, photographs, field notes, and libraries. These institutions also support a range of scholarly and public uses of these materials through publications, exhibitions, festival programs, and educational programs.

Each of these participating institutions has agreed to work collaboratively with the Alliance, MATRIX, the Michigan State University Museum, and H-Net. They have also committed to devote key staff to the **Quilt Index** project, serve as a publicly accessible repository of quilts and quilt documentation, bring in matching resources, and send representatives to periodic planning and advisory meetings. Drawing on the combined strengths of these institutions and organizations, this project will be assured a long life and wide publicity, as well as development of a rich body of content that is widely accessible to both a scholarly and public audience.

### Michigan State University

Michigan State University was established in 1855 as the pioneer land-grant University in the United States. The University will serve as the fiscal agent and administrative home of the Index, providing technical expertise, financial accountability, project management, and substantial cost share. MSU will also serve as the computing heart of the Index, with design of the database and related programming developed at MSU's MATRIX Center in collaboration with the **Quilt Index** partners. Two key Index partners are housed within the University:

**MATRIX: The Center for Humane Arts, Letters and Social Sciences OnLine** is devoted to the application of new technologies in humanities and social science teaching and research. MATRIX creates and maintains online resources, provides training in computing and new teaching technologies, and creates forums for the exchange of ideas and expertise in new teaching and research technologies in addition to serving as the computing home for H-Net: Humanities and Social Sciences OnLine. Currently, MATRIX is involved in a number of collaborative endeavors to digitize and make widely available archival materials, journals, artwork, artifacts, oral histories, and music for use by both an academic and public audience. The largest of these projects is the "National Gallery of the Spoken Word" (NGSW), which is funded under the National Science Foundation's Digital Libraries Initiative, Phase II program. The first large-scale repository of its kind, the NGSW will create a significant, fully searchable, online database of spoken word collections that span the 20th century. Other collaborative endeavors include a range of internationally collaborative efforts to develop new

publishing and distribution models to increase access to scholarly publications and oral histories for humanists in Western and Southern Africa.

MATRIX is also engaged in a range of educational initiatives for K-12 students. Funded by the Michigan Department of Education in July 1999, *Civics Online* (<http://www.civics-online.org>) provides a vast array of multi-media, primary sources for K-12 students and educators. *Civics Online* also helps teachers integrate those sources into their classroom, encourages students to use primary sources in their work, and engages parental participation in their children's civic education. This project directly addresses two ongoing needs expressed by K-12 teachers - lack of access to rich, relevant primary source texts and what has been described as the inaccessibility of current online libraries and archives. *Civics Online* answers these needs by moving past the standard notion of the archive/library by providing materials and building an interface specifically suited to a specific audience, as well as working to train that audience to use its materials through an extensive collection of professional development tools. As part of an ongoing, umbrella project MSU is collaborating with the University of Michigan to create a vast, online resource for international education, study and research. MSU, in partnership with International Studies and the College of Education is working to create *Africa Online* (<http://www.matrix.msu.edu/onlineafrica>) as part of this endeavor. This first component of the larger World Reach project will become a template for future projects within the World Reach effort. *Africa Online* aims to provide K-12 and undergraduate educators and students, their parents and local communities with high quality learning materials from and about Africa. Using national curriculums and drawing from the knowledge of experienced educators, the project provides educational materials at four educational levels: K-5, 6-8, 9-12, and undergraduate. At the K - 12 levels *Africa Online* targets the social studies curriculum in a manner that incorporates exposure to Africa's wealth of diverse cultural expressions.

Central to all these projects is a commitment to build unique, active, cordial, and enduring cooperation and dialogue among scholars and teachers from across the United States and around the globe. It is a challenge to integrate resources into partnering institutions and to overcome the physical limitations of individual collections. Yet such partnerships can be an effective way to serve local needs, while also developing collaborative endeavors. The **Quilt Index** is representative of this type of cooperative project.

MATRIX will provide technological and project management expertise in developing and maintaining the **Quilt Index**. The Index will be housed on MATRIX servers at Michigan State University. MATRIX will also facilitate development of educational materials and online exhibits, which will continue after the Index has been constructed and made publicly accessible. Together with H-Net, MATRIX will also play a role in evaluation of the Index and related resources. MATRIX has made the commitment to maintaining the Index permanently as a freely available online resource.

*The Michigan State University Museum* was established in 1857 as a collections-holding unit primarily for research and academic teaching unit. Beginning in the 1970s

the museum has aggressively sought ways to make its collections accessible to a much wider public and to engage the non-campus public in all phases of museum research, collection development and care, exhibition, and educational activities. It is now recognized by Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs as one of a handful of Michigan anchor museums and is one of five cornerstones of the Center for Great Lakes Culture. The museum now also regularly engages in regional, national, and international activities including a range of cultural heritage initiatives in South Africa.

It is now recognized as a center of quilt-related activities and its various quilt collection development, research, exhibition, publication, and education activities are now consolidated under the Great Lakes Quilt Center, a unit of the museum. For example, it has played a key role in the *Michigan Quilt Project*, an effort that involved individual and organizational volunteers around the state to document, preserve, and present Michigan's quilting heritage, and has documented 3,823 quilts. The museum's own quilt collection numbers more than 500 and includes historical and contemporary examples from around the world, with special emphasis on African-American quilts, Native American quilts, and quilts with special ties to Michigan. It also houses the Mary Schafer Quilt Collection (the collection of a nationally-acknowledged quilt historian), quilt blocks, sewing equipment, historic fabric, and quilt-related materials. Quilt research projects on North American Indian, African-American, and general Michigan quilting have generated over 100 tape-recorded interviews with quilters, photographs of quilters and quilting activities, field notes, and ephemera.

The data from the *Michigan Quilt Project* inventory files have been computerized, but without the inclusion of the quilt images that are also available for each documented quilt. The Index deployment phase will make possible the digitization of these images as well as those of the MSU Museum's collection of quilts. Faculty and staff of the museum's Great Lakes Quilt Center will also provide a key role in developing, piloting, and evaluating the **Quilt Index**.

### The American Folklife Center, Library of Congress

The American Folklife Center was created by Act of Congress in 1976. The purpose of the Center is to preserve and present American folklife through programs of research (including field documentation), archival preservation, exhibitions, publications, on-line presentations, reference services, technical assistance, professional training, and live performance. The Center recently completed a World Wide Web presentation on quilts and quilting drawing on documentary collections in its Archive of Folk Culture as a precursor to full deployment of the **Quilt Index**. Included in the collections are materials that document quilts and quilting in the United States, including tape-recorded interviews with quilters, photographs of quilts and quilting activities, and associated field notes and other manuscripts. These materials, to be incorporated in the Library's National Digital Library Program's American Memory collection, will be directly accessible through the **Quilt Index**. The Center will not receive any funding from this grant, but will be a close advisor and key participant in development and deployment of the **Quilt Index**.

## H-Net: Humanities and Social Sciences OnLine

H-Net: Humanities and Social Sciences OnLine is an independent, worldwide consortium of teachers, scholars, and public humanists and is committed to facilitating access to educational and scholarly resources to the broadest possible audience, across disciplinary, institutional and national boundaries. With over 110 networks, which reach over 90 countries, H-Net is the largest distributor of electronic discussion networks in the world, and hosts one of the most extensive web sites in the humanities.

As part of this project, H-Net has worked closely with Michigan State University Museum to expand its family of networks to include H-Quilts, a discussion list devoted to quilt history and scholarship. Jointly sponsored by The Alliance for American Quilts, and the American Quilt Study Group, H-Quilts is facilitating dialogue among a wide range of public humanists, scholars and academics, while encouraging ongoing exchange of research and knowledge. A team of quilt scholars who will assist other researchers to locate additional research tools and to make best use of quilt studies resources are editing the discussion network. Syllabi, bibliographies, commissioned essays, book reviews, and logs of H-Quilt discussions are archived on a web site devoted to the discussion list. These resources will also be accessible from the **Quilt Index** web site (See Appendix F or <http://www.h-net.msu.edu/quilt/quilt.html> for sample screens). In partnership with MATRIX and the Michigan State University Museum, H-Net is also sponsoring and creating a Center for the Quilt OnLine (<http://www.quiltcenter.org>), an initiative of The Alliance for the American Quilt. The Center features a variety of interactive resources related to quilt studies, for scholars, teachers, and the general public. Further exchange among scholars and humanists, while using a range of Internet technologies to increase access to valuable primary materials and resources is a key part of H-Net's work.

Because it is such an interdisciplinary organization, reaching both an academic and public audience, H-Net will attract the widest possible number of users to the **Quilt Index** and related materials. Through its discussion networks, including H-Quilt, H-Net will also ensure that the **Quilt Index** is widely publicized. Drawing on the wide range of affiliated scholars and humanities professionals from across the H-Net community, the H-Net community will also play a major role in evaluating the usefulness of the **Quilt Index** and supporting materials.

## Illinois State Museum

The Illinois State Museum (ISM), founded in 1877, fosters an understanding and appreciation of Illinois by collecting and disseminating information on the state's natural, cultural, and artistic heritage. The Museum currently includes 200, mostly 19<sup>th</sup> century, quilts in its collections, has been acquiring 20<sup>th</sup> century quilts, and anticipates adding some 160 Amish quilts. In addition, the Illinois State Museum has been selected as the repository for the records of the *Illinois Quilt Research Project* (IQRP). The IQRP

recorded more than 17,000 quilts at 30 quilt registration days and through a continuing process of mail-in registration. The extremely large and important archive of the *Illinois Quilt Research Project* consists of approximately 17,000 slides of quilts taken by a professional photographer at the quilt registration days, approximately 17,000 two-sided pages of historical information recorded by the owners or quilters, and approximately 3,400 four-page forms recording the physical analysis of about 20 percent of the quilts, randomly selected. The daunting task of computerization of these records has not yet been attempted. Deployment of the **Quilt Index** will make possible the digitization of a subset of quilts and quilt records from this project. Included in this group will be the portions of the Illinois State Museum's collection of quilts. Additional funding will be sought for the completion of the computerization of the Illinois quilts after the deployment phase of the project is completed.

### Tennessee State Library and Archives

Tennessee State Library and Archives (TSLA) holds a collection of materials relating to Tennessee's people and history that serves as a major resource for the region, including books, journals, documents, microfilm, manuscripts, photographs, and other research materials. TSLA established a website in 1996 that includes an on-line catalog and a large number of pages devoted to providing easier access to its collections. Eventual mounting of the digitized images to accompany the databases is a long-range goal.

The *Quilts of Tennessee* survey began in late 1983, focused on documenting quilts made in Tennessee prior to 1930, and recorded 1,425 quilts. Only 30 quilts and their makers' histories were included in a book and traveling exhibit, *The Quilts of Tennessee: Images of Domestic Life Prior to 1930*, which was designed to represent the state's quilt types. Another 600 quilt forms and images have been added since 1984, bringing the total to 2,020. TSLA's website includes a description and finding aid for the quilts documented through the *Quilts of Tennessee*. The original quilt documentation forms are available to researchers who visit the TSLA, but the collection is little used because its existence at TSLA and its scope and contents are not well known. In addition, the data themselves contained in the forms have not been adequately computerized, indexed, and analyzed. Through participation in the **Quilt Index**, the *Quilts of Tennessee* and TSLA will computerize the data and digitize the images of a subset of these quilts.

### University of Louisville Archives and Records Center

Founded in 1973, the University Archives and Records Center is one of seven research libraries at the University of Louisville. With collections totaling approximately 13,000 linear feet, the Archives serve the research needs of faculty, staff, and students, as well as scholars from other institutions and the local community. As a participant in the **Quilt Index** project, the Archives will receive from *The Kentucky Quilt Project* the records of the project, which are currently held privately and are not readily accessible to the public. The Archives will process the documentation of a subset of the approximately 1,300

quilts recorded by *The Kentucky Quilt Project*, and digitize both the data and images for inclusion in the Index.

Under the development and deployment phase, covered by this funding request, each collections site partner – including the Illinois State Museum, Michigan State University Museum, Tennessee State Library and Archives, and the University of Louisville Archives and Records Center -- will enter the quilt history and descriptive material obtained through their individual inventories via web-based entry forms for inclusion in the database and provide feedback on the **Quilt Index** database, search mechanism and web interfaces. More detailed descriptions of partner institutions are included as Appendix E.

### ***Methodology and Standards***

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The **Quilt Index** will adopt current “best practices” and standards to optimize interchange of information stored in the Index. This will help ensure the widest possible access to information as well as facilitating, in the years following this initial development and deployment phase, the inclusion of collections from around the country. General areas of standardization currently under consideration include intellectual property, terminology, imaging, storage and markup. (The project director, Mark Kornbluh, sits on the Best Practices in Humanities Digitization Advisory Board for the National Initiative for a Networked Cultural Heritage (NINCH) and is particularly attuned to the need to follow national standards in developing this Index.)

To facilitate the development of best practices, the staff for the **Quilt Index** project will be in contact with staff at the Museum Educational Site Licensing Project (MESL). MESL links images from seven museums to seven universities in an effort to test educational use of digitized museum images and information over computer networks. In particular, the project addresses the issues of intellectual property rights, network security, and standards. Likewise, the Computer Interchange of Museum Information (CIMI) consortium will be contacted regarding data and interchange standards. CIMI brings together 15 cultural heritage institutions, universities, and computer network organizations working on similar data sharing projects.

In the area of terminology, the **Quilt Index** will employ structured vocabularies developed by the Getty Information Institute to standardize terminology across the range of quilt documentation projects, individual quilt histories and collections sites. Specifically, the Art & Architecture Thesaurus (AAT) will be utilized to standardize terms for describing quilts. A comprehensive vocabulary of nearly 120,000 terms for describing objects, textural materials, images, architecture and material culture from antiquity to the present. A recognized and widely utilized standard for archives and special collections staff, use of the AAT will ensure that a standardized vocabulary be used to describe the collections contained within the **Quilt Index**.



The **Quilt Index**'s digitizing operations will draw on information shared by the MESL Project in *Delivering Digital Images: Cultural Heritage Resources for Education* and the Information Institute in *Introduction to Imaging*, both are critical resources on imaging for museums, universities, and other organizations. These works outline critical issues surrounding image capture, data compression, quality control, and network delivery, and thus facilitate the development of common standards that are essential for sharing and preserving digital images. The images used online will be available in several resolutions. Offline quilt images will be stored in a high-resolution, uncompressed lossless TIFF format. They will be then converted into high-quality JPEGs or GIFs and will be available for online reference or download. Smaller "thumbnail" images will be displayed with the descriptive records. Larger, more detailed reference images will be available. These highest resolution images will only be available offline, on request to project staff.

To address storage and markup, project staff will implement available standards in the area of descriptive metadata for physical objects. Using the list in Appendix G as a base, the project team has evaluated several possible means of storing information in the database. The preliminary conclusion is that using a traditional field-structured database would unnecessarily constrain the richness of the collected data. The project team has also conducted a preliminary survey of current metadata standards in museum and archival description. We believe that all of the existing standards either address specific needs that are not served well by detailed descriptions demanded of quilts. We therefore propose to develop a metadata standard for detailed description of quilts, working in consultation with scholars of quilts and related fields. This standard will be based on the XML specification, and will detail the nature of the information to be collected, as well as the format of the markup.

XML will allow for the production of structured documents that can be easily ported to the web. The structured data of XML also allows for the development of intelligent searches, giving users both the flexibility of full-text searches and the precision of database-driven parametric queries. The use of one XML DTD likewise provides the necessary tools for effective interchange of information among various organizations and easy migration of data into other archival description standards, such as MARC and EAD.

Several key features will be needed by the proposed metadata and markup language standard. First, the project anticipates needing to link related resources together within its database. Therefore, the standard must provide such linking. Second, to keep development costs low, software for manipulating the markup language must be readily available. A wide variety of such software is available to work with XML markup. Third, the standard should promote the ability to exchange descriptive records with other databases. Use of an XML based markup language helps this goal. Another important part is to use controlled vocabulary from existing sources, in this case the AAT. Quilt-related terms drawn from this thesaurus will be part of the proposed metadata standard, and would be used to form the lists of legal values for certain vocabulary-controlled

fields. If extensions to the available vocabularies are needed, they will be contributed back to those vocabularies. Finally, the specification must adapt to the fact that different subsets of data have been (and will be) collected by different organizations.

Using a web-based entry form, staff at the individual collections sites will enter each quilt's history and descriptive information from the documentation form into the database. Web-based entry forms have a number of important advantages. First, it allows easy and virtually error-free database update by providing a variety of check-boxes, drop-down menus, radio buttons, and text input fields. Also, staff at various locations can simultaneously access database resources to retrieve and update information without any knowledge of SQL or database-specific software. The use of XML Document Type Definition validation will ascertain that data is entered correctly without compromising the integrity of the master XML document. Appendix G of this proposal provides a detailed list of quilt descriptive information drawn from the survey forms of several state and regional projects. Using this list as a base, web-based entry forms can be further customized to show only those fields required by individual entry sites and ensure compliance with the AAT

### **How the Quilt Index will Work**

We have conceived of the **Quilt Index** as the best response to the need for coordination of nationwide, and eventually international data about quilts—both privately and publicly held—that complements and strengthens the state and regional documentation project efforts. Utilizing the power of the Internet and computerized databases, however, the **Quilt Index** can address the full range of information on American quilt history, and make it available on-line to researchers in a searchable format. The **Quilt Index** will be a comprehensive source of information and documentation on quilts that is widely available and accessible to everyone who studies, makes, or enjoys quilts. (See Appendix F for Sample Quilt Index Home Page). Just as The Index of American Design in the 1930s provided a national basis for consideration of American regional craft and design traditions, so the **Quilt Index** in the 21st century can provide a wide range of researchers and scholars in the humanities with a national database for the comprehensive and comparative study of this vibrant American art form.

The natural decentralization of the Internet corresponds precisely to the decentralization of quilt makers and quilt researchers. The Internet provides a powerful means for providing access to widely dispersed primary source materials. Computers and digital technology make it possible to share images and their metadata, and a variety of textual information about quilting. The rapid diffusion of access to the World Wide Web through terminals in schools, public libraries, and individual households permits an unprecedented opportunity to provide access to otherwise inaccessible information.

In particular, the **Quilt Index** will provide wide access to information dispersed throughout the United States and in many cases inaccessible due to location or fragility. The raw material of a significant portion of the database is not the objects themselves, but

the *information about quilts and images of quilts* found in public quilt collections and the myriad of state and regional quilt documentation projects. Most of the quilts will continue to be held in private hands for a long time to come but the state project database files will all be housed in institutions to which the public has ready access. Indeed, in some cases, the possibility of including a state quilt project in the Index will serve as an incentive to move the raw data from a private collection to a publicly accessible archive.

The **Quilt Index's** underlying full-text database and search engine will support a wide variety of user-driven web-based interfaces. The various interfaces will provide information that is customized to suit the needs of many different kinds of users. The flexibility of the web-based interfaces means that quilt makers, for example, will not have to wade through irrelevant information when searching for a particular quilt pattern or design. Yet scholarly researchers will find access to the **Quilt Index's** database of full, rich documentation available about the quilts and their production and use. Through the use of XML and a full-text-database, ~~users~~ can do general keyword searches to explore the breath of the collections. ~~They~~ can also specify exact parameters to do highly refined ~~searches~~ deep searches to find the exact materials they need. Because of the design of the database and documents, users will also have other ways to access the materials. They will be able to browse the collections and explore galleries of related materials. The user will also have access to a graphical search interface that will allow the user to visualize the relationship between materials. That is, users will not only be able to find the materials they need but find the materials in the context of other related materials. This will be accomplished in several ways. Users will ~~not only~~ have an option to have their queries returned as a traditional list of relevant documents but they can also have the option to will also be supplied with a list of related materials (images, bibliographies, teaching aids, and related documents). ~~They will also have an~~ Another option will allow users to have the searches returned as nodes of hyperbolic trees that can be expanded to reveal a reach resource of related materials.

Thus, the **Quilt Index** will serve as a critical catalyst for future research on American quilts and quilt makers, accomplishing three primary objectives:

- \* To organize and disseminate widely the quilt information that has previously been inaccessible to most researchers
- \* To spur the development of a standard nomenclature for identifying and describing quilts
- \* To encourage the preservation and public availability of documentary materials about quilts and quilting

### **Scope of Index Content**

The vision of the fully developed Index includes a range of information, realized through a standard thesaurus, and readily accessible and searchable through a World Wide Web site. This Index will offer researchers, quilt makers, educators, students, and the general public:

- \* Images of and contextual documentation concerning quilts in public and private collections compiled by state and regional quilt documentation projects
- \* Digitized images and documentary information concerning quilts in public collections (museums, historic houses, and historical societies)
- \* Oral histories (transcribed and/or audio) and documentary materials collected through field research and documentation projects such as The Alliance's Boxes Under the Bed (manuscripts, motion picture film and videotape, sound recordings, still photographs)
- \* Full text of selected books and periodicals
- \* Bibliographies and indexes of secondary materials relevant to quilt study
- \* Finding aids to assist with locating quilt-related primary documents and hard-to-find secondary materials housed in public collections (museums, historical societies, and archives)

The specific content of the Index *development and deployment phase* (Phase II), for which NEH funding is requested, will include:

- Documentation and images from subsets of the following state quilt projects: Michigan, Illinois, Kentucky, and Tennessee
- Documentation and images of quilts in the public collections of the Michigan State Museum, the Illinois State Museum, and American Folklife Center in the Library of Congress (The later is part of the American Memory Project and will be linked to the **Quilt Index**)

### ***Plan of Work: Digitization and Database Design***

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The fundamental strategy for building the **Quilt Index** reflects the decentralization of both the quilting world and the Internet. The Index will contain both information about quilting and images of the quilts themselves. It will be built organically by many individuals and institutions, with its development occurring in four distinct phases. Through this application, **we are requesting funding only for the development and deployment phase of the project** which will involve creation of the database and web interfaces, digitization of quilt documentation from all of the partner institutions, and a process of evaluation and feedback from the partners.

The four stages of development include:

#### ***Phase I: Design and Planning***

This phase of the project is currently underway. It calls for planning and designing a matrix for systematic presentation of quilts and quilting documentation on the World Wide Web, and for securing partnerships and financial support to make continued Index development possible.

### ***Phase II: Development and Deployment of Index***

The second phase of the project, which would be funded under this application for NEH funding from the Division for Preservation and Access, will include focus on development and deployment of the Index. This phase will begin projects to digitize the collections and documentation from the project partners. These endeavors can be broken down into three parts:

- 1) Construction of a web-based interface and databases to make the collections easily used and searchable for a wide variety of research and educational purposes
- 2) Launching of digitization efforts to put the collections, related textual and support material, and documentation from the project partners into compatible electronic forms
- 3) Feedback from the partners, modification and finalization of the **Quilt Index** and interfaces

### ***Phase III: Index Expansion and Development of On-line Educational Applications***

Once the **Quilt Index** has been tested and launched, the third phase of this project will greatly expand the content accessible through the Index. We anticipate that the project partners will complete the digitization of their collections and other institutions will be encouraged to add to the Index by putting their own materials on-line. Based on the successful H-Net model of decentralized, democratic endeavors, the national implementation of the **Quilt Index** will be conducted by local curators and teachers who know their collections best. Each institution will be responsible for adding its collections to the Index in accordance with Index guidelines. The partner institutions and MATRIX will work together to develop on-line exhibits and educational materials and add them to the web site. Financial incentives, technical assistance, and central coordination will ensure that new data for the Index is structured to be commensurate with the original design and structure. The costs will be less because of this decentralization; a critical mass of Index data will provide a magnet attracting other institutions to invest resources in order to be included.

### ***Phase IV: Continued Outreach and Development***

As part of this grant, Michigan State University has committed to maintaining the **Quilt Index** and its related applications over the long-term. Continued outreach and development will add to the Index, as well as update and expand the exhibits and educational materials. Ongoing publicity efforts and monitoring of project feedback will ensure the vitality of the Index, as well as its use by scholars, teachers, and a broad public audience.

## **Overall Project Structure and Database Design**

The **Quilt Index** is a project conceived and developed by The Alliance for American Quilts. The Alliance has secured a partnership with H-Net and Michigan State University to make the project a reality. Michigan State has agreed to apply for and administer any resulting funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities; MSU is contributing substantial cost share to the project in the form of computer hardware and software, programming, design, and support staff, and a significantly reduced indirect cost rate. MATRIX will be the administrative home and technological core of the Index, creating the web site, the database, and the necessary computer programming; and working with the partner institutions to implement and deploy the **Quilt Index**.

The distributed nature of the Internet will make the entire contents of the Quilt Index available to researchers, teachers and the broader public everywhere. The Web interfaces to the Quilt Index will provide multiple views of the information. These views will be adapted to the needs of various audiences, including historians, folklorists, teachers, quiltmakers, artists, and students. Examples of how some of these interfaces might look can be found in Appendix F, or viewed online at <http://www.h-net.msu.edu/quilt/quilt.html>. Users will be able to draw from the entire database, or from subsets. For example, a researcher might wish to examine only information about Kentucky quilts. Another might wish to study regional variations in construction techniques, and might therefore choose to search the whole database. Data provided by each institution will be stored centrally for use by the Index, but a mechanism will be provided so that each contributor may maintain their own copy of the data for their own purposes, if they so desire.

Web-based entry forms can be tailored to suit the needs of the individual collection sites and facilitate data entry. Using a customized web-form, staff at the various project locations may key information into the Index using only those fields that are suited to their project, without having to skip over extraneous or inapplicable fields. The base list of database categories developed for the **Quilt Index** (see Appendix G – Suggested Quilt Index Database Categories) contains an enormous number of categories, which could make data entry quite laborious. Customized entry forms will allow users to draw on a subset of the database, rather than forcing users to scan through very large numbers of items. Based on the successful H-Net model of decentralized control and MATRIX's extensive experience with coordinating collaborative and disperse institutional partnerships, this entry process will ensure that curators have full authority over their own collections.

MSU is well suited to host the data repository for the Quilt Index. The University is well connected to the Internet, with multiple high-speed connections. MATRIX has extensive experience in maintaining high-profile systems for use by a worldwide audience. Its existing computing resources are maintained in one of MSU's major data centers. The center is staffed with operators on a 24 X 7 basis, and offers redundant climate control and power systems. A rigorous backup program protects data from server hardware

failure. In addition, MATRIX has several full-time professional staff devoted to maintaining its servers.

The advisory structure for the project will include the Index Development Steering Committee and The Alliance for American Quilts founders and Advisory Council (see Appendix D for lists). The Steering Committee will continue to meet periodically as needed to guide Index development, as well as communicating regularly through a special e-mail list serve created especially for this group. The Advisory Council will review Index development at its annual meetings, and provide advice and review throughout the year.

### **Digitization and Copyright**

Entry of collection information, digitization of images and supporting documentation and texts must also be conducted at the individual project sites, and entered into the database through web-based forms and electronic transfer of files, in accordance with the best practices and standards outlined previously. The legal status of this data is, of course, a central issue. The Office of the General Counsel at Michigan State University has given permission to follow the model set out by the American Memory Project at the Library of Congress (LOC). We will make this information publicly available for non-profit research and educational use, per LOC copyright guidelines. Responsibility for adhering to copyright laws rests with the patron, although we will commit as an institution to making copyright information available. The text of this copyright statement is attached as Appendix I of this grant proposal. It also may be viewed online at <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/copyrit2.html>.

Each of the partner sites will ascertain rights, especially to quilt images, before they are published on the Internet. All partners are committed to following Library of Congress guidelines for securing copyright permission before presenting images and text. State quilt projects and museum quilt collections have secured rights in advance for publication of images to differing extents. Each partner institution will examine the nature of rights granted by quilt owners in the course of the state surveys. With advice from staff at the Library of Congress who have been dealing with rights issues for the National Digital Library, The Alliance and its project partners will develop processes for contacting quilt owners as needed to secure permission to include quilt images in the Index. In all cases where collections partner sites have questions relating to copyright and ownership of images or quilt documentation, they will make every attempt to contact quilt owners to secure permissions.

Each of the digitization sites, including the Michigan Quilt Project/Michigan State University Museum, The Illinois State Museum, The Quilt of Tennessee Project/Tennessee State Library and Archives, and The Kentucky Quilt Project/University of Louisville Archives and Records Center will digitize a subset of their extensive collections under this development and deployment phase of the **Quilt Index** project. Material from the Folklife Center at the Library of Congress (LOC) will be completely computerized and a subset of these holdings is currently available through

the Library of Congress website. Index developers will work with the LOC database and programming staff as appropriate to coordinate and use the LOC's experience to inform Index development. Once the Index web site is established, it will be linked to the LOC's quilt presentation. MATRIX and the Michigan State University Museum will consult extensively with the individual collections partners to ensure consistent adherence to best practices and standards on digitization of images and related ephemera, customized entry forms are developed for the project sites, and the suggested listing of database categories is honed.

## **Timeline**

### ***Pre-project activities (Phase I)***

August 1997	Meeting of Index subcommittee of Alliance Advisory Council members to begin Index planning
November 1997	Advisory Council meeting endorses Index project, selects partners, and approves moving forward with NEH application
January 1998	Meeting of Index Development Steering Committee composed of Index partners and selected Advisory Council members; work begins on database, work plans, etc.
May/June 1999	Steering Committee consideration of draft application and budget
July 1999	Submission of application for funding to NEH
Spring 2000	Launching of H-Quilt and companion website Work continues on Library of Congress quilt presentation Continued consultation on standards terminology

### ***Project activities (Phase II)***

July/August 2001	Project start-up (hiring workers, ordering supplies/software)
Fall 2001	Work begins on developing programming code at MATRIX Project partners finalize interface formats for web-based data entry of information from quilt inventory and registration forms Process begins to contact quilt owners for permissions
Spring 2002	Programming completed and web site functional Partner institutions begin to enter data
Fall 2002	Database and interfaces are modified in response to feedback and evaluation of partners
Late 2002	Initial material made available publicly on-line as a work in progress



By Spring 2003

**Quilt Index** is fully functional. Partner digitization continues. Plans are underway for the Phase III—the National Implementation Phase of the project

## *Staffing*

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### Principal Investigators:

**Mark Lawrence Kornbluh** is Director of MATRIX: The Center for Humane Arts, Letters and Social Sciences OnLine and Associate Professor of History at Michigan State University, and Executive Director of H-Net: Humanities and Social Sciences OnLine. Kornbluh holds a Ph.D. in American History from Johns Hopkins University. He has been Principle Investigator on several major collaborative grants awarded by the NEH, National Science Foundation, U.S. State Department, Michigan Department of Education, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Ford Foundation, and co-founded H-Net. Kornbluh has recently authored *Why America Stopped Voting: The Decline of Participatory Democracy and the Emergence of Modern American Politics* (New York University Press, 2000), speaks widely at scholarly associations, and has published several articles on use of the Internet for research and teaching. He is the lead P.I. on a major Digital Library Initiative, Phase II project.

**Marsha MacDowell** is Division Head and Curator of Folk Arts at the Michigan State Museum, and holds a Ph.D. in Art and Art History. MacDowell has published extensively on Michigan, Native American, and African-American quilting traditions; curated numerous regional and national exhibitions; and served as principal investigator on over 200 grants, including major ones from NEH, IMLS, NEA, and the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund. A founding member of the Alliance for American Quilts advisory board and a board member of the American Quilt Study Group, she is originating editor of H-Quilts.

**Shelly Zegart** is co-founder and Director of The Alliance for American Quilts and chairs the **Quilt Index** Development Steering Committee. Zegart is also founding and Executive Director of *The Kentucky Quilt Project*. She also founded and edited *The Quilt Journal: An International Review*. Zegart has published numerous manuscripts and articles on American quilts.

### MSU Staff:

**Michael Fegan** and **Scott Pennington**, both information and Internet technology specialists in database and Web interface design, will coordinate construction of the Index. **Dennis Boone** is MATRIX's chief programmer and will oversee construction of the database and search engine.

### Project Coordinators at Partner Institutions and Units:

**Marsha MacDowell** will coordinate inclusion of *The Michigan Quilt Project* into the **Quilt Index**.

**Katherine Burger Johnson** is Associate Archivist at the University Archives and Records Center at the University of Louisville in Kentucky. Johnson has published a number of articles on women's history and research. She will coordinate inclusion of *The Kentucky Quilt Project* into the **Quilt Index**, in partnership with **Shelly Zegart**.

**Merikay Waldvogel** co-directs the *Quilts of Tennessee Project* in addition to being a lecturer, writer and curator of quilt history. Waldvogel has published extensively on Depression Era quilts, dating/documenting quilts and published quilt pattern history. She will coordinate the *Quilts of Tennessee Index* project.

**Janice Tauer Wass** is the Curator of Decorative Art at the Illinois State Museum. Her curatorial work includes acquisition, preservation, and interpretation of a variety of collections. She has also implemented a computer catalog for the decorative arts collections and directed a virtual exhibition project, *At Home in the Heartland OnLine*. Wass will coordinate inclusion of *The Illinois Quilt Project* into the **Quilt Index**.

Index Development Steering Committee:

The Steering Committee will be chaired by **Shelly Zegart**. In addition to **Mark Lawrence Kornbluh**, **Katherine Burger Johnson**, and **Janice Tauer Wass**, the steering committee will include: **Karoline Paterson Bresenhan**, President and CEO of Quilts, Inc. and founding director of the Texas Quilt Search; **Patricia Keller**, Collections Manager at the Paley Design Center, Philadelphia College of Textiles and Science; **Alan Jabbour**, Director of the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress; **Penny McMorris**, Vice-President of the Electric Quilt Company, makers of software and quilt design, Bowling Green, Ohio, exhibition curator, and consultant for John M. Walsh III Collection of contemporary quilts; **Nancy O'Bryant**, Executive Vice President and Director of marketing communications for Quilts, Inc. and co-founder of the International Quilt Association; **David Taylor**, a folklife specialist at the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress.

***Dissemination: Outreach and Applications***

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H-Net, MATRIX and The Alliance reach scholars, students, and an interested public audience from across the country and around the globe. Their central involvement in this project, and various means of disseminating information and publicity materials will ensure that the widest number of people in all geographical areas accesses the **Quilt Index**. The Index's launch will be announced through all of the H-Net discussion networks and it will be prominently accessible through the H-Net and MATRIX web sites. H-Net also recently launched a new discussion network, H-Quilts, to address issues of quilt research and the use of the Index. H-Quilts was approved by the H-Net Executive Committee and, under the leadership of Marsha MacDowell, was officially launched in Spring 2000. A companion website is accessible at <http://www.h-net.msu.edu/~quilt> and

will grow over the next months to include a range of syllabi, bibliographies, commissioned essays, book reviews, and logs of H-Quilt discussions.

Index Development Steering Committee members will post information about the **Quilt Index** to the many discussion networks and forums in which they participate. Each partner institution will include information about the Index in its newsletters and other publications. The **Quilt Index** will also be demonstrated at a range of scholarly conferences including the annual meetings of the American Historical Association, Organization of American Historians, and semi-annual Berkshire Conference on the History of Women to be held in June 2002. Press releases about the Index will be distributed to a variety of related publications. Presentations will be made at meetings of AQSG and other relevant research organizations about the Index as a research tool.

The World Wide Web provides the ability to create a variety of applications based on the **Quilt Index** that are tailored to the information needs and interests of a variety of audiences. In addition to this resource, the Michigan State University Museum, MATRIX and the Michigan Humanities Council are devoting additional funds to develop educational materials for use in K-12 curriculums on North American quilts, and related lesson plans for teaching about quilts. Creation of these applications will demonstrate the valuable education resources that can be constructed from the Index data.

Applications will include a range of exhibits based on the information included in the **Quilt Index**, based on the model used by the National Archives and Records Administration for their educational materials. For example, a Native American Quilt Online exhibit, currently housed as a physical exhibit at the Michigan State University Museum, will include a virtual walk-through of the physical exhibit, allowing these materials to reach a national and international audience. Related classroom guides and supportive materials will contain lists of relevant links to quilt materials already on the Internet, as well as optional study questions. Such curriculum tailored learning materials will allow K-12 teachers to integrate this exhibit fully into their lesson plans. Plans to build additional online exhibits, tailored for public and classroom use, are also underway.

## **Evaluation**

Evaluation of **Quilt Index** resources and their utility for researchers, scholars, students, and a wide public audience will be determined through a number of avenues, and overseen by MATRIX, the Michigan State University Museum, H-Net and The Alliance for American Quilts. The H-Net community includes hundreds of thousands of individuals from around the world. The strengths and expertise of this community will be an important part of this project's development. MATRIX and H-Net will solicit written evaluations by all participants who use the **Quilt Index**. Reports on the project will be published on the H-Quilt discussion network to keep the profession and the NEH fully abreast of how the **Quilt Index** is progressing. H-Quilts in particular will tell us how closely we are approaching the needs of researchers. Input and exchange from members of other H-Net networks will be useful as well.

Feedback mechanisms will be incorporated throughout the **Quilt Index** and web site. Encouraging users to provide information about the site's utility and their needs, such mechanisms also allow a continued dialogue between those who will maintain and design the site, and the individuals who make use of this resource for a variety of purposes. Using domains, information about where the Index is being used and how often can be obtained through the web site. It is also possible to pinpoint how much specific parts of the site are used. These statistics can be very useful for analyzing utility of the Index and related resources, as well as targeting publicity and outreach.

The Alliance for American Quilts will coordinate evaluation of the **Quilt Index** by a panel of quilt scholars and experts. Additional evaluation by scholars from across the humanities will be provided by an independent committee of experts appointed by outside scholarly groups such as the American Historical Association, American Association of Museums, American Quilt Study Group, Organization of American Historians, and the American Studies Association.