

Contact: Diane Tolzman
dmtolzman@hotmail.com
503-860-8024

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Press Release

Quilt Documentations Scheduled

Statewide Project Seeks Oregon Textiles

The Oregon Quilt Project will host a quilt documentation of quilts that currently reside in the state of Oregon. The goal of the project is to unlock the secrets held within the stitches, patterns, and fabrics of the quilt. The Oregon Quilt Project will complete its 10 year journey in Sisters, OR. This event is sponsored by the Sisters Outdoor Quilt Show, East of the Cascades Quilters, Three Sisters Historical Society and The Stitchin' Post.

According to Eileen Fitzsimmons, Project Co-Chair, the documentation sessions for quilt owners will be held Friday, March 8th from 2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. and Saturday, March 9th from 9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. at The Stitchin' Post (311 W. Cascade Street).

A multi-year survey of quilts in Oregon, the OQP was organized in 2010 and became a project of the Willamette Heritage Center, located in Salem, in 2014. The purpose of the all-volunteer organization is to identify and document quilts and quilters in Oregon and preserve the information for future generations. To date, the project has recorded more than 1500 quilts in Oregon, and hundreds more will be added by April, 2019. “The documentation provides a record of an object that embodies elements of both history and art, within its geographic context. If the quilt comes with a detailed history of its making and its maker, that opens a window into the life, cultural background and motivation of its maker, usually a woman, whose contributions to society may have otherwise gone unrecorded.”, says Eileen Fitzsimmons. Quilts made or owned by individuals and institutions in eastern Oregon can be compared with those from other Oregon counties. For more information and to sign up for an appointment, contact

Zeta Seiple at 541-549-6157. Each person may bring two (2) quilts for documentation. **Documentation appointments are limited and will be scheduled on a first come first serve basis.**

During the event, a team of trained volunteers will travel to collect the history of the quilt and the maker, conduct a physical examination of the textile, and take a photograph. Copies of all documents, the photo, and an OQP label with registration number, will be provided to the owner. Original forms will be retained by the Willamette Heritage Center for future reference and research. The East of the Cascades Quilters are supporting the project with volunteers to assist in the documentation process.

With permission from the quilt owners, the information is collected by the OQP and will be included in a national database, the Quilt Index at Michigan State University in Lansing. The histories and images of more than 50,000 quilts from across the United States have already been filed on the Quilt Index, whose information may be accessed free of charge, via the internet.

Quilt historian Mary Bywater Cross, Portland, encourages owners of quilts that are old, new or made elsewhere that currently are in Oregon to participate in the documentation process. Quilt tops that have not been quilted, “summer quilts” (with a backing but no batting), tied quilts and quilted garments may also be documented. “Quilts are historic documents that often reveal the stories of women whose voices may otherwise go unrecorded,” commented Cross, one of the original members of the Oregon Quilt Project. “The information we collect about the maker and why the quilt was made provides insight into culture and communities throughout Oregon, from the mid-1840s to the present. Quilts are visual records of the human experience. What will we uncover that connects us to quilters in other states or countries, but might also be unique to Oregon.”

For information about the Oregon Quilt Project, visit their website at oregonquiltproject.org.

