

2026 AQSG Winter Virtual Seminar Program

Thursday, March 12 – 8:00pm ET | 7:00pm CT | 6:00pm MT | 5:00pm PT

Virtual Welcome Reception – Free to Members and Nonmembers!

Join us for an engaging Virtual Welcome Reception designed to spark connection, conversation, and inspiration. This lively online gathering will feature a warm opening followed by a variety of themed breakout rooms, giving you the opportunity to choose discussions that match your interests and connect with others who share your passion. Whether you're looking to meet new colleagues, reconnect with friends, or explore fresh ideas, this interactive format makes it easy and enjoyable. No travel is required, just log in, jump into the conversation, and be part of a vibrant community from wherever you are. We look forward to welcoming you!

Friday, March 13 - 8:00pm ET | 7:00pm CT | 6:00pm MT | 5:00pm PT

Keynote Speaker – Sandra Sider - *Stitching Time: Commemorative American Quilts* – Free to Members! (program will not be recorded)

From 1876 to the present day, quilters have used their textile art to commemorate significant events and occasions. These commemorative quilts always reference a passage of time, distinguishing them from a different category of quilt celebrating a wedding, birth, graduation, etc. Today we will be discussing quilts commemorating at least fifty years and, in several cases, hundreds of years—milestones in our human history

Saturday March 14 and Sunday March 15 (see times on registration form)

Janet Dionis - *Threads of Time: Unraveling Block Island History Through Quilts and Their Makers*

In *Threads of Time*, I use quilts as the starting point for exploring Block Island history. My interest in Block Island quilts began with a story about a name place directly behind our Historical Society called Calico Hill. The name came from drying salvaged fabric from shipwrecks on the hill. When I began researching the shipwrecks to look for references to calico, the tragic shipwreck tales added a depth of meaning to the fabric used in these quilts and connected the makers to the wrecks. One name emerged in my study, Myrtis A. Millikin. From building a relationship with Myrtis' granddaughter, the Historical Society acquired more quilts and a collection of diaries. Her story is connected to one of the worst maritime disasters in Rhode Island History. I believe more study will reveal more stories like Myrtis', that connect calico, shipwrecks, and quilt makers.

Amy Reid - *Grandmother's Flower Garden*

Filmmaker Amy Reid will present research and selections from her film *Grandmother's Garden*; a film about the history of women, quilting, and US history. *Grandmother's Garden*, deriving its title from the classic quilt pattern "Grandmother's Flower Garden," examines the past and

present production of quilting as it relates to United States histories' from the 19th and 20th centuries. Looking at the materiality of quilts, Reid is interested in unthreading histories of cotton production under the histories of enslavement and share cropping, textile production in New England's mills, and westward expansion. Since 2020, filmmaker Amy Reid has been working with quilt collections in institutions and meeting and filming with contemporary quilters in the regions where these histories took place: the Southeast, Northeast, and Western states. The film is working in tandem on 16mm and video and is conceived as a feature experimental documentary.

Sheryl Low - *Bertha Stenge: Chicago's Quilting Queen, and her friends, Florence Peto and Irene Post*

Bertha Stenge (1891–1957) was one of the greatest quilters of the Twentieth Century and is honored in the Quilters Hall of Fame. She is known for her extraordinary craftsmanship, design innovation, and artistic approach to quilting. Mrs. Stenge gained national recognition during the early-to-mid 20th century and won the Grand Prize in the 1942 National Needlework Contest of Woman's Day magazine for her Palm Leaf Quilt. This study session will take you through a journey of all of Mrs. Stenge's quilts, examining her design styles and possible influences through her relationships with other quilters.

Sandra Starley - *Celebrating Quintessentially American Quilts*

In honor of the nation's 250th anniversary, get a front row seat for some amazing antique and vintage quilts covering 250 years of American quilting. A special focus will be the creative zenith of 1840 to 1890 including the Centennial Celebration of 1876. See the changes in quilting styles over the decades as well as patterns that represent different regions of our great country like this Rolling Stone from Southeastern Pennsylvania backed with a Centennial print. A wonderful way to learn about history and quilt dating while looking at lovely quilts and fabrics.

Carolyn Gibbs – *Not Just Grandmother's Flower Garden*

For over 200 years, quilters have used the hexagon shape for hand piecing over papers – a popular choice which avoids tricky, sharp points. But their six-sided shape is not well-suited to square or rectangular quilts, and can lead to some unexpected design problems, as is evidenced by a surprising number of unfinished hexagon tops inside and outside museum collections. In this Study Centre, Carolyn Gibbs will use her usual logical approach to examine the underlying geometry of tessellating hexagons - particularly rosettes.

This analysis will help you to understand the hidden pitfalls which are at the heart of so many unfinished examples and reveal why Grandmother's Flower Garden is such a successful arrangement. She will also expand the possibilities of hexagons beyond this popular design, showing many historical and modern examples to guide you into identifying alternative arrangements in antique or vintage quilts, or used in your own work. Illustrated notes and hexagon grids will enable you to experiment with and beyond the designs discussed.

Mariah Kupfner - *"He Says of Good Cotton": Textiles, Whiteness, Labor, and the Anti-Slavery Movement*

Textiles connect us, they can be intimate objects, points of familial connection, touchstones for memory. They are also material links to vast economies, implicating us in relationships with all those people whose hands and minds helped produce the cloths we keep close. For many abolitionists in the early 19th century, this made textiles the perfect tools to express and combat the evils of slavery.

Soft fabrics could puncture the seeming quiet of the domestic interior and reveals its entanglement in systems of oppression. Anti-slavery activists used samplers, quilts, and pincushions to put forth this message. But Free Labor activists went further, calling attention to the substance of cotton itself and working to create a real alternative to an economy based on the labor of enslaved people.

This talk explores the precarious and complicated work of Free Labor activists who sought to source and sell ethically made cotton in the United States. I also analyze the troubling ways in which these activists and boosters collapsed physical color race and moral "cleanliness" through the language of cotton's whiteness. Free Labor discourse began to fetishize the purity of "spotless, white and fair" cotton "unsoiled by the sweat of the Slave." This presentation traces this language and labor from plantations and mills to stores and homes, anchoring analysis in material practices and objects. From silk quilts to cotton pinafores, I analyze the way makers, sourcers, and buyers attended to the texture of freedom.

Teri Walker - *Activist Quilting: Messages, Impact, Power*

Quilted messages represent a unique means of political participation and communication as well as a multifaceted dimension of power. This presentation focuses on: (1) 21st Century political quilts made by women in the United States; (2) political and/or social issues depicted; (3) quilter motivation; (4) quilt impact; and (5) concepts/nuances of power. This project serves to broaden one's understanding of the role and importance of activist quilts and quilters in the political world.

Susie Jerome – *Textiles 101 – Free to Members!*

Textile enthusiasts sometimes forget that many AQSG members are unfamiliar with the basic terms used in describing textiles. Damask or dobby weave – what?! Printed, painted, resist or discharge? Long-chain polymers??? Why is rayon like cotton? These terms and techniques can be confusing.

This one-hour presentation will help to answer these questions. We will explore the basics, with a look at the history and technological changes that brought textile manufacturing into the 20th century. Questions are welcome! So, grab a glass of wine or a cup of tea and join us.

Niki Keating and Vanessa Rico – *2025 Poster Presentations*

Niki Keating - The rise of widely accessible, social online platforms over the last several decades has created innovative and geographically unbound networks for quilters (King, 2002). Various internet platforms have been documented as a method for quilters to connect and may even serve as the entry-point for new quilters or the only connection to the broader quilting community. As modern conduits, virtual quilt-focused spaces facilitate online communities analogous to traditional sewing circles (Allred & Thornley, 2020), demonstrating similar physical, social and psychological benefits for individuals who meet to quilt in person (Kinley, 2024; Hutson & Hutson,

2024). Through mapping the timeline of the virtual quilting landscape—from early text-based forums in the 1990's, blogs in the 2000's, and visual-centric social media of modern day—we can better understand how the shifting "architecture" of quilt-related internet content has impacted the journey of contemporary quilters.

Vanessa Rico – When I first began quilting, I realized I had no clear image in mind when I heard the words “Hispanic quilts.” This absence sparked my research question: Why is there such little visibility of Hispanic, Latino, and Spanish quiltmakers in the broader quilting narrative? As a Hispanic woman learning to quilt, the lack of representation felt isolating—and deeply significant. This poster presents an early-stage exploration into the history and presence of Hispanic and Latina quiltmakers, a topic currently underrepresented in quilting scholarship.

My research is in the brainstorming and data-gathering phase. I have begun reaching out to quilters through informal interviews, reviewing past *Uncoverings* articles, and exploring resources from groups such as Quilting with Latinas and Quilt Arte. I am also seeking out exhibitions and collections that may house textiles from Hispanic and Latino makers. The goal is to build a foundation that documents and celebrates these stories and designs, ultimately leading to a publication that contributes to the cultural and historical record of quilt making.

By presenting this poster, I hope to receive feedback, recommendations for research methods, and guidance on locating sources or communities to engage with. Attending Seminar will allow me to connect with mentors and fellow researchers who can help shape the next steps in this journey. This session is not only a chance to share my vision but also a critical step toward making visible the rich, diverse contributions of Hispanic quiltmakers.