Stitching Together Women’s History at the Connecticut Historical Society
CT Humanities supports Connecticut quilt-makers programs

Hartford, CT (March 4, 2014) – Quilts hand sewn by grandmothers, mothers, sisters, and aunts hold family histories in their stitches. But those quilts tell larger stories that go beyond individual families to document the history of women’s work and women’s art that adds a unique perspective to Connecticut at Work, the year-long conversation on the past, present and future of work life in Connecticut created by Connecticut Humanities. A public lecture and day-long intensive workshop use the rich resources of the CHS to explore quiltmaking as women’s work and women’s creative outlet, how women’s work then and now can be undervalued, and how museums work to preserve textiles and to present women’s history.

Using both quilts and women’s diaries, Costume and Textile historian Lynne Z. Bassett will share her insight into the history of women’s quiltmaking in her presentation New England’s Early Quilts and the Labor of Quilting, to be held on Tuesday, March 11 from 5:30-7:00 pm. Women’s words, as well as their quilts, undermine the romantic nostalgia about quilts and quiltmaking colored the historical understanding of quilts and the labor of quilting for 150 years. A more complicated understanding of the cooperative labor involved, and the practices of quilt production lead us to a clearer understanding of how women worked in the past. Tickets are available at the door, $5 for CHS members and $10 for non-members.

An all-access pass to the extraordinary quilts held in the CHS collection is the centerpiece of our intensive Quilt Study Day with Lynne Z. Bassett, to be held on Wednesday, March 12 from 9:30 am to 4:00 pm (pre-registration is required, $60 for CHS members and $75 for non-members; please call Adult Programs Manager Jenny Steadman at 860-236-5621 x289). The day-long program will provide an extraordinary opportunity to learn about these important artifacts of women’s lives and labor through informative presentation followed by extensive examination and discussion sessions featuring key example quilts and related costumes.

These programs are made possible by the support of Connecticut at Work, which travels across the state through December 2014. The program features the Smithsonian Institution’s The Way We Worked exhibition with stops in seven communities: New Haven, Torrington, Hartford, Waterbury, Coventry, Stamford and Groton. Surrounding communities are adding local focus with community history exhibits, book and film discussions, author talks, performances and more. Connecticut at Work is an initiative of Connecticut Humanities, a non-profit affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. In the Hartford region, Connecticut at Work is a partnership with Hartford Public Library and Greater Hartford Arts Council. The Connecticut tour of The Way We Worked is made possible by Connecticut Humanities and Historic New England. For a calendar of events and more information, visit cthumanities.org/ctatwork.

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About the Connecticut Historical Society (@ConnHistSoc):

Founded in 1825, the Connecticut Historical Society is a non-profit museum, library, research and education center. CHS strives to inspire and foster a life-long interest in history and ignite a passion for learning about history through research assistance, exhibitions, tours and programs for all ages. Visit CHS online at chs.org or call 860-236-5621.

About Connecticut Humanities (@CTHumanities):

Connecticut Humanities (CTH) is a non-profit affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities that funds, creates and collaborates on hundreds of cultural programs across Connecticut each year. These programs bring together people of all ages and backgrounds to express, share and explore ideas in thoughtful and productive ways. From local discussion groups to major exhibitions on important historical events, CTH programs engage, enlighten and educate. Learn more by visiting cthumanities.org.