

Upstate Heritage Quilt Trail Organization Ask - "So You Want to Display a Quilt Where?"

In every civilization, art and history are frequently bound into the patterns of objects made for everyday use by everyday people. We at the Upstate Heritage Quilt Trail (UHQT) are devoted to preserving and celebrating the art and history of one of these objects - quilts.

While we do display original quilts two to three times a year in a variety of venues, that doesn't fulfill our goal to make these marvelous creations part of the daily experience of both residents and travelers in our beautiful little corner of the world which, for UHQT, includes Pickens, Oconee and Anderson counties in South Carolina.



Quilt Block on Lake Keowee, Photo by Debbie

What we have done to accomplish our goal was, first, to align ourselves with quilting clubs, well known quilters, and even a quilt historian or two. With the input of these resource people, we identified patterns of interest and beauty. Initially, most of the patterns selected for display were those that had an interesting history or whose creators contributed to local history in some way.

Next, after much research and securing financial backing, we began to create "quilt panels" that would accurately repro-



Quilt Block on Lake Keowee, Photo by Debbie



Close up of Quilt Block on Lake Keowee, Photo by Debbie Biddle

duce the patterns and colors of an original quilt. We paint these patterns onto large aluminum panels that are treated so they are not altered by weathering and mount them onto barns, homes, businesses, schools and more.

Perhaps you have seen these outstanding bits of artistry punctuating the landscape and taken note of their beauty and charm as you drive about the Upstate. In many of these sites, the quilt's story as researched and written by the members of UHQT are also displayed. These stories may include family memories as well as the pattern's history and physical location.

In more recent years, the members of UHQT have expanded their vision of what continued above on next column to the right

quilts we will accept for panel production beyond only historically significant ones and our only requisite now is that there must be a real quilt from which we will work. When the real quilt is not physically available, however, we have made a quilt panel from a photograph.

As of 2024, we have over 300 panels on a variety of structures in many different sites, including some docks. We have come to question that if you can enjoy seeing these wonderful creations from the road, why not be able to do the same from the water? And so, we come to the reason for this article which was first published in *KEOWEE Magazine*.

As of this writing, we have only five quilt panels on Lake Keowee and two in construction. Why not consider having a quilt panel on your dock? If you are interested in commissioning one, go to our website at (UHQT.org), click on "Get Involved" and then on "Quilt Panel Application" where you will see costs and other information.

While on our site, click on the Trails/ Map selection to see all the quilt panel locations in Anderson, Oconee, and Pickens counties as well as those in Greenville even though those are not managed by UHQT. By clicking on each of the individual quilt panel locations, you will see the quilt's information and a thumbnail photo.

UHQT, South Carolina's first quilt trail, uniquely allows panels to be made only from a real quilt. The volunteers who paint the panels make every effort to capture the shading and intensity of the quilt's colors and attempt to recreate the textures as well. If the person who commissions the panel wants total authenticity, our artists will go so far as to reproduce rips, stains and even stray threads.

Once you choose to commission a panel, you are in charge. You can choose the quilt to be used or have UHQT choose one for you and you (and whomever else you'd like to involve) can participate as much or as little as you'd like in the panel's creation.

Quilt panels range from 1' x 1' up to 8'



Biddle



Close up of Quilt Block on Lake Keowee, Photo by Debbie Biddle

x 8'. (4' x 4' and 8' x 8' are the most popular, but rectangular sizes can be provided for an additional charge.) The materials that are used to create these special panels begin with a professional sign board consisting of two sheets of aluminum with a polycarbonate center. After painting, the quilt panel is treated with a marine sealer so that it is fully protected from the environment.

We would love to see a time when there are enough panels on enough docks to eventually create a self-guided "discovery cruise" for visitors and residents alike. Please consider helping this goal come to fruition.

The American Barn Trail Movement

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