

New Craft Revival Website has Multiple Partners

Special to the One Feather

CULLOWHEE - The Craft Revival website, headquartered at Western Carolina University, has attracted hundreds of hits after just 18 months in operation, and the number of hits is expected to climb as more information is added to the growing, online collection at <http://craftrevival.wcu.edu>.

Anna Fariello, leader of the state-funded project, says visitors to the site are finding the beginnings of a robust digital archive of materials from the Craft Revival of the late 1800s and early 1900s. "This was an important period for our region of the Southern Appalachians," she says. "Without the Craft Revival, much of the work of the mountain crafts people would have been lost and their handcrafting skills might have died out. That means there would have been only a very limited foundation for today's continuing craft activities." Instead, the revival triggered the growth of handcraft guilds, weaving centers and folk schools, attracted tourists, scholars and artisans to the region; helped to promote the sale of tradi-

tional mountain crafts; and shaped the development of new craft forms as mountain tourism flourished.

The story of the revival and the people who were involved as both sponsors and workers is the focus of the online craft revival collection, which features images of craft objects, documents, photos, and other materials now scattered in museums, craft schools, libraries and local historical societies. "When the project is complete, that material will be gathered into one, web-based, digital archive that will be accessible to the world," Fariello says.

Already available are 398 images with corresponding metadata; 52 pages of content; a resource list of 69 craft organizations, including web links; a bibliography of 140 books and articles; and a reference file of over 300 artisans and production centers associated with the craft revival which is helping in the search for lesser-known makers and their work. That material and more is coming from the project's established Heritage Partners, including the John C. Campbell Folk School, Penland School of

Crafts, Western's Mountain Heritage Center, Special Collections in the university's Hunter Library, and Southern Highland Craft Guild.

The project team also is working with Qualla

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Arts and Crafts Mutual and the Museum of the Cherokee Indian to determine Cherokee participation in the Craft Revival project with the hope of including a detailed section on Cherokee crafts. Other Heritage Partners will be added as the project moves forward. The collection is expected to be completed by Spring 2008.

In addition to the Heritage Partners, Fariello said, cooperating partners have contributed items such

as botanical images of madder, indigo and cotton, which were used extensively by weavers; pictures of John Campbell from the Southern Historical Collection; and a photo of Lucy Morgan, a craft revival supporter, from the N.C. State Archives. "It is clear that the project is developing partnerships among lending institutions in a way that could only be hoped for in the planning phase of this project," Fariello said. "Their contributions will add significantly to the value of the entire collection."

Western's Craft Revival Project is funded, in part, by a grant, renewable for three years for a potential total of \$350,000, from the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services, through the North Carolina State Library. Western received one of only two Heritage Partners grants awarded since the inception of the program.

For information about the Craft Revival Project or to schedule a public program about the project, contact Dr. Anna Fariello, Visiting Associate Professor, Western Carolina University, **828-227-2499** or fariello@email.wcu.edu.