

## The Shuttle-Craft Guild of Hand-Weavers

THE Shuttle-Craft Guild is an organization of hand-weavers with members in all parts of the United States and many members in foreign countries. Included in its membership are college professors, housewives, army officers, teachers, artists, business people, writers, firemen, farmers, missionaries, doctors, — people living on isolated ranches in the Rocky Mountains and people living in New York apartments; in fact most of the different kinds of people to be found between lower California and the northern tip of Maine have representatives in the group.

The Guild was organized about seven years ago, with the idea of providing a meeting ground for people interested in the revival of hand-weaving, and to provide a center where those who wished to become weavers could obtain all available information. In the early days of the revival it was often very difficult for people living far from the large centers to get any help in this matter. There were not many people capable of giving the necessary information, and some of these, unfortunately, preferred to keep their knowledge to themselves. It seemed to the group who organized the Guild that this attitude was a mistake, and that if hand-weaving was to become once more a truly "popular" art we must make it easy for those who had the urge.

A common meeting ground has been the *Shuttle-Craft Bulletin*, a little news-letter sent out once a month to Guild members. Through the *Bulletin* many special activities are carried on, such as traveling exhibits to which members contribute articles made by themselves. These exhibits go from one to another, "round-robin" fashion, giving weavers an opportunity to see the work that is being done by others — a service particularly valuable to those

who live far from the large cities. Many such exhibits have been held, and there is usually one on the road. The Guild also from time to time publishes special matter of interest to hand-weavers. Some years ago the Guild — with the permission of the Pennsylvania Museum of Art — published the patterns contained in the old John Landes book of drawings, with drafts prepared by Mary M. Atwater. More recently the Guild has brought out

a little pamphlet of patterns in the new crackle-weave. The Guild also does a good deal of what may be called public service in the interest of the craft. A few years ago many of the leading magazines carried misleading advertisements of machine-woven products masquerading as "hand-woven." Most of this advertising we have been able to stop. One of the members, on behalf of the Guild, took up the matter with the Federal Trade Commission, and in the government's own good time we shall have an official ruling.

The Guild does not conduct a sales-agency for hand-woven products, though plans for such a service have been formulated and will be carried out when the membership so elects. However, inquiries often come in from people who wish to have coverlets or other articles woven to order, and these inquiries are referred to Guild members who are weaving for profit. And weavers who wish to find a sales-outlet are referred to the Guild members who conduct shops, — a service to both.

The chief aim of the Guild, however, is to raise the standards within the craft, so that hand-weavers will not be satisfied with mediocre work, but will produce only fabrics of excellent workmanship and high artistic value. A hand-woven fabric is not necessarily either good or beautiful simply because made by hand — if poorly woven and of poor colors



*Leather mounted bag, "Queen's Delight" pattern, woven by Mrs. Charles Smith, St. Paul, Minn.*



*Fireside rug, "Summer and Winter" weave, Sunflower pattern. Pillow top and corner of rug "Wreath Rose" pattern overshot weaving Woven by Mrs. Eric Green, Providence, R. I.*

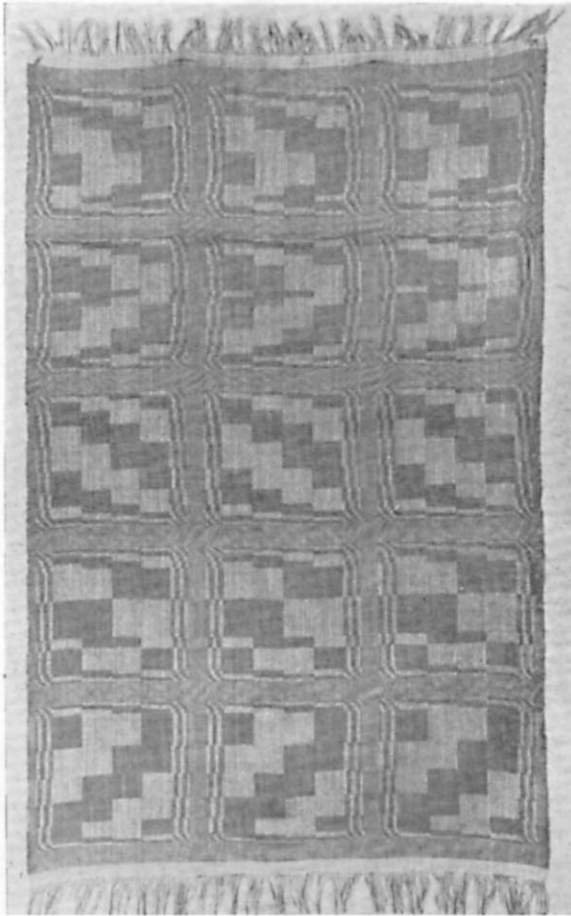


*Coverlet. Woven by Eleanor Foht, Fresno, California*

or poor design it cannot compare with the beautiful machine-made fabrics in the shops, and may be simply a waste of time and good material. A successful piece of hand-weaving, however, is like a good etching as compared to a commercial "half-tone," or like a concerto performed by an artist compared to the rattle of a mechanical piano. There



*The weaving studio of Emily N. Goodwin, Brooklyn, N. Y.*



*Wall hanging in modernistic style, crackle weave, "The Three Twills" pattern. Woven by Mr. Roger Millen, Hackerstown, N. J.*

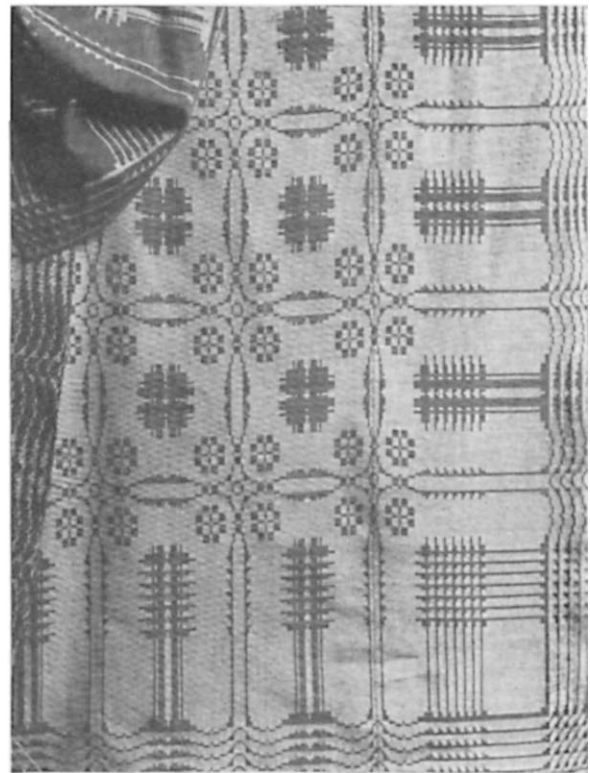
is a very real place for hand-weaving, — but it must be good hand-weaving.

In the beginning, membership in the Guild was limited to those who had taken or were taking the Shuttle-Craft Course of instruction. This was done to insure a common basis. At present, however, associate members are admitted to the circle in the idea of further extending its usefulness.

The Guild is very proud of the fact that so many of the people who are doing distinguished work in our craft are members of the Guild. Some are well known to readers of the *HANDICRAFTER*: Miss Glaser, who directed the work at the St. Louis School of Fine Arts and whose splendid exhibition was written up in the *HANDICRAFTER* some months ago, was one of the charter members, and so is Miss Ella Jurgens of St. Louis, whose fine work was shown in the same article; Mrs. Reed, Mr. Roger Millen, Mr. Hartz, Miss Fetterolf, Mrs. Nellie Johnson, Miss Davis, Miss Hall, and others whose articles have appeared in the *HANDICRAFTER*, belong to it; Miss Winifred Mitchell, who has made such a

splendid success of the Tenafly Weavers, is a charter member; Miss Winogene Redding, whose work in a southern mountain school was written up not long ago, Miss Goodwin and Miss Wolverton of New York, whose beautiful work has been mentioned in the *HANDICRAFTER*, — all these belong and many, many other distinguished weavers whose names ought to be mentioned but cannot be for lack of space.

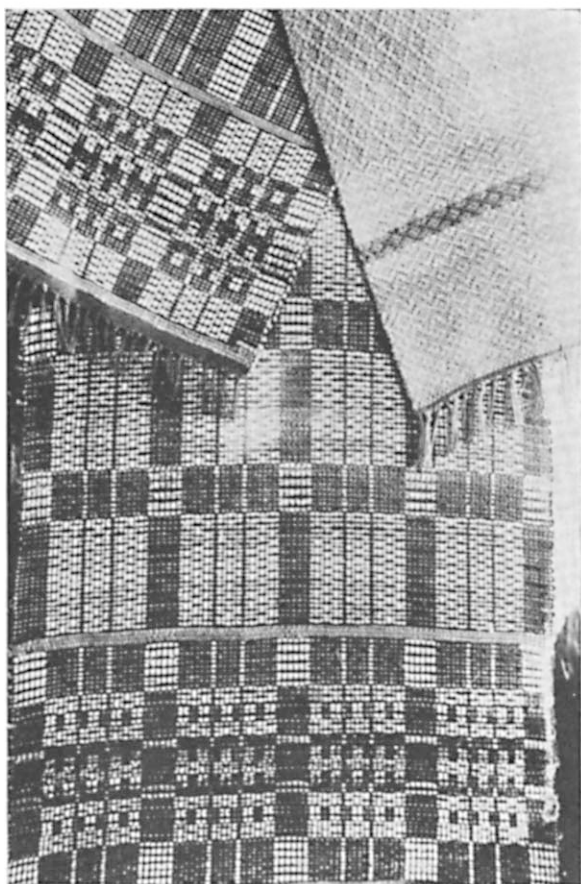
Mrs. Atwater, who is the guiding spirit in the Guild, is a decorative designer by training — Chicago Art Institute, École Julian and École Calorossi, Paris, France; also she was designer for several years with the Winslow Brothers Co. of Chicago and later teacher of design in an art school. Her marriage to a mining engineer cut short her artistic career, but she began weaving fourteen years ago while living in the little mining camp of Basin, Montana, where she still makes her home. Having decided to start a "village industry" in hand-weaving at Basin, she purchased looms and obtained the services of an instructor. Most of the women in the little community came to the "Shuttle-Craft House" and wove. They soon had a flourishing little industry, exhibited work in New York and Chicago, and took many prizes. The war, however, intervened, and when the government



*Coverlet, "Summer and Winter" weave, Snowball pattern with Pine Tree Border. Woven by Miss Virginia Shearer, Lewiston, Idaho*

organized the reconstruction service and issued a call for women skilled in handicraft she enlisted and spent a year in army hospital service. After leaving the service she continued in occupational therapy for a number of years.

Later on Mrs. Atwater decided to have a weaving course and, with the generous help of Miss Grace Denny, in charge of the Textile Department, University of Washington, she "tried out" her course on a group of university students. These young people had never seen a hand-loom before. They were given the set of instructions and an empty loom, and their progress was closely observed. They came out very well indeed, without any help except what they got from the notes. In fact one of



*Unusual rugs in crackle weave. Woven by W. Clyde Dunbar, Arkansaw, Wis.*

them "demonstrated" hand-weaving in one of the down-town shops at the end of a two-week session. She then offered her course to the public with some confidence, and since that time many hundreds of people have learned to weave, and to weave well, through written instructions and the criticism and correspondence that is part of the course.

Mrs. Atwater has devoted much of her time to questions of design, and it is through research work



*Coverlet, "Summer and Winter" weave; pattern, "Lisbon Star with Pine Tree Border." Woven by Mrs. Shipley Brown*

in museums and among old manuscripts that a number of the lost weaves of ancient times have become current again. "Double" weaving, widely advertised as a lost art, proved to be no such matter; the "Summer and Winter" weave, however, really appeared to be a lost art, and it was her work in experimenting on the loom and in deciphering ancient notes that finally unravelled the puzzle. The "Bronson" weave, too, was unknown among modern American hand-weavers till she dug it up, gave it a name, and set it going again. More recently she introduced to American weavers a very useful and little-known weave of Scandinavian origin, that through experimental work has given some very remarkable results.

NOTE. All the illustrations show work of members of the Guild.