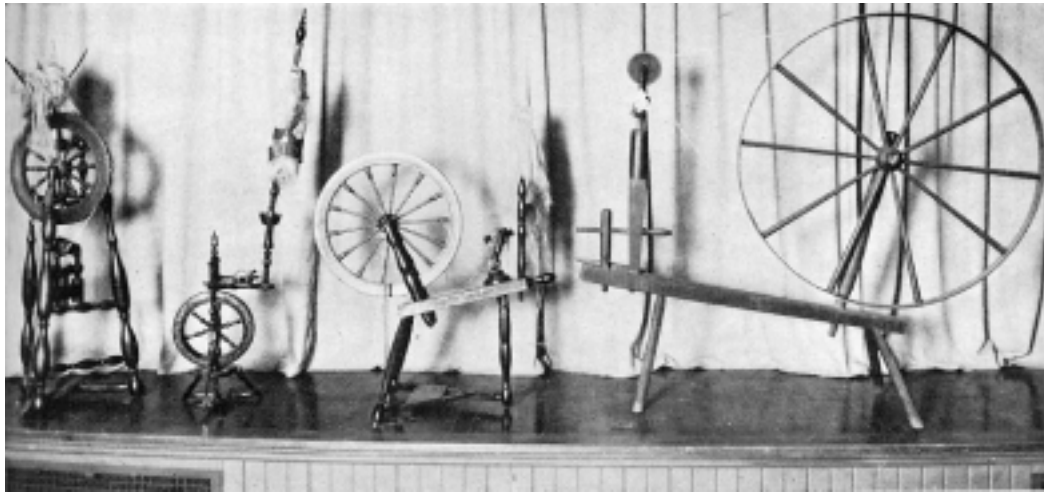


Textiles at Newark



TYPES OF SPINNING WHEELS AT NEWARK MUSEUM

TEXTILES AT NEWARK BY W. H. DE B. NELSON

A VERY short acquaintance with the Newark Museum Association and its president, John Cotton Dana, assisted by a most able and willing staff, upsets cherished memories of dead and dying museums, mausoleums of art, which for all the good they do to their community might be advantageously abolished. Few persons would even notice their departure. It has taken a century or two to awaken museum interest and to demonstrate what pleasant, historical and educational work may result. By degrees some of the museums are breaking with their traditional inertia and a more striking example could scarcely be discovered than in Newark. The latest exhibition, which followed Potteries, was devoted to the textile industry of New Jersey. Although commercial in character the exhibits may be said to have become objects of art owing to the artistic way in which they were shown, the unifying of each room or gallery doing so much to create this impression. Every show-case revealed some vase, bit of pottery or statuette to relieve the textiles and give an extra note of form or colour. It is just such seeming trifles which count. This little idea gave an unmistakable *cachet* to the exhibition. The ensemble was a story in action, a drama. One thought of steps rather than of specimens; Egyptian agriculture, blossoming cotton, ripened bolls, hands plucking the crop, the

gin, the bale, the card, revolving spindles, clacking looms, followed each other in a sequence that made the youngest visitor—and the children came in swarms—see each item in its relation to the whole industry, and to life. Most fascinating was the central platform with a rude colonial loom at one end and a Greek woman occupied with homely spinning at the other. Round about were picturesque wheels and reels and a little lady, suitably attired, was to be seen spinning flax.

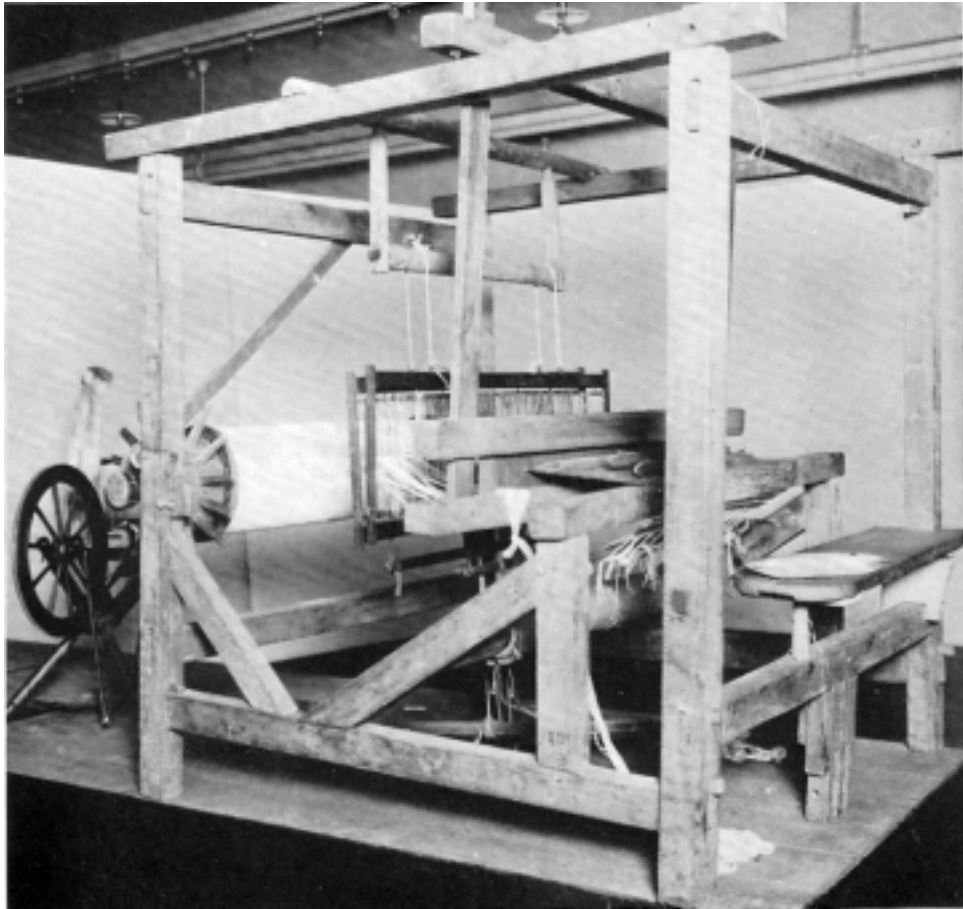
The general scheme has been to show every-day objects in their relation to art and to industry and to life; to give to mechanic, salesman and consumer the vision; to help him connect his daily task with the work of other times; to compare it to the product of the present, and to gain the inspiration for the future. To carry out this scheme processes as well as products have been shown—the development of textiles from fibre to yarn and from yarn to cloth. Spinning and weaving were traced from the most primitive devices to modern machines. Textile products were traced from the bark mats of the Indians, through the blue and white colonial coverlets and homespuns to modern commercial silks and hand-made tapestries.

The exhibit has been made to appeal to as many classes of people as possible. Club women all over the State held exhibits of historic textiles, thus arousing local interest and collecting an historic exhibit. Foreigners were interested by being asked to show things made in their home lands. These were collected from twenty or more school

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exhibits. Manufacturers were asked to give commercial exhibits, minus pink tissue-paper and booths, and without charge. Craftsmen interested in weaving and textile decoration were sought out, and every possible phase of the textile industry in the State touched upon.

The success of the venture has been astonishing, thousands of visitors having testified to the need for such activities. Opposed to many dead or half dead associations Newark is undoubtedly quick.



COLONIAL HAND LOOM AT NEWARK MUSEUM