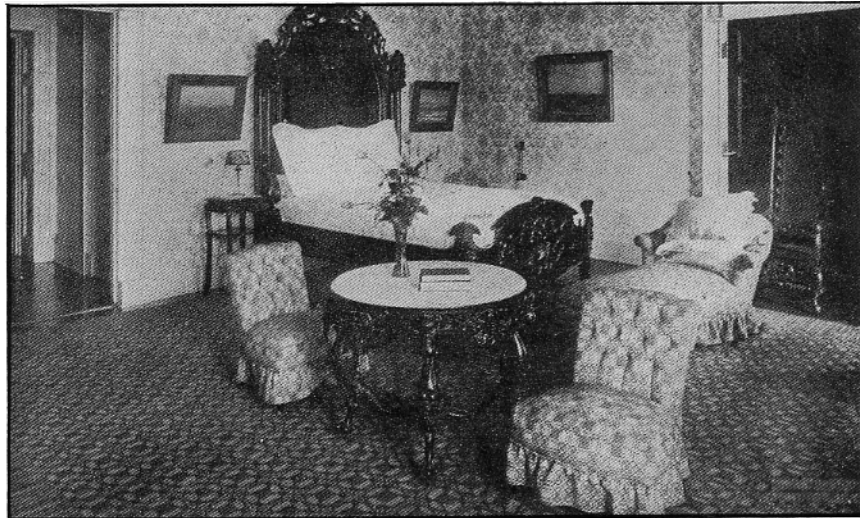


BLUE  
MOUNTAIN  
ROOM  
AT THE  
WHITE  
HOUSE



BLUE  
RUGS  
IN SUN,  
MOON AND  
STAR  
DESIGN

## ARTISTIC WEAVING IN THE MOUNTAINS OF NORTH CAROLINA

BY JAMES A. ROBINSON

**F**AR back in the mountains of North Carolina lives Mrs. Finley Mast, who is doing wonderful weaving on old-fashioned looms. Her success reads like an illuminated chapter from the "Days of Long Ago," but her efforts tell of patience and perseverance, skill, service and success in a domestic art long since neglected.

Among these mountains, in Watauga County, is a beautiful valley—Valle Crucis, "the vale of the cross"—that resembles a great green bowl, rimmed with blue, through which the Watauga River cheerily sings its way through the laurels that line its banks. Here nestles "Brookside Farm," a model of neatness and thrift—the home of Mrs. Mast. The highways leading to the farm are bordered with rhododendron and canna, with clusters of maidenhair fern peeping from below, and the atmosphere is ever fragrant with the breath of the pine.

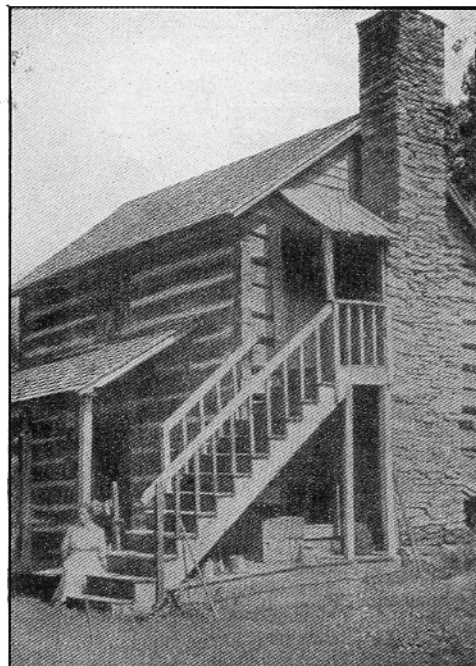
On the shady lawn, near the large comfortable dwelling is a quaint little log cabin, two stories, which is more than a hundred years old. In this house lived Mrs. Mast's grandfather, and her father in his childhood, and she now uses it for her loom house. Here Mrs. Mast weaves throughout the winter days, before a big, roaring fire in the large old-fashioned fireplace. During the summer months her home is filled with mountain tourists.

Mrs. Mast learned to weave when she was a mere slip of a girl. Her mother and her grandmother before her were great weavers. She has kept it up for more than forty years, but for the past ten or twelve years has devoted almost her entire time to weaving, except during the three summer months.

The three looms used by Mrs. Mast are old-fashioned and primitive; one of them having been in her family for more than a century. On two of the looms she weaves coverlets, druggets and wide rugs, and on the other one she weaves narrow goods—towels, pillow covers, curtains, bureau scarfs, small rugs, and many other artistic novelties from

cotton, flax and wool. Much of the material used is grown or raised on the farm.

Many of the drafts, or designs, of the coverlets, and many of the patterns used by Mrs. Mast, have been handed down from generation to generation, and doubtless came from over the seas in chests of English and Scotch settlers. These patterns bear significant names, such as True Lover's Knot, Double Chariot Wheel, The Downfall of Paris, Noah's Wonder, and Lasting Beauty. In North Carolina, however, inspiration has been caught from the weaver's own door in the shimmer of the sunshine, and the golden gossamer that veils the blue Appalachian Mountains, and the ancient names have given place to new drafts called Hickory Leaf,



THE LOOM HOUSE

Sun, Moon and Star, Sunrise, Fox Trail, Nine Snowballs, Blazing Star and Rattlesnake Trail.

Summer tourists in the mountains were quick to note and appreciate the beauty of Mrs. Mast's artistic and lovely draperies, rugs, coverlets and towels. She was induced some years ago to carry her loom to Knoxville, Tenn., to demonstrate flax weaving at the exposition. She went the next year and carried with her samples of rugs, coverlets, pillow covers, curtains, bureau scarfs and towels, all exquisitely woven in "matched patterns," in various colors. Her skill and fame were then and there permanently established.

One of the "matched sets" in blue found its way to Washington City, and became the property of Mrs. Woodrow Wilson, soon after Mr. Wilson's first inauguration, who was so charmed with the work that she gave Mrs. Mast an order for a rug seventeen feet square. Two of these large rugs of delft blue, known as the Sun, Moon and Star design, cover the floor of what is known as the "Blue Mountain-room of the White House." The design of the chair coverings in this blue room is the Double Chariot Wheel, and these were woven by another mountain weaver at Elkin, North Carolina.

Mrs. Mast has done work for people in more than half of the States of the Union, and for many nota-



MRS. MAST AT WORK ON HER OLD-FASHIONED LOOM

ble people of our country. She makes a specialty of the "matched sets" for Colonial bedrooms, which are found in many of the homes of North Carolina and other Southern States.

"Brookside Farm" is the Mecca for tourists in that section of the State during the summer months, where they go to spend the day just to see the handiwork of Mrs. Mast, and her old-fashioned hand-made looms. Although not at work in the summer months there is always some article on the loom, and Mrs. Mast gladly shows the visitors just how she weaves.

Mrs. Mast has a coverlet, a century old, well preserved, that was woven by her grandmother. She also has a counterpane, seventy-five years old, that was woven by her mother.