

HANDWEAVING

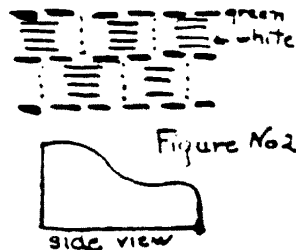
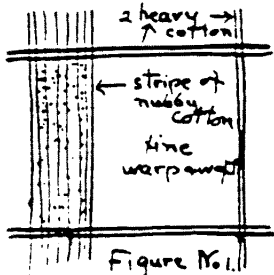
NEWS

Some Notes on the 1940 New York World's Fair,
Connecticut Craftsman Society, and
National Conference of Handicrafts at Penland, N.C.

The purpose of this issue of the News is to bring to you some information about some of the interesting places which I visited this summer while on my vacation and to point out to you a few of the important high lights as I see them.

First let us stop for a short time at the New York World's Fair, and see what they had to offer of interest to the weaver. A short distance from the entrance to the grounds was the building of the W.P.A. Federal Arts Project. In the entrance hall of this building were two fairly large pieces of tapestry, both of which merit our attention. Both of these were woven by Maja Albee of the California Art project, and were designed by the artist Hilaire Hiller. One of these tapestries was called "The Surrender of Cornwallis," and was woven of bright blues, reds, white, with some gray as well as yellow. It had a considerable feeling of design and pattern to me, and was quite modern in its whole effect. The other piece called "The Forrest" used much of the yellow green, and many shades of brown, yellow etc. with some blue greens etc. One effect in this tapestry was of especial interest to me as I had not seen it used in a tapestry before, and that was the use of two contrasting shades of color in the same design area. For instance, using a shot of light color and then a shot of dark on the next shed, alternating these to produce an effect, quite different from that of the regular tapestry technique of hatching which was also used of course. In another room just back of the entrance hall were some other weavings carried out by different W.P.A. Art projects. Here was another tapestry entitled "The Bull". This piece was woven by Adeline Emerson of the Southern California Art project, and also designed by Hilaire Hiller. This was entirely of shades of gray, with black and white, and also distinctly modern in its effect. One point which I wish to bring to the attention of weavers is that all of these tapestries were designed by an artist, which is as it should be it seems to me.

Also in this same room were some very well displayed curtain and upholstery materials from other projects. All of these seemed to me to emphasize texture which of course is important in all modern fabrics. I was especially interested in one piece of curtain material designed by Adeline Titsworth, supervisor of a Virginia Art project. This combined a rich nubby cotton, a fine mercerized cotton, and a very heavy mercerized cotton arranged in a square plaid effect somewhat as shown at Figure No.1. Another piece of upholstery material which was effective was woven on rose-path threading as shown at Figure No.2. It was displayed on a simple chair as sketched. It was all of cotton materials, the alternate pattern shots of white with beige tabby between, and the light green shots as shown, very simple but good looking I thought.



October 1940.

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The Finnish and Swedish Buildings. Both of these buildings were somewhat of a disappointment to me, of course owing to present conditions in Europe. Two pieces in the Finnish building attracted my attention, one a glass curtain and the other a blue drapery designed by Lva Antila. The glass curtain was woven of fine natural mercerized cotton in plain weave using the same material as the warp. Weave a deep hem, and then

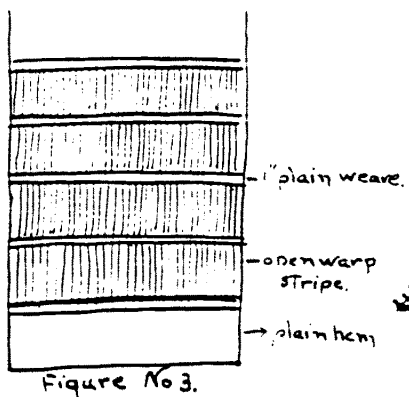


Figure No. 3.

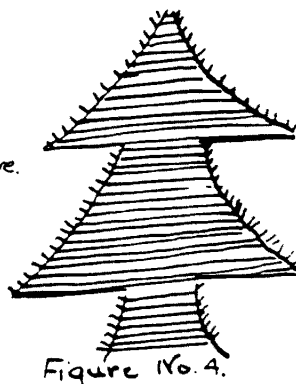


Figure No. 4.

about an inch above this of plain weave. Leave the warp unwoven for about 4" then weave another inch of plain, and so on to the top of the curtain. The effect is as shown at Figure No. 3. The heavy blue drapery was woven on a fine wool of french blue in color, set I should judge about 30 threads to the inch, the plain weft was of dark blue wool. The design of trees was an interesting form of laid in, and of different colors of what appeared to be a heavy rayon. Yellows, browns, and blue greens predominated. What made the laid-in design especially different was the fact that the ends of each color extended on top of the fabric for about $\frac{1}{2}$ " on each side of the design and gave a rough texture effect which raised the outline of the design.

We will now travel up to Connecticut to the "Well Spring" at Andover where the Society of Connecticut Craftsman had a most interesting sale of crafts, including weaving. A previous sale and showing had also been held at the Bartel House at Norfolk, and I was told the results were excellent as far as sales were concerned. Many News subscribers are members of the society, and I want to take this opportunity to congratulate them on their excellent display, and to say that I was sorry that I could not have arranged to have personally met those of you whose names I knew on some of your work. Definite plans are being made for a permanent shop in New York city to serve existing craft societies in that section of the country. Membership in this organization is \$1.50 annually for those actually engaged in craft work as producers. There is one paragraph which I should like to quote from the January bulletin of this society, especially as it seems to emphasize some of the questions that may be of interest to many of us, - quote, "The Jury would like to emphasize how much the Society as a whole wishes to encourage original work. There are many craftsman here and elsewhere making splendid copies of fine old pieces and these will always have a place. But we have at our command today so many new materials and methods of construction, as well as new ways of living, that we have every reason to develop new designs. One of the subjects on which the jury would welcome discussion is whether originality of design should be a requirement for the master-craftmanship award. Some other questions are: Should all work sent in be accepted for exhibition, the only requirement being that everything submitted be hand-made? Will the reputation of the society suffer if some less professional work is present at exhibitions even though it does not bear the approved seal? Is it fair to the expert craftsman to have less professional work at lower prices shown? On the other hand is it fair to deprive the inexperienced craftsman of the opportunity to show and sell his wares? The level of less good work can be raised in many cases. Should not the Society therefore embark upon a program of gradually raising standards?" End of quote. In this same connection at the Conference at Penland which I attended later and which will be briefly described, this same question of sub-standard things was given considerable attention. The conclusions seemed to be that as far as possible people should be encouraged to do the things they are best able to do, and to do them well. That these things should fit their purpose and be simple and easy to do well. In this way, even they, ~~to~~ will pass on whatever they can to make their handcraft lasting.

As the question of markets and outlets for our work is of much interest to many of you, I thought this whole subject might well be discussed. Also may I hear from any who are taking steps as an organization in order to sell handcrafts. Much has been done in this direction in the East and South, and I should like to hear from those in some of our north and mid-western States, as to anything which is being done in these sections toward the marketing of handicrafts or of weaving.

Country Gentleman Loom and Weaving Leaflets. Several requests have come to me recently for plans for the building of a loom. Country Gentleman magazine had an excellent loom designed for them by Mr. Forrest Crooks, which appeared first in an article in that magazine in January 1938, I think. This leaflet can be had for a 3c stamp, as well as several other weaving leaflets, all of which are excellent and full of information. Write for a list of these leaflets. Those of you who are teaching and using simple equipment will find my article on Cardboard Loom Weaving which appeared in the July 1940 issue, and another article on Woven Wool Caps which I believe is to appear in the October issue of interest. The wool caps were woven on the 12" simple heddle loom, and a cap and bag on the broomstick loom. A subscription to Country Gentleman is only \$1.00 for 5 years, and in this way one would not miss any of the weaving material which they are publishing. Address Curtis Publishing Co. Woman's Editor of Country Gentleman, Mrs. Caroline B. King, Independence square Philadelphia, Penna.

Requests for Designs for Weaving of Trees. I am always glad when subscribers write and ask me for material which they would like to use, for in that way I can give what my readers wish to have. Tree designs seem to appear to be of much interest to several. While in Philadelphia this summer, I had access to some of the old weaving books in the Pennsylvania Museum, and brought home with me a number of these designs. I am writing out some threading drafts for these in both "Crackle" weave and "Summer and Winter" and these will appear soon in the News.

National Conference of Handicrafts was held at the Penland School of Handicrafts at Penland, N.C. from August 28 - September 4th. It seems to me that this was a most significant meeting in every way. The conference was in charge of Mr. Allen Eaton, of the Russell Sage Foundation, and Miss Lucy Morgan of Penland, N.C. We were welcomed by Mrs. Bonnie Ford who spoke to us of the spirit of Penland, and before we left, I assure you we were all made to feel that fine friendly spirit which pervades Penland and makes one feel a part of it, although it is rather difficult to describe. The roll call showed representatives from 22 states, and included many well known leaders, teachers, home demonstration agents, farm security people, W.P.A. administrators and supervisors, N.Y.A. supervisors, as well as a large group of individual craft workers. The main objective of the Conference was to see what we can do together which we cannot do alone. Many excellent talks were given by outstanding leaders which I will not attempt to enumerate here, as this will be sent out in a special report later by the Conference. Some of the ideas which seemed to me important was the need for trained teachers in the handicraft field, to teach people how to increase the family income through an educational program and the use of native materials that are easily available. There was considerable discussion of markets and outlets for craft work, as well as what to do with sub-standard work. I am also going to quote from my notes two other statements which I think are very significant, although I do not have down exactly who made them, and that is, "That one of the greatest needs of today is for people to have the chance to express themselves through craft work, and parallel with this the matter of design assistance." Also, "Our whole hope for the crafts is the improvement of standards and the making of something better."

Craft workers in Pennsylvania. Will be interested in knowing that there is to be formed a craft association in that state. If interested in this, write to Mrs. Naaman Keyser, Plymouth Meeting, Pa. Also that a weaver's guild has been formed in Pittsburg and they are planning an exhibit in Pittsburg in October, for information about this write to Miss Lois I. Clifford, 5437 Ellsworth Ave. Pittsburg, Pa.

Bergman Looms. If anyone is thinking of buying an 8 or a 12 harness loom, I suggest that they write to Mrs. Bergman, Paulsbo, Washington. She has some excellent folding floor looms. I was privileged to work on one of these while at Penland, and can recommend them very highly. I would appreciate it very much if you write Mrs. Bergman, if you would mention that you saw the announcement of her looms in this News letter.

Combination of two 4 harness loom patterns for one 8 harness loom threading. This interesting scheme has been worked out by Mr. Donald Greenwood of Wheaton, Ill. and makes it possible to do some most unusual designing for an 8 harness loom. Mr. Greenwood very kindly passed on this information to me while I was at Penland, and after I have had the opportunity to write some original drafts and experiment with them, I shall pass them along to you in Handweaving News. This opens up an entirely new field for experiment for the venturesome weaver.