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MODERN COVERLETS, AS YOU WISH THEM

The season of ambitious ideas and large projects for the handweaver usually follows the busy holidays. Consequently, for its first twenty or so years the January Shuttle Craft BULLETIN was consistently devoted to one of the weaver's most ambitious projects, the weaving of a coverlet. In the early days of the handweaving revival, when the primary inspiration stemmed from the relics of the Colonial handloom, no article held greater fascination than the Colonial coverlet with its striking symmetrical patterns and borders, usually in white and blue. With the shift in decorating ideas during the past two decades, the traditional coverlet has receded into the background as a desirable bedroom fabric, except for those who have a room furnished with antiques of the Colonial period. Bed styles have changed and bed coverings have taken on a completely different aspect, while the weaver's interest has shifted to drapery and upholstery fabrics as major projects. But with the current trend of harmonized bedroom fabrics, and coverlet and draperies matching, interest returns to the bed spread.

Currently popular are three general types of bedspreads, and the day of chenille seems to have passed. Each one of these is suitable for the

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the Hollywood type bed or the bed without a footboard. The first type is simply a large oblong which hangs to the floor on both sides and the end of the bed, with sufficient length for pillow cover. The second is the coverlet-by-day-blanket-by-night type, light and warm and the size of a small blanket used with a dust ruffle. The third type is the fitted, tailored coverlet, with the top mattress size and a floor-length flounce.

General Considerations in designing a coverlet:

Although each of these three styles should be interpreted differently, there are a few general designing points which can apply to any bedspread. The fabric should be substantial, but should have as little poundage weight and be as wrinkle resistant as possible. There should be no long floats or loops which can easily catch and pull to make the fabric look shabby. Appropriate materials are cottons, woolens, rayon, silk and many of the new synthetics, while linen is a fiber to avoid. Single shuttle weaves give the best results for modern coverlets, which are much larger than the Colonial coverlets, because they give a lighter weight, better draping fabric. If two-shuttle weaves are used, they should be restricted to decorative borders, in most cases. Although traditional weaves, particularly those commonly associated with weaving linens can serve as the threading basis, they are usually best when interpreted unconventionally and without the usual warp-weft balance. The current style is for somewhat plain fabrics, either smooth or with texture interest, with the emphasis on color and elegance of fiber and weave. Texture, when used, is usually not gained by incorporating rough threads or smooth and rough threads in close association, but is achieved by using technique to give a small, all-over texture pattern. Two contrasting fabrics can be used effectively together, with two harmonizing colors or with smooth and rough texture. Plaids and shadow stripes are good. Finishes on edges, seam joinings and all tailoring

should be done with the utmost care. Although ruffles and scallops may be found on many of the modern coverlets, these seem hardly appropriate for the handwoven ones. Better would be narrow handwoven fringe, a narrow inkle band sewn around the entire edge, or simply a hem. Because of the wide widths required, most modern coverlets must be woven in three strips, and the center strip may be different from the edge ones.

Sizes for the three styles of coverlets are suggested here, and in each case mean finished and shrunk sizes. However, the handweaver in designing a coverlet should measure the bed for which it is intended and plan the size according to the requirements of the bed and the style. Allowance of 3 to 4 inches per strip should be made for warp take-up and shrinkage. Remember that it is always possible to hem or cut a fabric to make it narrower, but a great deal of ingenuity and shift of design are required to increase the width. Narrow bands may be set in between strips, and 2 to 4 inch inkle bands are particularly effective here, but such expediences should be avoided as emergency measures if possible.

The Oblong Coverlet: For a 75 by 55 inch mattress (double bed size) and a 22 inch bed height, this should be 110 inches long and 100 inches wide. For single bed size the width should be 15 inches less. Adjustment should be made if the bed size is different. The full bed size will require three strips, woven on 36 inch wide warp, and the single bed size three strips on 31 to 32 inch wide warp. The strips should be woven about 116 inches long to allow for shrinkage and warp take-up, and the total project will require about 10 yards of warp, plus loom allowance.

As this coverlet is much used for the studio type of bedroom in which the bed is used as a sofa

in the daytime, the coverlet should be heavy, substantial and wrinkle resistant. Draperies to match are particularly appropriate in this case, so it is well to design a warp which can be used for double purpose. Cotton is a good base, or cotton and rayon. Greater resistance to wrinkling is achieved if two types of material are used, especially a rough and a smooth.

A suggested design is alternating 1-inch warp stripes of 10/2 cotton set at 24 ends per inch and a light weight cotton or rayon boucle or ratinre set at 12 ends per inch, colors either harmonizing or matching. Weave in tabby. Reproduce the warp arrangement with the weft for the two edge strips of the coverlet, to give a cross-barred effect, but weave the center strip with the 10/2 cotton throughout, to make stripes. Or weave a square of cross-bar at the end of the center strip and the balance in stripes so the coverlet will have a border all around. Weave the draperies of 10/2 cotton to give vertical shadow stripes.

There are endless other design possibilities. A stripe or a plaid will be excellent here and even a Scotch Tartan can be used for a room which doubles as a livingroom. Strong checks can be good, or a tweedy type of fabric.

Another suggestion is the use of bands of solid loops, though this is a project which requires the use of two warp beams. Make the warp of 10/3 mercerized cotton (Lily Article 714 is good), set at 20 ends per inch. On the second beam, at each edge of the warp, beam 50-end warps of a heavy, soft material such as Lily Art 614, set at 10 ends per inch. This warp must be 4 to 5 times as long as the base warp. Thread the edges with 4 selvage threads on harnesses 1, 2 alternated, then enter the second warp on the third harness, threading 1, 2 with 10/3 followed by harness 3 with the heavy material.

Thread the main warp on 1, 2 alternately. Sley in a 10-dent reed, 2 per dent, but where the heavy warp occurs make it 3 per dent, 2 of base warp and one of heavy. Tie each harness to raise alone. Weave in tabby (the weft may be a fine boucle if desired). After each second shot, raise harness 3 to lift the secondary warp, insert a fine wire under the heavy warp threads, lower the harness and weave two more tabby shots. About 5 wires are required and four of them should be left in the loops all the time, always removing the last one and putting it under the new row. As these loops are not locked in, it is necessary that the beat be firm, and a soft weft material will lock them in place better than a smooth slick thread. When the weaving is completed the strips should be washed in a washing machine to fluff out the loops and shrink the base. Drying in an electric dryer is most satisfactory, or hanging the pieces outside where they can blow in the wind. Weave the center strip without the loops. The bands of loops may be crossbarred with loops in the weft loop rug technique (see STYLES #27) but without a return of the loop weft in the loop shed. It is evident that the beam containing the loop warp must have a very loose tension from a friction brake or it must simply be weighted.

The Blanket Coverlet: This coverlet has a particular interest to the handweaver, partly because it is not as large as the former type. It should be about 80 inches wide (for 11 inches hangover) and 96 to 100 inches long. Three strips on a 29" warp or two on a 42" wide warp are required. For single beds 65 inches is about right. This type of spread may have greater elegance than the former, but it should be lighter in weight and warmer. Thus, wool is a logical material to use in part, combined with cotton, silk, nylon, orlon, rayon, or some other fiber. Two designs are given here, one for four harnesses and one for 10 harnesses, and PORTFOLIO samples on each are included. Both of these use

TIE-UP, read left to right										DRAFT, read r to left		
9					10	9	10	9	10			
7	8				8	7	8	7	8	0		
5	6	7			6	5	6	5	6	9 9		
3	4	5	6		5	4	5	4	5	8 8		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	7 7		
										6 6 6 6		
										5 5 5 5		
										4 4 4 4		
										3 3 3 3		
										2 2 2 2		
										1		
										repeat		

Treadle, with one shot on each shed, in the following order: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, repeat.

TIE-UP, read l to								DRAFT, read r to l				
7				7	8	7	8					
5	6			5	6	5	6	8				
3	4	5		4	5	4	5	7 7				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	6 6				
								5 5 5 5 5 5				
								4 4 4 4 4 4				
								3 3 3 3				
								2 2 2 2				
								1				
								repeat				

Treadle, one shot on each shed, in the following order: 1, 2, 3, 4, 3, 2, 1, 8, 1, 8, 7, 6, 5, 6, 7, 8, 1, 8, repeat.

TIE-UP, Read l to r					DRAFT, read r to l					Treadle:		
5				6						1, 2, 3, 4,		
3	4			4						3, 2, 1,		
1	2	3		2						5, 1, 5, 1,		
					6					5, 1, 5, 1,		
					5 5					5, 1, 5, 1,		
					4 4					5, repeat.		
					3 3							
					2 2 2 2 2 2 2							
					1 1 1 1 1 1 1							
					repeat							

wool weft on a light weight warp. The first coverlet-blanket was made on the 10-harness draft at left. Interpretations of this draft are given for eight and six harnesses, but the ten is most effective if that many harnesses are available. The weave gives little puffy diamonds in all-over pattern on a tabby background. The warp was gold colored nylon (from The Weavers' Workshop, Dodgeville, Wisconsin) set at 20 ends per inch, 2 per dent in a 10-dent reed. The weft was a light weight, jade green baby wool used double by weaving with a double shuttle holding two bobbins (shuttle available from E E Gilmore, 330 S Commerce St, Stockton, Calif, \$2.00 plus postage). The beat was light, so that the diamond spots would fall on an exact diagonal of 45 degrees. Some control of the beat was required as the tabby shots (treadles 1 and 10) need a firm touch, which must gradually lighten toward treadles 5 and 6, but the rhythm of this is easily developed.

The blanket requires three 27 inch wide strips which must be carefully caught together. The warp should actually be 551 ends, to give 25 repeats of the 22-thread draft, plus a single balance thread. For the second, or 8-harness, draft the first 5 threads should be omitted at the right selvage and the last four at the left selvage. For the third, or 6-harness, draft the threading should start with 1, 2 repeated 4 times, then 3, 4, 5, 6, etc, and it should end with 4 repeats of 2, 1.

This pattern gives a charming, dainty blanket of light, summer weight. A suitable dust ruffle can be woven by resleying the warp to 27 ends per inch (sleyed 3 per dent in a 9-dent reed or 1, 2 alternately in an 18-dent reed) and weaving in tabby or with the diamond, satin spots, using the same yarn for warp and weft. The same fabric could be used for drapery and dressing table flounce. This blanket was simply steam-pressed, and should be dry cleaned.

The Second Coverlet-Blanket was woven on the following 4-harness draft:

	TIE-UP		DRAFT	
This is the familiar	4	4	4	4
and ever useful 3-	3	3	3	
thread huck or canvas	2	2		2
threading and the	1	1		1 1
weave is identical on	1	2	3	4
the 4-harness Point				

Twill threading, using the same tie-up in this case. The warp was $24\frac{1}{2}$ cotton set at $22\frac{1}{2}$ ends per inch, sleyed in a 15-dent read with one group of 3 ends in a dent and then a dent skipped. The weft was a loosely spun, somewhat irregular, white woolen yarn which resembled a handspun. It was secured in a job-lot which is not reproducible, but something similar could be found. A light weight knitting yarn could be used. (PORTFOLIO sample) The weave was planned to give a light weight, rather fluffy fabric, with vague shadow-stripes in the weft.

Treadle, one shot on each shed, in the following order: 2, 3, 2, 3;
 1, 3, 1, 4, 2, 4, - 4 times;
 2, 3, 2, 3;
 2, 4, 2, 4, 2, 3, 1, 3, 1, 3, - 4 times;
 repeat entire succession.

Use a medium, single beat so the weft will lie firmly but will not pack. After this fabric was removed from the loom it was washed very thoroughly in two different suds washings with rinsings between, to raise the nap as much as possible. The blanket will require about 3 pounds of yarn, while the previous one requires about $2\frac{1}{2}$ pounds.

The Tailored, Flounce Coverlet: This type is the most elegant of the three styles of coverlets. The top can be a very elegant fabric such as a quilted or a patterned double weave, with the flounce of the same warp and weft, but single cloth. It is, perhaps, most effective if the top

is a single piece. This is not difficult for the single bed size which is 40 by 90 inches, but the double bed size requires a width of 55 inches and few handweavers can produce this. A common practice is to weave two strips, use one length for the center, and split the other length to seam to either side of this. The floor-length flounce may be gathered as a ruffle around the two sides and the end of the top piece, which will require 8 to 10 yards according to the weight of the material. The lighter weight the material, the more is required. Or the flounce may be attached without fullness but with deep, tailored pleats at the corners. This will require about $6 \frac{1}{3}$ yards of material. The width is according to the height of the bed, which is most commonly 22 inches, though lower in many cases. All tailoring should be done as professionally as possible, usually with a cord around the top surface.

Considerations in Selecting a Coverlet Weave:

A plain tabby weave or a plain 2-2 twill, if the warp and weft are of smooth thread, will show wrinkles more than a fancy weave, so they are not as desirable. For a plain, single color design, one of the linen weaves can be used effectively: a huck variation, or M's and O's, or Spot weave. And a fancy, multiple-harness twill always has good texture interest. The rules of warp-weft balance which are usually considered when using these weaves, may be disregarded as concerns both materials and beat. A smooth, fine warp, set wider than normal, is desirable, with a weft which is heavier, soft, and perhaps rough. Experiments before making the final warp are important, so the weaver should always make one or more short sample warps and weave with different materials and different rotation orders before selecting the final design. Pattern weaves may be used and those of the "opposite" variety which have no half-tones are most desirable. However, the pattern should be used with restraint as borders

which alternate with wide, plain areas. In weaving such borders, the weaver must use great care to throw the weft very loosely in the pattern sheds. There is considerably more take-up in 2-shuttle pattern weaving than in tabby weaving and any drawing-in which will pucker the plain-weave borders must be avoided. This puckering tendency can, however, be used as an integral design element in rare cases. For instance, a fine cotton material (20/2 set at 30 ends per inch) may be woven with $\frac{1}{2}$ inch tabby followed by $\frac{1}{4}$ inch on opposites (harnesses 1-2 alternated with 3-4), beaten firmly, to give a curduroy effect, or seersucker.

Another good designing idea is to achieve a texture interest through varying the warp setting. For instance, sley $\frac{3}{4}$ inch at 2 per dent at a normal tabby setting, then 1 inch at 1 per dent, followed by $\frac{1}{4}$ inch at 3 per dent. Weave this to balance the stripes sleyed 2 per dent. The warp will take up slightly more in the stripes sleyed 3 per dent, and the stripes sleyed 1 per dent will hang softly, but if the stripes are narrow and occur regularly, the slight puckering enhances the design. This system is good for draperies as well as for coverlet. If a warp setting of this type is woven with a weft of finer grist, there is less tendency toward puckering.

Bands of warp-pattern weave can be used with stunning effect in modern coverlets, because the warp pattern gives greater than ordinary control over the placement of designs. Designs can be in full warp-length bands or they may be scattered in spots, as desired. If the floats on the wrong side are too long to be practical, the coverlet can be lined. For information about the warp-pattern weave, see the BULLETIN for April 1952.

A recent stock market report mentioned small sales of cloths with lack of any real demand and mentions that mill men were discouraged over immediate prospects. Could it be that the handweavers are becoming that active?

HANDWEAVING THREADING DRAFTS

The weaving draft is a symbolic representation of the way warp threads are drawn through the heddles. There are many draft forms in use today, and many obsolete, abandoned ones. A good draft form must be clear and allow no misinterpretation. It must be sufficiently graphic that the informed weaver will know at a glance what technique it is written for and what type and general conformity of pattern it will produce. The weaver should be able to thread from it easily, without having to rewrite or transcribe it. The Graphic Draft, written on squared paper, seems to best fulfill these requirements and is being adopted by more and more publishers in the handweaving field, even in the Scandinavian publications which have previously used more informal systems. In the Graphic Draft the horizontal spaces represent harnesses, the vertical spaces represent warp threads, and the black squares indicate the entering of a warp end through a specific heddle on a specific harness. Harnesses are numbered from bottom to top as they are numbered from the front to the back of the loom. The draft is read from right to left because this is the direction in which the right-handed person normally threads. Confusion in draft interpretation arises from two sources: that power looms, threaded differently, use drafts written from left to right, and that an early European custom was numbering harnesses on looms from back to front and in drafts from top to bottom. Thus, it is the direct or indirect reproducing of drafts from these sources which makes many drafts seem to read backwards, for instance starting the threading at the top and progressing in reverse. The careful weaver will transcribe such a draft to normal form. It will be noticed that a different from customary draft form is used in this BULLETIN. This is for convenience, not from a desire to be different. It is hoped that it meets the requirements of a good draft form. Comments are welcomed. If it proves satisfactory, it will be used for the BULLETIN.

SHUTTLE CRAFT GUILD NOTES

Although there have been more delays and interruptions due to the Guild's recent move than had been anticipated, we feel that we shall be able to bring you better weaving publications from this locality. Already we find improvement in the varieties and qualities of papers and envelopes we can secure. We are pleased to find an excellent printer near by who is both cooperative and imaginative. Our plans for resuming photographic illustrations have not yet materialized but we expect them to by next month. There is a slight change this year in the PORTFOLIO. Instead of making it a separate folder, we are now making an actual PORTFOLIO edition of the BULLETIN with a turn-in flat to hold the samples, to enable the reader to expose the samples while reading the information. The new PORTFOLIO edition will still be \$1.25 per single issue to Guild members, but \$1.50 to non-members. Two years of experience with the PORTFOLIO have indicated to us that we can resume the policy of sending a 13th month mailing to members we have failed to renew. Often the renewal is in the mail when the name is withdrawn after the 12th month, or was simply temporarily overlooked. The 13th mailing was dropped because of the cost and labor involved in each PORTFOLIO, but we have found that PORTFOLIO subscribers almost always renew, and promptly, or notify us of intention to discontinue. This consideration makes it possible for us to resume the 13th mailing. By the way, the PORTFOLIO has exceeded our advance estimate of 2 years ago by about four times, in popularity. The lesson and instruction kit for the Home Study Course may be purchased by any Guild member who has subscribed or renewed within six months for \$20, without the renewal fee, and reduction is made for instruction books already owned. The reaction to the WEAVER'S WORD FINDER has been enthusiastic. Those of you who do not have it may purchase a copy for \$2.50. Guild renewals are not accepted through agents, only direct.

