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Shuttle Craft Guild

HANDWEAVERS BULLETIN

DECEMBER 1960



About once every two years AMERICAN FABRICS publishes a leading article which casts its shadow on the textile design fashion trend for years to come. Recalling the articles on Scotch Tartans, District Checks, Colors of India and Paisley patterns, one is impressed by the accuracy and importance of the AMERICAN FABRICS forecasts, and by the fact that the trends in design they set prove themselves and last for years. It is therefore important to the handweaver interested in keeping abreast of fashion, as well as to the commercial designer, to heed the AMERICAN FABRICS "new fashion directions."

The handwoven fabrics of Ghana are the lead article in the fall-winter 1960 AMERICAN FABRICS (#61) entitled, "GHANA, An Untapped Source of Design Inspiration." Described is the traditional Kente cloth which has "a boldness and sophistication which, if interpreted creatively, could introduce a new note to American fashion design." The editors are confident that the designs "will soon become a groundswell of interest in and excitement with the textiles of Ghana -- an interest which will inevitably lead to new explorations in the culture and design forms of the newly emerging African nation."

Ghana is so new as an independent country that even its name is found in only the most recent atlases. Formerly the African Gold Coast, on the south coast of the west Africa bulge, this bit of the British Empire had a century of increasing participation in government as a constitutional colony, making it ready for independence on March 6, 1957 and for assuming its role in the United Nations two days later. The central of Ghana's six administrative territories is Ashanti, where the remarkable handwoven textiles which interest us today have been part of the ancient culture.

Two textile types characterize the Ghana Ashanti fabrics: a wide cotton tabby cloth with stamped designs, and the Kente cloth, narrow textiles made on primitive looms with woven designs in unique technique and pattern which are the main stem of our current interest. The Kente cloth is not altogether new to handweavers, as those weavers familiar with the best of the handweaving source material have on tap Mrs Atwater's presentation of one of the two Kente techniques. Mrs Atwater introduced the Kente cloth under the mistaken title of, "An African Girdle," in a Shuttle Craft Bulletin over twenty years ago. But fortunately for weavers now, since Mrs Atwater's old Bulletins are as rare and valuable as drops of gold, she gave the material again in BYWAYS IN HAND-WEAVING, (The Macmillan Company, 1954) on pages 115 to 118, with a magnificent color illustration on 114.

The two types of Kente cloth are differentiated mainly by warp set, one having a very closely set warp to give one design element in warp-rep stripes contrasted in a unique manner with a second design element in weft rep stripes. This textile will be taken up in more detail later. Mrs Atwater's article gives the type woven on a wider warp-set to form a tabby fabric having weft designs in a simple, rapid, pick-up system. All gradations between these two textile types are found, and Mrs Atwater's directions include weft rep stripes. The AMERICAN FABRICS photographs include warp-rep set-ups with the same type designs Mrs Atwater's article shows, as illustrated at left from a photograph in AMERICAN FABRICS.

The Kente cloths are narrow strips, five to seven inches wide, which are sewn together to make wide mantles. The joining staggers the positions of the two different designs to form large check effects. As the single strips have in the past been purchased by travelers as souvenirs, it was a normal assumption on Mrs Atwater's part on seeing one of these that the textile was intended for a belt.

The use of the Kente cloth was originally restricted to kings and the chieftans of the land. Patterns were symbolic and associated with particular families as assigned them by

the king. They represented clan membership, social status, property ownership, marital status and other personal facts through a symbol language for a people who did not read or write, in much the way as the designs woven into the Guatemalan huipils in bygone years were biographic. The ancient fabrics were of vegetable dyed cotton, and later an unusual spider silk was used, but in the 17th century silk was introduced from Europe and since then the finest of the Kente cloths have been silk, though cotton has remained the most used fiber.

The designing of textiles in the spirit of the Kente cloth involves the technical problem of producing two sections of fabric alternately, each in totally different colors, texture and pattern. The typical Ghana technique of weaving several inches of warp rep stripe in which only the warp is evident, followed by several inches of weft rep in which only the weft shows, is interesting but difficult, and not suitable to most textiles for contemporary use. Also, though possible, it is very difficult to weave opposing warp and weft reps simultaneously for a wide textile.

The obvious solution to the design and color problem, especially for wide fabrics, although it uses a technique not found in the Kente cloth proper, is to make a two-block eight-harness double weave threading. This requires a double weave set-up of the simplest two-block nature for alternate squares or rectangles, as shown on the photographs on page 20 of THE DOUBLE WEAVE monograph, threading the two units as at top left on page 21, or using the six-thread unit at the top of page 10. The weaving is with tie-up 1 on page 21. The six-thread unit with all warp warp of the same weight, but with alternating fine and heavy wefts, would be particularly appropriate as it would give the characteristic Kente cloth texture shift. Even a four-harness double weave threading could be used for the check designs by reversing the color relations in the threading every five to seven inches.

AMERICAN FABRICS gives a sample in sheer cotton by Galey and Lord, which makes this adaptation through double weave of a Ghana-inspired design. They present this as "one of the first pieces to come off the looms . . . a whole new fashion trend may well be in the making." This suggests for handweavers a welcome blend of two vital, new (old) textile elements: the popular double weave and the Ghana design trend. Handloomed textiles in this approach should be useful in decorating for bed spreads, draperies and small upholsteries, and handsome for bags of all types and sizes, as well as for afghans, decorative hangings and even table mats and runners. Below is a small project in this style particularly adapted to the Christmas holiday season.

unusual table settings and decorating for special occasions, and especially with the present-day custom of buffet entertaining, one wonders that the party strip has not come into vogue long before now. There is also the great current focus on purely decorative textiles, with almost all weavers interested in designing and weaving a wall hanging. There is a limit to the number of wall hangings a person can sympathetically use in a home, but the party strip offers as great a design challenge, and one could use any number of them, a different one for different occasions, different color schemes and different table designs.

For a holiday project, we are suggesting two party strips designed from the Ghana Kente cloth. The first one (see Portfolio sample) in silk for elegance, in brilliant colors for the holiday fiesta spirit, and in double weave for practicality and to emphasize design.

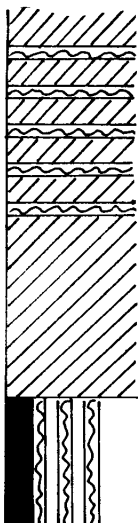
The material is the 7/2 duppioni silk from Robin and Russ Handweavers (632 Santa Barbara Street, Santa Barbara, California) and a small amount of the Lily black nylon, double wound with gold metallic (Article 305, 340 yards per 2-ounce tube, \$1.00). The duppioni 7/2 silk has 5,800 yards per pound, and comes on pound cones at \$7.00 per pound, or on 4-ounce spools at \$2.00 each. This silk, though it looks rough, makes a remarkable warp which is joyful to weave. The three new colors were selected as expressing both the holiday season and corresponding to colors used in the Ghana textiles: a brilliant scarlet, a yellow-green, and a greenish-grey.

The draft is the simple four-harness double weave, the four-thread draft given on page 10 of the DOUBLE WEAVE monograph, woven on the eight-shed tie-up at 1. Warp is set at 40 ends per inch, 20 ends for each surface, though a much closer warp set would also be appropriate. The surface indicated by the filled draft squares is all green. The surface indicated by the X symbol is a stripe arrangement as shown on the diagram at the bottom of this page, with red for the filled areas, grey for the white areas, and the black and gold twist for the narrow stripes. The design is suggested by the warp stripe of the illustrated Ghana fabric from AMERICAN FABRICS. (If you have the silk in undyed white or natural do not hesitate to use package dyes for any colors wished, as silk dyes well.)

The weaver with eight harnesses available will find that firmer edges are formed if the edge four threads are placed on harnesses 5, 6, 7, 8, with the warp colors reversed.

Here is a warping hint if this short, relatively narrow warp is to be chained, and sleyed and threaded before beaming. Make the warps for the two surfaces independently and the metal threads in a third chain. Sley the warp for the green surface first, with lease sticks or dowels in the cross. Then lay the red and grey striped warp on top of this and sley, leaving spaces for the metal ends. Sley the metal threads last. Keep all three chains independent, each with its own cross. Thread the warp and beam the whole thing together. If the threads tend to be sticky (particularly if the warp is set closer than the suggested one), lift the harnesses carrying the stripe surface and beam with these propped up. It may be easier to thread and beam only the silk warp, leaving spaces for the metal threads. After the tie-in is made the chain of metal threads may be hung over the back beam, threaded and sleyed back to front, tied-in, and the chain weighted for self-tensioning. (The best idea for weighting a warp chain comes from Halleys Spurkle of Honolulu. Put sufficient sand in the toe of an old nylon stocking to give the correct weight-tension and tie the stocking to the warp chain. Pleasant though it

PARTY STRIPS or FESTREMSA - GHANA IN



The Party strip or Festremsa, a decorative textile of Swedish tradition, is a narrow, long (6 to 8 inches wide, 2 to 4 yards long) decorative band of beautiful handwoven fabric, used on dining or buffet tables on festive occasions or holidays. It is laid on top of a plain table cloth or on a bare table. Party strips, being ornamental rather than utilitarian, are woven in designs and colors suitable to particular holidays or festive occasions, or to enhance special table settings or china or flower arrangements. (I am reminded of the wide red satin ribbons always used cross-cross on our childhood Christmas table, and then put away, carefully rolled on a tube, until the next Christmas day.) With the special attention these days on interesting and



would be, there is no need for going to Waikiki Beach for sand. Anyone can get sand, even if it requires a trip to a builder or a garden center.)

Weaving the party strip is by single-shuttle, tubular method. Weave green weft with groups of four-shot stripes in the black and gold twist where the green warp is the face; weave red weft where the stripe warp is the face. Alternate the two faces in squares or rectangles, as desired. To strengthen the fabric it is desirable, when weaving the four-shot stripes in the green section, to exchange the surfaces. The tubular structure makes the edges straighter and neater than the use of two wefts would. A little trick for weaving a good fold edge is suggested by Margaret Newman in her Double Width Weaving pamphlet described later. Below the fell, parallel to the weft and just inside the fold, pin the fabrics together as weaving progresses.

A QUICK PARTY STRIP FOR CHRISTMAS

Although the double-weave party strip above is a project which may be woven quickly, there is the problem of ordering and waiting for yarn if it is a casual project. Another project on this same trend can be done spur-of-the-moment. Use yarns on hand, making the warp of heavy threads set closely, using a smooth mercerized cotton for the odd numbered threads (those on harnesses 1 and 3) of a single color, alternated with a stripe mixture of rough and smooth threads for the other surface. For instance, wishing to harmonize a bowl of red, purple and blue Christmas balls, a cone of 5/2 pearl cotton in bright blue was on hand, left over from another project, and used for the smooth warp. A selection of various rough rayons and miscellaneous smooth threads (some used double and triple to make them correspond to the 5/2 size, in reds, blues and violets, were combined in free stripes for the other surface. The warp was set at 30 ends per inch, with 105 ends for each face. A short, narrow warp of this coarseness is very quickly wound and threaded. The 5/2 was used as weft throughout, and the horizontal stripes on the plain face were made by reversing the faces for four shots. A stunning strip results, one in the gay, holiday spirit, and one which may be warped and woven of yarns on hand as quickly as one could make a Christmas wreath or other holiday decorations. Try attaching small balls or bells to the fringes for added interest.

The variations on the party strips for holiday tables are endless and the imagination can play freely on decorative possibilities incorporating Christmas ornaments.

NEWS OF BOOKS AND PERIODICALS ON HANDWEAVING

In connection with THE DOUBLE WEAVE, there is one small publication which did not get into the bibliography because I learned about it after my copy had gone to the printer. This is DOUBLE WIDTH WEAVING, by Margaret Newman, 1001 East Druid Road, Clearwater, Florida. This mimeographed article is excellent, and anyone wishing to do double width weaving should have it. As well as directions for writing any four-harness draft so it will weave double on eight harnesses, it has excellent hints on the weaving of double-width fabrics, and a number of specific drafts for such weaves as Overshot, Huck, M's and O's, Atwater-Bronson Lace and others. Order directly from Miss Newman, who also has an excellent \$1.00 pamphlet on Tarascan (pick-up leno) Lace. The price is \$1.00. (Miss Newman was one of Mrs Atwater's early correspondence course students and a charter member of the Shuttle Craft Guild.)

Another long-time Shuttle Craft Guild member has recently published two "dollar leaflets" on the Shadow Weave which I should like to recommend. This is Marian Powell, 2222 Willis Avenue, Perry, Iowa, to whom orders should be sent. One leaflet is on four-harness Shadow Weave, the other on Multi-Harness Shadow Weave. Mrs Powell is a lucid thinker whose directions are completely understandable and whose drafts and tie-ups are presented in clear, accurate, neat, graphic form. Her approach has certain factors of originality, that quality which makes a publication worth while, instead of being merely a rehash of old material. The leaflets are devoted largely to drafts and patterns devised by Mrs Powell, each illustrated by a photograph, which reveal her fine designing skill and technical command.

Speaking of books, one which was published during my period of "retirement" proves useful for many references. Mr Zielinski's ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF HAND-WEAVING, (no encyclopaedia in the strict sense but rather an alphabetical compilation of words, drafts and opinions pertaining to textiles) is packed with useful information. I cannot altogether agree with Mr Zielinski's definitions, which are somewhat personal in their selection, but this is inevitable in a field which has no established vocabulary or system of symbols. As with any book, one selects what is useful and suitable for personal use, overlooking what is not. But this book is so packed with useful information for any weaver, including the drafts for the named coverlet patterns, instruction on weaving skills, definitions of obscure and historic terms, actual directions and much more, that it is excellent reference. It is published by Funk and Wagnalls (1959), price \$8.50, available from Craft and Hobby Book Service.

Elmer W Hickman, R D 2, Box 158, Emlenton, Pa, announces a new folio of contemporary designs with samples for each entitled FABRICS FOR THE HOME. This is Folio Number 12, the price of which is \$8.50, and it may be ordered from Mr Hickman or from Craft and Hobby Book Service. From Mr Hickman, for \$5.00, one may order 40 weaves from Folios 1, 2, and 3 without samples --- truly a bargain. Perhaps even more important is his offering for \$4.00 the instruction sheets for three of his SCANDINAVIAN ART WEAVING folios, so long out of print.

THE DOUBLE WEAVE, PLAIN AND PATTERNED, is now available through Craft and Hobby Book Service at \$4.00. The BULLETINS will be available with subscriptions only. A statistically inclined subscriber reports that there are more words in the BULLETIN, by count, than in the former SHUTTLE CRAFT, if words count.

A weaving periodical which brings me great joy, but is little known in this country is the QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF THE GUILDS OF WEAVERS, SPINNERS AND DYERS (of England). It is a high level publication containing excellent technical articles as well as unusual articles of general interest, and each issue contains a section of photographs. Annual subscription for "subscribers abroad including postage, 10 shillings." A dollar and a half in our money will cover this. Subscriptions should be sent to Mr G Crocker, 149 Wendover Court, Chiltern Street, London W 1, England. Files of back issues also are available, going back to 1952, at this same rate of \$1.50 for four, including postage.

The editorial staff of the Journal is a distinguished one, and most issues contain an article by Peter Collingwood, with whom weavers in this country have recently become acquainted through two articles in the Fall 1960 HANDWEAVER AND CRAFTSMAN, and through the half-dozen Collingwood rugs in the current "Made in Britain," Artist-Craftsman show.

Last year when in England, I had the pleasure of being invited to Mr Collingwood's workshop a short distance from London. On seeing his work, his workshop, and some of his amazing collection of experimental samples, one knows that Mr Collingwood is an artist with an astonishingly great technical command and virtuosity, and an incomparable color sense. His designs are unusual and completely beautiful. These rugs were so completely compelling that as my mind kept returning to them after I was back in this country, I felt that I must have one for myself. Mr Collingwood's strong professionalism is indicated by the fact that within six weeks of the time I had sent my order for a custom designed rug, the rug was in the hands of the exporter. And no small rug either, as it measures four by thirteen feet. It is possible that some time next year there will be a Shuttle Craft Guild monograph on some of Mr Collingwood's techniques outside his rug weaving.

Handweavers may be proud of the fact that the remarkable book ANNI ALBERS : ON DESIGNING, is displayed by the Library of Congress among the "Fifty Books of the Year." A compilation of Anni Albers' articles and lectures, illustrated by photographs of her textiles, this is certainly the most distinguished book on designing that weavers have had. (Published by The Pellango Press at \$4.95.)

The Shuttle Craft Guild publications by Harriet Tidball, available from Craft and Hobby Book Service, Big Sur, California, are:

THE HANDLOOM WEAVES, \$3.00 (1957)
THE INKLE WEAVE, \$2.50 (1951)
HANDWEAVERS' INSTRUCTION MANUAL (1949) \$3.00
INTERIOR DECORATING, THE HANDLOOM WAY
(1958) \$1.95 (reduced from \$3.00)
HANDWEAVER'S PROJECT BOOK (1960) \$2.00, or
four for \$7.50
THE DOUBLE WEAVE, PLAIN AND PATTERNED (October
1960 Monograph), \$4.00.

THE CORRESPONDENCE COURSE IN HANDWEAVING

In the September Bulletin it was announced that the Shuttle Craft Guild Correspondence Course (or Home Study Course, as it has been called since 1954) would be resumed with Frances Afanasiev, 1216 South Fifth Ave., Bozeman, Montana, acting as instructor. The response to both Mrs Afanasiev and me has been a positive demonstration that this traditional Shuttle Craft Guild service is needed as much now as it was ten, twenty, thirty years ago.

Mrs Afanasiev is using the 30 lessons of the Beginning Home Study Course, published by the Shuttle Craft Guild in 1954, and for those who wish a more advanced approach, the 20-lesson course published in 1950. As many weavers in past years purchased the course material without registering for correspondence criticism of lesson work, Mrs Afanasiev is accepting as correspondence students, these who have already purchased the material.

As most weavers find the post-holiday winter season an ideal time for undertaking a serious study of a comprehensive review, this would be a good time to enroll with Mrs Afanasiev for the Correspondence Course. Direct all inquiries to her, as I do not have

THE SHUTTLE CRAFT GUILD

The last few months have seemed like a family reunion -- hearing from and writing to hundreds of old friends. To many, many of the long-time Shuttle Craft Guild subscribers congratulations are due for their accomplishments revealed in exhibition lists, in the articles concerning

weaver activities in HANDWEAVER AND CRAFTSMAN, in advertisements for new services, and in writing for and teaching handweavers. Looking over these makes me proud to again be associated with the Shuttle Craft Guild and its distinguished subscribers. Mrs Atwater always said, "The Shuttle Craft Guild skims the cream of handweavers," and after an interval of being away, and now again skimming the subscription list, I have no doubts.

Most old subscribers realize why it was necessary to change the publication forms, and the response to the two present forms thus far has been about 99.5% favorable. A number of wishes that Bulletin margins were larger, to make space for punching for ring notebooks, so notice herewith size of print reduced to make a margin.

The problem of filing publications must be faced. Bulletins fit a ring notebook not suitable for monographs. Therefore I have arranged with the cover company which supplies binders for HANDWEAVER AND CRAFTSMAN to make binders for Shuttle Craft Guild Monographs. They are the same high quality but with a different binding fixture which requires no cutting, sawing or punching of publications, which may be inserted and removed easily. Each binder has space for 12 monographs or 6 monographs and 6 portfolio supplements. The price is \$3.00 plus 30¢ for postage and handling. Send all orders to:

The Suckert Loose Leaf Cover Company
11911 Grand River Avenue, Detroit 4, Michigan.

My personal library has become a problem for which I am having Suckert make up special binders to solve. Perhaps some of you, and especially Guilds with libraries to care for, would be interested in having these excellent binders in the three additional sizes I am having custom made. The problem is that they can be made up (at sufficiently reasonable price) in lots of 50 each, and I must pay for them in advance. Therefore I shall hold my order until January 15 to see if you wish to share these, or earlier if sufficient orders come earlier. Each binder is 2" thick with 20 holders for 20 - 40 publications. They are in the four sizes in which Shuttle Craft publications have appeared over the years, and I find these four sizes fit all of my other periodicals and soft-cover pamphlets. they are as follows:

- 8 1/2 x 11 x 2, for current and pre-1952 S C Bulletins, Cross Country Craftsman, The Tie-Up, Drafts and Designs, and others.
- 9 1/2 x 6 3/4 x 2, for 1957 - June 1960 SHUTTLE CRAFT, Ciba Review, Warp and Weft.
- 8 1/2 x 5 1/2 x 2, 1952 - 1956 S C Bulletins, The English Quarterly, the Australian Quarterly, and numerous special booklets

Order these from me (\$3.00 each plus 30¢ mailing) and I shall hold check until there are sufficient for the order, or return checks in January if insufficient.

More than 50% of Shuttle Craft subscriptions expire with this Bulletin. If yours is a January subscription, renewal (\$7.50 regular edition, \$17.50 Portfolio edition) will be prompt, I hope. And I hope that all current subscribers will be renewing so as not to miss the next Monograph on Backed, Reinforced and Double-Faced Weaves and Wool Weaving. The \$7.50 - \$17.50 renewal applies to all subscriptions now starting in January, February and March, due in December, January and February. The Monograph will not be sent to those who have not renewed. Renewals due between March and June will be \$5.00 and \$12.00 and may also be sent now, as all subscriptions in 1961 will expire in December 1961.

Wishing to broaden the scope and authenticity of the Shuttle Craft Guild publications, I have hopes of making a study trip each year to one of the world's important textile centers. The 1960 trip will be to Peru. I shall leave Dec 19, to be away three weeks, to return bursting with new ideas and knowledge of the ancient Peruvian classics.

Renewals and certainly Christmas gift subscriptions will be appreciated before I leave. But do not delay for my return, as mail coming while I am away will be handled

Harriet Tidball - Nov 1960