



warp and weft

Vol. XII, No. 6

June, 1959

warp and weft

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A Word from the Editor

We were sorry to miss the Southern California Handweavers Guild annual fashion show and exhibition, but a second case of the flu had your editor in bed for almost two weeks. And it still seems as though I haven't gotten back to where I should be strength-wise, even after two to three weeks.

However, we did have a chance to visit the Northern California Handweavers Conference in Monterey, and we should tell you that we thought it was an outstanding exhibition and show.

I was particularly impressed with many of the guild exhibitions. They showed that there had been much planning and preparation on the parts of the various guilds, particularly by those guilds who had a central theme for their exhibits.

I will not try and go into detail about the various different exhibits, but we will hope that we might be able to show you some of the works as covers on *Warp and Weft* in the months to come.

Remember, this is the June issue, and our next issue will be the September issue.

There is so much that seems to want to be included in this issue, that I will cut this short, and try and include as much of the other items as possible.

RUSSELL E. GROFF, *Editor*

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Book Review

This month we are pleased to tell you about another folio by Mr. Elmer Hickman, called TOWN AND COUNTRY TWEEDS.

It is an outstanding collection of samples of 20 different fabrics that fall into the "Tweed" classification, plus 4 additional fabrics woven of soft 2/16 imported Botany wool yarns.

All of these 24 fabrics are woven on 4 harnesses, with complete instructions being given for warping, threading the heddles, sleying the reed, and weaving the yardages. Also, the names and colors of the yarns used, and their sources are given.

Many of the fabrics can be adapted for men's shirts, men's suits, men's sport coats, as well as other times. They can also be used for women's suitings, sport coats, heavy coats, etc. I would think that many ideas for fabrics for teen-agers could be also inspired by these samples.

From seeing these fabrics, you could see that the average weaver would be able to weave any or all of these fabrics without any difficulty.

Mr. Hickman has also tried to ignore the colorings that are passing fads, but has chosen those that will stand up to the passage of the years in color styling.

There are a few which are variations of traditional weaves, but most of the fabrics are of a modern design and construction, using various twill adaptations, and a few other drafts with straight and novelty treadlings.

Once again, we must commend Mr. Hickman also on the mounting of these samples, as his choice of backgrounds for these samples do help to show the colorings to advantage.

I feel certain that every weaver will find something of interest to them in this outstanding folio of mostly wool samples.

Hints for finishing of the fabrics are also given by Mr. Hickman, and his ideas in regards to this are easy to follow, and simply and clearly explained.

Name: TOWN AND COUNTRY TWEEDS

Publisher: ELMER W. HICKMAN

Cost: \$6.95 POSTAGE PREPAID

Available: MR. ELMER W. HICKMAN
R.D. 2, EMLENTON, PENN. OR
ROBIN AND RUSS

This Month's Cover

The cover this month shows two beautiful afghans, one, the natural colored one woven by Mrs. Alice Krasnow (on left) and the plaid one of vegetable dyed yarns, woven by Mrs. Ethel Born, (on the right).

This month's cover and the photograph included with this article were submitted by Mrs. Harry E. Born of the Fairfax Weavers Guild in Virginia. For this, she will receive a two-year renewal to *Warp and Weft*. Mrs. Born sent us such an interesting letter telling about her afghan project, that I'm going to try and copy as much of it as we can, that you might enjoy her activities and those of her other weaving friends in the Fairfax Weaver's Guild.

From Sheep to Sofa

On those rare occasions when I have time to catch forty winks before the children dash in from school, it is with a feeling of immense satisfaction and pride that I snuggle down under my soft handwoven afghan and gaze fondly at the lovely muted shades and color—remembering all that has gone into the production of this heirloom!

It all started last spring when a fellow-weaver and member of the Fairfax Weaver's Guild was looking for someone to shear her two sheep. My husband, having been brought up on a farm and experienced in such chores, volunteered his services. So, at the proper season on a sunny warm Saturday afternoon, all was in readiness for the shearing. All except Pansy and Beery, that is? Being a little on the skittish side, they were not too eager to submit to such goings on but soon found it useless to resist.

Both sheep, incidentally, received their names as lambs for very specific reasons. Beery was so fat that it was quite obvious that she would be called Beer Barrel. But since this name did little for a girl's ego, as she grew older her name was shortened to Beery. Pansy, unfortunately, lost the latter half of her wool as a lamb, and was promptly

named Pants-Off. In order to preserve her modesty as she grew older, she too received a nickname.

So the sheep were sheared and several bags of wool were ready to be scoured, carded, and spun into yarn, and the wool was sent off to the mill to have this done. My friend and I decided to each weave an afghan on my 45 inch loom. First we warped the loom with the 2 ply natural wool, drawing in the warp in a diamond pattern with 12 threads to the inch, 45 inches wide.

Beaten very lightly, the same material as weft gave a nice textured pattern, and a fringe was allowed for at the beginning and end of each weft shot, and the edges were overcast as we went along.

Our imagination had been caught by the idea of dyeing some of the wool with vegetable dyes since these have a softer tone than most commercial dyes, and improve with age. So we collected all the information we could find on vegetable dyeing and began poring over it. We soon found that this subject led us into the fields of botany, agriculture, and chemistry. At the outset we discovered that each expert on dyeing had their own methods which had been handed down, added to, improved upon, etc. We read all we could find on the subject and then struck out boldly.

Our first project with dyeing called for pokeberries. (A friend remarked, "Thank goodness they are useful for something.") The berries were crushed, simmered until soft, strained, and the resulting "ooze" added to the large enamel dye pot and brought to just under the boiling point. Incidentally, we used rain water for all the dyeing, as chemicals in municipal water systems are likely to affect the colors obtained. Now wool will not absorb color unless the fibers are opened up so that the color can penetrate, and this process is called mordanting. There are many mordants which may be used, each giving a different tone or shade and some are suitable for use with only certain dye plants. We used the two most common mordants—vinegar and alum, and a little cream of tartar to add brilliance. The vinegar mordant was added to the pokeberry

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CANVAS LACE

An interesting variation of a Canvas weave, that can be used for tablecloths, place-mats, draperies, etc.

THREADING DRAFT:

	D	C	B	A
4.		XX XX XX		XX
3.	X X X X	X X X X X X	X X X X	X X
2.	X X X X	X X X X	X X X X	X X X X
1.		XX XX		XX XX

TIE-UP DRAFT

4.			X	X
3.		X		X
2.	X		X	
1.	X	X		
	1	2	3	4

WARP

20/2 Bleached White Ramie, with 3,000 yards per lb., on 1 lb. cones.

WEFT

20/2 Bleached White Ramie, same as the Warp.

REED USED

A 15 dent reed was used, and it was double-sleyed, 2 ends per dent, or 30 threads per inch.

TREADLING

There are 45 threads in one repeat in the treadling, and we will give it in as clear a manner as possible, to help you with an easier treadling also.

1. Treadle No. 3 and No. 4 and No. 3
2. Treadle No. 2 and No. 1 and No. 2
3. Treadle No. 3 and No. 4 and No. 3
4. Treadle No. 2 and No. 1 and No. 2
5. Treadle No. 3 and No. 4 and No. 3

NOTE: These 15 threads, make the large lace repeat in the pattern.

6. Treadle No. 2 and No. 3 for 12 threads which is a plain weave between laces.

7. Treadle No. 2 and No. 1 and No. 2
8. Treadle No. 3 and No. 4 and No. 3
9. Treadle No. 2 and No. 1 and No. 2

NOTE: These 9 threads give you the smaller lace repeat.

10. Treadle No. 3 and No. 2 for 12 threads and this gives the plain weave between the small lace and the large lace block.

Repeat over and over.

TREADLING NOTE

The lace can be very much accented in the weft if you care to do so by using a

SAMPLE:



double weft thread on either treadle No. 1 or treadle No. 4 only when you are treadling the lace patterns, and not when you are treadling the plain weave in between. We have done this ourselves in several of the many canvas weaves, but as it requires usually a second shuttle with two threads of weft wound together as one, and because of the time element in weaving the sample for *Warp and Weft*, we used just the single shuttle technique. Of course you could also eliminate the plain weave threads entirely, and make this in a lace stripe pattern, and then the lace would be the whole length of your warp in the fabric, and this is often very pleasing. If the double thread is used in the lace, with the plain weave between laces eliminated, it is even more effective. Actually, we wove almost 20 yards of samples, 50 inches wide for the samples in this issue of *Warp and Weft*.

More About this Fabric

Please note that the threading draft is divided into 4 parts, A, B, C, and D. The A and the C parts are the threading for the lace, and the B and the D parts are the threading for the plain weave in between the lace. You can, of course, place the laces further apart or closer together as you desire, by adding threads to or taking threads away from the B and D groups in the threading draft.

This fabric is of all Ramie, and as most of you know, we have been doing much experimenting with this fiber, and we have been enjoying it tremendously.

You can see from the sample how nice a quality this Ramie is. It does not present any problems whatsoever in the weaving. At one time, we did have some of the same size, 20/2 bleached which was fuzzy in appearance, and because of this a little hard to weave as it tended to cling together in the warp. However, we are importing this ourselves now, and are able to consistently purchase this nice quality.

For the first time, we have also been able to purchase this same size Ramie, size 20/2 in a natural shade, and we have been particularly pleased with the results when we used the bleached white as warp in the various lace weaves, and then the 20/2 natural as weft. It was particularly effective in the turned Swedish Lace pattern that we had in *Warp and Weft* in March. It would be an effective combination in any of the Bronsons, Swedish Lace, Canvas Weaves, and the like. We are sorry that we did not have it in time that we could have used it in this month's sample.

We do not want to extoll the Ramie thread as we have done it in past issues. However, we should mention it's extreme desirability in drapes, as it is very durable, and after the initial washing, will not shrink. It tends to resist rot and mildew, and does not stretch. Thus you see, it is a very desirable material. It has many of the virtues

of our man-made fibers, plus the fact that it is a natural fiber or a plant fiber.

We normally would set-up a 20/2 linen or a 20/2 Ramie at about 24 threads per inch for a plain weave, but because of the set-up in this fabric, and because of the fact that often two threads in the pattern are put together on the same harness, we deliberately set the Ramie at 30 per inch this time to make a firmer fabric. Of course you could set it at 24 per inch, and you could use different wefts if you desire.

We should also mention that as the Ramie is so similiar to linen, that it can be combined with linen very effectively in both the warp and weft. We have tried this in several samples and it works out beautifully.

A NOTE ABOUT THE TIE-UP

The tie-up, as we gave it was used on a jack-type loom. However, you can use this same tie-up on a counter-balanced loom, and weave this fabric with just as great ease as it was done on the jack-type loom.

Cost of the Fabric

First, let us mention that this nice quality Ramie comes in both natural and bleached white. It has 3,000 yards per pound, and comes on 1 lb. cones. Both the natural and bleached are \$3.20 per lb., well under the price of natural and bleached linen of the same size.

Secondly, we will give you the cost of a table-cloth, as we figured it out and the table-cloth finished was approximately 48 x 72 inches in size. The material in this table-cloth, both warp and weft came to \$6.40, as it took one pound for warp and one pound for weft. This is the actual cost of the finished table-cloth, and does not include the wastage on the loom set-up, etc.

Table-cloth Plan

For 50-inch width cloth.

- A. Selvage, alternate 2 and 3....24 threads
- B. Pattern repeat 30 times....1440 threads
- C. Repeat A and B of pattern....20 threads
- D. Selvage, to balance 3 & 2....16 threads

Width of loom set-up 50".... 1500 threads

(Continued on Next Page)

Of course, this could be reduced to fit the width of your loom, by eliminating some of the pattern repeats on part B of the above plan. It could be reduced even so far to use as place-mats, and the width of the selvage edge can be easily changed to whatever desired width you might like to have. One question might come up also about the above plan in regards to one selvage being 24 threads and the other 16. However, when you repeat A and B to balance the pattern, the last 8 threads or the B part of the pattern give a plain weave, and this combined with the D selvage of 16 threads makes a 24 thread selvage.

THIS MONTH'S COVER
Continued From Page 3

dye bath, and several skeins of washed wool added and stirred at 180 degrees for one hour. A lovely deep rose shade resulted—just what shade we couldn't decide, so it was named Rosemary after my daughter. Since the dye pot still looked rather potent, we dropped in another skein which came out an exquisite soft pinkish-tan. With such success on our first venture, we were greatly encouraged to continue and began scouring the neighborhood for suitable plants.

My roving eyes came to rest on a thriving border of hollyhocks at our next-door neighbor's house and she agreed to sacrifice a peck of leaves for the sake of art. These leaves were cut in small pieces, covered with water, soaked overnight. The next day, this green, gooey brew simmered, strained, and the second dye pot was ready. The yarn used had been mordanted with alum prior to this and was ready for the dye bath. (One book specified that the wool should be mordanted three days before using, placed in an old pillowcase or feedbag, and then hung in a dark closet. We thought this was going a little too far, but did try it in the dark. This time a soft gray-green was obtained, and we were thoroughly convinced of the truth of the statement, that in order to be successful in vegetable dyeing, one must have an open mind concerning the colors obtained.

We had also read that dyeing should be

done over an open fire, and by the time we had finished using onions (skin and pulp) as a dye material, we were convinced of the truth of that statement. Only my iron stomach prevented our giving up that experiment. However, it was worth the result — a lovely yellow-green. Confidently, I was afraid my afghan would be named "forever Onion," but after the yarn had hung outside several days, almost all traces of odor disappeared.

This far, we had achieved 5 colors, but still hoped for a real green — which is one of the hardest according to experts. Green tomato leaves, which had been picked and dried, produced a shade similar to the onions, but with more of a gold tone. Hoping to have a contrasting dark color, someone came up with a bag of ancient black walnut hulls which we were sure — judging from the color of the ooze produced from the soaking — would make a very dark brown. To our amazement, after an hour in the dye bath, a cocoa brown was the result. Of course, we liked it but still wonder if the hulls were too old, insufficiently soaked, or what happened.

With all these beautiful shades of yarn, we decided to combine them and see what the result would be, so the loom was threaded in a twill pattern, with 10 threads per inch in a warp plaid design. The weft threads were put in, in the same sequence as the warp, again allowing for a self-fringe. All the colors blended beautifully and needless to say we were both thrilled with the results of our labors — and expect these afghans to be around for our grandchildren to use. So that's the story of how this particular lot of wool progressed "From Sheep to Sofa."

P.S.—My husband is going to be amazed at my willingness to trim the plantain from our lawn next spring — but I hear that plantain leaves make a gorgeous shade of green.

—By ETHEL W. BORN

The Marguerite P. Davidson Collection

In our April issue of *Warp and Weft*, we mistakenly mentioned that the collection of Weaving of Marguerite P. Davison, the editor of **THE HANDWEAVERS PAT-TERN BOOK**, had been given to the Portland Handweavers. This was an error by your editor, and we wish to mention that this famous collection was a gift to **THE ARTS AND CRAFTS SOCIETY OF PORTLAND**. This is a separate organization from the Portland Handweavers, although they do have many members in common. The Arts and Crafts Society of Portland has the exhibition on display at the Arts and Crafts Society Building at 2381 N.W. Flanders Street, and visitors are welcomed to see this exhibition.

Woven Fringes

We have been experimenting with woven fringes, and find that you can weave these separately on your loom from other material. Our method for the last several samples has been this. Put about one inch of warp on your loom (Warp to correspond to the fabric you want to fasten the fringe to), and then skip twice the length of the fringe you want, and put another inch of warp on the loom. If you want a 5 inch fringe, you have one inch of warp, skip 10 inches, and then you have another 1 inch of warp through your reed. You can then weave this material from the one inch on the left to the one inch on the right, with the weft threads hanging loose between the inch bands. When finished weaving, you then cut the weft threads in the exact center of the weft, and you actually have two woven fringes, which you can attach to your material. Sometimes we put one or two threads in the exact center of the loose weft threads and use this as a guide in cutting the woven fringe in two. This way, you can then sew the fringe to your fabric, and you can put almost any weft thread that you might like to tie in with your fabric, in the weft when you are weaving the fringe. Try this once, and I think that you'll enjoy the results.

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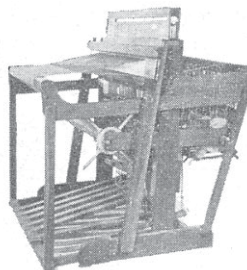
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