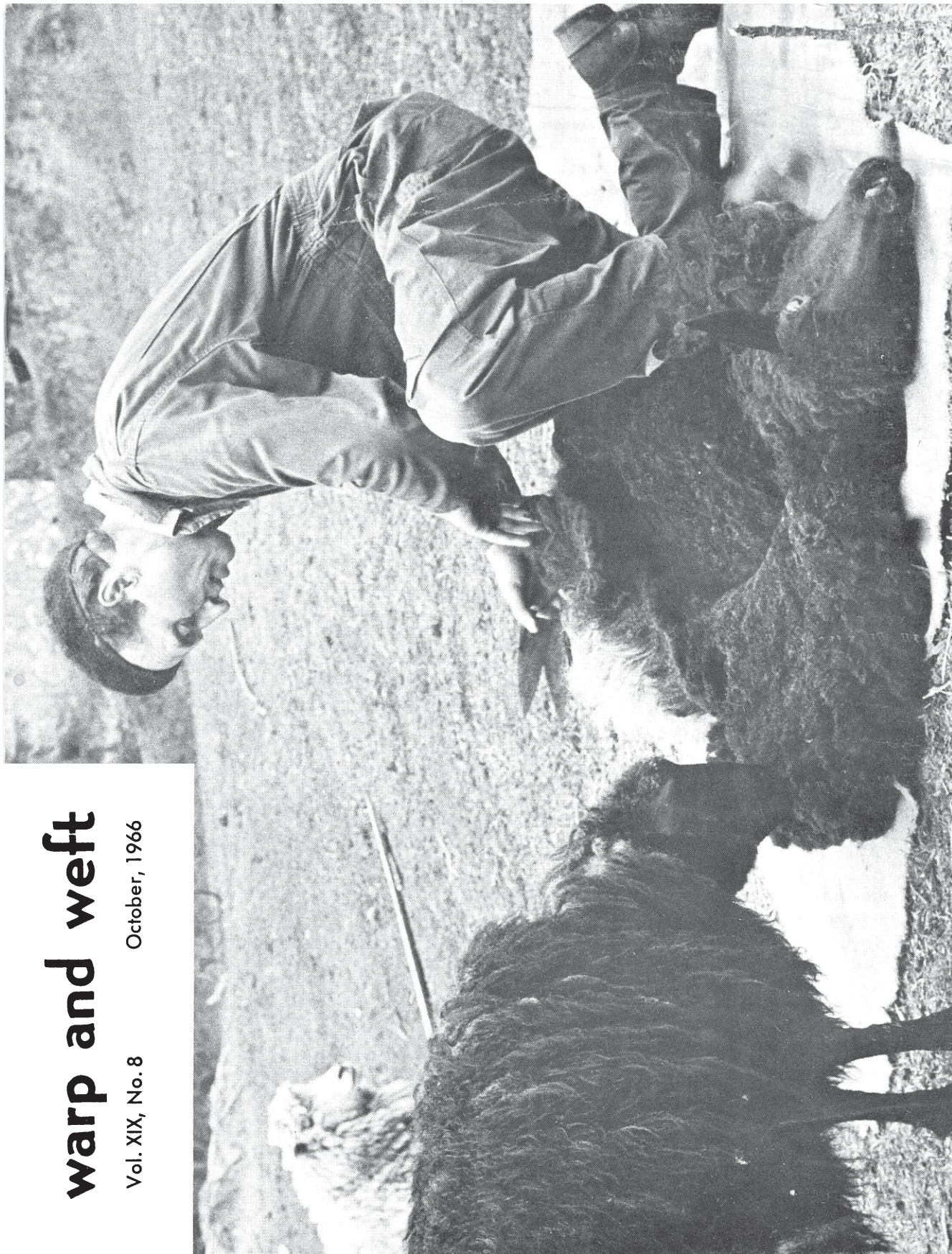


warp and weft

Vol. XIX, No. 8

October, 1966



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Assistant Editor: Robin Groff.

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A Word from the Editor:

It seems like we just mailed the last issue of warp and weft, and here it is, time for the next issue. Time surely does fly, and if only one could do all of the things he thinks about, but does not have the time to do, so much would be accomplished.

It is still a busy time for us, as usually with the advent of the school season, our business in the shop seems to climb likewise. Once again this has proved to be the case. We have been having several students in the shop, and this seems to take a little more time than you anticipate, so less and less seems to be done.

We have decided to repeat a pattern that we did about 5 or 6 years ago in Warp and Weft, and we are doing it in different colors, for a Christmas Warp and Weft project. It is a 4 harness huck variation for use in making decorative Christmas cards. Will feature it in the November issue probably.

We are pleased to be able to have the article about Paula Simmons in this month's issue, as we have arranged for her to give a program to our Portland Guild in November.

One thing that has been amazing to us is the continued growth of interest in both weaving and spinning. There has been a great revival of interest in spinning. We stock about 5 different manuals on the subject now, and have even stocked hand spindles, and also we have wool cards for carding wool in 4 different kinds. We import them from Sweden and Canada and have two kinds that are made

in the U.S. as regular stock items. We probably have sold from 50 to 100 pairs of wool cards this year alone, and I doubt if we ever sold more than 25 pairs in the 18 years we have been in business. Because of this interest, it is particularly interesting to be able to have the article on black sheep wool and spinning.

I don't know whether we mentioned it or not, but our daughter, Janice, has finally realized a desire and ambition of about 5 or 6 years, to own her own horse. She is now the proud possessor of a Half-Arabian mare, 3 years old, and she has been training her completely for riding, as he had never been ridden before we purchased her, except for about 4 times the week before we purchased her. She is a very pretty palomino, and with her patience, Janice is now riding her horse in the arena at the fairgrounds where she stables her horse.

Janice is fortunate in that the fairgrounds here rent horse stalls for \$10.00 per month, and allow the renters the use of their indoor arena any time during the day. She is in seventh heaven, but we (Robin and I) wonder how long it will last.

The past two weeks have seen my family from Pennsylvania here visiting, and my father told me that he works harder here than he does at home. Hope that I didn't work him too hard this time.

Enough of this chatter, and back to our sample for the month.

Russell E. Groff, Editor

Photograph Credits

Most of the photographs used in Warp and Weft this month were taken by a well known photographer in Washington, Charles R. Pearson for Paula Simmons. Mrs. Simmons furnished us with these photographs and asked that this credit be given.

Lady Black Sheep

In the Pacific Northwest, one of the prominent hand spinners is Paula Simmons of Suquamish, Washington. She specializes in the hand-spinning of black sheep wool from her own Black Sheep.

The "Black Sheep" ordinarily is just the odd black one that can be born as an accident, a throwback to recessive genes, in almost any breed. The national average of this happening is about one in a thousand sheep. Ross and Paula Simmons have been breeding black ewes to black rams for over 13 years, to the point where they can depend on almost 100 per cent crops of black lambs. The wool obtained from these long-wool crossbreed lambs has an important place in the color range of the finished handspun yarn Mrs. Simmons produces.

The separating of wool qualities and the sorting of shades are begun as Mr. Simmons shears, although the beauty of the wool depends much on the previous feeding, sheltering and care of the sheep.

All the other processes, the hand washing of each fleece, the further color and texture sorting, the teasing and shaking to remove seeds, the carding, and even the preshrinking of the yarn after the spinning, are all done in a way which they believe best preserves the beauty and lustre of the choice wool.

Paula spins the yarn to order for use in knitting, weaving, tapestries, and stitchery. It is available in a choice of several sizes and a great array of natural colors, from off-white through a whole range of grays, tans, browns and unbelievable auburns, to a jet black which is obtained only from the first shearing of the lambs.

Their first black sheep was purchased from a man named Jacob, which the Simmons found very significant. For anyone unfamiliar with the story, the first recorded flock of dark sheep belonged to Jacob, in the Old Testament.

Paula was a weaver before learning to spin, and originally intended only selling the wool to other spinners, but after a look at that first fleece, spinning was inevitable.



Here is a photograph of Paula Simmons spinning some of her black sheep wool on a hand-made, black walnut spinning wheel similar in design to a popular Canadian wheel in a four leg effect. This type of wheel is sometimes called by many a box type of spinning wheel, and is quite compact and small.

"Over 12 years have passed," Mrs. Simmons says, "and wool is still the most exciting thing that ever happened to me, with the future always presenting more to be learned about it.

PAULA WILL BE DESCRIBING HER WOOL AND YARN PROCESSES AND DISPLAYING BLANKETS, AFGHANS AND YARDAGE WOVEN FROM HER YARN TO SOME OF THE WARP AND WEFT READERS, WHEN SHE PRESENTS A PROGRAM TO THE PORTLAND HANDWEAVERS GUILD IN NOVEMBER. If any interested readers are in the area, they are invited to the Portland Handweavers Guild meeting at the Mt. Scott Community Center in Portland, Oregon. There will be two programs, one in the early afternoon, and another in the evening at 8:00 o'clock.

(Continued on Page 6)

MULBERRY AND YELLOW:

This month's sample is a very simple plain weave sample, which we would like to recommend for use in coat material, or for a light weight lap robe or car robe.

THREADING DRAFT:

4	O		X		X		
3		X		X		O	
2		X		O		X	
1			O		X		X

KEY TO THREADS IN THE WARP

O – Mulberry red heather knitting worsted
X – 2/16's Weaving Wool, Lemon Tint

WARP:

Two threads are used in the warp.

X – 2/16's Lemon Tint, Weaving Wool
O – Mulberry heather knitting worsted

WEFT:

The same two threads are used in the weft, as are used in the warp.

REED USED:

A 9 dent reed was used, and it was sleyed 2 ends per dent, or 18 threads per inch. Sometimes it is an end of knitting worsted and 2/16's in a dent, and other times it is 2 ends of 2/16's in a dent.

TREADLING SEQUENCE:

1. Treadle No. 5 or A – 2/16's weaving wool
2. Treadle No. 6 or B – 2/16's weaving wool
3. Treadle No. 5 or A – Mulberry worsted
4. Treadle No. 6 or B – 2/16's weaving wool
5. Treadle No. 5 or A – 2/16's weaving wool
6. Treadle No. 6 or B – Mulberry worsted

END OF ONE PATTERN REPEAT. REPEAT OVER AND OVER AS DESIRED.

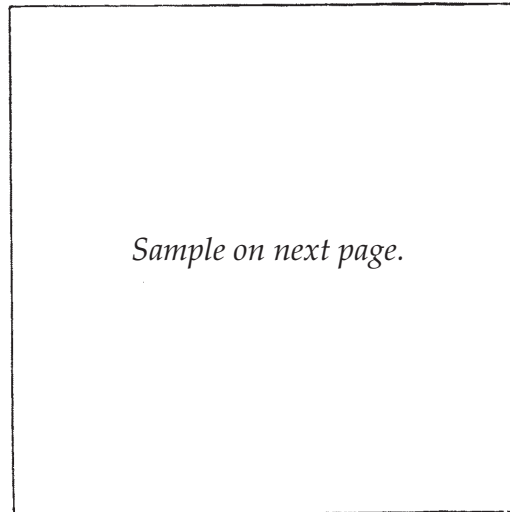
MORE ABOUT THIS SAMPLE:

First of all, I have been seeing similar

samples to this one off and on for about 8 or 10 years, and have always admired it. However, a short time ago, one of the Portland Handweavers Guild Members, Mrs. Marie Schafer showed us a sample of her fabric she was making for a coat. We liked it so much that we finally decided to use it as a Warp and Weft project, and here it is in this month's sample. Our thanks to Mrs. Schafer for her idea.

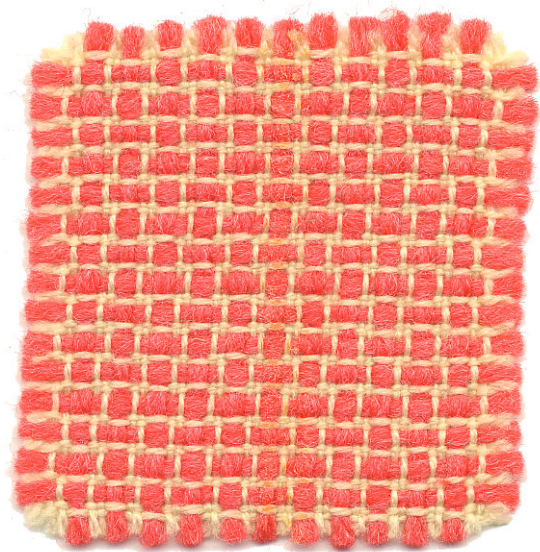
Now, there are many items that I want to mention about this fabric. You might think that it is a plain weave and so there is nothing to it. However, I feel that this is not correct, and there are several things that you can do to make it easier to weave or improve the fabric.

SAMPLE:



First, I'm tempted to think that a 6 dent reed, with three threads per dent, (2 of 2/16's weaving wool and one of the knitting worsted all in one dent), would be easier to weave. I had no trouble with the 9 dent reed, but thought there might be less clinging in the wool, if a 6 dent reed was used.

Secondly, I myself used a medium firm triple beat on this fabric. I did this for the main reason that I wanted to prevent any clinging together of the warp threads and thus perhaps cause a skip in the weft which would be a mistake. So, I beat after I threw the shuttle across, changed to the next treadle, and gave a quick, even, double beat. This separates the



warp thread quite well, and because of the elasticity of the wool yarns, does not make it stiff and boardy as you can have with some materials.

Third, when you bring in a new weft thread, or when you empty a bobbin, I feel that it is better if you do not lap them over one another in the weft, but start all new bobbins and end all old ones at the selvage edges. It is so much more noticeable if you lap them over when you are using a heavy thread like a knitting worsted in the warp or weft, and this was my reason for doing this.

Another thing that I want to suggest is that you try and always maintain the same even tension in your warp throughout the whole weaving process. If you do not, there seems a tendency on a loose tension for the heavy knitting worsted to sort of ball up, and where the knitting worsted weft crosses the knitting worsted warp, you have a slightly higher or raised pile. This is fine if you continue to use a loose tension. However, if you use a loose tension for a while and then a tighter tension, on the tighter tension when the knitting worsted yarns cross, you do not have as high a raised pile as if a loose tension is used. Thus, you want to try and use as even and uniform tension throughout the whole weaving process as is possible.

Next, I wanted to mention that you could use a stretcher or a temple to get a little more width in your weaving, but in this case we had no trouble with broken or frayed selvage threads, so I did not use a temple or stretcher. I had it set up 40" wide on the loom, and after weaving, I measured and found my weaving was 38¼" wide. No breakage whatsoever, so I did not use the temple.

Another thing that I wanted to mention is that we used an expensive and yet, extra nice quality of knitting worsted. We could get some that sells for about \$4.80 per lb., instead of \$6.40, but we felt that the more reasonable was much fuzzier, and would be harder to weave, and if you go to all the trouble of weaving a fabric, I personally feel that the better materials you use, the more satisfaction you will receive from the finished fabric.

TIE-UP DRAFT:

4	X	X	○	○	X	○
3	X	○	○	X	○	X
2	○	○	X	X	X	○
1	○	X	X	○	○	X
	1	2	3	4	5	6

X—tie-up for Counter-balanced looms.^A B
 ○—tie-up for Jack-type looms.

COST OF YARN\$ USED IN THE SAMPLE:

The mulberry colored heather knitting worsted is \$6.40 per lb. It comes in 4 oz. skeins. There are some other beautiful heather colors available now in this knitting worsted. 960 yards per lb.

The 2/16's weaving wool comes on 2 oz. tubes with 525 yards per tube. It has 4200 yards per lb., and is \$8.00 per lb., or \$1.00 per 2 oz. spool. There are 36 different colors of this yarn available.

COST OF THE FABRIC:

In a 10 yard warp, 40" wide, it took 2½ lbs. of knitting worsted for the warp, along with 1 lb. 2 oz. of the 2 ply weaving wool in the lemon tint color. The total warp cost was \$24.00 in all, so this means that the warp thread was \$2.40 per yard.

In the weft, 1 lb. of the 4 ply mulberry worsted to weave 4½ yards. It took 3½ — 2 oz. tubes to weave the 4½ yards in the weaving wool in 2/16's.

Thus the total weft cost for 4½ yards was \$2.20 per yard.

WARP COST PER YARD	\$2.40
WEFT COST PER YARD.....	\$2.20
FABRIC COST PER YARD	\$4.60

THIS MONTH'S COVER:

This cover photograph is of Ross Simmons shearing one of the black sheep which is part of the herd of Paula Simmons. Notice how thick the wool fleece is as it is being sheared from the sheep. Also, Paula said to be sure to mention that the white Romney ewe on the left of the picture was one that they were boarding for a neighbor at the time that the photograph was taken.

LADY BLACK SHEEP:

(Continued from Page 3)

Paula is like so many other craftsmen, in that she is so busy spinning and weaving, that she has very little time to enter shows and display her wares.

She is a member of the Northwest Designer Craftsmen, and her yarn-paks, skirts, hats and afghans are regularly displayed and enjoy good sales at the Northwest Craft Center and Gallery in Seattle. It was here that she had a one man show in May of last year. Thread-needle House in New York stocks her skirt yardage and yarn combinations.

She is most proud of the achievements of many prominent weavers who use her yarns. Among these is Lewis Mayhew of Seattle, who works predominately in Paula's Handspin Yarns, using it in custom woven skirt and coat fabrics, in patterning in many of his hand-woven ties, and he has won three major awards this year for yardage woven with her yarns.

Hal Painter, tapestry weaver of Sebastopol, California, does many of his commissions in Paula's yarn, favoring the auburns, tans, browns and jet black shades.

Mary Johansen of Monroeville, Pennsylvania uses the full range of Paula's shades in her tapestries, most outstanding of which was her 10' x 9' "Gestures," shown in the Second Biennale Tapestry Exhibit in Lausanne, Switzerland last year, where she was one of the three Americans invited to show. This piece was subsequently purchased for the permanent collection of the Wilmington Delaware Art Museum.

Many of you may have seen Paula on national TV, the To Tell The Truth show from New York, where she baffled 3 of the 4 panelists trying to decide who was the *real* Paula Simons.

Subscribers to Handweaver and Craftsman will remember her article "Handspun Yarn from Black Sheep." More recently, the Summer 1966 issue printed her 4 pages of advice

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for beginning spinners, and in the current fall issue is an article by her entitled "Weaving with Handspun."

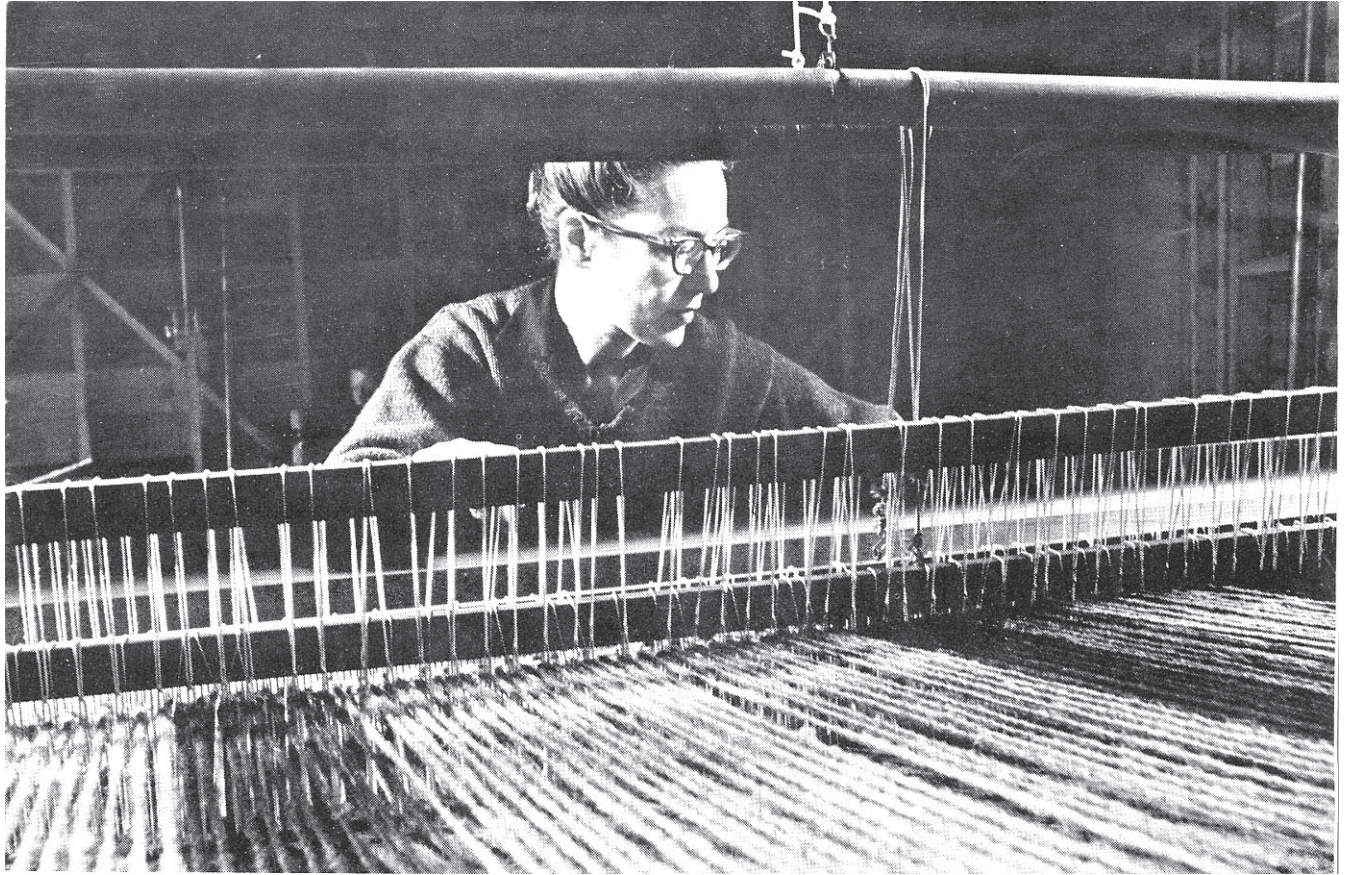
PERHAPS YOU MIGHT LIKE TO HAVE A SAMPLE CARD OF HER HANDSPUN YARNS THAT YOU MIGHT CONSIDER THEM FOR KNITTING OR WEAVING. If you would like one, you can send 50 cents for this sample card to Robin & Russ Handweavers, and we will see that it is sent to you.



Spinning some of her black sheep wool, this picture is excellent for showing the hands and their function in the spinning process.



Here is a photograph of Paula Simmon's first dark Lincoln ewe, which she purchased from a man named Jacob. He is called "Indiana," and was brought all the way from Gaston, Indiana by railway express.



Here is a picture of Paula Simmons working on a full size blanket, using her hand-spun black sheep wool for warp and for weft. It

looks as though it is quite a wide loom, and I wonder if it is 72", as are most blankets.

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