NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1993

PIECEWORK™

ALL THIS BY HAND

HILDA ERICKSON
UTAH PIONEER

And what is a stitch for? To hold.

It binds past to present, old country to new,

generation to generation.

12
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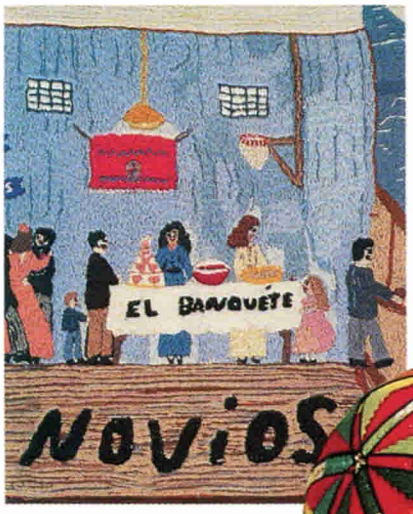
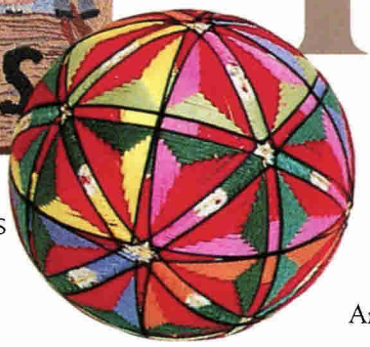
$4.00/£2.60 CANADA $5.50



See page 52.

PIECE



See page 72.

DEPARTMENTS

See page 52.

For here's a Queen
now thanks to God!
Who when she rides
in coach abroad
Is always knotting threads.

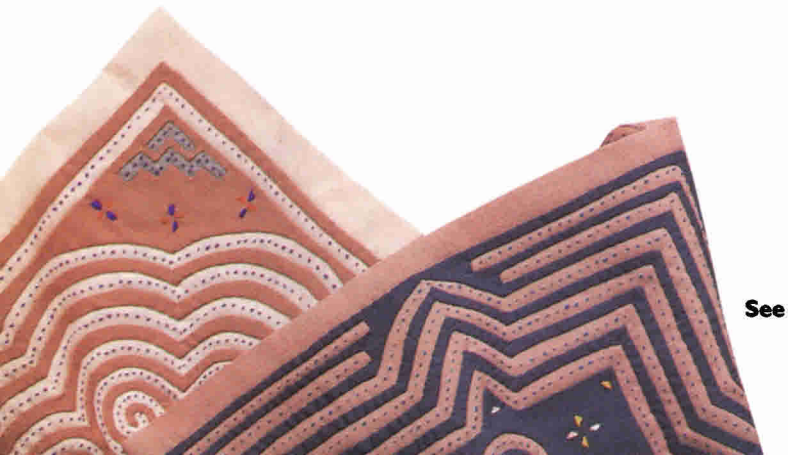
Sir Charles Sedley,
"The Royal Knotter," 1707

WORK™

ALL THIS BY HAND

See page 20.

See page 52.



See page 26.

COLUMNS

NOTIONS

From the editor

Nectar in a Sieve: Writing about Cultures

Work without hope draws nectar in a sieve.

From "Work Without Hope," by Samuel Taylor Coleridge. "Nectar in a sieve" became the title of Kamala Markandaya's novel about India, published in 1954.

In his collection of essays *Where the Bluebird Sings to the Lemonade Springs,* writer Wallace Stegner speaks of the difficulty that many of us have at first in really *seeing* the West because its colors, forms, and scale are too different from what we know. To really appreciate the arid West, you have to "get over the color green; you have to quit associating beauty with gardens and lawns; you have to get used to an inhuman scale." We have a human tendency to "like what we know," he reminds us, even more often than we "know what we like."

In presenting other cultures, PIECEWORK often faces the challenge of seeing and appreciating something different. Trying to understand in a short time the Amish and the Hmong—two complex, long-standing, and changing cultures—and explore how they have come together in the Lancaster, Pennsylvania, area has been just such a challenge.

Here are just a few notes from the development of the Amish and Hmong article.

* As I looked through a large box of textiles mostly made by Laotian Hmong women in a refugee camp in Thailand, I was first drawn to the paj ntaub (reverse-appliqué "flower cloths") in "quiet" colors—grays, browns, blues. Then I learned that this palette was suggested by designers who went to refugee camps in Thailand, canvassed world markets, and designed products in colors that they thought would sell well.

* But (#1): If products were previously being made for sale and not being purchased and if these new products were being sold successfully, shouldn't we respect the economic forces at work here? The new markets and the liaison with those markets helped the Hmong people move forward in their displaced lives.

* But (#2): I discovered from Jan Folsom, who worked as a designer in a camp in Thailand (see page 36) that the Hmong needlewomen she worked with often eagerly adopted fabrics, designs, and colors offered. When she traveled to Hmong villages and brought back traditional designs that the women in the camp had not seen before, those too were often enthusiastically adopted and adapted. Like artists everywhere, the needlewomen were open to changes that they liked.

* But (#3): Just when I had assumed that the "quieter" colors were from the "outside" and that the brighter colors (for example, chartreuse and fuchsia) were more truly Hmong, I found that the adoption of some of the brighter colors may be only one or two generations old in thousands of years of history and that colors vary by clan and by home country: the Hmong have lived in several countries including China, Laos, Thailand, and Cambodia.

* But (#4): I learned that some of the Hmong needleworkers who settled in the United States now use the colors I termed "uncharacteristic"—those quiet browns, grays, blues—in work they make for their own homes.

Is your head spinning? Mine was, and I hadn't yet considered the Amish.

As I chose an Amish quilt to photograph from among those of a generous collector, I found myself wishing its colors were more typically Amish. The quilt was "real," but was it representative?

Even if drawing the information together may have felt like gathering nectar in a sieve, we hope you enjoy the article about the Amish, the Hmong, and their connection. We have taken a snapshot of an unusual textile connection and look forward to presenting more on both cultures. We will try to see through our cultural lens clearly—whatever its color.

Veronica

PIECEWORK THANKS *Kathryn Alexander for the sock design used as the icon photograph for Marketplace.*

Aunt Alice's Bounty

Over twenty-five years ago, my husband and I helped Aunt Alice move from her rural home to her home in a small town—Herman, Minnesota. She wanted to do something special for us. I knew that she had crocheted a tablecloth for herself, so I asked if she would do one for us. Thus began a tradition that continues to this day.

Aunt Alice has crocheted a tablecloth and/or bedspread for each one of her nieces and nephews, has done so for many of her grandnieces and grandnephews, and has also done so for many friends.

People like Aunt Alice help me appreciate the idea behind PIECEWORK.

Myrna A.I. Stahman
Boise, Idaho

A Needlework Diary

I started making things for my two sons because I want them to have some of my needlework. I grew up in a family of six children. I lost both of my parents in 1986. After their deaths, we found a big box of Mother's needlework; each piece was tagged with the name of the person to whom it should go. We each received at least three pieces. My husband, who is a woodworker, has made frames for the pieces.

I now keep a diary of what I make and whom it's for. Even if I give the pieces away now, the feeling and the purpose are recorded in the book.

Gayle Jackson
Urbana, Illinois

A Basket at Last

A couple of months ago, I read a beautiful issue of PIECEWORK. I don't know what happened, but that evening I found a basket I had started fifteen years ago, half done, in my hands.

I had bought a fifty-foot package of cotton rope and started in the middle of it because I didn't know how to start at one end. I wrapped it and stitched back with pearl 3 cotton thrums, doing it backwards without knowing it. I worked at it slowly for a couple of years, then it hibernated until PIECEWORK came along. Running out of thrums, I had to use some new material to finish, but the basket is done, and I love it. I can't wait for the next issue.

Herbi Gray
Lacey, Washington

A Quilt Label Pocket

Regarding your article "Your Family Quilt Is a Textile Artifact" (September/October 1993 PIECEWORK), I have a suggestion that I often pass on to people requesting labels for their quilts. If your quilt is a family heirloom and you have information about it, consider turning the label into a pocket for holding a packet of material. The label (not stitched to the quilt on one side) can be large enough for a legal-sized envelope. The envelope could contain information regarding the quilt, photographs of the maker, and information and anecdotes from the maker's life, work, and family. Pockets work well for quilts that are stored or only seldom used because the historical information doesn't get separated from the quilt. Not only are you documenting the quilt with a maker's name, you're honoring and passing on the maker's life.

Patricia C. Elkovitch
Skaneateles, New York

Help the Left-handed

A colleague introduced me to the premier issue of PIECEWORK, and I was very taken with the variety of articles and the beautiful layout. But I was dismayed to see that yet another handwork publication has ignored a major group of people—the left-handed. The instructions for the embroidery stitches (p. 27) are clearly for a needle held in a right hand—and I have a deficiency which makes it nearly impossi-

Send your comments and ideas to "By Post," c/o PIECEWORK, 201 East Fourth Street, Loveland, CO 80537.

ble to translate such illustrations for my left hand. Over the years, this has been a great frustration for me and deterred me from trying some of the needlework I find so attractive.

Please consider showing instructions for left-handed folks, too, so we can express ourselves in an equal way.

M'Annette Ruddell
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

We appreciate the problem and will include information on resources for the left-handed as we come to know them.

Readers Respond to Tatting

I devoured my second copy of PIECEWORK. You are stretching my imagination; I had never even heard of twined rugs. The tiny-pieced quilt reminded me of Seminole patchwork.

Regarding the letter about tatting from Linda Simonson: I teach tatting and often encounter people who want to learn to tat, but for various reasons they don't have enough use of their left hand. I teach these people needle tatting or hook tatting. The two methods are similar because the knots are formed manually on the tool.

I have a set of the hooks Linda asked about. They come in four different sizes in a set for about $27.00. I ordered mine from YO's Needlecraft, 940 Dominguez No. O, Carson, CA 90746. (213) 515-6473.

Alice E. Heim
Homosassa, Florida

Thank you for the information, Alice. PIECEWORK also thanks Ruth Schaffer of Kingman, Arizona, who responded to Linda's letter by sending us a pamphlet on the subject.

Mystery Stitch

I was given a copy of the premier issue of PIECEWORK and found it colorful and informative.

I have a knitting question I would like help with. My mother was born and lived in Italy and later came to the United States. If she were alive, she would be about 115 years old. In her time, silkworms were raised by some families. I have a piece of a head scarf she knit of the spun silk and used to wear to church. The stitch resembles a lover's knot.

My sister and I would be most appreciative if we could find out how to make the stitch.

Yolanda Ginardi
Redford, Michigan

Eighty-Three-Year-Old Young-at-Heart

I just discovered PIECEWORK. I am a young-at-heart, active eighty-three-year-old. Locally, I am known as the "Basket Lady," having taught the ancient art of pine needle basketry to over one hundred people.

We use the long needles from the digger and Coulter pines which grow in the Los Padres National Forest. I find that the green needles work very well; in fact, they are easier to use in starting the coil of the basket. When carefully picked from the tree, they keep well in a refrigerator for five or six weeks.

My thanks to Robin Daugherty for the Teneriffe instructions in "A Pine Needle Basket to Make" (March/April 1992). I had seen the pattern, but couldn't understand how to do it.

Margaret B. Schussman
Cambria, California

Appenzell Embroidery and Bohus Knitting

I have enjoyed the first two issues of PIECEWORK.

Two subjects that I would love to learn more about are Appenzell embroidery and Bohus knitting. I have numerous examples of Appenzell embroidery, but all I know is what my mother told me: that it was made by a group of nuns in Switzerland. It is generally light blue drawn-thread work on very fine white cotton or

linen, including handkerchiefs or pillow shams.

Several books briefly mention Bohus sweaters (including your own *Knitting in the Old Way*, and *Wool Gathering*, by Elizabeth Zimmermann), but none completely describes the way purl and slipped stitches were actually incorporated into the subtly colored patterns. *Bohus Stickning*, by Ulla Haglund (in Swedish, 1980), includes a mitten chart that indicates purl stitches, but no hint of slipped stitches. It would be a shame to lose that information since no one (including myself) has succeeded in charting from an actual sweater, hat, or gloves.

Alice Tinker
Palo Alto, California

Don't Let Traditions Disappear

I was truly delighted to receive the sample copy of your magazine and to learn what you are planning to cover in future issues. PIECEWORK will certainly fill a very necessary role in preserving a lot of knowledge, history, and artistry that are on the verge of being forgotten.

Today, so many things are treated as disposable, and textiles are no exception. And yet the kind of items that are now bought cheaply to last a day, a season, a year—whether they are bags, garments, or sheets—would once have been painstakingly crafted and afterwards counted among the most valued possessions in a household. We have read the wills of American colonial and frontiersmen, which list shirts and sheets after their houses and fields, but before anything else. In remote peasant villages in eastern and southeastern Europe, families living in poor huts have most of their material wealth in the form of wonderfully woven and embroidered clothes and household linens. We even know of the ancient Peruvians, whose culture was centered around textiles; they produced some of the finest textiles ever made.

Today, textiles are not mainstream culture, except perhaps as a decorative backdrop. Textile history is considered eccentric; textile artists must constantly struggle with the set notion of fine arts being either painting or sculpture. The reasons for this view are complex and stem from the way the arts developed and the fact that most textiles workers were women. Historically, a lot of time, thought, human ingenuity, and human creativity have been put into making and decorating of textiles. If we allow the modern bias to silence the interest in historical and ethnic textiles, we will continue losing irrecoverable information about our history. It would be a great pity to let these traditions disappear.

This is why I was so delighted with PIECEWORK. I am an embroiderer, dividing my time between modern embroidery and ethnic embroidery.

Ayelet E. Lindenstrauss
Narberth, Pennsylvania

Note & Apologies

Bonnie Greife, an Athapaskan beadworker from Greeley, Colorado, was featured in the September issue of PIECEWORK, pages 76–77. Details of her and her family's fine beadwork were shown unattributed in the small motifs on pages 1, 73, and 74, one of which is repeated here. We thank Bonnie for the use of her work.

In the Further Reading list for the September article "The Urge to Extravagance: Prodigal Quilts," we apologize for inadvertently switching authors: Jacqueline Atkins and Phyllis A. Tepper's book is *New York Beauties*; Blanche Greenstein and Thomas A Woodard wrote *Twentieth Century Quilts*. Phyllis Tepper notes that the Osborne quilt (1850–1875) was not necessarily made over twenty-five years but within that period.

A PLACE TO COME TO

Linda Lynton

Mud, Mirror and Thread: Embroidery as Identity

BETWEEN 1396 and 1407, a great famine raged in central India, and according to local legends, a wealthy Banjara woman who owned "a million" oxen and carts brought grain from Nepal, Burma, and China to feed the starving people. She is now worshipped by her people as the goddess Jagdamba.

Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe, New Mexico. Founded in 1954, the museum is dedicated to the idea behind the inscription over the door of the main entrance composed by founder Florence Dibell Bartlett: "The art of the craftsman is a bond between the peoples of the world."

Photograph courtesy of the Museum of New Mexico.

This story reflects economic and social realities: the nomadic ethnic groups of India served as the transportation system for the subcontinent before the arrival of the railways—and women played leading roles in the culture. For despite the stereotype of the subservient Indian woman, usually only upper-caste women (such as Brahmans) were expected to be passive. Nomadic groups like the Banjara, most of whom live on the western Deccan plateau, or the Rabari of the Indian/Pakistani deserts have always led highly active lives that depend on the strength of the women. They worshipped their own tribal gods, some of which were only incorporated into the modern Hindu pantheon in the past couple of centuries, or else they adopted Islam.

The primary artistic expression of these strong nomadic women—elaborate, colorful embroideries—has high status among their people. Not only is a woman's marriageability judged by the quality and volume of embroidery she creates, her entire family gains status through the quality of her work. At a very young age, girls learn how to create embroidered clothing for themselves, and later, their menfolk and their children, as well as for their homes and their cattle and/or camels.

Because these embroideries are little known in the West, it is a pleasure to see them explored in an intriguing exhibit now at the Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe, a unit of the Museum of New Mexico. The exhibit opened June 27 and runs through September 1994. Titled "Mud, Mirror and Thread: Folk Traditions of Rural India," the exhibit compares the embroidery styles of different nomadic groups, in particular those of the Banjara and the Rabari, and presents pottery and wall and floor paintings of the same groups. The rich and vivid exhibit, which includes life-size costumed and jeweled cloth mannequins, some in loosely contextual scenes such as a Banjara home exterior and a Rabari wedding scene, was designed by Linda Gegick, Exhibition Division, Museum of New Mexico.

Two women were the primary creators of the exhibit (although they would immediately start emphasizing the many others who contributed): Nora Fisher, museum curator of textiles and costumes, and anthropologist Judy Frater. Judy Frater, who has spent nearly two decades among the Rabari, Sodha Rajputs, and other nomadic ethnic groups in the deserts of western India (such as Sind, Thar Desert, and Kutch) and also studied groups in Pakistan, is probably the world's leading authority on the distinctive embroideries created by the numerous nomadic groups who live in the region between the mountains of Afghanistan and India's Deccan plateau. Her detailed work included in the visually stunning book, *Mud, Mirror and Thread,* which was developed in conjunction with the exhibit but stands as a solid, informative work

Banjara woman in Bombay, wearing dress of Gulbarga District, Northeast Karnataka State, 1989.
Photograph courtesy of Nora Fisher.

on its own, gives us an appreciation of the complexity and variety of the embroideries created by these peoples.

Curator Nora Fisher concentrated her studies on the many Banjara groups who live largely in central India. In both their articles and the exhibit, Judy Frater and Nora Fisher show how important embroidery was (and still is) as a marker of ethnic identity and cultural pride. Embroidered textiles and jewelry comprise much of a nomadic family's wealth.

Dr. Stephen Huyler, a specialist in terra-cotta and wall hangings, collaborated with Nora Fisher and Judy Frater in the book *Mud, Mirror and Thread.* Ceremonial wall decorations are thought to purify the house and bring prosperity. His lecture "Women's Ritual Wall and Floor Decoration in India" was part of the exhibit's opening events.

The Banjara and the Rabari were once part of a single cultural entity, which probably split well over 500 years ago in the Rajasthan area. The exhibit begins with an introduction to the two groups' common Rajasthani root. One wall displays embroideries from both groups for comparison. The clothing and embroideries of the Banjara and the Rabari show striking differences, yet also interesting, persistent similarities although the groups have had no contact for centuries.

Banjara and Rabari women both wear very full skirts and drape large veils over their heads and upper bodies. They also wear distinctive backless blouses with elbow-length sleeves and long panels falling down the front, as well as abundant jewelry, including rows of ivory bangles (which now may be plastic) that reach to their upper arms. Women in both groups embroider their clothing elaborately.

Yet there most similarities end. Although the embroideries of both groups are highly detailed,

Banjara embroidery, ca. 1975, from Dhar District, Madhya Pradesh, Central India.
Photograph of Nora Fisher, 1989.

The types of stitches used, the color combinations, as well as the designs created indicate not only different ethnic groups, but different subdivisions and branches within these groups.

Detail of bags, skirt, and ceremonial cloth on Banjara mannequin of Bijapur District, Northeast Karnataka State, in "Mud, Mirror and Thread: Folk Traditions of Rural India" exhibition, Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe.

Photograph courtesy of the Museum of New Mexico and Blair Clark, 1993.

Banjara work on clothing looks bold compared to the dense, tightly sewn embroideries of the Rabari. The most detailed Banjara work is done on dowry bags and special wrapping cloths. Although both use geometric motifs based on the square, such as the Banjara quincunx (a pattern of five elements, one at each corner and one in the center of the square) and the Rabari eight-pointed star, many motifs are completely different, reflecting the different cultural influences that have affected each group since they parted. Colors schemes also vary. Banjara clothes tend to be predominantly bright red, whereas Rabari clothes are more varied—often (but not always) black, white, and more somber tones. Banjara embroideries stress earth tones with many additional embellishments such as cowrie shells, while Rabari work uses primary colors to achieve strong contrasts.

Banjara women also tend to use more appliqué on their clothes than Rabari, but both groups sew mirrors onto them. "People always ask what the significance of the mirrors is," Nora Fisher comments, "but no one really knows." The mirrors may serve dual purposes of decoration and protection, with the mirrors reflecting and therefore perhaps repelling evil spirits. Part of the difficulty in discerning meaning is that the needleworkers often don't answer direct questions; you have to wait patiently for the answer to appear obliquely in conversation and during rituals.

The types of stitches used, the color combinations, as well as the designs created indicate not only different ethnic groups, but different subdivisions and branches within these groups. Among the Rabari, for instance, is a group known as the Kachhi, who live in the remote, desolate region of western Kutch. They always wear black wool veils and skirts embroidered, usually in yellow and white). They use wool because they are sheep herders, and they wear black because they are in ritual mourning for a medieval king who died defending them. Women from other Rabari groups wear intricately embroidered cotton and even polyester (which has been commonly available in India only since the 1980s).

The Banjara subgroups of Karnataka in southern India often create a striped effect in their embroideries unlike more northerly groups. They may sew tiny rows of ovals surrounded on either side by lines of chain or loop stitch sewn as a double meander, leaving the cloth underneath exposed (a regional embroidery style) or they create the more typical Ban-

View of Machukatha Rabari mannequin of Saurashtra area, Gujarat State, in "Mud, Mirror and Thread: Folk Traditions of Rural India" exhibition, Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe.

Photograph courtesy of the Museum of New Mexico and Blair Clark, 1993.

jara style with dense "mats" of chain stitch and satin stitch covering every inch of the underlying fabric.

Yet these variations are only the beginning. For styles change, even among such staunchly traditional groups as the Banjara and Rabari. In *Mud, Mirror and Thread,* Judy Frater offers an unusual example of change in a quite different ethnic group now living in Gujarat. The Sodha Rajputs emigrated in the early 1970s from Pakistan to India, where they found their traditional, high-status style of embroidery, a dense double buttonhole stitch known as pakka, was sewn only by the lower castes. Abandoning it, they now decorate their clothing with the higher-status muka, a metallic-thread embroidery.

This is one of the exciting things about both the exhibition and the book (published jointly by Museum of New Mexico Press and Mapin Publishing of Ahmedabad, India): both show that the more you delve into these embroidery traditions, the more complex they turn out to be and the more you find yourself appreciating them not only as works of ethnographic interest but as a vibrant art form whose frontiers are still evolving.

The Museum of International Folk Art is open seven days a week from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. General admission is $5. Museum visitors under seventeen are admitted free.

For more information on the exhibition or the book, contact the Museum of International Folk Art, PO Box 2087, Santa Fe, NM 87504-2087. (505) 827-6350.

About the Author. *Linda Lynton is a writer and scholar specializing in Indian textiles, who lives in Brooklyn, New York. She is working on a book on the regional saris of India.*

Linen Closet

Frances Faile

Caring for Old Samplers

SAMPLERS AND needlework pictures are among the most loved, most studied, and most collected textiles. Interest in these pieces has soared as researchers learn more about the girls and young women who worked the samplers and the teachers who instructed them.

If you are fortunate enough to have a family sampler or if you collect these beguiling needleworks, you will want to keep them in the best condition. Because most people acquire framed samplers and display them, the advice that follows assumes that a sampler is already framed.

You can ensure the best conditions for your mounted antique sampler by following an experienced conservator's advice. Darning sampler made by Hannah Oxley, 1793.

From the collection of Frances Faile.

Before embarking on the steps *you* can take to ensure the health of your sampler, note the circumstances under which you should consult a conservator. Seek professional help if the sampler is damaged, stained, severely soiled, or discolored, glued very tightly to a mount—or if you see insects within the frame.

Cleaning Your Sampler

First, look at the sampler in its frame. If the sampler seems clean and is attractively displayed and if the paper sealing the back of the frame is intact, you may want to leave it as is. If the sampler looks dirty or wrinkled or the frame is in poor condition, admitting dirt or dust, you should probably remove the sampler from the frame and improve the framing. Your sampler may have been laid loose in the frame, tacked to a wood stretcher (probably its original mount), or glued to cardboard. The last method, with different glues, has been in use throughout the twentieth century, culminating in today's handy but potentially harmful "sticky board." Sticky board can loosen fibers as fabric is adjusted on the board, and the adhesive may contain damaging acids. If the sampler is loose or has been tacked to the wood, remove it carefully (pulling tacks can tear the fabric). If it has been glued, you may want to let a conservator remove it. If you try it yourself, it's fine to let a thin layer of cardboard come off with the glue, but watch for any stress on the threads. You can carefully pick the glue from the cloth, but don't use water and again, avoid any pulled threads.

Through a piece of fiberglass window screen or with a piece of muslin covering the vacuum hose, vacuum both the face and reverse side of a sampler that can be removed from its frame with the gentlest suction (a hand vacuum is best). The screen protects the delicate embroidery from being caught or abraded. However, do not attempt other cleaning on your own. Many early dyes will run in water or water-based solutions, and dry-cleaning fluids can damage fragile fibers. A professional can clean many samplers but will do so only after analysis and testing; the procedure is too risky to undertake lightly.

Nearly always, you will find that your sampler lacks two critical components of archival framing: a mounting consisting entirely of acid-free materials, and spacers between the sampler and the glass.

Reframing Your Sampler

Old frames will benefit from being gently cleaned first to remove dirt. Vacuum inside the frame to remove dust and debris, then wipe the frame inside and out with a damp cloth to remove grime. If any part of the frame is raw wood that might touch the sampler, it should be varnished or covered with acid-free tape.

The frame should be fitted with glass to protect the sampler from soiling. If your frame contains old glass, keep it. If you need new glass, use ordinary single-strength window glass available from hardware stores. If the light in your display area is bright, or if the sampler is very valuable, consider ultraviolet-filtering glass, available from quality framers; ultraviolet-filtering Plexiglass also is available, but it is not as

"These tints shall fade, thus beauty dies . . ."

Sampler verse from
Samplers and Sampler Makers,
by Mary Jaene Edmonds

clear. Avoid nonglare glass—its surface has an acid residue that is harmful to fibers.

Spacers—narrow strips of acid-free museum board or acrylic strips, such as Innerspace (clear acrylic with an acid-free adhesive on one side)—are a must. These are inserted between the sampler and the glass at the edges, and are hidden by the lip of the frame. They permit air to circulate within the frame, preventing moisture buildup. Mats may serve the same function but traditionally are not used with samplers. Further, some mat boards that are labeled acid-free are so only on their surfaces. Museum board and ragboard are acid free throughout.

Mounting Your Sampler

Buy a piece of four-ply acid-free museum board (available at art stores). Cut the board 1/8 inch smaller in both dimensions than the back opening of the frame. Select a firmly woven, medium-weight piece of cotton or linen fabric, enough to make a slipjacket for the board (twice the area of the board with allowances for seams). The color should enhance the appearance of the sampler, especially if it will show through worn or damaged areas. Wash the fabric in warm water in mild detergent and rinse *repeatedly.* If there is any evidence of bleeding, don't use the fabric. Dry and press the fabric, then fold it in half. Place the board on the fold and trace its outline with a pencil. Machine stitch two sides, leaving the third open. Check to see that the slipjacket fits over the board; the fabric should be taut. Turn the slipjacket right side out and press.

Insert the board in the slipjacket, keeping all the seam allowances on one side of the board, which will become the back. Stretching the fabric tight, turn the raw edges in, and slipstitch the opening shut.

Position the sampler on the face of the mount. Starting at the center of each side, gently stretch and pin the sampler to the board with fine pins placed near the edge of the fabric at an angle to the board's surface but with heads slanting outward. The grain should be as straight as possible, but don't expect edges to be square in older pieces.

Hand stitch the sampler to the fabric slipjacket, using a fine needle and cotton thread that matches the sampler fabric. Knot the thread and bring the needle from the back up through the margin of the sampler and tighten the thread gently. Insert the needle into the slipjacket opposite the point where the needle emerged (stitches are perpendicular to the edge). Bring the needle up about 1/8 inch from the previous stitch and repeat, removing pins as you go.

Finishing

After inserting the mounted sampler in the frame, secure it with brads or glazing points in the usual way. Then cover the back of the frame with heavy air-permeable paper to prevent the intrusion of dust. This paper should be acid-free and secured with acid-free glue or tape. Do not cover the back with plastic.

Display your sampler away from light, heat, and moisture. Avoid kitchens, bathrooms, walls over working fireplaces, and walls that receive direct, strong light. By selecting an area of moderate light and even temperature, you will enhance the appearance and prolong the life of your unique needlework.

Finding a Conservator

The American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC) is the national organization for conservation in all fields. Two helpful pamphlets are available from the national office. *Caring for Your Treasures* is a list of books and *Guidelines for Selecting a Conservator* outlines how to find appropriate professional help. Contact AIC at 1717 K St. NW, Suite 301, Washington, DC 20006. (202) 452-9545; fax (202) 452-9328. ❖

About the Author. *Frances Faile is a textile conservator in private practice in Bridgewater, New Jersey.*

WORDSPINNING

Kate Douglas Wiggin

First published in October 1903, Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm, *by Kate Douglas Wiggin, soon became a children's classic. Young Rebecca, the second of seven children of the widowed Aurelia Randall, goes alone to stay with her mother's unmarried sisters, Aunt Miranda and Aunt Jane Sawyer. The aunts have actually requested the oldest daughter, Hannah, who is quiet, responsible, and hardworking—but what they get is imaginative, lively, talkative Rebecca. Living with her proper aunts is to be "the making of" Rebecca. In the following excerpt, Aunt Jane first demonstrates her understanding by opposing Aunt Miranda's practicality—and thereby becomes Rebecca's ally. Simply being allowed to wear bright colors and to add tape trimming to the edge of her dress has the power to make Rebecca's life more bearable, just as Rebecca's imagination can turn the poor bit of land she grew up on into "Sunnybrook Farm."*

FROM

Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm

IT IS NEEDLESS to say that Rebecca irritated her aunt [Miranda] with every breath she drew. She continually forgot and started up the front stairs because it was the shortest route to her bedroom; she left the dipper on the kitchen shelf instead of hanging it up over the pail; she sat in the chair the cat liked best; she was willing to go on errands, but often forgot what she was sent for; she left the screen doors ajar, so that flies came in; her tongue was ever in motion; she sang or whistled when she was picking up chips; she was always messing with flowers, putting them in vases, pinning them on her dress, and sticking them in her hat. . . . Now if Hannah had come—Hannah took after the other side of the house; she was "all Sawyer." (Poor Hannah! that was true!) Hannah spoke only when spoken to, instead of first, last, and all the time; Hannah at fourteen was a member of the church; Hannah liked to knit; Hannah was, probably, or would have been, a pattern of all the smaller virtues; instead of which here was this black-haired gypsy, with eyes as big as cartwheels, installed as a member of the household.

What sunshine in a shady place was Aunt Jane to Rebecca! Aunt Jane with her quiet voice, her understanding eyes, her ready excuses, in these first difficult weeks, when the impulsive little stranger was trying to settle down into the "brick house ways." She did learn them, in part, and by degrees, and the constant fitting of herself to these new and difficult standards of conduct seemed to make her older than ever for her years.

The child took her sewing and sat beside Aunt Jane in the kitchen while Aunt Miranda had the post of observation at the sitting-room window. Sometimes they would work on the side porch where the clematis and woodbine shaded them from the hot sun. To Rebecca the lengths of brown gingham were interminable. She made hard work of sewing, broke the thread, dropped her thimble into the syringa bushes, pricked her finger, wiped the perspiration from her forehead, could not match the checks, puckered the seams. She polished her needles to nothing, pushing them in and out of the emery strawberry, but they always squeaked. Still Aunt Jane's patience held good, and some small measure of skill was creeping into Rebecca's fingers, fingers that held pencil, paint brush, and pen so cleverly and were so clumsy with the dainty little needle.

When the first brown gingham frock was completed, the child seized what she thought an opportune moment and asked her Aunt Miranda if she might have another color for the next one.

"I bought a whole piece of the brown," said Miranda laconically. "That'll give you two more dresses, with plenty for new sleeves, and to patch and let down with, an' be more economical."

"I know. But Mr. Watson says he'll take back part of it, and let us have pink and blue for the same price."

"Did you ask him?"

"Yes'm."

"It was none o' your business."

"I was helping Emma Jane choose aprons, and didn't think you'd mind which color I had. Pink keeps clean just as nice as brown, and Mr. Watson says it'll boil without fading."

"Mr. Watson's a splendid judge of washing, I guess. I don't approve of children being rigged out in fancy colors, but I'll see what your Aunt Jane thinks."

"I think it would be all right to let Rebecca have one pink and one blue gingham," said Jane. "A child gets tired of sewing on one color. It's only natural she should long for a change; besides she'd look like a charity child always wearing the same brown with a white apron. And it's dreadful unbecoming to her!"

"'Handsome is as handsome does,' say I. Rebecca never'll come to grief along of her beauty, that's certain, and there's no use in humoring her to think about her looks. I believe she's vain as a peacock now, without anything to be vain of."

"She's young and attracted to bright things—that's all. I remember well enough how I felt at her age."

"You was considerable of a fool at her age, Jane."

"Yes, I was, thank the Lord! I only wish I'd known how to take a little of my foolishness along with me, as some folks do, to brighten my declining years."

There finally was a pink gingham, and when it was nicely finished, Aunt Jane gave Rebecca a delightful surprise. She showed her how to make a pretty trimming of narrow white linen tape, by folding it in pointed shapes and sewing it down very flat with neat little stitches.

"It'll be good fancy work for you, Rebecca; for your Aunt Miranda won't like to see you always reading in the long winter evenings. Now if you think you can baste two rows of white tape round the bottom of your pink skirt and keep it straight by the checks, I'll stitch them on for you and trim the waist and sleeves with pointed tape-trimming, so the dress'll be real pretty for second best."

Rebecca's joy knew no bounds. "I'll baste like a house afire!" she exclaimed. "It's a thousand yards round that skirt, as well I know, having hemmed it; but I could sew pretty trimming on if it was from here to Milltown. Oh! do you think Aunt Mirandy'll ever let me go to Milltown with Mr. Cobb? He's asked me again, you know; but one Saturday I had to pick strawberries, and another it rained, and I don't think she really approves of my going. It's *twenty-nine* minutes past four, Aunt Jane, and Alice Robinson has been sitting under the currant bushes for a long time waiting for me. Can I go and play?" ❖

Legacy

Identifying keepsakes

Universal Scissors

Q. In an antique store, I saw an odd pair of scissors that had different notches and one blunt tip. The name "Universal" was inscribed on them. What kind of scissors are they?

—Lucinda Marten
Glendale, Wisconsin

Universal scissors from the collection of Loene McIntyre.

A. *What kind of scissors they are is not the half of it. They are also a ruler, nail file, screwdriver, cigar-box opener, cartridge extractor, tapping hammer, penknife, glass cutter, glass breaker, marking wheel, and ink scratcher all in one instrument. Furthermore, they could cut buttonholes, metal tubes, cigars, and wire. Better than a Swiss Army knife, "universal scissors" were manufactured in Germany in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The pair of scissors at left even includes a Stanhope viewer (see March/April 1993 PIECEWORK) for entertainment. For unknown reasons, the scissors were discontinued in favor of "plain" scissors that simply cut thread and cloth.*

Wooden Object

Q. Can you help me identify a wooden object that has Maltese crosses on both sides, and on one side has an arc with nine holes and an inscription, "T.G. 1828."?

—Elizabeth Harris
Los Angeles, California

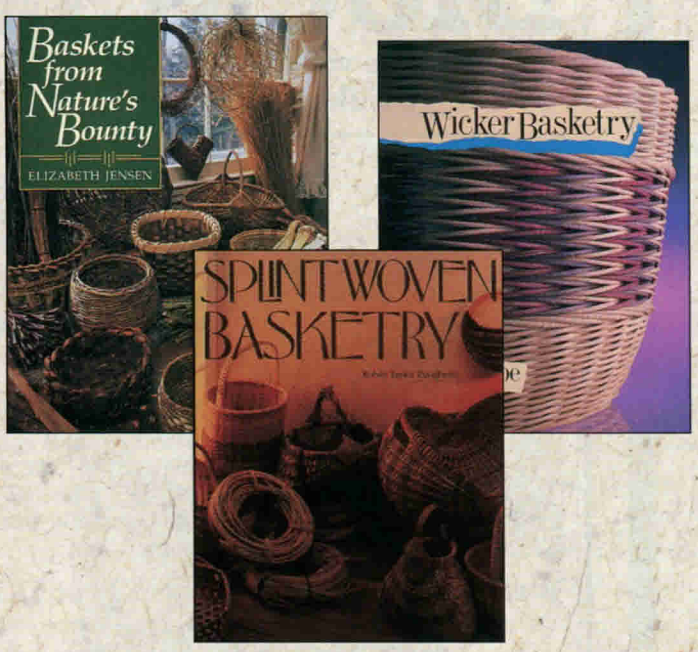
A. *We have consulted with needlework experts, a sewing notions collector, a museum collections curator, and a tool collector. Most have concluded that it is probably not a sewing tool but a gauge. The tool collector determined that it probably belongs to a larger piece and is an indicator dial with holes for detent. The inscription could be the manufacturer's or the owner's. We welcome any suggestions or comments from readers about the identity of the object. Send to PIECEWORK, 201 East Fourth St., Loveland, CO 80537.*

Unidentified wooden object from the collection of Elizabeth Harris.

READERS: For an upcoming story on rick-rack, do you have any old examples of this ubiquitous trim used in interesting and attractive ways? Please send descriptions, snapshots, or photocopies of actual pieces to PIECEWORK at the address below.

Readers are invited to send identification questions to PIECEWORK, 201 East Fourth St., Loveland, CO 80537. We will answer selected questions in "Legacy."

Books from Interweave Press



A Case for Baskets

The wonderful thing about baskets is you can start one evening with a pile of sticks and by bedtime have a handsome, custom-made container for your fleece, yarn, unfinished knitting, and other piles of "stuff." Finishing a basket in one evening provides a nice counterpart to other kinds of projects that sometimes drag on and on. These three books cover a wide range of basket styles, with complete step-by-step instructions. We know they work work because we've tried them.

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Nordic Knitting
Thirty-one Patterns in the Scandinavian Tradition
Susanne Pagoldh

Nordic Knitting gathers the best historic knitted garments from Scandinavian folk museums and replicates them in patterns for today's yarns and colors. Filled with color photographs of the terrain and of outstanding historic garments, this book offers techniques and contemporary interpretations for making more than 30 garments.

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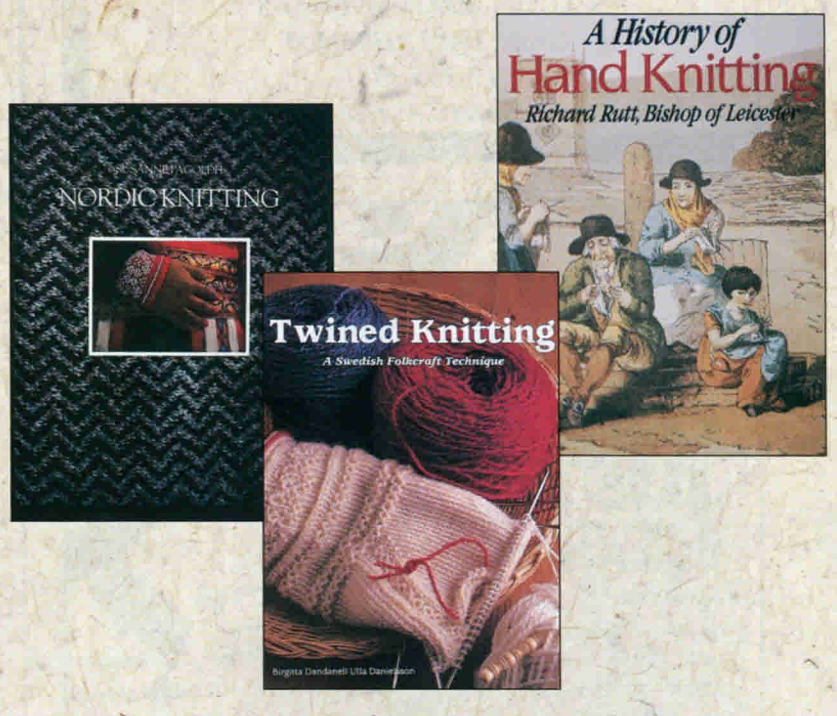

Twined Knitting
Birgitta Dandanell and Ulla Danielsson; Robin Orm Hansen, translator

Twined knitting is a venerable Swedish folkcraft technique that creates dense, durable, and exquisitely patterned fabric for mittens, caps, gloves, stockings, and jackets. Working with the collection at the Dalarna Museum in Sweden, the authors have unraveled the secrets of twined knitting and present them in this volume along with instructions for a number of handsome projects.

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Drawing on literary evidence, legends, and surviving scraps of ancient knitted fabric, Richard Rutt traces the craft of knitting from its earliest beginnings to the present day, portraying at the same time domestic and social change in Europe, Great Britain, and the Americas. The result is fascinating, thorough, amusing, and very readable.

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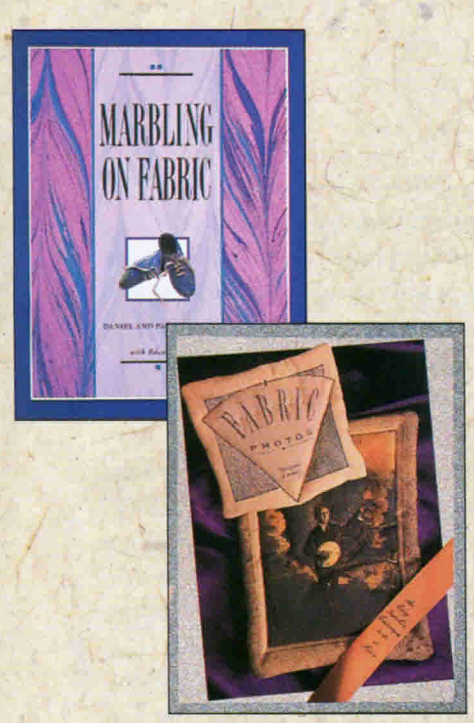

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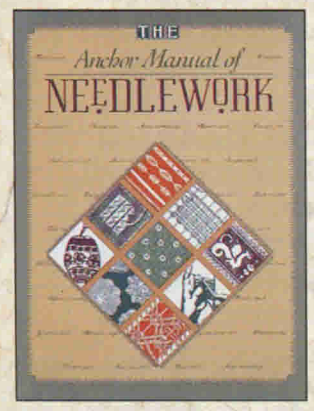

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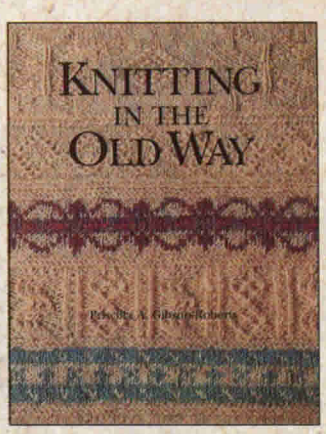

Knitting in the Old Way

Priscilla A. Gibson-Roberts

Gansey, Aran, Fair Isle, Bohus: the great folk sweaters of the world have been knitted for many generations with speed, skill, individuality and joy—without line-by-line printed patterns. You can join this fine tradition with ***Knitting in the Old Way***, which first helps you master some simple fundamentals of design and construction and then offers a wealth of pattern graphs for creating your own unique heirlooms.

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Crazy Quilt

Events, news, and things

Cultural conservation is a science-based discipline with two purposes: to extend the life of a work of art, a natural history specimen, or an artifact by slowing and treating decay; and to recover and preserve information about how the object was made and used.

—from *"What Is Cultural Conservation,"*
Rocky Mountain Conservation Center

Rocky Mountain Conservation Center—A Special Trust

Walk into the Rocky Mountain Conservation Center (RMCC) in Denver, Colorado, any time and you're likely to see staff conservators engaged in securing quillwork on a Sioux tobacco pouch, using cotton swabs to clean a painting by Thomas Moran, or removing tape adhesive from an Ansel Adams print.

RMCC, founded in 1977, is a regional conservation laboratory, a nonprofit educational corporation affiliated with the University of Denver. RMCC was started by museum professionals, university educators, and conservators and funded by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the Shwayder Foundation.

RMCC's 6,000-square-foot facility contains laboratories for conservation of archaeological, ethnographic, historical, and fine art objects; photographs, works of art on paper, documents, and maps; and paintings on fabric, wood, metal, or glass. It also houses a full-service photography studio and wood shop. Objects are protected and cared for in climate-controlled labs where lamps and windows are filtered against ultraviolet radiation. Several different security systems protect the center and its contents.

The center does not "restore" objects. Restoration makes an object appear new but may involve irreversible repairs. Conservation stabilizes the object with only such repairs as are necessary to recover as much of the original as possible. Treatments are formulated so that if in the future a superior treatment is found, previous repairs can be reversed. To ensure responsibility for objects, the staff closely follows the *Code of Ethics* and *Standards of Practice* of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works.

Rocky Mountain Conservation Center is located at 2420 South University Blvd., Denver, CO 80208. (303) 733-2712.

—*Nancy Arndt*

A Rose-Start in Her Hem

On the Oregon Trail Sesquicentennial Quilt, four Wild Goose Chase patterns symbolize the 300,000 pioneers who migrated west to the Oregon Territory between 1843 and 1860. The quilt was designed, pieced, and quilted by the Blue Mountain Piecemakers Quilt Guild of Pendleton, Oregon.

Led by Jean Dunn, committee members Lois Jemes, Beth Hegge, Kathi Thompson, Clarissa Noble, and Teri Robins began meeting in March 1992 to plan and design the commemorative quilt. When the design was complete, outer blocks of the quilt were put into kits for

guild members to piece from June through August. Quilting started on November 1, and by February 1, 1993, the quilt was finished. A total of 600 hours was spent by the guild members on construction and quilting.

The blue strip in the center of the foreground depicts the peaceful Umatilla River flowing at the base of the Blue Mountains—known as "The Blues" because of their color in the early morning or late evening. The green border contains wildflowers indigenous to the region. Eighteen of the outer blocks surrounding the center portion are old quilt patterns. Two long blocks depict the tall ponderosa pine tree and the long house in which Native American councils met.

The committee decided without hesitation that the pioneers would be portrayed on the quilt not by wagon trains, but as they interacted with the Native Americans.

While researching the quilt's theme, Jean Dunn met Leah Conner, whose maternal grandfather, Kipp-soots-pa-ouyen, a member of the Umatilla tribe, was about eight years old when the first pioneers came through eastern Oregon. Leah shared one of her grandfather's stories of Umatilla people hiding from the white settlers as they arrived—because they had never seen the drooling, swaying-headed oxen before. Kipp-soots-pa-ouyen's people felt sorry for the weary travelers since most looked starved and tired, and were barefoot, especially the children. While sharing food with the immigrants, the Umatilla people heard their first English words: "How far Willamette?" (referring to the Willamette Valley and Oregon City in western Oregon). The center of the quilt depicts a Umatilla woman sharing items in a basket with a pioneer and a Native American man directing a pioneer west.

Other personal objects and experiences were included. One member of the guild provided tiny glass beads sewn for the necklace of the Native American woman grinding corn in the village scene. The beads came from the Pendleton Round-Up Indian Village, which she had visited thirty years earlier.

The red rose sewn at the hem of a woman's skirt represents the rose-starts and flower bulbs the women kept in the wide hems. Not only were the bulbs easier to carry this way, but they were kept moist when the women walked through wet grasses. The red represents sacrifice.

Thirty thousand lives were lost on the trail due to sickness, accidents, or other misfortunes. The quilt block showing a wagon leaving a roadside grave represents the average of one grave every 100 yards along the Oregon Trail.

Quilt posters with story details are available for $9.00 from Oregon Trail Quilt, PO Box 1683, Pendleton, OR 97801.

—Nancy Arndt

Oregon Trail Sesquicentennial Quilt, designed, pieced, and quilted by the Blue Mountain Piecemakers Quilt Guild, Pendleton, Oregon.

Photograph by Don Erickson. Courtesy of Jean Dunn.

A statement published in *Good Housekeeping* in 1888 indicated the desire of quilters to go back to simple thoughts, designs, and materials. "When I say quilts, I do not mean the gay red, green, and yellow abominations known as the Rising Star and Setting Sun that we see year after year at the country fair, but the modest Hexagon, Ninepatch, Variable Star, and Irish Chain that we were taught to make when we were wee lassies."

Anita Schorsch, Plain and Fancy

MOURNING SLIPPERS AND CHESTNUT CRUSHERS

The Bata Shoe Museum in Toronto, Ontario, captures the history of one of the oldest crafts in the world. Archaeologists have discovered 4,000-year-old illustrations depicting sandal makers on the walls of ancient Egyptian tombs. Basic shoemaking, a craft assigned to women in many cultures, has hardly changed over the centuries.

"Shoes are special," says Sonja Bata, founder and chairwoman of the Bata Shoe Museum Foundation. "They tell you about the owner's social status, habits, culture, and religion, as footwear reflects the history, life and beliefs, the climate, and geography of the people who wear it."

Bata started collecting footwear in 1946, when she married Thomas J. Bata, whose family had been shoemakers for ten generations in the former Czechoslovakia. Taking an avid interest in her husband's shoe business, she traveled the world and became fascinated by the great variety of shoe shapes.

The Bata Shoe Museum is believed to have the world's most extensive and comprehensive collection of Native North American footwear. The museum's foundation has sponsored field research to collect footwear from the Lapps of Finland, the Ainu in Japan, the Eskimo in Alaska and Siberia, and the Inuit of northern Canada. Circumpolar footwear will be the theme of an exhibition beginning after Christmas 1993 and continuing until the fall of 1994, when the museum is scheduled to move to new and larger quarters.

In addition to Native American footwear of deerskin and buffalo rawhide, many other treasures are on display, such as Pope Pius IX's Lenten shoes and Queen Victoria's mourning slippers. There are delicate pairs of shoes, only six inches long, designed for "golden lotus" feet of Chinese women, World War II smuggler's clogs, and perhaps the rarest shoes of all, the silver and leather Peruvian boots worn by a young boy sacrificed at the coronation of a new leader. Ancient and ethnic footwear, special-purpose shoes, and royalty and celebrity footwear are all exhibited here along with a shoe discovery center in which visitors can touch various leathers and view a nineteenth-century cobbler shop.

French chestnut crushers, circa 1800.
Photograph Bata Shoe Museum. Courtesy of Ann Hattes.

It has been estimated that the average person walks the equivalent of three-and-a-half times around the earth in a lifetime, or about 9,000 steps per day. Through exhibits at the Bata Shoe Museum, visitors walk those steps not only in their own shoes, but also in those of their ancestors and neighbors worldwide.

The Bata Shoe Museum Collection is located on the second floor at 131 Bloor Street West, Toronto, ON M3C 1K3. (416) 924-7463. Admission fee.

—*Ann Hattes*

Woman's kilim woven uppers made in Turkey and manufactured into shoes in France, with velvet and silk bows, circa 1880.

Photograph Bata Shoe Museum. Courtesy of Ann Hattes.

The Eighty-Year Embroidery

"The Earthly Paradise: Arts and Crafts by William Morris and his Circle from Canadian Collections" was recently exhibited at the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto. The exhibit includes paintings, drawings, prints, wallpaper, books, stained glass, photographs, furniture, jewelry, ceramics, metalwork, and textiles of William Morris (1834–1896), a British artist, poet, designer, craftsman, socialist, visionary, and businessman.

But to those of you who begin a project and feel committed to finishing it, we offer the following story from an article about the exhibit by Kate Taylor in the *Toronto Globe.*

Katharine Lochnan, curator for "The Earthly Paradise," recounts an experience from her twenty-year search for works by William Morris. She was visited by Lady Margaret Ayre, an elderly woman from Pointe Claire, Quebec. In the hotel lobby where they met, Lady Margaret presented a plastic garbage bag that held a stunning green damask panel nearly ten feet long with a partridge in a tree outlined in colorful silk embroidery. William Morris's assistant, John Henry Dearle, had designed the image in 1890, and the embroidery was available as a kit at the Morris & Co. shop on London's Oxford Street. The shop would start a section of such an embroidery to show how it was done and then the buyer would take over. In 1904, a Mrs. Cunliffe purchased a kit but never finished the work. Instead, she passed it along to her friend Lady Margaret Ayre and requested that she finish it.

Eighty years after the embroidery was purchased, Lady Margaret was still working on it. Katharine Lochnan heard about the embroidery from a British colleague, Linda Parry, and was interested in borrowing the work for the show. However, Katharine recalls Linda Parry urging her to do more than just borrow the piece: "Kathy, if you can get her to stop, please do. It's really not appropriate to keep adding to this period piece."

When Katharine suggested that she stop working on the embroidery, Lady Margaret seemed both happy and relieved.

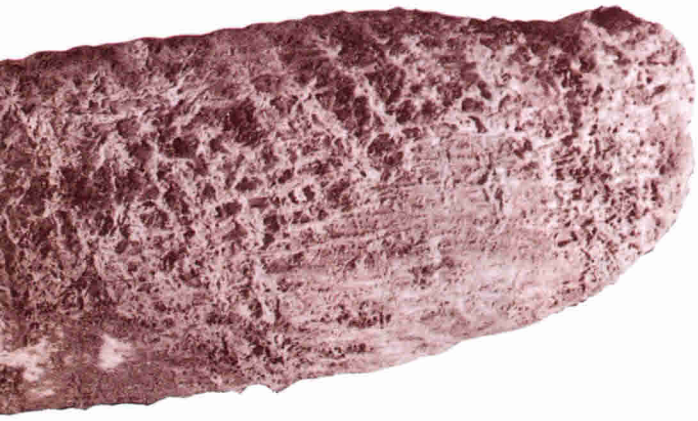
The William Morris exhibit will be at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa October 22, 1993, to January 16, 1994; Museé du Québec in Québec City February 16 to May 15; and the Winnipeg Art Gallery June 23 to September 11.

—*Nancy Arndt*

In the eighteenth century, parents stipulated in their wills that their daughters be taught how to read and sew.

Bobbi A. McRae, The New Fiberworks Sourcebook

Crazy Quilt



The earliest known fragment of cloth, which scholars think is linen, has been dated by the radiocarbon method to 7,000 B.C. The white cloth measures about 3 by 1½ inches.

Photograph courtesy of the University of Chicago.

9,000-Year-Old Textile Found

Archaeologists from the University of Chicago and Istanbul University discovered a woven fabric dated to 7,000 B.C. in a dig in an area of southern Turkey known as Cayonu. Robert Braidwood, professor emeritus of the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute and Professor Halet Cambel of Istanbul University are co-directors of the Joint Prehistoric Project. Assisting with the project is Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood, an authority on ancient textiles at the National Museum of Ethnology at Leiden in the Netherlands.

The 3-by-1½-inch piece of cloth was perhaps a rag used to get a better grip on a handle. It was found wrapped around the handle of a tool made from an antler; the calcium-rich material helped preserve the fabric. The cloth, probably woven from the fibers of the flax plant on a simple frame, may be twined. The technique of twining two weft threads around single warp threads is similar to that of the twined rag rugs presented in the September/October 1993 issue of PIECEWORK. It seems that this ancient technique is even older than we thought!

—*Nancy Arndt*

Knotting ought to be reckoned, in the scale of insignificance, next to mere idleness.

Dr. Samuel Johnson, Dictionary

Book Mentions

The Embroiderer's Flowers, by Thomasina Beck, presents photographs, illustrations, and history of embroidered flowers that have been used on clothing and furnishings since Elizabeth I. David & Charles, distributed by Sterling Publishing, 387 Park Ave. South, New York, NY 10016-8810, 1992. Hardbound, 160 pages, $29.95. ISBN 0-7153-9901-2.

Floral Cross Stitch, by Melinda Cross, presents colorful photographs accompanied by watercolor illustrations of flowers and charts of the twenty cross-stitch designs. Delightful folklore, myths, and legends are included with each design. Trafalgar Square Publishing, North Pomfret, VT 05053, 1993. Hardbound, 112 pages, $29.95. ISBN 0-943955-76-9.

Hmong Voices in Montana, from the Missoula Museum of Arts, is a colorful and moving exhibit catalog. Hmong hill-tribe people who have settled in Montana tell the story of their escape from Laos, the few treasures they brought with them—especially their textiles—and their lives in the United States.

Japanese Immigrant Clothing in Hawaii: 1885–1941, by Barbara F. Kawakami, gives a glimpse into the lives of two generations of plantation workers and tells how their clothing was adapted to the harsh conditions of Hawaiian plantation labor. University of Hawaii Press, 2840 Kolowalu St., Honolulu, HI 96822, 1993. Hardbound, 254 pages, $29.95. ISBN 0-8248-1351-0.

A Joy Forever: Marie Webster's Quilt Patterns, by Rosalind Webster Perry and Marty Frolli, includes patterns and instructions for the appliqué quilter interested in the life of this early American woman and the many quilts that made her famous. Practical Patchwork, PO Box 30065, Santa Barbara, CA 93130, 1992. Softbound, 96 pages, $19.50. ISBN 0-9620811-7-5.

Tassels: The Fanciful Embellishment, by Nancy Welch, takes the reader on a journey through centuries of use of tassels and provides directions for making them. Lark Books, distributed by Altamont Press, 50 College St., Asheville, NC 28801, 1992. Hardbound, 160 pages, $26.95. ISBN 0-937274-53-4.

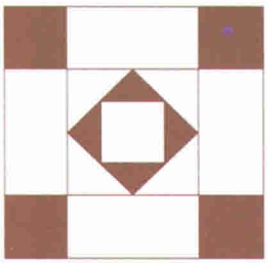
♦ **PHOENIX, ARIZONA**
November 6, 1993–October 1994, Glass Tapestry: Plateau Beaded Bags, a collection of twentieth-century beaded bags from Washington's Plateau region. Contact The Heard Museum, 22 E. Monte Vista Rd., Phoenix, AZ 85004-1480.

♦ **DENVER, COLORADO**
Through December 17, African-American quilt-making exhibit at the Metropolitan State College Center for the Visual Arts, 1701 Wazee St., Denver, CO 80202. (303) 294-5207.

♦ **SAVANNAH, GEORGIA**
April 15–17, 1994, Southeast Fiber Forum 1994, includes workshops in weaving, spinning, embroidery, and other fiber arts. Contact Sue Helmken, Box 30634, Savannah, GA 31410. (912) 897-7922.

♦ **EVANSTON, ILLINOIS**
Through December 17, Zuñi Arts and Crafts, includes traditional and contemporary work. Contact the Mitchell Indian Museum at Kendall College, 2408 Orrington Ave., Evanston, IL 60201. (708) 866-1395.

♦ **BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS**
November 12–21, Golden Swan Needlework exhibition sponsored by the Women's Educational and Industrial Union (WEIU). Categories include cross stitch, surface embroidery, canvas, and ethnic stitching. Contact WEIU, 356



Boylston St., Boston, MA 02116. (617) 536-5651.

♦ **LIVONIA, MICHIGAN**
November 13, "For the Love of Lace," a lace exhibition and demonstration, will be held at the Livonia Civic Center Library, 32777 Five Mile Rd. Contact Kathleen Campbell, 207 Wilson, Ypsilanti, MI 48197. (313) 483-5693. Fax (313) 485-0809.

♦ **CINCINNATI, OHIO**
Through February 27, 1994, "In the Classical Mode," women's fashions and textiles reflecting neoclassical tradition. Contact Cincinnati Art Museum, Eden Park, Cincinnati, OH 45202-1596. (513) 721-5204. Fax (513) 721-0129.

♦ **PAWTUCKET, RHODE ISLAND**
November 27–28, and December 4–5 and 11–12, Holiday Celebration, an art exhibit and sale by Fiber Artists Cooperative. Contact Slater Mill Historic Site, Roosevelt Ave., PO Box 727, Pawtucket, RI 02862. (401) 725-8638.

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Through January 3, 1994, "With Grace and Favour: Victorian and Edwardian Fashion in America," organized by the Cincinnati Art Museum and held at the Chrysler Museum. Contact the Cincinnati Art Museum, Eden Park, Cincinnati, OH 45202-1596. (513) 721-5204. Fax (513) 721-0129.

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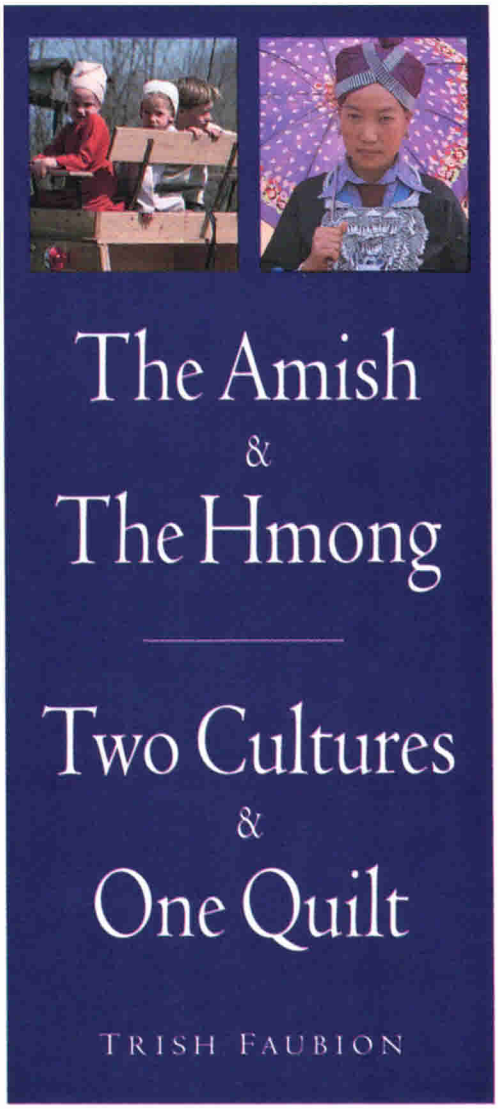
A record auction price of $17,600 was paid by London dealer Winifred Williams at Christie's of London on December 3, 1979, for a Meissen dentil-shaped porcelain thimble circa 1740.

Guinness Book of Records

Amish children. A Hmong girl in full dress.
Photographs by Jan Folsom.



At first glance, they seem like two very different cultures, but they have some strikingly similar characteristics.

THE AMISH. The Hmong. At first glance, they seem like two very different cultures, but they have some strikingly similar characteristics: both are agrarian cultures; both are fiercely independent; both have deliberately remained separate from the outside world; both stress family and community as social structure; and both immigrated to the United States seeking asylum—the Amish from religious persecution, the Hmong from political reprisal. Both the Amish and the Hmong have strong needlework traditions. Interestingly, in the past fifteen years or so, the Amish and Hmong cultures—including their quite different forms of needlework—have brushed up against one another, with rather remarkable results.

An Unusual Connection

In the 1970s, Amish quilts, long made by Amish women for their families, began gaining recognition among collectors. That recognition spread to the general tourist population, producing an overwhelming demand for Amish-made quilts, especially in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, where there is a significant Amish population. As a result, quilt making became an important cottage industry among Amish women, allowing them to work at home and supplement the family income.

Also in the 1970s, Hmong families began settling in Lancaster and surrounding counties, where they came into contact with the large communities of Amish. Then, in the early 1980s, another factor was added to the equation: the Country Bride Quilt. As Rachel Pellman explains in *The Country Bride Pattern Book, "Bride's Magazine* was decorating an old row house in downtown Lancaster . . . to be featured as a 'first home' for a bride and groom. Since Lancaster County is widely known for fine quality quilts, *Bride's Magazine* [wanted] to show a quilt on the bed. . . . They contacted the staff at The Old Country Store in Intercourse [known for its Amish and Mennonite quilts, and managed by Rachel Pellman] . . . about designing such a quilt." The quilt The Old Country Store staff designed was a rose, lavender, and green appliquéd quilt with lovebirds, hearts, and tulips on twenty-inch squares. The appliquéd blocks were separated by elaborately quilted plain blocks with an appliquéd tulip in each corner. The quilt appeared in the June/July 1983 issue of *Bride's Magazine.*

The Country Bride Quilt was an overwhelming hit among magazine readers. They wanted the pattern to make the quilt—or better yet, they wanted to buy a similar quilt. The Old Country Store began contracting with local Amish and Mennonite quilters to make the quilts, and the quilters themselves also began producing Country Bride Quilts for sale at their roadside stands. The popularity of this quilt was a key factor in connecting Hmong needleworkers, who have a strong appliqué and reverse-appliqué tradition, with the Amish, who ironically seldom use appliqué on their own quilts.

Two Textile Traditions

Antique (and many contemporary) Amish quilts are striking for their simple, pieced geometric forms and wide borders (both elaborately quilted), their rich col-

Understanding the unusual intersection of the two traditional needlework styles—each with different cultural purposes, necessary skills, and beauty—requires gaining an understanding of each culture's past and present.

ors, and the use of black fabric. Most unusual is the black fabric, which elsewhere is seldom used so extensively. Rather than creating a somber quilt, the black fabric heightens the richness of the other colors, much as the black leading in stained glass intensifies the colored glass. In addition, the extensive hand quilting adds an exceptional texture to the overall piece. Until collectors and museums began seeking antique Amish quilts as "art objects," these stunning quilts served an entirely practical purpose—they provided a warm bedcover.

Paj ntaub (or *pa ndau*, both pronounced pond ouw), one of the most characteristic textiles of the Hmong people, is remarkable for its delicate and intricate designs, bright colors, and fine stitching. Traditionally, paj ntaub, ("flower cloth") was done with bold solid colors and consisted of a combination of techniques: geometric reverse appliqué, appliqué, elaborate embroidery, and cross stitch. It was used to decorate men's, women's, and children's clothing. And until the Vietnam War brought the Hmong in contact with the Western world, paj ntaub existed solely for the benefit of the Hmong.

Understanding the unusual intersection of the two traditional needlework styles—each with different cultural purposes, necessary skills, and beauty—requires gaining an understanding of each culture's past and present.

The kind of appliquéd quilt that brought Hmong needleworkers in contact with Amish quilters in the Lancaster, Pennsylvania, area.
Photograph by Jan Folsom.

Seeking Religious Freedom: The Amish

In the mid-1520s in Switzerland, a radical new religious sect—the Anabaptists—began winning converts. They insisted on adult baptism, when an individual could voluntarily and knowingly profess his faith in Christ. They also advocated separation of church and state, and for the most part adopted a set of strict moral practices and a simple manner and dress.

Among the converts was Menno Simons, a Catholic priest who converted to Anabaptism in 1531 and after whom the Mennonites are named. The Mennonites, like other Anabaptist groups, were severely persecuted for their beliefs and wandered from one European country to another seeking asylum. In 1693, Jacob Ammann, a charismatic Mennonite leader, separated from the Mennonite group because he felt that even more serious reforms were in order. Ammann taught that pious feelings and simple rural living should go together, and he taught his followers to practice their beliefs. For Ammann, Sunday worship in church was insufficient; he advocated applying what one believed in one's daily life. Humility and modesty were valued, and ostentation was a sin.

Ammann's aim was to keep the Amish separate and distinct so that they would be drawn together. He asked for total obedience to an omniscient God. The preciseness with which a person followed the sect's

Most of the Amish still farm with horses or mules. Their dress regulations remain rigid: solid-colored fabrics continue to be the rule for both men's and women's clothing (patterned fabrics are considered ostentatious and worldly).

rules demonstrated that obedience. Those who broke the rules were "shunned," or ostracized. Thus, the whole fabric of an ordered life could disintegrate if a person broke the rules.

The Amish eventually found asylum in Pennsylvania, beginning about 1727. And while Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, continues to support a large Amish population, Amish communities have grown up in other states as well, notably Ohio, Indiana, Missouri, Iowa, Illinois, and Kansas.

The Amish are still "most basically, a people committed to God," according to Rachel and Kenneth Pellman in *How to Make an Amish Quilt.* They still believe that their life-style and practice must embody their faith. The community continues to act as the conscience for the individual and still discerns together what its members can and cannot do.

Amish farmhouse with wash on the line.
Photograph by Jan Folsom.

The Pellmans add that "most Amish do not see their community as restrictive. Rather, it is a harbor from rampant Western individualism they believe is responsible for the demise of church, home, and family. . . . Because they are committed to their faith-life, they are wary of anything that could become a possible route to acculturation into the 'world.'"

Most of the Amish still farm with horses or mules. Their dress regulations remain rigid: solid-colored fabrics continue to be the rule for both men's and women's clothing (patterned fabrics are considered ostentatious and worldly). Most clothing is still made in the home. And while some technological developments have been endorsed (such as polyester-blend fabrics and other manufactured materials, such as linoleum), the most conservative Amish communities still reject ownership of automobiles, do not use electricity from local power companies, and do not permit telephones in their homes. While the Amish do not consider such advances evil in themselves, they do believe that they eat away at the close-knit fabric of family and community life and that the drift into the world can be subtle. As a result, they are leery of keeping up with technology and style.

Seeking Political Sanctuary: The Hmong

Although the Hmong are much more recent immigrants than the Amish, their origins reach farther back in history. They are an ancient tribe of migratory mountain people whose exact origin is uncertain. According to Carl Magnuson, professor of anthropology at the University of Kansas, Chinese records indicate that the Hmong may have lived along the banks of the Yellow River about 3,000 years ago. Following their participation in uprisings against the Chinese in the 1860s, the Hmong fled China for the unoccupied mountainous regions of what are now Laos, Thailand, and northern Vietnam.

Even in their new homeland, the Hmong culture was a primitive agrarian one, organized around twenty-one clans consisting of people who shared the same paternal ancestry. The Hmong lived in isolated settlements and deliberately had little contact with the outside world. The family was the dominant institution, with a hierarchical order and authority based on respect for age. Men could have more than one wife.

The Hmong were a fiercely independent people with an oral educational system (there was no written Hmong language until the 1950s, when Christian missionaries developed an alphabet for them). Their carefully guarded traditions and beliefs, which included reincarnation, spirits, shamans, and animal sacrifices, were passed down from one generation to the next.

Beginning in the 1940s, the Hmong were drawn into a conflict that later became the Vietnam War, serving first as scouts and soldiers for the French (until about 1954) and then as soldiers in a secret army the United States Central Intelligence Agency organized to defend the U.S.-backed Laotian government against the Pathet Lao (communist guerillas). When the United States withdrew and the Pathet Lao took control (1975), the Hmong were forced to flee for their lives across the Mekong River into refugee camps in Thailand.

From there, thousands of Hmong have immigrated to the United States, France, and Australia. Currently,

Amish Center Diamond quilt, Lancaster County, 1922. Older Amish quilts are known for their rich colors and fine quilting.

about 100,000 Hmong refugees live in the United States, primarily in California, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Montana, and North Carolina: small Hmong communities dot several other states, including Colorado and Pennsylvania.

The Hmong's transition to Western culture has been difficult because of the language barrier and the extreme change in their life-style. Upon entering the United States, they have had Western education and "modern" technology—such as automobiles, toilets, and telephones—thrust upon them instantly.

Practical and Simple: Antique Amish Quilts

When the Amish immigrated to Pennsylvania, quilt making was not one of the skills that the women brought with them, according to Bettina Havig in *Amish Quiltmaker.* They learned the craft in the mid-nineteenth

Old and recent examples of *paj ntaub*, or "flower cloth," executed with reverse appliqué.

From the collections of Jan Folsom and others.

century from their non-Amish neighbors of Welsh and North Country English descent. The Welsh and English women had a rich heritage of quilt making, and "many similarities exist between traditional North Country English and Welsh quilts. The [Amish] Bars designs . . . may well have been borrowed from the 'strippy' quilts of English tradition."

The Bars design Bettina Havig mentions is a simple pattern that consists of several straight vertical pieces (bars) surrounded by one or two borders. Often, a Bars quilt's only ornamentation is the quilting in the central bars section and in the borders.

Two other patterns characterize the early antique quilts of the Pennsylvania Amish: Center Diamond and Sunshine and Shadows. The Center Diamond pattern is even simpler than the Bars pattern, consisting of a large central square of a single fabric set on one of its corners to form a diamond, with large triangles filling in the corners to create another, encompassing square. One or more borders outline the square-within-a-square. The Center Diamond is "in keeping with traditional values; the large pattern components could be pieced with a minimum of time. To have spent too much time on piecing would have been seen as a needless extravagance," Willow Ann Soltow explains in *Quilting the World Over.*

Quilt historians believe that the Amish women purchased fabric for a Center Diamond quilt, judging from its large pieces. The Sunshine and Shadows pattern, on the other hand, which is made up of small, different-colored squares pieced in such a way that bands of color radiate out from the center to form the outlines of several large squares or diamonds, has the earmarks

Besides being decorative, the needlework distinguished the Hmong from other ethnic groups, and within the Hmong themselves, it identified the various clans.

of a quilt made from the colorful scraps left over from making dresses, shirts, and aprons.

Quilts made by the Amish who settled in the midwestern United States are executed in patterns other than the Bars, Center Diamond, and Sunshine and Shadows, a phenomenon attributed to the midwestern Amish's greater contact with non-Amish neighbors. However, these quilts are generally pieced patterns that use a single predominant template (for example, a square or triangle). Appliquéd antique Amish quilts are rare. Not only is appliquéing decorative in intent and more time-consuming than piecing, it also wastes fabric.

Contributing to the visual appeal of antique Amish quilts are the characteristic borders that are again simple and practical from the quilter's point of view: the borders quickly add size to the quilt top. Typically, an inner border frames the pattern, and a second, often wider border completes the overall design and provides a field for elaborate quilting. Borders are almost never mitered (mitering, like appliqué, is time-consuming and requires more fabric) and often end at the side seam with squares used at each corner.

Surprisingly, traditional Amish quilts are usually closely and elegantly hand quilted. A few quilting designs are prominent: diamonds, scallops, feathers, cables, ferns, and grape clusters, leaves, and twisting vines. While the quilting imparts a rich texture to the simple pieced patterns, it is also practical: it holds the quilt's three layers (pieced top, batting, and back) together securely. The closer the quilting lines, the more secure the three layers. In addition, quilting had a social function. One homemaker might piece a quilt top, but quilting it was usually a group activity, involving relatives and/or friends and contributing to the sense of family and community.

The colors used in older Amish quilts are a key factor in their attractiveness. "Contrary to some beliefs," says Bettina Havig, "there are no color restrictions imposed on the Amish quilter. Some colors are more prominent, others less so, but all are part of the palette. Lighter colors are obviously harder to keep clean; this practical consideration is the explanation for the scant use of lights and white." Rachel and Kenneth Pellman point out, however, that "among the Old Order Amish there were and are stipulations about clothing colors," from which we may infer that there were similar stipulations about quilt colors because Amish quilts were traditionally made from the same fabrics that were used in clothing. Thus, traditional quilts of the more conservative groups of eastern Pennsylvania contain burgundy shades, but not red, red-orange, orange, and yellow. Quilt historians agree that it is the "naïve" color combinations and juxtapositions that create the "bursts" and "subtle blends" of color that are characteristic of traditional Amish quilts.

Hmong leaving a refugee camp to emigrate to other countries, among them, the United States.
Photograph by Jan Folsom.

To Decorate and Distinguish: Hmong Paj Ntaub

Unlike the Amish, the Hmong women brought their needlework traditions with them when they immigrated to the United States. In fact, their needlework has offered them a way to preserve an element of their culture that is otherwise in danger of becoming lost amid the fast-paced American life-style.

In their homeland, the Hmong used paj ntaub to decorate clothing such as jackets, skirts, turbans, and headdresses. Besides being decorative, the needlework distinguished the Hmong from other ethnic groups, and within the Hmong themselves, it identified the various clans.

The paj ntaub of the White clan may be the best-known style of Hmong needlework in the United States. Although the White clan's techniques include appliqué, embroidery, and cross stitch, their most distinctive work is their reverse appliqué, in which a top fabric, in a solid, bold color, is slit and the cut edges turned under, leaving narrow channels through which a contrasting solid color of background fabric shows. There is also a layer of foundation fabric beneath the background fabric. The top fabric is stitched to the background fabric with closely placed, nearly invisible stitches. The stitching simultaneously anchors the design to both the background and the foundation layer.

To achieve its precise symmetry, the design in paj

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"Hmong people, when they see something, they just watch one time—they don't need to ask any questions. They just look at what you're doing, and they can do it."

ntaub reverse appliqué relies on cutting folded fabric much as Western children fold and cut paper to make snowflakes. A piece of fabric, usually square, is folded and cut. Then it may be unfolded, refolded, and cut again. Hmong needleworkers usually cut their complex designs into the fabric without drawing in the design. They make a few snips to mark significant points in their motif, then do the rest of the cutting freehand in stages after the top fabric has been basted to the background and foundation fabric.

Five primary motifs of paj ntaub reverse appliqué—the Star, Snailhouse, Elephant's Foot, Ram's Head, and Heart—are prominent and easily recognized and used by all Hmong today, despite regional preferences among the Hmong when they were in Laos.

The Star motif, as its name suggests, consists of an eight-pointed star at the center of the design with a varying number of concentric eight-pointed star-shaped channels radiating out to the border.

The Snailhouse motif consists of a pair of spirals joined at their outside rims. A basic Snailhouse motif commonly contains four such pairs placed so as to form a square or diamond.

The Elephant's Foot motif comprises four Snailhouse pairs placed in a square and surrounded by a varying number of rings. The curves of the rings soften the squareness of the Snailhouse pairs and create a distinct flowerlike motif.

The Ram's Head and Heart motifs combine the spirals of the Snailhouse with straight lines. The Ram's Head joins the outside rim of two spirals with an inverted star point. In the Heart motif, the two straight sides of the hearts lead into curves at the top, and then wind into inner spirals.

The Hmong use several minor motifs to balance a design or fill empty spaces. The secondary motifs add complexity and intricacy to the overall piece. Most common among them are rings, plumes, and bars.

A series of borders often surrounds the central motif in paj ntaub reverse appliqué. One border usually has evenly spaced appliquéd triangles that suggest mountains. Alternating with such borders are plain strips of fabric or strips embellished with embroidery, reverse appliqué, or another appliqué motif. The borders are usually edged on both sides by thin strips of fabric that look like rows of piping.

Adapting to Change

In their needlework, as in their life-styles, the Amish and the Hmong have demonstrated different degrees of adaptation. The Amish have, albeit slowly, adapted to change when it hasn't threatened family or community solidarity. Thus, Amish homemakers have wholeheartedly accepted the commercially dyed polyester and polyester/cotton fabrics because of their easy care. (Think of the ironing it eliminates for a mother with six to ten children!) As a result, contemporary Amish quilts, though usually exhibiting the same colors and patterns of older ones, look quite different from them.

The greatest change, however, may be seen in "Amish-made quilts." Unlike "Amish quilts"—those made for use in the Amish home—Amish-made quilts are made for tourists and quilt collectors. In such contract quilts, appliqué and print fabrics are combined with the traditional pieced geometric patterns, solid fabrics, and elaborate quilting.

Hmong needlework in America reflects changes as well, reflecting the Hmong people's relocation into the Western world. Because distinctions between the clans are no longer as relevant as they once were, each group now borrows elements from the others in both their festival costumes and their needlework. In addition, the Hmong have discovered a non-Hmong audience for their artwork, and paj ntaub has become a marketable commodity.

Today, instead of using paj ntaub exclusively to decorate clothing, Hmong needleworkers produce squares of reverse appliqué that can be framed, used as pillow tops, or pieced together to form quilts, tablecloths, or wall hangings. They have also adapted the designs to new uses, including potholders, shoulder bags, and tea cozies.

Traditional color schemes, in which red was predominant, and gold, bright pink, blue, and green were often used (although even these colors may be in themselves adaptations), have been replaced by pastels and

earth tones that appeal to the modern Western decorator's aesthetic sense. And many traditional designs have been simplified because Western buyers find them too busy and cluttered.

In Pennsylvania, the Hmong are applying the skills they've developed in stitching their traditional paj ntaub to producing the appliquéd quilts that have become so popular in "Amish country." Which brings us back to the Country Bride Quilt.

Two Cultures, One Quilt

One day, the story goes, a Hmong woman in Lancaster County noticed a "Quilts for Sale" sign in the home of an Amish woman. She inquired whether the woman needed help making quilts and went home with some blocks to work on. Since then, numerous Hmong women have gone to work for both commercial shops and smaller "home" shops, producing country and Amish-style quilts. As with their Amish counterparts, contract quilt making allows them to work at home. However, it is often not supplemental income that they're earning; many Hmong women, through their needlework, are the primary wage earners in their families.

What I have described is simply the history of an unusual cultural intersection, yet it is not unique. All over the world, such intersections have occurred and continue to occur.

Because of the Hmong people's strong needlework tradition, they seem to pick up this "new" needlework quickly. Pang Xiong Sirirathasuk, a White Hmong woman who emigrated from Laos fourteen years ago and worked for the Amish for two years, explains, "Hmong people, when they see something, they just watch one time—they don't need to ask any questions. They just look at what you're doing, and they can do it."

Not only are the Hmong women quick studies and excellent needleworkers, they work quickly. A Hmong woman can appliqué a full quilt top and sew the appliquéd squares together in two days to a week, depending on the complexity of the design and how much help she has from family members. Pang Xiong says that entire families work on quilts together in the evening after dinner into the wee hours of the morning. She reports that "some of the men are better than the ladies. Their stitches are a little tinier."

Amish and Hmong Combined Styles

One outcome of the connection between the Hmong and the Amish has been the relatively few but arresting textile pieces that intentionally combine elements of the Amish and Hmong traditions. In addition to similar elements in their histories—for example, both having left their homelands to flee persecution—there are some similarities in their handwork, such as the frequent use of borders on their textiles. Overall, however, it is the contrasts that make the combined work striking. The bold, deep Amish colors, broad borders, and simple shapes contrast with the delicate Hmong reverse appliqué (occasionally in "hot" colors), with its curvilinear designs. At least one Hmong woman, Tong Lor, of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, has begun to spend most of her time on quilts that combine elements of the Hmong and Amish traditions. Tong Lor's work appears on the cover of this issue.

Shop owners work with the Hmong in at least two ways: they provide both fabrics and patterns, or they provide only the patterns, size specifications, and required colors. In the latter case, the women supply the fabric and thread and do all the cutting and appliquéing. In either case, after a quilt top has been appliquéd, the Hmong women usually return it to the shop owner, who then farms it out to Amish women to do the quilting. The shop owners pay Hmong needleworkers about $200 for a standard-size Country Bride quilt top. They pay an Amish quilter $200 to quilt a standard-size quilt. A completed quilt then sells for $600 to $1,500.

Just as work arrangements vary, so too do working relationships. Some Hmong women believe that the shop owners take advantage of the Hmong needleworkers' need for income and inability to speak English. Pang Xiong explains that she quit working for the Amish because she found that making quilts on her own and selling them at quilt shows and craft fairs was more profitable. She says that many Hmong needleworkers don't do that because they "don't have a place to sell, and they don't know how to sell." However, other Amish entrepreneurs and Hmong needlewomen have enjoyed excellent, ongoing relationships. In any case, often the work has allowed Hmong women to earn a living by using a special skill before they can

Tong Lor, Hmong needlewoman, creates quilts that combine Hmong reverse-appliqué with Amish design and fine quilting. She is shown here with the cover quilt. *Photograph by Jan Folsom.*

speak English.

For the Hmong needleworkers, recognition is another issue. Because of the volume of tourism in the Lancaster County area, shop owners have had to rely on all available hands to create quilts to meet the demand, but prospective buyers, who may have just toured an Old Order Amish community as if it were a "living history" museum, want "Amish" quilts because they evoke images of a simpler time and life-style. The quilts are sometimes marketed as "Amish" quilts regardless of who had a hand in making them.

Larger cultural issues concern both the Amish and the Hmong. The agrarian Amish have watched their farmlands—through economic necessity and various regulations—slowly dwindle to the point that the "family farm" cannot necessarily support the family. At the same time, they have discovered that the combination of their traditional handwork, modified somewhat to meet popular tastes, and tourists can offer them a source of income that still affords them control over their life-style. Nevertheless, it also literally brings to their doorsteps the world from which they have deliberately chosen to isolate themselves.

For the Hmong, their traditional needlework is one of the few ways of preserving their heritage, but although paj ntaub is being exhibited and gaining recognition, Hmong needleworkers often can earn more money making Amish-style quilts than making paj ntaub. That, then, may become where they expend their efforts, and those may become the skills they pass on to their children.

What I have described is simply the history of an unusual cultural intersection, yet it is not unique. All over the world, such intersections have occurred and continue to occur with increasing frequency. We can only hope that as adaptations occur, needlework traditions are not lost to their cultures. At the same time, we need to open our minds to the new needlework that emerges. ❖

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About the Author. *Trish Faubion is the editor for* NEWS 3X/400, *a technical journal for programmers based in Loveland, Colorado. She divides her spare time among needlework projects, gardening, reading, and hiking in the Colorado Rockies.*

Trish would like to thank Pang Xiong Sirirathasuk for a delightful conversation and insights into the issues surrounding the intersection of the Hmong and Amish needlework traditions in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

The Amish & The Hmong
A Personal Perspective

JAN FOLSOM

I WAS STUNNED when I heard the news: Hmong women in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, were collaborating with Amish women to make appliquéd "country" quilts! I had worked intimately with both groups in opposite sides of the world, and I couldn't imagine that they had found each other and were sharing a common ground.

An Amish farmhouse and farm buildings.

All photographs on pages 36–38 by Jan Folsom.

Revisiting Amish Roots

Growing up in Ohio, near the largest Amish community in the world, I was often taken to visit Mennonite relatives who lived in that area. Raised as a city girl, and encouraged to be adventurous and creative, I felt uneasy with my shy and plain rural cousins. We lived in two different worlds, and I was unable to relate to their seemingly simplistic way of life. It wasn't until I had lived and traveled in more than fifty countries and had worked with tribal people in Southeast Asia that I became interested in knowing more about the Amish.

In 1991, I embarked on a year-long project to learn all I could about the Amish in four different communities, to photograph them, and to put the results into an exhibit. I wanted to understand how and why these people thrived on their secluded, old-fashioned way of life and to share this information with the public.

Most of my time was spent in Holmes County, Ohio, with an Old Order Amish family who had been close friends of mine for many years. Their love for me and their acceptance of me as part of their family far exceeded my expectations, and I was able to learn about them from the inside out. Appropriately, my exhibit, which was shown in September 1992 at The Colorado Gallery of the Arts in Denver, was called "My Amish Friends —An Inside Look."

My Amish family comprises a couple in their seventies and their brothers and sisters, their children in their thirties and forties, and their grandchildren from newborn to young adults. This age spread gave me ample opportunity to observe, to interact, and to ask questions on nearly every level. I ate at their tables, slept in their beds, rode in their buggies, transported them in my car, helped to can vegetables, photographed their products for brochures, made patterns for their clothes, and generally experienced Amish life as closely as I could without actually being Amish.

Along with this firsthand information, I researched the Amish; my reading ranged from pieces written for the casual tourist to John Hostetler's exhaustive textbook, *Amish Society,* now in its fourth edition. Attending an international conference on the Amish and meeting with several authors, including Donald Kraybill and Dr. Hostetler, have deepened my base of information.

Aware of the differences among the Amish groups, I traveled from Holmes County, Ohio, to Lawrence, Mifflin, and Lancaster counties—all in Pennsylvania —to see what I could learn about the clothing, housing, and buggies in these communities. In Lawrence County, for example, I found ocher-colored buggies and brown bonnets. In the Kishacoquillas Valley of

An Amish farmer works his fields with draft horses.

Mifflin County, I discovered bright yellow buggies and black buggies driven by the Byler and the Reno Amish and white buggies driven by the "Nebraska Amish," so named because their leader was a bishop from Nebraska.

Working with Hmong Refugees

A Hmong needlewoman works on her paj ntaub in a refugee camp in Thailand.

My contact with the Hmong began because of my work as a designer. In 1982, I had been asked by Christian and Missionary Alliance to go to Thailand and reorganize Camacrafts, the craft program this organization sponsored in Ban Vinai refugee camp on the Lao border. The offer came at a good time. For six years, I had enjoyed great creative fulfillment designing and making high-fashion, hand-painted silk gowns and resort wear, but I had determined that I needed to make a different contribution to the world, and I was ready when the call came to spend time helping the underprivileged.

My job goals were twofold: to design marketable craft items that the Hmong people could make and sell and to develop a catalog showing these products. The time estimate I was given was one month; the project actually took the best part of two years.

The craft program in Ban Vinai had been evolving since the end of the Vietnam War. In 1976, hundreds of thousands of traumatized survivors of the fighting in Cambodia and Laos had poured across Thailand's north and east borders, where the United Nations hurriedly threw together makeshift camps. Their possessions left behind, the Hmong arrived with nothing but the survival skills they had used in their mountain villages. In an effort to regain some purpose in their lives and earn a little money, the women started making small fabric pieces to sell. Ever enterprising, they took dirty parachute cloth and whatever bits of fabric they could find and appliquéd and embroidered them in their traditional needlework patterns. Missionaries took these crude pieces of paj ntaub to Bangkok and with a great deal of effort, sold them for a few baht each.

Ban Vinai refugee camp in Thailand where I worked with Hmong needleworkers.

From these meager beginnings, the craft program in Ban Vinai refugee camp grew into a business which sent Hmong needlework around the world and brought money to needy refugee families. Missionaries did an admirable job of running the program although they were untrained in sewing, product design, or marketing. When I arrived in Ban Vinai, I wanted to drop some of the items being produced, add others to meet marketing requests, and improve colors, fabrics, and embroidery thread.

Hmong sewing skills evolved through centuries of making their clothing in China, Laos, Burma, and Thailand. Their costume styles and needlework designs varied according to the group and area in which they lived. The Blue Hmong, for example, weave cloth for skirts, then batik the fabric with indigo dye. The batiked patterns are then embellished with appliqué and bordered with cross-stitch embroidery in intricate designs before the skirts are pleated. Jackets are decorated with reverse appliqué or embroidery on the collars, and in some village, on sleeves and the jacket body.

After studying the costumes of the Hmong and becoming familiar with their needlework skills, I researched fabrics and supplies available in the Bangkok wholesale district. Fortunately, I found a Chinese Thai woman to accompany me and do the negotiating. With her help, I was able to obtain the materials needed and to have them shipped to the camp on the Lao border.

Hmong needlewoman works on a quilt top laid on backing fabric and then on grass cloth at Ban Vinai refugee camp. It was difficult to find a large enough space to lay out the quilt where it would stay relatively clean.

My first encounter with the Hmong women was unpromising. Instead of being welcomed, I was met with suspicion and resistance. Arms folded, they stood

Change is in the air again, and the factors that brought the Amish and the Hmong together making quilts in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, continue to evolve.

defiantly before me with sleeping babies slumped in intricately sewn carriers on their backs and dirt-streaked toddlers clinging to their skirts.

I had designed some simple placemats which I had thought would be easy for them to make and easy for me to market. I eagerly showed the women what I wanted them to do. After a long conference with the ladies, my interpreter shrugged, "They say it's too difficult." I eventually understood that "difficult" had nothing to do with the intricacy of the design but everything to do with whether the women had ever made the item before. Payment would be based not on the amount of time it took for them to do something, but on how familiar they were with it and how much they wanted to do it.

Hmong needleworkers turning in their needlework to Camacrafts. Each piece had to pass a quality inspection.

Hmong needlework designs were easily adapted to craft items which missionaries in the camps designed. One of the most successful projects was bedspreads. The Hmong women especially enjoyed sewing small squares of reverse appliqué and then assembling them into bedspreads. They were given the measurements for twin, double, queen-, and king-sized bedspreads. To be accepted by Camacrafts, a finished bedspread could not deviate more than two inches in any dimension. The women, though unschooled, easily figured out how big to make the squares and the borders to arrive at the correct dimensions.

Assembling the squares into bed-sized rectangles was a challenge in a place where there were no clean places to work. Attaching the huge rectangles to the backing fabric added another dimension of difficulty, but the women met the challenge with ingenuity and skill. They found a relatively flat place in the packed dirt outside their huts, spread woven grass cloth, then laid the two large pieces of fabric to be sewn together on it. They washed their feet before venturing onto the fabric, then squatted down and moved about on top of the fabric, assembling the two pieces into a bedspread.

Bedspreads, like most of the other textile products made by the Hmong women, were items they would never make for themselves. In a Hmong hut, in their native villages as well as in the camps, an entire family might sleep together on a bed constructed of bamboo and grass cloth. The only luxury might be mosquito netting. Even though they couldn't use them themselves, the Hmong women used their needlework skills to provide for their families, and in so doing they kept their tradition alive.

Years later, my experiences with the Hmong and the Amish came together. As a designer of Hmong bedspreads and a teacher of the women making them, I knew my life had come full circle when I discovered Hmong women working with the Amish and Mennonites who were part of my heritage.

Intersection in Lancaster

It was in Lancaster County, land of gray buggies and droves of curious tourists, where I discovered that Hmong women were sewing the appliquéd tops for "Amish" quilts. Eager to know more about this collaboration, I spoke with shop owners, with Hmong women, and with quilt expert Rachel Pellman, all of whom were instrumental in this development. The catalyst had been an appliquéd quilt designed for a Lancaster, Pennsylvania, row house restoration featured in *Bride's Magazine;* publication of the article led to many requests for finished quilts [see page 26].

Mennonite shopkeepers began to supply Hmong women who had settled in Lancaster County with fabric and patterns to make the appliquéd quilt tops. Eager to see this collaboration in process, I found a young Hmong woman in her early twenties who was sewing quilt tops while taking care of her husband and four children. Eventually, she could not meet the demands on her time, so she gave some of the sewing to her friends and relatives. It wasn't long before they had learned how to do the quilting and complete the quilts instead of having Amish quilters do it.

Change is in the air again, and the factors that brought the Amish and the Hmong together making quilts in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, continue to evolve. On a trip there last summer, I found many more of the Hmong women quilting as well as appliquéing the quilts. I look forward to what will evolve as I follow the stories of these two cultures I care about deeply. ❖

About the Author. *Jan Folsom is a designer, photographer, and writer who is interested in the Amish and the Hmong and has organized exhibits presenting both cultures. In the 1980s, she worked with Hmong needleworkers in a refugee camp in Thailand. Since that time, she has worked to increase understanding between different cultures around the world. She lives in Boulder, Colorado.*

A *Hmong-Amish Reverse Appliqué Square* to Make

Designed by Suzanne De Atley and Chue Lao

TRADITIONALLY, the basic construction of a reverse-appliqué piece calls for three layers of fabric: a foundation layer (invisible), a background layer (here, red), and an overlay layer (here, brown) that is cut and its edges stitched under to reveal the background color as the design. The work may be embellished further—as this one is—by additional appliqué and by embroidery stitches. In our project, the purple triangles are appliquéd on after the central diamond of reverse appliqué is complete, and a fourth layer of finishing fabric covers the back of the piece (hiding all the stitching) and is brought to the front as a brown border. The finished piece measures 8 by 8 inches.

Although reverse appliquéing is not difficult, it's a good idea to practice cutting patterns on paper first and then practice turning under edges, keeping an even channel open, and making precise and evenly spaced appliqué stitches on fabric scraps. *Creating Pa Ndau Appliqué,* by Carla J. Hassel (see Further Reading, page 35) is a useful reference that contains additional designs. The fabric colors and the Center Diamond design provide the Amish elements.

Materials

Three colors of firmly woven cotton fabric that will not ravel and a lightweight cotton fabric, such as muslin, to use as the foundation layer. We used a set of Amish colors quilt fabrics from Quilts and Other Comforts, PO Box 394, Wheat Ridge, CO 80034-0394. (303) 420-4272. Background piece (color 1), 8 × 8 inches; overlay piece (color 2), 5 × 5 inches; finish and border (also color 2), 9¼ × 9¼ inches; triangles (color 3), a rectangle 7¼ × 3 ⅝ inches (folded in half crosswise and cut, then folded diagonally and cut into four triangles); foundation piece, 8 × 8 inches. Preshrink and iron the fabrics and test for colorfastness if you plan to wash your finished piece.

Cotton basting thread

Coats 40 wt rayon embroidery thread for appliqué; Coats 30 wt rayon for the embroidery. We used black for appliqué, turquoise for embroidery. For more visible running stitches, use cotton turquoise thread.

Sharp scissors strong enough to cut through four layers of fabric

4-inch embroidery scissors with sharp points

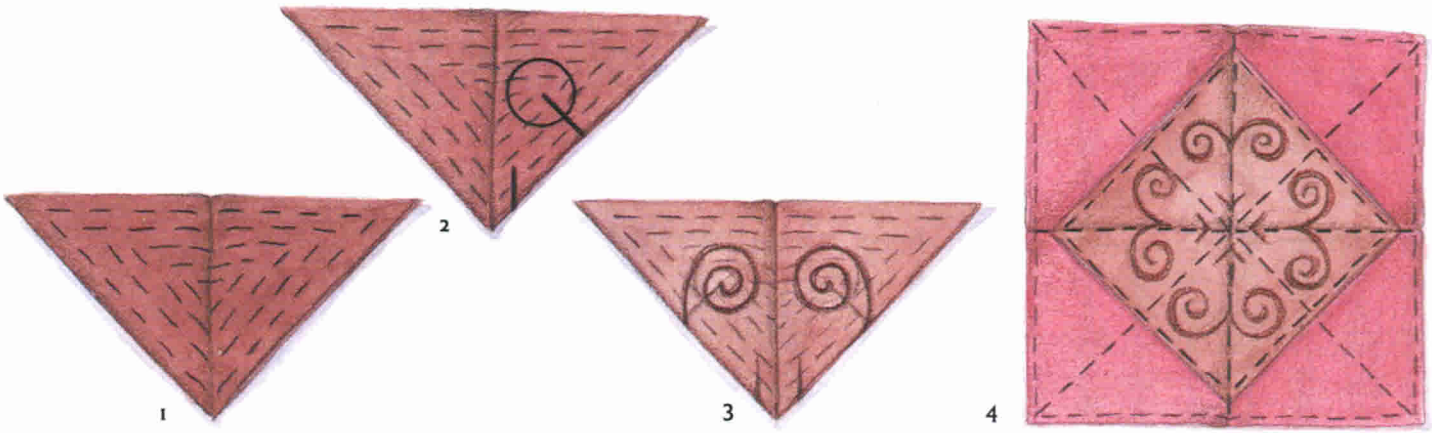
2 needles: for the appliqué, Betweens size 12 (a quilting needle); optional for basting, size 12 regular sharp

Thimble

Small ruler marked in sixteenths of an inch

1-inch circle template (or a quarter)

Disappearing-ink pen (the mark disappears when rinsed with cold water), such as a Wonder Pen



Cutting the overlay piece

Fold the overlay piece to make a triangle four layers thick: First bring the upper right corner of the square down to meet the lower left corner; align the edges carefully and crease the fold. Next, fold the triangle in half so that all the cut edges are together and crease the fold. You will cut your design into this triangle.

1. Baste the folded fabric to keep the folds in place while cutting. Baste along the edges, then inside the triangle in rows about 1/2 inch apart. Mark the centerline of the basted triangle by folding it in half and creasing the fold. Then open it again to your working triangle. Position it so that the point where the folds meet faces you and the cut edges are away from you.

2. Make a mark on the right-side folded edge about 1½ inches from the fold point of the triangle. From this point, draw a line 5/8 inch long perpendicular to the folded edge. Align the center of your circle template to coincide with the end of the line and trace the circle. These lines will guide you in cutting the snailhouse spirals.

Next, make a mark on the right-side folded edge 5/16 inch from the fold point. From this point, draw a line 1/2 inch long parallel to the centerline. This line will guide you in cutting the L-shaped designs in the center of the square.

To mark the opposite side for cutting, turn the triangle over. The unmarked side is now the right-hand side. Mark it as above.

3. First, cut the lines parallel to the centerline, then cut the spirals. (We recommend practicing the spirals on paper first, or drawing them to guide the cut.) Beginning at the mark on the fold line, cut a gentle curve up to the circle outline. Follow the circle outline, rotating the fabric as you cut. When you are about 7/8 of the way around the circle, begin to cut the spiral. Watch the previously cut edge to keep a uniform width.

Turn the triangle over and cut the second spiral, then remove the basting threads and open the overlay. You should have four pairs of snailhouses, each pair joined at the outer edge of the "shell," and four L-shaped cuts in the center of the square.

Preparing the layers

Fold the background fabric (here, red) in half horizontally and then vertically so that it is quartered. Crease the folds and open the square with the right side down.

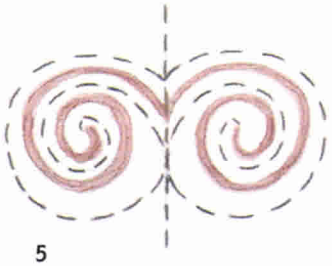
Quarter and crease the foundation fabric (muslin) in the same way. Open it and place it right side up on the background fabric so that the quarter lines match. Pin the two layers together.

4. With the background facing up, place the overlay piece so that it rests as a diamond within a square. Align the fold lines of the overlay with those of the background and pin it to the other two layers. To secure the stacked layers for stitching, baste along the perpendicular and diagonal axes and around the outer edge of the overlay. Baste the outer edges of the background and foundation pieces to prevent fraying.

5. Carefully baste the snailhouse spirals beginning at the V between the members of each pair and using small basting stitches down the center of the spiral rings. Also baste outside the snailhouses.

The stitches used in reverse appliqué

6. Appliqué stitch. This tiny, visible stitch is the primary construction stitch. Fold under a narrow seam allowance (1/16 inch to 1/8 inch) and hold it in place with your thumb. Use a single rayon thread knotted at the end. Insert the needle from the back of the piece through the appliqué very close to the folded edge. Draw the thread through and insert the needle through the background and foundation fabrics right next to the folded edge. Direct the needle diagonally to the left on the underside and bring it up through the appliqué piece again about 1/16 inch from the previous stitch. Concentrate on keeping the stitches equal in size, evenly spaced, and perpendicular to the folded edge.



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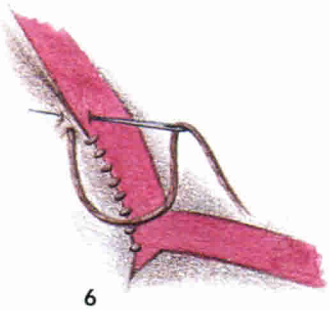

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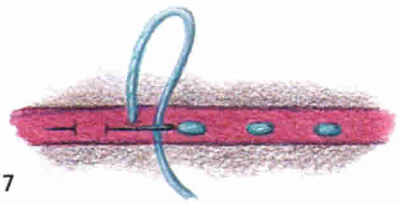

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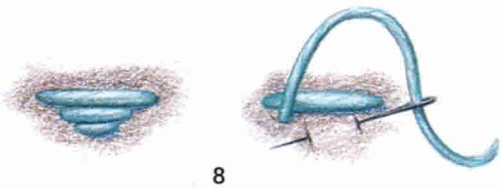

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Sew inside corners on the overlay by clipping the corner of the seam allowance along the diagonal to within a few threads of the corner fold line. Turn the seam allowance under and place a stitch slightly to each side of the corner so that the stitching does not cause fraying.

Sew points on the overlay by tucking the seam allowance under on the first side and stitching to within 1/4 inch of the point. Tuck the seam allowance under along the second side, keeping it under the first folded edge. Finish stitching the first side. Place a stitch on each side of the point and one exactly at the point.

Sew concave curve areas by clipping the seam allowance frequently to avoid dimpling. Take care not to cut too deeply.

7. Running stitch. This over-and-under stitch embellishes the channels produced by the reverse-appliqué technique. For this piece, the running stitches are about 1/16 inch long and spaced about 1/8 inch apart.

8. Satin stitch. Use the satin stitch to produce the triangular accents on the surface of the piece. The longest stitch of each triangle is about 1/4 inch long.

Stitching the reverse appliqué

For the snailhouse: Begin sewing the convex curve of the spiral first. Clip the seam allowance at the lower V in the center of the spiral pair. Using the point of your needle, turn under a 1/16- to 1/8-inch seam allowance. Turn under about 1/4 inch of the fabric edge at a time and hold it in place with your thumb. Secure the edge with the appliqué stitch as described above.

At the center of the spiral, turn a soft point and begin stitching the second, concave side. You will have to clip this seam allowance to keep the curve smooth. As you progress, the channel that lets the background fabric show through forms the design. In our example, the channels are about 3/16 inch wide. Keep the width of this channel even by adjusting seam allowances as you stitch.

When you complete the first spiral of the pair, turn under a neat point at the V and continue stitching the concave curve for the second spiral.

After completing the snailhouses, stitch the lines that form the Ls. For each L, make five corner clips and one folded point.

Stitch the border of the overlay. Turn under the outside edges of the overlay piece and appliqué. Make sharp points in each corner.

Finishing the square

Lay the hypotenuses of the triangles flush with the edges of the overlay piece. The base points of the triangles should meet on the horizontal or vertical fold lines of the background fabric. Baste in place.

Stitch under the base of each triangle to form a border for the overlay piece. In our example, the channel left is 1/8 inch wide. Stitch the remaining sides of the triangles and remove the basting threads.

Using the turquoise embroidery thread, embroider a running stitch down the center of all the reverse appliqué channels. Add the satin stitch triangles.

Fold the finishing piece in quarters and crease. Open it and with wrong sides together, align the stitched piece on it. Pin the pieces together and baste them, close to the edge of the finished piece.

Turn the edges of the finishing piece over to the front of the stitched piece to form the border. Press the border in place, mitering the corners.

Beginning on one side, turn under enough seam allowance on the finishing piece to make a 1/2-inch border. Using the appliqué stitch and the dark rayon thread, sew the border to the front of the stitched piece, and secure the mitered corners.

Remove the remaining basting threads. Remove any traces of ink with a little cold water. Gently steam press the piece on the wrong side. If wrinkles remain, press the piece on the right side with a press cloth.

Stethoscope and forceps; lace, knitting needles, sewing needles; pen, diary pages, and photographs—all arrest the visitor at the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers Museum in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Photograph by Joe Coca. Courtesy of the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers Museum.

BUCKSKIN, LACE, AND FORCEPS:

Hilda A. Erickson, Utah Pioneer

BY JUDE DAURELLE

As soon as anyone of the cholera-smitten passengers died the captain steered for the nearest shore. There the men dug a grave and buried the corpse. Then the trip continued until it was time to steer to shore for the next funeral.

On the Missouri River to Nebraska

The trip from Wyoming, Nebraska [mail depot and routing point not far from Omaha], to Salt Lake City took an even ten weeks. We reached our destination on October 22, 1866. In Salt Lake City, they had been fearing that we would be snowbound, so they had sent out people with many mules to meet us. The mules pulled our wagons the last two days instead of our oxen, who were absolutely exhausted.

En route by wagon train to Salt Lake City

AMONG HER BELONGINGS lay a stethoscope, forceps, a gray buckskin mask, scissors and needles, a memorandum book, a ballot showing her candidacy for the Utah legislature, photographs of a handsome young woman of the late nineteenth century—and knitted lace. The woman pictured in the photograph and whose belongings these are was Hilda A. Erickson, for several years before her death in 1968 Utah's oldest living pioneer. She was a licensed obstetrician (frequently called upon to be general practitioner, dentist, and veterinarian), a seamstress, a missionary, a teacher, a vegetable gardener, a rancher, and after her husband died, the owner of a general store. And throughout all those years, she was a lace knitter. The display case at the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers Museum speaks of the contrasts her life encompassed. It caught and held my imagination.

To be considered a Utah pioneer, a person must have entered the state before the joining of the east and west segments of the transcontinental railroad near Ogden, Utah, in 1869. Hilda had arrived from Sweden with her mother and younger brothers in 1866.

Her long and somewhat enigmatic life was mainly lived in what could be called the harshest, most inhospitable environment in the contiguous forty-eight states. Of the objects in the case, it is probably the medical instruments that represent the most unusual aspect of her life; with those instruments she traveled that difficult terrain. But it is the knitted lace that represents the most common aspect—those elements of her life shared with other pioneering women. The delicate lace knitted over many years acts as counterpoint and balance to the demanding practical realities she dealt with always. Although accounts differ in some details, all present Hilda Erickson's life as remarkable.

Hilda Erickson as a young woman.
Photograph courtesy of Hilda Richins.

Hilda Erickson was born in Sweden on November 11, 1859, to Pehr Andersson (or Anderson) and Maria Kathrina Larsson (or Larson) Andersson. She grew up on a small farm in Ledsjö parish with her parents and four brothers. Early in 1866, Pehr Andersson and his wife met Mormon missionaries working in Sweden. After a fervent religious conversion, they decided that Maria, with their two younger sons and their daughter, Hilda, should go to America to begin a new life in the Mormon community and prepare for the later coming of the rest of the family. Pehr and the two older sons stayed in Sweden to earn money for passage and their new life.

In May 1866, a group of Mormon converts that included Hilda and part of her family set off from Göteborg, Sweden, traveling first by boat to Denmark, then to Germany, and to England, where they em-

barked for the United States. After a nine-week sea voyage on the sailing ship *Cavour* that included headwinds, periods of being becalmed, and fog, they landed in New York in July. They went by train to St. Joseph, Missouri, and from there by boat on the Missouri River to Wyoming, Nebraska. The river trip was marked by many shipboard deaths of cholera. The final segment of the journey was made by foot and ox-cart to Salt Lake City with Captain Abner Lowry's train of sixty wagons and 100 passengers. The train arrived in October 1866, the last immigrant train of the season.

Bride and groom Hilda and John Erickson, 1882.
Photograph courtesy of Hilda Richins.

Because neither houses nor jobs were available in Salt Lake City, the Anderssons went on to Mount Pleasant, Sanpete County, where they were able to board with a friendly family. Maria Andersson supported her family by spinning, weaving, and sewing clothes for other pioneer women, and Hilda attended school for two winters there. When Pehr Andersson and the older brothers joined the family, they moved to Grantsville, in Tooele County, an area southwest of Salt Lake City on the edge of the Great Basin and the Great Salt Lake Desert. Hilda continued school in Grantsville until she was fourteen. She left school briefly to take a course in dressmaking, tailoring, and sewing (which included fitting and making patterns) in Salt Lake City, becoming an efficient and talented seamstress.

After she left school, Hilda supported herself as a seamstress, often completing an entire dress, suit, or coat per day. She had an active work, social, and religious life, as the journal she kept of her twenty-first year makes clear. On February 23, 1882, following a long courtship, Hilda married another Swedish immigrant, John Erickson, in Salt Lake City. Just one year later, the two were sent as missionaries to the Goshute (or Gosiute) Indians in the Deep Creek Mountain Range's Ibapah Valley. The valley runs north and south just east of the Utah-Nevada border. The mountains rise majestically, many of their sheer granite faces reaching 12,000 feet. The Goshute Indian Reservation is on

—continued on page 46

I Will Commence to Write a Daily Journal

The following entries are selected with permission from a published version of Hilda Erickson's journal of her twenty-first year. "I am now twenty-one years of age," Hilda wrote, "and will commence to write a daily journal." The entries record her life as a capable seamstress and a popular young unmarried woman.

November 11, 1880: It is Relief Society conference. I have no time to go to meeting. I made one pair of pants and my brother John came home and made me a present of a teapot. It was my birthday and mother presented me with a water pitcher and a set of glasses. I went to meeting in the evening and heard Sister Kimball and Sister Howard preach. I went home and John Erickson accompanied me and asked me to become his wife, which I did not readily comply with. I told him I was not ready to get married. I told him to leave me to consider the matter. (It was not the first time he had asked me.)

December 12th: I went to Sunday School and took Emma home for dinner and then we went to meeting to hear Pres. H. Grant and Apostle Lyman. Lucy Clark and Aretta Hale and myself went to Brother Jepson to see about the hall for a leap-year ball but we did not get it. I had supper at brother Hales and then we went to meeting again and John Erickson took me home; requested of me to answer his question, which I did not exactly do. I told him the same as before, that I was not ready and that I wished him to go home.

December 13th: I commenced making a dress for Mrs. Nicks and John E. came up on horse-back and I got his horse to go down to Charley Stromberg and E. Samuelsons and then returned home to work again. I worked until 2 o'clock then I went to the store and saw Lucy about the dance and went in to see Mrs. Nicks and sister Anderson about the hall. I went to see Pete Anderson about playing, and down to Charleys to get some money and then I returned home and John E. was there. He sat coaxing me to give him a satisfactory answer. I told him that I was too young. We made a bargain that I should take somebody else to the dance and he would do the same.

December 21st: I sewed all day till 3 o'clock; then went to A. Eliasons to cut out a coat and vest for the boy.

December 25th: Christmas Day. We all went to Charley's for dinner and then I went with John Erickson to the dance at night and danced 25 times.

December 26th: Sunday. I went to Sunday School and after dinner went to Bolingers.

December 27th: I sewed a coat for Pete's boy and some for Mrs. White. Went to Bolinders for supper John E. came to see me. I cut out a coat for Claus.

December 28th: Went to Andersons for dinner, had a good time. Then I went to the dance at night and danced 26 times; John E. asked me the same old question.

December 29th: I sewed on Claus's coat. Emma Erickson wanted me to come home with her and cut out a dress which I did. Then John took me home on the horse and asked and coaxed me the same. Again I told him I would consider the matter.

December 30th: I sewed George Hammond's pants. Adolph Johnson asked me to go to the Swedish dance and I went with him.

January 8, 1881: I was invited to Lottie Andersons for a candy pull but went to John's for dinner and supper and stayed there until 12 o'clock.

January 9th: I went to Sunday school. Lucy gave me $3.85 for the dance, went to meeting and heard the President preach. John E. took me home and asked me again to marry him in January, which I would not consent to do.

January 10th: We were at Elquists for breakfast and Charley Stromberg took me down in a wagon to cut out dresses for the girls. Then I went home to go to the dance for Elam McBride who was going on a mission. I danced 24 times.

January 12th: I made a pair of overalls for John E. and he came after them. He said he had quit going with the girls and said he had heard something and mother jawed me so I went up to Claus's a little while.

January 17th: John E. came up early in the morning and I got his horse to go to Kulls. Charles Stromberg and Tilda went with me and John E. to the dance. I danced 25 times in Anderson's hall for the benefit of Elam McBride.

February 5th: I finished Johnny's coat. J.K. asked me to the theatre and Willie Rytting did too. Then C. Willis came to read my face. He said I was very particular about my character and what company I kept; that I wanted a good name, liked fun and would have it even at my own expense. He said I was very particular with my food, wanted good food, and wanted things neat and clean and in order. He said I was worth my weight in gold and that I was very quick in learning anything; that I could see into things quick and that there was not a lazy hair on my head and if I had a friend and anyone would speak evil of him or her, I would stick up for them and almost fight for them and that I did not do much back-biting. I was saving but not stingy; I was the best natured woman he ever saw and I did not like to see anything suffer. I would run if they were killing anything.

Two entries from Hilda's journals of 1882 and 1883 present her marriage to John Erickson, after which Hilda and John settled briefly in Grantsville until called to be missionaries to the Goshute Indians in Ibapah.

February 2nd: Finished cutting Steve's clothes. Went to the Girls' Meeting and heard Mrs. DeLa-Mare sing in tongues. Mrs. House interpreted. Lucy Clark came and said she and Alfred Eliason were going to get married in Salt Lake City on February 22nd. She made me promise to go with them when they got married. I had said before that I wouldn't go to get married until she went and I thought she would wait awhile. John and I had to hurry and get ready. I didn't even have time to make my dress.

February 22nd: we left Grantsville to go to the station called Half-way House, to the little train that went to Stockton. Lucy's oldest brother, Thomas Clark took us over in a team and wagon. We went to Salt Lake City and stayed at the Townsend House. While sitting in the lobby I said, "I wish I was at home and going to the dance." We all went to the theatre and the following day, February 23rd, we went to the Endowment House and were married. We shopped around and then went home. Thomas Clark met us at the train at the Half-way House.

The following entry includes sentences deciphered directly from the original journal entry for the day of Hilda's marriage to John Erickson.

23 We got up to have breakfast then started for the house of the lord to get married then we was in there until 4 o'clock then we went downtown to buy again then down for supper and I was trying to get Lucy to stay with me but she would not. Alfred coaxed her to go with him then JE stayed with me and I had a good bawl when they went.

the west side of the range. Bighorn sheep, cutthroat trout, a few cougars, and mule deer were the main inhabitants of the area.

The church had bought land and wished to establish a large mission ranch there in the valley, 200 miles from Salt Lake. John and Hilda Erickson were among the couples called to create the model ranch. They were to use the model operation to work with the Indians on new ways of farming while teaching them the tenets of the Mormon faith. In addition to her ranch and garden work, Hilda taught the native women to read, write, spin, weave, knit, and sew. In an odd reversal of what we might assume, she also taught them to bead, a skill they are known for today. In 1883, Hilda and John Erickson's daughter, Amy, was born. Hilda's diary entry for that day is typical of many, brief and yet moving: "I took sick and Mrs. [illegible] came to see me then Betsy came then Barbara came again and I got worse and John went for Mrs. [illegible] then I got a little girl at 2 o'clock." When Amy was not yet two years old, Hilda was chosen for a special mission of her own.

Doctor Hilda Erickson

Utah's first hospital, sponsored by the Church of the Latter Day Saints Women's Relief Society, was chiefly for women. It opened as the Deseret Hospital on July 17, 1882. The women of Utah were among the first to study and practice modern obstetrics and medicine in general, and Hilda was invited to study at the hospital.

In 1884, Hilda traveled alone to Salt Lake City to attend Women's Obstetrical Training at the Deseret Hospital under Doctor Romania B. Pratt, a graduate of the Women's Medical College in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Hilda's mother took care of Amy. In 1885, Hilda graduated and was licensed to practice obstetrics in the Territory of Utah. Her license was renewed several times; the last birth recorded in her memorandum book was in 1906.

From her first licensing until 1893, Hilda doctored the inhabitants of the entire area from Tooele, Utah, to the Nevada border and from the Great Salt Lake to at least Millard County. Although she was licensed as an obstetrician, her medical training enabled her to treat both humans and animals as needed. She rode sidesaddle over the desert trails beneath the Deep Creek range, wearing a gray buckskin mask to protect her face from the blowing sand.

The memorandum entries from her largely obstetrical logbook are brief and factual, yet they offer a glimpse into pioneer life. The short lines are dictated by the narrow pad; her notes, presented uncorrected and unedited, were probably written hurriedly.

May 25, 1887 A boy
Very Blue 5½ lbs
Name James Cora Ibepah
Tooele Co Utah paid 6.00.
Ibepah Tooele Co.
Utah Ter.
Mrs. Mattilda Fitzgerald
May 7th 1888, 10 O'clock
A.M. Monday I was
not here I was coming
from pleasant valley
I got there to late
I was engaged and
had been there
3 times on false alarms
Name Frank
Paid 5.00
Mrs Rachel Tanner
Ibapah Tooele Co.
Utah Ter.
March 1889 Sunday 9 a.m.
A boy 6 lbs lived 1/2 hour
had to take the
placenta mother made
a good recovery
recived 6.00
Mrs. Nanie Tripp
Deep Creek. Eight mile
Nevada A boy
Elmer Guy Tripp 10 lbs
born Aug. 8 1891 Saturday
mother made a very
good recovery
Baby took convulsions
Wednesday 26 3 weeks old
but got all right
8.00

From these years of her life come stories of trips of twenty-five miles through the mountains on horseback to attend childbirths, of trying to keep newborn infants from freezing in subzero temperatures, of impromptu tooth pullings in her wagon as pioneer and native patients sought her out, often following her trail for miles to get her help. She kept her medical equipment with her. She may often have taken her wire lace-knitting needles and thread for long, unplanned hours away from home waiting for a birth or for a stubborn fever to break.

In addition to her medical work, Hilda continued to teach the native women useful crafts. She made patterns and taught them to make beaded buckskin gloves from hides they had cured. The Indians, who called her "Angapomy" (there are many variant spellings, but the translation is always "Redhead"), respected her and often came to her for general advice as well as medical help. That she kept up her work as a seamstress we know from brief notations such as this terse 1885 diary entry: "From April to August I sewed 104 days." Her vegetable gardens at the Deep Creek Mission Ranch were productive on behalf of the

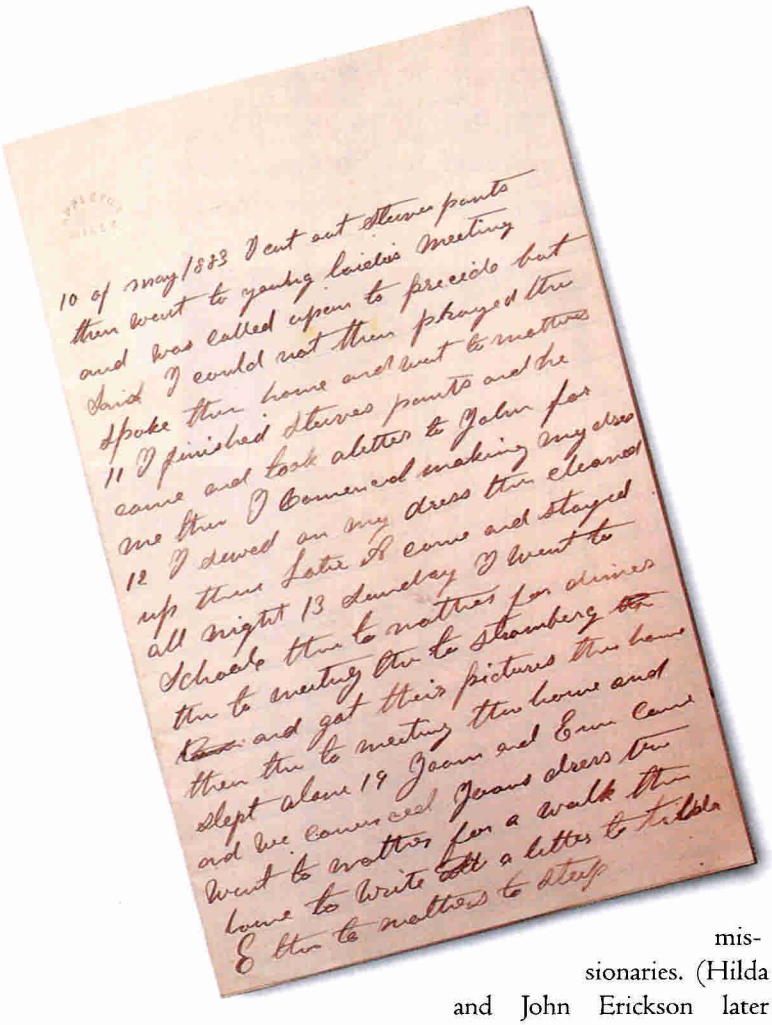
When the Gold Hill railroad was under construction, Hilda agreed to cook for the crew. Crew members came sooner than expected, one evening when Hilda was alone at the ranch. She immediately slaughtered and dressed a young sheep and served it for the evening meal.

Hilda Erickson, Utah pioneer, 1909.

Photograph courtesy of Hilda Richins.

Hilda Erickson's lace knitting, cotton seeds, and the ballot on which she is listed as a Democratic candidate for the state legislature indicate the breadth of her activities.

Photograph by Joe Coca. Courtesy of the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers Museum.



A page of Hilda Erickson's early diaries indicates the busy life she led and the amount of sewing she completed.

missionaries. (Hilda and John Erickson later bought the ranch next to the mission ranch as well as another ranch six miles away called Deep Creek, which is now owned by their grandson, Jay Hicks—all of which can lead to confusion in records.) Because supplies had to be brought over a great distance (a trip for supplies and mail took fifteen days) and could profitably be made available to everyone, she and John ran a small trading post. Their son, John Perry, was born on the Deep Creek Mission Ranch in 1890.

Like all pioneer women, Hilda Erickson developed many talents. A journal entry records, "We all went to the sheep camp and brought the men home. I sheared sheep." Minor emergencies arose constantly. When Amy was just three weeks old, Hilda was driving a team with another woman and the baby from Ibapah to Grantsville and was caught in a sudden sandstorm. Unable to see the road, they pulled what covers they had over themselves and sat up through the night—then went on to their destination the next morning. Years later, such unexpected situations still arose. When the Gold Hill railroad was under construction, Hilda agreed to cook for the crew. Crew members came sooner than expected, one evening when Hilda was alone at the ranch. She immediately slaughtered and dressed a young sheep and served it for the evening meal.

After long, work-filled days, if not called to attend a birth, Hilda used any quiet, lamp-lit moments of serenity to knit lace. The pieces in her possession when she died show substantial skill in fine work and a high degree of sophistication in her choice of projects. Pictures of her "parlor" at Trout Creek Ranch show lace curtains, crocheted lace doilies and scarves, and fine white work, all of which were popular in the Victorians, subject to the Victorian hunger for embellishment and fancywork. Lace was the simplest way to adorn the plain cloth of their lives. The material—usually cotton thread—came easily across the plains. And the craft was portable: Needles, thread, and partially finished yardage could easily be carried throughout the day, taken on visits, picked up as one watched through a long labor or illness. Lace, with its repeated and easily varied patterns (often, a woman would make variants of a favorite pattern over many years) could be knitted in a few spare moments in half light. A collection of short lengths of lace acted as a sampler. Lace knitting produced intricate beauty from simple elements, fastening the wilderness to a past almost forgotten and a future only imagined.

LACE TIES

Hilda Erickson was not alone among Utah pioneer women in producing yards of knitted lace. The display cases at the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers Museum hold a profuson of lace-trimmed clothes and linens. Why did these women who traveled by wagon and handcart to this territory create this extensive legacy of a product so often associated with civilization, fashion, leisure, and a life of amenities? Perhaps for exactly those reasons: The lace was a tie to that life, a graceful embellishment that could be produced under almost any circumstances and could link them across time and space to other times and places. To sleep in a raw new country on a pillowcase edged deep in lace may have helped to make the new life bearable.

Although they were pioneers, they were also Vic-

torian drawing rooms of England and France. Hilda probably made many of the pieces.

In her needlework as in all her activities, Hilda was fast. Granddaughter Hilda Richins remembers despairing of learning to knit from her grandmother because Hilda knitted so quickly; the younger Hilda finally taught herself.

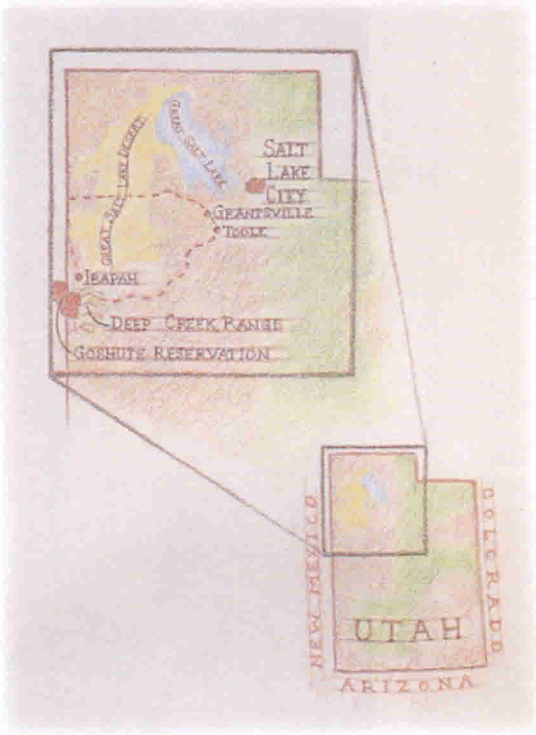
Last Chance Ranch

In 1893—Hilda was then in her midthirties—the couple's mission for the church was complete. Hilda and John returned to Grantsville, but chose not to stay long. For all its hardships, life at Deep Creek had been satisfying and deeply fulfilling. They purchased land of their own at Trout Creek on the northwest end of the Deep Creek range (a different location from the small town of Trout Creek at the southeast end of the range). They named their property "Last Chance Ranch." One acquaintance who had laughed at the idea of this ranch becoming productive was reportedly given within two years a squash too large to carry. The Ericksons hauled logs from the mountains to build a house and barn. John constructed a reservoir and a sophisticated water system. The couple raised alfalfa and wheat as well as cattle, sheep, horses, and dairy cows. With hard work, the gardens produced bountifully.

Later, Hilda moved to a house in Grantsville so that the children could attend school, while her husband stayed behind to run the ranch. When he was called on a church mission to Sweden in 1903, she managed the ranch and ran the town home. In 1909, Hilda and her son returned to Sweden for a three-month vacation, the first in her busy life. They traveled by steamer, the trip accomplished in a fraction of the time of that first sea journey.

Utah was the second among the territories and states in the union to grant suffrage to women (they were first able to exercise this right in 1890). After first voting as a young woman, Hilda Erickson, a strong Democrat, never missed an election. Although she never sought public office, in 1922, the Democratic Party nominated her to run for the state legislature. She did not become the candidate, but the nomination indicated the regard many had for her energy, ideas, and judgment. In 1925, Hilda and John bought and Hilda managed a general store in Grantsville. John Erickson died in 1943, and two years later Hilda sold the store; she was 85. In 1958, she flew to Illinois for a visit; on her return trip, she was a passenger aboard the first jet to land at the Salt Lake City airport.

The jet plane trip was just one event in Hilda's Erickson's long-standing love of speed. When automobiles first arrived in Utah, Hilda fell in love. She bought her first car in 1908 and over time owned eleven. For decades, she drove the desert roads at breakneck speeds, receiving many speeding tickets. In her mid-nineties, after an accident Hilda insisted she did not cause, she was told she was too old to be driving. Her retort was, "I'll be driving a long time from now if people like you will watch what you're driving into." Nevertheless, her license was revoked.



Hilda A. Erickson was licensed to practice obstetrics in the Territory of Utah, which by 1885 was congruent with the future state. Due to the treacherous ground between, the trip to Ibapah from Salt Lake and Grantsville necessitated skirting the Great Salt Lake Desert. Hilda's medical practice led her on long trips into and around the Deep Creek Mountain Range, onto the Goshute Reservation, and through parts of the desert.

Hilda died in Grantsville on January 1, 1968. Her eulogy describing a remarkable life led by an extraordinary woman sketches a story of courage, intelligence, enthusiasm, artistic skills, attention to detail—and a constant supply of energy.

About the Author. *Jude Daurelle graduated from Westminster College in Salt Lake City. A weaver, spinner, knitter, and dyer, Jude also teaches art and music. She thanks her husband, David Daurelle, for his help with this article.*

PieceWork thanks *the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, at whose museum in Salt Lake City, Utah, the research for this article was completed. We are particularly grateful to Ann Brest Van Kempen of the museum staff; Grant Davis, Hilda Erickson's great-grandnephew for help with family history; and Hilda Richins, Hilda Erickson's granddaughter, who generously loaned her grandmother's diaries and photographs.*

A Lace Edging to Knit

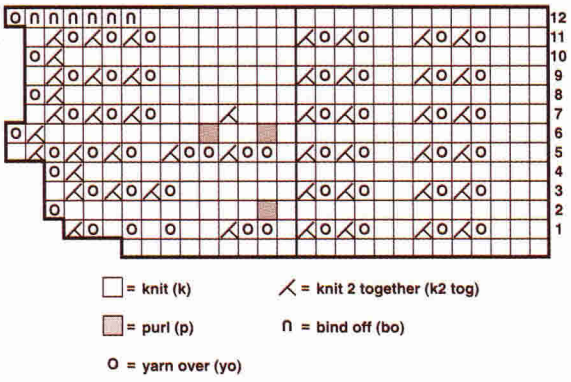
Designed by Jude Daurelle, based on a lace edging among Hilda Erickson's belongings

EARLY PIONEER WOMEN in Utah knitted literally miles of lace edgings, which they seem to have used most often to border cotton pillowcases. The lovely example knitted by Hilda Erickson and shown in the photo above would also be suitable for other household linens, curtains, or an apron border. Worked in a softer two-ply cotton yarn, it would make an attractive edging for a receiving blanket. The gray buckskin mask Hilda wore as she rode out on medical missions reminds us of the realities the lace embellished.

To edge a pillowcase

Choose #30 cotton crochet thread and U.S. size 0 or 00 (2.25- or 2-mm) knitting needles. Make or purchase fine-count cotton percale pillowcases and measure the circumference of one. Make a sample of six pattern repeats of the lace edging; wash, dry, and lightly spray starch it as you steam press it, being careful to open the lace but not stretch it, especially lengthwise. Measure the sample and divide by six to get an average measurement for one repeat. Divide the circumference of one pillowcase by the resulting number to determine how many repeats you'll need to knit to edge one case.

For example, suppose the circumference of your pillowcase is 48 inches and your sample of six pattern repeats measures 9 inches. The 9 inches divided by six pattern repeats gives 1½ inches for each pattern repeat, or 32 pattern repeats for the 48-inch circumference. If your arithmetic results in a fraction of a repeat, round up to the next whole number; you can ease in the surplus when you sew the lace to the pillowcase.



About the pattern

This lace edging, which is worked edge to edge, has two elements: a panel of filet work and a scalloped openwork motif. The filet panel, which comprises the first 13 stitches of each odd row, is easy to learn: all odd rows are the same sequence of knit stitches, yarn overs, and right-leaning decreases, and all even rows are plain knitting. The scallops require more attention. Three large holes are formed by double yarn overs (closed on the following row with a knit and a purl), and an airy triangle of single yarn overs fans out from them. Even rows begin with a yarn-over picot, which is made by simply bringing the yarn forward into the purl position before working the first stitch. The last row of the scallop begins with a picot and six bound-off stitches, which reduces the row to the number of stitches needed to start the next motif. You may find it helpful to use a row counter until you've learned the stitch sequence.

An average knitter will be able to knit one pattern repeat in about ten minutes, or enough lace for one pillowcase in between five and six hours.

Instructions

Abbreviations

k = knit
p = purl
yo = yarn over (bring yarn forward into purl position)
yo twice = bring yarn forward, wrap it counterclockwise around the right needle, and bring it forward again to make two wraps around the right needle
k2 tog = knit 2 stitches as one to make a right-slanting decrease
st = stitch
bo = bind off

Cast on 22 sts; k 1 row.
Row 1: k3, (yo, k2 tog) twice, k2, (yo, k2 tog) twice, k1, yo twice, k2 tog, k2, (yo, k1) twice, yo, k2 tog. (25 sts)
Row 2: yo, k9, (k1, p1 in the two loops of the yo twice in the previous row), k14. (26 sts)
Row 3: k3, (yo, k2 tog) twice, k2, (yo, k2 tog) twice, k6, (yo, k2 tog) 3 times, k1. (26 sts)
Row 4: yo, k2 tog, k24. (26 sts)
Row 5: k3, (yo, k2 tog) twice, k2, (yo, k2 tog) twice, k1, (yo twice, k2 tog) twice, k1, (yo, k2 tog) 3 times, k1. (28 sts)
Row 6: yo, k2 tog, k7, (k1, p1 in double yo of previous row, k1) twice, k13. (28 sts)
Row 7: k3, (yo, k2 tog) twice, k2, (yo, k2 tog) twice, k3, k2 tog, k3, (yo, k2 tog) 3 times, k1. (27 sts)
Row 8: yo, k2 tog, k25. (27 sts)
Row 9: k3, (yo, k2 tog) twice, k2, (yo, k2 tog) twice, k7, (yo, k2 tog) 3 times, k1. (27 sts)
Row 10: repeat Row 8. (27 sts)
Row 11: repeat Row 9. (27 sts)
Row 12: yo, bo 6 (counting yo as first st), k21. (22 sts)
Repeat these 12 rows for pattern.

PieceWork thanks *Jude Daurelle for her careful analysis of Hilda Erickson's knitted lace, and Dorothy Ratigan for her technical editing. The instructions given above will result in a close facsimile of the original edging.*

Wool-on-cotton colcha embroidery, circa 1940–1945. Floral and animal motifs summarized Carmen Espinosa's study of historic colchas. The motifs on the colcha-embroidered baby blanket presented on pages 64–65 are based, with permission, on motifs from this colcha.

Frances Delgado Espinosa. Collection of the Albuquerque Museum, purchased in 1985, General Obligation Bonds and gift of the Albuquerque Historical Society in memory of Carmen Gertrudis Espinosa, who designed the colcha after study of an historical colcha collection. Probably embroidered by Carmen Espinosa and others.

SUZANNE MACAULAY

THE ELOQUENT COLCHA

TRADITIONAL HISPANIC EMBROIDERY

ALTHOUGH THE WORD *colcha* is Spanish for bedcover and therefore can refer to quilts and other coverlets, during the Spanish colonial era in what is now the southwestern United States, the word referred specifically to a densely embroidered wool coverlet. Over time, the term also came to refer to the characteristic stitch used for the embroidery as well as to other textiles (altar cloths, altar carpets, wall hangings) embroidered with it. That single adaptable stitch links today's colcha embroiderers to a vital Hispanic embroidery tradition.

The colcha stitch (page 65) is often self-couching, anchoring the surface thread to the ground fabric with another stitch running at an angle to it. Stitches much like this efficient and flexible stitch have appeared in a great many embroidery traditions and have been known by a variety of names, including Roumanian couching, Oriental stitch, convent stitch, figure stitch, Deerfield stitch, Bokhara couching, and lazy stitch. The colcha stitch covers large surface areas economically. Stitch length and spacing can be easily adapted to the type and diameter of thread or yarn used, and the stitch can move in any direction, curving and undulating as a pattern requires. These qualities contribute to the striking subtle shading and textural effects that are the hallmark of colcha embroideries.

Colcha embroiderer Josephine Lobato (see page 57) uses the stitch to record intertwined memories of her life and past and the history of her San Luis Valley community in southern Colorado. "I worked a long time to discover something simple," she says. The simple thing is that "colcha stitch is good for everything." She first came in contact with colcha embroidery through a revival effort in San Luis, Colorado. She uses commercial yarns on muslin and connects with the colcha tradition by relying on the colcha stitch and by embroidering scenes that capture the past. She places herself or a family member in most of her colcha scenes: she is the young girl in pink at the wedding recorded in *La Entriega de los Novios;* she, her two brothers, and her baby sister sing their way from house to house in the Christmas celebration depicted in *En Belén Nació Jésus.*

A New Mexico weaver, Maria Vergara Wilson (see page 61) has found that colcha embroidery frees her from the constraints of the weaving grid and connects closely with her personal life. "I was expecting the birth of Martin when I did that," she comments about one part of a colcha embroidery she worked on over several years. She sees her life in the stitches. Maria, who grew up in Albuquerque, New Mexico, came to colcha embroidery through her grandmother and her Aunt Carmen Espinosa. Maria spins yarn for and weaves the traditional loosely woven ground cloth, *sabanilla,* and dyes her handspun embroidery yarns with natural dyes.

Although their work is strikingly different, both women find colcha embroidery intensely personal yet deeply rooted in their cultural backgrounds. As they inherit and continue a tradition, their colchas speak.

TRACKING THE ELUSIVE COLCHA

When I first began studying colchas, the very term appeared problematical. In the Taylor Museum archives in Colorado Springs, I discovered two letters between a curator and a collector about a particular bedcovering that had been added to one museum's collection. The crosscurrents of doubt and certainty implicit in the exchange intrigued me. The writers express confusion not only about the technique used to make the piece in question but also about whether the term refers to the technique or to the textile.

...the historic, cultural, and aesthetic meanings of these embroidered textiles are rather fragmentary because colchas were most often created privately and in the home.

To Mr. H. Schweitzer from M. A. Wilder:

December 23, 1936

It is a knitted or crocheted bedspread, used probably as the more familiar *colcha* was used by the Spanish colonial people. It came to us [labeled] as a knitted *colcha* and as we have no information on this type of material, I am in the hope that you may be able to tell us something definite regarding it. The materials are all native hand spun. The design being in large diamonds . . . The specimen in no way resembles any *xerga* [or *jerga,* a twill-woven fabric often used for rugs] that I have seen, so I am considering it rather as a variation of a *colcha.*

Schweitzer's reply:

December 26, 1936

My Dear Mr. Wilder:

I have your letter regarding a knitted or crocheted bed spread.

So far as I can judge from your description it is something that does not have any particular place, or *belong to any particular type of Spanish product,* [my emphasis] so far as I know.

I have seen several in my time that I think are the same and they might have been made by *any other people than Spanish [my emphasis].*

At any rate I am sorry to say that that is all I can say at this distance without seeing it.

Wilder expresses doubts concerning the intrinsic nature of the colcha, and Schweitzer adamantly assures him that the piece he describes is definitely "not Spanish." That particular colcha is now regarded as an exemplary wool-on-wool traditional Hispanic embroidery.

Since the letters I came across were exchanged nearly sixty years ago, research on Hispanic colchas has continued to be plagued with mystery and lack of solid information. The first colcha-embroidered coverlets and altar frontals were created during the eighteenth century to replace the lovely pieces the Spanish colonists had had to leave behind when they immigrated to the harsh frontier zone of what is now northern New Mexico. After independence from Spain in 1821, colchas became emblems of a regional culture.

Despite the absence of written documents, colchas suggest the concerns, styles, and circumstances of earlier times. However, the historic, cultural, and aesthetic meanings of these embroidered textiles are rather fragmentary because colchas were most often created privately and in the home. They were probably stitched during leisure moments between daily chores. Their creation went unrecorded in account books, business inventory lists, or surviving diaries, any of which might have captured information about the inspiration, means of production, stitchers, mode of exchange (gifts or trade), stitching techniques, and circumstances of creation.

Individual colcha stitches convert the rhythms of minute gestures into patterned fields so dense they look woven. Occasionally, the stitches are awkward, but most stitchers ripped out mistakes or hid problem areas by embroidering over them. Sometimes, faint pencil marks from an embroiderer's initial design are visible on the ground fabric, letting us glimpse the creative process.

Early Wool-on-Wool Colcha Embroidery

Traditional colcha embroideries from the northern Rio Grande area of New Mexico and Colorado are usually classified according to material and type of construction. The earlier embroideries, known as wool-on-wool colchas, are associated with the time of Spanish colonial domination in New Mexico. This type of textile continued to be made into the second half of the nineteenth century, when they were supplanted by wool-on-cotton embroideries. In wool-on-wool colcha embroideries, the balanced plain weave (equal warp and weft thread counts of twelve to twenty-two yarns per inch) of the handspun and handwoven woolen ground fabric, sabanilla, is so densely and completely overlaid with embroidery that it simulates a tapestry or carpet. The stitch texture is lush, and the designs are complex and formal. Because the narrow Spanish looms were

New Mexican sabanilla colcha, circa 1860–1870, 86 by 54 inches, with zigzags and a geometric floral design embroidered with yarns dyed with native dyes of indigo, brazilwood, chamiso, and combined indigo and chamiso for green.

Photograph courtesy of the Taylor Museum.

typically thirty inches wide, most colchas consist of two widths of fabric joined at a center seam usually as obscured by embroidery stitches as the ground fabric itself.

The overall designs of wool-on-wool embroideries appear to have been inspired by diverse sources, including the curvilinear floral patterns of Chinese shawls *(mantón de Manila)*, tree-of-life motifs from East Indian trade fabrics, heraldic symbols, and the geometric bands of Saltillo-style Rio Grande blankets.

Changing Tradition: Wool-on-Cotton Colcha Embroidery

Political and economic changes in the northern Rio Grande region during the mid-nineteenth century altered the style and appearance of Hispanic colchas. The wool-on-wool pieces created largely from hand-worked materials were replaced by wool-on-cotton embroideries made from factory-made cloth stitched with commercial yarn obtained from the eastern Anglo marketplace via the Santa Fe Trail. However, the complex interplay of hand embroidery and commercially produced materials did not result in the degeneration of artistic expressiveness, as might be assumed. Instead, the new materials engendered a different embroidery style from that of the woolen colchas. The new colchas were characterized by free-floating predominantly curvilinear designs of vines, birds, deer, and buffalo on bare expanses of tightly woven cotton ground fabric.

The shift to freestanding designs created from brightly colored commercial embroidery yarn resulted from a combination of factors. Delicate handspun fibers would have frayed and split if stitched into tightly woven twill manufactured cloth. Even commercial plied yarn could not have covered these densely woven ground fabrics. The fabric's compact solid weave lacked the open structure and pliability of handwoven sabanilla. Continually punching the needle in and out of tough twill fabrics until they were completely covered with stitches would have been tiring and difficult.

As well as factory cloth and plied wool yarn, post-colonial westward migration brought samples of American crewelwork over the Santa Fe Trail, inspiring embroiderers to incorporate new design elements into their repertoire. Crewel designs had been influenced by English embroidery, which had itself been strongly influenced by chintz fabric designs from India. It is possible to trace the path of a motif from India to its appearance in England, on the eastern coast of the United States, and westward to New Mexico.

Not only was the use of the single colcha stitch eclipsed by a choice of more elaborate stitches, but as trade with the East Coast increased, stencils and stamped patterns became readily available. By the end of the nineteenth century, these commercial patterns had inhibited hand-drawn stitchery. Not until twentieth-century craft revivals did the colcha stitch begin to flourish again in the Southwest. Maria Vergara Wilson and Josephine Lobato are two artists who ably and individually continue this rare embroidery tradition. ❖

About the Author. *Suzanne MacAulay is an art historian and folklorist who lives in Nederland, Colorado. Her doctoral dissertation explores traditional colcha embroidery and its recent revival in the San Luis Valley of southern Colorado.*

Further Reading

Fisher, Nora, ed. *Spanish Textile Tradition of New Mexico and Colorado.* Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 1979. Chapter 15 provides a good background on Spanish colonial textiles and revival of textile techniques in the twentieth century.

Glassie, Henry. *The Spirit of Folk Art.* New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1989. This lively discussion of folk art was inspired by the Girard Collection of the Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

MacAulay, Suzanne. "Colcha Embroidery Along the Northern Rio Grande: The Aesthetics of Cultural Inversion in San Luis, Colorado." Ph.D. dissertation. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1992. This cultural and aesthetic treatment of colcha embroidery traces its history from its roots to contemporary revivals.

Simmons, Virginia McConnell. *The San Luis Valley: Land of the Six-Armed Cross.* Boulder, Colorado: Pruett, 1979.

Teeuwen, Randall, ed. *La Cultura Constante de San Luis.* San Luis, Colorado: The San Luis Museum and Cultural Center, 1985. This superb brief compilation of essays addresses the Hispanic culture of San Luis, Colorado.

Wroth, William, ed. *Weaving and Colcha from the Hispanic Southwest.* Santa Fe: Ancient City Press, 1985. This reproduction of instructional manuals from the 1930s shows colonial embroidery designs for the New Mexico State Department of Vocational Education programs.

Josephine Lobato: Embroidering a Story

Suzanne MacAulay

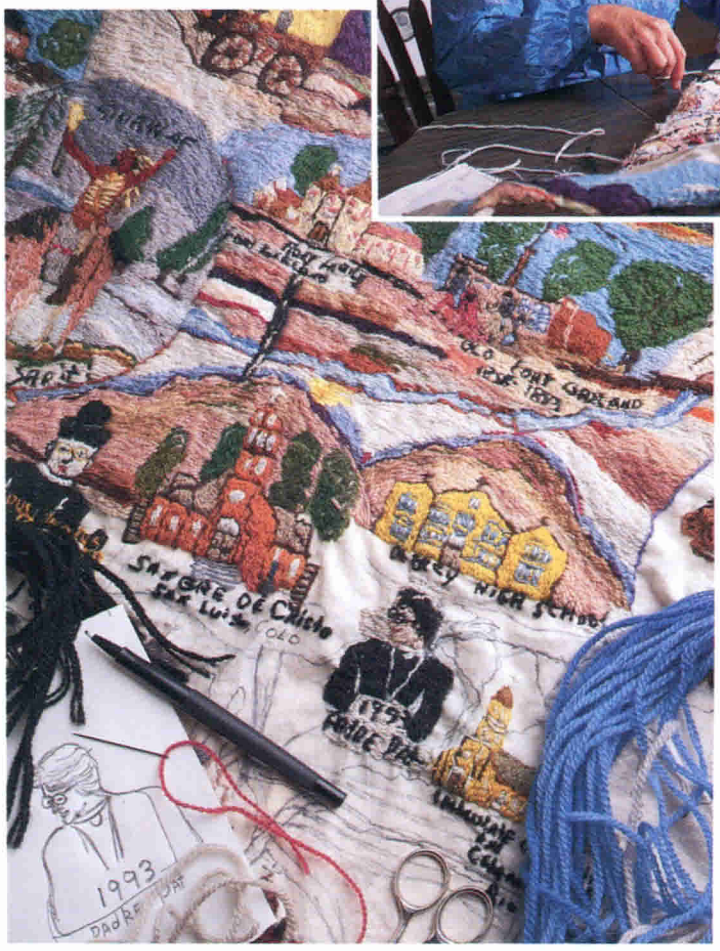
I was there to do a report. Carmen was showing us slides of embroideries from previous workshops. What I saw was feelings. There was something there that touched me. I have so much [experience] working with history. Then I have so much in my background—the memories of that time period when there was transition here in the 1930s and 1940s . . . I began to think . . . I always thought someday I'll sit down and write. But, I may never sit down and write! So, my embroidery is sort of a story . . . and it's sort of a legacy.

In 1988, Josephine Lobato attended an embroidery workshop in San Luis, Colorado, conducted by Carmen Orrego-Salas, a Chilean artist and teacher. This enterprise was part of a local revitalization program for the economically depressed town of San Luis, population 800. Josie Lobato was there as an observer for the Colorado Historical Society, but Señora Orrego-Salas urged her to put her notes aside and embroider—an experience that changed Josie's life.

Josephine Lobato's intense personal engagement with colcha embroidery as a pictorial narrative was a response to Carmen Orrego-Salas's encouragement to the San Luis women to trust their own creative abilities. Relying on their imagination, they could portray biographical scenes, memories (*recuerdos*), cultural scenes, and images—inspired by religion, folktales, dreams, or fantasies. Despite the economic purpose of the stitching project, Josie Lobato embroiders primarily for family and friends. By delineating her story and that of her community, she reaffirms her cultural roots, but she also strongly believes that her colchas constitute a legacy for her children. During the five years since she began stitching, Josie has always tried to complete an embroidery by Christmas Eve to give to one of her eight children, a practice that has become a family ritual.

Colcha: The Most Necessary Stitch

Josephine Lobato does most of her embroidery using the traditional colcha stitch, a stitch unaltered since frontier days. Occasionally, she will create textural contrast while she playfully heightens visual interest by using other stitches such as the turkey clip or "worm" (an expanded French



Josephine Lobato, colcha embroiderer, at her home in Chama, New Mexico, working on her current colcha embroidery, which captures in its sections the history and the present of different places in the San Luis Valley.

Josie Lobato's colcha, in progress, showing both her sketch and the finished needlework image of Father Pat Valdez of the San Luis church.

Josie Lobato's colcha embroidery *La Entriega de los Novios.*

Courtesy of Rose Marie Martinez.

staged in a school gym, depicts the moment during the traditional Hispanic wedding ceremony when the *padrinos,* the godparents, bless their godchildren and relinquish their responsibility as caretakers. They turn the bridal pair over to each other, to their new in-laws (more frequently, the emphasis was on the transferral of the daughter), and to the community. This has always been a fragile moment of passage in Hispanic nuptial rites. According to custom, the bride and groom could be kidnapped and held for ransom anytime before *la entriega* was actually performed. The performance was accompanied by the singing of at least twelve verses describing the passing of responsibility from one set of adults to another. Mixed into these verses were blessings, allusions to marital obligation, and innuendos concerning the future of the marriage.

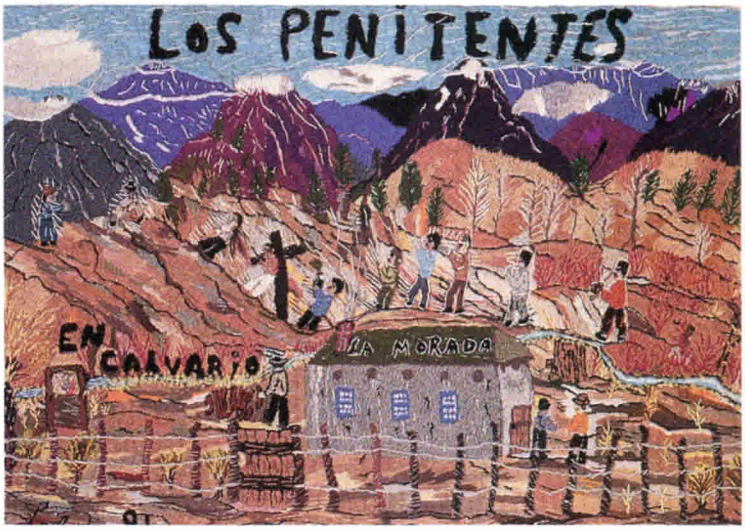
The evanescent quality of this scene is emphasized by the shades of pink, purple, and blue combined with startling red accents. The image of the man leaving by the side door with bottle in hand interjects a humorous note but also hints at a past and still prevalent social concern in this region.

knot commonly known as bullion stitch), or by leaving short strands of yarn dangling out of the picture for horse tails or reins, but she feels that the distinctive dimensional and tactile qualities associated with colcha embroidery derive primarily from the colcha stitch. "It's . . . the most necessary stitch. You can do miracles with that colcha stitch."

Detail of *La Entriega de los Novios.* The young girl in pink is Josie.

Whenever Josie is stymied by a technical quandary or needs to refresh her memory, she examines the nineteenth-century wool-on-wool colcha bed cover in the collection of the Fort Garland (Colorado) museum where she works; she is the director under the guidance of the Colorado Historical Society. Her job allows easy access to this piece, and she has used it over the years as a resource for both technical knowledge and inspiration. Her stitching dialogue with this historical colcha resembles an ongoing conversation with an old friend, which eases the loneliness of an artist consumed by a very personal vision.

Themes of Hispanic life, particularly from the transitional era of the thirties and forties, when Anglo influences were increasingly felt in the San Luis Valley, dominate Josephine Lobato's work. They reflect her artistic mission: to serve as a tour guide to her own culture. *La Entriega de los Novios,* which is



Josie Lobato's colcha embroidery *Los Penitentes.*

Courtesy of Rita Crespin.

Josie Lobato's colcha embroidery *En Belén Nació Jésus.*

Courtesy of Vernon Lobato.

La Entriega de los Novios was conceived primarily from Josephine Lobato's childhood memories, but her husband, Gene, also contributed to it. The "Go Wildcats" slogan, a reference to the local high school team, was his addition to historical accuracy. Josie claims that Gene is an effective collaborator "because we both have the same memories!"

Gene Lobato collaborated again with Josie to create *Los Penitentes.* She based her conception largely on Gene's memories of his religious experience as a young boy. The *Hermandad,* or Society of the Brotherhood, popularly known as the Penitentes, has long been active in this region. The Society's name is derived from the penitential practices of religious devotion performed before Easter by Catholic lay brothers, usually in the outer precincts of remote Hispanic villages. Women were restricted from participating in these annual Holy Week re-creations of Christ's Passion.

Los Penitentes is a composite picture of the *morada* (Penitentes' church) of San Luis (now abandoned), with a setting inspired by the colors and shapes of the foothills and mountains near the Lobatos' home in Chama, a village not far from San Luis. *Los Penitentes,* one of the most expressive of all Josie Lobato's works, coveys its emotions through dramatic colors (purple is "the color of penance") and the manner in which the harsh landscape envelops the Brothers as they climb the steep grade to the place designated as Calvary. To suffuse the barren landscape with a sense of seasonal regeneration and spiritual renewal, Josie spent many hours walking through nearby hills and observing the light, the subtle colors of plants emerging from winter, and the shadows on the surrounding mountain peaks at different times throughout the day.

Josie Lobato's experiments with colcha embroidery amplify her power of memory as she claims these recollections for herself and offers them to viewers to deepen our understanding of San Luis. Themes of change and transition frequently appear in her work. For example, in *En Belén Nació Jésus,* set during the early 1940s, the singing children visit traditional flat-roofed row houses standing next to adobes recently renovated in a more contemporary Anglo style with pitched roofs and colored shingles. Josephine Lobato's embroideries imaginatively shape and preserve life's stories, reaching into the twin wellsprings of history and biography:

> *There is more than one way to do history. This is my history . . . the history that I grew up with. So, it's coming out in bits and pieces in my mind as to what was important. But the point of the whole thing is . . . not to lose something that is going to be lost.* ❖

Details of Josie Lobato's colcha *En Belén Nació Jésus.*

Colcha: Tradition and Spontaneity

Maria Vergara Wilson

Maria Vergara Wilson, colcha embroiderer, at Ghost Ranch near Abiquiu, New Mexico, with her current wool-on-wool colcha embroidery on handspun and handwoven sabanilla ground cloth.

The public side of my work has always been weaving. Although my embroideries have been shown,they come from inspirations which I do not consider a part of my career. Weaving has always been about producing for those who have an interest in Rio Grande weaving; the embroideries have been done mainly for my family. I have sold three embroideries: two to the Museum of International Folk Art [Santa Fe, New Mexico] and one to the Albuquerque Museum. Although I am pleased that the museums wanted them, I found parting with the embroideries painful. I am not sure why I find embroideries so dear and so personal. Unlike weaving, which is done at a loom in a specific place, the embroideries accompany me throughout the events in my life. They are not predesigned; they change as I change. They can be carried with me, and often I can say, "I was sitting under the grand cottonwood at Ghost Ranch when I embroidered this."

I grew up in Albuquerque. My father, Chilean born, was a physician and a poet. He practiced medicine for over fifty years. My mother was a nurse and a classical pianist. My grandmother, who lived with us, gave me the love I have for the culture and language of southern Colorado and northern New Mexico. Unlike my mother, who pursued her career, my grandmother took great time to create many embroidered cloths. She was born and raised in Los Leones, Colorado (now called Walsenburg), where her family had been since the area was settled by the Spanish.

Embroidery was a part of the education I received in the small Catholic grade school that I attended. Under the watchful eyes of the nuns, we labored in the shade of the elms in the courtyard to produce embroideries. I remember having no interest in counting threads, a tedious process seemingly necessary to the production of altar cloths. Because my father provided the nuns with free medical advice, they often felt obliged to finish my frankly grimy samplers. Nevertheless, I did spend hours in this activity. I didn't mind; I simply preferred tree climbing.

I knew of colcha designs long before I ever attempted to make a colcha embroidery. My grandmother spent many hours teaching me to draw flowers when I was a little girl. A daisy with its long petals is the abstracted flower most children draw. The flower my grandmother and I drew had the rounded, fat petals of a colcha flower. When I saw the old colchas at the Museum of International Folk Art, I immediately recognized the floral designs which adorn them as the same flowers my grandmother had drawn for me.

My Aunt Carmen Espinosa was always involved in the traditional arts of northern New Mexico. Although she was not truly my aunt (she was the eldest living cousin in my mother's family), out of respect we called her Aunt Carmen. She made a study of colchas collected by Leonora Curtin Paloheimo, an early promoter of Spanish colonial arts in the 1930s. The designs she carefully studied formed the basis of the pamphlet *New Mexico Colonial Embroidery,* which was distributed by the New Mexico State University Extension Service and played an important part in a 1930s revival of the art.

Aunt Carmen was a sophisticated woman who loved the beautiful things in life and who took joy in producing a good many of them—as a painter, a writer, and an embroiderer. She published her last book with the University of New Mexico Press when she was in her nineties. Often when we got together, we would get out her favorite colcha. It was a unique piece because it had all the elements of design she had found in the Curtin-Paloheimo collection. Within the frames of the curving vines are all the delightful flowers and whimsical animals of her studies.

Aunt Carmen was a role model for me. I remember many of her comments to me. Not long before she

Wool-on-wool colcha, circa 1982–1984, 34 by 41 inches plus a 4-inch fringe, embroidered in a traditional style by Maria Vergara Wilson.

Collection of the Albuquerque Museum. Purchased in 1983, General Obligation Bonds. Courtesy of the Albuquerque Museum.

Details of wool-on-wool colcha by Maria Vergara Wilson.

died, she assured me, "I have loved every minute of this life." I associate that vitality with all her work and with my own embroidery.

Colcha Embroidery: A Matter of Time

To begin a colcha embroidery, I first weave a piece of sabanilla, the plain-weave woolen fabric used for a ground cloth in wool-on-wool colcha embroideries. This cloth has seldom been available commercially, which has prevented most colcha embroiderers of northern New Mexico from making wool-on-wool embroideries. In the absence of sabanilla, they have resorted to wool yarns embroidered on a cotton ground cloth. Handspun, vegetally dyed yarns are rare and must also be prepared. The colors I use are derived from plants and insects. A typical piece will contain yarns dyed with indigo, cochineal, chamiso, and walnuts.

I am currently working on a wool-on-wool colcha, which I began for the Folk Life Festival at the Smithsonian. I have spun the yarns and dyed them and have completed approximately a third of it. It will be a floral piece worked in a starburst fashion. Although I know working with the starburst design is utterly unwise, for some unfathomable reason I feel compelled to repeat this error. The design puts the threads on a bias to the warps and wefts of the sabanilla and, as might be expected, the overall textile becomes very pliable. Yet I like the way the handspun yarns look when they move outward from the center.

Traditionally, colcha embroidery is worked without knots. I begin embroidering with each new piece of yarn by first taking three or four running stitches. I notice that older embroiderers often turn my pieces over to see whether the back has knots.

There are traditional colors and design elements, but I arrange them in my own way. I often mark the basic patterns or the major sections of a colcha's design on the sabanilla with a running stitch in dark thread, but I like the spontaneity of working freehand with the flowing colcha stitch. The stitch creates wonderful textures and patterns that catch the light as you turn the piece different ways. Weaving has a forced symmetry that I have always wished to escape, and embroidery frees me from it.

Yet more than just materials from weaving creeps into my embroidery designs; design elements from the Saltillo blanket—with its characteristic central diamond and lengthwise borders—also appear. Although my colcha designs are floral rather than geometric, they are often arranged within borders that parallel the long side of the rectangular pieces, and they often have concentric floral diamonds in the center.

One colcha may take me two to five years; some colcha embroiderers have worked many times that period to complete a colcha. There have never been many colcha makers or colchas of the wool-on-wool style, but there are very few today. In order to make pieces like those made before 1821, as I have done, it is necessary to weave. Over the past five years, I have taught colcha embroidery at Ghost Ranch, a conference center near Abiquiu in northern New Mexico. Unfortunately, few women have the time or inclination to learn this art.

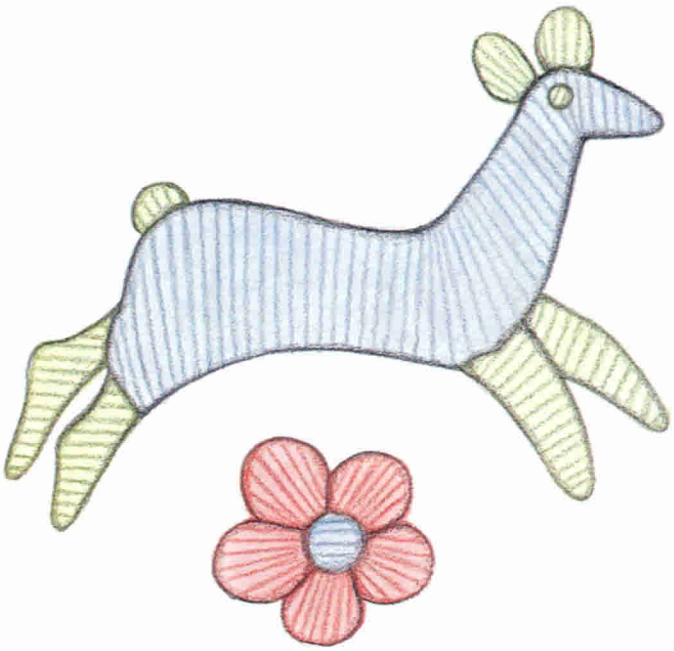
About the Author. *Maria Vergara Wilson, a weaver who spins and dyes many of her yarns, lives today in La Madera, New Mexico. Some of her colcha embroideries are in museums, but she does much of this special traditional embroidery for her family.*

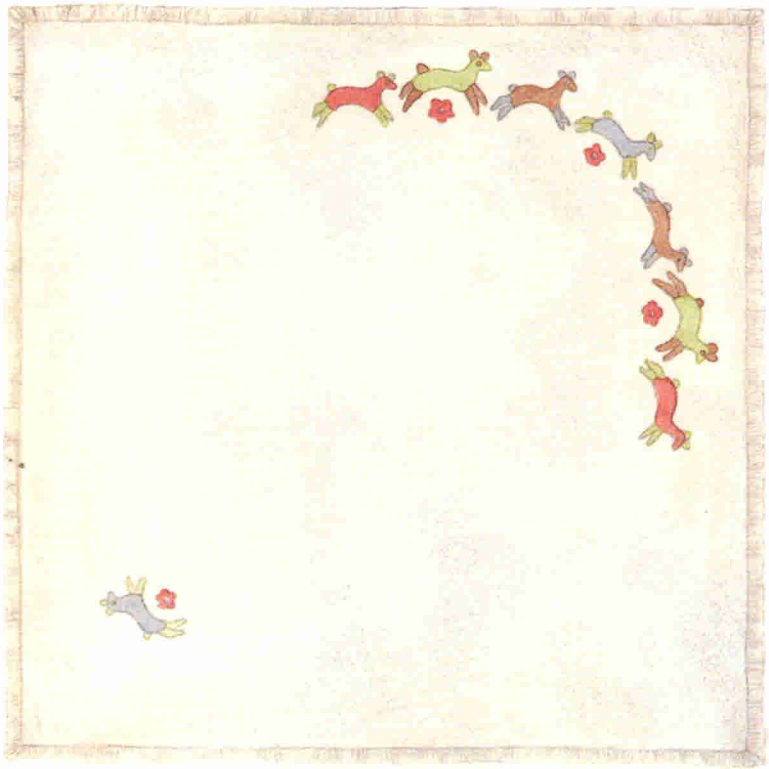
A Colcha Baby Blanket to Make

Designed by Marie Risbeck

Colorful textured wool embroidery in this versatile colcha stitch decorates this off-white, lightweight wool baby blanket.

Fabric and yarns are from Textile Reproductions. Cradle courtesy of the Loveland Museum and Gallery.





Materials

- 1¼ yd of off-white lightweight wool twill fabric. We used twill worsted fabric (catalog #211) from Textile Reproductions, Box 48, West Chesterfield, MA 01084. (413) 296-4437. Catalog $4.00 (includes fabric and yarn sample).
- Crewel embroidery needle (sharp with a large eye)
- Oval embroidery hoop 5 × 9 inches
- Wool yarn: The blanket shown uses natural dyed two-ply wool crewel yarn from Textile Reproductions (see above), one skein each of light brown, light blue, pink, and yellow. Alternately, use DMC's fine wool crewel yarn (Laine Medicis), two skeins of each color; or 18 yd of each color of Paternayan yarn and use only one ply at a time.
- Fabric scissors
- Cotton thread to match the background cloth
- Fabric marking pencil, such as Washable Wonder Marker
- Sheet of paper 11 × 17 inches
- Black marker that will not bleed into your paper
- Tape measure

Cut the fabric into a square 37 × 37 inches and pull a few edge threads to mark the grain on each side. Recut the fabric if necessary to align it with the grain and cross grain.

The deer and flower motifs are based with permission on embroidered motifs on a colcha in the Albuquerque Museum (shown on page 52). I embroidered eight deer, of which six full-size deer make borders that begin at one corner of the blanket (three deer along each edge; see diagram). The two deer at the opposite corners are the same height as the other six, but their bodies are shortened to fit them to the corner (take a "tuck" in the body of your deer motif pattern to create the smaller deer).

Trace the deer and flower motifs onto the paper so that the deer's heads are 3 inches from the edge of the fabric and the deer motifs are evenly spaced, 1 to 2 inches apart. The flowers are below the deer, as shown on the drawing of the blanket design. Outline each

motif with the black marker, place the fabric over the paper, and trace the arranged motifs onto the fabric with the fabric marking pencil.

Colcha embroidery traditionally has no knots, so thread is anchored with running stitches. Two simple stitches (or stitch variants)—a large stitch and a small stitch (illustrated at right)—create colcha embroidery's characteristic texture. The last drawing in each column shows what the back of the fabric will look like when that stitch is used.

Embroidering

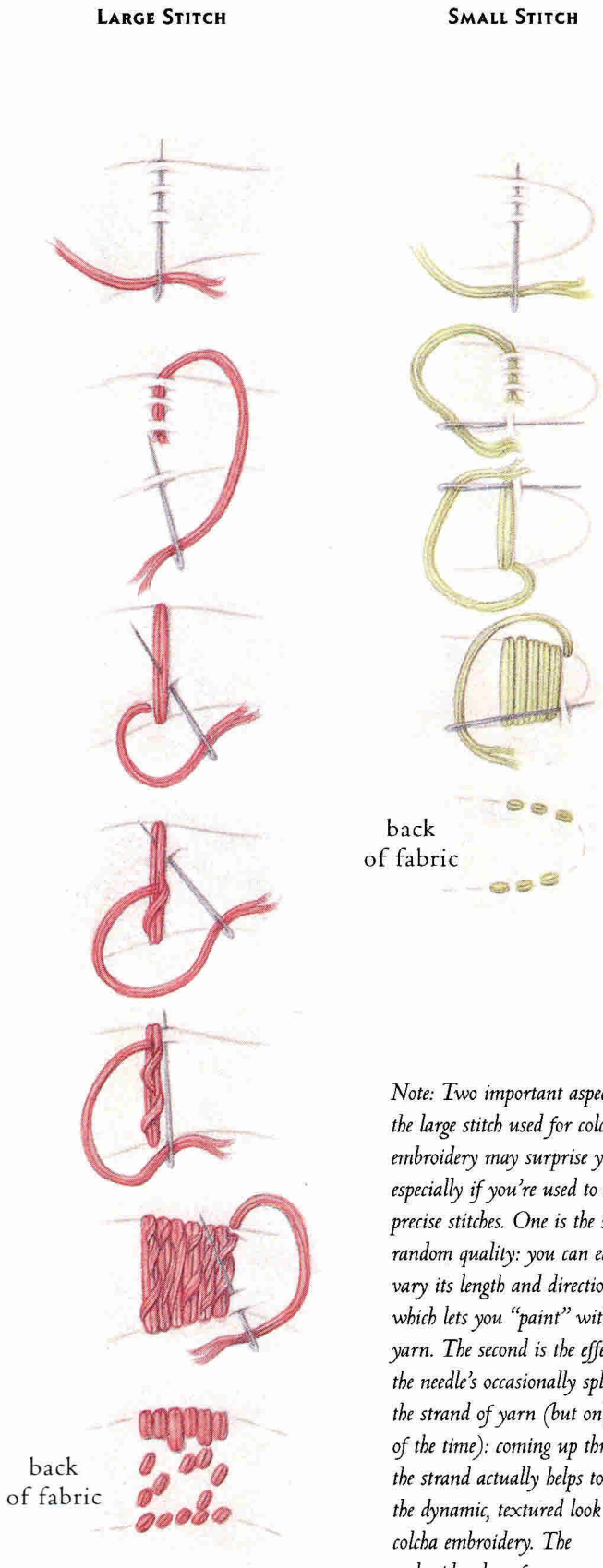
With your fabric held fastened in the embroidery hoop, thread your needle with one of the yarn colors and select a starting point. Take three running stitches within the outlined area to anchor the thread. Single, close stitches will fill some areas of the design completely, reaching from one edge of a motif section to another (for example, the deer's legs and nose). In other areas, you will use both large and small stitches to move across a larger motif section (for example, the deer's body), often couching the large stitch at an angle. To add to the motif's texture, occasionally bring your needle up through a strand of yarn, splitting it.

Fringing

With your sewing machine and off-white thread, sew a straight stitch border 1/2 inch from the edge of the blanket all the way around. Pull the outside 1/2 inch of threads from the fabric to make the fringe.

Source

For those interested in the style of colcha embroidery that completely covers an open-weave ground cloth, handspun, handwoven *sabanilla* is available from Glenna Dean, 7495 Sagebrush Rd., Santa Fe, NM 87505. (505) 438-9771.



Note: Two important aspects of the large stitch used for colcha embroidery may surprise you, especially if you're used to more precise stitches. One is the stitch's random quality: you can easily vary its length and direction, which lets you "paint" with the yarn. The second is the effect of the needle's occasionally splitting the strand of yarn (but only some of the time): coming up through the strand actually helps to create the dynamic, textured look of colcha embroidery. The embroidered surface seems to "move."

Sybil Carter's Legacy:

Native American Lace

BY MARY DWYER

Sybil Carter, Episcopal missionary, developed a self-help lace-making project for Native American women.

Photograph courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.

For thirty years I have earned my own living, and am proud of it. So I [felt] sorry that the Indian women had no work. What did I do? I planned to teach them some handiwork and pay them some wages. Work is power. Work ought to be the foundation stone. I began with the mothers . . .

Sybil Carter, Lake Mohonk Conference

MY QUEST STARTED with a curious footnote in one of Pat Earnshaw's lace books mentioning Native American lace. Having never heard of this craft, I was intrigued. How had such a typically European craft found its way onto Indian reservations in the United States? The trail led to some startling pieces of finely worked bobbin lace with canoe and tepee motifs—and to a remarkable woman, Sybil Carter, and her unique lace mission.

For thirty-six years, from 1890 to 1926, scattered Native American missions representing more than fifteen tribes sprinkled from New York to California successfully produced lace for commercial sale using an innovative self-help network established by Sybil Carter, an Episcopal missionary. Although today we would probably question this missionary approach to "aid," which urged Native Americans to conform to European and American social norms regarding work, dress, and religion, Sybil Carter was dedicated to a program of economic self-sufficiency for women that was admired then and can be admired now. She saw the handwork she had learned as a young girl as one way to achieve it.

The lace-making program was conceived at a time of national awakening to the plight of the Native Americans. "At this time as perhaps never before, our sense of National responsibility towards the Indians is made evident by the marked public interest in all plans for their education and advancement towards civilization," a supporter of Sybil Carter's program wrote in 1905. "And it seems fitting that American women should attempt for the Indians what the English and Italian women are doing for their poorer sisters in the well organized lace industries of their Countries."

Sybil Carter had learned to make lace as a young woman but had not used the skill again until years later when she was a missionary in Japan and visited a lace school. She saw lace making as a marketable craft she might teach Native American women.

The lace-making project was formulated as a missionary outreach under the direction of Henry B. Whipple, first Episcopal bishop of Minnesota. The bishop championed the Native Americans' causes and

was concerned about their situation; they trusted him. Sybil Carter made her first visit to White Earth Reservation in Minnesota at Bishop Whipple's invitation.

> In 1886 I was invited by Bishop Whipple to visit White Earth Reservation, and I was deeply impressed by the utter idleness of the women, and by the fact that they asked me to give them work. At once I began to talk to my friends about a trade for the Indian women. Many plans were discussed. At last, in July, 1890, I again visited White Earth, and this time gathered twelve Indian women of the Ojibway tribe into a log hut, and gave them a few lace lessons. I was amply repaid in a three weeks' visit, by bringing back twelve bits of very pretty lace, thus proving two things: First, they could learn; second, they wanted very much to work for their living. I pressed the matter as rapidly as I could upon Churchwomen, and secured funds to send out two teachers, one in October, 1890, and the next in August, 1891.
>
> *Indian Mothers and Their Work*

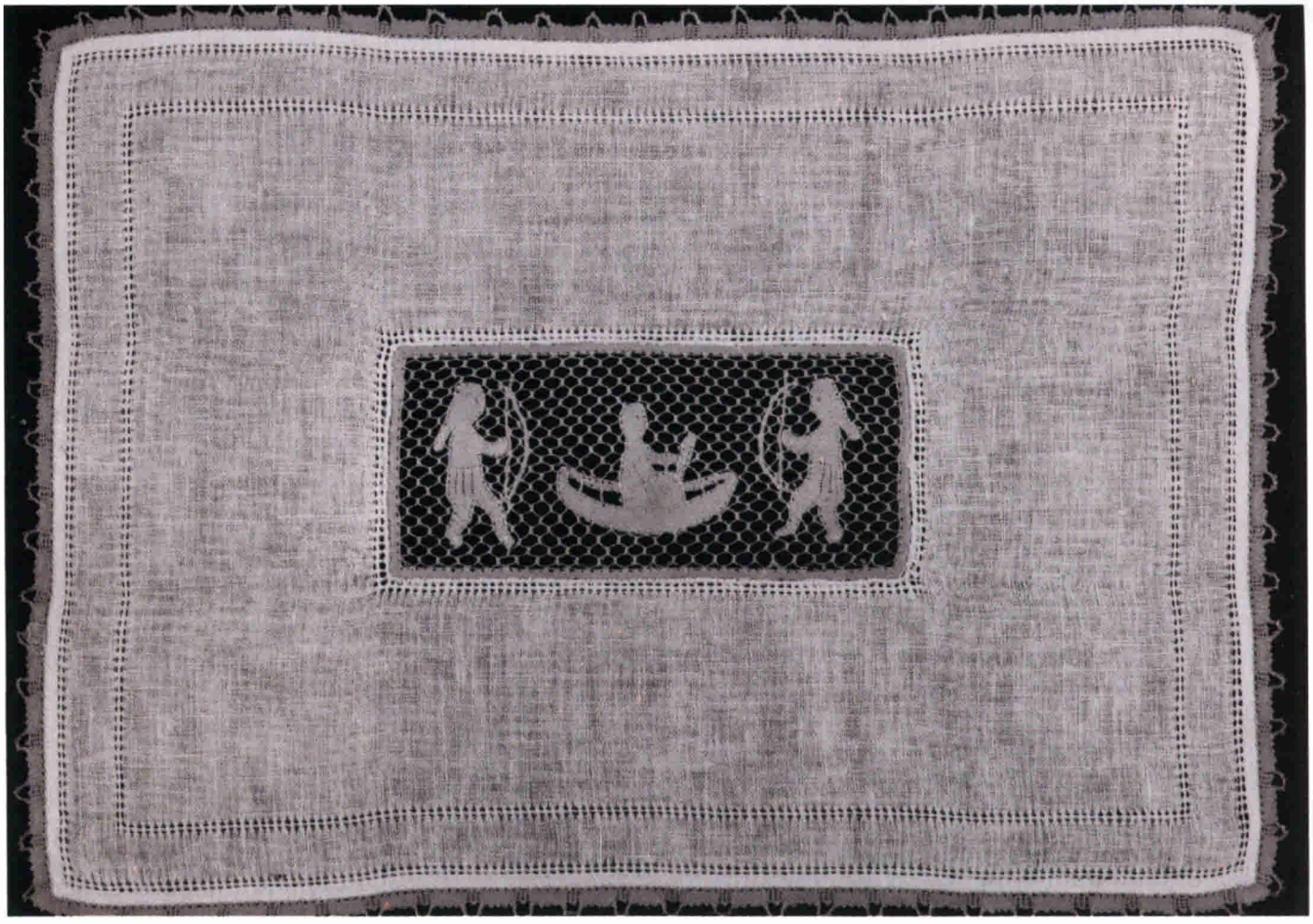
In a speech she gave in 1890 to the Board of Indian Commissioners, Sybil Carter provided additional insight into her drive to develop an industry for Native American women. To introduce her lace-making program, she described how the Civil War and her father's death had left her penniless.

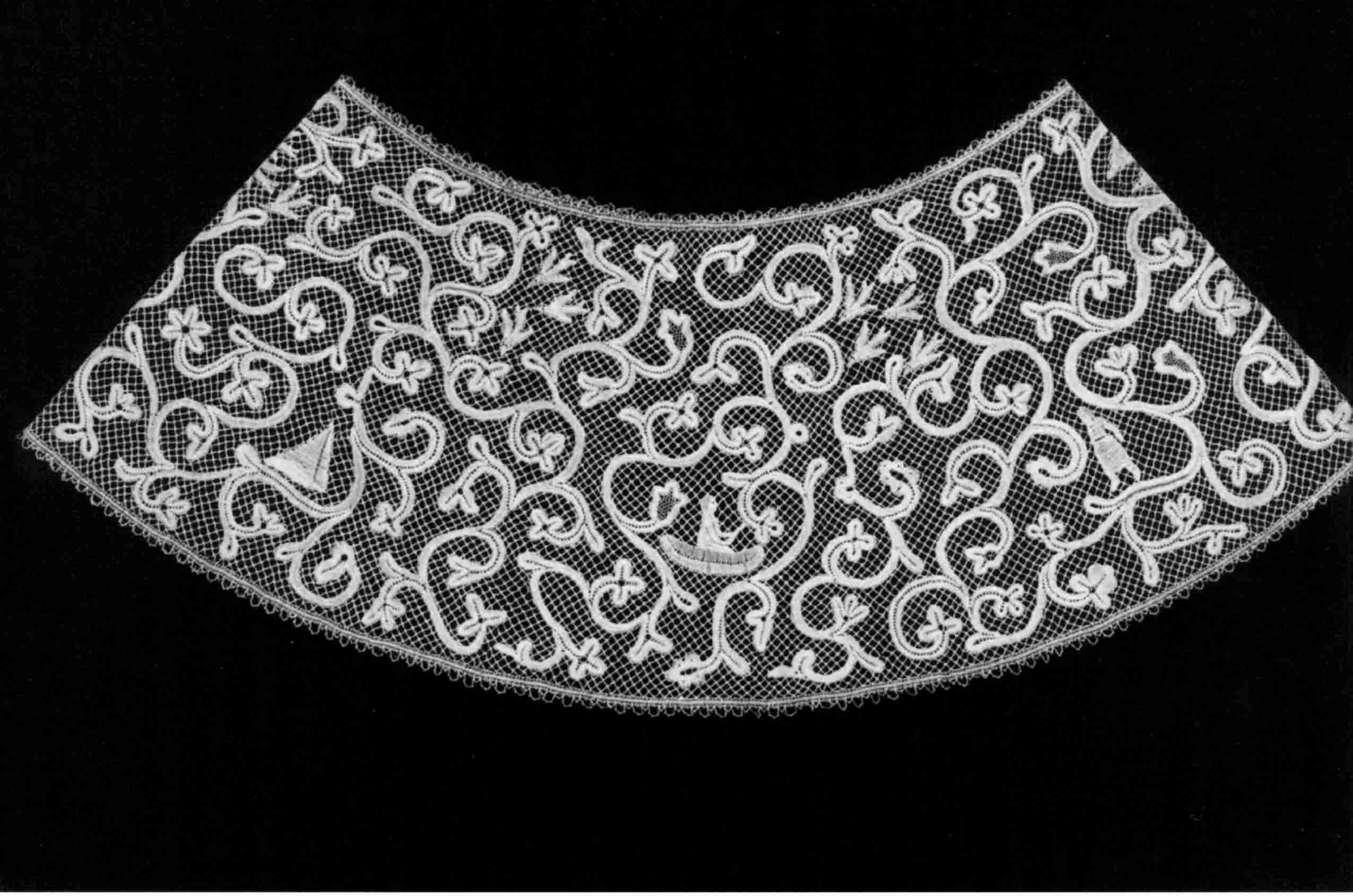
> Then I was so glad to have received the idea in my young days that it was honorable to work. . . . When I was among my Indian sisters I used to wish that I could do something to add to their power of earning money. . . . There is nothing better than giving people a chance to make their own way in life. . . . I remember a soliloquy of an Indian woman named Shoniaqua, which means money woman. Looking at her first finished piece of lace, she said for sixty years she had not been a money woman, but, with a pleased look, added, "Money woman now."

By 1894, six lace-making classes were offered on the White Earth Reservation.

An Oneida linen bobbin lace mat (6 by 8½ inches), circa 1915, illustrates the use of Native American motifs. Sybil Carter Indian Lace Association. Gift of Mrs. Bayard Cutting in memory of Miss Mary Parsons.

Courtesy of the Cooper-Hewitt Museum, National Museum of Design, Smithsonian Institution/Art Source, catalog #1943-44-4. Photograph by Ken Pelka.





Lampshade cover of linen bobbin lace with Native American motifs worked into a more European-style design, circa 1905. Gift of Mrs. Bayard Cutting in memory of Miss Mary Parsons.

Courtesy of the Cooper-Hewitt Museum, National Museum of Design, Smithsonian Institution/Art Resource, catalog #1943-44-2. Photograph by Scott Hyde.

Lace House, Lace Cows

The craft of lace making had several advantages: materials and finished products could easily be transported by mail, and lace could be made at home between household duties and childcare. Oneida women, according to an interview with several of them in *International Old Lacers* (1990), still made lace or remembered others' lace-making. Lace makers wrapped their braid and thread work (the Oneida women did both Italian cutwork and bobbin laces) in paper napkins and carried it with them in pasteboard oyster pails, which could easily be hung on cabin walls, away from curious children.

Lace money provided homes and improvements to homes, new farm implements, livestock, and comforts—often designated by prefacing them with the word "lace" as in "lace pigs." These lace-funded additions "could never have been enjoyed on slender incomes from the land alone."

By 1902, Sybil Carter's successful lace missions began to be cited in the Department of Interior's Indian Affairs annual report:

> The making of lace of modern designs is another direction in which the great natural skill of the Indian is being utilized. Miss Sybil Carter has organized classes on a number of reservations, and it is found that the Indian women learn readily and produce beautiful work, which finds a ready market and is already proving a source of considerable income to those engaged in it. Last year the Indian women under Miss Carter's direction alone sold over $5,000 worth of lace.

The Sybil Carter Indian Lace Association

During the early years of the lace mission, Sybil Carter managed all phases of the project including teaching or finding teachers, purchasing and distributing supplies, and arranging sales. In 1904, to encourage the lace-making industry, friends of Sybil Carter organized the Sybil Carter Indian Lace Association. Members helped collect needed funds, select and furnish salaries for teachers on the reservations, provide lace-making materials to the reservation classes, and market the finished lace.

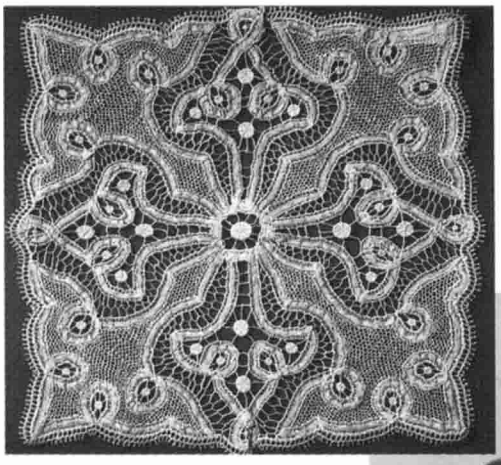
Over time, the Association took on more duties. Members handled sales at the Association shop at 509 Park Avenue in New York City and at invitational sales. The organization oversaw all mission operations, lace

production, and lace sales. When Sybil Carter died in 1908, the Association continued the lace missions until 1926, when it dissolved.

In every lace program, a trained lace teacher supplied instructions and materials. Records show that in 1904, a lace instructor earned a $300 salary plus $200 for living expenses. Teachers also received funds to pay the workers as soon as lace was finished. The teacher mailed finished lace every two weeks to New York and received new supplies, also by mail. As the program grew, an associate manager from the Association traveled from mission to mission overseeing operations.

In an Association pamphlet published after Sybil Carter's death, the teacher's dual role was defined.

> The Sybil Carter Mission and Lace Industry Association is distinctly Missionary. . . . Each teacher [is] necessarily a missionary, her duties being to teach the lace making and assist in missionary work especially in the care of the sick.



> Miss Carter emphasized strongly the spiritual side of personal life and work. She wrote monthly to each teacher words of practical advice for daily living, her aim being to establish in each place a little community of Christian women whose influence would be felt throughout the Reservation.

Production and Design

The Native Americans trained through workshops produced an abundance of lace. A log sheet from the Sybil Carter Indian Lace Association donated to the Cooper-Hewitt Museum lists doilies, handkerchiefs, fichus, edging, medallions, yokes, boleros, collars, cuffs, and insertions. Other references name ecclesiastical pieces, pillows, and bedspreads. Of the Native American lace artifacts at the Cooper-Hewitt, most are made of linen thread and/or linen cloth and some samples are backed with silk. At the Sibley House Museum in Mendota, Minnesota, as part of the Bishop Whipple holdings, the Native American lace collection includes a variety of bobbin, needlepoint, and tape laces, mostly incorporated into household linens. Types of lace in the collections include cutwork, braid (set into a net ground), and pillow (bobbin) laces, with the majority being bobbin laces. Specific lace styles listed include Battenberg, princess, Honiton, Russian, point, and Burano.

Although when Native American lace is presented in texts and exhibits, stereotypical motifs such as tepees, canoes, women with papooses, and "braves" predominate, much of the lace was developed with traditional patterns and is indistinguishable from European laces produced elsewhere. Therefore, the bulk of the Native American work became, in a sense, invisible.

The Association supplied most of the patterns to the missions. A tag attached to a piece in the Cooper-Hewitt collection attributes its pattern to a seven-

This Oneida doily, circa 1895, would have been indistinguishable from other European-style laces. It is made of cotton thread, commercial tape, and needlepoint filigree.

Photograph courtesy of the Museum of History and Technology, catalog #72-3363.

Sybil Carter (center) with two lace teachers and four Native American lace makers, Leech Lake, Minnesota, 1894.

Photograph courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.

teenth-century Italian lace piece at the Metropolitan Museum in New York. According to Association literature, patterns were selected by "experts"; in several publications, Mary Parsons is listed in charge of lace designs. Sybil Carter once said that she provided most of the designs but that the native women also got designs from carpets, church windows, leaves and flowers, and their own beadwork. Clearly, lace makers had multiple design sources.

In 1990, Trenna Ruffner, editor of the *International Old Lacers,* visited Oneida women who remembered lace-making activities and still had some equipment and tools. When she asked the women whether they or the other lace makers they had known ever used a pattern book, they produced a copy of Elizabeth Mincoff and Margaret S. Marriage's *Pillow Lace,* first published in 1907. The Oneida women also had blueprint patterns for bobbin lace with Indian motifs.

Detail of the lampshade cover.

Native American laces gained worldwide recognition earning Gold Medals at the Paris Exposition, 1900; the Buffalo Pan-American Exposition, 1901; at Liege, 1905; at Milan, 1906; and at the Australian Exposition, 1908. At the Louisiana Purchase exhibit in 1904, the laces received the Grand Prize (highest recognition). Mission lace was presented to Queen Victoria and Princess Alexandra, perhaps as a way to promote the Native American craft.

Lace Sales: Matching Fashion Needs

The quick sale of lace articles was essential to ensuring steady funds and a smooth-running self-help program; the sales covered worker salaries and material costs. When Sybil Carter pleaded for pledges to the association, she stated her commitment to returning lace proceeds to the workers. "I feel sure all will wish the lace money to go to the poor lace workers, and will be glad to think of the many comforts they can get for their small wages to help them through the long cold winter."

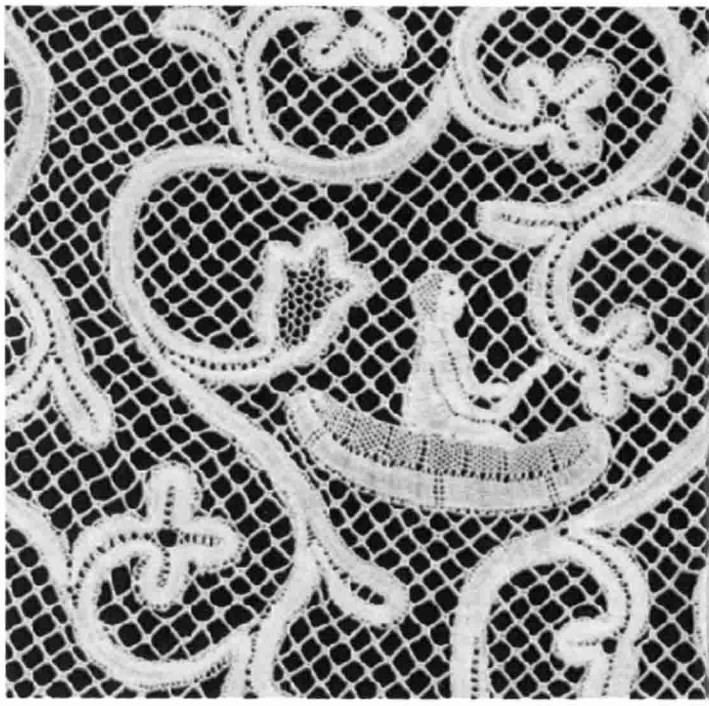
Early in her mission, Sybil Carter instituted annual lace sales in major eastern cities including New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and Pittsburgh. In each city, a volunteer oversaw the sales, recruiting others to assist. Lace sales were often held in a drawing room for an afternoon, with laces marked and displayed. Patrons would come to participate in the social event and to purchase the lace.

The Sybil Carter Association membership registry reveals the prominence of these patrons. The list includes Mrs. Franklin Roosevelt, Mrs. Vanderbilt, and Mrs. Bayard Cutting. A 1919 *Modern Priscilla* magazine article noted that Mrs. Vanderbilt owned a bedspread that had taken eight Native American women a year to complete. In addition to finished lace offered for sale, orders for custom-made pieces were important.

In the Cooper-Hewitt Museum collection, an enthusiastic note from February 26, 1904, describes a day's sale. "Very successful sale, Sold all the lace, about $1,000 and took orders for $1,200 more!"

Against Growing Odds

The Sybil Carter Indian Lace Association expanded the lace-making program from the original site at White Earth Reservation to locations in ten states. Participating tribes included Ojibway, Sioux, Seneca,



Onondaga, Oneida, Kiowa, Winnebago, Arapaho, Shoshone, Paiute, and Hopi. According to documents and annual reports, the number of sites grew to twelve.

In addition to expanding the number of schools, the Association sought to broaden the program. The annual report for 1912 expresses the desire to have Indian teachers as well as Indian lace workers in the program. Available records list only one Native American teacher, however: Josephine Hill Webster, daughter of Chief Cornelius Hill, who taught the Oneidas.

The lace-making project was not all smooth sailing. Although records of the Sybil Carter Indian Lace Association are sketchy, annual reports reveal some of the hardships encountered in running the mission

programs. In the 1908, 1909, and 1911 reports, several programs were listed as temporarily closed, some for more than than a year. Others solicit patience from individuals waiting for their orders to be filled.

No document states why the Sybil Carter Indian Lace Association disbanded. However, several annual reports note ongoing changes. In 1911, the Association discontinued sites at Santee and Greenwood, noting that the "Indian women have been able to support themselves in other ways and are no longer in need of this industry." In 1918, the Association reported that "the slight decrease in the amount of money which we have paid to the Indians this year is due to the tremendous demand and unprecedented returns in other lines of industry to which quite naturally they, as well as others, have turned." World War I made good jobs available that paid far better than a home industry.

World War I brought other changes as well. It seriously damaged the hand lace industry, and when for the first time, women assumed new work roles, fashions changed and the use of lace dwindled. Machine-made laces became more plentiful and cheaper. The market for fine handmade lace dwindled.

Although the Sybil Carter Indian Lace Association disbanded in 1926, some of the mission sites continued to produce lace commercially. At the Cooper-Hewitt Museum, a publication titled *Oneida Indian Lace Makers of Oneida, Wisconsin* details the Oneida lace makers' previous connection with the Association and their interest in continuing to make and sell lace.

> [I]t remained for Mrs. I. N. Webster, the manager of the branch in Wisconsin, to continue with the art independently, and this has been a great boon to the Indian women who in many cases have to support the whole family on the fruits of their industry.

The article went on to describe the group's lacemaking prowess and to solicit orders. The Oneida and other Native American groups had in many ways made lace crafts their own. In fact, art historian Kate Duncan, in "American Indian Lace Making," discusses whether the lace should be considered successful competition in a non-Native craft or whether—at least where the techniques outlasted Sybil Carter and her society and where new designs were created—it had become a Native American craft.

Sybil Carter was a woman with a mission. Her legacy was a well-thought-out self-help program based on creating handmade lace and marketing it to eastern cities with an appetite for lace. Of the remaining artifacts, most are probably indistinguishable from other laces made in European styles with European techniques. The other artifacts, like a lace medallion with a canoe motif, blend Native American motifs with distinctly European traditions and techniques. But many such instances of unusual intersections in handwork exist. These striking lace pieces are more than curiosities: they should be remembered for themselves and for their reflection of our history. ❖

About the Author. *Mary Dwyer has been feeding her lace fever by reading, researching, and collecting for the past eight years. She has exhibited her collection in Connecticut and Colorado and has worked as a lace consultant for universities and historical museums. A freelance writer, Mary lives in Fort Collins, Colorado.*

Further Reading

The following are listed for your information and as references for research; most are available only in special libraries or museums.

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By Mary Black

TEMARI

Made by Itoko Isozaki (Kagoshima) circa 1990.
Courtesy of the Japan Toy Museum.

GRACEFUL GLOBES

Temari made by Mary Black.

Temari or *te-mari* (in southern Japan *mâi* or *maru*), which means hand ball, and *ito-mari*, which means thread ball, are names for a colorfully stitched Japanese ball made as a gift or for decoration. A rounded core material is wrapped first with yarn and then with sewing thread. The ball is divided into measured, marked segments and then embroidered with colorful yarns.

Since I saw my first temari in 1973, making temari has been part of my life. I had no how-to information until I found a book in Japanese in a shop in San Francisco. Slowly, I figured out from the photographs how

Made by craftswomen in Naha-city (Okinawa) circa 1960–1970.

Made by Nashiri Tara in Tokunoshima-island (Kagoshima) circa 1960–1970.

Made by craftswomen in Takayama-city (Takayama) circa 1960–1970.

Courtesy of the Japan Toy Museum.

to make the balls. I then worked with Susan Watts, who had learned to make temari while in the Peace Corps in Japan, and studied with Kazuko Yamamoto, a master temari teacher.

Temari were probably first made as "play" balls in China about A.D. 400 by and for the nobility. Made of only the finest silk, they were called princess balls and were made for princesses by their ladies-in-waiting or by princesses for their princes. Only the upper classes were allowed to play with them, and there was much rivalry as each princess tried to make her prince the most beautiful ball.

Most of the older temari that have survived in museums date from the Edo Period (1603–1867), but the Japanese had started making the balls in the ninth century (the Heian Period). Beginning probably in the seventeenth century, girls played indoor games with temari to rhythmic nonsense songs, much like our jump-rope rhymes, called temari-uta.

The balls were usually made from scrap material. Cores were formed from wads of grasses, old paper, rice hulls, or cotton wrapped first in paper and then in recycled thread. To obtain colorful threads both to wrap the ball and to embroider the geometric and free-form designs on it, the makers often unraveled a worn *obi* (the broad sash worn as part of a traditional Japanese woman's costume) or a kimono. Cotton thread also was available, and those who had no obis to recycle used cotton rather than silk thread as the outer wrapping. Few of the early balls are left today because moth and other insect eggs—invisible but present in the used materials—hatched, and the larvae ate the balls from the inside out.

Each Japanese prefecture (district) had its own color scheme and preferred designs. The patterns on the balls were often derived from nature—for example, Pine Bough, Chrysanthemum, Peach Blossom, and Cherry Blossom. They were named for the motif used and embroidered to suit the season.

Today, the temari still is used as a play ball and made for grandchildren by doting grandmothers. One appealing tradition is that of a mother making a special temari for a daughter to find by her bedside on New Year's Day. The temari is a thing of beauty seen upon awakening to the new year.

Kichinosuke Tonamura, founder and director of the Kurashiki Folk Art Museum in Japan, started the revival of temari making after World War II. Temari making had declined after the introduction of rubber, including rubber balls, to Japan in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. She, along with Chiyoko Ozaki, author of more than nine books on the subject, none yet translated from the Japanese, are credited with making the balls popular today. Chiyoko Ozaki, the founder and retired president of the Japan Temari Association and an advisor to the Foundation for the Instruction of Japanese Handcrafts, helped establish the

The hands are called an outlet for the heart. One's heart, indeed one's whole way of life, is expressed in the words of one's hands. This is why, before setting our hands to the work of embroidering, we aim first at composure of heart.

Iwao Saito, President, Kurenai-Kai

Courtesy of the Japan Toy Museum.

Made by craftswomen in Kumamoto-city (Kumamoto) circa 1980.

Made by craftswomen in Naha-city (Okinawa) circa 1960–1970.

Made by Kuyma Nishihara in Ishigakijima-island (Okinawa) circa 1960–1970.

Master Teacher Program for teaching temari making.

To become a certified temari teacher, an individual must progress through a series of accomplishments and study with a certified teacher for five years. Students of temari must submit twenty-four temari from Chiyoko Ozaki's beginner's book; the teacher must submit four of these to the Temari Association for approval for the student to merit the elementary-level certificate. The second level (equivalent to a "high school" certificate) is achieved by making twenty-four more balls from other Japanese temari books, by studying with a certified teacher, and by submitting these balls and having them approved. To obtain the highest or "college" certificate, a student must study further with a certified teacher and submit a number of originally designed balls. It is difficult to get this final certificate in the United States because there are few certified teachers here.

Temari made by Mary Black.

Made for a sale all over Japan circa 1890 (Meiji Era).

Made by Haruka Fukumiya in Kochi (Kochi) circa 1960–1970.

Courtesy of the Japan Toy Museum.

Vividly embroidered temari are part of a long tradition, from which few artifacts remain. Because making temari was a folk art, few of the artists' names survive, yet the temari tradition survives as new makers are arrested by the graceful globes. There are endless design possibilities using just the traditional motifs; the Chrysanthemum ball presented as a project is just a beginning. ❖

About the Author. *Mary Black is a spinner, weaver, and temari maker and teacher who lives in Clinton, Washington.*

PieceWork thanks *Ayame Osaki of the Japan Toy Museum in Hyogo, Japan, for information and photographs of temari.*

Designed by Mary Black

A Chrysanthemum Temari to Make

The Chrysanthemum ball is easy and satisfying to make. For this design, the ball is divided into eight segments.

Materials

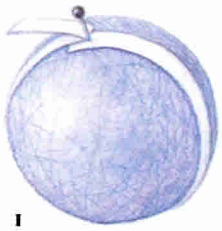
- One 2½-inch styrofoam ball (or a small plastic bag such as a sandwich bag stuffed with about two cups of polyester filling, cotton balls, or old nylons). Although it is not traditional, I suggest using a styrofoam ball for your first temari because it is lightweight and round. Because styrofoam balls implode and crush easily if they become too hot, I teach my students to make their own cores after they are familiar with the overall technique.
- Pearl cotton #5 in three coordinating colors; light, medium, and dark, plus a black or metallic thread for embroidering the ball
- About 400 yd sewing thread for the final color wrapping in a color coordinated with those of the pearl cotton
- 1 ounce 2-ply acrylic yarn for the inner wrapping
- 1/4-inch-wide paper strip about 20 inches long for measuring divisions on the ball. Use streamers from a party-supply store or cut your own strip.
- Round-headed straight pins in the following colors: 1 black, 1 red, 8 white, 8 blue, 8 green for marking divisions on the ball.
- 2 large-eyed, sharp-pointed needles such as cotton darning or crewel needles.
- Small tape measure (optional)
- Sharp, small scissors

You can make a temari that rattles by putting pebbles, popcorn kernels, or bells inside a container placed in the core of the ball. The Japanese often use a mixture of seashells and pebbles or a bell. The container can be a small box, two bottle caps taped together, or a deeper, screw-on bottle cap wrapped in plastic. If you are using a styrofoam ball, cut a plug from the ball, place the rattle inside, and replace the plug shortened to fit.

Fabric courtesy of East West Imports, Fort Collins, Colorado.

Wrapping the Ball

Wrap the acrylic yarn randomly around the ball; never let the yarn follow the same path twice. Change the position of the ball frequently as you wrap to get an even covering, and if you have made your own core, press the ball in your hands to shape and then maintain its roundness. Continue wrapping until there is a 1/4-inch layer of yarn on the ball; this is the base that the needle and embroidery thread will go through. Then, wrap the ball with sewing thread in the same way, keeping an even tension on the thread at all times. When you're finished wrapping, leave a tail of thread about 20 inches long. Thread the tail through a needle and take inch-long stitches through the yarn layer randomly around the ball to tack down the sewing thread.



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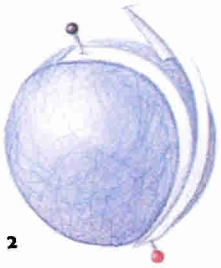
Marking the Ball

1. Pin one end of the paper strip to the ball with the black pin. The pin is referred to as the north pole. Keeping the strip flat, wrap it around the ball and crease it where it again meets the pin.



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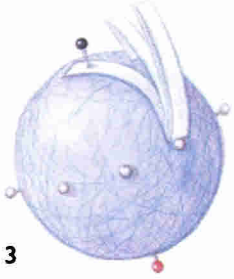
2. Bring the crease back to the north pole and crease the halfway point. The new crease marks the south pole. Mark this point with a red pin.



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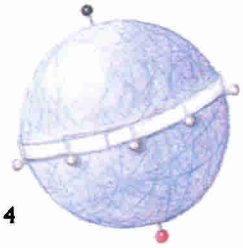
3. Fold the strip in half again and crease to mark the equator. Swivel the strip around the north pole and mark eight positions around the equator with white pins.



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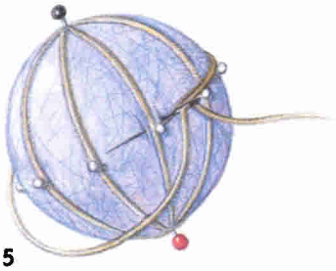
4. Remove the strip from the north pole pin (replace the pin in its exact spot), fold the strip into eighths, and use one segment to space the white pins evenly around the equator.

To add a guide thread (which can be either part of the design or removed later), thread a needle with two yards of pearl cotton or metallic thread. Insert the needle one inch from the north pole pin, go under the color wrapping (but not



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into the styrofoam base), and come out at the north pole pin. Keeping firm tension on the thread, wrap the thread around the circumference of the ball, passing the south-pole pin on the way, and take a small backstitch at the north-pole pin. The ball is now divided in half vertically. Wrap the thread around the circumference again (but take no back stitch) to divide the ball into fourths and then twice more to divide into eighths. Before the last wrap, anchor the intersection of threads at the south pole with a small stitch before returning to the north pole. At the north pole, take a small backstitch, and then insert the needle at the pole and bring it out an inch away. Cut the thread close to the ball.

Add a guide thread around the equator. Insert the needle an inch from a white equator pin and bring it out next to the pin.

5. Wrap the thread around the equator, passing each white pin in turn. End with a small backstitch, hide the thread under the color wrapping, and cut as before.

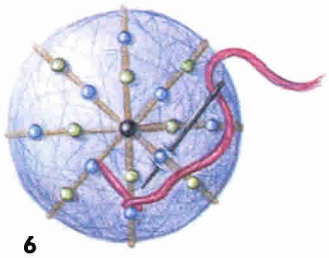
Measure one-third the distance from the equator to the north pole along a guide thread and insert a blue pin. Put three more blue pins the same distance from the equator line on alternate guide threads. Now, measure two-thirds the distance from the equator to the north

pole and place the four remaining blue pins at this distance on the unmarked guide threads. Staying in the "northern hemisphere," repeat this process with the green pins so that there are two pins on each thread, one blue and one green, one at one-third and the other at two-thirds the distance between the equator and the north pole.

Embroidering the Ball

Thread a needle with one yard of the darkest pearl cotton thread. With the north pole facing you, choose a blue pin close to the equator. Insert the needle into the color wrapping, bringing it out on the left side of the guide thread at the pin.

6. Rotating the ball counterclockwise, go diagonally to the next blue pin on the right and take a small backstitch.



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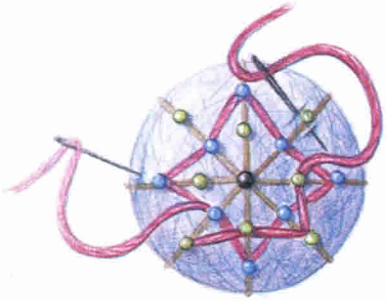

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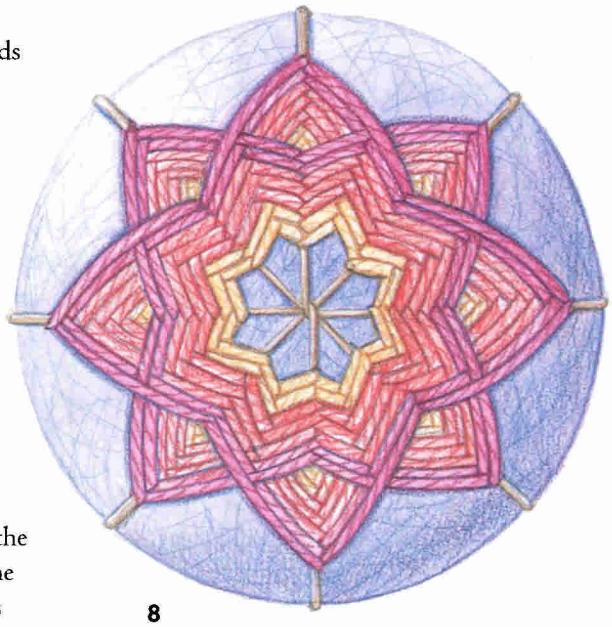
Note: All back stitches are taken from right to left. The thread from the needle always lies on top of the last stitch.

The needle should catch a few threads of the color wrapping, but should *not* pierce the guide thread. Continue around the ball, making a stitch at each blue pin until you reach the first stitch. Take the last stitch slightly above the first one (closer to the equator) and store this needle and thread for now. You've embroidered a four-pointed star.

Thread another needle with another strand of dark thread and make a second four-pointed star, this time guided by the green pins.

7. Store the second needle, pick up the first, and repeat the blue-pin round. The new row will be parallel to the previous row and closer to the equator.

8. After you have completed two rounds using both sets of pins, switch to the medium-colored thread for three rounds. Follow with two rounds of the light-colored thread and finish with a black or metallic row if you like.



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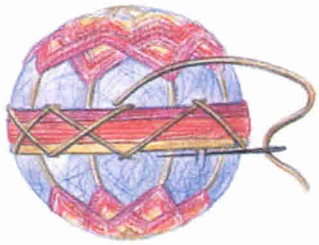

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9. Repeat the entire sequence for the southern hemisphere.

Finish the ball with the *obi*, a band of color around its center, which resembles the broad sash worn with the Japanese kimono. For a band 3/4 inch (2 cm) wide, start a thread 3/8 inch (1 cm) south of the equator and wrap it around the ball until it is 3/8 inch (1 cm) north of the equator. End the wrapping thread and decorate the *obi* with herringbone stitch in a different color.

Experiment with Your Chrysanthemum

There are various ways you can change the appearance of the Chrysanthemum design. To make it look more compact, increase the number of divisions in the ball to sixteen or even thirty-two. (You can also divide the ball into fourths and then each fourth into thirds for twelve divisions; divide the twelve divisions in half for twenty-four and in half again for forty-eight divisions. Divide your ball into ten, twenty, or forty divisions starting from a basic division into fifths.

Angeline Hardwick Crichlow:

A CHALLENGING TATTER

BY SUE LENTHE

I am now eighty and I should so like to know that some younger tatters are using [the old techniques] today so they will be safe for at least another generation.

—Introduction, *Challenge to Tatters,* 1989

ANGELINE Hardwick Crichlow loves to tat. She loves the antiquity of the craft: tatting has been found on Egyptian mummies. She loves the way the craft twines through her roots: Angeline's mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother were tatters. Her great-grandmother, Margaret Robinson, was born in Ireland in 1827 and immigrated first to Nova Scotia, and finally to northern California. She brought with her her love of tatting and taught her daughter, who in turn taught Angeline Crichlow's mother, Exilda Hocken Hardwick.

Angeline Crichlow's favorite recent photograph of herself is this one of her hands tatting, a tribute to tatting's importance to her life.

Photograph courtesy of Angeline Crichlow and her family.

Angeline learned to tat—a form of lace making—from her mother when she was eight, and her family lived on an isolated ranch in Arizona. "We were not poor," Angeline says. "We were rich with the farm's produce and the rangeland cattle, pigs, turkeys, wild rabbits, quail and doves." Her mother's tatting was part of the riches: "When an annoncement of birth came, Mother tatted a bonnet, booties, or a ball." Angeline particularly remembers a beautiful tatted scarf always on the piano. The threads of history she has worked to preserve and pass along by teaching tatting as well as talking and writing about it keep her linked to the heritage her mother passed to her.

I remember as a child a fascination with my Mother as she sat in her rocker with her thread and shuttle click-clicking away. Her shuttle flew up and down. The little rings grew into doilies and scarves and, best of all, yokes and edgings for my dresses and doll clothes.

Energetic and articulate, Angeline is a patriot whose love for flag and country runs deep. Caught up in the spirit of history and pride rekindled in many by the bicentennial, Angeline vowed to teach and talk tatting to anyone who would listen. The catalyst was a competition of old-fashioned craftwork in Dayton, Ohio, in which a small tatted piece Angeline entered won a cash award and plenty of praise.

Surprised both that others didn't know the beauty of the craft and that no one seemed to be doing it, Angeline was inspired to teach tatting.

Tatting is similar to crochet and knitting except that those crafts use loops that stretch and give, Angeline explains. The tatter uses her two hands, a small oblong shuttle, and thread to create a series of tight, hard knots that form a delicate design.

Tatting can be used to create a variety of decorative textiles from lace edgings for bed linens and towels, lingerie, and collars to larger pieces such as doilies and antimacassars. Angeline Crichlow's largest piece is a double-bed–sized bedspread she finished tatting two years ago. When asked how long it took to tat, she answers only, "a long time."

While it is unlikely that the craft is enjoying a national renaissance, wherever Angeline Crichlow is, there is sure to be a flare of interest in tatting. In Dayton, Angeline taught tatting classes at the local YMCA, yarn shops and other stores, churches, and privately. Later she was hired to teach adult education courses in tatting at two Dayton high schools. "I had always tatted, but I started in earnest eight days a week."

When she found no book available to suit her teaching needs, Angeline wrote her own. She published the first edition of her textbook *Let's Tat* in 1979. To write the book, "I dug in my memory for every scrap of tatting experience with Mother," Angeline related. "I racked my memory for all of Mother's patterns." She also deciphered patterns from tatting she collected at flea markets. Since that first textbook, Angeline has published five short tatting books, with a sixth

Knotting Threads: A Queen's Occupation

One of the most famous and most royal tatters was Carmen Sylva, Queen of Roumania, to whom Katharin L. Hoare dedicated her book *The Art of Tatting*, first published in 1910 and reprinted by Lacis Publications in Berkeley, California in 1982. In her introduction to the book, the queen recounts the value of tatting and all such women's handwork and urges the reader to think of the peaceful hours tatting may bring and to remember "that we loved you well in publishing the result of our own loneliness."

This knotted lace technique was most common in the Victorian era when both men and women tatted. Many nineteenth-century portraits show women tatting. The tatting shuttle increasingly became a work of art in itself, made of materials including wood, ivory, bone, crystal, silver, gold, mother-of-pearl, and opal and often inlaid with other semiprecious and precious materials. The craft's portability probably contributed greatly to its popularity; tatting materials and tools could easily be taken along while visiting or traveling. It is also capable of endless variations and adaptations. The Roumanian Queen wrote of finding a new stitch: "I don't know if Madame Curie felt much happier when she found radium."

planned this fall. She has published a workbook, *Ten Lessons for a Beginner*, as well as eight books of her poetry.

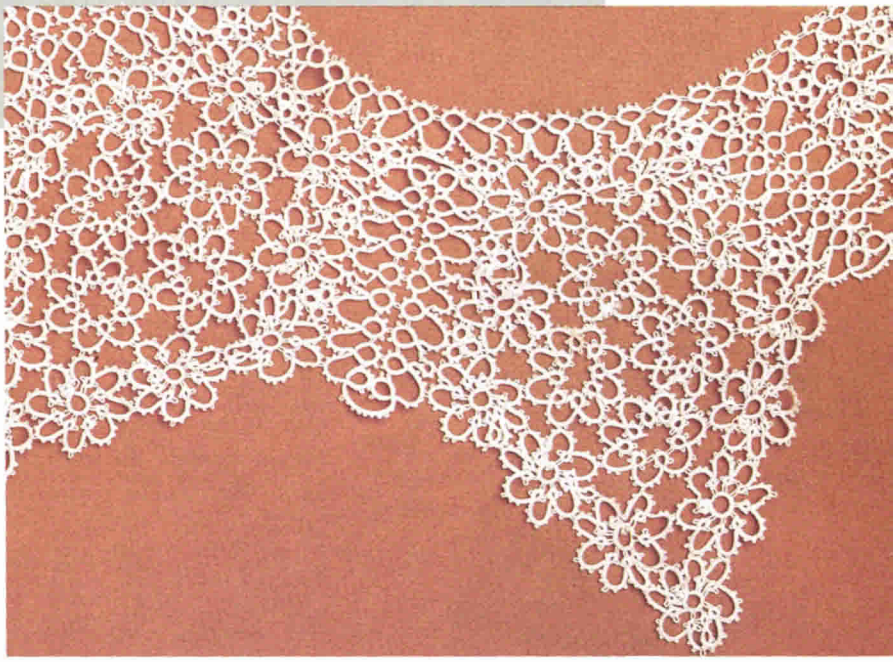
Angeline has augmented the knowledge of the craft her mother gave her by studying heirloom laces. In Dayton, she built a thriving business rejuvenating and mending heirloom pieces.

One morning in 1983, her husband woke paralyzed. She spent every day of nearly a year by his side in various hospitals. She poured her fears into her tatting, completing much of what later became a tatted bedspread—considered a huge tatting project—during that time. "Lots of grief and lots of prayers and lots of gratefulness that he was left his arms and his head and his mental ability are mingled in that piece."

After her husband became paralyzed, they moved from Dayton to Carmichael, California, a suburb of Sacramento. Having escaped Ohio's oppressive winters and moved closer to one of the couple's four grown children, Angeline returned to tatting.

In Carmichael, she started a tatting club like one she had started in Dayton. Both clubs still meet. The California club has become a close-knit group aged twenty-one to eighty-three. Linked by their love of tatting, and now for each other, the women share patterns and books and tat together for four hours once a month. They teach tatting to anyone interested in learning.

Tatting isn't difficult to learn, Angeline says, but adds, "Tatting uses the baby fingers and the ring fingers quite a lot. You hold the shuttle with the main fingers of the right hand and keep the little babies free. Some people just can't coordinate those fingers. If you take up tatting you have to really want to learn because right at first it seems like maybe it's hopeless. But after a month you usually are making rather pretty things."



Early twentieth-century tatted lace collar. Worked with two shuttles, all rings and bars are of continuous stitches resulting in a very firm and structurally strong work.

Courtesy of Jules and Kaethe Kliot, Lacis, Berkeley, California.

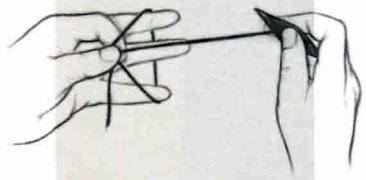
For most of Angeline Crichlow's life tatting has been something to cherish and share. In another self-published book on tatting titled *Challenge to Tatters*, Angeline issues a call to keep the old patterns and techniques alive: "I present here techniques almost dead among young tatters today. In years gone by tatters did not know how to tat until they had mastered all of these techniques." She urges her readers to not only learn the patterns but to pass them along.

In *Let's Tat*, Angeline Crichlow expresses her hope for the craft: "Perhaps some day a lovely, lacy art will revive, and someone will be glad that I have set down in picture and in print what I know about tatting." ❖

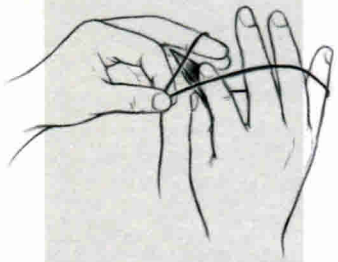
About the Author. *Sue Lenthe is a freelance writer living in Berthoud, Colorado.*

BEGINNING *to* TAT

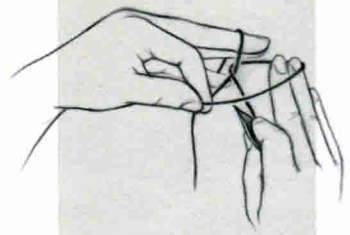
Lisa Trumble



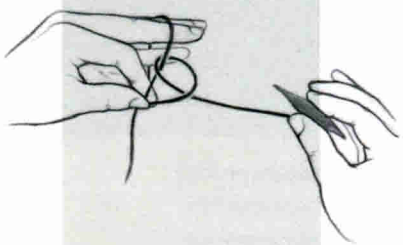
1. To begin, loop the end of the shuttle thread around your left hand. This loop is called the hand thread; the segment between the hand thread and the shuttle is called the shuttle thread.



2. With the shuttle thread over the back of your right hand, begin the first half of the ds by passing the shuttle under the hand thread.



3. Bring the shuttle back over the hand thread. As you move the shuttle back to its original position, let the thread that is draped over your right hand slide off.



4. At this point, the shuttle thread is looped around the hand thread. To reverse this relationship, relax the tension on the hand thread and give the shuttle thread a little tug.

The following instructions present some basics of tatting—all you'll need to know to complete the snowflakes pictured on page 83.

Choosing shuttle and thread

Tatting shuttles are of two basic types: metal shuttles with a hook end (called the front or nose) and a removable bobbin, and plastic ones with or without a spike on the front and a fixed bobbin. I recommend that beginners try the plastic type; a metal hook can too easily snag your tatting when you are first learning. If your shuttle lacks a spike or hook, you will need a crochet hook to join elements of tatting together and a straight pin to unpick and correct knots.

Knot size is determined only by the size of the thread used. The higher the thread number, the finer the thread. Size 10 or 20 crochet cotton is suitable for learning to tat; the knots can be seen easily. Wind a generous amount of thread evenly onto your shuttle, with the loose end emerging from the right side of the shuttle.

Getting started

The basic stitch in tatting is the double stitch (abbreviated "ds"). The double stitch is identical to the lark's head knot so much used in macramé. To begin a double stitch, unwind about 18 inches of thread from your shuttle. With the shuttle in your dominant hand (we will refer to it as the right hand in these instructions), hold the thread about 3 inches from the loose end between the forefinger and thumb of your opposite (left) hand. Spread out the other fingers of that hand slightly (that is, make a relaxed "OK" gesture). Swing the thread around the spread fingers of that hand, and pinch the thread again between forefinger and thumb so that the thread forms a circle around your hand. (1)

You have one thread, but two different sections. The section looped around your left hand will be called the "hand thread," and the section stretched between your left hand and the shuttle will be called the "shuttle thread."

A ds has two parts and is made *onto* the shuttle thread. This idea is central to tatting. The ds must be able to slide along the shuttle thread so that they can be gathered into rings or arched into chains.

For the first half of the double stitch: With the nose of the shuttle pointed toward your left hand, sweep your right hand forward under the shuttle thread and then back to its original position, catching the shuttle thread over the back of your hand.

With the nose of the shuttle still pointing left, move the shuttle *under* the hand thread at the largest open section thread (between your forefinger and middle finger). (2) Bring the shuttle back *over* the hand thread while still keeping the shuttle nose facing left. (3) (You will relax your hold on the shuttle so that it can pass the hand thread freely, but you will not let go of it.)

As you move your right hand back to its original position, let the thread draped over it slide off.

The shuttle thread now forms a small loop around the tauter, straighter hand thread. (4) *You need to reverse this situation so that the hand thread loops around the shuttle thread instead.*

This is the trick: You pull the shuttle back to its original position, relax the raised fingers of your left hand so that the hand thread is not under tension, and give the shuttle a little tug. The stitch should flip, reversing the relationship between the two threads. You need that flip; as illogical as it may appear at first, the hand thread

must loop around the shuttle thread instead of vice versa. This completes the first half of the ds. (5)

Spread the fingers of your left hand out and raise your middle finger to help tighten the knot a little. The shuttle thread should pull taut as you tighten the knot, but don't tighten too much or the stitch may flip back and lock up. (If your knot doesn't slide on the shuttle thread, use the spike of your shuttle or a straight pin and unpick the knot and try again. To correct mistakes, you have to unpick each knot one by one.)

Your right hand and the shuttle have returned to their starting position. Let the shuttle thread sag in a U below the shuttle. Pass the shuttle *over* the hand thread in the same space you used before, between your left forefinger and middle finger. Bring the shuttle *under* the hand thread, coming out through the U. (6)

As you move the shuttle back toward your right, flip the stitch, just as you did before, so that the hand thread loops around the shuttle thread. As you tighten the second half of the stitch, move it close to the first half until they are side by side. You've now completed one ds.

As you make more ds, you'll find that your hand thread gets too short to handle easily. To lengthen it, hold the stitches you've made and slowly pull on the bottom part of the hand thread to enlarge the loop.

Picots

Picots (abbreviated in patterns as P or as a dash) are loops created as ornaments to give tatting a lacy appearance; they also join rings together and join rings to chains. Usually, successive ds are placed close to each other. To make a picot, leave a space between the second half of one ds and the first half of the next one. After completing the second ds, slide it next to the first one. The thread in the space you left arches up to become a picot above the line of stitches. (7) The larger the space you leave, the larger the picot.

Rings

Rings are made of a designated number of ds (or ds and picots). When you have made the required number of stitches for the ring, gently pull on the shuttle thread as you hold the completed stitches between your forefinger and thumb. The thread should slip through, the thread around your left hand will get shorter, and the stitches will curl into a circle. Let the hand thread drop while you pull gently on the shuttle thread until the first and last ds are side by side and your ring is complete. (8)

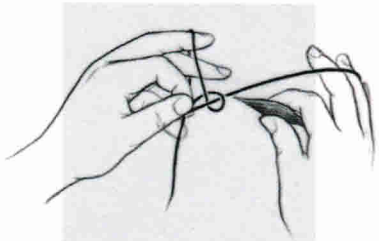
Chains

Chains (CH or C) are series of ds worked on a straight length of thread; they are often used to join rings together. If a pattern calls for both rings and chains, you will need a second thread. One thread will make rings, and the other will make chains that join them together. The stitches on chains are exactly like the stitches on rings, but the thread around your left hand does not form a complete circle.

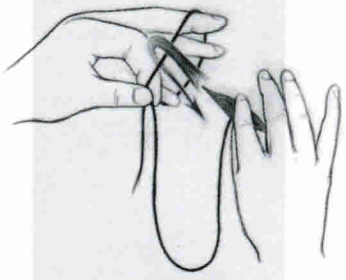
While you're learning, it can help to have a different color for your second thread. For more complex patterns, the second thread can be wound on a shuttle; for now, though, leave it on the ball. Pick up the ball thread and put it over your left hand and fingers as if you were going to make a ring, but don't make a full circle with it. Wind it a couple of times around your little finger and let the end (still attached to the ball) hang free. (9) You will have an arch of thread over your left hand. Begin to make the ds (they will be in the second color if you're using one). There is nothing to close; simply slide the stitches of the chain together to make the chain curve gently. You can make picots on chains just as you do on rings.

Reversing work

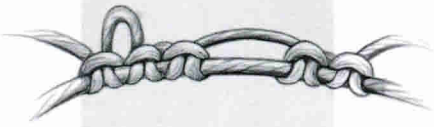
Notice that the stitches cause your work to curve clockwise (counter-clockwise if you're working left-handed). Turn-



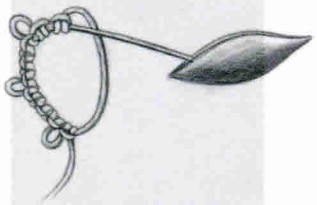
5. The hand thread is now looped correctly around the shuttle thread.



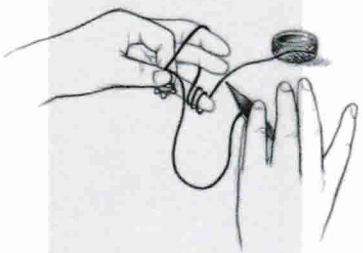
6. The second half of the ds is made by passing the shuttle over and back under the hand thread.



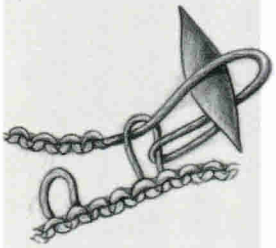
7. A picot is formed by leaving space between two ds and then sliding them together.



8. A ring is formed by pulling gently on the shuttle thread after all the required stitches have been made.



9. Make a chain between rings by using a second thread for the hand thread.



10. Join a chain or ring through the picot of a previous chain or ring by pulling a loop of the hand thread through the picot and passing the shuttle through it.

11. Increase tension gently on the hand thread to complete the join. Follow this with another ds.

ing or reversing your work (T or RW) curves the rings or chains in the opposite direction. Suppose you are closing a ring. You pull on the shuttle thread and the stitches meet. As you look at the completed ring, the shuttle and ball threads should be hanging down.

To reverse your work, simply flip it so that the bottom of the ring is now where the top was. Turn it over as if you were flipping over a coin.

The join

Picots are used not only for a lacy effect, but also to join loops and chains. There are two kinds of joins: one is simply called a join and the other a shuttle join (or locking join). Patterns usually indicate which type of join is to be made.

Suppose you want to join a ring (J or +) through the last picot on the previous ring. Bring the picot on the previous ring close to the top of the hand thread. With the point of the shuttle, a crochet hook, or a pin, go through the picot and hook the hand thread and pull it through the picot. (10) The loop of thread coming through the picot must be large enough to pass your shuttle through it. You may need to close up the fingers of your left hand a little to get some slack in the hand thread as you pull it through the picot.

Pass the shuttle through this loop. Holding the shuttle thread taut, slowly open your left hand again. The loop through the picot should get smaller and bring the two rings closer together. (11) The loop through the picot should be small enough to be inconspicuous, but shouldn't pull the shuttle thread through it to the other side or the shuttle thread won't slide through the stitches and you won't be able to pull the stitches into a ring.

The pass of the shuttle through the loop counts as the first half of a ds. Make the second half of the stitch normally. Just as a picot refers to the space between ds and not to the ds itself, the join refers to the connection between stitches and not to the stitches used to secure the join.

After the join is complete, the picot that actually comes from the first ring looks as though it could be from the second ring (or chain). Sometimes rings or chains simply share a picot. Joins stabilize a tatted piece without altering the overall design. The shuttle join is worked like the previously described join, but instead of pulling the top hand thread through the picot, pull the shuttle thread through. Pass the shuttle through the loop, tighten the join, and make the normal second half of the ds. The effect of pulling the shuttle thread through the picot is to lock it up so that the stitches made before the join no longer slide on it if it is pulled.

Attaching new threads

Join new threads at the end of a completed chain or after a completed ring. If you try to join a new thread in the middle of a ring, the knot will not pull through the stitches when you try to close the ring.

Assume that you have just finished a ring and are about to run out of thread on the shuttle. Cut the shuttle thread, leaving a loose end of about 4 or 5 inches. Refill your shuttle. Lay the loose end of thread and the end of the new shuttle thread together, loop them around and through, and tie a knot as close to the end of the last ring as possible. Then continue as usual.

Knowing how to make rings, chains, picots, and ds, and do reverse work and joining will enable you to complete nearly any tatting pattern.

Hints

- Until you're comfortable with the flip, check after each half of the ds to make sure that it has flipped correctly. Each half stitch must be flipped or you will not be able to pull the shuttle thread to make the ring draw together.
- Your threads may twist as you work with them. Every so often, while holding completed stitches firmly between your

left forefinger and thumb, let the shuttle dangle to allow the thread to untwist.

- It is notoriously difficult to undo a tatted ring after you've closed it, so before closing any ring, be sure that it contains the correct number of stitches, the picots are in the right place, etc. If you need to correct a closed ring, you will probably have to cut it open, undo the knots, and join a new thread to remake the ring.

- If a pattern starts with a ring, calls for both rings and chains, and you've just filled your shuttle, do not cut the thread from the ball. Simply begin to tat. After the ring is closed, you have both a ball and a shuttle thread—and no need to hide thread ends in the back of the work.

- You can deal with the loose ends in a number of ways. Do not simply knot them and cut them close to the work, although many older patterns may advise this. The little tufts of thread spoil the appearance of the finished piece. Instead, thread the ends on a needle and work them through several ds, trimming the excess, or whipstitch over the loose end on the wrong side of the finished piece with matching sewing thread and trim off the excess.

- Picots are not made between halves of a ds. "Picot" refers to the loop, not to the ds on either side of it. When you make a picot, the next ds counts as the first stitch for the next group.

- Try to make the picots within a ring the same size unless the pattern tells you to make some larger or smaller than others.

- If you make a short chain (try about 7 ds), then reverse your work and make a ring and keep reversing between each ring and chain, you will create a lace edging with one row of rings and one row of chains arching between them. Many medallions use this basic design, bringing the work full circle and joining the last chain to the base of the first ring. ❖

About the Author. *Lisa Trumble is a tatter and writer who lives in Albany, New York.*

Three Snowflakes to Tat

Designed by Georgia Seitz

You now have the skills to make the three snowflakes shown below.
Instructions follow on pages 84-85.

Tatting shuttle courtesy of Loveland Museum and Gallery.

Materials

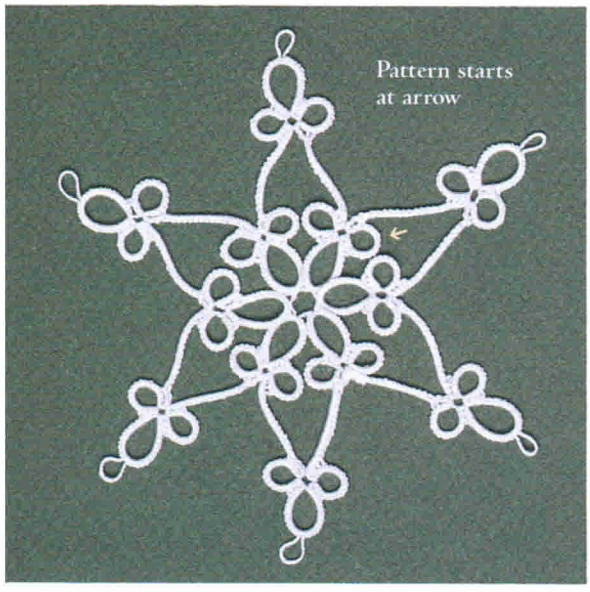
Tatting shuttle
White DMC Pearl Cotton, size 12
Size 14 crochet hook
Scissors
Glue (such as Aleene's Tacky glue)
Heavy spray starch or fabric stiffener such as Aleene's
Stainless steel pins and pinning board for blocking

Tatting Codes

Number	=	*number of double stitches to make*
R	=	*ring*
CH	=	*chain*
+	=	*join*
–	=	*picot*
RW	=	*reverse work*
*	=	*repeat from here (instructions to repeat this section occur later)*

Snowflake Pattern A

R 3–12–(very small) 3. Leave no space.
R 3 + 12–(very large [1/2-inch diameter] as it will be used for 5 joins) 12–(very small) 3. Leave no space.
*R 3 + 12–3. RW
CH 3 + (shuttle join to last picot made on cloverleaf) 14–3. Do not turn.
R 3–(join to last picot on chain) 12–(very small) 3. Leave no space.
R 3 + 12–12–(very small) 3. Leave no space.
R 3 + 12–3. Do not turn.
CH 3 + (join to last picot made on cloverleaf) 14–3. RW
R 3 + (join to last picot on chain) 12–(very small) 3. Leave no space.



R 3 + 12 + (join to large picot of initial cloverleaf) 12–(very small) 3. Leave no space. Repeat from * for a total of 6 points on the snowflake.

Join last chain to bottom of initial cloverleaf. Bring ends to the back and tie and glue, or whipstitch; trim. Spray with starch or use fabric stiffener, blot away any excess stiffener, and pin out on blocking board. Begin pinning at base of initial cloverleaf and go around the center before pinning out the points.

When tatted with size 12 thread, this pattern uses about 15 yd and makes a snowflake about 3½ inches in diameter.

TATTER'S SHORTHAND PATTERN

R 3–12–3
R 3 + 12–(lg; join all center motifs here) 12–3
R 3 + 12–3 RW
CH 3 + 14–3 Do not turn.
R 3 + 12–3
R 3 + 12–12–3
R 3 + 12–3 Do not turn.
CH 3 + 14–3 RW

Repeat pattern for 6 points. Use shuttle join where needed.

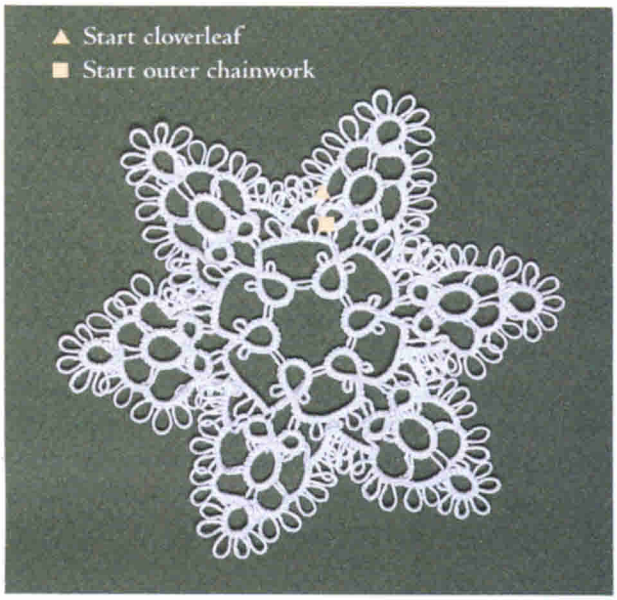
Snowflake Pattern B

Make 6 cloverleaf motifs. (Each takes about 1½ yd in size 12 thread.)
R 3–3–3–(very small) 3. Leave no space.
R 3 + 4–4–4–4–(very small) 3. Leave no space.
R 3 + 3–3–3. Bring ends to the back and tie and glue, or whipstitch; trim.
For center motif, wind about 6 yd thread and do *not* cut from ball. Using shuttle and ball thread:
R 2–4–6–4–2. RW
*CH 3 + 3–3–3–3 + 3. Join chain to cloverleafs. RW

Method: Hold the cloverleaf with its largest point closest to you; the chain should join to the picot on the small ring to the right. The second join at the end of the chain joins to a second cloverleaf. If you hold the second cloverleaf with its largest point closest to you, the chain will join to the picot on the small ring to the left. After you complete the next ring, the next chain will join to the picot on the small ring to the right of the second cloverleaf. Continue around, joining the last chain to the picot on the small ring to the left of the initial cloverleaf.

R 2–4 + 6–4–2. RW. Repeat from * for total of 6

rings, joining last ring to first ring. Join last chain to base of first ring. Bring ends to the back and tie and glue, or whipstitch; trim.



For outer chainwork, wind about 5 yd and do *not* cut from ball. Using shuttle join, attach thread (right side of center medallion up) to the free picot of the small ring on the left of any cloverleaf motif.

*CH 2–2–2–2 + (using shuttle join) to next picot on large ring of cloverleaf.

CH 2–2–2–(very small) 1 + to middle picot of large ring of cloverleaf. Do not turn.

R 3 + (to small picot of chain) 2–2–2–2–2–2–(very small) 3. Do not turn. Shuttle join into same picot again.

CH 1 + (to small picot of ring) 2–2–2 + (using shuttle join) to next free picot on cloverleaf.

CH 2–2–2–2 + (using shuttle join) to next picot on small ring of cloverleaf.

CH 2–2–2–2 + (using shuttle join) to middle picot of chain of center motif.

CH 2–2–2–2 + (using shuttle join) to the free picot on the small ring to the left of next cloverleaf. Repeat from *, joining last chain to initial point of attachment.

Bring ends to the back and tie and glue, or whipstitch; trim. Spray with starch or use fabric stiffener, blot away any excess starch, and pin out on blocking board. Begin pinning at base of initial rings and go around the center before pinning out the points.

When tatted with size 12 thread, this pattern uses about 18 yd and makes a snowflake about 3½ inches in diameter.

Snowflake Pattern C

For center motif of 6 rings, wind about 3 yd thread on shuttle and cut.

R 2–(very small) 6–2–2–6–(very small) 2. *Leave 1/8 inch length of thread. Do not turn.

R 2 + 6–2–2–6–(very small) 2. Repeat from * for a total of 6 rings, joining first ring to last. Bring ends to the back and tie and glue, or whipstitch; trim.

For the second round wind about 5 yd thread and do *not* cut from ball.

R 3–2–2–2 + 2–2. Leave no space.

R 2 + 2 + 2–2–2–3. RW

Method: First ring is joined to the picot to the far right on any ring of center motif. Second ring is joined to the picot on the far left on the next ring of the center motif. Thus, the side picots of each center ring are attached to separate rings from round two.

CH 3–3–3–3–3–3–3–3–3–3. RW. Repeat 6 times, joining last chain to bottom of initial ring. Bring ends to the back and tie and glue, or whipstitch; trim.

For the third round, wind about 5 yd thread and do *not* cut from ball.

Cloverleaf:

*R 3–2–2–2–2–(very small) 3. Leave no space.

R 3 + 2–2–2–2–(very small) 3. Leave no space.

R 3 + 2–2–2–2–3. Do not turn.

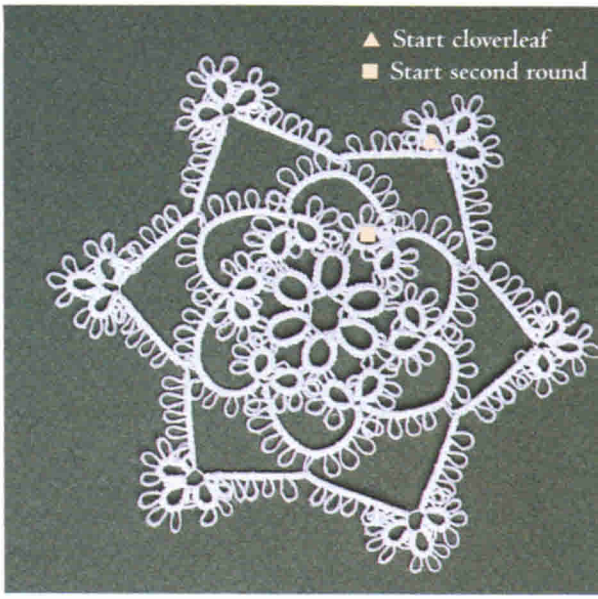
CH 3–3–3–3–3–3 + (using shuttle join to middle picot of chain of previous round).

CH 3–3–3–3–3–3. Do not turn. Repeat from *, joining last chain to base of initial cloverleaf.

Bring ends to the back and tie and glue, or whipstitch; trim. Because the third round is attached at only six points, this pattern is very fragile. It is best to use a heavy solution of fabric stiffener, blot away any excess stiffener, and pin out on blocking board. Begin pinning at base of initial rings and go around the center before pinning out the points.

When tatted with size 12 thread this pattern uses about 12 yd and makes a snowflake about 3½ inches in diameter.

Three delicate tatted snowflakes offer different challenges. You may find Snowflake C, which looks complex, the easiest to complete.



Linda G. Lugenbill

Navajo Ceremonial Baskets: The Center Holds

THE ANCESTORS OF the present-day Navajo migrated from the far north (Mackenzie-Yukon Valley) to the Southwest, settling near the Pueblo people along the Rio Grande in New Mexico. Today, the Navajo reside in northern Arizona, New Mexico, and southern Utah. Their reservation covers about 18 million acres with a tribal population of about 130,000—the largest tribe in the United States. Originally a mobile and aggressive tribe of hunters who lived in semipermanent family camps, after they were confined on the reservation, the Navajo adopted a pastoral way of life. Basket making is an important part of that life.

One of the most distinctive baskets among southwestern cultures is the Navajo ceremonial basket, often called a wedding basket. It is a coiled basket, shaped like a shallow bowl, with three or more interrupted red bands of stitching bordered above and below by black triangles. Although earlier Navajo wedding baskets took the form of deep bowls (with shallower baskets appearing after about 1900), the basket's sacred significance has otherwise limited experimentation with its design, which has remained relatively static for more than 100 years.

According to Harrison Tsosie, husband of Navajo weaver and basket maker Jo-Ellis Tsosie of Cortez, Colorado, the term "wedding basket" was an Anglo designation for the sacred basket, which was used in other ceremonies as well as weddings. He describes how in one ceremony, the medicine man put spiritual water inside the sacred basket and then brushed the water with yucca root to form a soap for a ritual hair washing. Before 1900, medicine men sometimes turned the basket over and used it as a drum.

When the basket is used in a wedding ceremony, the man and woman to be married meet at sundown in a building where the bride's father fills the basket with blue or yellow cornmeal and draws a cross of blue pollen denoting the four directions on top of the cornmeal. Starting at the edge of the basket to the east and moving clockwise, the couple and their guests eat the cornmeal. According to the Tsosies, the bridegroom's mother then takes the basket, which is never used again but treated as a special family object. Because family members return periodically to the head of the family, where such special baskets are kept, Navajo families are said to be "kept together by the baskets."

Materials and Dyes

Navajo ceremonial baskets are traditional in materials, structure, and design. The process of gathering and preparing materials has changed little. Yucca leaves (*Yucca filamentosa*), frequently used as a welt (a bundle of fibers), are collected and dried. The Navajo travel great distances to collect rods of sumac (*Rhus trilobata*) when the sap is down and the plant leafless. The collecting location is often a well-guarded secret. Sumac rods form the basket's foundation while split, peeled sumac is used for the stitching. Sumac collected in summer is yellow-tan; that collected in winter is white. Jo-Ellis Tsosie distinguishes between "winter" or "summer" baskets by color.

Navajo ceremonial baskets traditionally use materials left naturally white or dyed black, red, or orange. Vegetal dyes were used until modern commercial dyes became readily available. The root of mountain mahogany (*Cercocarpus montanus*), dug in winter from high, rocky places near water, was a favorite dye material. Mixing juniper root and the crushed bark of mountain mahogany root with a bit of alder bark and the ashes of burnt juniper or cedar needles gave a red dye. Black came from sumac splints (thin strips of split rods) steeped in a mixture of powdered coal and ocher, then boiled with sumac leaves and piñon pitch. Today, aniline

dyes produce jet blacks and vivid reds and oranges without the need for time-consuming preparation.

Constructing a Ceremonial Basket

The ceremonial baskets are coiled baskets originally constructed with a two-rod foundation topped by a fiber bundle, or welt. This foundation resulted in a slightly flexible container with smooth, thin walls and relatively flat rims. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, some baskets were made with three-rod-bunched foundations, thicker walls, and rounder rims. Basket making declined in the twentieth century. At the same time, the Navajo population increased, as did the frequency and number of rituals requiring ceremonial baskets. The solution was to acquire the much needed baskets from neighboring tribes. The Navajo used cash from the sale of rugs or traded blankets to acquire baskets from the San Juan Paiutes and the Utes. The three-rod-bunched foundation has been attributed to southern Paiutes, for whom that construction is common.

Few tools are required to make the traditional basket. After the rods have been collected dried, the maker uses a knife to start splitting each rod into thirds, and then finishes the split using both hands and teeth. After debarking, pieces, called splints, are sized for uniform width and thickness. Some basket makers use a gauge made from a metal soup can lid with holes of various sizes drilled or punched through it to size the splints. The dried splints are stiff and would break if bent. Before they can be woven, they are soaked and kept damp under a towel to mellow them. Basket makers use awls to assist with the stitching.

A Navajo ceremonial basket begins with a self-coiled or knotted start. Some even contain a wooden peg or a cloth scrap as a plug at the center of the coil. The coiled foundation is covered with noninterlocking, close stitches.

Navajo ceremonial baskets from the collection of Linda Lugenbill.

The rim ends in a tapered coil, and the rim edge is finished with a false braid or herringbone stitch. According to legend, in ancient times a Navajo woman was seated under a juniper tree finishing her basket in the old, plain way when the god Hastseyath threw a sprig of juniper into her basket. The basket maker imitated the folds of the leaf on her rim, and the herringbone motif has since been recognized feature in a traditional Navajo ceremonial basket.

THE CONSTANT DESIGN

The design of the basket is symbolic. For example, the center start must be in line radially with the tapered end of the coil. This radial line, which forms a clear path from the center of the basket through every band to the rim, is known as the spirit line, the path, or the doorway. It is believed to prevent one's spirit from being trapped in the basket. The tapered end of the coil on the basket's edge also lets the medicine man know, even in darkness, where the spirit line is. The line must always be oriented to the east. The Navajo believed that ill fate would befall anyone who started a basket rim and did not finish it before the sun set.

The general patterning of the basket—a white or yellow-tan background with bands of black triangles above and below bands of interrupted red stitching—is one of the few southwestern basket designs with consistent meanings. The center start is believed to symbolize the beginning of the Earth, from which life moves outward for the Navajo. Harrison Tsosie refers to the center as a star and describes the inside of the hogan (the Navajo dwelling, in which the door always points east) as having the same star on the floor and ceiling. He refers to the star as "our home, our foundation" because the hogan and the baskets mean "home" to the Navajo. Life-giving rain, which comes in black clouds on the mountains of the Navajo land, is depicted by the black pendant and sawtooth triangles. Specifically, the upright triangular motifs are the mountains. "Inside the four sacred mountains is our home," Harrison Tsosie explains. The red bands, which he calls "walking beauty," symbolize the colors of the rainbow or the red and pink of the sun's rays in the sky. The outer white field is thought to represent the increase of "the People" (as the Navajo refer to themselves); the pathway or break in the encircling design lets the People emerge.

The Navajo believe that the ceremonial basket is filled with power. Its design has survived practically unchanged. Although contemporary Navajo basket makers create baskets that vary from the tradition, a core of meaning and design keeps the Navajo ceremonial basket tradition strong. ❖

ABOUT THE AUTHOR. *Linda Lugenbill is a basket maker, researcher, and writer living in Colorado Springs, Colorado.*

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Book Marks

Books in review

Treasures in the Trunk

by Mary Bywater Cross

Nashville, Tennessee: Rutledge Hill Press, 1993. Softbound, 174 pages, $19.95. ISBN 1-55853-237-4.

> Women translated the geometric shapes of colored fabrics into what they saw in flora and fauna and in what they experienced in weather and exposure on the Trail. They pieced, appliquéd, and quilted their response to the people and places in their new home in the West.
>
> Mary Bywater Cross, page xvii

"Those who come this journey should have their pillows covered with dark calico and sheets colored, white is not suitable."

Treasures in the Trunk

Treasures in the Trunk is a celebration of women, their rightful place in history, and the quilts they created as they crossed the country and settled the Oregon Territory. In a scholarly presentation, Mary Bywater Cross examines "seventy quilts and their makers from 1825 to 1915, quilts found today in national and western private and public collections." The quilts are organized chronologically and further grouped according to whether they were pieced and/or quilted before, during, or after the owners or makers traveled the Oregon Trail. Quiltmaking was an important activity even before departure, both as bedding for the hard trip ahead and as a way of keeping connections with family and friends.

> As [the women] made the quilts to be used on the Trail, they referred to them in diaries, letters, and logs. They made quilts to honor their families and friends who stayed behind, and they made quilts to record the items from their past. For instance, Elizabeth Currier Foster made the Poke Stalk (Quilt A-3) before emigrating. . . . The poke stalk plant does not exist in the Northwest.

Throughout the book, in the pioneers' own words, there are vivid windows into the trail experience: ". . . washed a very large washing . . . Those who come this journey should have their pillows covered with dark calico and sheets colored, white is not suitable."

In her search for common fabrics, patterns, and styles, the author uncovers a wealth of symbolic art pertinent to the lives and times of many women. She identifies themes of nature, migration, and family cycles of birth, death, and celebration. The result is a "patchwork" of the symbolic community shared not only by the women who traveled the Oregon Trail but also by all women in all times.

The documentation for each quilt presented includes a photograph of the quilt and a photograph of its owners. Whenever possible, the book also includes a photograph of the quilter, her new home and county, the year the quilt was made, and the year the quilt was brought over the trail. In a short narration, the author shares the results of her research about the owners' lives and the quilts' fabrics, colors, workmanship, and symbolism.

Perhaps the greatest treasures in this small book are the appendices. In her research, Mary Bywater Cross encountered many previously unpublished stories relating the lives of the women, men, and children who made the arduous journey across the plains, carrying their quilts. The stories often relate to specific individual quilts and create a real vision of the people who walked the Oregon Trail. For example, Appendix B contains a letter from Tabitha Moffett Brown, who used her needlework skills to make her way in her new world:

> On Christmas day at 2 p.m., I entered the house of a Methodist minister, the first house I had set my feet in for nine months. For two or three weeks of my journey down the Willamette I had felt something in the end of my glove finger which I supposed to be a button. On examination at my new home in Salem, I found it to be a six and a quarter cent piece. This was my sole capital to commence business with in Oregon. With it I purchased three needles.

Do you have a cache of little balls, skeins, hands, and snippets of yarn that you're saving for something someday? Jan Messent's book Knitted Historical Figures *may be just the inspiration you've been waiting for.*

She made buckskin gloves and sold them to establish herself. She later founded a school. Stories of such strength abound.

Treasures in the Trunk has wonderful photographs and stories, is a great reference on traditional quilt making, and offers appreciation for and insight into the lives of Oregon's pioneer women.

—*Jude Daurelle*

Knitted Historical Figures
by Jan Messent

Tunbridge Wells, Kent, England: Search Press, 1992. Softbound, 143 pages. $24.95. ISBN 0-85532-747-2.

If you think of knitting only as a way to dress body or home, consider a parade of twenty-one little people marching down through the ages in the finest detailed garments ever to spring from a pair of knitting needles. Beginning with a B.C. Egyptian couple, an Old Testament rabbi, and a high priest of the Sanhedrin, we move through the opulence of the Italian Renaissance and sweep across Europe through centuries to the time of Queen Victoria. We hit the beaches (rocks?) of the New World with the Pilgrims, visit the Colonies, then it's back to the beach with a Bloomer girl dressed in gay but discreet swimming attire. We're brought up to date, almost, with a wee-waisted Gibson girl dressed for a rowdy game of golf.

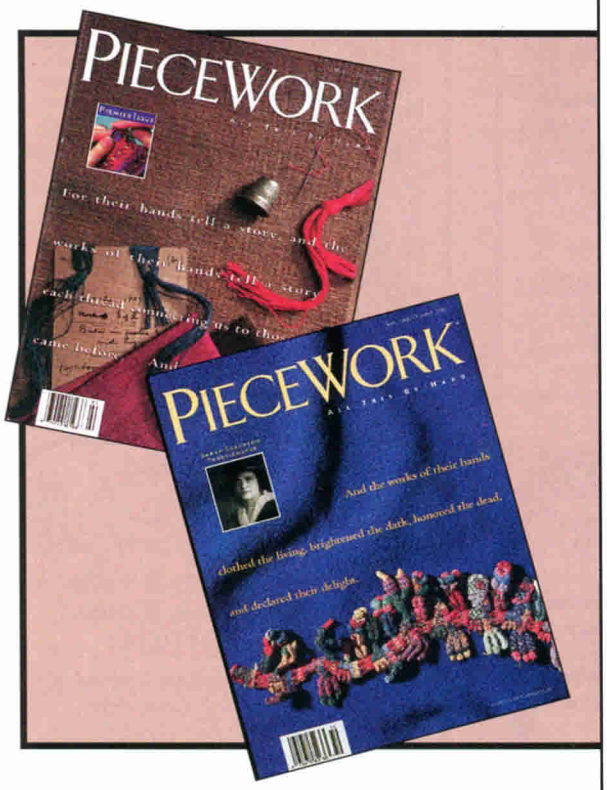
The costumes are carefully researched, and each project is prefaced with lively historical information about the period and the garment. Several figures were inspired by portraits. King Henry VIII, Elizabeth I, and Madame de Pompadour are easily recognizable in their ruffs, frills, bows, and glitter. If you aren't a bead junkie already, you may find yourself haunting bead stores, thrift shops, and yard sales for just the right gem for Elizabeth's tiara or Cleopatra's girdle. These dolls offer many opportunities for embellishment, and the author encourages your creativity.

Needle and yarn sizes and some terms given are British and correspond to fingering yarn and U.S. needle sizes #1 to #3½. Beautiful English novelty sock yarns have been used effectively for the look of rich fabric, and some colors are softened with tea-dyeing. Since my cache of yarn oddments is short on the finer yarns, I used sport weight yarn and U.S. #2 needles throughout. I made the American girl (ca. 1750). With a few added rows here and there, she turned out wonderfully and in proper scale. Knitted to the author's specifications, these dolls are designed to fit over standard plastic fashion dolls, although the author also gives directions for making your own padded wire armature and knitted "skin." It's probably not necessary to add that these dolls are designed for display, not as toys.

Full-color photos and detail shots of each doll, as well as sketches of the original costume and construction diagrams, complement the written instructions. There is a section explaining terms and techniques, and one on the pattern knits used in many of the more elaborate costumes. Although this is definitely not a book for beginners, all directions are clear, and it's guaranteed to bring many months of fun to those entranced by "little things."

—*Jeanne Nash*

Knitted Historical Figures is available from North American distributor, Arthur Schwartz and Company, 234 Meads Mountain Rd., Woodstock, NY 12498.



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SUCH GOOD FRIENDS

Veronica Patterson

Bangwell Putt—At Her Age

When she was young . . . she may have kept late hours and never got to bed till quite a while after dark. . . . She may have used lipstick. She may have even smoked a pipe . . . or she may have been a perfect angel. Who knows!

The Journey of Bangwell Putt

BANGWELL PUTT, thought to be the oldest surviving rag doll in the United States (circa 1770–1775), resides quietly at the Memorial Hall Museum in Deerfield, Massachusetts. Although her clothes are tattered, she is properly dressed for her eighteenth-century day: She wears a linen corset with wood stays; a bodice, drawers, and petticoat, also of linen; and a wool petticoat just beneath her dress, the last of several dresses worn out and replaced.

Bangwell Putt, the oldest surviving rag doll in the United States.

Photograph courtesy of the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, Memorial Hall Museum, Deerfield, Massachusetts.

Bangwell Putt belonged to Clarissa Field, who was born blind, August 25, 1765. Her grandfather, Moses Field, carved the wooden part of Bangwell's body out of pine wood. Her shoes were made of deerskin. Bangwell Putt's hands with their elongated and well-defined fingers were made of linen. As one might expect in a toy made for a blind child, the fingers, which could be felt easily, are expressive; Bangwell Putt's face is blank. Of Clarissa Field's several imaginatively named dolls—Pingo, Palica, Kimonarro, and Ebby Puttence—Bangwell Putt was the favorite. Clarissa and Bangwell were together for seventy years of Clarissa's more than eighty. The doll was donated to the Memorial Hall Museum in 1883 by Clarissa's cousin Deacon Phineas Field.

Bangwell Putt's retirement might have been complete but for a journey she made that was recorded in a 1945 children's book by Mariana (Marian F. Curtiss) called *The Journey of Bangwell Putt.* Reprinted by Lothrop, Lee and Shepard in 1965, the book chronicles Bangwell Putt's trip to New York in whimsical prose with sprightly watercolored illustrations of Bangwell Putt and friends. Here is how the journey came about.

At the Memorial Hall Museum, with her friends—the fat, kind velvet horse; Charlemagne the lion, who lives on a chair; an animal known only as "the one who lives on a jug"; and Adolphus (species unidentified), who lives on a rug, "life was not exciting." Bangwell Putt made a wish on the new moon for an adventure and the next day was dusted off for a trip to "the City of New York in North America" for a Christmas loan exhibit of toys and dolls.

According to the story, Bangwell, who was not sophisticated, met haughty, elegant dolls, who disdained her. She was lonely, particularly on Christmas Eve until the unexpected arrival of the mysterious Hessian soldier. He had come to take her to the Christmas Ball aboard his two-headed mount, the "horseandsnail." With a new comb in her hair and dancing slippers, Bangwell attended the ball—and we are told she danced. After the celebration, she traveled back to Memorial Hall. Afterward, letters to the Hessian soldier were rumored to arrive periodically from Deerfield and signed "B. Putt." But as the author says, "Who knows!"

Bangwell Putt lives again in retirement, but she can be visited at the Memorial Hall Museum, on Memorial Street in Deerfield, Massachusetts.

PIECEWORK THANKS *Suzanne Flynt, Jeanette Blohm, the Memorial Hall Museum, and the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association for information on Bangwell Putt.*

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