THE CRAFT MAGAZINE WITH A DIFFERENCE

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1995

PIECEWORK

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PIECE

DEPARTMENTS

Sew, dear mother, a skirt for me
Made of nine sections,
So I can show it off
To my many admirers.

A Latvian *daina* (folk song) from *Latvian Knitting Techniques*, by Anita Apinis-Herman

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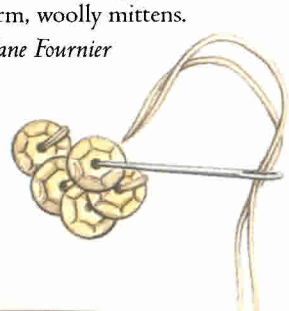

WORK™

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Notions

From the editor

A Small Hair Piece

My mother combs,
pulls her hair back
tight, rolls it
around two fingers, pins it
in a bun to the back of her head.
For half a hundred years she has
done this.
My father likes to see it like this.
He says it is kempt.
But I know
it is because of the way
my mother's hair falls
when he pulls the pins out.

Li-Young Lee, "Early in the Morning," from Rose *(Brockport, New York: Boa, 1986)*

Why is it that the same stuff once said to be our crowning glory can become a contentious "statement" when someone wears it too long (in the 1930s or the 1960s) or too short (women's bobbed hair early in or men's shaved heads late in this century)? Cutting or shaving it off has denoted many things in our culture, from a punishment for adultery or prostitution to a statement of school spirit.

If we lose our own, we may mourn it—and wear other people's (or a look-alike synthetic). Throughout much of recorded history, hair has been a marketable product (England imported hundreds of tons per year in the mid-nineteenth century). However, even one in our soup (no matter how beautiful) is disgusting. Hair is a prime ingredient in magic: hair and fingernails (both of which "grow"—in the sense of getting longer—yet are clippable without harm) are used to focus the power of love and fertility potions and life threats.

Hair is sensuous. Running hands through someone's hair is intimate. A woman letting her hair fall loose is a sensual act—one so well recognized that the phrase "letting down one's hair" has come to stand for emotional openness.

It is certainly the stuff of legend: from Samson and Delilah to Rapunzel and all the princes and princesses eventually revealed by golden hair, hair is a sign. People have always attached meaning to it.

How humans fix their hair—whether to participate in an African tribe's rite of passage or the latest Western fashion (also group-driven)—always communicates something about who we are. We brush, braid, color, cut, and/or shape it. A "bad-hair day" is a joke for a reason. Hair is integral to who we are; cover or cut it off, and suddenly a familiar face is strange.

A hair trigger is the most responsive of mechanisms. A hair line is the finest of cracks. A hairbreadth escape is the closest. Hairsprings regulate the finest motions. That which is hair-raising is extremely frightening. Hair shirts are very penitential. And hair splitters are the most annoying people to have around. Security is not to have a hair on your head harmed. In mysteries and spy stories, a hair is used as an invisible trap placed across the edge of doorways and trunk openings to discover later whether they've been disturbed. An article on Myanmar (Burma) in the July 1995 issue of *National Geographic* opens with a spectacular photograph by Steve McCurry of southern Myanmar's Golden Rock, a destination of Buddhist pilgrims, who believe it to be balanced with one strand of the Buddha's hair.

You may wonder what the hair-PIECEWORK connection is. We are planning an article on the intricate and ingenious hairwork that reached its peak of popularity in the mid-nineteenth century in Victorian England, and I've already experienced a variety of (usually strong) reactions to the idea of working with human hair to make intricate three-dimensional pictures of hair or hair jewelry.

Those reactions confirm that hair is basic to our identity. What do you think about hair crafts, and do you have hair jewelry or hair pictures among other family mementos? We would love to hear about and see photographs of them. ✦

Veronica

Veronica Patterson
Editor

My thanks to all of you for your wonderful responsiveness—to our request for friends' names to receive a complimentary issue of PIECEWORK from you, to sending yarn and purchasing Rainbow Socks to support Bosnian refugees, to our use of the word "craft" following Linda Ligon's September/October 1995 "A Stitch" (watch for those comments in "By Post" in the next issue).

Needle Points

I read "A Stitch" (July/August 1995) with great amusement. I learned to thread a needle from my mother, who taught home economics for thirty-six years. She taught me and all of her students to hold the thread between thumb and forefinger of one hand and, holding the needle in the other hand, slide the needle over the thread (the way Huck did it).

My mother and I have found this to be a virtually foolproof way of threading a needle. We don't have to squint to find the eye or use any of the devices Linda mentioned. Most of the time, I don't even look when I thread a needle this way. Ninety-nine times out of 100, we have success the first time (unless the thread frays).

Linda Gross
Montclair, New Jersey

I'm staggered! I had no idea that I was so abnormal until I read "A Stitch" in July/August 1995. As a child, I read that bit about Huck Finn without bothering to test its accuracy. I just assumed that I would thread my needles the "female" way. I was shocked to discover that I thread my needles in a manner ascribed to boys. At first I was devastated, but now I feel a burgeoning pride in what I feel to be a superior method.

The column asserts that the normal way for needle threaders of either sex is to hold the needle still and put the thread through the eye. I can almost hear derision in the reference to the opposite method as "trying to lasso the thread with the needle."

Like your husband, Linda, I anoint my thread ends with a bit of spit to stiffen them up. Even still, I find thread relatively floppy so I like to anchor the thread ends securely between the thumb and first finger of my left hand. I leave just enough damp thread sticking out to fit through the eye of the needle. Because needles are stiff and straight, I can use my right hand to hold the needle and home in on the thread ends in my left hand.

With my method, no one would need the assistance of such arcane technology as patent #2,679,959 to thread your needles. Thanks, Linda, for the reminder that we do needlework for fun.

Carolyn Fysh
Banff, Alberta, Canada

Another Forbidden-Stitch Purse

Once again, I have thoroughly enjoyed the latest issue of PIECEWORK. I have raved to a number of people about the fascinating variety of articles that are featured.

In the July/August 1995 issue, the picture of the embroidered purse sent me looking for a very similar one which belonged to my grandmother (shown at right). I would put the date as the 1930s, maybe even the 1920s, but not the 1940s as implied by the letters found with the one in the article.

Mary H. Yuhasz
Denver, Colorado

Black moiré faille evening purse embroidered in forbidden stitch and stamped "Real Hand Made, Point of Beauvais, Made in France," with the calling card of Mrs. Walter (Mary Grayson Jacobs) G. McBlain, Mary Yuhasz's grandmother.

Photograph by Joe Coca.

Helping Each Other

The July/August 1995 issue was the best ever. Even my husband, who is a computer whiz, enjoyed reading it. I particularly liked the knitting articles because I'm an avid knitter. And I would like to add that there is still a great need for handmade things. I subscribe

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

to the *Pine Meadow Knitting News,* 490 Woodland Dr., York, PA 17402-1248, (717) 846-0762, a charity knitting newsletter. The listed charities need everything from baby booties and stuffed toys to sweaters for seamen. Just think what a difference we could make if we put that World War II effort into taking care of our own!

Cynthia Tymer Imes
Rochester Hills, Michigan

My Lace Grandmother

Thank you for the article about Mary McPeek ("The Stamps that Celebrate Lace Making," May/June 1995). She is my lace making teacher's teacher, and she is always gracious and helpful to even the rawest beginner.

In the article on näversöm in the same issue, I wondered if one could make a small piece by using a sliced-up gallon milk jug as fake birch bark. The resulting work support could be rolled and held with a rubber band, a neat size to tuck into a purse, tote bag, or large pocket.

Martha F. Krieg
Ypsilanti, Michigan

Thanks for Writing Her Life

Thanks to Jude Daurelle for the excellent coverage of my mother's life and craft ("Writing Her Life in Thread," July/August 1995). My brother and I treasure her handiwork. My mother would be pleased with the story, much amazed, even overwhelmed.

Clyde F. Allen
Bremerton, Washington

Preferred Reading for the Fabrically Illiterate

While I read books and magazines from all over the world and in several languages, and in spite of the fact that I am a four-thumbed, template-challenged, shuttle jock—who if asked his favorite seasons of the year would say "baseball and basketball"—and while I do not cross-stitch, embroider, spin, weave, crochet, needlepoint, tat, or quilt (my wife does), I am proud to say that she has to wait to read her

PIECEWORK until I have finished it, cover to cover. Quite frankly, I prefer it to my *Sports Illustrated* and *Sporting News.*

I find the homespun philosophy, history, and human-interest yarns more than a delightful backdrop to what I consider your "piece" works. I think some of the sportswriters discussing the fabric of America would do well to consider Pearl Allen's stitched psalms or the abolitionist quilts (July/August 1995).

Finally, to all of those anonymous, bright, talented, patient, and underappreciated stitchers in the stadiums and ballparks throughout the world, I tip my hat.

James R. Blakesley
Salt Lake City, Utah

Chicken, Egg, Shuttle, Needle

Thank you for a great magazine and particularly for the article on needle tatting (March/April 1995). Barbara Foster wrote an excellent article on a subject that is very difficult to research. When it comes to the history of needle tatting and shuttle tatting, we run into questions like whether the chicken or the egg came first.

My feeling is whatever technique a person uses, they are keeping alive a great art form. One technique is *not* better than the other. Whichever technique you prefer, use that technique and enjoy what *you* are doing and don't be concerned if you have approval from the rest of the world.

I teach both shuttle and needle tatting. My real love is the shuttle, but I am glad to have needle tatting to teach. There are students who just don't get the shuttle technique and are very happy to be able to tat.

A lot of us love tatting and simply enjoy finding tatting in a magazine like PIECEWORK.

Kendra J. Goodnow
Westmont, Illinois

Note

The telephone number for the Belgian Lace School in San Pedro, California, is (310) 514-2272.

Calendar

Upcoming events

Please send your event information at least three months before the month of publication. Listings are made as space is available. Although we try to include as many events as possible, we cannot guarantee that your listing will be included.

✦ TORRANCE, CALIFORNIA. November 4. 11th Lace Day, sponsored by the Freeway Lace Guild. Bette Crowell (310) 645-6085.

✦ DENVER, COLORADO. November 17–18. Bobbin Lace. Beggars' Lace, PO Box 481223, Denver, CO 80248. (303) 233-2600.

✦ LOVELAND, COLORADO. Through November 27. Contemporary Beads and Beadwork: Innovative Directions at the Loveland Museum/Gallery, Fifth and Lincoln, Loveland, CO 80537. (970) 962-2410.

✦ LOVELAND, COLORADO. March 11–17. An Interweave Forum: Cloth.ing. Send a SASE with 52 cents postage to Interweave Press, Cloth.ing, 201 E. Fourth St., Loveland, CO 80537.

✦ WASHINGTON, D. C. Through January 7. Mysterious Voids at the Heart of Historic Textiles: A Search for Meaning. Quilt National: Innovation and Impact. The Textile Museum, 2320 S St., NW, Washington, DC 20008-4088. (202) 667-0441.

✦ CHICAGO, ILLINOIS. November 8–February 4. Robert Lehman and His Textiles. The Art Institute of Chicago, 111 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60603-6110. (312) 443-3600.

✦ CHICAGO, ILLINOIS. December 1. Call for papers deadline for the Textile Society of America's Fifth Biennial Symposium, Sacred and Ceremonial Textiles, at The Art Institute of Chicago, September 18–22. Rita J. Adrosko, Co-chair, TSA 1996 Symposium, Textiles-NMAH 4131–MRC 617, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC 20560.

✦ PADUCAH, KENTUCKY. Through January 1. The Quilts of Anna Williams. Museum of the American Quilter's Society, 215 Jefferson St., PO Box 1540, Paducah, KY 42002-1540.

✦ LIVONIA, MICHIGAN. November 18. Love of Lace Six, sponsored by the Great Lakes Lace Group. Kathleen Campbell, 207 Wilson, Ypsilanti, MI 48197. (313) 483-5693.

✦ MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA. November 3–12. Beading workshop at the Art Institute of Guatemala, 4758 Lyndale Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55409-2304. (612) 825-0747.

✦ MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA. Through January 7. From the Land of the Thunder Dragon: Textile Arts of Bhutan at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, 2400 Third Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55404. (612) 870-3000.

✦ NEW YORK, NEW YORK. Through November 30. The Changeless Carpathians, an exhibit by Helene Cincebeaux and Mary B. Kelly; Meanings and Messages in Ukrainian Folk Embroidery with Tatiana Kara-Vasieleva and Ludmila Bulgakova. Ukrainian Museum, 203 Second Ave., New York, NY 10003. (212) 228-0110.

✦ NEW YORK, NEW YORK. Through November 26. Swords into Ploughshares: Military Dress and the Civilian Wardrobe. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1000 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10028-0198. (212) 570-3951.

✦ CINCINNATI, OHIO. November 18–January 31. Cincinnati Quilts! at the Cincinnati Historical Society Museum Center, Cincinnati Union Terminal, 1301 Western Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45203. (513) 287-7000.

✦ WILLIAMSPORT, PENNSYLVANIA. November 24–January 6. Full Deck Art Quilts. The Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service. Nancy Vanderlin (717) 323-1400, or (717) 323-1353.

✦ MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE. Through December 31. Art of Africa. Brooks Museum of Art, 1934 Poplar, Memphis, TN 38104-2765. (901) 722-3500.

✦ AUSTIN, TEXAS. November 11–12. 5th Annual Jewelry and Bead Bazaar, sponsored by the Austin Bead Society, PO Box 656, Austin, TX 78767-0656. (512) 264-1117.

✦ HOUSTON, TEXAS. November 2–5. International Quilt Festival at George R. Brown Convention Center. Quilts, Inc., 7660 Woodway, Ste. 550, Houston, TX 77063. (713) 781-6864.

✦ FREDERICKSBURG, VIRGINIA. November 5–11. Thirteenth Annual Kenmore Needlework Exhibit at Kenmore Plantation and Gardens, 1201 Washington Ave., Fredericksburg, VA 22401. (703) 373-3381, ext. 4.

✦ TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA. November 2–4. Annual Meeting and Symposium of the Costume Society of America Regions II and IV, hosted by the Costume Society of Ontario, Box 981, Station F, Toronto, ON, Canada M4Y 2N9. Deborah Maw (416) 966-2856.

TRAVEL

✦ LONDON, ENGLAND. November 11–19. Textiles `95, an exhibition of work by the London Guild of Weavers, Spinners, and Dyers, including rugs, tapestries, and knitting. London Guild of Weavers, Cedar Bank, Diamond Terrace, Greenwich, London, SE10 8QN, England. (011) 44-81-692-2650.

✦ CHATEAU DE CHASSY EN MORVAN, BURGUNDY, FRANCE. Le Chassy d'Or, 7th International Art Quilt Competition. Deadline is March 1. Send a SASE with one universal postal coupon to Le Chassy d'Or, 58120 Chateau Chinon, France.

✦ FRANCE. April 19–30. Folk Art Explorers' Club tour, sponsored by the Museum of American Folk Art, 61 W. 62nd St., New York, NY 10023. Beth Bergin or Chris Cappiello, Membership Office (212) 977-7170.

✦ LYON, FRANCE. Quilt Expo V, sponsored by the American International Quilt Association. Quilts, Inc. 7660 Woodway, Ste. 550, Houston, TX 77063. (713) 781-6864.

✦ PRAGATI MAIDAN, NEW DELHI, INDIA. January 28–February 1. Indian Handicrafts and Gifts Fair, organized by the Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (sponsored by the Ministry of Textiles, Government of India), 6, Community Centre, Basant Lok, Vasant Vihar, New Delhi-110057, India. 011-91-11-600871 or 011-91-11-6875377.

✦ NEW ZEALAND. May 6–22. An Interweave Journey: The New Zealand Woolcrafts Festival. Send a business-size SASE to Interweave Press, New Zealand Journey, 201 E. 4th St., Loveland, CO 80537.

✦ SCANDINAVIA. June. Interweave Journey: Knitting in Scandinavia. Send a business-size SASE to Interweave Press, Scandinavian Journey, 201 E. Fourth St., Loveland, CO 80537.

Linen Closet

Amy Z. Rowland

Wet-Cleaning Antique Lacework

HAVE you ever seen mysterious red-orange and yellow stains that mark stored antique lacework articles with bright and subtle patterns as if you had left them to dry in a shallow, now-evaporated pool? To all appearances, the lacework was clean when you put it away, but in fact, you effectively left it sitting in a pool of minerals and acids.

Ordinary tap water, however crystal clear it may appear, often carries dissolved minerals such as iron and manganese. Household water supplies may contain chemical additives, impurities from groundwater, and/or dissolved minerals from inside your plumbing pipes—unless you use a water filtering and softening system.

Rust mold, acid residues, and yellowed fold lines like those shown usually respond well to gentle laundering.

Untreated antique lacework courtesy of Amy Z. Rowland. Photograph by Joe Coca.

Even if you thought you rinsed your lacework thoroughly when you laundered it, rinse water that is neither filtered nor softened will have deposited tiny amounts of impurities onto the fabric. With a little air and time, these dissolved mineral deposits oxidize, or rust, leaving spots called "iron mold" or "rust mold." Chlorinating hard water increases the likelihood that it will deposit fabric-discoloring mineral salts. Adding chlorine bleach to hard water practically guarantees rust mold.

The yellow pool-shaped marks usually indicate acid residues. These may have formed when surface dirt was not completely removed in laundering or when vinegar or lemon juice was used in the final rinse water or when the lacework was improperly stored. Ordinary white tissue paper, cardboard storage boxes, and wooden bureau drawers can leach acids into the fabric during storage.

If you want to keep your white antique lacework in good condition or revive it following neglect, you can protect it from rust mold and acid yellowing by a method of wet-cleaning that I call "gentle laundering." (The process works for colored lace as well.) By the time an antique piece—especially of cotton—comes into your hands, it may show overall yellowing, fold lines, and black or gray mildew spots. Other stains such as gravy, blood, or hardened glue may be present.

The Solution: Gentle Laundering

In an ideal world, we would all have washbasins made of inert materials and an unlimited supply of soft, pH-balanced water, free from all impurities. Happily, it's possible to approximate these conditions at home.

Choose a basin, sink, or tub made of an inert material such as stainless steel, glass, porcelain, plastic, or an enamel-coated iron (make sure that the coating isn't chipped), which will not leach minerals into your lacework. Avoid aluminum, cast iron, and copper. The container should be large enough to hold the piece flat or, if this is not possible, folded once. A stainless-steel double sink is ideal, or you may use two plastic dishwashing basins: the second container will hold the lacework while it drains between sudsings and rinsings.

You may use tap water for laundering and spot treatment even if it is hard or treated. The key is *not* to use it for the final rinse. Instead, use only bottled distilled or demineralized (filtered or otherwise treated to remove minerals) water to ensure that any dissolved minerals, suspended dirt particles, detergents, and spot-treatment cleaners are thoroughly rinsed out.

1. Fill the sink with lukewarm (90°–110°F/

32°C–43°C) tap water, enough to cover the fabric generously.

2. Wearing rubber gloves to protect your hands and the lacework, gently immerse the lace, smoothing it out until it lies flat. If it is very fine or delicate, place a sheet of netting or a single piece of bound screening (fiberglass with edges covered by tacked bias tape) underneath it, or tack the lace with loose stitches between two pieces of bound screening to support it when it is immersed.

3. Let the lacework soak for half an hour to an hour to lift away loosened dirt and dust. Carefully transfer it to the clean sink to drain.

4. Rinse the first sink. Refill it with lukewarm tap water, adding a few drops of a mild liquid detergent. If the lacework is visibly soiled or stained, use a slightly alkaline liquid detergent, such as Ivory Dishwashing Liquid or Woolite Cold Water Wash (both about pH 8). If the lace appears to be clean and stain-free, choose a pH-neutral liquid detergent, such as Palmolive Dishwashing Detergent for Sensitive Skin, Shaklee's Satin Sheen or Basic H, or Neutrogena Cleansing Wash. (Detergents work well in either soft or hard water, whereas soap reacts with the dissolved minerals in hard water to form gray scum.)

If your lace is not coming clean, you may now want to spot-treat resistant discolorations by dabbing on detergent. Undiluted liquid detergents are effective for spot treatment of the food spills and stains. Powdered detergents must be wetted and made into a paste, but they are more effective on ground-in

dirt than liquid detergents. If your lacework shows this kind of soiling, dissolve Woolite Hypoallergenic Gentle Cycle Powder in lukewarm tap water, apply it to the area you wish to spot-treat, and proceed with the next step.

5. Immerse your lacework in the wash water. With gloved fingers, gently force the sudsy water through the fabric for a minute or two, but do not scrub or rub the lace. Let the lace soak for half an hour to an hour to let the detergent surround dirt particles and carry them off.

Carefully lift out the lacework and place it in the second sink or basin to drain. If you have used screening to support the lace, spread the lacework out flat against it, then raise it up. Do not wring out the lacework.

6. Rinse the sink or basin in which you wet-cleaned the lacework and refill it to generously cover the lace with room-temperature bottled distilled water. Immerse the lacework.

7. After half an hour to an hour, test the pH of the rinse water with a pH test stick or strip. If it is about pH 7, lift out your lacework and let it dry. If the pH is above or below pH 7, lift out the lacework, drain the sink or basin, and refill it with fresh room-temperature bottled distilled water. Immerse the lacework. Repeat until the pH of the rinse water registers near 7, which is neutral.

8. Dry the lace on a clean inert surface, such as a formica counter or the top of a washing machine or dryer.

Gentle laundering may be repeated as often as you like and will help preserve your lacework for many more years, perhaps even centuries.

To keep your lace in its best condition, choose acid-free storage materials. ❖

About the Author. *Amy Z. Rowland is an award-winning writer and avid lace collector who lives in Elkins Park, Pennsylvania.*

Supplies

Conservation Resources International, 8000-H Forbes Pl., Springfield, VA 22151. (800) 634-6932.
Clotilde, Inc., 1909 SW 1st Ave., Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33315-2100. (800) 545-4002.
Conservation Resources (U.K.), Units 1 and 4, Pony Rd., Horspath Industrial Estate, Cowley, Oxfordshire, England OX4 2RD. 011-44-0865-747755.
Edmund Scientific, 101 E. Gloucester Pike, Barrington, NJ 08007. (609) 573-6260.
Gaylord Bros., Box 4901, Syracuse, NY 13221-4901. (800) 448-6160.
The Hollinger Corp., PO Box 8360, Fredericksburg, VA 22404. (800) 634-0491.
Light Impressions, PO Box 940, Rochester, NY 14603-0904. (800) 828-6216.
Mini-Magic, 3910 Patricia Dr., Columbus, OH 43220. (614) 457-3805.
Talas, 568 Broadway, New York, NY 10012. (212) 219-0770.
University Products, Inc., PO Box 101, Holyoke, MA 01041. (800) 628-1912.

Crazy Quilt

Things to know

A Macramé Tale

The sailors on ancient sailing ships sometimes carried a knotted cord which, claimed legend, witches had tied. The knotted cord supposedly bound the winds and therefore controlled the destiny of the sailing ship.

Sunset Books, eds. *Macramé*, Menlo Park, California: Lane, 1975

Exhibition Showcases Norwegian Textiles

Textiles form an important part of the traveling exhibition "Norwegian Folk Art: The Migration of a Tradition," on display at the Museum of American Folk Art through January 7, 1996. The textiles include those from Norway, those brought to America by Norwegian immigrants, and those made in American but influenced by traditional Norwegian designs.

Coverlet in pictorial tapestry technique, 1760, Norway.

Photograph courtesy of Museum of American Folk Art.

Norwegian weavings in the exhibit range from early pictorial interpretations of biblical events to more recent geometric tapestries. Folk costumes, with colors, styles, and embroidery distinctive of each region of origin, served as an expression of national pride during periods of Danish and Swedish rule.

In wearing traditional dress, Norwegian immigrants in America echoed the nationalism of friends and families overseas, affirming pride in their ancestry, creating solidarity, and teaching younger generations an appreciation of their heritage.

Under the auspices of Norwegian Visions, a cultural partnership program, the exhibit presents many works of art that have never before been shown outside of Norway. Following its premiere at the Museum of American Folk Art, 61 W. 62nd St., New York, NY 10023-6214, (212) 977-7170, the exhibit travels to the North Dakota Heritage Center in Bismarck in June 1996, to the Minnesota Museum of American Art in St. Paul in November, then to the Nordic Heritage Museum in Seattle, Washington, and the Norwegian Folk Museum in Oslo, Norway, in 1997.

Quilting Myself

Quilting has always been a means of self-expression, and a 1993 project at Gilman School in Baltimore, Maryland, took that tradition literally. Five- and six-year-old boys drew self-portraits on paper, then transferred the images to squares of muslin, using fabric paints. After adult volunteers sewed the squares together by machine, the students completed the quilting themselves. They, their parents, and their teachers are proud of the results; the finished quilt now hangs in the school auditorium.

—Information courtesy of Susan A. Davis

Quilt of self-portraits done by students at Gilman School in Baltimore, Maryland.

Photograph courtesy of Susan A. Davis

Hat with Palestinian-style embroidery in cross stitch, by Dita Buchsbaum, Yisud Hama'ala.

Photograph courtesy of Ayelet Lindenstrauss.

A Celebration of Mediterranean Embroidery in Jerusalem

The Mediterranean basin has bustled with rich and diverse traditional ethnic embroidery for millennia. However, despite their diversity, the embroideries of the region are connected. The traditional styles of the towns of Assisi, Italy, and Azemmour, Morocco, are practically identical, except that the backgrounds worked in regular cross stitch in Assisi are worked in long-armed cross stitch in Azemmour. Versions of traditional Turkish towels are made in various parts of North Africa, many patterns on Palestinian women's costumes are Ottoman in origin, and Spanish blackwork is a development of much older blackwork from Mamluk Egypt.

Many museums in Israel exhibit historical embroideries, but the show "Embroidery around the Mediterranean," held in the Zionist Confederation House in Jerusalem in November and December 1994, focused on embroideries being made today in Israel. The exhibition also celebrated the cooperation between the Jewish and Arab embroiderers who participated in it, being the first joint show of its kind. A dialogue between the two groups, under the auspices of the exhibit, was lively and thought-provoking—happily sidestepping political issues to contrast approaches to ethnic embroidery.

Textile expert Zohar Wilbush posed the main issue succinctly in Arabic as well as Hebrew. As she accompanied her engineer father on his professional trips throughout the Near East in the days when traditional crafts were still practiced widely, Wilbush absorbed the region's material culture thoroughly. Her eye and her hand for the exact feel of an old textile are inimitable. Given a traditional fabric, she can very often date it to within a decade, place it to within a district.

Precisely this sensitivity is sometimes jarred by modern interpretations. "Ethnic embroidery existed naturally once," Wilbush said, "when your materials were what you could find and afford, and your stitches were those that suited your materials; and when your embroidered textiles were what you needed to make a good match and have a respectable wedding." The clear purpose of the embroideries also gave continuity and unity to the choice of patterns. "Now women use the old design to be creative, to make tourists' mementos, and it can be very nice, but it is not the same thing," Wilbush concluded. She does not mean to be discouraging; she has spent a lifetime promoting the study and practice of the old skills lest they be lost, but she sees the change.

Reproduction of a mid-nineteenth-century challah cover, embroidered with a stylized map of Jerusalem, by Brenda Abraham, Jerusalem.

Photograph courtesy of Ayelet Lindenstrauss.

For the women in the audience, embroidery is a choice. None is expected to stitch as part of her role as a woman in her community, yet most learned the craft and the traditional styles of their town or region from

SEQUINS

Early sequins were made of loops of silver, brass, or copper that were stamped or flattened under pressure to produce a disc with a hole in the center. Original sequins will display a 'seam' running from the middle to the outside edge, and often a tiny indentation at the outer line of the seam. Joel Monture, *The Complete Guide to Traditional Native American Beadwork*, New York: Macmillan, 1993

their mothers. Although not authentic ethnic embroiderers in one sense, these embroiderers feel echoes of the traditional lifestyles and feel strongly connected to them via their embroidery.

The exhibition was a feast for folklore lovers, but it was also remarkably popular with the general public, eliciting memories of childhood homes and travels around the Mediterranean. The participants' dialogue was important both for its content and for bringing together embroiderers and textile enthusiasts from the entire country.

—*Ayelet Lindenstrauss*

It's Official: Sewing Relieves Stress

A new clinical study commissioned by the American Home Sewing and Craft Association reveals that women who sew experience a significant drop in heart rate, blood pressure, and perspiration rate when compared to women who participate in other leisure-time activities. The study seems to confirm what sewers have always recognized—that sewing reduces stress and helps them relax.

There is a soothing and sedative effect in needlework; it composes the nerves, and furnishes a corrective for many of the little irritations of domestic life. Eliza Ware Rotch Farrar, *The Young Lady's Friend, By a Lady*, Boston: American Stationers' Co., 1837

Thirty women participated in the study designed by New York psychologist and biofeedback expert Robert H. Reiner. Two groups of women—fifteen experienced sewers and fifteen nonsewers—were measured for blood pressure, heart rate, perspiration, and peripheral skin temperature. Each woman was monitored before and after engaging in five home-centered leisure-time activities that required similar eye-hand movements. The five pastimes included playing a card game, painting at an easel, reading a newspaper, playing a hand-held video game, and sewing a simple project. The order of the activities was changed at random.

"The study appears to indicate that sewing is the most relaxing of the five activities reviewed, due to the statistically significant drops observed in heart rate, blood pressure, and perspiration rate," says Dr. Reiner. Mean heart rate for experienced sewers dropped by about eleven beats per minute after sewing. For

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novice sewers, mean heart rate dropped by about seven beats per minute.

And More Confirmation from the Past

We hear so much about this "jazz age" being hard on the nerves. Quilt-making is the ideal prescription for high-tension nerves. It is soothing and there is no exercise can equal that of really creating something with the hands. Carrie A. Hall, *The Romance of the Patchwork Quilt,* New York: Bonanza Books, 1935

Old Story, New Ending

In his tongue-in-cheek book, *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories* (New York: Macmillan, 1994), James Finn Garner offers up-to-date renditions of classic fairy tales. Garner's Cinderella was far from mortified when her fancy gown and impractical glass slippers disappeared at the stroke of midnight. Free of the confining clothing, she stretched and enjoyed the comfort, prompting the "womyn" around her to do the same. "They stripped off their bodices, corsets, shoes, and every other confining garment. They danced and jumped and screeched in sheer joy, comfortable at last in their shifts and bare feet."

Finally, the women of the realm "set up a clothing co-op that produced only comfortable, practical clothes for womyn. Then they hung a sign on the castle advertising CinderWear (for that was what the new clothing was called), and through self-determination and clever marketing, they all—even the mother- and sisters-of-step—lived happily ever after."

The Art (or Not) of Quilting

When women artists were allowed to follow their own creative impulses, their work ranged over an enormous area. . . . Not knowing women were supposed to favor delicate lyrical design, they were free . . . also to work out the most precisely mathematical geometrics or strongly rhythmic, natural forms. They made political, personal, religious, abstract and every other kind of art. Women quilt makers enjoyed this freedom only because their work was not even considered art, and so they were exempt from the harassment experienced by most women artists.

—*Patricia Mainardi,* Quilts, the Great American Art, *San Pedro, California: Miles and Weir, 1978*

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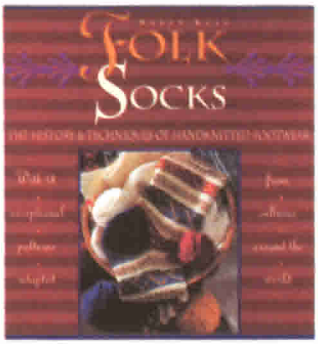

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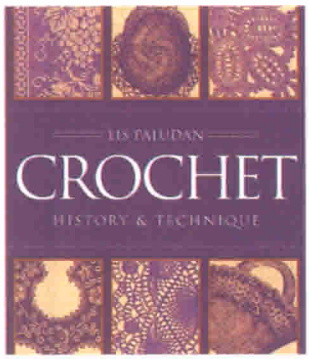

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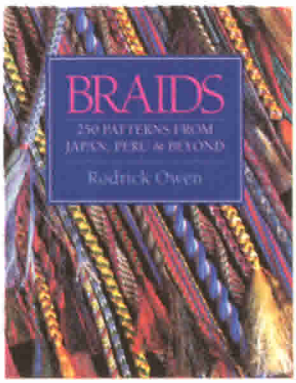

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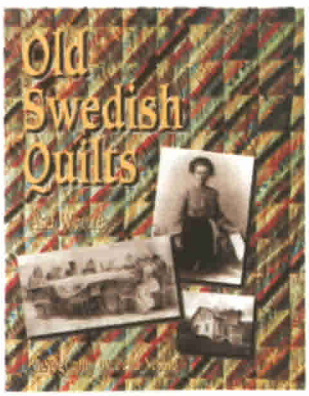

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Pólya Zsuzsa
HUNGARIAN EMBROIDERER

RICKY CLARK

Pólya Zsuzsa (Susi Lanyi) wearing a traditional Hungarian costume from Kalocsa. *Photographs by Rick Sherlock.*

THE TEACHING SISTERS of the Engelfräulein convent in Budapest had their educational priorities in order: religion, embroidery, and the other R's. Through embroidery, they taught Hungarian history, geography, and culture. If Pólya Zsuzsa (now Susi Lanyi) was a typical student, the teaching took firm hold, for she has embroidered almost daily since she graduated in 1937.

Should Susi need inspiration, she has only to look at the thick workbook that she compiled in 1935 at the convent school. It includes her hand-drawn maps of Hungarian cultural regions, embroidery patterns, and worked examples of the patterns.

Susi Lanyi's Journey

Born in Budapest in 1916, Susi was the second of four children in a gifted family. Her father, Jenö, was an internationally renowned surgeon; the technique he devised for gastric surgery (the Billroth-Pólya procedure) is still used. Her mother, Lili, drew, painted, and was a talented needlewoman. Jenö's brother, George, was a mathematician who profoundly influenced the artist M. C. Escher by providing a mathematical analysis of tessellation, the system of interlocking symmetrical shapes that became a hallmark of Escher's art.

When she was twenty, Susi met her future husband, George Lanyi, at a ball that George's parents gave in their villa. George was then a student at the London School of Economics; a year later, he and Susi married and came to the United States. They lived in Massachusetts, Washington, D.C., and Rhode Island. In 1950, when George joined the Oberlin College faculty, he, Susi, and their son, Tony, moved to Oberlin, Ohio. George died in 1981; Susi still lives in Oberlin. When she is not busy with volunteer activities, she is either drawing or embroidering because "the nuns taught us that idle hands are the devil's work."

Hungary: Where East and West Meet

Located in the Carpathian basin at the intersection of eastern and western cultures, Hungary comprises Transdanubia, the area west of the Danube that includes Lake Balaton, one of the largest lakes in Europe; the Uplands, a mountainous region in

the north; and the central Alföld, or Great Plain. Until 1918, much of Transylvania formed the eastern part of "old" Hungary. Although that area is now within the borders of Romania, it retains its close cultural bond with Hungary.

Over the centuries, Hungary has come under the influence of various cultural groups, each of which left its imprint. Hungary's earliest documented settlers, the Magyars, came west from the Ural Mountains in the ninth century, bringing with them the Finno-Ugric language that is the basis of present-day Hungarian. They also brought a distinctive cloak (made of frieze, a heavy, waterproof wool, or sheepskin with the fleece on the inside) that, centuries later, evolved into the Hungarian *szür.* In 1526, the Ottoman Turks invaded the country and dominated most of Hungary for 150 years. Hungary has also had a large German population residing in western Transdanubia and parts of Transylvania.

When the Turks were driven out at the end of the seventeenth century, all of Hungary came under the rule of the Hapsburgs. A revolution in 1848 failed, but in 1867 the two monarchies effected a compromise creating a dual monarchy known as Austria-Hungary where Susi was born. In 1920, the Austro-Hungarian Empire was dissolved. Under the Treaty of Trianon, Hungary lost more than two-thirds of its territory to Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Yugoslavia.

Hungarian embroidery, which reached its peak in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, was a genuine folk art, practiced by women who had learned their skills informally within their family and communities. Embroiderers lived in rural villages, where they made and decorated textiles for family use as clothing and as ritual objects. Many of these embroidered textiles remained in one village for several generations. The women also contracted to do embroidery for others.

Urban Hungarians had their own textile traditions, and a collection of linens for the bride was one of them. Susi had a traditional long engagement to enable needleworkers to embroider her trousseau. Her mother purchased yards of beautiful linen and distributed it to young girls in a rural village who embroidered to earn an income when they had little farmwork during the winter.

Sampling Regional Embroidery

In Susi's workbook, each section begins with a map placing the region within an outline of pre-1918 Hungary. A brief text identifies the area, the characteristics of its embroidery, and practical uses that her teachers recommended.

Transdanubia. Three examples of embroidery in Susi's workbook come from southeastern Transdanubia. Two are from the Sárköz region, the first from the traditional wedding costume of a bride of this district. Susi's text indicates the kinds of information that the nuns provided:

> Embroidery of Sárköz: The young brides of Sárköz decorate their bonnets made of very thin black material with very small design embroidery. They use thin white floss for this. Stitches: chain, satin, "false," split and "fishing" stitches. Their

Susi Lanyi, the cover of her workbook, one of the regional maps and description of characteristic embroidery, and two worked examples. The drawn-thread work is from Kalotaszeg and the multicolored embroidery is from Sárköz, Transdanubia.

Examples of the embroidery of Kalotaszeg, Transylvania.

varied, rich designs can be used for decorating delicate work, but enlarged can be used for scarves, shawls, dresses, drapes and tablecloths.

From Sárköz comes a second example of embroidery: an elegant multicolored design worked on a silky fabric.

The Ormánság region of southeastern Transdanubia, along the southern border of Hungary, is represented by embroidery with bright primary colors on white linen, the region's characteristic background fabric.

In the village of Buzsák in Somogy County, just south of Lake Balaton, embroiderers traditionally worked dense, vibrant designs on homespun linen in colored flosses and used it to decorate blouses, tablecloths, and pillows.

Embroidery motif from Buzsák, Transdanubia.

What is called szür embroidery, from western Transdanubia, once decorated the heavy cloaks of herdsmen. Originally, the szür doubled as garment and bedding. With few exceptions, professional male furriers and tailors rather than women made these garments because special tools and great strength were required to embroider on such heavy materials. The type of embroidery used was called *virágozás,* which means "flowering."

Szür embroidery motif from western Transdanubia.

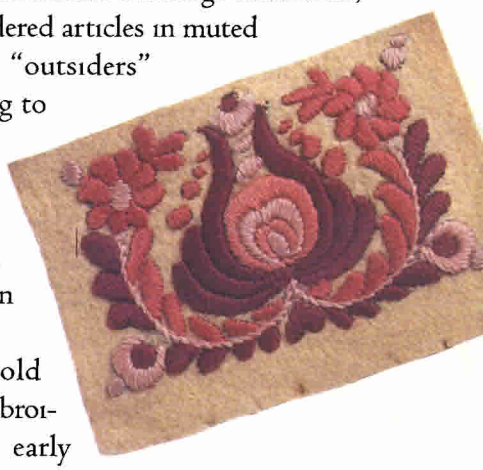
After sewing machines became available, tailors used the same designs but worked them in appliqué to apply to the szürs. Susi's workbook includes an example of both the embroidered and the appliqué technique.

An entirely different style of embroidery, white cutwork, is also traditional in the Rábaköz region. Cutwork, also called Madeira work, is used on wedding dresses in Boldog village and in Mezölövesd, both in the Uplands.

Uplands. The costume worn by people of Mezölövesd (Matyó is the adjective used for the people and the embroidery) is widely known because Mezölövesd is a major center of Hungarian folk art. Until the 1860s, symmetrical floral motifs worked in red, blue, or both were the favored style there. As was true also in Sárköz, in Transdanubia, black became a popular festive color in Mezölövesd, where Matyó brides wore black wedding dresses as recently as 1910. Their costume includes a narrow black or dark blue apron decorated with embroidery and sometimes also silver and gold spangles (sequins). Susi's workbook includes two examples of this style of Matyó embroidery.

In the 1870s, Matyó embroidery began to change. Orderly arrangements of repeated, symmetrical motifs gave way to crowded designs that covered most of the surface. The motifs were always floral, the individual flowers linked by curving vines, but no single flower stood out. Matyó costume became a riot of color.

The public "discovered" Mezölövesd early in the twentieth century. Matyó embroidery became so popular that in 1912, aristocratic urban ladies attended the Opera Ball in Budapest in folk costumes from Mezölövesd. Soon Matyó needlework could be found on cushion covers in urban homes throughout Hungary. The women of Mezölövesd established cottage industries, creating embroidered articles in muted colors to sell to "outsiders" while continuing to use their traditional color palette on the pieces designed for their own families.

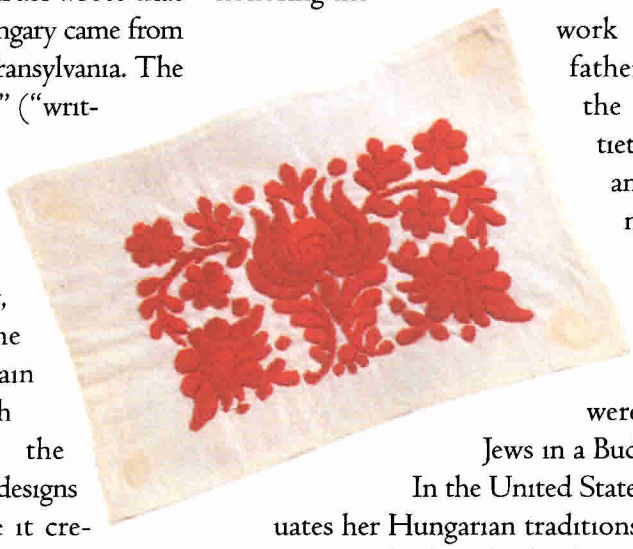


A story is told about Matyó embroiderers of the early twentieth century who worked costly gold and silver threads into their costumes although they could ill afford to purchase the materials. In 1924, Matyó women's churchgoing costumes were so heavily encrusted with gold and silver lace, trim, and other expensive "glitters" that at the beginning of Lent, the village elders asked their priests to intervene. To the sorrow of the women of Mezölövesd, the priests forbade such glitter. The following week, the women cut the of-

During Lent in 1924, the women of Mezölövesd so heavily encrusted their churchgoing costumes with glittering trim that priests intervened.

fensive decorations from their garments and burned them publicly. By Easter, however, these resourceful embroiderers had replaced their metal threads with gleaming yellow and white embroidery floss (possibly rayon or a shiny cotton floss).

Transylvania. In her workbook, Susi wrote that the richest ethnic embroidery in Hungary came from the Kalotaszeg region in western Transylvania. The title of her descriptive text is *"Irásos"* ("written"), which refers both to the practice of drawing the pattern directly on the fabric and to the square chain stitch (*nagyirásos*) frequently used for the heavy, linear designs. The square chain stitch suits the linear designs because it creates two neat edges with a satin stitch filler between them, and it also works well for the curved lines often used in these designs.



Geometric drawn-thread work was another technique popular in the Kalotaszeg region, where embroiderers worked on handspun and handwoven linen with white thread.

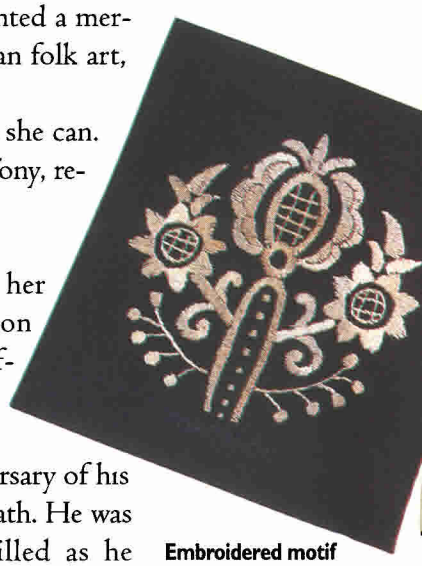
From Torockó, in western Transylvania, Susi included one example in white floss on black sateen in "lattice" or "trellis" stitch (*rácsöltés*) and one with counted cross stitch.

Embellishing Everything

The designs that Susi creates today are traditional: symmetrical flowers, a bridal couple in Hungarian folk costume, curving vines. Her embroidery ranges from individual motifs for bookmarks to large wall hangings. In a traditionally Hungarian way, Susi exuberantly embellishes everything, drawing on or painting what can't be embroidered: breadboards, bookmarks, pot holders, small boxes, and other domestic objects. She has even painted a mermaid, a common motif from Hungarian folk art, on her garage door.

Susi still visits Hungary as often as she can. In September 1995, she and her son, Tony, returned for a symposium honoring the work of her father, on the fiftieth anniversary of his death. He was killed as he interrupted Nazis who were rounding up Jews in a Budapest street.

In the United States, Susi perpetuates her Hungarian traditions, drawing and embroidering for friends, family, and the sheer joy of it. The Engelfräulein would be proud. ❖



Embroidered motif from Torockó, Transylvania.

Szür appliqué based on an embroidery motif.

Matyó embroidery motif from Mezölövesd in the Uplands.

About the Author. *Ricky Clark is an affiliate scholar at Oberlin College and a founding member of the Ohio Quilt Research Project. A member of the American Quilt Study Group, she is the coauthor of* Quilts in Community: Ohio's Traditions *(Nashville: Rutledge Hill, 1991) and the author of* Quilted Gardens: Floral Quilts of the Nineteenth Century *(Rutledge Hill, 1994).*

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CELEBRATING THE RITUALS AND RICHES OF LIFE

HUNGARY'S most spectacular embroidery decorates textiles associated with rituals or ceremonial events: elaborate costumes worn for weddings or festivals and domestic linens made as part of a girl's dowry.

Before the industrial revolution in Europe late in the eighteenth century, textiles were made and embroidered by hand, an extremely time-consuming process, but with an improved economy and the coming of railroads in the mid-nineteenth century, more rural Hungarians could buy factory-made fabrics and threads. With greater prosperity, Hungarians in some regions added more garments to their costume. Women wore numerous underskirts between their shift and skirt, one or more aprons over the skirt, a full blouse, and a vest, as well as an elaborate hairstyle and headdress. Susi once met a young girl at a wedding in the village of Tolmás who told her that beneath her voluminous skirt she wore thirteen underskirts, one for each year of her age.

A Hungarian ornamental bed piled high with embroidered linens.

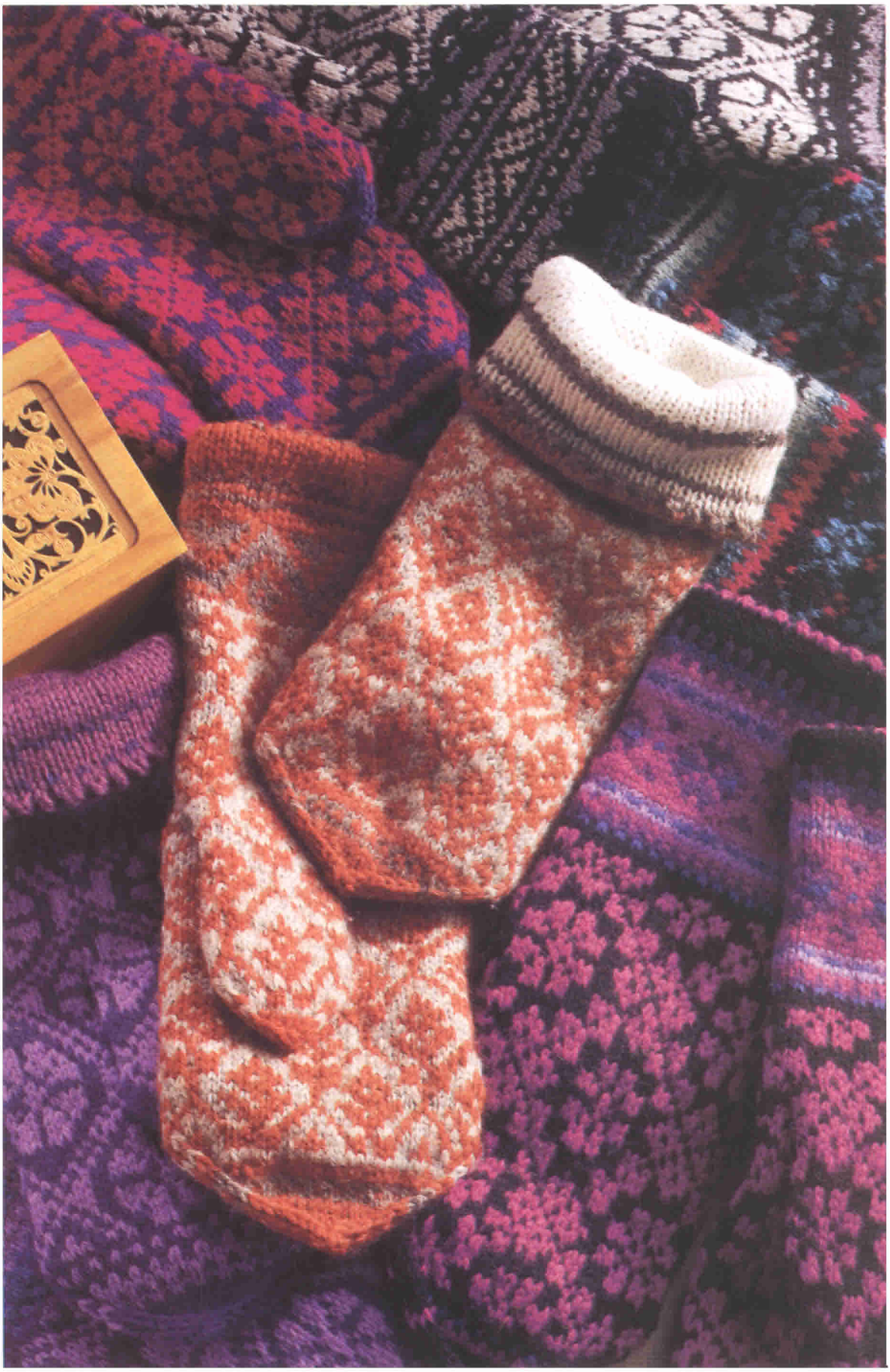
Photograph from Transylvanian Folk Art, *by Albert Wass de Czege. Courtesy of Albert Wass de Czege.*

The amount of embroidery on a costume also reflected economics. Sparse decoration indicated poverty; in fact, the Hungarian word *paraszt* means both "peasant" and "plain." By implication, a completely decorated surface implies wealth. Over time, the amount of embroidered decoration on a single item increased in some regions, such as Mezökövesd, until individual motifs were obscured.

Costume colors have varied with time and place, but the association of certain colors with age, social status, and even place of residence has been remarkably consistent. As is true in similar traditional cultures such as that of Slovakia, young Hungarian women typically wore bright red and older women wore darker colors. In the late nineteenth century, young people adopted black as a festive color and married in black wedding dresses. In some regions, the colors used on the edges of szürs indicated the owner's status or village.

The wearing of embroidered costumes and other textiles in Hungary was usually related to rites of passage. In some areas, when a man went courting, he would wear his szür to his sweetheart's home, then leave it there "accidentally." If he found it on his porch the next morning, he had been rejected.

Ritual textiles were not limited to costume. The ornamental bed, which a rural woman brought to the house when she married, was rarely used in everyday life. It held a vast collection of bedding stacked to the ceiling, all of it handmade and embroidered: numerous embroidered sheets, half a dozen to a dozen pillows (each with several sets of pillowcases), as well as decorated kerchiefs and counterpanes. The ornamental bed was kept in the *tiszta szoba* ("best" or "clean" room) of the house. Each daughter received an ornamental bed as her dowry. When a girl married, the bed with all its bedding was first publicly displayed in her home. Her friends then carried it in a lengthy, elaborate procession to the groom's home, where his family jokingly bargained for it. After the wedding, sheets and pillow slips might be changed occasionally, according to season or holidays, and after a death in the family, when the ritual bedclothes were used on the bier. After the burial, mourning bedclothes were displayed on the bed for a year. Each ornamental bed represented years of handwork by the women in a family.



Mittens with traditional Latvian designs knitted by Irma Ciganovich. Note the knitted lining characteristic of Zemgale, the cold inland region where Irma grew up.
Photograph by Joe Coca.

MESSAGES *in* MITTENS

The Story of a Latvian Knitter

SANDRA MESSINGER DE MASTER

IRMA CIGANOVICH glances at the picture of an elaborate wedding mitten depicted in Lizbeth Upitis's book *Latvian Mittens* and begins to "read" the symbolic message that the bride had knitted into it. The trees and the sun represent life, happiness, and all that is good, she says. The serpent represents a connection with fate and good fortune. Because a rye stalk usually bears a single head, the double rye head is a wish for "multiplied" prosperity and fertility. The bride combined these motifs to express her desire that she and her husband have a happy and prosperous future together. However, the mitten's message is lost, Irma acknowledges, when we lose an understanding of the cultural traditions.

I came to know Irma in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, through Mary Germain, the owner of The Wool Works, a retail yarn and weaving shop. For at least fifteen years, Irma has been buying her yarn there and knitting it into stockings, mittens, and socks that pay tribute to her thirty-seven years in Latvia. Each fall, when she sells her work, faithful customers flock to the shop to make their annual purchases. Her knitting is clearly a reflection of her Latvian upbringing. "Ethnic designs in knitting mean something," she insists. "At least Latvian designs do. The knitter uses the designs like a language for personal expression."

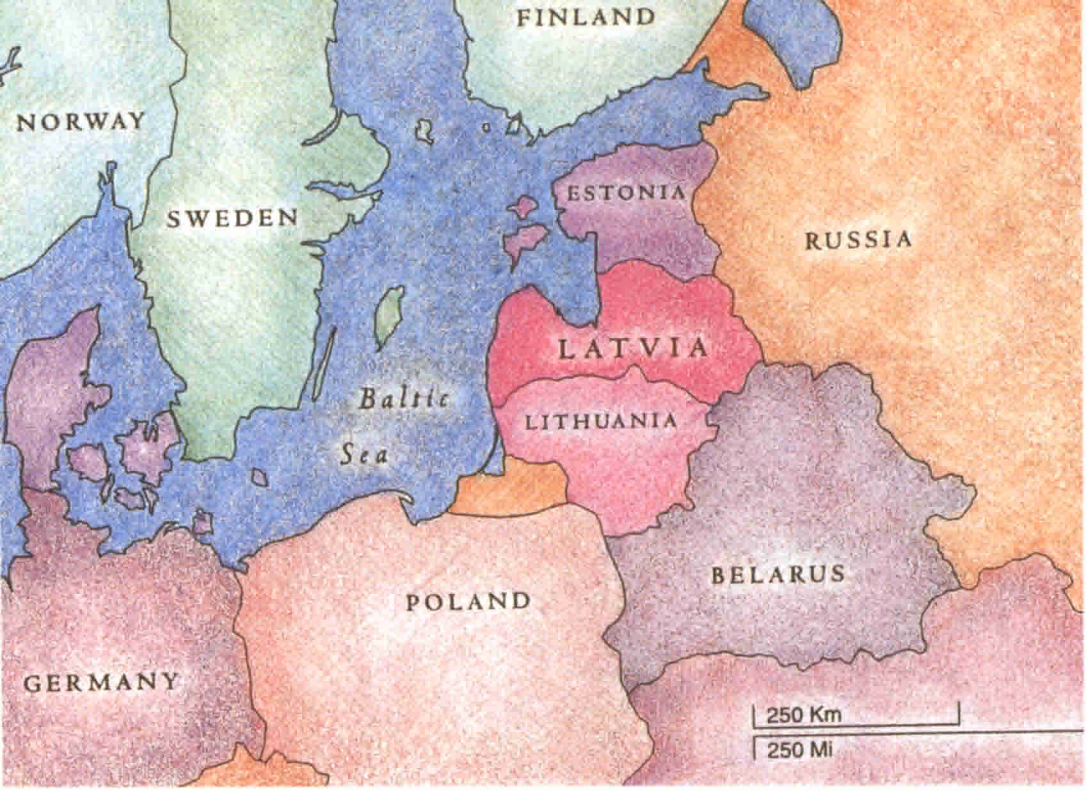
Born Irma Mezeraups in 1912 in the province of Zemgale in southeastern Latvia, she grew up on a farm and recalls that time as "the happiest time of my life. I remember the animals and the apple trees and neighbors helping each other." Her family worked hard. Proficient farmers, they were nearly self-sufficient, eating what they produced on the farm and raising sheep for the wool they needed to clothe themselves. Irma remembers her mother's taking pride in her children's clothing, which she had sewn by hand, but in the same breath recalls that they had no shoes to wear.

As the second of four children and the eldest daughter, Irma took on added family responsibilities. She learned to knit when she was ten "out of necessity. For a family on a farm, you had to knit."

World War I left scars on Irma's country, but her family remained intact. World War II was much more devastating for the Mezeraups: their only son was killed in the war, and Irma was separated from

Irma Ciganovich (the girl on the right) with her mother, brother, and sister in Latvia, circa 1920.

Photograph courtesy of Irma Ciganovich.



Latvia, one of the three Baltic countries, lies east of the Baltic Sea.

her family and sent to a German work camp for safety. It is a period in her life that Irma keeps private. In 1949, Irma immigrated to the United States. En route, she met the Yugoslavian man whom she would later marry.

Having been sponsored by a physician's family in Minneapolis, Irma lived with them and cared for their children to repay them for their help. It was at her sponsors' home that she knitted her first Christmas stocking. After she married, Irma and her husband lived in Iowa for four years before moving to Milwaukee. She was busy raising a daughter and son, Marite and Nick, and working in a hospital cafeteria. Although Irma knitted while her children were growing up, she didn't have time to focus on her craft until about twenty years ago when she retired from her job.

Latvian Roots

The Baltic states comprise three countries: Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania. They lie east of the Baltic Sea and serve as an economic and cultural link between Russia and the West. Latvia's history has been one of invasion and domination by other peoples. From the thirteenth century on, the Balts were conquered by Teutonic knights, Swedes, Poles, Danes, Germans, and Russians. Until the Baltic states' assertion of independence from the crumbling Soviet Union, the only years when Latvia was independent were those between 1917 and 1940.

Under Mikhail Gorbachev's *glasnost* and *perestroika,* the Balts again pursued and obtained their independence, but the real struggle to achieve economic stability is just beginning. However, many Latvian women continue to knit, and a national appreciation of Latvia's rich culture is emerging. An Institute for the Arts has been established, and old weaving and knitting patterns and customs are being studied and recorded there.

Latvian Knitting: The Importance of Mittens

Knitting has always played an important role in Latvian society. Girls learned to knit at about nine or ten. By their early teenage years, they began to knit mittens for their dowry. A young woman proved herself worthy of marriage by the number and quality of the mittens that she knitted. A symbol of gratitude and appreciation, mittens were and still are given as presents on occasions ranging from birth to death and including confirmation, engagement, marriage, christening, and taking a child to church for the first time. They also might be presented to the blacksmith the first time a horse was shod or to a young man with whom a young woman had enjoyed an evening ride. Irma refers to mittens as Latvian "greeting cards": means by which the knitter expresses her appreciation. Socks, stockings, and hats also are knitted and given, but mittens still carry the most significance in Latvian culture.

Latvians knit two kinds of mittens: "work mittens," worn for work and every day, and "best mittens," worn for festive occasions. Work mittens are made from natural-colored wool and are decorated with other colors. Best mittens are colorful and richly embellished, with border patterns and decorative fringes. Best mittens not only reflect the knitter's talent and depth of feeling, but also indicate a group affiliation.

Until the early twentieth century in the isolated

and agrarian Latvian society, the symbols, colors, and designs knitted into the mittens identified the wearer's region. Today, with the evolution from a rural to a more urban society and with improvements in transportation and communication, it is increasingly difficult to ascribe characteristic patterns to particular regions.

Until the mid-nineteenth century, many Latvians believed in the magical powers of "mitten throwing" (sometimes translated as "giving" or "hanging"). Upon marrying and entering her husband's house for the first time, a new bride would leave a pair of mittens in several significant places: on the threshold of the front door, above the hearth, tied to important doors, in the shed, granary, and barn, on the well, and in the garden. These offerings symbolized her hopes for a productive future and success in her wifely duties. From several dozen to 200 mittens were needed for the wedding festivities.

An ethnic craft grows from the unique experience in the history of its people.

LIZBETH UPITIS,
Latvian Mittens: Traditional Designs and Techniques

TRADITIONAL LATVIAN MOTIFS

In *Latvian Mittens,* Lizbeth Upitis describes Latvian design as being strictly symmetrical, with individual elements expanded or enriched to complete the space. Borders and centers are elaborated until they nearly touch.

The geometric designs are believed to illustrate the Baltic tribes' traditional mythology. Before the introduction of Christianity into the Baltic states about 1200, the tribes practiced a highly developed folk religion based on three divine beings: Dievs, the supreme god (whose symbol is a triangle with extended base, an arrow pointing upward in the triangle, and a dot above its point); Mara, the Mother Earth goddess (whose symbol is a horizontal zigzag); and Laima, the goddess of Fate (symbolized by a "greater than" sign). The deities' symbols appear as design elements in ancient textiles and in metal, pottery, and wood artifacts, indicating that the religious roots are deep.

Weaving patterns also have played an important part in the development of Latvian knitting, beginning at about the end of the nineteenth century with the publication of the first weaving books. Mitten designs imitated those of the *rakstu,* or "woven writing," motifs and the *ziedu,* or colored-flower motifs, both common in woven sashes. The

Although they are unlined, Irma's socks have many construction and patterning details in common with her mittens. After a border of garter stitch at the cuff and four or five rows of knit 1, purl 1 ribbing, she works about 4 inches (10 cm) of small designs and then another 1/2 inch (1.3 cm) of ribbing. Changing to an allover pattern, she knits until just above the square Dutch heel that is knitted in a sturdy, long-wearing heel stitch.

Photograph by Joe Coca.

Christmas stockings, which are not part of a traditional Latvian Christmas, have become one of Irma Ciganovich's knitting specialties. She prefers to use colors more muted than the usual bright reds and greens.
Photograph by Joe Coca.

geometric weaving patterns lent themselves to knitting.

Motifs commonly used in Latvian knitting include the flea (a pattern of single-stitch dots), a table or window (a solid or open rectangle, or that shape plus a cross), a cross and a half cross, a triangle, a zigzag (or serpent), a star, a sun (in several forms), cat's feet, other geometric shapes, and flowers.

Color plays an important role in Latvian mittens and socks, which are seldom knitted in fewer than two colors. Skillful knitters use as many as five colors to add life and depth to their creations. Traditional colors are blue, green, red, orange, and yellow, colors that frequently appear in the Latvian landscape and life. Irma recites a Latvian *daina,* or folk song:

Winter and cold are coming
Dark long nights.
Knit summer sunshine in your mittens
Along with sky and cornflower blue.

In addition to embellishing handknitted mittens and socks, multiple colors increase the warmth: while one color is knitted, the others are stranded on the back of the work. The more colors used, the warmer the mitten. The more the mittens are worn, the more the strands bind together, or "full," making the mittens more windproof and thus warmer still.

Evolving Traditions

Traditions and designs also are influenced by new environments and situations. When Irma decided to knit a Christmas stocking (Christmas stockings as we know them in the United States are not part of a traditional Latvian Christmas), she drew on her knowledge of traditional Latvian designs and stocking construction but added a motif of children dancing around the stocking.

Most of Irma's patterns are either geometric or floral, inspired by her favorite Latvian folk motifs. She arranges traditional Latvian diamonds, stars, crosses, and triangles in complex patterns, many of which symbolize her wish for hope and prosperity for the recipient. Irma employs few traditional Christmas motifs and prefers quieter colors to the typical bright reds and greens. ❖

About the Author. *Sandra Messinger De Master is a knitter and spinner who lives in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin. She enjoys studying handwork that has its roots in long-standing ethnic traditions. She lived in Spain for two years and is currently writing an article about Basque knitting.*

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Irma's Christmas Stocking to Knit

DESIGN ADAPTED BY MARY GERMAIN

Traditional Latvian designs make a gaily patterned stocking to hang on Christmas Eve.

KNITTED PATTERNS LEARNED during a childhood in Latvia merge with the American tradition of hanging stockings on Christmas Eve to create a unique style of Christmas stocking. Mary Germain knitted her stocking in the round with sport-weight wool yarn, closely following Irma Ciganovich's Latvian designs.

Irma knits her Christmas stockings in much the same way as her mittens. The stocking starts at the cuff with a hem that is eventually turned to the inside along a decorative picot edge. The outside of the cuff usually features small, simple patterns that may continue to the heel or change to an allover pattern on the leg. The design divides at the Dutch heel and then continues again around the foot.

The stocking requires only basic knitting techniques, but you'll need to pay close attention to coordinate the patterned knitting with the sock shaping. When you knit with two colors, it's important to carry the unused color loosely across the back of your work to maintain the elasticity of the knitted fabric.

Materials

Sport-weight wool yarn, one 1¾-ounce (50-g) ball each of the following colors: natural white, light teal green, dark red, and dark green. Mary used Naturespun from Brown Sheep in Natural #730, Juniper #N55, Scarlet #N48, and Cross Country Green #N28.

Set of 5 double-pointed knitting needles, size 2 (2.75 mm) or the size needed to achieve the correct gauge

Stitch marker that fits snugly on your needle

Yarn needle or large tapestry needle

Stitch holder (optional)

Abbreviations

b—work into the back of the stitch
k—knit
p—purl
sl—slip
ssk—slip the next two stitches, one at a time, as if to knit, then insert the point of the left-hand needle into the fronts of these stitches and knit them together from this position
rep—repeat
rnd—round
st(s)—stitch(es)
tog—together
yo—yarn over

Gauge: 8½ sts and 9 rows measured over 1 inch (2.5 cm) of two-colored stockinette stitch.

Size: The finished stocking measures 13 inches (33 cm) from the cuff to the toe.

KEY

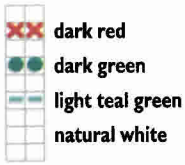


Chart 1

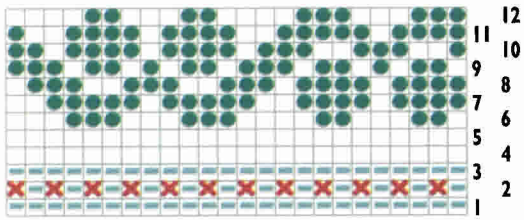
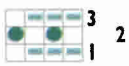


Chart 2



Knitting the Stocking

Hem: With natural, cast on 84 sts and distribute them evenly on 4 needles. Place the marker on the end of the last needle to mark the end of the round (center back). Being careful not to twist the stitches, join the knitting into a circle.

Knit 5 rnds natural.

Knit 1 rnd red.

Knit 1 rnd natural.

Knit 2 rnds red.

Knit 6 rnds natural.

Knit 1 rnd red.

Work picot rnd with red as follows: * (K2tog, yo) 3 times, k1, yo; rep from * to end of rnd (96 sts).

Leg: Knit 4 rnds natural.
Reading the chart from right to left, work chart 1.
Knit 2 rnds natural, decreasing in the second rnd as follows: (k1, ssk, k9) 4 times, (k9, k2tog, k1) 4 times (88 sts).
Work chart 2.
Knit 2 rnds natural, decreasing in the second rnd as follows: k1, ssk, k14, (ssk, k9) twice, ssk, k6, k2tog, (k9, k2tog) twice, k14, k2tog, k1 (80 sts).
Work chart 3.
Knit 2 rnds natural, decreasing in the second rnd as follows: (k1, ssk, k17) twice, (k17, k2tog, k1) twice (76 sts).
Work chart 4.
Knit 2 rnds natural, decreasing in the second rnd as follows: k1, ssk, k25, ssk, k16, k2tog, k25, k2tog, k1 (72 sts).
Work chart 5.
Knit 1 rnd natural, decreasing as follows: (k1, ssk, k6) 4 times, (k6, k2tog, k1) 4 times (64 sts).
Work 4 rnds of chart 6. Break yarns.

Divide for the Heel: Slip last 16 sts worked and first 17 sts of next rnd onto the free needle (33 heel sts on needle). Place the other 31 sts onto a holder or leave on a spare needle.
Join in red and work the heel stitches back and forth as follows:
Row 1: Knit.
Row 2: Purl.
Row 3: K2, * sl1, k1; rep from * to last 3 sts, sl1, k2.
Row 4: Purl.
Rep rows 3 and 4 six times more for a total of 16 rows.

Turn the Heel: Row 1: K2, * sl1, k1; rep from * to last 7 sts, ssk, turn.
Row 2: Sl1, p19, p2tog, turn.
Row 3: * Sl1, k1; rep from * 9 more times, ssk, turn.
Row 4: Sl1, p19, p2tog, turn.
Rep rows 3 and 4 four more times (21 sts). Break red yarn.

Foot: Arrange stitches as follows: Slip first 10 sts from heel needle to the spare needle. Join in natural and red and work rnd 5 of chart 6, beginning with remaining 11 heel sts (this needle is now called needle 1). Continuing to work from the chart, pick up and knit 8 sts along right side of heel flap onto needle 1. K15 instep sts onto needle 2 and k16 instep sts onto needle 3, matching the pattern with the pattern worked before you shaped the heel (see note below). With needle 4, pick up and knit 8 sts along the left side of the heel flap in pattern and work the remaining 10 sts from the spare needle (68 sts).

Note: You will need to adjust the pattern at the end of needle 1 and the beginning of needle 4 to make rnd 5 of the pattern line up with the pattern already worked on the instep. The sequence of colors for rnd 5 will be as follows (N—natural; R—red):

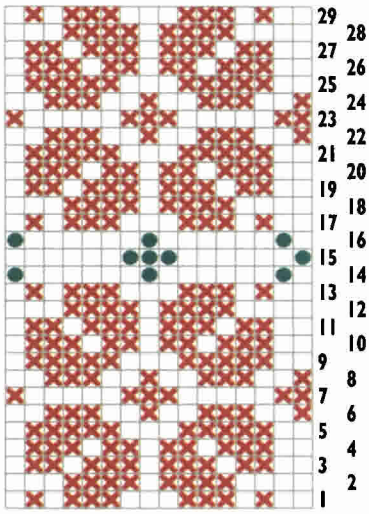


Chart 3

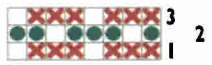


Chart 4

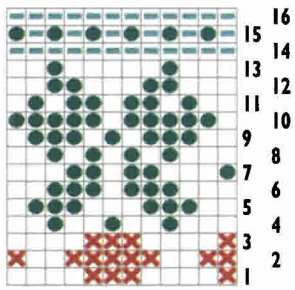


Chart 5

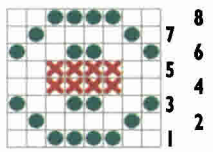
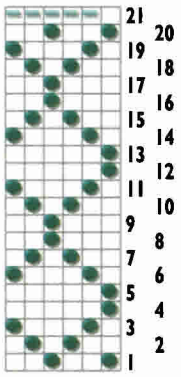


Chart 6

Chart 7



Needle 1: K2 N, k4 R, k4 N, K4 R, k5 N (19 sts).
Needles 2 and 3: K1 N, *k4 R, k4 N; rep from * twice more, k4 R, k2 N (31 sts).
Needle 4: K4 N, k4 R, k4 N, k4 R, k2 N (18 sts).
Continue to adjust the pattern to accommodate the decreases on the next 3 rnds.
Work rnd 6 of chart 6, decreasing as follows: K to last 4 sts of needle 1, k2tog twice, k to beginning of needle 4, ssk twice, k to end of rnd.
Work rnd 7 of chart 6, decreasing as follows: k to last 2 sts of needle 1, k2tog, k to beginning of needle 4, ssk, k to end of rnd.
Work rnd 8 of chart 6, decreasing as for the previous rnd (60 sts).
Knit 1 rnd natural. There should now be 31 sts on needles 2 and 3 (the top of the foot) and 29 sts on needles 1 and 4 (the sole of the foot). The distribution of sts will remain uneven as you work the foot and toe.
Work chart 7.
Knit 1 rnd natural.

Toe: Work the toe with red as follows:
Rnd 1: K to first st of needle 2, k1b, k until 1 st from end of needle 3, k1b, k to end.
Rnd 2: Needle 1: * Sl1, k1; rep from * until 2 sts from end on needle 1, k2tog. Needles 2 and 3: K1b, ssk, * sl1, k1; rep from * until 3 sts from end of needle 3, k2tog, k1b. Needle 4: Ssk, * sl1, k1; rep from * to end.
Rnd 3: Rep rnd 1.
Rnd 4: Needle 1: * Sl1, k1; rep from * until 2 sts from end of needle 1, k2tog. Needles 2 and 3: K1b, ssk, * k1, sl1; rep from * until 3 sts from end of needle 3, k2tog, k1b. Needle 4: Ssk, * k1, sl1; rep from * to end.
Rep rnds 1 to 4 until 20 sts remain, then decrease every rnd as follows:
Rnd 1: Needle 1: K3, k2tog. Needles 2 and 3: K1b, ssk, k5, k2tog, k1b. Needle 4: Ssk, k2.
Rnd 2: Needle 1: Sl1, k1, k2tog. Needles 2 and 3: K1b, ssk, k1, sl1, k1, k2tog, k1b. Needle 4: Ssk, k1.
Rnd 3: Needle 1: K1, k2tog. Needles 2 and 3: K1b, ssk, k1, k2tog, k1b. Needle 4: Ssk.
Cut yarn, thread tail through remaining 8 sts and pull tight.

Finishing

Darn in ends. Fold the hem to the inside at the picot row and stitch in place on the inside.

Cut three 10-inch (25.4-cm) pieces each of natural, red, and dark green yarn. Tie the strands together 3 inches (7.6 cm) from one end with an overhand knot and arrange the yarn into three groups, each consisting of a natural, red, and dark green strand. Make a three-strand braid 1¾ inches (4.4 cm) long and knot the ends together. At one end of the braid, thread each three-strand group of yarn from the outside of the stocking to the inside, about 1 inch (2.5 cm) from the picot edge of the cuff and 1/2 inch (1.3 cm) from the center back. Space each group 1/2 stitch from the others to distribute the stress when the stocking is hanging. Thread the other end of the braid on the other side of the center back in the same way. Tie the beginning and ending groups of yarns together with 3 separate square knots. Trim the ends to 1/2 inch (1.3 cm). Lightly steam-press the stocking. ❖

Supplier

The Wool Works, 1812 N Farwell Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53202. (414) 278-8838. A Latvian stocking kit consisting of all the yarns necessary for this project is available for $13.50 postpaid.

About the Author. *Mary Germain is a knitter, weaver, and quilter and the owner of The Wool Works, a retail yarn shop in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.*

Kalagas
The Golden Tapestries of Burma

SARA DROWER

Gold-thread and sequin *kalaga* of a Buddha figure, made in Myanmar (formerly Burma). The ornament of the cock, above left, is backed with a soft paper.
Photograph by Joe Coca.

THE ONLY LIGHT inside the room filters through slits in the woven bamboo walls. A man hunches over a curious handmade apparatus, wrapping copper wire around a rod to form a small, tight spring. He methodically turns, coils, and cuts off centimeter-long segments of the spring, giving them to several little boys seated on the floor, each before a piece of tree trunk that serves as a low worktable. A boy places a spring on a metal plate, covers it with a smaller metal template, and begins to pound with a hammer. Copper is soft and easily worked; after a minute or so of pounding, the flattened spring is transformed into a flat disk with a small central hole—a sequin! Cup-shaped sequins are formed using a cup-shaped template. The copper sequins are strung on cord, then taken behind

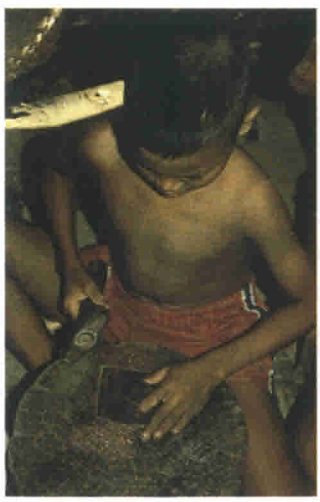
the cottage, where the electroplating solution and auto battery are kept, and coated with a silver-nickel mixture.

My husband and I saw the sequins being made in 1987 in a small village near Mandalay in Burma (the country was renamed Myanmar in 1989), where we were vacationing following a business trip to Southeast Asia. I was interested in the Burmese beaded, embroidered, and sequined ceremonial tapestries called *kalagas* (a Sanskrit term for Indian wall hangings), and we had begun our tour of their manufacture, which takes place in several villages, by watching the sequin makers.

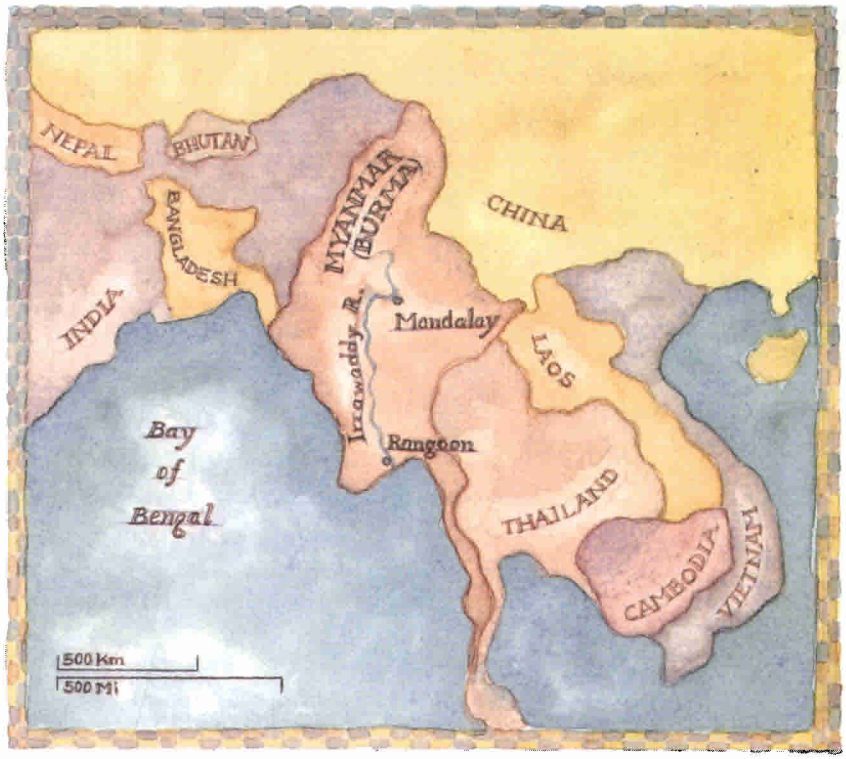
Calculating the difference between making sequins by hand and die-cutting and stamping them out in mass production gave us a quick lesson in Burma's stagnant economy. For a number of reasons, rice exports, once the mainstay of the economy, have all but ceased. The current socialist-military government has largely kept the country closed to foreign influence and imports. There is little modern machinery and little electricity to run it. Often replacement parts are unavailable. School is a luxury, and the young sequin stampers' earnings are important to their family's income.

The Craft Villages

Making the embroidered and appliquéd kalagas is a cottage industry that involves many villages, each of which specializes in one aspect of their construction. Driving along the dusty roads from one craft village to another, we pass pagodas and pony carts. Huge oxen pull a family in a wooden cart, and monks in saffron-colored robes collect daily contributions. Both men and women wear the traditional long, saronglike *longyi*.



The last monarchies of Burma were located in or near Mandalay, where many fine crafts (jewelry, metalwork, silk weaving, stone carving, woodcarving) were produced for royalty and for the Buddhist temples. Originally, fine crafts were available only to royalty, but after Burma became a British colony in 1885, anyone with money could acquire them. As kalagas and other crafts began to be produced for export, however, their quality gradually declined.



Myanmar, formerly Burma, presently governed by a military dictatorship, the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), has had a turbulent history.

Each craft village has specialized in producing a certain craft, in factories which are family homes, cottages woven of bamboo. Simple furnishings and hammocks are pulled out of the way to provide as much working space as possible for the family members and neighbors involved in the craft work. In each home, there are family altars—a Buddhist one and another dedicated to some of the many spirits (*nats*) that inhabit the ground, air, water, plants, and so on. Each one is well cared for and adorned with offerings of flowers, fruit, and incense.

Making the Glass Baubles

We visit a factory in which glass baubles used to embellish kalagas are made. (Although referred to as beads, they have no holes.) With a diamond cutter, a worker scores ordinary window glass, breaking off centimeter-wide strips. More scoring and snaps produce centimeter-square pieces of glass.

Sequin making in Myanmar. Coils of copper wire are pounded into copper disks with a hole in the center, which are later plated.
Photograph by Sara Drower.

Everyone is pressed into service to fill a large order for *kalagas*. The initial embellishment is done on fabric stretched on low frames. The smiling girl is wearing *thanaka* makeup, made of the ground bark of the thanaka tree and used for both decoration and protection from the intense sun.
Photograph by Sara Drower.

Some of the squares are mounted with an unidentified glue on metal rods for ease in handling while smoothing and rounding their corners on a handmade wooden lathe. The craftsman applies emery powder and diamond abrasives under a stream of water to dissipate friction and heat, progressing from coarse to fine grades. After several minutes of grinding and smoothing, the glass square becomes a glass circle.

The glass circles are loaded onto a metal tray and placed in a crude blast furnace. After a few minutes of intense heat, they melt to form glass domes. When cool, the little domes are bonded with resin glue to the remaining glass squares or to little squares of mirror. Dye added to the glue produces a color that radiates through the clear glass decoration. Although the ground is littered with broken glass, the workers walk around barefoot, apparently never cutting their feet.

Making the Golden Thread

It is mid-October, after the rainy season, and the Irrawaddy River has badly flooded the surrounding land. Our visit to the villages where the golden thread used to embroider the kalagas is spun is restricted by still-high floodwaters. Even though the houses are built on stilts, water laps at second-story windows. Craft production has been moved to the only high ground: the British-built railroad bed and tracks. Work pauses for the morning train from Rangoon and then continues uninterrupted until the train's late afternoon return trip.

We watch bales of raw cotton pass by in boats on their way to be cleaned and carded, then spun into three-ply cord. Next, the cord will be dyed. Today's chemical dyes produce bright colors (antique kalagas have subdued colors).

A young man walks along the railroad tracks, stringing the still-damp three-ply cord onto posts. When the entire amount of cord has been arranged, a woman who seems to be in charge begins to wind it onto a spool, twisting it with shiny metallic Lurex by means of a gadget built from old bicycle parts. The pedals are turned by hand by an impish boy, who is admonished from time to time to keep turning the wheel evenly.

Shwe-gwi-do, the Burmese name for kalagas, is translated as "gold-thread embroidery" or "gold-thread sewing." The term does not mean simply golden-colored, but refers to the precious metal. Probably real gold once covered or was twisted with other fibers to make the embroidery thread rather than the Lurex used today.

Early tapestries were used as screens or wall hangings in religious buildings, as coffin covers at monks' funerals, as doorway covers, and as oxcart decorations. Adherents of Buddhism perform merit deeds; one such act is to commission and donate a tapestry to a Buddhist temple or monastery. Contemporary kalagas may even depict modern-day secular scenes. Similar embroidery was used in the past for embellishing royal costumes. Today, families commission a costume for a boy when he is initiated into a Buddhist monastery.

Making the Kalagas

Most of the embroiderers are women and girls, but men and boys join in the work when there are large commissions to be filled. In the embroidery

A *kalaga* that tells a story. In Burmese art, nearly every space is filled with swirling detail.
Photograph by Sara Drower.

village we visit, they are smiling and chatting with each other or being entertained with tapes of contemporary Burmese music or Burmese romantic stories similar to Western soap operas. They sit on the floor, three or four workers working on stretched fabric held in a single large, low frame. That piece of fabric will later be cut into four or more individual kalagas. The stitches are simple and easy to do; new or inexperienced workers begin with the easiest task, glueing the glass baubles and couching the cord, and advance to more difficult work as they become more skillful.

Embellishment of the fabric starts with the borders of each area that will become a separate kalaga. First, glass baubles are fastened with an unidentified glue at regular intervals. The Lurex-twisted cord is arranged in an intertwining pattern around the beads and couched in place with finer thread. Cord crosses over each corner of the square base of each bead or else encircles the base, in either case securing it.

Certain repeated combinations of beads, sequins, and cord have names. For example, a glass bead encircled with tacked cord, then surrounded with cupped sequins is called a "flower." A "leaf" comprises row upon row of overlapping flat sequins surrounded with couched cord. The Burmese art and craft expert Sylvia Fraser-Lu notes that in Burmese art, every space is filled, and this is the case with the kalagas that we see being made.

Gold-thread and sequin *kalaga* made in Myanmar (formerly Burma) with a central figure of a horse.
Photograph by Joe Coca.

The embroideries vary in workmanship. The better works have closely overlapping sequins and finer stitching, several sets of threads anchor the glass baubles, and the border may also contain a line of closely overlapped sequins. In works of lower quality, threads barely anchor the glass baubles, and sequins are spaced farther apart.

The "flower" motif comprises a glass bead encircled with cord and surrounded with a ring of cupped sequins. The shape of the sequins reveals their wound-wire origin.
Photograph by Sara Drower.

The Central Figures

Kalagas typically depict mythological animals, Buddhist stories, and occasionally scenes from everyday Burmese life. Religious subjects are usually pictured in the same stylized way, so that the message or story is immediately understood by the devout viewer. An animal used as the central figure of small kalagas (large kalagas may have more than one central figure) is likely to represent a tale from the collected stories of the life of Buddha called the *Jataka*. Animals also symbolize the month or day of the week of a person's birth. Only those workers whose skills are most highly developed are promoted to the finer work required for the central figures, which are created separately, stuffed, then appliquéd in the center of the embroidered panel.

The central figures are elaborately embellished with rows of couched threads and overlapping sequins that follow the contour of the figure and define their shape. In areas that are not embroidered, the cotton background fabric is dyed another color, or other bits of fabric are appliquéd in place. Because the central figures are more heavily embellished (with threads and metal sequins), the fabric used for them is treated with a rice glue and backed with layers of a special soft handmade paper.

The paper is made in the Shan state, according to a spokesperson, near the border shared with Thailand. The bark of the local *sa* tree is shredded into fibers, soaked in water for at least twelve hours, then boiled with ash. The pulp is spread out, tamped with a hand tool, and allowed to dry. Grains of uncooked sticky rice are ground to a powder, then mixed with water to make the glue. Lime and insecticide are added to the glue to prevent deterioration in the tropical climate. Before embroidering the central figures, workers size the stretched fabric with several applications of the rice glue. The paper backing may be applied before or after embroidery, depending on the nature of the subject.

Some embroidery of the central figure is done while the sized fabric is stretched on a frame. The figure is then cut out, placed in the center of the embroidery, and the cut edge stitched, leaving an opening for stuffing (unlike trapunto, in which an opening is made in the back of the fabric). Locally grown kapok or other soft fiber material is inserted to give dimension to the figure.

Much artistry is involved in stuffing and sewing each area of the central figure. Sometimes sections are cut apart so that each one may be stuffed and sewn individually. After stuffing, rows of overlapping cord and sequins are applied. In this way, the contours of the figures are followed and emphasized with the sequins and further sculpted by embroidery that follows their form. Finally, cut edges are covered with stitching.

Myanmar has had a turbulent history marked by a constant struggle for power between opposing groups of people, but because of its political and economic isolation and its deeply traditional form of Buddhist worship, many handcraft traditions, including the making of kalagas, continue to be well preserved. ❖

About the Author. *With a background in biology and scientific illustration, Sara Drower is a textile artist who makes quilted and embroidered jackets and wall hangings. She lives in Wilmette, Illinois.*

Further Reading

Cummings, Joe, and Tony Wheeler. *Myanmar: Burma, a Travel Survival Kit.* Oakland, California: Lonely Planet Guidebooks, 1993.

Fraser-Lu, Sylvia. *Burmese Crafts, Past and Present.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.

———. "Kalagas, Burmese Wall Hangings and Related Embroideries." *Arts of Asia* 12, 4, 73–82.

Stanislaw, Mary Anne. *Kalagas, the Wall Hangings of Southeast Asia,* 1987. Available from Ainslie's Imports, 1025 D Tanklage Rd., San Carlos, CA 94070. To order the book, send a check for $12.50.

A Sequined Horse Ornament to Embroider

DESIGNED BY MARIE RISBECK

INSPIRED BY the embroidered *kalagas* of Myanmar (formerly Burma), Marie Risbeck has created a whimsical horse ornament. She has captured the rich glow of the Burmese embroideries with matte gold sequins and metallic threads couched onto cotton fabric. The stitches used in the ornament are not difficult, but because you will find yourself working with some awkward shapes and maneuvering your needle in tight spaces, this is a project best suited to those with previous embroidery experience. Attention to detail will ensure a good finish.

Materials

100 percent cotton fabric, washed and pressed, 1/4 yard (22.9 cm) each of gold and rust brown
6-mm (1/4-inch) cup sequins, matte gold, 1 string of 1,000
Kreinik metallic 1/16-inch (1.6-mm) ribbon, one spool copper #021
Kreinik metallic fine braid, one spool red #003
Kreinik metallic cord, 1 spool gold #002C
DMC 6-strand embroidery floss, 1 skein each of the following colors: black #310, rust brown #400, gold #738, red #817, charcoal #844, light teal #943, and lilac #3726
8-inch (20.3-cm) embroidery hoop
Stiff cardboard, 1 piece 6 inches (15.2 cm) square
Plain white paper
Dressmaker's wax-free tracing paper or erasable fabric marker
Sewing machine fitted with zipper foot
Polyester fiber stuffing, about 2 ounces (56 g)
Cotton swab
Crewel needles, 1 each size 9 and size 7

The gold sequins and rich colors of this horse ornament capture the opulence of the golden tapestries of Burma (now Myanmar).

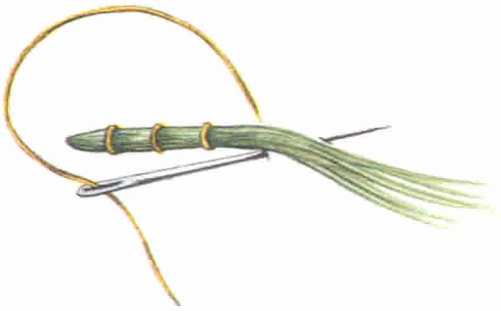
Embroidering the Horse

Trace the pattern (page 47) onto plain white paper and transfer it to the gold fabric using dressmaker's tracing paper or erasable fabric marker. Place the fabric in the embroidery hoop.

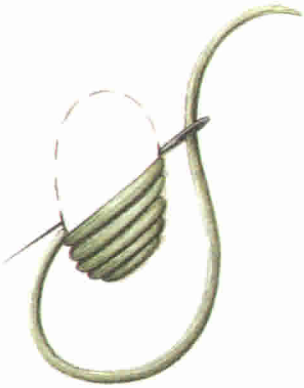
The pattern is also a guide to the placement of the sequins, stitches, and colors that make up the horse. Fill the areas indicated with overlapping sequins, using two strands of gold floss to stitch them in place. Begin at the lower edge of each area to be filled and work toward the top. Stitch the single sequins in the positions indicated on the pattern.

Stitching the sequins

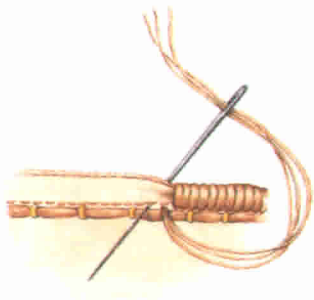
Couching



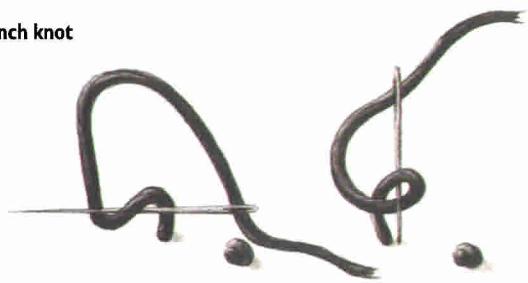
Satin stitch



Overcast stitch



French knot



Work the horse's mouth (red), hooves (charcoal), and bridle fittings (teal) in satin stitch with six strands of floss. Work the couched metallic copper ribbon and fine red braid using one strand of gold metallic cord to couch a single strand of the heavier metallic thread in place. Work the couched floss, using six strands of floss as the laid thread and one strand of gold metallic cord to couch it in place. With six strands of black floss, make a large French knot for the horse's eye. Work 1 row of rust brown couching around the entire outline. Remove the embroidery hoop.

Transfer the outline of the internal form to the piece of cardboard. Cut out the cardboard form. Place the rust brown fabric, right side down, on a flat surface and place the cardboard form on top so that there is a 2½-inch (6.4-cm) margin of fabric around the form. Place the embroidered fabric, right side up, over the form so that the form falls within the outline of the horse. Pin the two fabrics together.

With the stitch length set at 20 stitches per inch (2.5 cm), machine-stitch around the outline of the horse, outside but adjacent to the row of rust brown couching. Leave the seam open for about 3/4 inch (2 cm) at the back of the neck, the belly, the back of the tail, and the back of the back leg, as shown by the dashed lines on the pattern. Trim the seam to 1/16 inch (1.6 mm).

Stuff the horse on both sides of the cardboard form, using the cotton swab to push stuffing into the horse's extremities. Hand-stitch the openings closed, then overcast the entire seam with three strands of rust brown embroidery floss. Determine the point by which the horse must be suspended to hang correctly. Thread a length of thread through the seam at this point and tie the thread into a loop. ❖

About the Author. *Marie Risbeck is a fiber artist and designer who lives in Fort Collins, Colorado. An M.F.A. graduate of Carnegie Mellon University, she frequently exhibits her paintings and needlework throughout the country.*

Supplier

Firefly Embroideries and Beading Supplies, PO Box 304, Davisburg, MI 48350-0304. (810) 634-3649. Matte gold sequins.

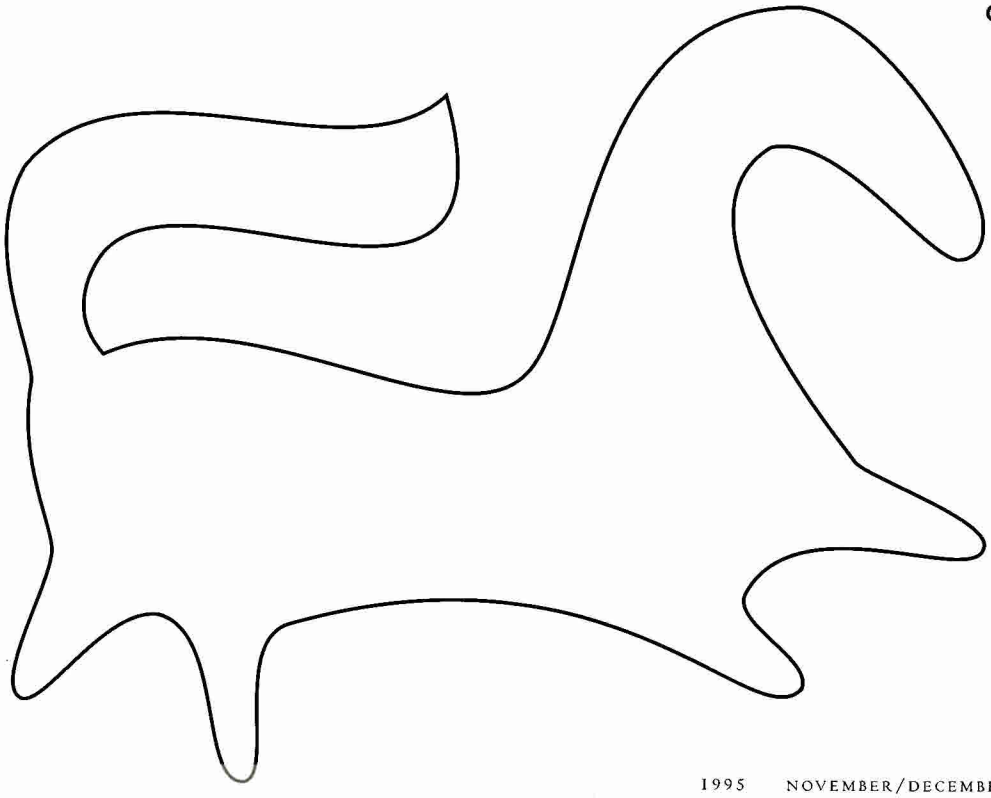
Pattern and stitch guide

Color key

- Copper ribbon
- DMC #3726
- Red braid
- DMC #400
- DMC #943
- DMC #844

Stitch key

- French knot
- Single sequin
- Overlapping sequins
- Satin stitch
- Couching



Internal form

UNRAVELING Poetry Mittens

VERONICA PATTERSON

ON MITTENS knitted of fine handspun yarn, words wind around each hand: the opening lines of a poem on one mitten, the continuation on the other. The mittens engage us with their novelty, the skill and thought required, and the peculiar attraction of decoding the written word.

About 1970, Susanna Springer of Missoula, Montana, bought the single mitten pictured at an antique show in Chatham, New York. In 1987, she sent it to Anne Macdonald, who included it in *No Idle Hands: A Social History of American Knitting* (New York: Ballantine, 1988) and sent back to Susanna a photocopy of a similar pair of mittens in the Smithsonian Institution.

Poetry mitten, circa 1780, courtesy of Susanna Springer, of Missoula, Montana.

Photograph by Joe Coca.

One thing you must not borrow
Nor ever give away
For he who borrows trouble
Will have it every day
But if you have a plenty
And more than you can bear
It will not lighten yours
If others have a share.

[You must] learn to be contented
Then will your troubles cease
And then you may be certain
That you will live in peace
For a contented mind
Is a continual feast.

Tucked inside Susanna's mitten were a newspaper clipping from a Bangor, Maine, newspaper dated 1880 and a handwritten note. The article describes the mitten as being more than 100 years old, as belonging to Mrs. Charles H. Penny, and as having been knitted by her great-great-aunt, Margaret Evans of New Hampshire, who was blind but had in her early childhood learned to knit figures and letters by counting. In fact, the N's and S's are reversed, and one line drops to the next in midword. The note adds that the mitten was once exhibited by Josie Tretheway, Margaret's great-great-great-grandniece. The newspaper article dates the mitten to about 1780. The mitten has "80" worked into the design on the thumb.

The poem "Trouble," which appears in part (the last part) on Susanna's mitten and in full on the pair at the Smithsonian, most clearly links the three mittens. The Smithsonian's pair of mittens is dated tentatively to the nineteenth century based on the name William Watson worked into both thumbs. One William Watson was a London printer of cheap, or "penny" papers whose business flourished from about 1805 to 1830. Although his publications included poems, this verse has not been found.

Money will make you many friends,
But do not praise them high;
For should misfortune make you poor,
Such friends will pass you by.

Susanna's mitten does not include the words "you must" (line 9). The mittens differ in other ways as well. The mittens in the Smithsonian are blue and white, are designed with letters only, use X's to divide lines, and the tip of the mitten is the top of the "page," with the poem winding up from the wrist. Susanna's mitten is blue and white but includes rows of red flowers between the lines; the cuff is the top, and the poem winds down it to the mitten tip. The thumb seems to have been needed for text (the last word on the mitten's tip is "continual," and some letters of "feast" appear on the thumb).

The only other reference I have to poetry mittens is an anecdote that appears in *Labor of Love: American Textiles and Needlework 1650–1930,* by Judith Reiter Weissman and Wendy Lavitt (New York: Knopf, 1987) about Peggy Davis, an "old time knitter" famous for "knitting the letters of the alphabet into her mittens." A neighbor showed a pair of Peggy Davis's mittens to someone else who bet him that an old blind woman in another town could do the same thing. Not to be outdone, Peggy Davis practiced knitting in the dark and then produced mittens with a four-line verse (above).

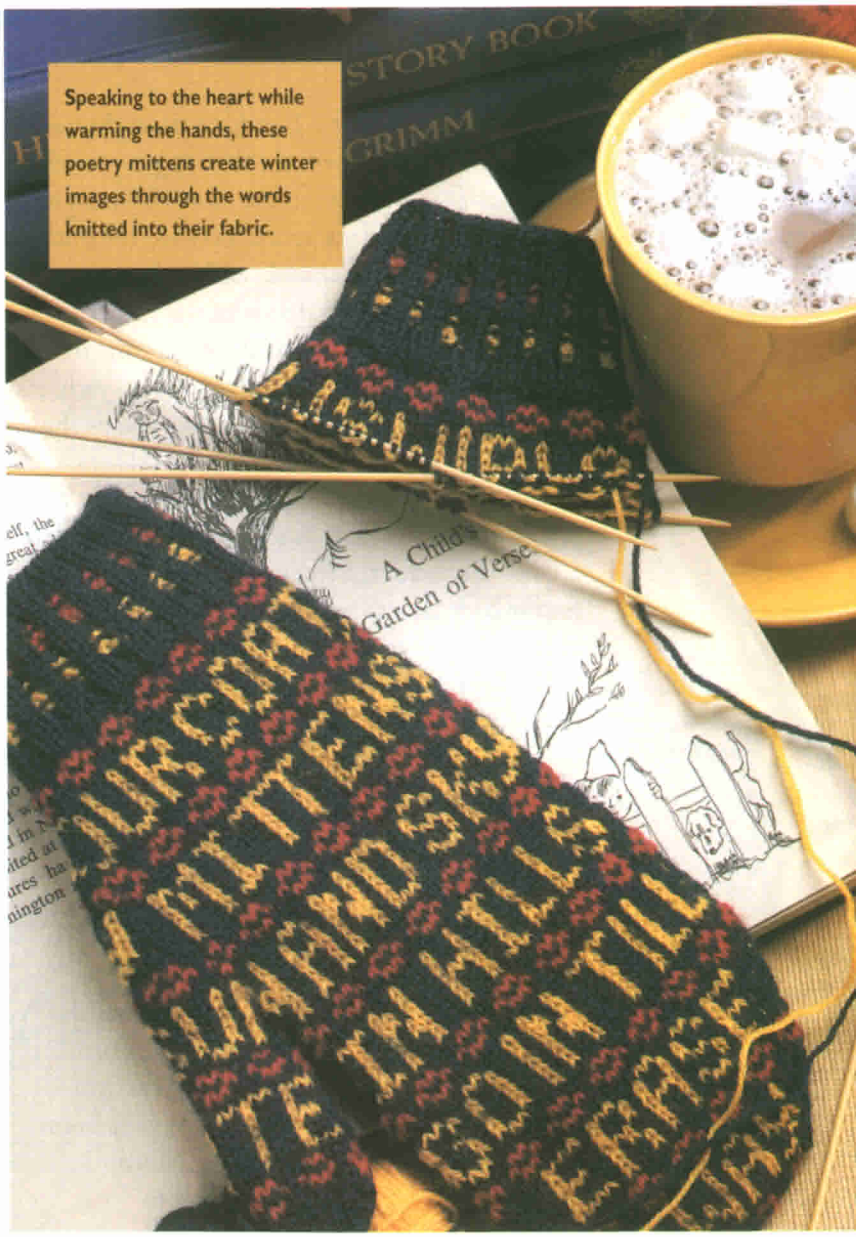
Have you seen similar mittens or a pattern for them? Do you know the origin of either poem? We need more clues to unravel this mystery. ❖

Poetry Mittens to Knit

DESIGNED BY VERONICA PATTERSON AND JANE FOURNIER

WORKED IN THE ROUND of fingering-weight yarn, our brightly colored poetry mittens warm more than just your hands on a chilly day. If you wish to design your own mittens, sources of suitable poems are many. Use one of the two poems that Veronica Patterson composed with mittens in mind (page 50), knit up an old favorite, or create your own poem. When you know the gauge and size of the mitten you want to knit, draw an outline on graph paper and work the letters of the poem into the space.

The fine detail and absence of a rhythm in the lettered pattern make this a challenging project, best for knitters with experience in multicolored knitting. You'll also need to know how to graft stitches together for a neat finish at the tip of the mitten.



Speaking to the heart while warming the hands, these poetry mittens create winter images through the words knitted into their fabric.

MATERIALS

Fingering-weight wool yarn, one 1¾-ounce (50-g) ball each of dark blue, yellow gold, and red. We used Nature Spun from Brown Sheep Company in Blueberry #110, Gold Glow #N15, and Red Fox #N46.

Set of 5 double-pointed needles, size 0 (2 mm) or size needed to achieve the gauge specified below

Small stitch holder or scrap yarn

Tapestry needle, size 18

ABBREVIATIONS

k—knit

m1—make 1: pick up the thread running between the base of the stitch on the left-hand needle and the base of the stitch on the right-hand needle onto the left-hand needle, inserting it from front to back. Knit into the back of the loose strand.

p—purl

rep—repeat

rnd—round

ssk—slip the next two stitches one at a time as if to knit, then insert the point of the left-hand needle into the fronts of these stitches and knit them together from this position.

st(s)—stitch(es)

tog—together

Size: Women's medium

Gauge: 9 sts and 12 rows measured over 1 inch (2.5 cm) of stockinette stitch.

Right Mitten

Cuff: With blue yarn, cast on 64 sts evenly on four needles. Being careful not to twist the stitches, join the knitting into a circle and work in k2, p2 ribbing for 6 rnds.

Rnds 7 and 8: * K2 blue, p2 red; rep from * to end of rnd.

Change to blue and work 3 rnds in k2, p2 ribbing.

Rnds 12 and 13: * K2 blue, p2 yellow; rep from * to end of rnd.

Change to blue and work 4 rnds in k2, p2 ribbing.

Knit 1 rnd, increasing 6 sts evenly throughout the rnd (70 sts).

Hand: Work the first 32 rnds of the right mitten chart, increasing to form the thumb gusset with ml increases as shown. Read the chart from right to left, ignoring the blank spaces between the outlines for the mitten front, thumb, and back.

Rnd 33: Work the first 35 sts of the rnd as shown on the chart, slip the next 22 sts (for the thumb) onto a stitch holder or a piece of scrap yarn, cast on 4 sts in blue, and continue the rnd as shown on the chart.

Continue to work the hand from the chart, shaping the top of the hand as shown. After the last rnd, arrange the sts for the front on one needle and those for the back on a second needle. Graft the front and back stitches together with blue yarn. Using the tail of the red yarn, work duplicate stitch over the grafting to complete the red motifs at the top seam.

Thumb: Slip the thumb sts from the holder or scrap yarn onto a needle. Looking down into the thumb opening, pick up and knit 2 sts from the two left stitches of the cast-on sts at the thumb opening. Work the thumb sts according to rnd 33 of the thumb chart, then pick up and knit 2 more sts from the right side of the cast-on sts at the thumb opening (26 sts). Distribute the stitches so that needles one and three have 6 sts each and needles two and four have 7 sts each. Work the remainder of the thumb in the round according to the thumb chart, then shape the top of the thumb as follows:

Rnd 49: (Kl, k2tog) 8 times, k2.

Rnd 50 and every following even-numbered rnd: Knit.

Rnd 51: (Kl, k2tog) 6 times.

Rnd 53: (Kl, k2tog) 4 times.

Rnd 55: K2tog 4 times. Thread the yarn through the remaining sts and pull them tight.

Left Mitten

Work the cuff as for the right mitten.

Hand: Work the first 32 rnds of the left mitten chart.

Rnd 33: Work the first 31 sts of the rnd as shown on the chart, slip the next 22 sts (for the thumb) onto a stitch holder or a piece of scrap yarn, cast on 4 sts in blue, and continue the rnd as shown.

Work the remainder of the hand from the left mitten chart. Finish the top of the hand and the thumb as for the right mitten. Darn in the loose ends on the back of the work. Block and lightly steam-press both mittens.

For charting your own poetry mitten design, proportional knitters' graph paper is a useful tool. One source is Graph-It *by Gail Selfridge (Loveland, Colorado: Interweave Press, 1991), a book of reproducible knitter's graph paper in more than 200 gauges.*

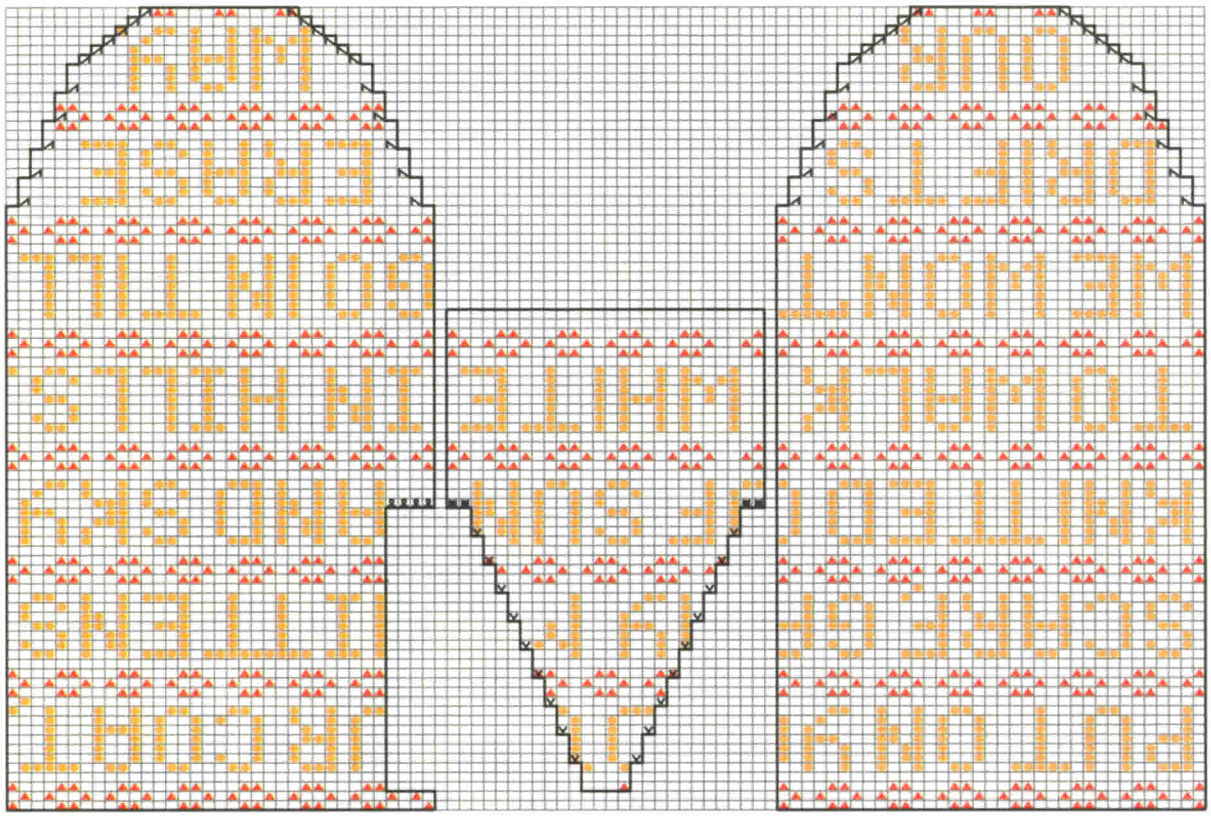
MITTEN VERSES *by Veronica Patterson*

Put on your coat,
scarf, gay mittens
knitted of sun and sky
to walk in white hills.
We won't go in till
drifts erase
our way.

When snow swirls
we begin to dream
of dancing firelight
and hasten gaily home,
clapping hands
and words to
warm them.

Morning spreads
over snowy hills,
a rolling canvas
where the sun first
brushes gold on
blue drifts
of night.

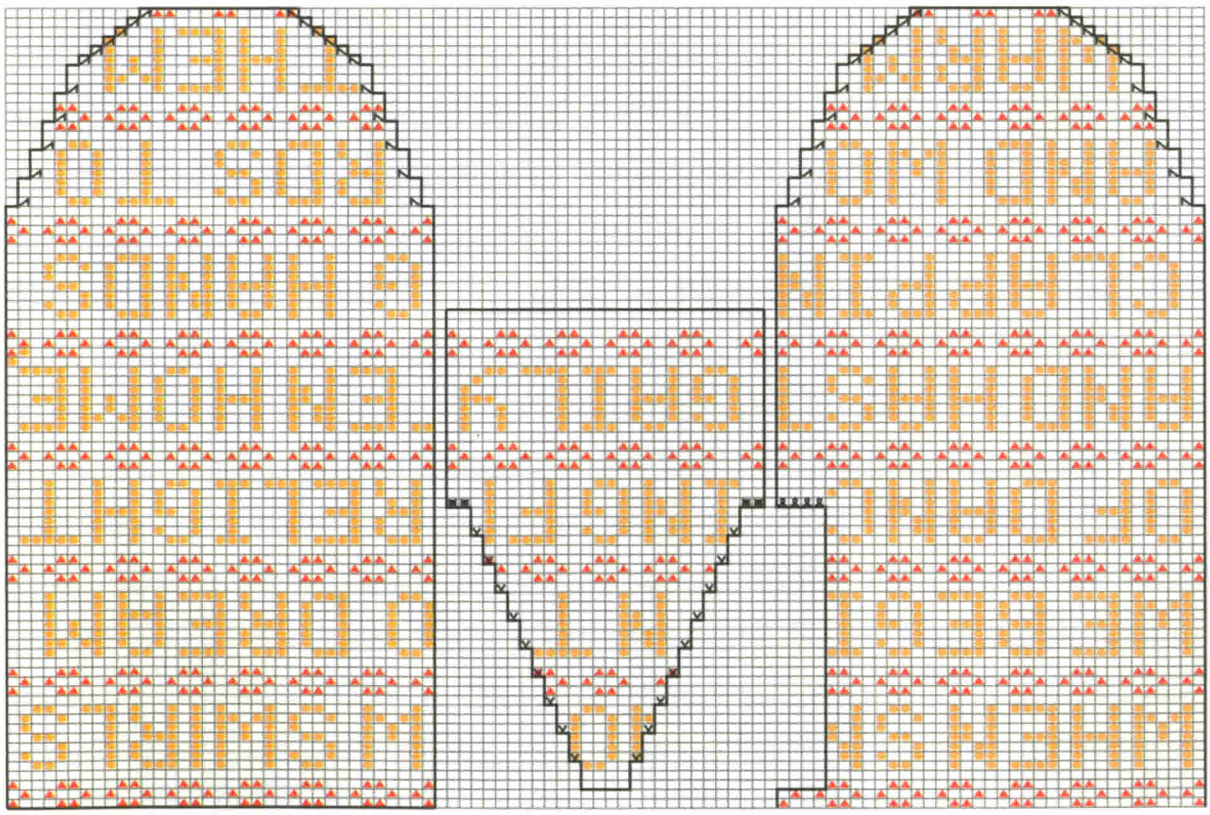
Evening lingers
on the white horizon
until the reluctant sun
lays down its palette,
cleans its brush
of day's last
crimson.



Right mitten chart

Key

- dark blue
- yellow gold
- red
- m1
- cast on
- ssk
- k2tog
- pick up and knit



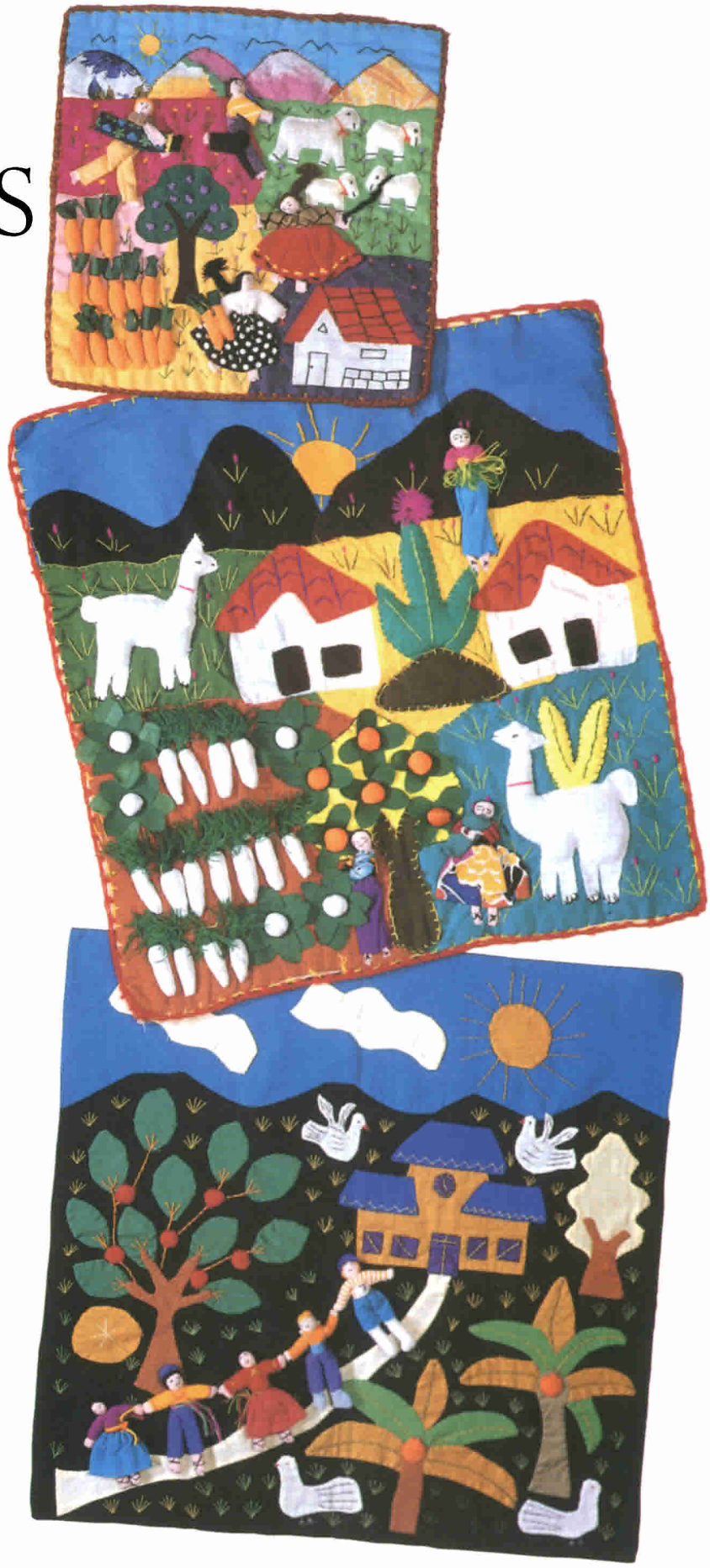
Left mitten chart

To make the charts easier to read, copy them at 150 per-cent or larger on a photocopier.

ARPILLERAS

Pictures from the Land of the Sun

WILLOW ANN SIRCH



Arpilleras. **[Top] Farm scene from Peru. The rugged snow-capped Andes mountains stretch the entire length of western South America from Panama to Tierra del Fuego. [Middle] Garden scene, purchased in Venezuela. [Bottom] Schoolhouse, origin unknown. Many arpilleras are embellished with wool embroidery to enhance the appliquéd background and three-dimensional figures. In this scene, embroidered grass and embroidery on the leaves of the trees, the children on their way to school, and the schoolhouse complete the picture.**

Arpilleras courtesy of Willow Ann Sirch unless otherwise noted. Photographs by Joe Coca unless otherwise noted.

BUYERS AND SELLERS are haggling, children are scurrying, mothers are scolding. The sun falls warm and inviting on stall after stall of ripe fruits and vegetables. One vendor sells soft yarns in muted earth tones: mustard, mauve, rust, and forest green. Nearby, a wooden crate is piled full of *arpilleras,* small, colorful fabric pictures with many little stuffed human figures sewn onto fabric landscapes of emerald, azure, and warm brown. Although this market is in a town in Venezuela where my husband bought the most recent additions to my collection of arpilleras last year, it might have been one of many other places in South America. Most arpilleras, which capture in fabric the Andean sun, the mountain air, and the lively South American spirit, are made in Peru and Chile.

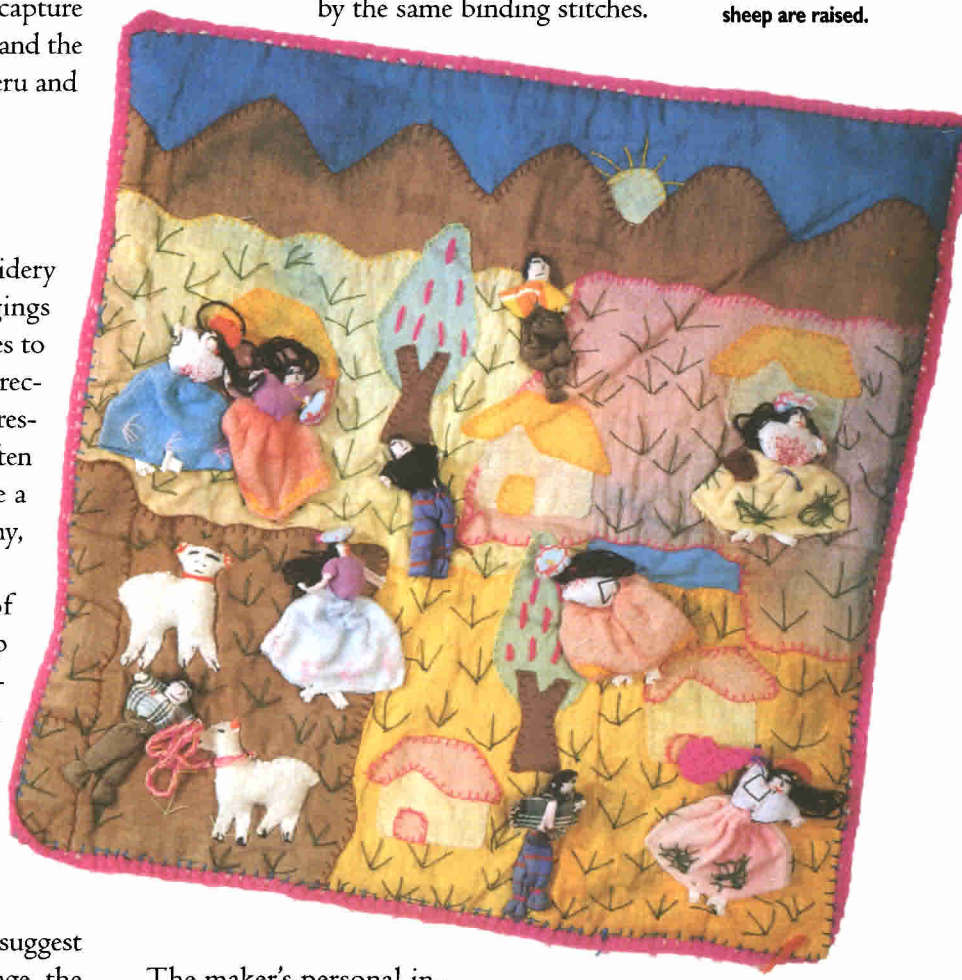
Pictures in Fabric

Executed in appliqué, often with embroidery and other embellishment, these wall hangings range in size from 12-inch (30.5-cm) squares to 1-yard (0.9-m) or slightly larger squares or rectangles. Their most striking feature is the presence of three-dimensional human figures, often dressed in traditional garb. The figures give a sense of energy and movement to their tiny, flat appliqué worlds.

Typically, arpilleras are constructed of brightly colored scraps of cotton, burlap (*arpillera* means "burlap" in Spanish), or synthetic fabric. One or two pieces of solid-colored fabric may be used for the foundation fabric, a strip of blue for sky and another of green for a hillside or gray for a city street, for instance. Both rural and urban scenes almost invariably include rolling hills or jagged peaks in the background to suggest the ever-present Andes. The mountain range, the world's longest above sea level, shapes the way of life of the region's inhabitants.

In this part of the world where hot, sunny days prevail, an appliquéd sun appears frequently, representing not only daily reality but also, in its constancy, faith. As one arpillera maker told Marjorie Agosin, a Chilean-born poet, Wellesley College professor of Spanish, and author of *Scraps of Life: Chilean Arpilleras,* "I put an enormous sun in all my arpilleras because even though I might not have a cup of tea to my name, I never lose my faith." Many scenes are completed by embroidery worked in bright wool yarns. Some special arpilleras have a small pocket sewn on the back that contains a message of explanation written on a piece of paper.

Most arpilleras are backed with the burlap from which they get their name or with a coarse cotton cloth like that used for grain sacks. The picture may then be bordered by a yarn binding in chain stitch, blanket stitch, or running crosses that attaches the two layers. Some have a crocheted edging attached by the same binding stitches.



Farm scene purchased in Venezuela. Although some expansive South American farms rival the size of a small nation, there are many small subsistence farms as well where people eke out a living. This scene shows a small farm on which grain and sheep are raised.

The maker's personal innovations make one picture stand out from another. Here, a head might feature a lock of human hair. There, a figure might hold a tiny pot made from real clay. Many arpilleras are made without regard for rules of proportion. A human may be the same size as a building. A bird may dwarf a sheep. In many examples, the figures are sewn to their backgrounds in a carefree manner, giving the impression of hu-

Chilean *arpilleras*, like this one documenting police brutality, are seen less often today under the current president, Patricio Aylwin, a political moderate. More popular are scenes recalling and demanding justice for the "Detained and Disappeared."
Courtesy of Marjorie Agosin.

mans endlessly whirling in a life-dance across a vivid landscape.

From the Land's End

Chilean arpilleras, notably those made during the 1970s and 1980s, depict scenes with more somber overtones. The colors may be somewhat drab and the images more likely to depict urban poverty or oppression, with figures dressed as military officials threatening figures of ordinary citizens.

According to Barbara Cervenka, a School of Art faculty member at the University of Michigan who has for several years worked with women in a Peruvian craft cooperative, such wall hangings had "a history as folk embroideries and were often given as gifts for weddings and other celebrations."

The Chilean arpilleras may also be rooted in wall hangings made in the 1950s by the Chilean folklorist Violeta Parra, who revived folk traditions in music and the visual arts and spoke out on behalf of the poor and oppressed. Her hangings used scraps of fabrics including feed sacks, bits of yarn, and other found objects, the same materials later used in arpilleras.

The serious subject matter in Chilean arpilleras reflects the recent history of this troubled country. In 1973, Chile, whose name comes from an Indian word meaning "where the land ends," came under the domination of General Augusto Pinochet through a bloody military coup. During the next decade and a half, thousands of Chileans suspected of opposing his regime were imprisoned, tortured, and executed. Dragged from their homes by military police in the middle of the night, many simply disappeared. Their families were given no explanation nor any knowledge of their fate.

Most of them men, these political prisoners of the Pinochet regime became known as the "Detained and Disappeared." Because most Chilean women pursued the traditional role of mother and homemaker, they were financially dependent on husbands, brothers, and fathers. The women in the families of the Disappeared suddenly found themselves destitute. Many turned in desperation to the church in their community.

The first arpillera workshops were established with the help of the Roman Catholic Church in Santiago. They furnished fabric and thread for making small appliquéd cloth pictures which were then sold overseas to provide the women with money for basic necessities.

The workshops were more than a creative outlet. They gave the women a means to express their grief, rage, and frustration over their losses and enabled them to reach out to one another and feel less alone in their suffering. One arpillera maker, whose son disappeared in 1974, explained that making arpilleras alleviated the women's pain "because we could tell our story and at the same time denounce what happened to us." In a society that typically discouraged women from speaking out and being politically involved, the *arpilleristas* took up the needle to tell their stories to the world.

Many Chilean arpilleras made during these years featured such hand-sewn mottos such as "No More Torture" or "Where Are They?" With increasing solidarity and courage, a number of the arpilleristas organized and participated in protest marches and demonstrations. The church exported the hangings, and the makers came to view each arpillera that left the country as a cry to the outside world—and a small victory.

The political nature of many Chilean arpilleras is not always apparent at first glance. One seemingly

innocent scene pictures children around a large table and women tending a cooking pot outdoors. An informed viewer, however, understands that this is a child-feeding program necessitated by years of economic upheaval and poverty. Cooking outside, which looks appealingly bucolic, is a hardship for these urban women, who must make do with simple cooking methods and poor vegetables scrounged from the marketplace.

In 1980, the Chilean people approved a new constitution that provided for a gradual return to democratic government in the 1990s. Step by step, opposition political parties were permitted, a plebiscite was called for, Pinochet was rejected, and a political moderate, Patricio Aylwin, was elected president. Arpilleras, small voices in a sea of protest, helped in their own humble way to bring about change.

Today, wall hangings that retain a political slant are more likely to contain mottos such as "Justice for the Detained and Disappeared." The workshops no longer meet, and many individual Chilean arpillera makers are turning toward more cheerful motifs. Not only are they more likely to sell to tourists, but they emphasize a better future as well.

Made in Peru

Like the arpilleristas of Chile, the women who make Peruvian fabric pictures are impelled by both economic need and the desire to show something of their personal situations. Arpilleras made in Peru are mostly the products of women who live and work under severe economic and political pressures.

Unlike Chilean arpilleras, however, Peruvian examples generally feature pastoral scenes rather than politicized urban ones. Three-dimensional human figures are pictured with stuffed sheep, llamas, or other animals as well as with tiny stuffed vegetables that pop up out of colorful gardens. The human figures are usually engaged in traditional activities such as planting, tending livestock, or walking against a landscape backdrop. The content grows from the background of the needleworkers themselves, many of whom have been displaced from rural villages high in the Andes as times have gotten harder. The scenes recall what may well have been happier days for their makers before the economic destabilization of recent years necessitated their move to urban areas.

Although Peru has not undergone the violent

The political nature of Chilean *arpilleras* is not always apparent at first glance. [Top] A child-feeding program, Chile, circa 1985.This arpillera pictures children around a table at a church-sponsored feeding program. Under the repressive government, many Chilean families were thrust into poverty when their men joined the ranks of the "Detained and Disappeared." [Bottom] Women cooking at communal pot, Chile, circa 1985. Church-sponsored arpillera workshops provided many Chilean women an outlet for their grief and frustration while enabling them to earn a living.

upheaval of a military takeover like Chile, it has, in recent decades, been besieged by economic instability, rampant inflation, staggering unemployment, and terrorist violence. "Terrorism and military reprisals have claimed over 11,000 lives and more than 2,000 others have disappeared," notes Barbara Cervenka. Barbara has visited extensively with the women of a shantytown known as Pamplona Alta outside Lima. She recounts that in 1979, the women of the local cooperative there were introduced to Chilean arpilleras and were immediately drawn to these small works of fabric art. In the themes depicted, they recognized images from their own lives and decided to start making fabric pictures of their own as a salable product and as a way to tell their own story.

Nativity scene, Peru. The combination of three-dimensional figures and flat background is part of what gives *arpilleras* their appeal.

In Pamplona Alta today, "the Peruvian women call their wall hangings *cuadros*—that is, 'pictures,'" Barbara explains, "although the term arpillera is also used." She adds that "these women have a very scant livelihood. They have only a tourist market, not a national market. The opportunity to sell their work is very important to them." She notes that the work is generally done as part of a group. The women come together in workshops or in each other's homes, where they may spend several hours a day sewing and sharing ideas. "Together, they discuss issues that affect them, select themes for their work, and decide how to interpret the themes pictorially in the cuadros," Barbara observes. Since this first group of women began to make their cuadros, others have joined them, learned from them, and in some cases, moved on to form new cooperative groups that sew and critique one another's works.

The quality of workmanship in arpilleras varies widely. Some are constructed with careful attention to detail, tiny appliqué stitches, raw fabric edges painstakingly turned under, and plenty of decorative embroidery. Others show less detail, are made from more coarsely woven cloth, and have raw fabric edges and only sketchy embroidery. Those made for the tourist trade and export provide a window on a way of life and serve in many cases as a way to voice deeply held beliefs. Once we understand their history, we can only admire the way that the vitality of arpilleras not only reflects but also literally supports the lives of their makers. ❖

About the Author. *Willow Ann Soltow Sirch is the author of four books and numerous articles on quilting, including most recently* Designing Your Own Quilts *and* Quilting the World Over, *both from Chilton Press, Radnor, Pennsylvania. She lives in Hamden, Connecticut.*

Further Reading

Agosin, Marjorie. *Scraps of Life: Chilean Arpilleras.* Trenton, New Jersey: Red Sea Press, 1987.

Cervenka, Barbara. *Michigan Today.* Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan, March 1993, 25, 1, 2–3.

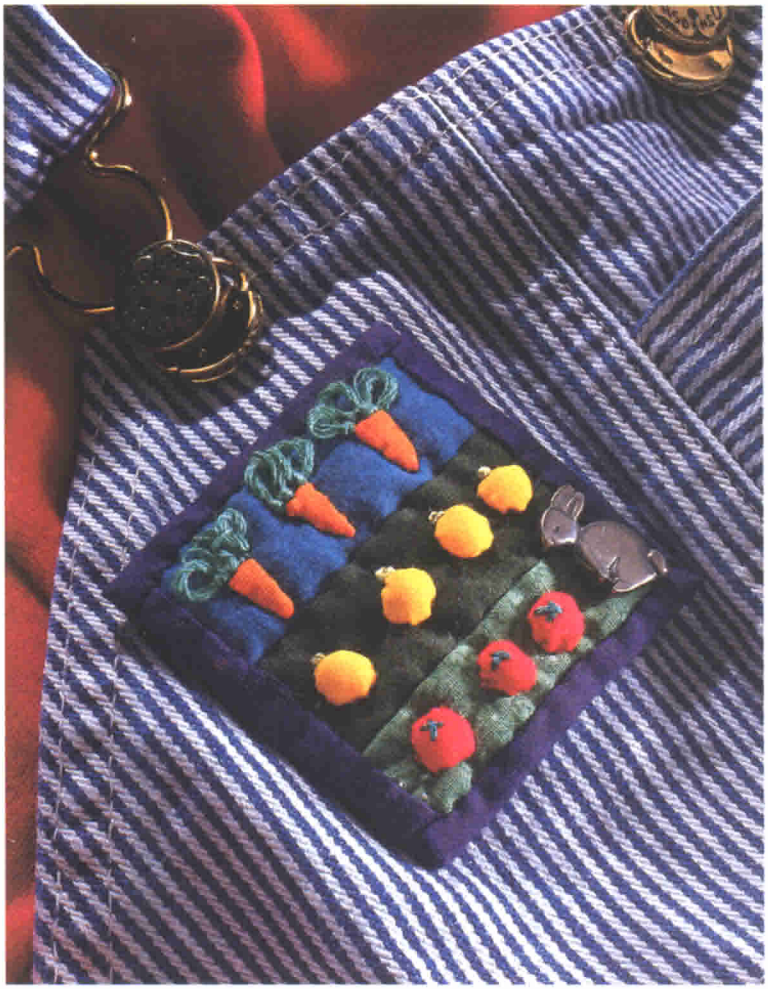
Sources for Arpilleras and Cuadros

Craft and import stores in many areas of the country carry arpilleras imported through any of several self-help organizations that support the arpilleristas.

Like Chilean arpilleristas, the Peruvian makers tend to be poor women with little other means of support. Readers interested in purchasing Peruvian cuadros should send an SASE to Barbara Cervenka, 307 Maple Ridge, Ann Arbor, MI 48103. Request a list of available themes and prices.

A Garden Pin to Appliqué

DESIGNED BY WILLOW ANN SIRCH



Stuffed appliqué vegetables reminiscent of South American *arpilleras* create a playful fabric garden vignette.

BRINGING TO MIND the arpilleras of Chile and Peru, Willow Sirch's garden pin sprouts tiny, three-dimensional vegetables of stuffed appliqué. A few scraps of brightly colored cotton fabric, cotton or polyester batting, and some simple embroidery stitches become a lush garden that will thrive at any time of the year. Although it is not difficult, you may like to practice the hidden appliqué stitch before working with the very small pieces of fabric used in the pin.

The *arpilleristas* of South America rely on their needlework as a much-needed source of income. To support Latin American craftspeople, you may wish to purchase *arpilleras* through a local handcraft outlet or contact one of the sources listed on page 56.

Materials

100 percent cotton fabric, washed and pressed, in the following colors: one piece 2¼ × 1 inch (5.6 × 2.5 cm) each of teal and dark green, one piece 2¼ × 3/4 inch (5.6 × 2 cm) of medium green, one piece 2¾ inches (7 cm) square of dark blue, and scraps of orange, yellow, and red

Cotton or low-loft polyester batting, one piece 2¼ inches (5.6 cm) square plus an additional small scrap

Six-strand cotton embroidery floss, 1 yard (0.9 m) each of light green, medium green, and dark green

Pewter bunny or other animal button or charm, 1/2–3/4 inch (1.3–2 cm) in diameter

Pin back or safety pin, 1 inch (2.5 cm) long

Sewing thread to match the fabrics

Crewel or sharp needle, size 10

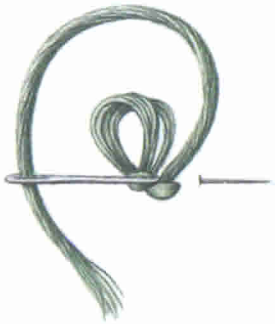
Crewel needle, size 5

Stitching the Pin Front

Place the square of batting on your work surface. Place the teal strip of fabric over the square of batting, matching the upper edges and sides. Finger-press 1/8 inch (3 mm) of one of the long edges of the dark-green strip to the wrong side. Place it in the middle of the batting square so that the folded edge overlaps the raw edge of the teal strip by 1/8 inch (3 mm). Pin the folded edge through both layers of fabric and the batting, and stitch it in place using hidden appliqué stitches. Use the same procedure to stitch the strip of medium green below the dark green fabric.

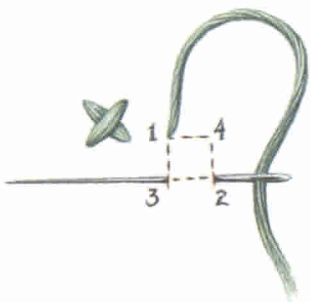
Templates

Carrot tops



French knot

Cross stitch



Using the triangular template shown at left as a pattern, cut three carrots from the orange fabric. Finger-press one long edge of one of the carrots. Leaving room above the carrot to embroider the top later, pin it in place on the background and appliqué the folded edge. Use the point of your needle to tuck the remaining raw edges under as you stitch the carrot to the background fabric. Follow the same procedure for the other two carrots.

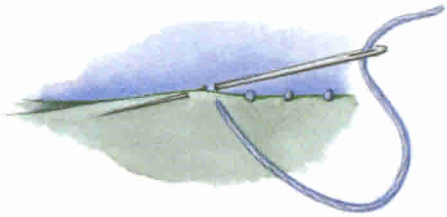
Using the circular template as a pattern, cut four round gourds from the yellow fabric. Work a line of running stitch around one of the fabric circles 1/8 inch (3 mm) from the edge. Pull off a pea-sized piece from the scrap of batting and roll it into a ball between your thumb and forefinger. Place the ball in the center of the yellow circle. Draw up the ends of the running-stitch thread, pulling the circle into a ball around the batting. Place the yellow ball on the dark green strip, with the raw edges down. Holding the ball in place with your thumb, sew the outer edge of the ball to the background fabric, tucking under the raw edges with the point of your needle as you go. Make three more gourds in the same way.

Make three tomatoes from the red fabric, using the same method that you used for the gourds. Stitch the tomatoes in place on the medium green strip, leaving room for the bunny at the far right.

With the size 5 crewel needle and six strands of medium green embroidery floss, stitch the tops of the carrots. Start with a back stitch, then sew three 1/4-inch (6-mm) loops, taking one or two back stitches between each loop to anchor it in place. With six strands of light green embroidery floss, stitch a single French knot on the dark green fabric at the center top of each gourd. With three strands of dark green embroidery floss, stitch a single cross stitch in the middle and toward the top of each tomato.

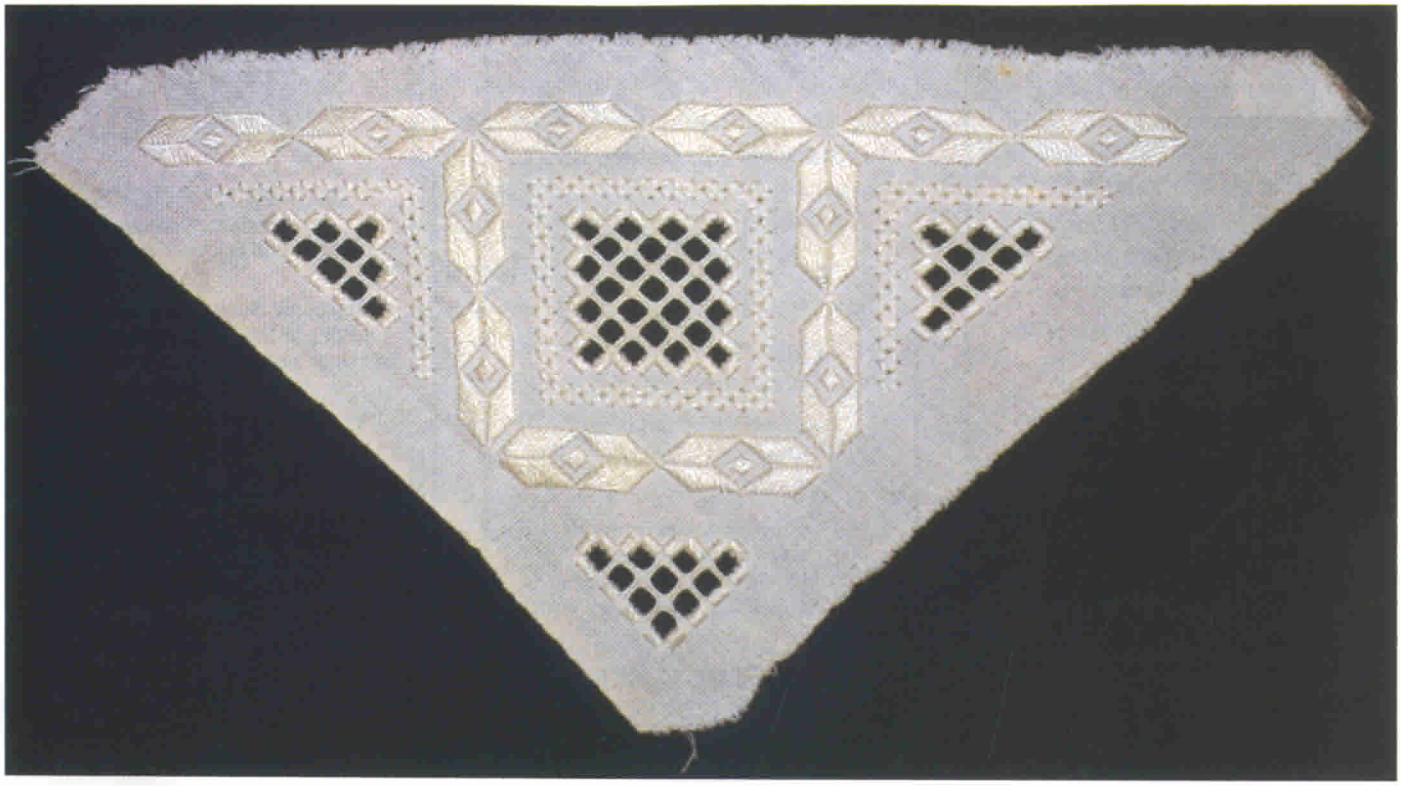
Completing the Pin

Place the pin front right side up in the center of the dark blue fabric square. Fold the edges of the blue fabric 1/8 inch (3 mm) toward the center of the pin and press the folds. Turn the upper edge in again to make one side of a frame for the fabric picture. Pin, then appliqué the edge onto the teal background. Fold and stitch the lower edge and finally the two sides. Sew the bunny button in the lower right corner. Complete the garden pin by sewing the pin back or safety pin on the back, making sure that the stitches do not show on the front. ❖



Hidden Appliqué

As you bring it to the surface of the work, angle the needle so that it passes through the background fabric and the seam allowance of the appliqué fabric and emerges from the fold where the seam allowance is turned to the wrong side. Insert the needle into the junction of the appliqué and background fabrics opposite the point at which the thread emerges.



NORWEGIAN HARDANGER
Tradition and Transformation

NANCY NEHRING

It would be difficult to find any variety of needlework requiring less skill and experience in producing beautiful effects than Hardanger embroidery. The least experienced amateur, by exercising care in counting and placing the stitches with mathematical exactness, can produce as beautiful work as would require long practice in most forms of embroidery. And this is doubtless one reason for the lasting popularity of Hardanger embroidery.

—Priscilla Hardanger Book, 1909

UNTIL the twentieth century, the Hardanger Fjord region on the west coast of Norway was isolated from the rest of the world by the raging North Sea to the west and by rugged, glacier-capped mountains to the east. About 1650, women of this area began developing a distinctive style of embroidery that combined whitework, counted-thread work, and drawn-thread work in bold geometric patterns. Norwegians call it *Hardangersom*, or "embroidery of the Hardanger region," but English-speaking needleworkers know this exacting embroidery technique simply as hardanger. The region's geographical isolation kept hardanger embroidery relatively unchanged for more than 200 years. Hardanger's attraction lies in its simple elegance, which is achieved by the use of a limited number of different stitches.

Triangular insert, probably for a pillow sham. Made in the early 1900s, provenance unknown. Cotton, 16 x 11 inches (41 x 28 cm).

Scrim and Kloster Blocks

Hardanger was first worked on white linen fabric with linen thread. Both fabric and thread came from flax that was locally grown, processed, spun, and—in the case of the fabric—handwoven. The fabric, called *scrim,* was woven in a one-by-one weave with twenty to fifty threads per inch. Two sizes of linen thread with a soft twist were used, similar in size and twist to today's pearl cotton ranging from number 16 to 45. The thicker thread was used for features such as the bars of kloster blocks, the finer thread for weaving, filling stitches, eyelets, and hems.

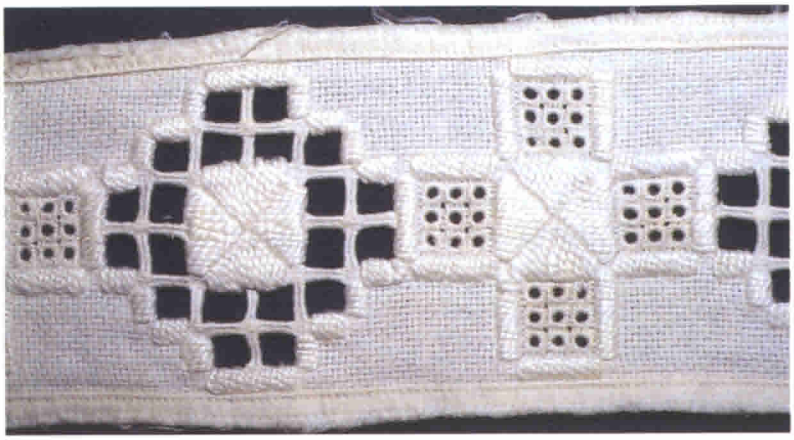
Traditional hardanger comprises six stitches: kloster block, woven bar, lace and twisted-cross fillings, fagot, and eyelet. The kloster block is worked in satin stitch over four threads of the fabric, with each block made up of five stitches. Blocks are worked perpendicular to one another, and the fabric threads between sets of kloster blocks are then cut and drawn away. The woven-bar stitch is a figure-eight pattern worked over four fabric threads, two on each side of the figure eight. Picots are often worked in the middle of the bar. The only filling stitches used before 1900 were lace stitch and twisted cross. The lace filling stitch is made with a simple loop stitch in each side of the open block. The twisted cross is an X made in an open block, each arm of which is then wound with the same thread. The fagot stitch is worked from the back of the solid areas of the fabric. Each row of fagot stitch comprises two lines of stitches that slightly raise the fabric between them and form small holes as the thread is drawn tight. The eyelet is worked over two fabric threads around a center hole with one fabric thread between each pair of stitches; the thread is pulled tight to form a large center hole.

Hardanger was once used almost exclusively to embellish the regional costume, or *bunad.* A girl's or woman's bunad included a blouse with a stand-up collar and cuffs, trimmed in hardanger. The jacket was red with black sleeves, decorated with gold pieces and sometimes beaded. A white linen apron with hardanger bands covered a long black wool skirt.

The hardanger was stitched on linen bands whose edges were finished in a narrow hem that strengthened the band and made it removable so that it could be reused. The embroidered bands were then sewn to the blouse or inserted in the apron.

Young Norwegian women in their traditional costume, or *bunad.* Four are wearing blouses decorated with traditional hardanger embroidery, and all are wearing aprons decorated with traditional hardanger embroidery.

All photographs courtesy of the Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum, Decorah, Iowa.

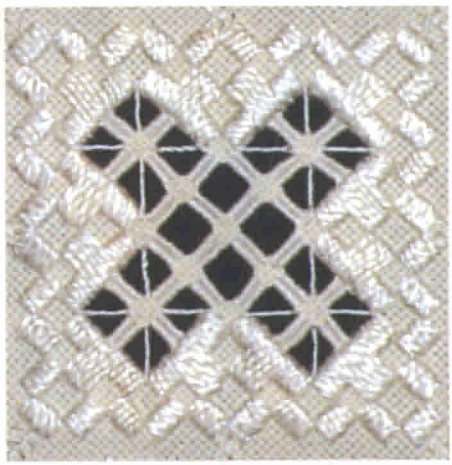


Band insert, probably from an apron. Made in Stavanger, Norway, by Josephine Larsen for her trousseau. Cotton, 22 x 2½ inches (56 x 6.4 cm).

Adjusting to a New Country

Norwegians began to immigrate to the United States about 1840. Some adaptations to their new circumstances were reflected in their needlework. In the United States, cotton was cheap and plentiful. Grown in large quantities, it was mechanically spun and woven into a variety of threads and fabrics. The immigrants quickly abandoned the arduous task of producing their own linen and began to work their hardanger on cotton with cotton thread.

As Norwegian-Americans mingled and intermarried with people of other cultures, their needlework took other forms and incorporated additional techniques. No longer used only on costumes, hardanger now appeared on household linens as well. Crocheted and needle-lace edgings were added, softening the edges of pieces. New stitches joined those in the traditional repertoire, including several needle-lace fillings for the cutaway portions of kloster blocks. But these innovations were minor compared to those that would occur near the turn of the next century.



Detail of a hardanger doily with a central X with lace-stitch filling. Made in Norway in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. Cotton, 4½ x 4½ inches (11 x 11 cm).

Hardanger's Widening Scope

In Norway, beginning in about 1880, improvements in communication brought outside fashion influences to the Hardanger region. Improvements in trade made inexpensive cotton fabric universally available, and cotton began to replace locally produced linen. Gradually, women began to wear the regional costume less frequently, but it was never entirely abandoned.

Then, in 1895, the outside world discovered hardanger. The ability to execute exquisite needlework was a requirement for every well-educated Victorian woman, and it resulted in a strong demand for new and unusual needlework. Thus, during the last few years of the nineteenth century, J. and P. Coats (Anchor) and Dollfus-Mieg & Cie. (DMC) thread companies sent representatives throughout Europe seeking new needlework techniques to entice their clientele.

After hardanger's initial introduction, the companies' drive to produce new and different patterns for their customers quickly corrupted traditional hardanger work. They had no qualms about using different fabrics and threads, especially ones that they happened to sell. In 1904, the importer T. Buettner and Company, which published *Designs for Hardanger Embroidery,* introduced the two-by-two weave hardanger cloth that is often used for hardanger work today. Designs using colored threads were used to make the traditional white-on-white designs more appealing as well as to sell colored thread.

The thread companies such as DMC, Priscilla (J. and P. Coats), and Belding all published books on hardanger, promoting the technique for use on the usual array of Victorian needle-embellished articles. Sara Hadley's *Complete Hardanger Book* (1904) and *Supplementary Lessons in Hardanger* (1906) offered hardanger embroidery for shirtwaists, dresses, doilies, bed linens, table linens, curtains, bags, and pincushions.

Combining hardanger with other types of needlework further increased the variety of patterns that might be offered. Edges were finished with decorative buttonhole stitches, needle lace, or crochet. Fancy needle-lace fillings borrowed from other lacemaking techniques were used to fill kloster blocks and as individual motifs. Embroidery stitches and motifs other than the traditional satin-stitched mo-

tifs were used extensively to soften hardanger's geometric patterns. General embroidery books that included hardanger, such as *Embroideries and Their Stitches* (Butterick Publishing, 1905), unintentionally blurred distinctions as they presented the combined needlework techniques.

Norwegians in Europe and Norwegian immigrants in the United States also used such pattern books. The new materials and stitches recommended in the books were thus incorporated into the heart of the hardanger tradition.

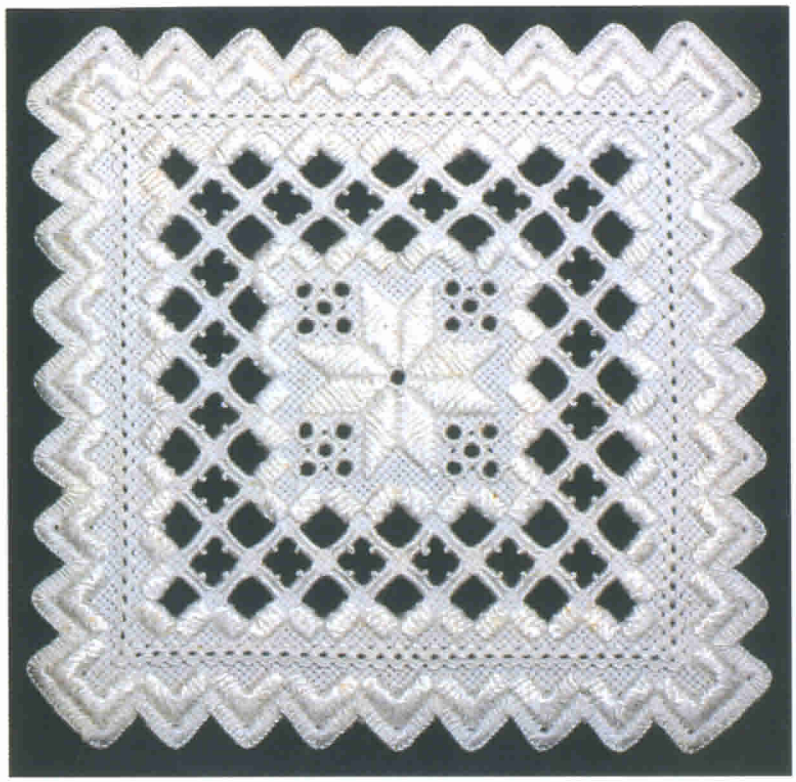
Perennial Hardanger

Many traditional needlework techniques were revived during Victorian times. They began to decline again during World War I, and the decline continued through and after World War II. Hardanger, however, was rediscovered in the late 1970s—and changed once again. Synthetic even-weave fabrics available for other needlework techniques were soon adopted for use with hardanger. The two-by-two-weave cloth became almost universally used for hardanger. Colored threads were used on colored grounds to emphasize subtle tonal variations produced by light reflecting from threads laid at right angles to each other. Metallic threads were introduced to add sparkle.

A profound change was the simplification of hardanger to a single geometric motif as needleworkers of the 1970s and 1980s sought techniques that could be learned easily and projects that could be completed quickly. The intricacy and restfulness of long rows of repeating motifs was lost. Amusing nongeometric shapes such as hearts and Christmas trees were invented and worked as stand-alone motifs.

Confusion with other needlework techniques increased through the 1980s until nearly any drawn-thread work with woven bars might be labeled hardanger. Recently, serious needleworkers have tried to narrow the definition of hardanger to refer only to its traditional repertoire of stitches. Work incorporating a substantial number of other stitches is classified as modern hardanger.

Despite the *Priscilla Hardanger Book's* insistence on its simplicity, achieving hardanger's "beautiful effects" can be exacting, and despite the changes that have come about during its several revivals, hardanger has remained throughout its history a striking and attractive style of needlework. ❖



Hardanger doily with a satin-stitched star in the center from a luncheon set comprising a tablecloth and forty-two doilies. Made in Norway in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. Cotton, 4½ x 4½ inches (11 x 11 cm).

About the Author. *Nancy Nehring is a freelance writer who lives in Sunnyvale, California. Her book about handmade heirloom buttons, many of which use lace-making techniques, will be published in 1996 by The Taunton Press.*

Further Reading

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Reader's Digest Complete Guide to Needlework. Pleasantville, New York: Reader's Digest Association, 1979.

Mail-Order Books and Supplies

Vanberia, PO Box 229, 217 W. Water St., Decorah, IA 52101. (800) 628-5877.

A Hardanger Motif to Stitch

DESIGN ADAPTED BY MARY ANN GEIGER

Inspired by a turn-of-the-century pincushion design, this hardanger insertion worked on cotton fabric is an ideal introduction to this style of embroidery.

The apron was made from Simplicity pattern 9807. Coffee grinder courtesy of Country Shed Antiques, Loveland, Colorado

WHEN THIS delicate hardanger design first appeared as a pincushion in a 1904 publication by Sara Hadley entitled *Supplementary Lessons in Hardanger,* the instructions accompanying it were extremely brief. The needleworker was informed that "It may be readily worked from the illustration and from the instructions given for similar designs in this number." Happily for us, Mary Ann Geiger enjoys piecing together the patterns, materials, and techniques that may have been used in old designs and has presented us with a complete set of instructions.

Worked on cotton hardanger fabric in #8 and #12 pearl cotton thread, the motif makes a good introduction to the techniques of hardanger embroidery. The stitches are straightforward, but some may be unfamiliar. If you haven't worked this style of embroidery before, Mary Ann recommends that you practice the stitches before beginning the motif.

When working hardanger, it is *essential* to count with great care the kloster stitches that form the basis of the design. An incorrectly placed stitch or mistakenly cut thread can mean starting the motif over again.

MATERIALS

- 22-count even-weave hardanger fabric, 1 piece ivory, 12 inches (30.5 cm) square
- DMC pearl cotton #5, 1 skein or 1 ball ecru
- DMC pearl cotton #12, 1 ball ecru
- Light-colored sewing thread
- Sharp, thin-bladed embroidery scissors that cut all the way to the points
- Tapestry needle, size 24
- 10-inch (25.4-cm) embroidery hoop (optional)
- Apron pattern for an apron with a flat bib
- Fabric and notions for the apron as specified by the pattern

The Stitches

Kloster stitch: Worked in heavier thread, kloster stitch is a block of five satin stitches worked over four threads of fabric. The klosters outline the areas of fabric to be cut. Finish the beginning and ending tails by darning them under several groups of kloster stitch on the wrong side of the work.

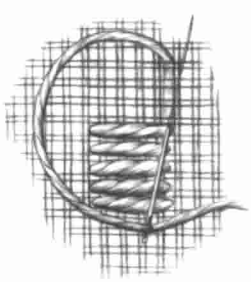
Eyelet: Using the finer thread, bring the needle and thread to the right side in the center of the four-thread mesh surrounded by kloster stitch. As you work each stitch, gently pull the thread tight away from the center of the block.

Pulled-thread lace: Using the finer thread, bring the needle up in the middle of one of the sides of the area to be filled. Gently pull each stitch tight away from the center of the area to draw the fabric threads together. Make sure that you align the stitches the same way in every block.

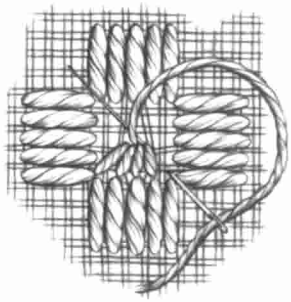
Woven bars: Bring the needle to the right side in between the four threads that form the foundation of the bar. The stitches form a series of figure-eight wraps around the two groups of two threads. Work eight complete stitches around each half of the bar. Carry the thread diagonally behind the work to the next bar.

Lace filling stitch: Using the finer thread, make a simple loop stitch in each side of the open block. Carry the thread behind the woven bars to the next opening to be filled.

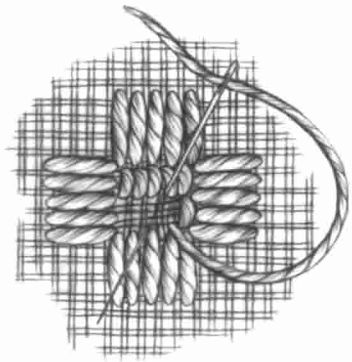
Woven picot bars: With the finer thread, make four figure-eight stitches as you would for a woven bar, make a picot on each side, then finish the bar with another four figure-eight stitches.



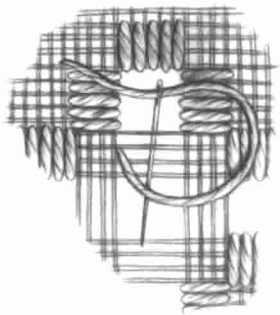
Kloster stitch

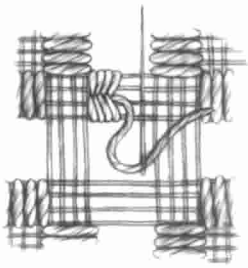


Eyelet

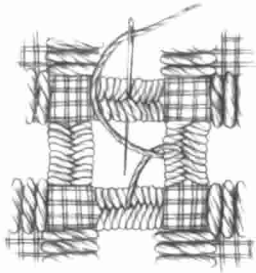


Pulled-thread lace

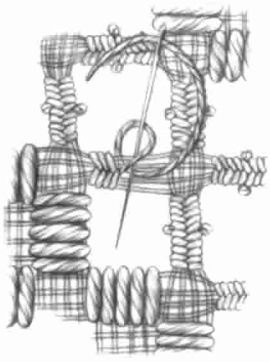




Woven bars



Lace filling stitch

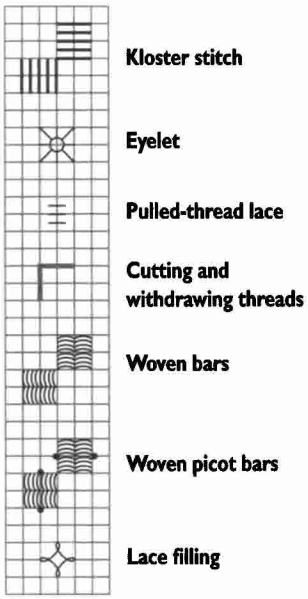


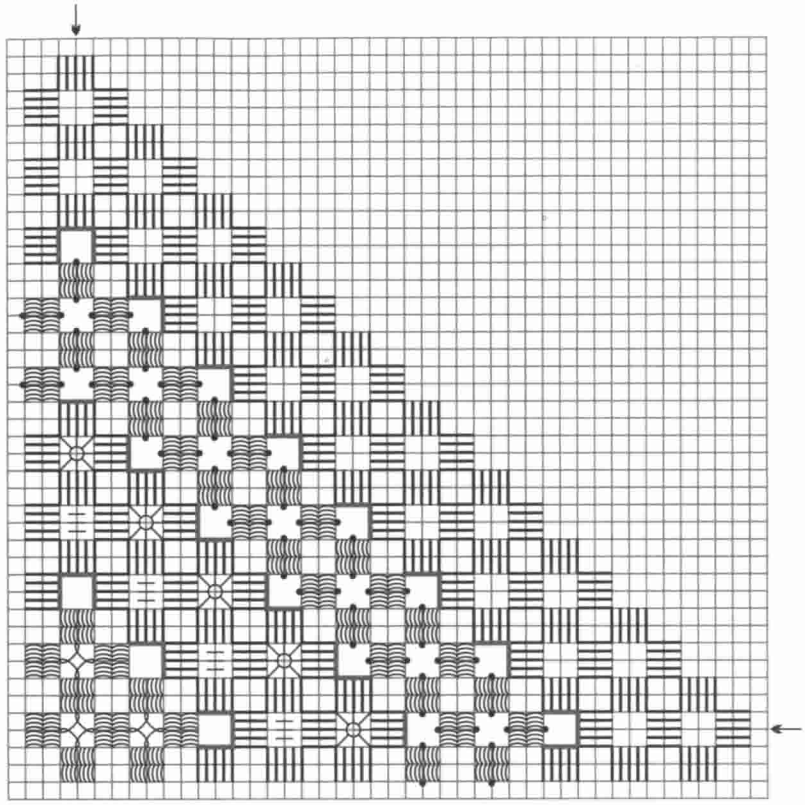
Woven picot bars

Stitching the Insertion

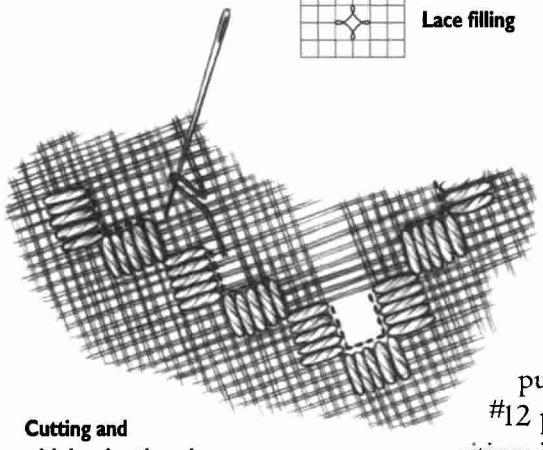
Overcast the raw edges of the hardanger fabric with light-colored sewing thread. Fold the fabric in half to form a rectangle and finger-press the fold. Fold it in half in the other direction and finger-press the fold. Mark the intersection of the two folds with a stitch of sewing thread.

Each square of the pattern chart represents a two-thread-by-two-thread block of fabric. The chart shows one-quarter of the motif. Rotate the chart to match whatever part of the design you're working on. The arrows indicate the corners of the design. Count out from the center of the fabric as indicated on the pattern chart and begin stitching the inner round of alternating blocks of kloster stitch with #5 pearl cotton. Count the threads and stitches on this first round very carefully. Stitch the next two rounds of kloster stitch. Count out from the inner rounds of kloster stitch and work the three outer rounds. *Do not* cut the fabric yet.





Pattern chart



Cutting and withdrawing threads

Work the eyelets and pulled-thread lace with #12 pearl cotton in the positions indicated on the pattern. If you've been using an embroidery hoop, remove it now and work the remainder of the pattern without it.

Now is the time to make certain that the blocks of kloster stitch are correctly placed before cutting the fabric. You will always cut across the ends of the kloster stitches, never parallel to them. Insert the tip of the scissors into the hole at the open end of the block. Carefully snip the four threads between the end of the block and the corner hole, as close as possible to the ends of the kloster stitches without cutting them. Continue around the inside of the central diamond until all the edges indicated on the pattern chart have been cut. Using the tip of your needle, pull up the ends of the cut threads and draw them out of the fabric (see figure above).

With #12 pearl cotton, work the woven bars and lace filling on the drawn-thread lattice of the central diamond. Cut and withdraw the threads in the outer portion of cutwork and work woven picot bars on the lattice with #12 pearl cotton.

Making the Apron

Trim the fabric around the finished embroidery to 1/2 inch (1.3 cm). With right sides together, machine-stitch pieces of apron fabric to each side of the embroidery to make it the correct size and shape for the bib of your apron pattern. Press the seams away from the embroidery. You may wish to add a lining to the apron bib if the pattern doesn't include one. If the bib is not to be lined, finish the seams with seam binding. ❖

About the Author. *Mary Ann Geiger researches, designs, teaches, and writes about different forms of needlework from her home in Valencia, Pennsylvania. As Executive Director of the Center for History of American Needlework (CHAN), Mary Ann has ample opportunity to indulge her interest in needlework sleuthing.*

"Trimmings" offers a collection of patterns, charts, and instructions that have been gleaned from old magazines and books that are no longer generally available. Most of the patterns and instructions for these small needlework articles are worded exactly as they appeared in the original publication. Use them as they are or adapt them to other techniques—but do have fun with them!

Some ingenuity may be required to find substitutes for materials that are no longer available or to interpret unfamiliar notations. When we know of errors or have other information that will help, we'll offer it separately. Much of the time, however, your success will depend on you.

Offering the patterns in this way lets us draw upon a wealth of delightful, intricate, and sometimes quirky needlework found in out-of-print publications.

Squares for a Bedspread

These instructions are from an 1874 issue of *Nordisk Mønster-Tidende.*

Materials: Thin wool or cotton yarn (No. 10); 2 mm crochet hook.

A completed square measures 15 by 15 cm (6 by 6 in).

The fan-shaped pc are worked as follows: 8 dc in the same st, turn the crochetwork and join the last dc with the first by a sl st (through both sides of the st). Turn the crochetwork again and work further on the front side or face.

Ch 4, form a ring with 1 sl st in the first st. Work in the backs of the sts.

Rnd 1: Work 2 sc in each st = 8 sts.

Rnd 2: *1 pc fan, 2 sc in the following st*, rep from * to * 3 times (4 fans) = 12 sts.

Rnd 3: Work 2 sc in each st including the sl sts that join the fans tog = 24 sts.

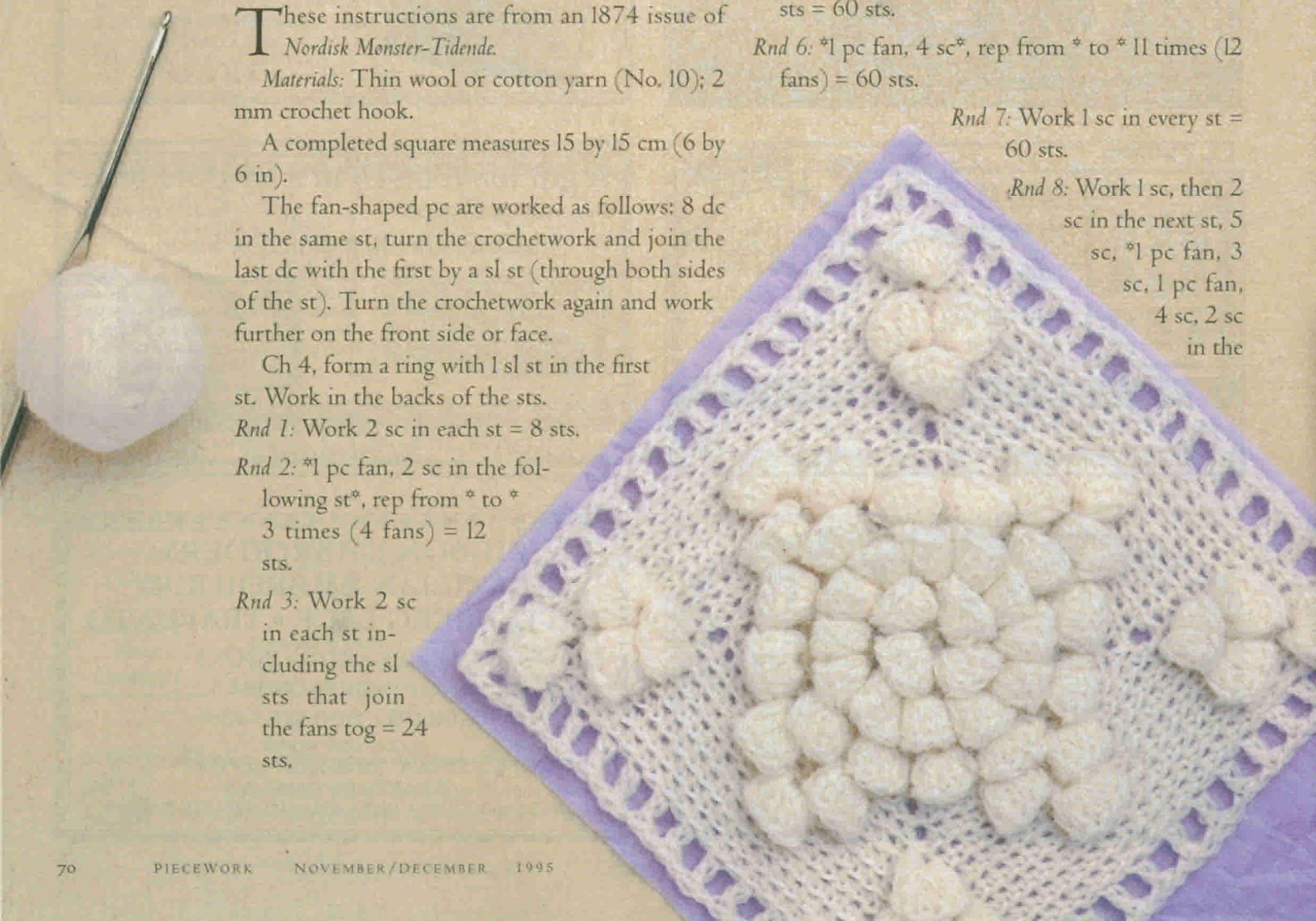
Rnd 4: Rep rnd 2 from * to * (12 fans) = 36 sts.

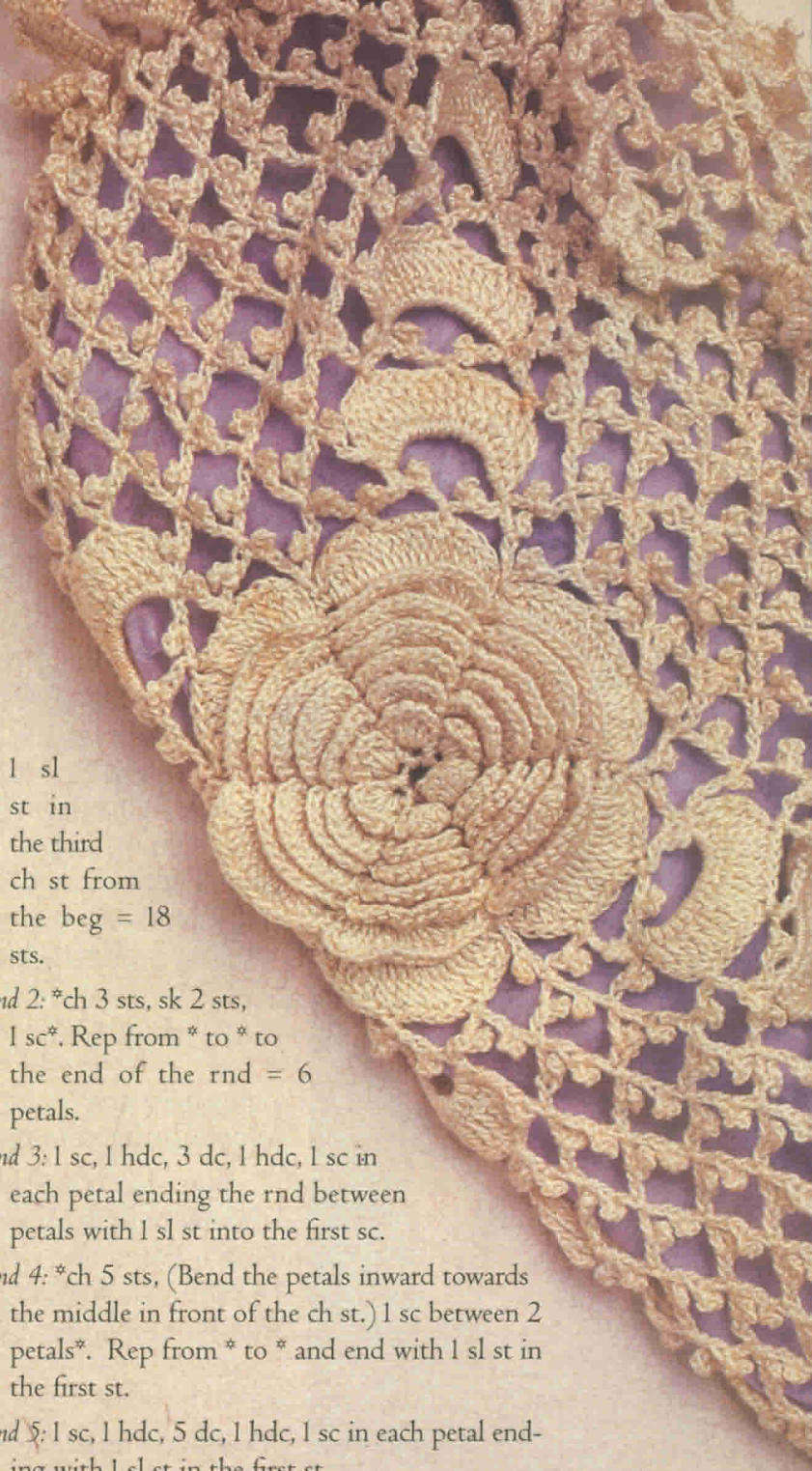
Rnd 5: Work 2 sc in each st but only 1 sc in the sl sts = 60 sts.

Rnd 6: *1 pc fan, 4 sc*, rep from * to * 11 times (12 fans) = 60 sts.

Rnd 7: Work 1 sc in every st = 60 sts.

Rnd 8: Work 1 sc, then 2 sc in the next st, 5 sc, *1 pc fan, 3 sc, 1 pc fan, 4 sc, 2 sc in the





next st, 5 sc*. Rep from * to * 3 times, the third time, work 3 sc after the final fan = 64 sts. On this rnd, 2 sc have been worked in the same st 4 times. The second of these 2 sc forms a corner st. The rnd ends directly before the first corner st.

Rnd 9: *3 sc in the corner st, 15 sc*. Rep from * to * 3 times = 72 sts.

Rnd 10: Work 1 sc, *in the corner st (middle sc of the 3 sc of the previous rnd) work the following: 1 sc + 1 pc fan + 1 sc. Then work 8 sc, 1 fan, 8 sc*. Rep from * to * 3 times = 80 sts.

Rnd 11: Work 1 sc, *in the corner st (sl st at the back of the fan) work 3 sc. Then 19 sc*, and rep from * to * 3 times = 88 sts.

Rnd 12: *In the 3 sts that form the corner, work 1 fan in the first, 3 sc in the second, 1 fan in the third, follow with 19 sc*. Rep from * to * 3 times = 96 sts.

Rnd 13: Work 2 sc, *3 sc in the corner st, 23 sc*, rep from * to * 3 times = 104 sts.

Rnd 14: Work 1 sc, * 1 sc + 1 fan + 1 sc in the corner st, 25 sc*. Rep from * to * 3 times = 112 sts.

Rnd 15: Work 1 sc, *3 sc in the corner st (sl st behind the fan), 27 sc*. Rep from * to * 3 times = 120 sts.

Rnd 16: 1 sc, 1 sl st + ch 5 sts + 1 dc + ch 2 sts + 1 dc, then *ch 1 st, sk 1 st, 1 dc*, rep from * to * 13 times, ch 1 st. (Sk 1 st, work the following in the next corner st: 1 dc + ch 2 sts + 1 dc + ch 2 sts + 1 dc. Afterwards *ch 1 st, sk 1 st, 1 dc*, rep from * to * 13 times, ch 1 st) twice. End with 1 sl st in the middle st of the 5 ch sts.

When the required number of squares have been completed, sew them together from the reverse side with an overcast stitch.

6-petal Flower, no thread inlay

Ch 8, form a ring with 1 sl st in the first st.

Rnd 1: ch 3 sts (= 1 dc), 17 dc on the ring, end with 1 sl st in the third ch st from the beg = 18 sts.

Rnd 2: *ch 3 sts, sk 2 sts, 1 sc*. Rep from * to * to the end of the rnd = 6 petals.

Rnd 3: 1 sc, 1 hdc, 3 dc, 1 hdc, 1 sc in each petal ending the rnd between petals with 1 sl st into the first sc.

Rnd 4: *ch 5 sts, (Bend the petals inward towards the middle in front of the ch st.) 1 sc between 2 petals*. Rep from * to * and end with 1 sl st in the first st.

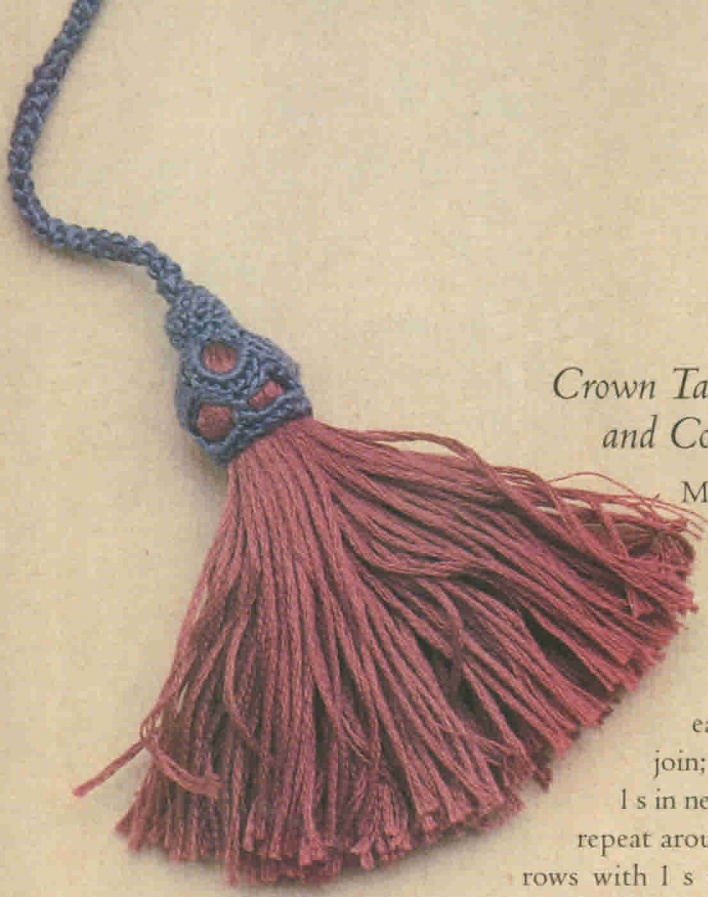
Rnd 5: 1 sc, 1 hdc, 5 dc, 1 hdc, 1 sc in each petal ending with 1 sl st in the first st.

Rnd 6: *ch 7 sts, 1 sc between 2 petals*. Rep from * to * ending with 1 sl st in the first st.

Rnd 7: 1 sc, 1 hdc, 7 dc, 1 hdc, 1 sc in each petal ending with 1 sl st in the first st.

To continue, work 2 more ch sts in the even-numbered rnds and 2 more dc in the odd-numbered rnds.

From *Crochet: history and technique* by Lis Paludan. Published in 1995 by Interweave Press, Loveland, Colorado.



Crown Tassel and Cord

Made of Clark's O. N. T. Pearl Cotton No. 3.

Chain 3, join; 2 s in each of 3 ch. join; 2 s in next st, 1 s in next. 2 s in next, repeat around row. Two rows with 1 s in each st. 5 loops of 6 ch each on last row. 10 s in each loop. Skip 2 s on scallop, work 6 s in next 6 s, skip 2 s on next scallop, 6 s in 6 s. Repeat around row; join. Sl st to middle of scallop. Ch 4, 1 s in middle of next scallop. Ch 4, 1 s in next scallop. Repeat 5 s in each loop; join.

Rattlesnake Cord: Use Clark's O. N. T. Mercerized Crochet, No. 10, and a Clark's O. N. T. Crochet Hook No. 7. Ch 3, draw a loop through 1 thread of 1st and 2nd ch at same time, thread over and draw through 2 loops on needle. * Turn work, draw a loop through 2 sts along left-hand edge, draw through 2 loops on needle. Repeat from * for length.

From Clark's O. N. T. Designs for Tassels, Cords, and Fringes, Book No. 21. Published in 1924 by Clark Thread Company, Newark, New Jersey.

Note: The tatted samples on this page were worked with a smooth, 100 percent cotton sewing thread.

Doll-sized Tatted Edgings

Handkerchief Edging

3d, 1p, 3d, 1p, 3d, 1p, 3d, draw up or close. Tie at base of ring. * Leave 1/4 inch thread between rings. 3d, join, 3d, 1p, 3d, 1p, 3d, draw up. Repeat from *.

Pale Pink Edging

4d, 7p, with 2d between each, 4d, close. Tie knot at base of ring. Leave space of thread. 2nd Ring: 3d, join, 2d, p 2d, p, 3d, close. Tie knot. Make third ring like first.

From *Tatting Craft, My Book No. 3* by Anna Valerie. Published in the early 1900s by E. C. Spuehler.

Handkerchief Edging No. 556 [not shown]

R. 10 d. s., p., 5 d. s., p., 5 d. s., close; ch. 10 d. s., p., 2 d. s., p., 10 d. s., fasten to end p. of r. Rep. r. and ch. desired length.

From *Tatting Designs with Instructions, Book No. Five* by Adeline Cordet. Published in 1916 by Valley Supply Co.

You're invited to contribute a vintage pattern (1930s) or earlier) for a small article of handwork that you've found and perhaps made. Send us the original magazine with the pattern if you can and otherwise a clear photocopy to: "Trimmings," PieceWork, 201 East Fourth Street, Loveland, CO 80537.

My Name Is Rosie May

GIVEN to my grandmother, Fanny Jones, in 1867, Rosie May has the delicate beauty of many other nineteenth-century dolls. Her head is made of the unglazed porcelain called parian because it was crafted to imitate the fine Parian marble of Greece. Rosie May's molded hair is fashioned in waves gathered into a loose bun on the nape of her neck. Her cheeks and lips are light pink, and her blue eyes look out from beneath arched eyebrows.

Women often bought the head only and made the body at home, and I believe that this is how my great-grandmother, Martha Jones, made Rosie May for her five-year-old daughter, Fanny. After purchasing the doll's head in the nearby pioneer town of Poinette, Wisconsin, Martha would have made its body using a newspaper pattern measuring about 15 inches from shoulder to feet. She cut out body, arms, and legs from sturdy muslin, sewing the seams on her treadle sewing machine.

After stuffing the body and limbs with cotton rags, she used heavy cotton thread to hand-sew a line of stitches at knee, hip, elbow, and shoulder to give the doll flexibility.

Rosie May has real-looking hands of red kid-leather, not mittens as some dolls had. Probably cut from old gloves, the tiny hands have separate, unstuffed fingers that emerge from lightly stuffed palms and wrists. Rosie May has brown suede boots with red kid soles; each boot is decorated with ties of pink embroidery thread.

Seventeen-year-old Josie was to dress the doll. She made undergarments: pantaloons trimmed with lace, a half slip trimmed with eyelet edging, and a camisole top of plain white cotton. Rosie May was provided with an everyday outfit that consisted of a tan cotton patterned blouse with small deep pink flowers and a plain pink cotton skirt. For Rosie May's best dress, Josie chose a buff calico with tiny designs of black and red. She machine-stitched horizontal pleats across the bodice and around the bottom of the skirt, then trimmed the neck and wrist bands with narrow tatted lace.

Rosie May's wardrobe includes a hat made of buckram cut into a diamond, covered with wine-colored silk, and trimmed with ecru lace, a tiny pink rose, and small silk bow; the hat is tied with lace ties.

The best dress had a special feature—a small, deep pocket in the front seam. In it they placed a tiny handkerchief with tatted trim and a handwritten poem to introduce Rosie May to Fanny on Christmas morning.

Years later, when Fanny Jones Hoyt gave Rosie May to her daughter, my mother, she wrote the following note describing how Rosie May came into her life:

> The Christmas after I was five years old, 1867, my mother gave me a doll which my sister Josephine had dressed. She had on her best dress which was of buff calico. In the pocket was a tiny handkerchief and a note which read—
>
> My name is Rosie May
> I come on Christmas Day
> To live with Fanny J. ❖

ABOUT THE AUTHOR. *Helen D. Holmes is a doll collector and writer who lives in Lincoln, Nebraska. A retired educator, she taught elementary school and worked for the Department of Education in Arkansas.*

Rosie May in her best outfit, courtesy of Helen D. Holmes.
Photograph by Mike Farrell.

To create a tatted handkerchief or dress edging similar to Rosie May's for your own special doll, see the patterns offered on the opposite page.

PRODUCT NEWS

Sharon Altergott & Jan Hogestad

Rainbow Socks are a project of an organization of refugee women from Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina (in the former Yugoslavia). Their colorful hand-knitted wool and wool-blend socks are available in four adult (S, M, L, XL) and two children's (S, L) sizes. Adult socks are $17 a pair, children's $10, plus $4 a pair for shipping and handling. For orders or quantity price information, contact Rainbow Socks, 169 Union St., Natick, MA 01760, (508) 655-2469; fax (508) 655-2585. Visa and MasterCard are accepted.

Acid-free tissue and boxes for your heirloom articles are available from **Mini-Magic.** Included in the acid-free starter kit is a box measuring 15 by 11 by 3 inches, twenty sheets of acid-free tissue, sodium perborate oxygen bleach, a pound of soap, and instructions for $27 postpaid. For a catalog of fabrics, ribbons, trims, and conservation supplies, send $3 (for conservation information only, send a SASE) to Mini-Magic, 3910 Patricia Dr., Columbus, OH 43220. (614) 457-3805.

That Patchwork Place announces the publication of two new books. *Watercolor Impressions,* by Pat Maixner Magaret and Donna Ingram Slusser, brings together quilts from all over the world constructed from 2-inch squares of multicolored fabrics. The retail price is $26.95. *WOW! Wool-on-Wool Folk Art Quilts,* by Janet Carija Brandt, presents charming quilts and penny rugs, all in wool. The retail price is $19.95. Look for That Patchwork Place's quilting books at quilt shops or bookstores or contact the company at PO Box 118, Bothell, WA 98041-0118. (800) 426-3126; fax (206) 486-7596.

Classic Elite Yarns' first hardcover book, *Knitting the New Classics,* contains more than sixty patterns for women's, men's, and children's handknitted sweaters. It is available from yarn stores or send $27.95 postpaid (Visa/MasterCard or check) to Classic Elite, 12 Perkins St., Lowell, MA 01854. (508) 453-2837.

MARKETPLACE

All Manner of Good Things

NOTICES

TO PLACE A CLASSIFIED AD, send your ad copy along with payment ten weeks before month of publication. Payment of $1.50 per word ($30 minimum) must accompany ad. VISA, MasterCard, Discover, and American Express accepted with account number and expiration date. Send to **Interweave Press, PieceWork Classified Ads,** 201 East Fourth St., Loveland, CO 80537, or fax (970) 667-8317.

KNITTERS' WEEKEND in the beautiful Napa Valley Wine Country. Feb. 23, 24, 25, 1996. Speakers, yarns, workshops. Space limited. For information please write **Nancy England, Knits By...,** Dept-P, PO Box 1686, Vacaville, CA 95696.

BOOKS AND VIDEOS

BOOKS & ART SUPPLIES for fiber artists. **Wellspring Gallery,** 3333 S. Robertson Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90034. (310) 4411-4204. Send your name and address by November 30, 1995, for a free catalog in 1996.

NATURAL WILLOW BASKETRY VIDEO. Learn to make beautiful, functional melon-shaped baskets. $18.95 includes postage and handling. Canadian customers, add 7% G.S.T. Send check or money order to **Magpie Video Productions,** Site 3, Box 9, RR #1, Millarville, AB, Canada TOL 1KO.

NEEDLEWORK BOOKS, pre-owned, interesting variety, many out of print. List $1. **Forest Park Antiques,** 7504 Madison, Forest Park, IL 60130.

PRE-OWNED NEEDLEWORK AND quilting books and magazines. Next three catalogs: Quilting $3; Needlework $3; (refundable with order). **Peddler's Wagon,** Box 109PW, Lamar, MO 64759-0109. (417) 682-3734.

SHIRL THE PURL'S *Knitters' News: The Canadian Hand Knitting Newsletter.*. Tips, techniques, news, views, profiles, projects. $25 for five great issues. Checks payable to **Mossom Publishing,** Box 65004, 358 Danforth, Toronto, ON, Canada M4K 3Z2.

USED NEEDLEWORK AND fiber arts books for sale. Next three catalogs $3. **Studio Books,** Box 7804P, Huntington Beach, CA 92615-7804. (714) 965-3267.

CLOTHING

ANTIQUE SILK KIMONOS, reasonably priced. Wall hangings, wearables; dressy, casual. Photos $6 (refundable). **Dragonsilk,** Dept. P, 307 E. Spring, Fayetteville, AR 72701. (501) 521-6457.

WONDERFUL, REWOVEN, country-style Japanese obi, two for $55 including shipping. **Kimono and Crafts,** 45 Vienna Ct., Richland, WA 99352. (509) 375-0133.

EQUIPMENT

PORTABLE TAPESTRY LOOMS. Expand your horizons with these professional-quality looms at affordable prices. Catalog $2. Tapestry yarn samples $5. **Norsk Fjord Fiber,** PO Box 271-P, Lexington, GA 30648.

FABRICS AND QUILTS

MONTHLY ANTIQUE FABRIC CLUB: the real thing, not reproductions. $25 to $200 per month. Call Nancy at **The Kirk Collection,** (800) 398-2542, for details. Send SASE for *free* catalog to 1513 Military Ave., Omaha, NE 68111-3924.

NATURAL INDIGO FABRICS, 1850s patterns, 100% cotton, 35" wide. Sample pack: ten patterns, 1/8 yd each, $18 plus $3 shipping. VISA, MasterCard, American Express, Discover. **1860 Drygoods** at The Kirk Collection, (800) 398-2542.

INSTRUCTION

NEEDLEWORKS, March 14–17, Whidbey Island, Kate Barber knitting workshop. *Meg Swansen's Knitting Camp West,* March 22–25. **Coupeville Arts Center,** Box 171PW, Coupeville, WA 98239. (360) 678-3396.

MISCELLANEOUS

FUND-RAISERS, PROMOTIONS, special events. Cloisonné pins. Create your own design. Quick, high-percentage returns. **Elizabeth Armour,** 1237 Nautical Way, Dept. 155, Oxnard, CA 93030.

NATURE'S DYES FORUM audiotapes are now available from **Sounds True Recordings.** Call (800) 333-9185 and request form NDE.

PATTERNS

CONTEMPORARY BEADWORK: Fifty Counted and Charted Patterns for Peyote Stitch by Diane Fitzgerald. $22.95 including postage. **Beautiful Beads,** 115 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55401.

1774, 1854, 1864, 1904, 1944. Historically accurate American doll quilts and dress patterns. Researched and reproduced by experienced costume and textile historian for eighteen inch dolls. Designed to turn history into child's play. Each pattern includes patterns, complete instructions, period notes, and reproduction techniques. Variety of designs suitable for all skill levels. For *free* catalog, call or write **Past Crafts,** PO Box 16512-P, Alexandria, VA 22302. (800) 507-9356.

VINTAGE EMBROIDERY PATTERNS, 1900 to 1940s. Victorian to whimsical, original color schemes, complete instructions. Twenty-pattern sampler $5. Catalog $2. **Aunt Effie's Heirlooms,** 2108 NCR 23, Berthoud, CO 80513.

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ADVERTISERS' INDEX

A Stitch

Harriet Clark

Where Does She Get Her Clothes?

When we were little, we were always happy to see our Aunt Hattie drive up to the house because we expected something new to wear for each of us. She didn't bring new clothes but would fix the hand-me-downs that people were always giving Mama saying, "Something to make over for your four girls."

When I was thirteen, Aunt Hattie invited me to live with her and Uncle Ed so I could go to high school in Winsted, Connecticut. Thus began four years of joy in interesting schoolwork, good teachers, and new friends—but utter misery in clothes and disillusionment with Aunt Hattie as a clothes designer.

During the first winter, someone gave me a jacket of bright red broadcloth with magnificent pearl buttons but fitted for an adult with pinched-in waist and flaring bust. Fortunately, it was considered such good quality that I was to wear it only for church. I shrank into the pew, trying to hide the bright red knitted gloves Aunt Hattie had bought to match the jacket. The other girls had kid gloves and long coats hanging loosely from their shoulders.

One autumn day, I walked into my homeroom and hurried past the boys and girls to slump into my seat and try to hide the screaming black and white squares under the desk.

A hated schoolteacher who had lived with our family toward the end of the previous school year had left all her old clothes with us and the familiar "something to make over for the girls." Her skirts were long, sweeping the floor, and one had large black-and-white checks and was of a material that would wear like iron. Horrified, I watched Aunt Hattie fondle it and say, "I'm sure I can make a jumper for you."

One autumn day, I walked into my homeroom and hurried past the boys and girls to slump into my seat and try to hide the screaming black and white squares under the desk. I heard gasps from Virginia and Caroline, my best friends, whom I could impress in algebra class but whose clothes were always crisp and tailored. Then I heard Hallett, a boy I greatly admired, ask Virginia, "Where does Harriet get her clothes?" Virginia tried to hush him.

I hoped to live only long enough to get home and report to Aunt Hattie—never mind if I hurt her feelings. To my surprise, she took Hallett's question as a compliment.

In my fourth year, Aunt Hattie began to realize that I looked different from the other girls. One day, she asked me to meet her at the best dry-goods store to choose some new material for a suit. I was happy to think about a skirt and probably a white shirtwaist to wear under a perfectly fitted jacket. After school, I dashed into the store to "choose" new material. Aunt Hattie was there talking loudly to the salesgirl about what we could afford. I knew that the "choice" was already made. Aunt Hattie twitched my arm when my eyes strayed to a bolt of soft blue cloth and said, "Harriet, you have no appreciation—" and began a familiar tirade. The salesgirl quickly unrolled, measured, and cut the brown herringbone tweed.

Aunt Hattie made the skirt immediately. I tried it on and was happy with thoughts of a real suit with a pretty blouse. The next day, I hurried home to try on the jacket and found that Aunt Hattie had stitched the lovely skirt firmly to a top of the same tweed. Afraid she might send me home in disgrace, I professed myself glad to have a dress and jacket outfit I would wear until it wore out. If ever. ✦

About the Author. *Harriet Clark, who was featured in "Harriet Clark in Her 100th Year" (May/June 1994), is a rug hooker who lives in East Cornwall, Connecticut.*

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