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Derived from the French word *embellir* (to beautify), our word “embellish” dates to the mid-fourteenth century. Of course, people have been embellishing their clothing, their homes, and their bodies since time immemorial. In this issue of *PieceWork*, we explore all manner of embellishments, from buttons and knitted and embroidered socks to coronation cord and embroidered aprons. Helen Bonney’s article, “Embellishment at All Costs,” sets the stage:

Shipwreck, piracy, and smuggling are all aspects of Cornish folklore and indeed of Cornish recorded history. Walk into any bookshop near the coast and there will be a whole stack of such titles for sale, both factual and fictional. In the eighteenth century, smugglers traded in forbidden luxuries such as brandy, silk fabrics, and quantities of lace with which to embellish the fashions of the rich and famous. Contraband these articles may have been, but they certainly were highly desirable.



Among the smugglers was the English sculptor and Royal Academy of Arts member Joseph Nollekens (1737–1823), who worked in Rome for a time where he created “life-size portrait busts of wealthy travelers visiting the Holy City on their Grand Tour. Each bust was skillfully modeled in plaster, then shipped home to London, where a ‘statuary’ or stonemason would carve a replica in marble to be collected by the grand tourist on his return.” Nollekens filled those plaster busts with silk stockings, gloves, and lace.

Then there are buttons, a form of embellishment that has been used for centuries. Erica Patberg, in her article on the unfortunately named but exquisite silk thread Death Head buttons, explains that by 1250 in France, members of a powerful button guild were making miniature works of art from precious metals and gemstones. When, in the seventeenth century, French tailors began creating buttons with silk thread, button guild “members called for legislation to make buttons made with

needle and thread illegal. The legislation proved unenforceable, and war, literally, ensued. The tailors won the first battle in *la guerre des boutons* (the War of the Buttons), but the powerful button guild struck back with searches of wardrobes, fines, and arrests. This unrest in the French button monopoly opened the door for the enterprising English to enter the lucrative button trade.”

When I was five or six, I had a collection of buttons that numbered in the hundreds. I spent countless hours sorting and arranging them. I vividly remember that time.

I hope you will discover several embellishments in this issue that strike your fancy!



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Weaving a Memory

“Reweaving Damaged Fabric: Patience Is a Virtue” by Monette Satterfield (March/April 2012) brought back memories of 1944. I had said goodbye to my husband and seen him off to the South Pacific. I had vowed to stay in San Francisco until he came back from his tour of duty. I had to find a place to stay and wait; I also decided to apply for a job as a reweaver.



The man who interviewed me for the job gave me a piece of material with a hole about the size of a quarter in it and asked me how I would repair it. I checked it closely and

asked for a drinking glass, a rubber band, and a needle and thread. I placed the material over the glass, fastening it with a rubber band, and I stole thread from the material edge and replaced each missing thread by weaving it back in. He gave me the job.

My husband flew his fifty-one missions as a B-24 pilot and came home. The war ended and we moved back to Indiana, but I did reweaving until wool clothing went out of style. Thanks for this article. It brought back a lot of memories.

Jean Scheffler
Via email

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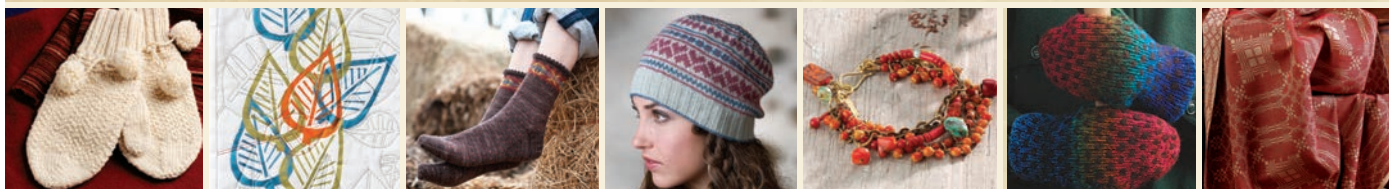
Correction

The chart for the Snowflake/Rose Ski Headband to Knit (March/April 2013) is missing a square in Row 11 (the right lower portion of the snowflake). A corrected chart may be found at pieceworkmagazine.com/corrections.

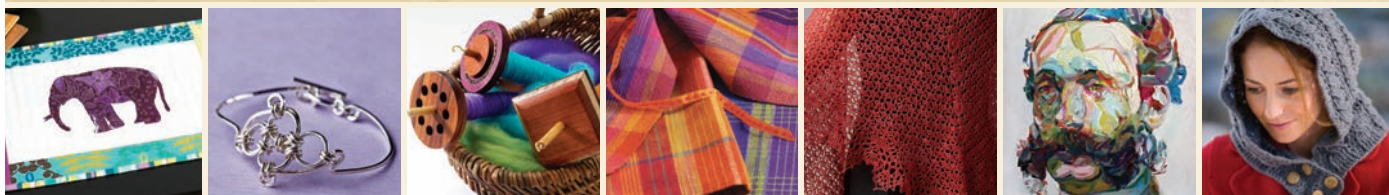
Interior page from one of the Fabricon Company of Chicago’s manuals on reweaving with fabric samples that were supplied with the manuals. Collection of Monette Satterfield.

Photograph by Joe Coca.

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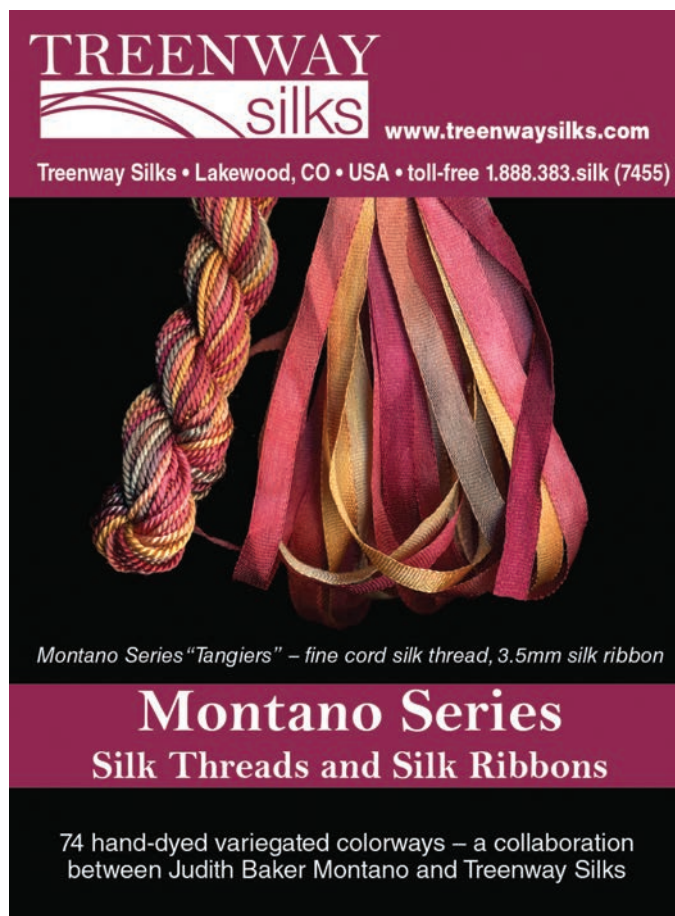
Textiles: The Art of Mankind

Mary Schoeser

New York: Thames & Hudson, 2012. Hardcover, 568 pages, \$95. ISBN 978-0-500-51645-4.

Mary Schoeser's *Textiles: The Art of Mankind* is eye candy for the fiber artist. Overflowing with glorious photographs of sumptuous textiles from around the world and through the ages, this book leaves no doubt why textiles have such cultural significance and value, why, as Schoeser says, "Alliances were sealed, allegiances sworn, and passages to heaven bargained for with textiles." In her whirlwind tour of the historical and cultural impact of textiles, fibers, and structures from lacemaking and weaving to needle arts, surface design, and other techniques, Schoeser doesn't hesitate to address big subjects, tackling head on the question of whether textiles have "artistic clout," examining the use of color from Pre-Columbian Peru to the Bauhaus and beyond, and tracing the relationship between textile imagery and cultural ideology. Although many ideas are painted with a broad brush, annotations in the text point readers to illustrative textile examples. In the chapter on "ingredients," her discussion of structure ranges from basketry and braiding to knitting, crochet, needle lace, and loom-woven cloth. Throughout, Schoeser acknowledges the work of collectors, artists, and recent thought leaders such as Anni Albers (1889–1994), Peter Collingwood (1922–2008), and Jack Lenor Larsen (1927–). A comprehensive list of further reading and an extensive list of resources—designers, artists, manufacturers, collectors, collections, dealers, galleries, and groups—help to make this a useful reference. *Textiles: The Art of Mankind* is a book of substance (both physical and intellectual), but it is its superb images that make it a treasure and a delight. It is a true celebration of textiles.

—Anita Osterhaug





Coat. Maker unknown. Silk, brass buttons. 1790. South Carolina. Worn by Charles Cotesworth Pinckney (1746-1825) while he served as Minister or Ambassador to France under George Washington from September 1796 to January 1797. Gift of Mrs. Charles Cotesworth Pinckney in 1953. The Charleston Museum, Charleston, South Carolina. *Photograph courtesy of The Charleston Museum.*

EXHIBITIONS

San Marino, California. Through September 2. Useful Hours: Needlework and Painted Textiles from Southern California Collections, at The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Garden. (626) 405-2100; www.huntington.org.

Fort Collins, Colorado. August 30–May 16, 2014. The Intricate Web: Lacemaking, Trade and Tradition, at the Avenir Museum of Design and Merchandising. (970) 491-6648; www.dm.cahs.colostate.edu.

District of Columbia. Through October 13. Out of Southeast Asia: Art That Sustains, at The Textile Museum. (202) 667-0441; www.textilemuseum.org.

Decorah, Iowa. Through July 27 and through November 10. National Exhibition of Folk Art in the Norwegian Tradition and The Sami Reindeer People of Alaska, respectively, at Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum. (563) 382-9681; www.vesterheim.org.

Falmouth, Massachusetts. July 10–September 1. Signatures: 15 Artists Making Their Marks in Mosaic, at Historic Highfield Hall. (508) 495-1878; www.highfieldhall.org.

Kansas City, Missouri. Through August 18. Revealing, Reversible and Resplendent: 15th–17th-Century Italian and Spanish Textiles, at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art. (816) 751-1278; www.nelson-atkins.org.

Santa Fe, New Mexico. Through September 2. Plain Geometry: Amish Quilts, at the Museum of International Folk Art. (505) 476-1200; www.internationalfolkart.org.

New York, New York. Through August 18. Search for the Unicorn: An Exhibition in Honor of The Cloisters 75th Anniversary, at The Cloisters Museum and Gardens. (212) 923-3700; www.metmuseum.org.

Raleigh, North Carolina. Ongoing. The National Academy of Needlearts Permanent Collection, at the Gregg Museum of Art & Design at North Carolina State University. (919) 515-3503; www.ncsu.edu/gregg; www.needleart.org.

Charleston, South Carolina. Through August 11 and through September 2. Uniformly Dressed and Indigo: Natural Blue Dye in the Lowcountry, respectively, at The Charleston Museum. (843) 722-2996; www.charlestonmuseum.org.

Tacoma, Washington. Through August 3. Small Tapestry International 3: Outside the Line, at the Handforth Gallery, Tacoma Public Library. www.americantapestryalliance.org.

Macclesfield, England. Through August 8. Button Project, at the Heritage Centre. www.silkmacclesfield.org.uk/heritage-centre.html; www.textilesociety.org.uk.

London, England. July 27–September 29. The Queen's Coronation 1953, from the Royal Collection, Buckingham Palace. www.royalcollection.org.uk.

Quilt. Maker unknown. Double Irish Chain pattern. Cotton. Ohio. Circa 1935. 81½ × 71 inches (207.0 × 180.3 cm). Gift of Stuart and Cindy Hodosh. Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

SYMPOSIUMS, WORKSHOPS, CONSUMER SHOWS, TRAVEL

Berkeley, California. July 31–August 3. Clones Lace and Irish Crochet with Máire Treanor, at Laci's Museum of Lace and Textiles. (510) 843-7290; www.lacimuseum.org.

Manchester, New Hampshire. August 15–18. World Quilt Show—New England XI, at the Radisson Center of New Hampshire. (215) 862-5828; www.quiltfest.com.

Barton, Vermont. September 26–29 and October 10–13. Peak Week Dyeing to Knit Retreats with Donna Druchunas and Cheryl Potter, in their respective studios located in the Northeast Kingdom. www.cherryarn.com; www.sheepstoshawl.com.

Birmingham, England. August 8–11. The Festival of Quilts 2013, at the National Exhibition Centre (NEC). 44 20 7688 6830; www.twistedthread.com.

Liverpool, England. November 1–3. Textiles: Embroidering the Truth, the Textile Society National Conference, at the Rex Makin Lecture Theatre. www.textilesociety.org.uk.

Shetland, Scotland. July 31–August 5. International Textile Festival, including Lighten, an exhibition of contemporary Nordic textile art, and In the Loop 3.5, a knitting conference, in Mareel, Bonhoga Gallery, Shetland Museum & Archives, and other places in Shetland. www.shetlandarts.org/whats-on/festivals/international-textile-festival.



Ives Family Coat of Arms. Made by Rebecca Ives Gilman (1746–1823). Silk and metallic thread stitched on satin-weave black silk; surface satin, running, chain, long-and-short stitches, French knots. 1763. 21 × 20 inches (53.3 × 50.8 cm). Gift of Thomas H. Oxford and Victor Gail. Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens, San Marino, California. *Photograph courtesy of the Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens.*



The Unicorn in Captivity. Maker unknown. Woven. Wool warp, wool, silk, silver, and gilt wefts. South Netherlandish. Circa 1495–1505. 145 × 99 inches (368.3 × 251.5 cm). Gift of John D. Rockefeller Jr., 1937 (37.80.6). The Cloisters Museum and Gardens. New York, New York. *Photograph courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art.*



Neckpiece. Maker unknown. Short strands of beads couched to fabric. Glass beads, wool fabric. Worn by South Sami women in Nord-Trøndelag County, Norway. Probably late nineteenth or early twentieth century. 4½ inches (11.4 cm) at center front. Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum, Decorah, Iowa. *Photograph courtesy of Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum.*



Orphrey fragment. Maker unknown. Appliqués with padding, outlined and detailed with cording. Silk and linen. Italy or Spain. Late sixteenth to early seventeenth century. (2008.45) The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri. *Photograph courtesy of The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art.*



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Embellishment *at All Costs*

HELEN BONNEY

SHIPWRECK, PIRACY, AND SMUGGLING are all aspects of Cornish folklore and indeed of Cornish recorded history. Walk into any bookshop near the coast and there will be a whole stack of such titles for sale, both factual and fictional. In the eighteenth century, smugglers traded in forbidden luxuries such as brandy, silk fabrics, and quantities of lace with which to embellish the fashions of the rich and famous. Contraband these articles may have been, but they certainly were highly desirable.

An unlikely but successful smuggler was the sculptor Joseph Nollekens (1737–1823), a member of England’s Royal Academy of Arts, not that he ever sailed a small ship across the Channel in the dead of night to anchor in some hidden creek. Nollekens lived in Rome from 1760 to 1770, making a name for himself with life-size portrait busts of wealthy travelers visiting the Holy City on their Grand Tour. Each bust was skillfully modeled in plaster, then shipped home to London, where a “statuary” or stonemason would carve a replica in marble to be collected by the grand tourist on his return. It was a lucrative art form but Nollekens, who was always careful about money, had a profitable sideline according to his biographer J. T. Smith, writing in 1828:

“He actually succeeded as a smuggler of silk stockings, gloves and lace; his contrivance was truly ingenious, and perhaps it was the first time that the Custom-house officers had ever been so taken in. His method was this: All his plaster busts being hollow, he stuffed them full of

the above articles, and then spread an outside coating of plaster at the back across the shoulders of each, so that the busts appeared like solid casts.”

On his return to London as a successful sculptor, Nollekens was able to wear some of his contraband at his own wedding: “. . . the bridegroom’s dress was a suit of Pourpre du Pape [purple silk velvet], silk-stockings with broad blue and white stripes, and lace ruffles and frill, the whole of which articles he had brought from Rome. . . .”

In later life, Nollekens became downright miserly and certainly was not noted for elegance in dress: He “. . . was now and then seen to take out a worsted stocking and tie it round his neck, whenever he had a sore throat, to which he was often subject . . .” and on one occasion received a gift from a friend of “. . . a fleecy hosiery shirt for you – put it on immediately and also the breastplate. They will keep you warm and comfortable during the cold weather – keep you free from rheumatism and prolong your life. . . .”

Just how effective these garments were we shall never know but the shirt would certainly have been knitted on the frame.

“Drab was his favourite colour and his suit was generally made all from the same piece; though now and then he would treat himself with a striped Manchester waistcoat, of one of which he was so fond, that he sat to Abbot for his portrait in it; an engraving from which may be seen in Messrs Cadell’s Collection of interesting Contemporary Portraits, where he is represent-



Joseph Nollekens by Lemuel Francis Abbott (1760–1803). Oil on canvas. Circa 1797. 30 3/8 × 25 inches (77.2 × 63.5 cm). Given by Henry Labouchere, 1858. Primary Collection of the National Portrait Gallery. (NPG 30).
Photograph ©National Portrait Gallery.



Map showing the coast of Cornwall and the Scilly Isles.

ed leaning on his bust of Fox, which brought him into more notice than any other of his productions. His dress-stockings also were rather remarkable, being ornamented with blue and white stripes. . . .” Those Italian silk stockings seem to have worn extremely well; it seems that they were kept for special occasions.

Meanwhile, the Cornish smugglers in their little boats were doing their utmost to outwit the customs officers, until eventually the Law prevailed and smuggling was no longer viable as a way of life. In the Scilly Isles, there was real hardship, which was reported in *The West Briton* newspaper. In July 1818, at a meeting of the county magistrates under the chairmanship of the sugar baron Sir Rose Price (1768–1834), whose family had made their fortune from plantations on Jamaica, it was declared that the distress was no more severe than in many parts of Cornwall, had originated in a failure in the potato crop, had been increased only partially by the suppression of smuggling and “. . . the inhabitants should be encouraged and assisted in gaining an honest livelihood by burning kelp, improving their lands, and extending their fisheries, from which their late habits rendered them averse. . . .”

The severity of this report caused public outrage and a subscription was raised “. . . to equip the islanders with all the means to commence a proper mackerel and pilchard fishery. . . .” In May 1819, *The West Briton* reported that an Industrious Society was being established on the islands, which “. . . proposes employing all those widows, infirm, and aged women, and distressed orphans, whom the fisheries could not relieve. . . . The female committee

are teaching straw plait, widows and children are knitting stockings, and a woman from Essex is gone to Scilly with a new spinning wheel, to instruct them in spinning, with both hands, shoe thread and line twine. All these goods will be sent to a warehouse in Penzance.” Worsted and lamb’s wool stockings, men’s frocks (i.e., ganseys), night-caps, gloves, and braces (all knitted articles) followed them later on.

On July 2, it was further reported that:

When the School of Industry for the Scilly Isles was formed, his Royal Highness [1762–1830; the Prince Regent, who would become George IV] condescended to become its patron. Impressed with gratitude for this honor, the committee gave directions that two pair of lamb’s-wool stockings should be knit by some poor families on the Islands, as a present to their illustrious patron. A few days since, the stockings reached Penzance and were generally admired by most of the respectable inhabitants of that town; many persons considered them almost as fine as if they had been wove [i.e., frame-knitted], and, certainly much more durable. G.P.R. [George Prince Regent] as initials were neatly wrought in crimson silk, and surrounded with a fanciful wreath on each stocking. This humble present was accompanied with a most respectful letter from the female committee at St Mary’s, addressed to his Royal Highness, soliciting his acceptance of the first fruits of that institution he had deigned to patronize.

One suspects from the above extracts that, although

straw plait for hats and twine spinning were new skills, knitting was already well-established on the islands (as on the Channel Islands), and the widows and children who were knitting stockings were accustomed to do so. Moreover, whoever knitted the fine stockings for the Prince Regent and embellished them with suitable embroidery was not a raw beginner. The knitting of stockings, fishermen's ganseys, gloves, and braces were part of the Cornish way of life. What had been provided for the islands by the Industrial Society was a means of marketing their products on the mainland for hard-earned cash. What is not clear is just how long this example of a cottage industry survived. ❖

This article was published originally in SlipKnot No.108 (June 2005) and adapted here with kind permission from the United Kingdom's Knit and Crochet Guild.

FURTHER READING

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Craton, Michael, and James Walvin, *A Jamaican Plantation: The History of Worthy Park 1670–1970.* 1970. Reprint, New York: ACLS Humanities, 2011 (the West Indian history of the Rose Price family of Trengwainton, near Penzance).

Smith, J. T. *Nollekens and His Times.* 1828. Reprint, n.p., Ireland: HardPress Publishing, 2012.

Wright, Mary. *Cornish Guernseys & Knit-frocks.* 1979. 2nd ed., Worcestershire, England: Polperro Heritage Press, 2008 (a treasury of information, old photographs, and knitting patterns from the Cornish fishing villages; there is a photograph on page 61 of a group of fishermen at Polperro, wearing knit-frocks and knitted braces circa 1860).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR. *As a country child in England during World War II (1939–1945), Helen Bonney learned to knit and sew in a family where the textile arts were treasured. Following a university degree course in art history, she acquired her research skills by compiling official reports on historic buildings. Then at home for a while with two young sons, she also acquired a domestic knitting machine to make garments for the family and began to explore the history of the whole craft, finding clues in some unexpected places. She was a member of the United Kingdom's Knitting and Crochet Guild for many years.*

Scilly Isle Socks to Knit and Embroider

CAROL HUEBSCHER RHOADES

Since no one knows what the original socks for the Prince Regent (see preceding article) looked like, I took general stocking features and fashions of the day into account when designing this pair of socks. As I've discovered from other socks that I've knitted, a rolled edge or casing for ties to hold up the stockings produces a sock top that is elastic and comfortable. The stockinette wrap-stitch pattern that I chose for the ribbing reminds me a little of the cobblestone-like Looe Eddystone motif in Mary Wright's *Cornish Guernseys & Knit-frocks* (see Further Reading) while evoking the lace prevalent in both men's and women's attire of the period.

These socks are sized for a medium man's or a large woman's foot. For a medium woman's size, decrease on the leg every fifteenth round until the leg is about 6½ inches (16 cm) long; continue working the heel and foot until the total length is 2 inches (5.1 cm) less than desired. Work the toe as described below.

MATERIALS

Rauma Lamullgarn, 100% lamb's wool yarn, fingering weight, 273 yards (249.6 m)/50 gram (1.8 oz) ball, 2 balls of #11 Off White; www.nordicfiberarts.com

Kreinik Silk Mori, 100% silk thread, 5½ yards (5.0 m)/skein, 1 skein of #1114A Medium Christmas Red; www.kreinik.com

Needles, set of 4 double pointed, size 00 (1.75 mm) or size needed to obtain gauge

John James Needle, tapestry, size 24; www.colonialneedle.com

Stitch marker

Stitch holder

Compass

Washable fabric marker

Finished size: 8 inches (20.3 cm) foot circumference, 10¼ inches (26.0 cm) from back of heel to tip of toe, foot length is adjustable
Gauge: 38 sts and 48 rnds = 4 inches (10.2 cm) in St st

See below and page 62 for Abbreviations and Techniques

SPECIAL STITCHES

Double Wrap 2 Stitches

Sl 1 kwise wyb, k2, pass sl st over 2 k sts, sl the 2 k sts back to left needle, with needle in front of work, insert right-needle tip pwise into st to the left of the wrapped sts, lift st and pass it over the 2 k sts, sl the 2 wrapped sts to right needle.

Wrapped Rib Pattern (multiple of 12 sts)

Rnds 1 and 2: *P1, k4, p1; rep from * to end.

Rnd 3: *P1, yo, double wrap 2 sts, yo, p2, k4, p1; rep from * to end.

Rnds 4 and 5: *P1, k4, p1; rep from * to end.

Rnd 6: *P1, k4, p2, yo, double wrap 2 sts, yo, p1; rep from * to end.

Rep Rnds 1–6 for patt.



Carol Huebscher Rhoades designed her socks based on the pair the School of Industry for the Scilly Isles knit for their patron, the Prince Regent, who became England's George IV (1762–1830). The framed photograph is a portrait of George IV when he was the Prince of Wales, (1790–1796) by John Hoppner (1758–1810). Oil on canvas. 94½ × 58½ inches (240.0 × 148.6 cm). (RCIN 405412). Royal Collection. *Reproduction photograph courtesy of Wikipedia Commons. Photograph by Joe Coca.*

Sock

Leg,

With 2 dpn held tog, CO 85 sts. Carefully remove 1 dpn and divide sts over 3 dpn. Join in the rnd as foll: Sl the 1st st pwise to right needle, pass the last CO st over it, sl st back to left needle—84 sts.

K 6 rnds.

Set-Up Rnd: *P1, k4, p1; rep from * to end.

Rep last rnd once more.

Work Rnds 1–6 of Wrapped Rib patt 4 times.

Work Rnd 1 of Wrapped Rib patt once more.

Next Rnd: P1, k to last st, p1. Work this rnd between dec rnds.

Dec Rnd: P1, k2tog, k to last 3 sts, ssk, p1—2 sts dec'd.

Rep Dec Rnd every 20th rnd 3 more times—76 sts rem. Work even in patt until leg measures 8 inches (20.3 cm) from CO edge.

Heel,

Next Row: K19, turn.

Next Row (WS): Sl 1 pwise wyf, p37, turn. Place rem 38 sts on a holder for instep.

Next Row (RS): Sl 1 pwise wyb, k37.

Next Row (WS): Sl 1 pwise wyf, p37.

Rep last 2 rows 18 more times.

Shape heel flap,

Next Row (RS): Sl 1 pwise wyb, k16, k2tog, pm, ssk, k17—36 heel sts rem.

Next Row (WS): Sl 1 pwise wyf, p to end.

Next Row (RS): Sl 1 pwise wyb, k to 2 sts before m, k2tog, sl m, ssk, k to end—2 heel sts dec'd.

Next Row (WS): Sl 1 pwise wyf, p to end.

Rep last 2 rows 3 more times—28 heel sts rem. Break yarn, leaving a 12-inch (30.5-cm) tail. Divide sts onto 2 dpn and use Kitchener Stitch to graft sts tog.

Shape gusset,

Next Rnd: With RS facing and beg at grafted edge, on Needle 1, pick up and k26 sts along side of heel flap; on Needle 2, k38 instep sts from holder; on Needle 3, pick up and k26 sts along side of heel flap—90 sts.

Rnd 1: K.

Rnd 2: K to last 3 sts on Needle 1, k2tog, k1; on Needle 2, k38; on Needle 3, k1, ssk, k to end—2 sts dec'd.

Rep Rnds 1–2 six more times—76 sts rem.

Foot,

K until foot measures 8¼ inches (21.0 cm) from back of heel or 2 inches (5.1 cm) less than desired foot length.

Toe,

K across Needle 1. Beg of rnd is now at beg of Needle 2.

Rnd 1: K1, ssk, k to last 3 sts on Needle 2, k2tog, k1; on Needle 3, k1, ssk, k to end; on Needle 1, k to last 3 sts, k2tog, k1—4 sts dec'd.

Rnd 2: K.

Rep Rnds 1–2 fifteen more times—12 sts rem. Break yarn, leaving a 12-inch (30.5-cm) tail. Place sts on Needles 1 and 3 onto 1 needle. Use Kitchener Stitch to graft sts tog.

Finishing

Weave in all ends. Gently handwash socks in lukewarm water with wool-safe soap. Rinse in same temperature water. Roll in a towel to absorb excess water and leave flat to dry.

Embroidery

A simple wreath embellishes these socks. Before embroidering, wash the red silk to prevent bleeding onto the white knit fabric. Follow the stitch line up from the gusset on the outside of each sock leg and place a pin on that vertical row near the top of the leg below the cuff. Measure 1½ inches (3.8 cm) down from the last row of the Wrapped Rib pattern and place another pin. The juncture of the two pins is the center of the wreath. Use a compass set at 1 inch (2.5 cm) and the washable fabric marker to draw a 2-inch (5.1-cm) diameter circle. Leave the bottom of the circle open for the “spill” from the wreath. Use 3 strands of silk for all of the embroidery. Embroider over the drawn circle with backstitch and then freely embellish with lazy daisy “leaves” all around. Wash socks again to remove marker.

ABOUT THE DESIGNER. Carol Huebscher Rhoades of Madison, Wisconsin, translates Scandinavian knitting, crochet, and weaving books into English, teaches handspinning, and gives workshops on traditional Scandinavian and British knitting and crochet; she is particularly fond of nineteenth-century knitting and crochet patterns and history.

Death Head Buttons

ERICA PATBERG



Portrait of a Man, Known as the "Indian Captain" by Joseph Wright (1734–1797), showing Death Head buttons on the jacket front and breeches. Oil on canvas. 90¼ x 54½ inches (229.2 x 138.4 cm). 1767. (B1981.25.713). Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, New Haven, Connecticut. Photograph courtesy of the Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection.

THIS IS A STORY ABOUT BUTTONS—not ordinary buttons but very special buttons. Despite their ominous name, Death Head buttons do not resemble a skull. Apparently, it was their quartered symmetry forming an X-shaped cross that reminded some unnamed soul of the crossbones of the skull-and-crossbones symbol. The buttons are created by carefully wrapping overlapping threads around a wooden disk with a single center hole. Although evidence of their manufacture can be found as early as the sixteenth century, Death

Head buttons reached the height of their popularity in the mid-eighteenth century, adorning the waistcoats, coats, and breeches of the rising merchant class. Other buttons had been developed throughout England with regional variations, all worked with thread and needle over a wooden mold, but to my way of thinking, Death Head buttons with their shiny silk and multicolor variations steal the show.

The story of handmade decorative buttons begins much earlier, in France. By 1250, France had created a button guild, whose master craftsmen made buttons of gold and diamonds, miniature portraits encased in glass, elaborate jewel-encrusted drops and disks to bedeck the clothing of royalty. When, in the seventeenth century, the button guild saw a threat to its monopoly in tailors who were fashioning buttons from thread, members called for legislation to make buttons made with needle and thread illegal. The legislation proved unenforceable; war, literally, ensued. The tailors won the first battle in *la guerre des boutons* (the War of the Buttons), but the powerful button guild struck back with searches of wardrobes, fines, and arrests. This unrest in the French button monopoly opened the door for the enterprising English to enter the lucrative button trade.

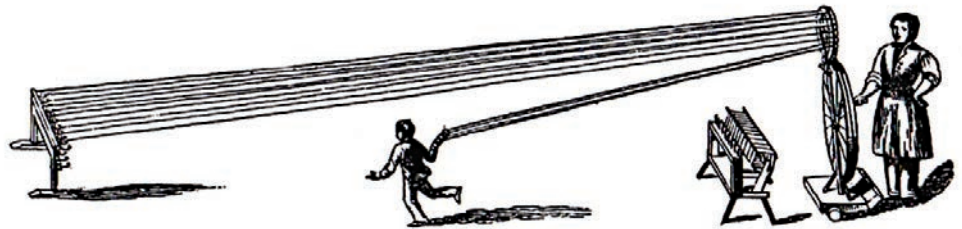
Abraham Case (unknown–1658?) had admired French thread buttons as a soldier in Belgium and France. Having moved with his new wife to Shaftesbury, Dorset, in 1622, he saw a ripe business opportunity in the inexpensive labor and plentiful raw materials of the Dorset countryside and wasted no time in creating a button empire. His first button was the High Top, a conical linen-thread button arising from a base made from a slice of sheep's horn.



Handwoven coat. Plain weave, hand-embroidered with silk thread, and Death Head buttons. Wool, silk, and linen. Worn by J. Horby, born 1757. Back length 29 inches (73.7 cm). (OK-02811). 1763. Collection of Foundation Arts Museum, National Museum of Art, Architecture, and Design, Oslo, Norway. Photograph by Truls Teigen and ©National Museum of Art, Architecture, and Design, Oslo, Norway.

Drawing from *The Penny Magazine*, Volume XII, No. 711 of a trotter, a boy who ran barefoot 16 to 20 miles (25.7 to 32.2 km) a day to assist the silk thrower in making the silk twist for Death Head and other buttons. 1843.

WikiCommons image courtesy of Clem Rutter.



In Macclesfield, 200 miles (321.9 km) north of Dorset, the making of Death Head buttons began as a cottage industry, probably in the seventeenth century. Chapmen would deliver the silk twist and wooden button molds to the button makers and collect finished goods. In *The Silk Industry of the United Kingdom: Its Origin and Development* (London: Drane's, 1921), Sir Frank Warner describes these peddlers:

In the wild country between Buxton, Leek and Macclesfield, called the Flash, from a chapel of that name, lived a set of pedestrian chapmen, who hawked about these buttons, together with ribands and ferreting [narrow tape] made at Leek, and handkerchief with small wares from Manchester. These pedlars were known on the roads which they travelled by the appellation of Flashmen, and frequented farmhouses and fairs, using a sort of slang or canting dialect.

Samuel Finney III (1719–1798), lord of the manor of Wilmslow, about 8½ miles (14 km) northeast of Macclesfield, records that a merchant from Macclesfield told him that “an active and diligent woman could earn four shillings a week” and that even children of six years old could almost earn their living by assisting in the preparatory processes. He estimated that, in households where the women and children were engaged in making buttons, the family income was increased by 50 percent. An agricultural worker's wage was then about one shilling per day. The merchant said that he frequently paid out as much as £10 to £12 (200 to 240 shillings) weekly to a single village for button making.

In 1698, Macclesfield built its first workhouse for the poor, where, according to *A History of Macclesfield* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1961), the children were encouraged “by persons skillfull in the trade of buttoning to support themselves by making buttons and other matters relating to the trade.” They were fed, housed, and dressed well, and upon reaching the age of majority, they had a viable skill with which to make a living.

A leading figure in the history of the Death Head button was Charles Roe (1715–1781), whose father and mother had died when he was just eight years old. Raised

by older siblings in Macclesfield, Charles attended grammar school, and then immediately entered the “button and twist” trade. He most likely started as a trotter in a silk-throwing shed, or “shade,” a narrow building about 90 feet (27 m) long built for twisting or “throwing” silk. Each silk thrower employed a boy as a helper or trotter, whose job was to take a rod carrying the bobbins with thread and run the length of the shade, hook the threads on stationary pins (the cross), and run back to the gate (the spinning wheel shown at right in the illustration above). He would repeat the process until the thread reached the required thickness.

Estimates of the distance that a trotter ran, barefoot, in the course of a day's work varied from more than 16 miles (25.7 km) to nearly 20 (32.2 km). One twister commented in Lord Shaftesbury's Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Employment of Children (1841) that his ten-year-old helper “was very tired always at the end of his day's work of 10 hours.” The commission found no injury to the feet or ankles; on the contrary, the trotters were healthy and “notorious for being long winded, and fast runners.”

Roe must have been ambitious. He soon moved into manufacturing silk twist for button making, sewing thread, and weaving. In 1742, he paid £2 to become a Freeman of Macclesfield. His timing was fortunate: Thomas Lombe's (1685–1739) patent on the silk mill machinery had recently expired, and in 1743, at the age of twenty-eight, Roe began construction of the first water-powered silk mill in Macclesfield, on the banks of the fast-flowing Bollin River. The Park Green Mill opened the following year to financial success. Many others followed suit. At their maximum, 210 mills operated in and around Macclesfield, and more than 20,000 people were estimated to be employed in the silk, button-making, and related industries. Macclesfield was the center of silk Death Head buttons although in Leek, 13½ miles (21.7 km) to the south, mohair thread was being used to make the same style; only later did the manufacture of silk and silk buttons migrate south to Leek.

The Industrial Revolution spelled the end of the golden age of thread buttons. A button-making machine invented by John Ashton (dates unknown) and displayed at the

Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations in London in 1851 created buttons at a fraction of the cost of thread-and-needle-worked buttons. The handmade Death Head button hung on for a few more years, but the industry began a steady decline with pressures from inexpensive mass-produced buttons. With many workers now unable to support themselves, the British government paid to send 300 families to Australia and Canada; there, still destitute, they likely turned to the one trade they knew, button making.

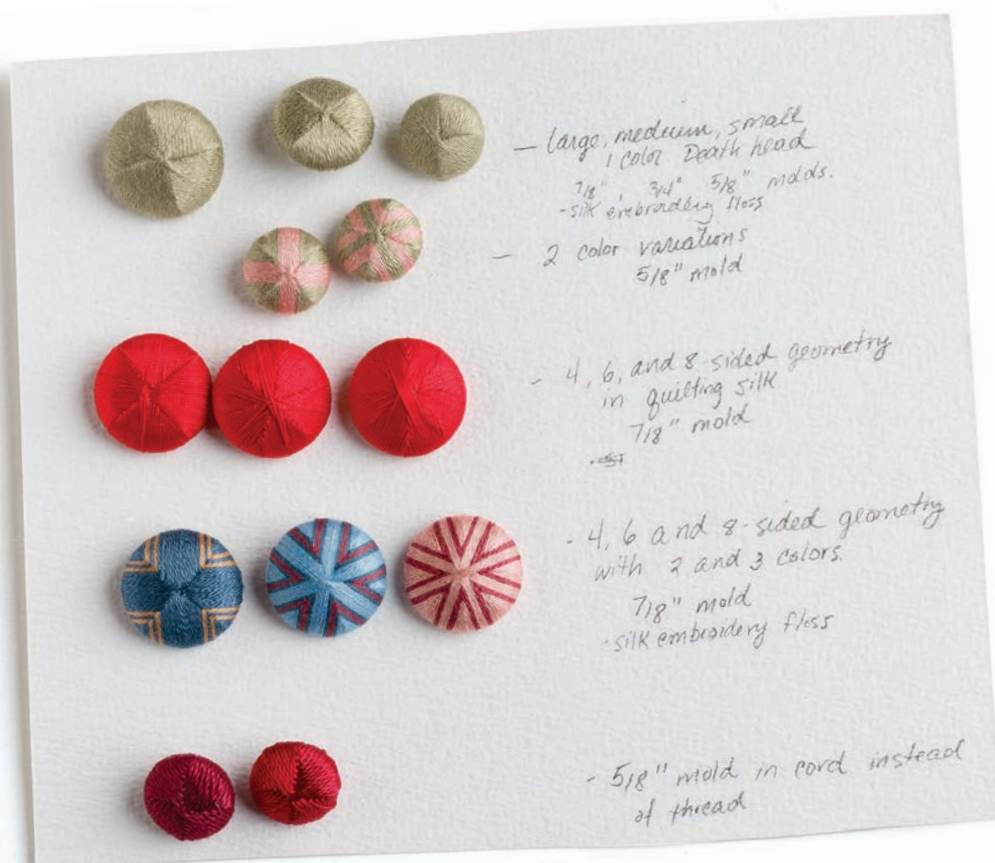
Early in the twentieth century, Dowager Florence Lees (1840–1922) of Lytchett Minster in Dorset attempted to

revive the button industry with a small business specializing in the production of “parliamentary” buttons for members of Parliament from Dorset in their respective constituency colors: pale blue for South Dorset Conservatives, purple for East Dorset Conservatives. In 1908, these buttons were in full production, but the outbreak of the First World War (1914–1918) ended production for good. At some point, the clearance of an old cottage on the Lees estate turned up several boxes full of buttons that were sold to American museums.

Today, whether as collectibles or craft projects, Death Head buttons continue to captivate. ❖

Death Head Buttons *to Make*

ERICA PATBERG



MATERIALS

Madeira Silk Embroidery Floss, 4-strand 100% silk thread, 5 meters (5.5 yd)/Spiral Pak, 1 packet will make three 1-inch (2.5-cm) buttons; www.sewingandcraftclub.com

Fujix Quilter Silk Sewing Thread, 100% silk thread, 20 meters (21.9 yd)/spool; 1 spool will make four 1-inch (2.5-cm) buttons; www.thesewingparlour.com

John James Needle, sharps; www.colonialneedle.com

Straight pin

Button molds, wooden, 5/8, 3/4, and 1 inch (1.6, 1.9, 2.5 cm); www.wmboothdraper.com

Erica Patberg's lovely shimmering silk Death Head buttons are the perfect embellishment. Use them on clothing, as cufflinks, affixed to a velvet headband, or string them on cord for a stunning bracelet or necklace.

Photograph by Joe Coca.

A growing interest in historical costume and historical reenactment has led to a revival of handmade buttons. Blue Cat Buttonworks in Richmond, Virginia, (www.bluecatbuttonworks.com) specializes in supplying reproduction thread buttons for Colonial reenactments and costumes. Supplies for making your own Death Head buttons are available at Wm. Booth Draper (www.wmboothdraper.com) and Wooded Hamlet Designs (www.woodedhamlet.com). If you've mastered the basics and are interested in delving into more complex button making, Gina M. Barrett of Gina B Silkworks (gina-b.blogspot.com/2011/05/deaths-head-buttons-samples-different.html) sells supplies, kits, and instructions for some of the most beautiful and intricate variations of the Death Head and other thread buttons.

To introduce you to the techniques required, follow the instructions below. I used silk sewing thread to make the red buttons and silk embroidery floss for the others. I've found one strand of silk embroidery floss is the most

forgiving thread to work with, producing a nice finished button, but do experiment!

This technique requires patience while learning, but with experience a single-color, four-sided button may be finished in a few minutes. A firm and even tension helps with wrapping. Using a small knife to score a notch to hold the foundation wraps in place can be helpful. To make multicolored buttons, simply tie the new color at the back of the button and continue wrapping. For the Astral or six-segmented variation, it's best to use a template and mark the foundation wraps with pencil on the mold. Wrap from Point 4 to 2, 5 to 3, 6 to 4, 1 to 5, 2 to 6, and 3 to 1. This is one complete round of wraps. Continue laying down new rounds until the button is covered.

INSTRUCTIONS

Button

Thread the needle with a length of thread 5 to 6 feet (1.5 to 1.8 m) long. Begin by wrapping a foundation X around the button mold, dividing the mold as evenly as

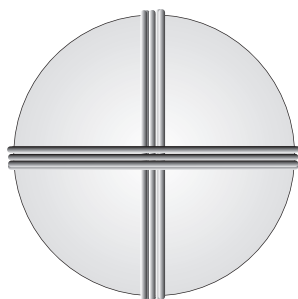


Figure 1

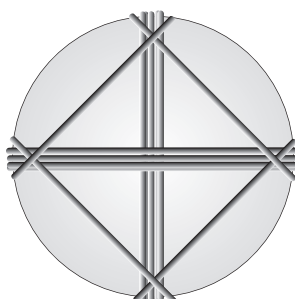


Figure 2

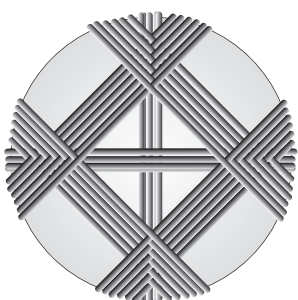


Figure 3

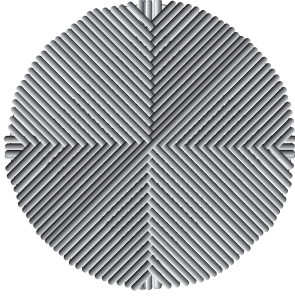


Figure 4

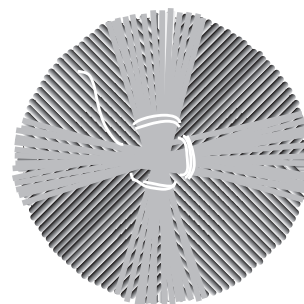


Figure 5

possible into 4 quadrants (Figure 1). Once there are 3 to 4 wraps in both directions, turn the button to the back and with the needle secure all threads with a knot at the center back of the button.

If the button were a clock face with the wraps extending to 12, 6, 3, and 9 o'clock, wrap the thread from 6 to 3; proper tension (which comes with practice) and the foundation wrap anchors the thread. Turn the button $\frac{1}{4}$ turn to the left and repeat until one complete round of 4 wraps is complete. Each succeeding round is laid just inside the previous round, with each wrap holding the previous wraps in place (Figure 2).

Continue wrapping until slightly less than half of the button surface is covered with thread (Figure 3). At this point, the wraps will begin slipping from the sides of the button. Insert the straight pin from the back of the button through the center hole. The pin prevents the wraps from slipping.

Continue wrapping, leaving the pin in place, until the button is completely covered (Figure 4). If you find that the quadrants are not quite square, adjust the wraps closer by pushing them together on the larger quadrants. You can also wrap more than once in one direction to make up for slight deviations.

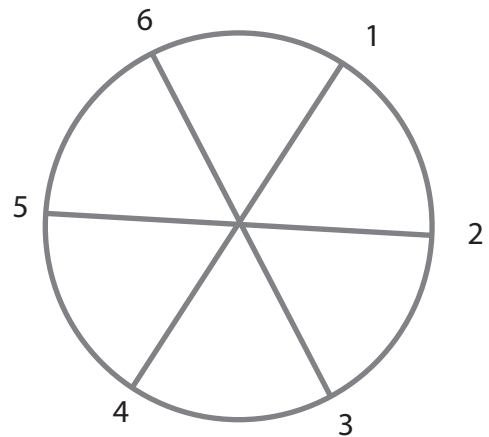


The back of one of Erica Patberg's Death Head buttons, showing the long tail of thread that will be used to sew the button on to the final item.
Photograph by Joe Coca.

Do not remove the pin until the wraps have been secured. After the last wrap, turn to the back of the button. Using the needle and thread, gather all threads in one of the 4 "arms" that have formed at the back of the button and secure with a few taut stitches. Repeat for the other 3 arms (Figure 5). Bring the needle up through the center hole and catch the center 2 threads with a small stitch. Bring the needle back down through the center hole and tie off the thread. Leave a long tail to sew the button on to the final item.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND DESIGNER. *Erica Patberg is a knitwear designer and expat New Yorker living and working in a quaint village in the Dutch countryside. Follow her twists and turns at www.cogknits.com.*

Astral Template



Template may be photocopied for personal use.
Reduce template to fit size of button mold.



Button molds used in making Death Head buttons.
Photograph by Joe Coca.

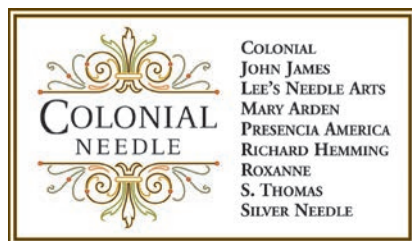
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Raised Filet Crochet

AVA T. COLEMAN



Ava T. Coleman's reproduction of the right section from A Unique Buffet-Set in Raised Filet-Crochet in the July 1930 issue of *Needlecraft Magazine*; she used Lizbeth 100% cotton thread size 40 in #603 Ecrú (www.hhtatting.com) and a size 8 (5.00 mm) crochet hook.

Photograph by Joe Coca. Scissors and crochet hook courtesy of the Loveland Museum/Gallery, Loveland, Colorado.

Many of the instructions in vintage needlework magazines are too sketchy to be of much use to today's readers, but this one from the July 1930 issue of *Needlecraft Magazine* is a welcome exception. The preliminary information on filet crochet and the charts are easy to follow. In places, especially in the outlining of the tree branches, I used one or two fewer chain stitches between anchoring posts than originally called for to make the lines more defined. Reducing the number of the single-crochet stitches slightly also made the edges of the tree crisper and, when I worked the shoreline as the instructions prescribe, increased the contrast of the tree and wigwam with the shoreline and water. Take care not to catch little raised chains in the plate of the iron when pressing them to maximize the contrast.

Block this project in steps. Use a straightedge to align the filet posts in the background and correct the distortion caused by the outline stitching. Next, pin the interior of the piece, spray with water, and allow it to dry. Leaving the pins in place, block the edging. Redampen the entire piece and allow it to dry completely. Remove the pins and press the piece on the wrong side. Apply a light coat of spray starch to the wrong side and press again; this step helps to retain the shape but does not stiffen the fibers.

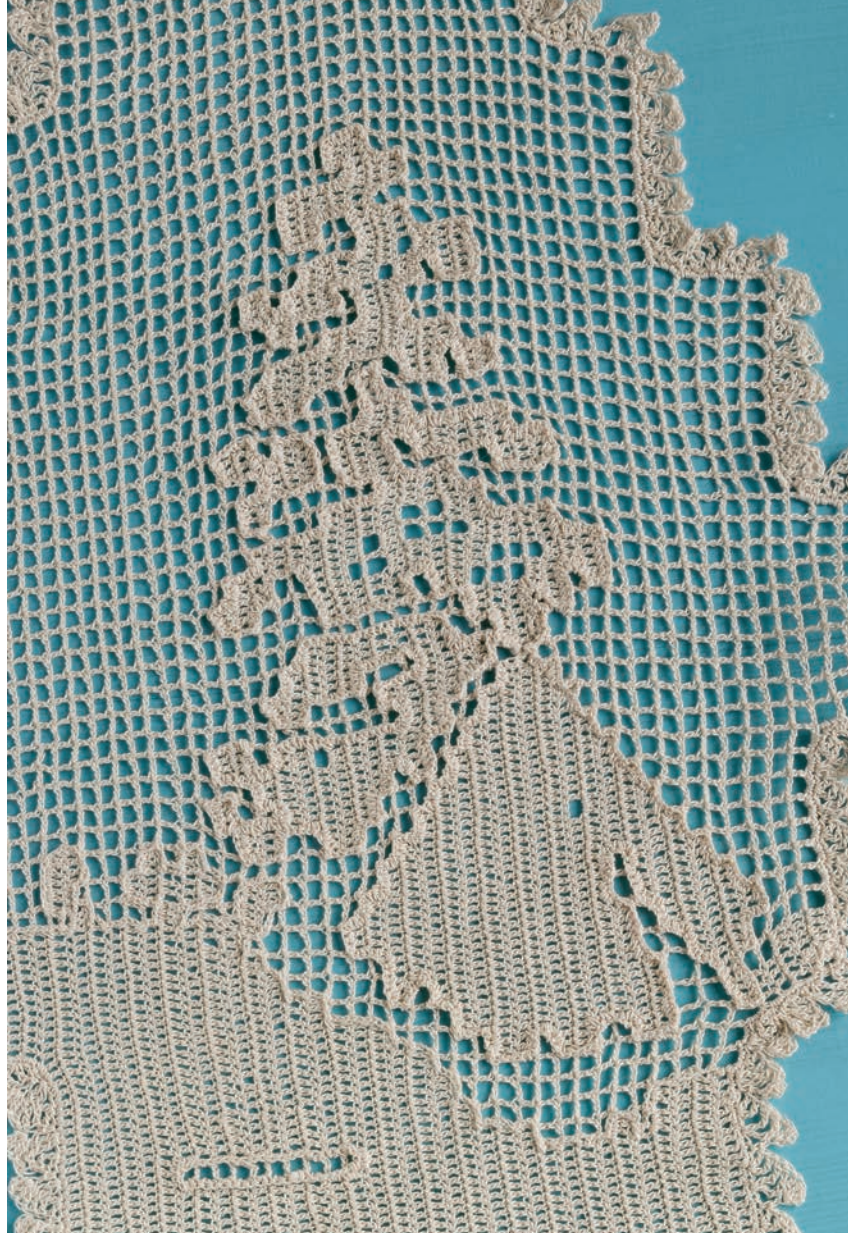
Below are the instructions exactly as they appeared in the July 1930 issue of *Needlecraft Magazine*. Please note that British crochet notation was used. The chart below outlines the differences between British and American notation; crochet abbreviations are defined on page 62:

English	American
Single crochet	Slip stitch
Short or double crochet	Single crochet
Ordinary treble	Double crochet
Double treble	Treble
Triple treble	Double treble

A UNIQUE BUFFET-SET IN RAISED FILET-CROCHET

By Annie E. Burruss

We all enjoy doing something out of the ordinary, so far as needlework goes, at least. We like to hear our friends exclaim, when we display our handicraft, whatever it may be, "Isn't that charming?—and so unusual. I never have seen anything more attractive. Where *did* you get the idea?" And this is sure to be said of the three-piece set illustrated,



Detail of Ava T. Coleman's reproduction of the right section from A Unique Buffet-Set in Raised Filet-Crochet in the July 1930 issue of *Needlecraft Magazine*.

Photograph by Joe Coca.

the design of which represents early American Indian life—with the wigwams, trees, points of land, water, boat and clouds, all going to form a continuous picture as natural as possible. The work is very simple, the filet-crochet being first done in the usual way; then, when a piece is completed, the design is "raised" or embossed as follows: Fasten the thread in any outlying corner of the solid parts of the design, chain 3, double crochet in next corner of filet block, and repeat around the edge of the portions of the design which you wish to lift into relief. Along an edge where the blocks lie straight, 7, 10 or more trebles in a row, simply miss 2 trebles of a block, fasten in next, covering the width of a space, and



The illustration from the July 1930 issue of *Needlecraft Magazine*, showing A Unique Buffet-Set in Raised Filet-Crochet.

repeat. Going down the side of a block, as between the tree branches, proceed in the same manner, fastening at base of trebles or top of trebles below. The outlining is very easily done, and effective, and is worked throughout in the same way, and almost any piece of filet-crochet can be treated thus.

The following portions of the design are to be outlined: The straight trunks of trees and masses of foliage, the outer edges of wigwams, letting the outlining chain run straight down the sides of each, diagonally across the little filet blocks, and the upper edge or top of the canoe, and the ends, together with the two Indians and oars, letting the chain run straight down the latter, as directed. The feathers on the heads of the Indians are arranged by putting the chain across the space above. Do not outline the lower part of the canoe, where it sinks into the water, nor the shadow of it. Outline the edges of the land in the foreground and any irregularities, but let the upper or straight edge disappear in the distance without outline. The clouds are not outlined, nor the bird shown in the small mat at the left. In the central mat the solid portions of

the work are massed at the ends, which unavoidably makes it a little wider at each end; to straighten it several rows of filet may be added to top and bottom of the mat, starting these rows with a slanting chain of 2 or 3 stitches; they are not noticeable in the finished work.

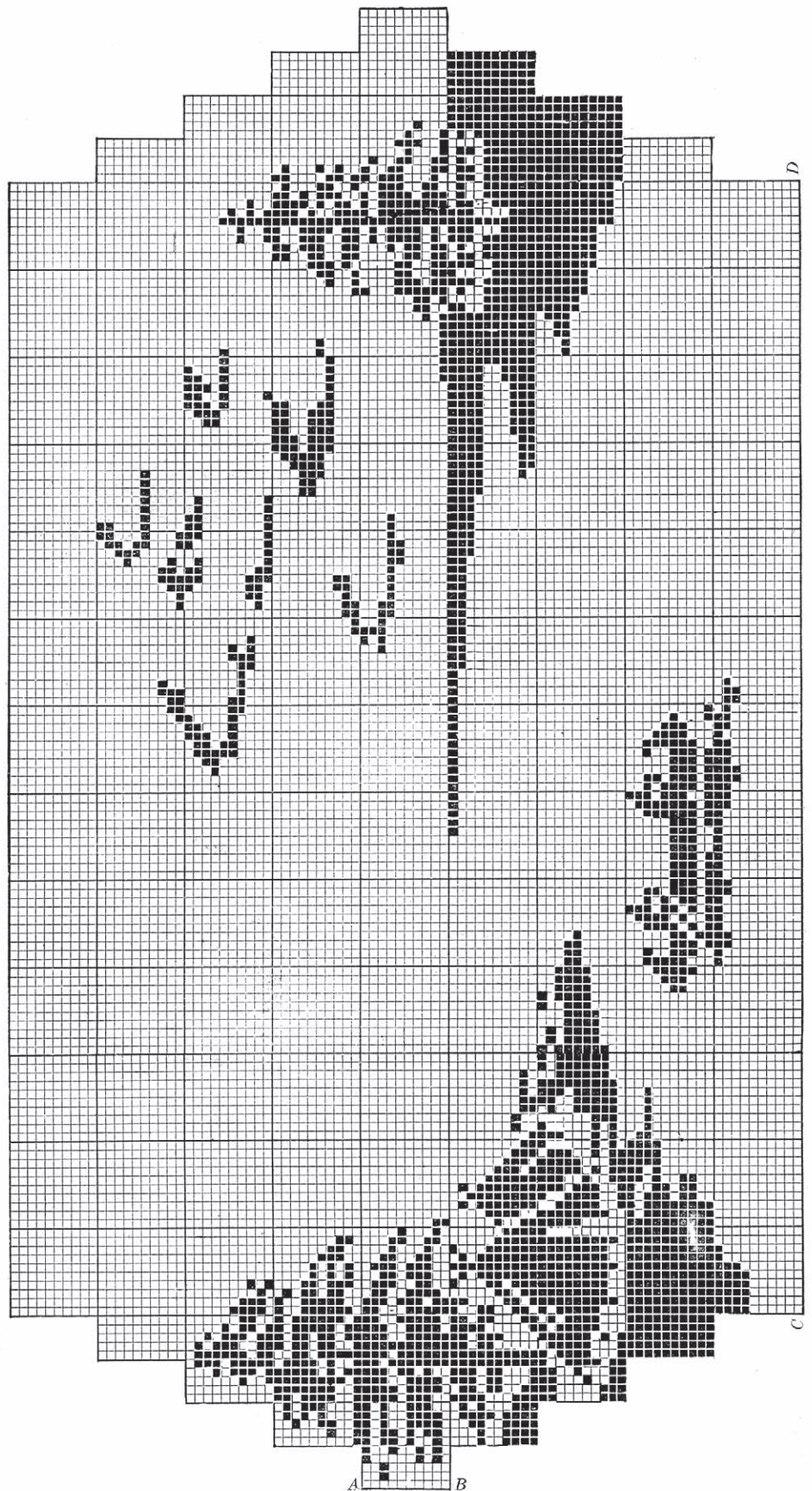
For the edge: Fasten thread in treble, * chain 4, picot (of chain 2, caught back in 3d stitch from hook), triple treble in space, double treble in same space, treble in next space, double crochet in same space, fasten with single crochet in treble, and repeat from *; make the little points in the same way along the solid portion. Single crochet in 1st stitch, chain 4, picot, triple treble in next stitch, double treble in next, treble in next, double crochet in next.

As suggested, the three pieces of the set are first worked in the usual way, following the chart provided for each. The smaller mats are begun at one side, so that the rows run lengthwise, while those of the centerpiece, which is started at the end, run across; if one works from the chart, however, one may commence as most convenient. The size of thread may also be in accordance with the worker's judgment, varying with the size of mats wanted or one's method of work. Crochet-thread No. 40 is a good size. Chain 35 stitches for a small mat (A to B, on chart).

1. A tr in 8th st from hook, 9 more sp.
- 2 to 5. Ten sp (ch 5 for 1st sp of row).
6. Ch 37 (to widen 10 sp), tr in 8th st from hook, 9 more sp, the last tr in tr of preceding row, 10 sp over 10 sp, widen 6 sp and 13 tr, at end of row, thus: Ch 2, t tr in same st with last tr, (ch 2, t tr in center of t tr) 5 times, 1 tr in center of t tr, (1 tr in lower stitch of 1 tr) 11 times; any number of sp and tr can be added in the same way.
7. Thirteen tr (ch 3 for 1st), 26 sp.
8. Like 7th reversed.
- 9, 10. Like 7th and 8th rows. Ch 32 at end of 10th row.
11. Miss 3, a tr in each st of ch, 13 tr in 13 tr, 26 sp, widen 10 sp as at end of 6th row.

Continue, following the chart as indicated, to the 36th row, where the decreasing or narrowing begins. This may be done either by slip-stitching over 1st 10 spaces, which most workers find the simpler meth-

od, or by dropping these spaces at the end of preceding row, as follows: Keep 2 stitches—of the treble which helps form the space preceding the 10 spaces to be dropped or narrowed at beginning of next row—on the needle, * thread over twice, hook in next treble, thread over, draw through, and work off 2 stitches, repeat 8 times, then for the last space put thread over 3 times, miss 2, hook in next and draw through, and work off all stitches on needle 2 at a time, keeping the spaces even, the last 3 stitches together. This leaves the work ready for beginning 36th row without slip-stitching. Continue with 19 spaces, 7 trebles, 3 spaces, 4 trebles, 2 spaces, 4 trebles, 3 spaces, 4 trebles, 2 spaces, 7 trebles, 1 space, 40 trebles, 5 spaces, 46 trebles, turn, leaving the remaining 31 trebles, the equivalent of 10 spaces. Follow the chart as heretofore, narrowing instead of widening, as indicated, until the work is reduced to 10 spaces, as at the beginning; do 5 rows and fasten off. The other small mat is worked in the same way. The large mat is also commenced with a chain of 35 stitches (A to B) on the chart. Continue, increasing every 6th row, with 5 rows between widenings, until you have widened four times and the mat is 90 spaces in width; then work even, keeping the sides straight, to the 150th row, where the narrowing begins,



Charts may be photocopied for personal use.

made to correspond with the widening at the start. If preferred the mat can be commenced at one side (C to D), with a row of 130 spaces (395 chain-stitches), in which case it will not be necessary to fill in at bottom and top, as directed, to straighten the edge, each side. Instead of making this long foundation-chain one may work the requisite number of spaces as follows: Chain 8, treble in 1st stitch of chain, for 1st space; then * chain 5, turn, treble in 3d stitch of preceding chain, or 3d of 5 chain for all following spaces; repeat to length required. Follow the chart for the work, adding if desired extra rows of spaces each side to give a little greater width.

Perhaps the method of filling in the sides should be a little more explicitly given: Count from one end or corner along the edge to where it begins to curve or draw in—13 spaces in the model; fasten thread in top of next treble, chain 2, treble in next treble, continue with regular spaces along the edge to corresponding point at other end, chain 2, and join

securely to next treble, fastening off. For next row, count 5 spaces from beginning of row last made, or to the next apparent “waisting,” as our friend, the weaver, would name it, fasten in and proceed as before. Do another row or so in the same way, as required. This work must necessarily vary a little in detail, but the method is the same.

Perhaps a little explanation as to how to increase trebles at end of row, where there is no chain to work on may be of advantage to some. Make the last treble of the row a long treble—that is, having the usual 3 stitches on needle, work off 1 of these, then 2 at a time in the usual way. Have the single or 1st stitch a little loose, since this serves as the chain in which to work the next, widening, treble; repeat until you have the required number, making the last as usual.

ABOUT THE DESIGNER. *Colorado Heritage Artist and frequent PieceWork contributor Ava T. Coleman is co-owner, with Donna Druchunas, of Stories in Stitches, a company offering historically based knitting publications and workshops.*

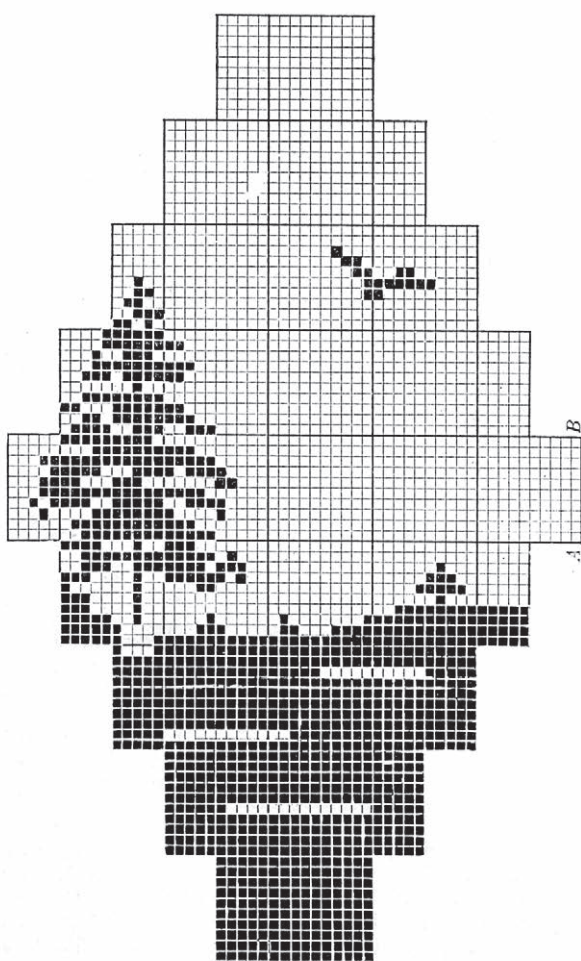


Chart for left section of *A Unique Buffet-Set in Raised Filet-Crochet.*

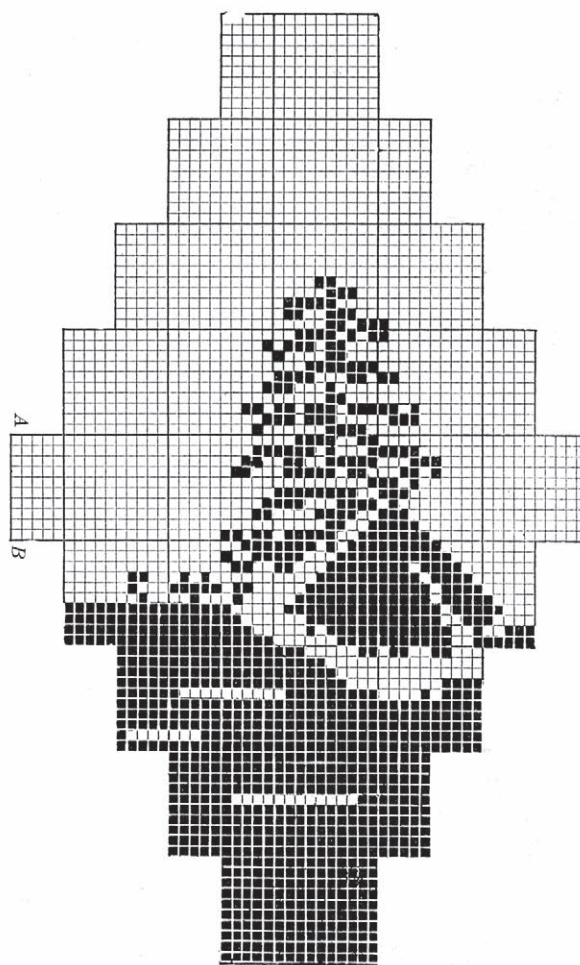


Chart for right section of *A Unique Buffet-Set in Raised Filet-Crochet*; this is the section Ava T. Coleman worked.

Coronation Cord

A Time-Saving Embellishment

MARY POLITYKA BUSH

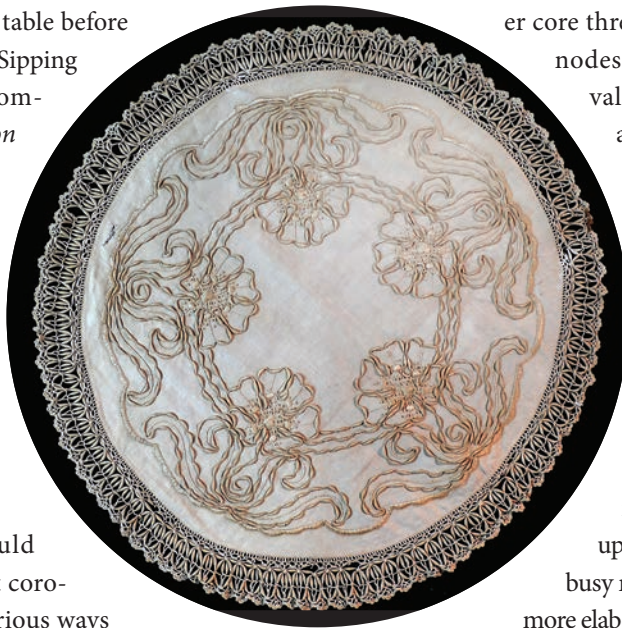
SPRING, 1910. A SUNNY KITCHEN. The woman of the house, having waved her husband off to work, sits down at the table before beginning her daily chores. Sipping coffee, she peruses the women's page of *The Washington Herald*. A small advertisement catches her eye: Paris Transfer Pattern No. 8160, a charming "centre-piece" measuring 20 by 20 inches (50.8 by 50.8 cm) with a feathery, meandering border to be worked in coronation cord. Ten cents, stamps or coins. She's sold.

Our needlewoman would have known very well what coronation cord was and the various ways in which it could be used: in embroidery, crochet, lacemaking, and tatting, or by itself. Her home would likely have been furnished with linens entirely made or embellished by hand. Labor-saving appliances were in their infancy, and the demands of housework afforded little time for creative needlework. Enter corona-

tion cord (or braid), a time-saving embellishment made of a finer thread tightly wrapped around a thicker core thread to shape a series of fatter nodes separated by thinner intervals. Coronation cord could be and was used to embellish bed linens, doilies, guest towels, pillow tops, tablecloths, waists (blouses), parasols, collars, jabots, dainty purses, and more.

Writing in the August 8, 1909, issue of *The New York Times*, Anne Rittenhouse notes, "[T]his braiding is admirably adapted for pick-up Summer work or for the use of busy mothers who have not time for more elaborate 'fancy work' . . . For quick effects few kinds of handwork equal embroi-

dery with coronation braid. It is simple in method, materials are inexpensive and there is no intricate stitchery." In *The Dorothy Bradford Series 7 on Coronation Braid Crochet* (Boston: Alfred Mayer-Weismann, 1913), Bradford comments, "Due to its high luster, [coronation cord] works prettily and



TOP: Linen table center with couched coronation cord and embroidered Art Nouveau field design and a crocheted border. Thought to be German. Circa 1915. 25 inches (63.5 cm) in diameter. (18221). Collection of the Laces Museum of Lace and Textiles, Berkeley, California. Photograph courtesy of the Laces Museum of Lace and Textiles.

BOTTOM: Detail of the table center with the Art Nouveau design. (18221). Collection of the Laces Museum of Lace and Textiles, Berkeley, California. Photograph courtesy of the Laces Museum of Lace and Textiles.

brilliantly as any embroidery thread: due to its simple use, it has saved a great many troublesome hours to the busy woman of to-day.”

Not only a time saver, coronation cord was economical and easy to launder. Furthermore, even beginners could use it with good results. So it was that coronation cord spent years dancing between the picots of tatting, playing a distinctive role in crocheted lace, cording the edges of needle-lace motifs, and outlining flowers, leaves, butterflies, and baskets that appeared to be meticulously worked in padded satin-stitch embroidery but were not.

Coronation cord had been part of the needlework scene since the late 1800s although its premiere is difficult to pinpoint. In her *PieceWork* article “Coronation Cord” (July/August 1996), Shirley McElderry reports discovering “a cord that appears to be coronation cord” in an article titled “Trimming, Crochet, and Cord” in an 1875 issue of *Peterson’s Magazine*; however, needlework compendiums published before the turn of the twentieth century don’t mention it. Perhaps those authors didn’t consider using it to be true embroidery.

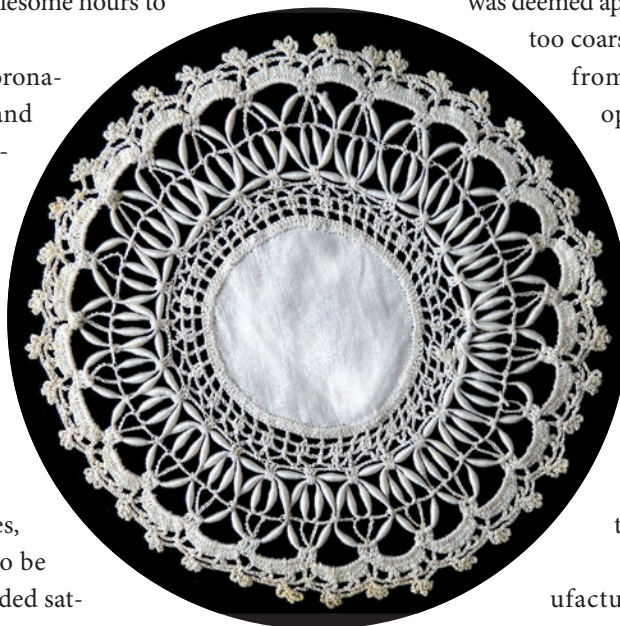
An alternate name, torpedo cord (alluding to the torpedo-shaped thick spots in the cord), was used for a while but did not catch on. “Coronation cord” apparently was more appealing, but the origin of its name remains a mystery. Finer types, with rice-sized thick spots, were understandably known as rice cord or rice braid.

The finer the cord, the sheerer the fabric for which it was deemed appropriate. Using cord that was too coarse was sure to invite criticism from those with an already low opinion of the cord itself, according to Rittenhouse, who explains that doing so “. . . gives a cheap look to the work. . . .” She also warns against choosing complicated designs that would be difficult to work neatly, resulting in a loss of resemblance to hand embroidery. Flawless sewing in attaching the braid was essential.

Coronation cord was manufactured in Germany. Most was of cotton although examples of silk-wrapped cord are known. It came in a range of sizes and was available in pastels as well as in brown, red, white, and black. Cotton cord was sold in paper-wrapped hanks or by the yard (0.9 m) for as little as one cent a yard.

Coronation cord’s popularity in America reached its peak in the mid-1920s, but by 1927, it was little more than a needlework memory. Its decline is puzzling, but the late 1920s saw an upswing in popularity of several other forms of needlework. The use of coronation cord resurfaced from time to time, but it often was misidentified as trapunto, bullion embroidery, Mountmellick embroidery, and so on.

In the early 1980s, needlework experts Kaethe and Jules Kliot noted an unusual cord in some pieces in their extensive collection. Learning that it was coronation cord, they began to study, collect, and seek a source for the cord itself. The collection grew to nearly three dozen examples,



TOP: Doily with crocheted and coronation-cord borders around a linen center. Circa 1920. 8½ inches (21.6 cm) in diameter. (28841). Collection of the Lacy Museum of Lace and Textiles, Berkeley, California.

Photograph courtesy of the Lacy Museum of Lace and Textiles.

BOTTOM: Table center with couched coronation cord and embroidered design and buttonhole-stitched scalloped border. Thought to be American. Circa 1920. 19 inches (48.3 cm) in diameter. (18223). Collection of the Lacy Museum of Lace and Textiles, Berkeley, California.

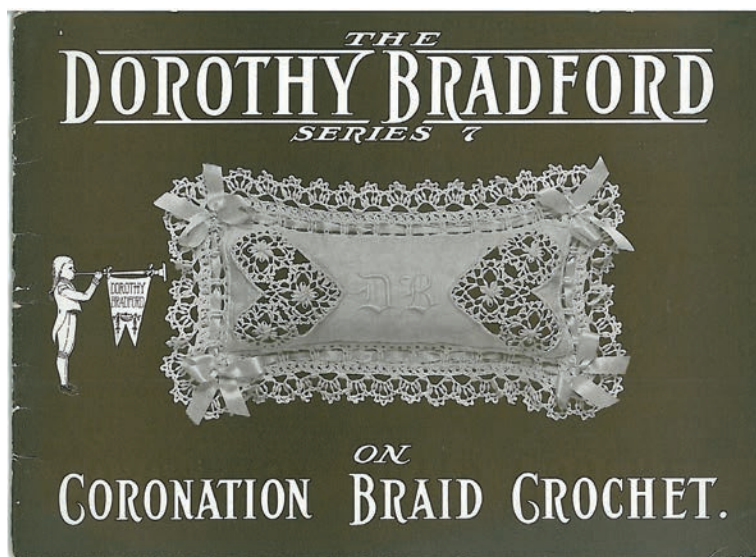
Photograph courtesy of the Lacy Museum of Lace and Textiles.

but it turned out that the cord was no longer being made, and machines to make it no longer existed.

After a twelve-year search for a new source, Jules Kliot (who is founder and director of the Lacy Museum of Lace and Textiles in Berkeley, California) arranged with U.S. passementerie manufacturer Frank Barbett of Barbett Industries in Reading, Pennsylvania, to build a machine that could reproduce coronation cord's characteristic silhouette. Two years later, with the aid of computer technology, Barbett was able to begin manufacturing coronation cord.

Kliot's *Coronation Cord Remembered* (Berkeley, California: Lacy Publications, 2011) is a compendium of close-up photographs of period coronation-cord needlework from the Lacy collection. It also includes a history of the cord and instructions excerpted from vintage publications.

Today's coronation cord is being manipulated in ways that would have surprised embroiderers of 100 years ago. Contemporary fiber artists are using it to create textural interest; some are braiding it into kumihimo cord. Nonetheless, others use it much as a needleworker in 1910 would have done—to embellish household linens and clothing. ❖



Cover of *The Dorothy Bradford Series 7 on Coronation Braid Crochet* (Boston: Alfred Mayer-Weismann, 1913). Collection of the Lacy Museum of Lace and Textiles, Berkeley, California.

Photograph courtesy of the Lacy Museum of Lace and Textiles.

A Pillowcase to Embellish with Coronation Cord

MARY POLITYKA BUSH

Household linens were a favorite canvas for coronation cord artistry in the early 1900s. This purchased pillowcase is embellished with couched coronation cord and a cotton lace edging joined to the hem with zigzags of the cord. The oval design area, here filled with embroidered flowers, would be equally lovely framing a single initial formed from couched cord.

INSTRUCTIONS

Notes: When cutting coronation cord, cut between the nodes where it narrows. Before cutting, coat the area with fabric adhesive and let it dry thoroughly. Cutting through the adhesive-coated area prevents raveling. If not using adhesive, use sewing thread to firmly wrap and secure the cord on each side of the spot where it will be cut; do not make this wrapping too thick or too wide. If the wraps along the length of the cord loosen or become misaligned, do not cut them off. Instead, coax them back into place by gently rolling the cord between thumb and fingertips; in couched areas, use the tip of the needle to tuck them under the cord. If necessary, secure loose threads with dabs of

MATERIALS

Coronation Cord, 100% cotton-wrapped cord, 2 yards (1.8 m)/package, 2 packages of Ecru; www.lacy.com
Lace, cotton, 1 inch (2.5 cm) wide, 1¼ yards (1.1 m), Ecru
DMC Coton à Broder Embroidery Floss, 6-strand 100% cotton thread, 8.7 yards (8.0 m)/skein, 1 skein of Ecru; www.dmc-usa.com
Sewing thread, Ecru
John James Needles, crewel sizes 7 and 10; www.colonialneedle.com
Pillowcase, cotton, Ecru
Washable fabric adhesive
Washout marking pen or hard pencil

fabric adhesive or with a tiny stitch or two taken with needle and sewing thread. The lace itself is not sewn directly to the pillowcase: Zigzags of coronation cord separate the lace from the edge of the pillowcase; one side of the cord is sewn to the lace, the other side is sewn to the pillowcase.

Embellishment

To transfer the design area, place the center of the pillowcase hem over the pattern and tape both to a sunny



Mary Polityka Bush embellished a pillowcase with couched coronation cord flowers and a cotton lace edging joined to the hem with the cord.
Photograph by Joe Coca.

window. Lightly trace the outline of the oval with the marking pen or pencil. It is not necessary to trace the suggested flower placement within the oval.

Use a single strand of sewing thread to couch one continuous length of coronation cord around the oval outline. Take single couching stitches over the cord where it narrows; then secure each node by catching its underside with a small stitch that is anchored, in turn, to the pillowcase. Take 2 or 3 stitches over narrow areas that are pinched together, as they are at each end, and where the cord crosses over itself. Hide the beginning and end of the cord under the crossover point at one end of the oval.

Following the diagram and using the coronation cord, make 4 loop flowers. Cut three 3-node lengths of cord and coil them tightly to create buds. Arrange the flowers and buds within the oval, using the pattern as a guide. Use 6 strands of floss to attach the loop flowers with several loose French knots piled in the centers; use sewing thread to secure the petals with a couching stitch at the end of each loop. Couch the buds with sewing thread. Use 3 strands of floss to work detached-chain-stitch leaves.

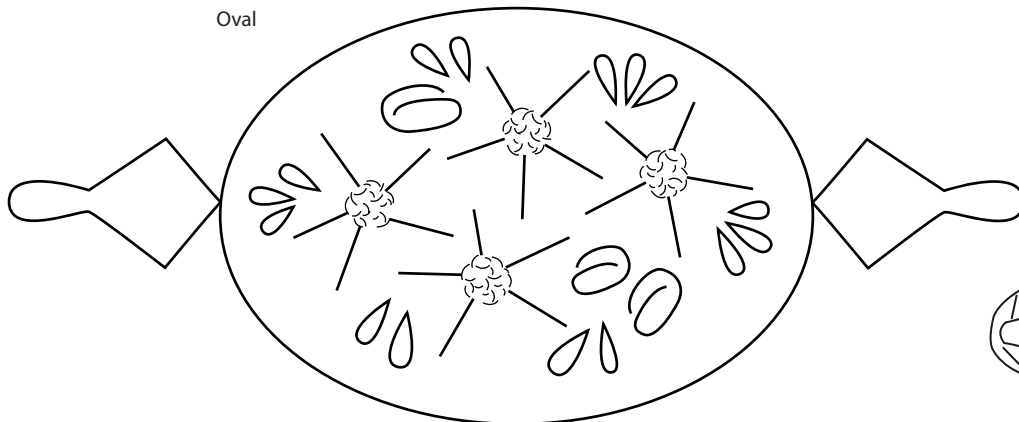
To make the edging, shape the cord into zigzags evenly spaced to fit the circumference of the pillowcase. The zigzags should measure about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch (2 cm) from point to point. Use the sewing thread to sew the points on one side of the zigzags to the straight edge of the lace. Do not cut off the excess cord until you have sewn the edging to the pillowcase. Sew the points on the other side of the zigzags to the edge of the hem, beginning and ending on the back of the pillowcase. End the cord by overlapping narrow areas and sewing them together and to the hem with several small stitches. Finish the lace by overlapping and hemming under the ends. Cut off the excess coronation cord.

Finishing

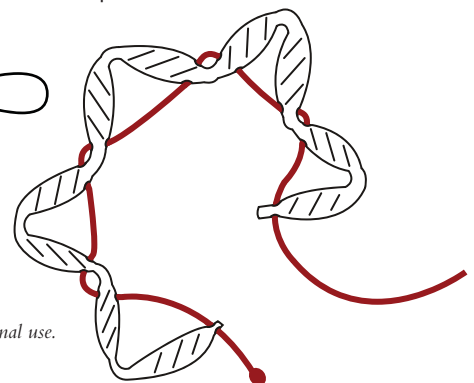
Press the finished embellished portion of the pillowcase face down on a thick terry towel.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND DESIGNER. *Mary Polityka Bush lives in Piedmont, California. She thanks Jules Kliot for sharing his knowledge of coronation cord and for allowing her access to the beautiful examples of coronation cord needle art in the collection of the Lacis Museum of Lace and Textiles in Berkeley, California.*

Oval



Loop Flower



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Embellishments to Knit

NICKY EPSTEIN



Expand your creative horizons with these versatile and unusual knitted-design techniques. When judiciously applied, these techniques bring new creativity to a knitter's design and take the piece beyond the ordinary. The best results happen when technique and imagination are in concert, so don't be afraid to experiment.

These embellishments were knitted with size 5 needles and Patons Grace, 100% mercerized cotton yarn, DK weight, 136 yards (124.4 m)/1.75 ounce (50 g) ball; www.patonsyarns.com. See below and page 62 for Abbreviations and Techniques.

Poppy

Large petal (make 5),

CO 3 sts.

Rows 1 and 7: K.

Rows 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, and 14: P.

Row 3: *K1, CO 1; rep from * to last st, k1—5 sts.

Row 5: Rep Row 3—9 sts.

Row 9: *K1, CO 1; rep from * to last st, k1—17 sts.

Rows 11 and 13: *Ssk, k to last 2 sts, k2tog—13 sts after

Row 13.

Row 15: Ssk, BO to last 2 sts, k2tog, and pass last st on needle over k2tog st. Fasten off.

Small petal (make 3),

Work Rows 1–10 of large petal, BO as for Row 15.

With tail threaded on a tapestry needle, pick up loops of CO edge and gather all 5 large petals tog. With same yarn, join the 3 small petals tog and tie to center of 5-petal group back. Fasten off. Work seven French knots (Figure 1) in center. Work 3-st knit cord (Figure 2) for stem. Add leaves, if desired.

Leaf on a Stem

CO 4 sts. Work knit cord (Figure 2) until piece measures 4 inches (10.2 cm), inc 1 st on last row—5 sts. Do not BO.

Work leaf as foll,

Row 1 (RS): K2, yo, k1, yo, k2—7 sts.

Rows 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, and 12 (WS): P.

Row 3: K3, yo, k1, yo, k3—9 sts.

Row 5: K4, yo, k1, yo, k4—11 sts.

Row 7: Ssk, k7, k2tog—9 sts.

Row 9: Ssk, k5, k2tog—7 sts.

Row 11: Ssk, k3, k2tog—5 sts.

Row 13: Ssk, k1, k2tog—3 sts.

Row 14: Sl 1 pwise, p2tog, pss0—1 st.

Fasten off.



All photographs by Joe Coca.

Casey's Picot Point (multiple of 20 sts + 1)

CO using the provisional method.

Rows 1–3: Beg with a knit row, work St st.

Row 4 (WS): P1, *yo, p2tog; rep from *.

Rows 5–7: Beg with a k row, work St st.

Row 8 (WS): Place CO sts on a spare dpn and place in front of and parallel to working needle. Fold at picot edge. P2tog (1 st from each needle) across row.

Row 9: *K1, yo, [p1, k1b] 4 times, sl 1 pwise, k2tog, pssso, [k1b, p1] 4 times, yo; rep from *, end k1.

Row 10: P1, *p1, yo, [k1, p1b] 3 times, k1, sl 1 kwise, p2tog, pssso, k1, [p1b, k1] 3 times, yo, p2; rep from *.

Row 11: *K3, yo, [p1, k1b] 3 times, sl 1 pwise, k2tog, pssso, [k1b, p1] 3 times, yo, k2; rep from *, end last rep k3.

Row 12: P1, *p3, yo, [k1, p1b] 2 times, k1, sl 1 kwise, p2tog, pssso, k1, [p1b, k1] 2 times, yo, p4; rep from *.

Row 13: *K5, yo, [p1, k1b] 2 times, sl 1 pwise, k2tog, pssso, [k1b, p1] 2 times, yo, k4; rep from *, end last rep k5.

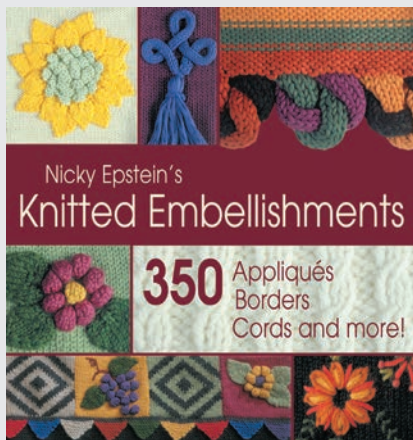
Row 14: P1, *p5, yo, k1, p1b, k1, sl 1 kwise, p2tog, pssso, k1, p1b, k1, yo, p6; rep from *.

Row 15: *K7, yo, p1, k1b, sl 1 pwise, k2tog, pssso, k1b, p1, yo, k6; rep from *, end last rep k7.

Row 16: P1, *p7, yo, k1, sl 1 kwise, p2tog, pssso, k1, yo, p8; rep from *.

Row 17: *K9, yo, sl 1 pwise, k2tog, pssso, yo, k8; rep from *, end last rep k9.

Row 18: P.



Knitted Embellishments

From frogs to fruits, *Nicky Epstein's Knitted Embellishments: 350 Appliqués, Borders, Cords, and More!* (Loveland, Colorado: Interweave, 1999) offers knitters of all levels the opportunity to expand their creative horizons with versatile and unusual knitted-design techniques. To order, visit interweavestore.com/Knitting/Books/Nicky-Epsteins-Knitted-Embellishments.html.



Celtic Connemara Knot

Work tube st (Figure 3) for desired length. Beg and end at top, work in “under, over” motions as shown in the illustration below.

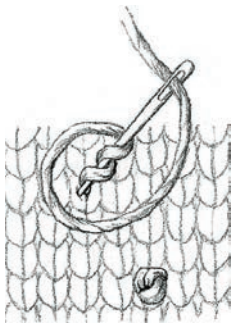
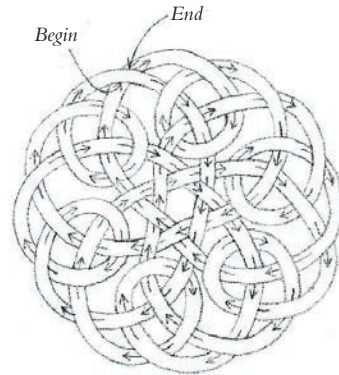


Figure 1
French Knot

Work French knots singularly or in clusters to make flowers or flower centers. Bring needle out of the knitted background from back to front, wrap yarn around needle one to three times and use your thumb to hold it in place as you pull needle through the wraps into the background a short distance (one background thread) from where the thread first emerged.



Figure 3
Tube Stitch

CO 5 sts.
Row 1 (RS): K1, [sl 1 pwise, k1] 2 times.
Row 2: Sl 1 pwise, [p1, sl 1 pwise] 2 times.
Rep Rows 1 and 2 for desired length.



Figure 2
Knit Cord

The cord (also called “knitted cord” and “I-cord”) is a tube made with two double-pointed needles. CO 3 (or more) sts. *K3 (or more) sts. Do not turn work. Slide sts to right end of needle. Pull yarn to tighten. Rep from * for desired length.

Adapted from *Nicky Epstein's Knitted Embellishments: 350 Appliqués, Borders, Cords, and More!* (Loveland, Colorado: Interweave, 1999).

ABOUT THE DESIGNER. Nicky Epstein is one of the country's leading knitwear designers and authors. Her unique designs have appeared in knitwear publications, on television, and in museums. She is the author of more than twenty-five bestselling books that range from fashionable designs to original, breakthrough knitting techniques. She teaches and lectures around the world and is a passionate devotee of the art and craft of knitting.

Embellish *with the Knit Stitch*

NELL ZNAMIEROWSKI

People have all sorts of favorites: foods, colors, clothes, time of day. My mother, Helen Wojnar Znamierowski (1904–1982), an avid embroiderer, had a favorite stitch for canvas work. As a young girl in southern Poland, her needle-arts teacher taught her many interesting stitches along with other techniques such as crochet, lacework, and cutwork. But when it came to covering canvas, she always was drawn to the knit (or soumak) stitch, a diagonal stitch with a herringbone effect that looks like flat knitting and naturally forms a slightly indented line where the stitches meet vertically.

In Poland, Mother had used the knit stitch many times, especially in large projects such as a lightweight rug that also could be hung on the wall and a giant pillow cover. But in the United States she was so busy with crochet, cutwork, and sewing that she didn't return to canvas work and the knit stitch for more than thirty years. The occasion that prompted the return was a photograph that she had seen in her favorite inspirational magazine, *Woman's Day*, which in the 1960s had a significant needlework/crafts section. In the photograph were several needlepoint pillow covers of different designs and colors. She felt that one of them had the perfect colors for my New York City apartment and that its tile-work pattern was modern enough for my tastes.



Canvas pillow cover embroidered with knit (or soumak) stitch by the author's mother, Helen Wojnar Znamierowski, inspired by needlepoint pillow covers seen in an issue of *Woman's Day* in the 1960s. Leftover three-ply Persian wool from the author's rug-weaving business was used for the embroidery. Photograph by Joe Coca.



TOP: Swatch embroidered in five colors in knit stitch on canvas by the author's mother. The stitch creates a herringbone effect that looks much like knitted stockinette stitch.

Photograph by Joe Coca.

BOTTOM: The back of another knit-stitch swatch embroidered in three colors on canvas by the author's mother.

Photograph by Joe Coca.

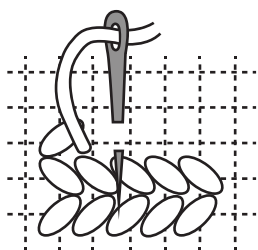
On her next visit to the city from her home in up-state New York, she brought the photograph, and I agreed with her about the colors and design. We never discussed which stitch she would use since she had said she knew how she was going to do it. "It" turned out to be the knit stitch, not the stitch that had been used in the project in the magazine.

We went to work picking out four to five colors from my vast yarn stock: I had a small rya (high-pile) rug-weaving business and had small amounts of leftover yarn in a great variety of colors. Nearly all the yarn was a three-ply Persian rug wool like that used in the weaving and repair of oriental carpets. It came from Paternayan, a company well known in those days for its quality and immense color selection.

Mother and I picked out several colors that would look good on my purple velvet couch. I also gave her samples of different types of canvas so that she could figure out which would work best with her knit stitch. She made several samples of different combinations of the colors that we had picked, from which we made our final choices for two to three pillows.

When a decorator friend of mine saw the pillows, he asked if he could order some in colors that he needed for a client. I knew that Mother was looking for winter projects when she couldn't be active in her garden so I agreed to it. We filled the initial order and then got new orders for other clients of the same decorator friend. All were in the same pattern and, of course, the knit stitch. Only the colors kept changing. This lasted for perhaps two to three years.

Knit Stitch



Bring needle back to front, *insert front to back in the first hole above and to the right (or left, according to direction of line being worked). Emerge through the hole directly below. Repeat from *. For herringbone, move left in next row. Make a larger stitch by working over more threads.

Stitch diagram courtesy of the author.



At this point, I changed apartments and needed pillows as chair seats, so Mother went to work with canvas and the knit stitch again. We also entered work in exhibitions. I can vaguely remember receiving a joint prize at one show. The designs were no longer from *Woman's Day* but were based on geometric shapes and sketch-

es from my travels abroad. One thing never changed though: the stitch was always knit.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR. Nell Znamierowski is a retired designer, color consultant, instructor in woven design, and textile writer. She wrote about her mother for *PieceWork's* special issue on Ellis Island (September/October 1996) and in the November/December 2012 issue.



Detail of rug or wall hanging worked in knit stitch; started in Poland and finished in the United States by the author's mother. Photograph courtesy of the author.



Pillow cover worked in knit stitch in Poland by the author's mother. Photograph courtesy of the author.

Trimmed and Ornamented

First Lady Ida McKinley's Dresses *and* Gowns

B E T S Y B U T L E R



EMBROIDERY, BEADS, TUCKS, PLEATS, BRAID, appliqué, buttons, or other decorations: trimmings not only add to the beauty and distinctiveness of garments, but also reveal clues about the wearer's individuality. The McKinley Presidential Library & Museum in Canton, Ohio, is home to twenty circa-1890s dresses and gowns that belonged to Ida Saxton McKinley (1847–1907), who was First Lady of the United States from 1897 to 1901. Although she suffered from ill health throughout much of her adult life, the blue-eyed, auburn-haired First Lady had a definite taste for fashion.

Long, tight sleeves that puffed at the shoulder and tapered toward the wrist were a feature of many day dresses of the period; many included pintucks and cuffs decorated with rows of velvet ribbon or trimmed with delicate lace. Long, bell-shaped skirts had slight trains, gored panels that made them fit smoothly over the hips and flair to the hem, underskirts with pleated ruffles, hem-stiffening horsehair interfacings, small padded fabric bustles known as bump pads, and generous interior pockets.

Popular fabrics included heavy satins, brocades, and failles with patterned designs or bold stripes. Contrasting colors, various shades of the same colors, and matched fabrics and patterns frequently were combined in the same dress. Combining textures, for example, marrying satin with velvet, was another way of creating interest. By the turn of the century, many skirts were overlaid with lace. Light, translucent fabrics such as chiffon were incorporated into a tailored bodice to create ruffled or ruched shirtwaists. Swirling, curving embroidery embellished eveningwear. Sparkling sequins, beads, faceted artificial jewels and pearls, and cords of twisted metal threads made the entire garment glitter. Several of Mrs. McKinley's gowns feature these elegant embellishments.

Mrs. McKinley appears to have had a penchant for aqua. One patterned black net and beige silk faille bodice has a band of aqua silk at the wrists. A black silk crepe bodice trimmed with black lace, pleats, and tucks is accented with aqua stitches on the reverse of tabs that close the garment in the front, and an accompanying pale beige chiffon blouse has an insert trimmed with applied beige lace and accents of aqua embroidery. The waistline of a beige silk taffeta dress is accented with a broad, fringed sash in matching fabric that is backed with aqua silk and adorned with an embroidered light aqua flower. Pale aqua chiffon adorns the wrists and cascades down the front of both the bodice and the skirt of a woven iris-patterned silk damask dress. An aqua silk faille dress with buttons



OPPOSITE: Photograph of Ida McKinley. Photographer unknown. United States. Circa 1880–1890. Collection of the McKinley Presidential Library & Museum, Canton, Ohio. *Courtesy of the McKinley Presidential Library & Museum.*

LEFT: Two-piece costume worn by Ida McKinley. Embroidered waist tape reads “Marshall Field.” Gray silk crepe trimmed with combinations of pale rose and off-white cording, small pearls, and bands of narrow gray velvet. The standing collar of the bodice extends downward, coming to a point in front. A divided tail, or peplum, is front and back. Long sleeves are scalloped at the wrist and slightly puffed at the shoulder. 1898. Collection of the McKinley Presidential Library & Museum, Canton, Ohio. *Photograph by Kimberly A. Kenney and courtesy of the McKinley Presidential Library & Museum.*

BELOW: Detail of dress bodice from Marshall Field worn by Ida McKinley. Gray silk crepe; pale rose and off-white cording; small pearls; bands of narrow gray velvet. Collection of the McKinley Presidential Library & Museum, Canton, Ohio. *Photograph by the author and courtesy of the McKinley Presidential Library & Museum.*



under the left arm has a beige and aqua leaf-embroidered band trimming the neck, sleeves, and waist of the bodice; the skirt front has a panel of shirred aqua silk; a band of box-pleated aqua satin edges the hem of the skirt.

Embroidered tapes inside the waist of several of the dresses identify the dressmakers whom Mrs. McKinley favored: Mrs. Dunstan of 6 East 30th Street, New York City; Mme. George of Baltimore and Paris; Rock & Torpey of 13 West 29th Street, New York City. A gray silk dress in the collection came from Marshall Field in Chicago. As her nephew worked there, it is thought that Mrs. McKinley took the train to Chicago and then chose dresses from a selection that representatives from Marshall Field brought to her hotel room.

Although Mrs. McKinley's garments are still stunning, they are showing their age. They are currently stored in ar-

chival boxes in a temperature-controlled room, but only a few are stable enough for occasional display. Fortunately, the museum will be conserving and stabilizing each of the dresses and gowns so that they may be displayed for the public to enjoy as well as preserving them for the future.

"Clothes are especially useful because they were worn by real people, in real times, in real places," says Jean Druesedow, director of the Kent State University Museum. "They speak volumes about the wearer's age, sex, and socioeconomic status, together with the occasion or ceremony at which the garment was worn. But costumes need some thematic context to make them make sense for the gallery visitor. Showing Mrs. McKinley's dresses provides a context about not only her life as a First Lady, but also that point in her life and in her husband's career. I wish these clothes could talk."



LEFT: Detail of dress bodice worn by Ida McKinley. Aqua silk faille with buttons under left arm; beige and aqua leaf-embroidered band trimming neck, sleeves, and waist. Circa 1890. Collection of the McKinley Presidential Library & Museum, Canton, Ohio.

Photograph by Kimberly A. Kenney and courtesy of the McKinley Presidential Library & Museum.

RIGHT: Gown worn by Ida McKinley. Sapphire blue velvet; Battenberg lace; narrow bands of embroidered brown and ivory velvet ribbons; fagoting; tiny gold beads. Circa 1890. Collection of the McKinley Presidential Library & Museum, Canton, Ohio.

Photograph by Kimberly A. Kenney and courtesy of the McKinley Presidential Library & Museum.

Ida Saxton McKinley

Ida Saxton was born June 8, 1847, in Canton, Ohio, to James Saxton (1816–1887) and Katherine DeWalt Saxton (1827–1873). The eldest of three children, Ida was educated at private boarding schools in New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania, and in 1869, she, her sister Mary, and a handful of other young women joined a local teacher for a six-month Grand Tour of Europe.

Back home in Canton, Ida worked as a clerk and a cashier in her father's Stark County Bank; her grandfather Saxton had founded the local newspaper, *The Ohio Repository*, in 1815. She also began teaching Sunday school at the First Presbyterian Church. On her way to church, she would often pass William McKinley (1843–1901), a lawyer and Civil War veteran from Niles, Ohio, who was superintendent of the Sunday school at First Methodist Church, and they would talk about their work. They were married January 25, 1871.

The McKinleys had two daughters, Katie (1871–1875) and Ida (1873–1873). Ida died at the age of four months, and the McKinleys lost Katie to typhoid just before her fourth birthday. Mrs. McKinley, who had also lost her mother in 1873, suffered from severe headaches, epileptic seizures, fainting spells, and periods of depression for the rest of her life. Phlebitis made walking difficult without assistance.

Nonetheless, Mrs. McKinley supported her attentive, devoted husband as much as she was able. William McKinley had been a seven-term member of the U.S. House of Representatives from 1876 to 1891 and a two-term governor of Ohio from 1892 to 1895. Campaigning from the front porch of the couple's Canton home, McKinley was elected president of the United States in 1896 and again in 1900. He was assassinated in 1901. After her husband's death, Ida McKinley returned to Canton and died there of a stroke in 1907.

—B. B.

“Conservation treatment aims to preserve historic material and to make it look ‘right’ while preserving historic integrity,” textile conservator Chandra Obie explains. “This is why it is important to make a distinction between restoration and conservation. The goal of restoration is to make an object look new, typically without regard to its historic integrity. The goal of conservation is to stabilize an object so it can continue to be appreciated. It's important to understand the difference as we prepare to treat Ida's dresses because the history of these pieces is so important. The fact that they were Ida's is what makes them really special, so a responsible conservation treatment must safeguard as much ‘Idaness’ as possible.

“Most of [the gowns] have seen some hard times with various alterations, damage from old storage conditions, some stains, and fading,” Obie says. “Easily the biggest challenge for these pieces is the linings. In this period of history, a lot of silk was weighted, which means that when it was manufactured, a metal salt was added to change the way the fabric feels and drapes. Unfortunately, these metals are not friendly in the long term, and we see very typical weighting damage, such as brittleness, spontaneous splitting, and powdering.”

Obie hopes to preserve as much of the silk as possible by aligning conservation support material that has been



Detail of dress bodice worn by Ida McKinley. Embroidered beige cotton; beige net; lace-trimmed stand-up collar of bodice and skirt hem edged with narrow black ribbon; skirt accented with vertical panels of matching lace and finished with knife-pleated ruffle at hem. Circa 1890. Collection of the McKinley Presidential Library & Museum, Canton, Ohio.

Photograph by the author and courtesy of the McKinley Presidential Library & Museum.

LEFT: Dress bodice worn by Ida McKinley. Black velvet ribbon bow on left side of bodice made of purple-and-cream-striped silk with woven chevron design. Circa 1890. Collection of the McKinley Presidential Library & Museum, Canton, Ohio. Photograph by Kimberly A. Kenney and courtesy of the McKinley Presidential Library & Museum.



RIGHT: Dress bodice worn by Ida McKinley. Beige silk taffeta; small applied black velvet circles and dots on bodice extending down front of skirt. Circa 1890. Collection of the McKinley Presidential Library & Museum, Canton, Ohio. Photograph by Kimberly A. Kenney and courtesy of the McKinley Presidential Library & Museum.



impregnated with conservation adhesive under the damaged areas and reactivating the adhesive with a heated spatula. For areas that are too damaged for this treatment, custom-dyed infill material will be applied.

The last decade of the nineteenth century was a time of great industrial innovation, and dressmakers had at their disposal many new and unusual embellishments, such as early plastics, natural materials treated with chemical processes, and new dyes and fabrics. “That makes for a challenging recipe years later, when we aren’t sure what we are looking at or how to take the best possible care of it,” Obie observes. The extensive beadwork on several of the McKinley dresses presents its own challenge in that any cleaning treatments are limited by how they might affect the beads.

One ensemble is made of multiple fabrics, including beige silk taffeta. Small, hand-applied black flocked velveteen circles and dots are scattered across the garment, decorating the bodice and extending down the front of the skirt. “At first glance, it seems there are some dark, crusty stains, but when one looks more closely, the stains are the leftover glue spots where black flocked circles have fallen off,” Obie says. “Those glue spot stains are a valuable clue to how the ensemble once looked.”

The time to complete each treatment depends on whether the piece requires simple stabilization or more extensive work; the estimated cost to conserve each garment is \$5,000. The museum is accepting tax-deductible

donations to support the project; visit www.mckinleymuseum.org. You can follow the project on Facebook: www.facebook.com/IdaMcKinleyDressProject. ❖

ABOUT THE AUTHOR. *Betsy Butler is a librarian in Columbus, Ohio, whose fondness of history, reading, and travel equals her enjoyment of cross-stitch, needlepoint, and knitting. She wrote “If I Only Could See to Sew”:How Needlework Enhanced the Quiet, Industrious Life of Henrietta McGuffey Hepburn” for the November/December 2009 issue of PieceWork. Visit her blog at <http://beesfirstappearance.wordpress.com>.*

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1896 Beaded Cuffs to Knit

CAROL HUEBSCHER RHOADES



MATERIALS

Dream in Color Smooshy, 100% superwash Australian merino yarn, fingering weight, 450 yards (411.5 m) / 110 gram (3.9 oz) ball, 1 ball of #20 Blue Sage; www.dreamincoloryarn.com

Needles, 2 straight or double pointed, size 00 (1.75 mm) or size needed to obtain gauge

Caravan Beads, size 8° glass seed beads, 10 grams (0.3 oz)/ tube, 3 tubes of Matt Metallic Khaki Iris #8-2035; www.theloopyewe.com

Beading needle, size 10; www.colonialneedle.com

Thread, sewing or quilting, short length

Tapestry needle

Finished size: 6¼ inches (15.9 cm) circumference and 4½ inches (11.4 cm) long

Gauge: 8 sts and 18 rows = 1 inch (2.5 cm) in garter st

See page 62 for Abbreviations and Techniques

The chart for this project is available in PDF format at pieceworkmagazine.com/Charts-Illustrations

Victorian England's *Weldon's Practical Knitter* contains numerous patterns for bead-embellished cuffs, ranging from bracelet length to about 5 inches (13 cm) long, with beads used for pattern motifs and/or edgings. In most cases, the beads are worked on a garter-stitch ground.

The pattern that I adapted here is in the Thirty-First Series and appears in *Weldon's Practical Needlework*, Volume 11 (1896, facsimile ed., Loveland, Colorado: Interweave, 2004). I simplified the original pattern by choosing slightly larger needles and yarn and working two rather than three pattern repeats. I charted the design from the photograph in the book.

Following a summary on the basics of beaded knitting, Weldon's offers these options: "The colouring of both wool and beads must be left to the worker. The model given here was worked with black wool and gilt beads, but there is abundant choice in colours for those who wish to match particular costumes or are fond of variety. For very deep mourning most handsome cuffs can be made of black wool and small, round, dull jet beads."

INSTRUCTIONS

Notes: Before beginning, string 418 beads for one cuff onto the yarn (plus a few extra beads) as follows: thread the beading needle with a short length of thread; knot the ends. Hook the end of the yarn through the thread loop and pull about 6 inches (15 cm) through. Move the thread knot so it is not under the yarn fold to avoid bead-impeding bulk at that point. The beads move from the needle, down the sewing thread, onto the doubled yarn, and, finally, onto the single strand of yarn. Each bead sits *between* two stitches and is placed on a wrong-side row so it will show on the right side. Read the chart from right to left on right-side rows and left to right on wrong-side rows. Each square on the chart is a stitch; the Place Bead dot on the line is a bead placed between two stitches; every row begins with slip one knitwise with yarn in back and ends with purl one. Work only Rows 1–54 for the second repeat.

Cuff

String 418 beads onto working yarn. Holding 2 needles tog, CO 37 sts. Carefully remove 1 needle. Work Set-Up Rows 1 and 2 of Bead Chart, work Rows 1–56 once, and then rep Rows 1–54 once more—36 sts. Leave sts on needle.

Finishing

With right side facing, turn the cuff so that the cast-on row is at the top. Using a double-pointed needle and working from right to left, pick up (do not knit) thirty-six loops across the cast-on edge. Fold the cuff so the two sets of stitches are parallel with right side facing out and join with Kitchener Stitch. Weave in all ends. Hand wash gently in lukewarm water and wool-safe soap. ❖

ABOUT THE DESIGNER. Carol Huebscher Rhoades lives in Madison, Wisconsin, where she cannot knit enough beaded cuffs. She researches Scandinavian, German, and British knitting traditions and translates Scandinavian knitting and crochet books into English.

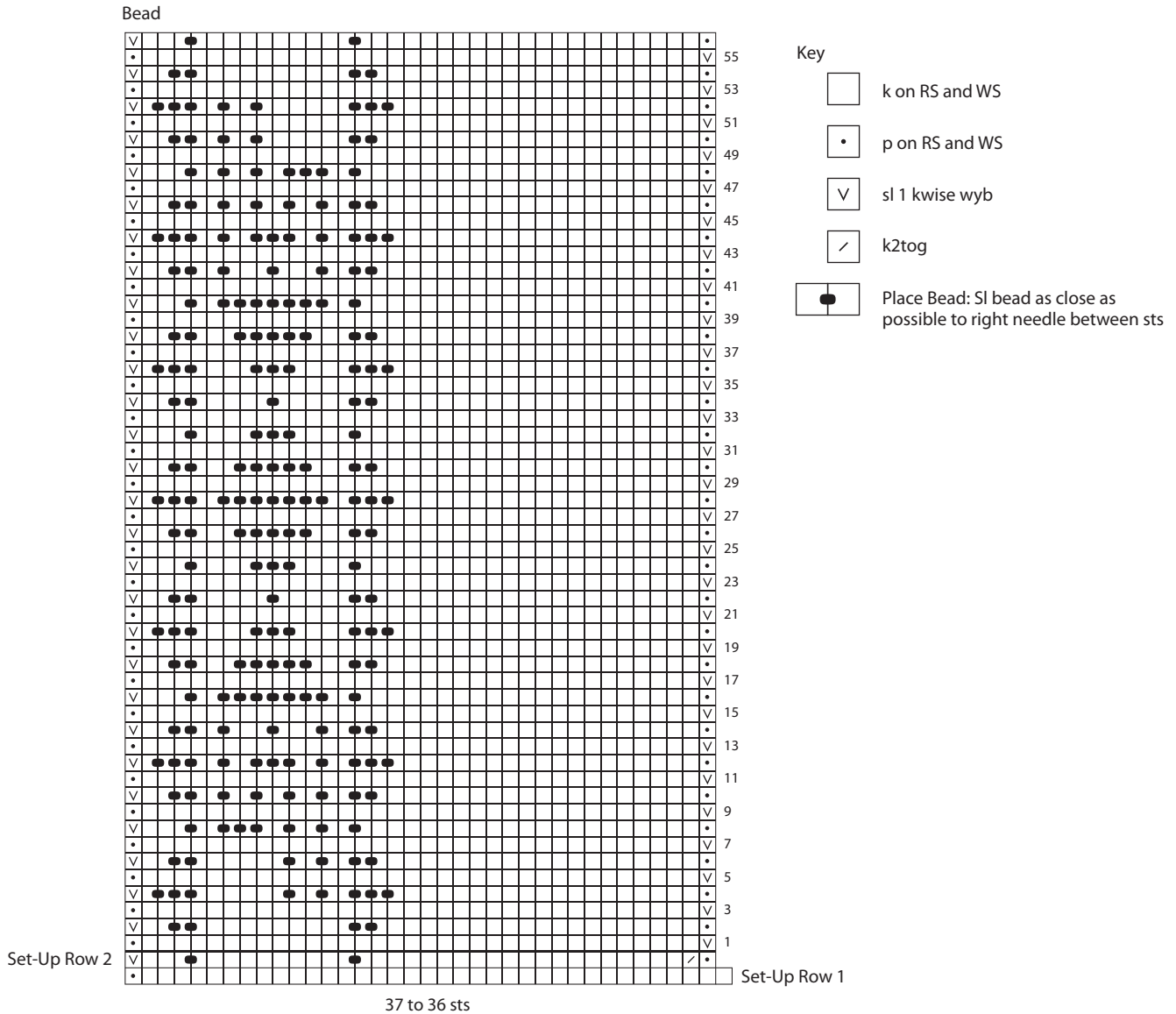


Chart may be photocopied for personal use.



Hard White

My Button Box

CHRISTEN BROWN



Picture



Glow Bubble

MY MOM USED TO SEW ALL OF OUR CLOTHES, and she kept the leftover buttons in an old Royal Cigar box. Besides everyday buttons common during the 1950s and 1960s, the box also held an assortment of teddy bear eyes and metal snaps, plastic buckles and bra clips, sequins and little metal bells, orphaned rhinestones, and plastic pearl beads.

I loved playing with the buttons in my mom's box, and I especially loved the sound they created as I let them sift through my fingers. My love for buttons grew as I started sewing my own clothes. I was drawn to the designer and handmade buttons sold at the fabric store where I worked while attending the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising. I used to make jackets and dresses to display them on, often using them as decoration rather than as closures—I love buttons but avoid buttonholes and loops (go figure!).

Early in my career as a maker of wearable art, a customer gave me eight boxes of vintage buttons; they became the foundation of my own button stash. Today, I look at collecting as a treasure hunt: I haunt antique shops, thrift stores, garage sales, and estate sales in my quest for additions to my collection. Here are some of my favorites:

Hard White

One of my most exciting thrift-store finds was this nineteenth-century hard-white pewter button. Several New England manufacturers made pewter buttons from a hard tin alloy; of the patterns that have been documented, this is #7 with the backmark "Spencer & Hotchkiss." This button is notable for its unattractive shank. Because pewter self-shanks eventually wore down, manufacturers took to using a longer-lasting brass wire shank embedded into a hump of metal.

Picture

Nineteenth-century German metal picture buttons were molded in one piece or made in two parts with the design resting on the second piece of metal and often tinted a different color. The scenes typically depict heroic figures, a popular opera, or mythological characters. On this example, back-marked "Eingetragen," a man poles a woman in a rowboat through a pond set against a japanned background.

Guilloché

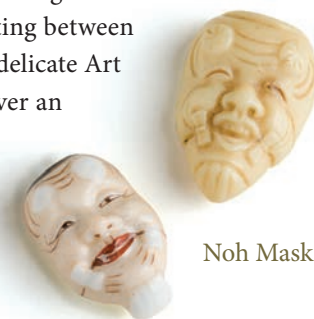
I made this bracelet showcasing four blue *guilloché* enamel buttons dating between 1890 and 1920. They have a delicate Art Nouveau design engraved over an



Champlevé



Satsuma



Noh Mask

Bakelite



Guilloché



engine-turned geometric pattern. The base of the metal button blank is first carved and then covered with a thin layer of enamel.

Champlevé

The original owner of this nineteenth-century button came from the Midwest on a Conestoga wagon to settle in California; the button was passed down through many generations of her family and then to me. Its beauty comes from its detailed enameled surface. *Champlevé* (French for “raised field”) is an enameling process in which a metal button blank is first dye-stamped and then the raised and recessed pattern is filled with powdered glass and fired. This button also is embellished with three tiny riveted cut steel studs.

Satsuma

I found this early-twentieth-century Japanese button at an antique mall in a jar with about a hundred other buttons; this little treasure was worth the price of the whole lot! Made from a fine grade of porcelain clay and fired at a high temperature, these buttons have hand-painted designs with a cracked glaze and a self-shank. Patterns include figures and floral designs with gilt details; a common pattern is bamboo shoots.

Noh Mask

These Japanese buttons, in versions made from porcelain and celluloid, depict the masks worn by actors in Noh theatrical performances. This is Okina, the Vener-

able Patriarch, one of the oldest masks still used today. These examples were exported from Japan during the late 1950s and early 1960s, sewn either on a card or in a boxed collection of six masks with a description of each character.

Celluloid

One of the most versatile plastics was celluloid. Developed in the nineteenth century, this cellulose-based plastic was used through the 1940s in everything from buttons to hairbrushes and photographic film. The buttons could be molded, stamped, extruded, and/or carved; the surface could be painted or the plastic itself tinted. Fine detailing, light weight, and intricately carved floral patterns are unmistakable characteristics of celluloid buttons made during the mid-twentieth century. On this coat button, the floral embellishment is glued to the navy disk background; a separate celluloid shank is glued on the back.

Glow Bubble

The Glow Bubble is a three-layer button comprising a thin clear or partially painted celluloid dome fixed to a bottom metal layer with a shank. The third, inner layer has an iridescent sheet glued to cardboard set into the bezel of the bottom layer. The iridescence shines through the clear or partial pattern of the dome. These are mid-twentieth-century coat buttons shown with an example of an iridescent sheet.

Bakelite

A durable, phenol-based plastic developed during the early part of the twentieth century, Bakelite remained popular through the 1940s. Easily recognizable by its rich solid colors (red, pumpkin, olive, forest green, butterscotch, chestnut, and black), Bakelite was used for all sorts of utensils, auto parts, telephones, and jewelry, as well as for buttons.

Celluloid



Glass Intaglio



Perfume



Intaglio Bakelite

The thickness of Bakelite allowed reverse carving, called intaglio. This mid-twentieth-century two-part button (shown at right) has a clear carved dome set into a black frame. It is from a set of five buttons that were on a wool coat of my grandmother's. Clear Bakelite had a tendency to yellow with age. By comparison, the Lucite coat button with the same reverse carving shown next to the Bakelite example shows no sign of yellowing. Lucite, made by DuPont beginning in the 1930s, is a polymerized methyl methacrylate. This single button was at the neck of a cream-colored wool swing coat that belonged to my mom.

Glass Intaglio

The intaglio technique also was used for glass buttons. These buttons that I found in an old sewing box among a tangle of threads are clear with a painted pattern on the recessed back of the glass. The large flat dome button has a painted pattern of zinnias; the smaller one has painted flowers. Because of the shape, the smaller button is called a "paperweight."

Molded Glass

Germany and Czechoslovakia were major producers of glass buttons from the late nineteenth century through the mid-1940s. Many of them were made

in lively colors. During the Victorian era, especially for use on mourning attire, molded black glass buttons were popular as a cheap substitute for buttons made from jet, a hard mineral similar to coal. I found this detailed black glass jacket button and small iridescent dress button in an old dresser drawer hidden in my grandmother's basement.

Tagua Nut

Buttons are made from a variety of natural materials; mother of pearl, from fresh- and saltwater mollusk shells, is probably the most common. Tagua nut, the seed

Cleaning and Care of Buttons

Rubber, Molded Glass, China, and Porcelain

Rub with a soft cloth or soft toothbrush. If designs are not painted on, the buttons may be gently cleaned in a mild solution of hand soap and water; rinse; dry immediately.

Metal

Rub with a soft cloth or soft toothbrush. A polishing cloth may be used on sterling silver. Do not use water or cleaning chemicals.

Mother of Pearl

Rub with a soft cloth or soft toothbrush. If designs are not painted on, the buttons may be gently cleaned in a mild solution of hand soap and water; rinse; dry immediately. Too much water and abrasion can remove the glossy surface.

Tagua Nut, Wood, Leather, Papier-Mâché, Horn, and Composition

Rub with a soft cloth or soft toothbrush. Do not use water or chemicals.

Fabric-Covered and Woven-Thread Buttons

To remove dirt, vacuum with gentle suction through a small piece of screen secured over the nozzle.

Celluloid, Bakelite, and Lucite

Rub with a soft cloth or soft toothbrush. If designs are not painted on, the buttons may be gently cleaned in a mild solution of hand soap and water; rinse; dry immediately. Do not use cleaning chemicals.

—C. B.

Whistle



Molded Glass



Tagua Nut



of a kind of South American palm tree is another. When carved, the nut, also known as vegetable ivory, has striations similar to ivory and has been used as an ivory substitute since the nineteenth century. The nut can be left in its natural color or dyed, usually in browns, tans, or black, but sometimes in brighter reds, blues, or greens. Because the dye penetrates only the outer layer of the nut, carving reveals its natural color, as seen in this early-twentieth-century red button with the flower-shaped carving shown with a tagua nut.

Painted Wood

With the scarcity of metal during and after World War II (1939–1945), manufacturers had to find substitute button materials. Wood became one of the materials of choice. Wood buttons are easily cut, stamped, dyed, or painted, or carved and inlaid with shell or small pieces of metal. I found this small wood button sitting in a little silver dish at an antique mall. The delicate floral pattern has a hand-painted design with gilt details; it has a self-shank.

Perfume

These perfume buttons are nineteenth-century velvet-covered buttons with a tiny metal design worked around the outer edge and a partial fern design in the center. They

were sewn down the front of a woman's dress and dabbed with a little perfume. Perfumes of the eighteenth century were oil based; putting perfume on the buttons was a way to avoid staining the garment to which they were attached. It is said that a woman would give a scented button to the man she loved as a token of remembrance.

Cut Steel

Cut steel buttons emulating gemstones were popular in France during the mid- to late eighteenth century. Steel was first chipped and faceted, sometimes with as many as fifteen cuts, polished, and riveted to a metal base to create a beautiful, tiny, labor-intensive work of art. This example dates to the late nineteenth or early twentieth century.

Whistle

One of my favorite styles of button, the whistle button has a single hole on the face and two holes on the back; the slightly recessed hole on the face protects the thread used to sew on the button from wear. As to the origin of its name, blowing into one of the holes of a china button produces a whistle sound. The three buttons shown here are made from carved tagua nut, glass, and mother of pearl. Whistle buttons also have been made from wood, china, and papier-mâché.

Intaglio Bakelite



Painted Wood



Cut Steel





Buttons on Cards

Many types of buttons were sold affixed to cards. Here are three examples. Realistic buttons, popular during the 1930s and 1940s, were made primarily from glass, plastic, or wood, and resembled everyday objects such as fruit (as seen here), buildings, and sewing notions. In the late nineteenth century, the mother-of-pearl industry in America was centered in the Mississippi River Valley. Machines punching out button blanks from mollusk shells created millions of buttons during this period. A few manufacturers dyed or painted their shell buttons. The group of painted mother-of-pearl buttons shown here date from the 1920s to the 1950s. Clever advertising on the cards was intended to promote sales.

As I continue to add to my collection and research button history and lore, each of my buttons has become more special to me. ❖



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR. *Christen Brown has been teaching fiber art, beadwork, ribbonwork, and embroidery for more than twenty years. She is the author of Ribbonwork Gardens: The Ultimate Visual Guide to 122 Flowers, Leaves & Embellishment Extras and Embroidered and Embellished: 85 Stitches Using Thread, Floss, Ribbon, Beads & More (Lafayette, California: C&T, 2012 and 2013, respectively) and has contributed to PieceWork and Threads magazines. Visit her website at www.christenbrown.com.*

Storing and Preventing Damage to Buttons

- Keep vintage plastic buttons such as celluloid and Bakelite in acid-free archival boxes that are not airtight.
- Celluloid products are flammable and susceptible to bugs.
- Many two-piece metal buttons have a piece of cardboard between the top and bottom layers. If the button gets wet, the cardboard will retain the water, and the metal will rust or discolor; it cannot be cleaned.
- Glue shrinks with age; glued decorations that fall off can be reattached by applying glue such as E-6000.

—C. B.

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Cloth Flowers *to* Make

PEARL COLE

When I was eight or nine years old, my Granny, Vina Elizabeth Halpain (1889–1983), taught me how to make these little cloth flowers. As I've seen neither patterns

nor instructions on how to make what I now call “Granny Flowers,” I am very happy to show others how to make them so that they can enjoy using them as much as I have.

I prefer to use a fabric circle measuring 3 inches (7.6 cm) in diameter, but you can try different sizes to see which you like best. Almost any soft fabric—cotton, organdy, crepe, silk, batiste—can be used; velvet works well with larger circles.

INSTRUCTIONS

Flower

Trace the circle pattern template onto fabric (Figure 1). Cut out the circle.

Run a gathering thread around the circle of fabric about $\frac{1}{8}$ inch (3 mm) from the edge (Figure 2).

Pull gathers until the raw edges are almost touching. Fasten thread. Do not cut thread. This is the back of the flower (Figure 3).

Turn flower over; this is the flower front. Bring needle and thread up from the back in the center of the circle. Wrap the thread from the center, over the edge, and bring the needle back up through the center (Figure 4).



Embellish clothing, household linens, and accessories with these precious “Granny Flowers.” The flowers are made from cotton and Hanah Silk Satin in Teak, Fawn, Blue Jeans, and Misty, and were photographed on examples of Hanah Silk; for more information, visit www.artemisinc.com.

Photograph by Joe Coca.



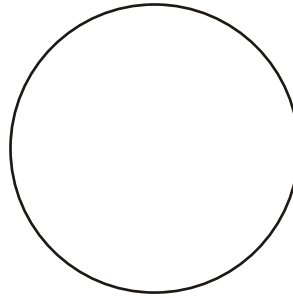
With thumb and finger, lightly hold edge of material and pull thread to gather material down toward the center. (Holding the edge as you gather will keep nice smooth gathers in the petals.) Go around the edge once more in the same place and come up in the center. This 2nd stitch will hold the petal firmly in place while you make the next petal (Figure 5).

In the same manner, go around 4 more times for a 5-petal flower. (Don't forget the 2nd stitch on each petal.) Fasten off on back. Sew a bead for flower center, if desired (Figure 6).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR. Pearl Cole was fortunate to be born into a family of needleworkers who taught her to knit, crochet, embroider, and sew, which she has done for most of her eighty years. Recognized nationally for her work growing and decorating gourds, she still finds plenty of time for needlework and for making "Granny Flowers."



Figure 1



Template may be photocopied for personal use. Enlarge or reduce template to fit chosen fabric.

Figure 2

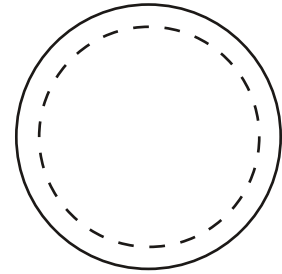


Figure 3

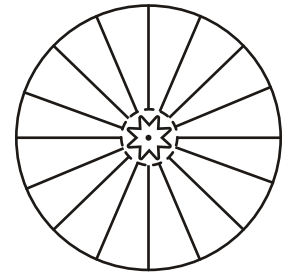


Figure 4

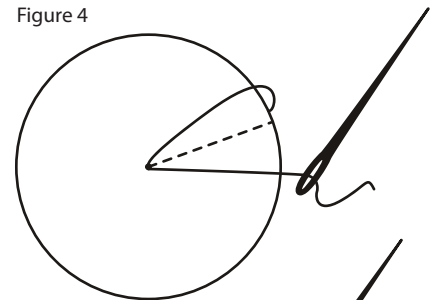


Figure 5

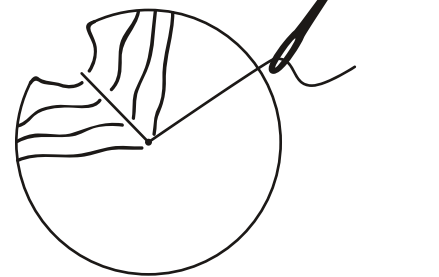
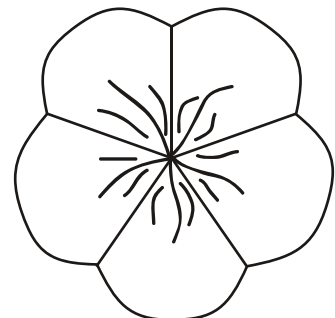


Figure 6



Mrs. Embroidery

Edite Mogensen

CATHARINA FORBES



NESTLED BETWEEN ESTONIA AND LITHUANIA, Latvia is bordered on the east by Russia and on the west by the Baltic Sea. All three countries, which have long served as an economic and cultural link between Russia and the rest of Europe, have for more than 800 years suffered from foreign occupation.

Latvia is the homeland of my friend Edite Mogensen, a preeminent needlewoman who now makes her home in Sarnia, Ontario, Canada. The Latvia into which Edite was born in 1931 had declared its independence in 1918. In 1932, Latvia and the Soviet Union concluded a non-aggression treaty, and the country was rediscovering its ancient roots and enjoying a cultural renaissance. There was a rebirth of national pride and a revival of traditional costumes, some dating back more than a thousand years.

Ancient Latvians had had close ties to the natural world and a code, *dzīves ziņa* (life knowledge), which governed the people's interactions with each other and with the

world, and that was the foundation of their religion. They respected and revered all of nature. Some of the symbolism of this early religion has carried over into the symbols of traditional ornamentation still seen in the crafts of today's Latvia.

During this time, clothing was made at home from locally grown flax and wool. Men wore linen trousers, and women wore woolen skirts with tablet woven sashes. Shoes, belts, and caps were made of leather. Shirts and blouses were closed with brooches, the cuffless sleeves held in place by bronze bracelets. The German occupation of the country in the thirteenth century caused hardship and saw the disappearance of bronze ornamentation and jewelry, resulting in little to no archaeological evidence from burial sites of this period.

Knitting began to appear during the fifteenth century. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, coats, shirts, and skirts were embellished with embroidery that included the ancient symbols of fertility, protection, and well-being. Fabric was gray or white, the natural colors of linen and wool, with indigo blue and red, yellow, and green plant dyes used to color thread for ornamentation.

Today, women's festive dress varies from region to region, but throughout Latvia, it is a symbol not only of tradition but also of national pride. The wearing of folk dress is associated with purity, goodness, noble-mindedness, and ceremony.

Edite's roots and love for her country run deep. Her needlework connects her with her heritage and the life that she was forced to leave behind as a twelve-year-old child during World War II (1939–1945). The eldest of three children, she was born in Riga, the capital city, where her mother was a teacher and her father a judge.

FRONT ROW: Edite Mogensen in Latvian costume (middle) with her younger brother and sister. BACK ROW: Edite's mother, aunt, and grandfather. Photographer unknown. Photograph taken at her grandfather's farm near Gulbene, Latvia, before 1941.
Photograph courtesy of Edite Mogensen.

“Life was good, and the standard of living was high,” she recalls. Every summer, her maternal grandfather rented several cottages at the beautiful beach at Riga Bay, where Edite’s mother, Elizabete, held a yearly embroidery club for the children. Summer was also a time for spending long, happy days at her paternal grandfather’s farm near Gulbene.

Sensitive and gifted, Edite began her beloved music education at four. She also worked on her embroidery along with her mother and godmother Elvira, who instilled in her a love for this fine work and a desire to learn.

These happy years came to an end, as did Latvia’s independence, with the Soviet invasion of June 17, 1940. During the following Year of Terror, Stalin purged the country with mass executions and deportations to Soviet labor camps. During the night of June 14/15, 15,081 Latvians, including children, were executed or deported. On June 22, Germany attacked the Soviets and occupied the country until 1944, when the Soviets reoccupied the country and Stalin resumed large-scale deportations through 1946.

In 1944, 300,000 Latvians fled their homeland, seeking safety elsewhere. Throughout the occupations, there were two major escape routes: overland to Poland and Lithuania and into Germany and by ship or small boat to Sweden. Both routes were fraught with danger; Soviet troops patrolled looking for fleeing Latvians, mines in the Baltic Sea sank ships, and small,

heavily laden boats capsized. By the end of World War II, only 120,000 Latvians were found to be living in Western and Central Europe and Northern Africa. At the end of the war, Latvians were considered Soviet citizens and the USSR insisted on their return. The Soviets pressured Sweden to return exiled military personnel who had sought



A vest and blouse comprise part of a Latvian folk costume Edite Mogensen handsewed and embroidered using traditional geometrical designs. Photograph by Joe Coca.

When asked, Edite proudly shows the handwork that she has created through the years.

refuge in that country. Sweden eventually gave in to Soviet demands, and on January 23, 1946, extradited 147 Latvians. Latvians who had fled to Germany were placed in displaced persons camps run by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency, whose prime objective was the repatriation of displaced persons. Although some Latvians wanted to return, most did not, painfully aware of what awaited them. By 1947, expatriated Latvians again were on the move, this time overseas to England, Australia, the United States, Argentina, and Canada.

Edite, with her mother, younger sister, and brother, left Latvia one evening in August 1944. Her father, due to work commitments, remained in Latvia. For months, the rest of the family had no idea whether he was alive or dead. They had traveled by freighter to Danzig (now Gdansk, Poland). “That night [was] very dark and frightening,” remembers Edite, “I could hear the adults talking and worrying about the mines in the water.” In Danzig, the family immediately boarded a train for Flensburg, the northernmost city in Germany, but there, only a short distance from the Danish border, the visa that was to get them to Copenhagen was declared invalid. They were destitute but were saved by kind strangers offering food and shelter. After two weeks, Edite’s mother succeeded in obtaining the required visa, and the family continued on to Copenhagen.

Life in Denmark was difficult, money and food scarce. Edite’s father left Latvia in November 1944, possibly on the last train out of Riga, as his home and city burned behind him. After a month of travel through war-torn Ger-

many, he made it to Denmark and was reunited with his wife and children. Soon after, the family moved into an empty farmhouse near the village of Udby. Farm work had to be done and animals looked after, but there was also time for embroidery. With the help of a Latvian friend, Edite found some Latvian patterns and took up the needle once again; she also learned knitting and cross-stitch. Eventually, the younger children began attending school, and Edite found work in Copenhagen.

In 1951, with the help of the International Refugee Organization, Edite’s father, hoping for a better future for his children, moved his family to Canada. Edite, now nineteen, lived with her mother and siblings in Toronto while her father completed his one-year commitment to the farmer who had sponsored his family. Edite found work in a pharmacy, and her mother took in sewing. In 1953, Edite married Hans Mogensen (1927–), a young Dane whom she had met while working in Copenhagen and who had followed her to Canada. He became a chemical engineer, and with an offer of work in Sarnia, Ontario, the couple moved there in 1957 to what would become a permanent home for them and their two daughters. Edite finally was able to resume her music education and graduated in 1964 from the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto. For the next forty years, she taught piano and music theory to children and adults.

In 1968, Edite began an embroidery club for the neighborhood children, teenagers, and their mothers, just as her mother had done in those summers long ago in Latvia. The youngest children embroidered pencil cases in



The Embroidery Club at the beach at Riga Bay, Latvia. Photographer unknown. Edite is in the center with embroidery in hand; her younger sister is at the far right; the other children are her cousins. Photograph taken before 1941.

Photograph courtesy of Edite Mogensen.

simple patterns, but as they gained experience, their projects became more complex and detailed. The club met nearly every day in Edite's backyard, and at the end of the summer, the completed projects were displayed for family and friends. By the time the club ended nine years later, seventy-five people were attending the lessons, and Edite was known to all as "Mrs. Embroidery."

Edite likes to tell this story: The mother of one of her students was serving tea to a guest, who, admiring the beautifully stitched cloth on the tea table, asked how long the lovely piece had been in the family. She was shocked to learn that the teenage daughter of the family had completed it only the week before.

When asked, Edite proudly shows the handwork that she has created through the years. Edite still has several pieces worked on linen with red and small amounts of green embroidery that she stitched during her teen years in Denmark. Each piece shows a version of the morning star. Edite worked from hand-drawn patterns. She has made each daughter a Latvian folk costume from a particular region, including a headpiece covered with colorful embroidery and beadwork, blouse, handwoven skirt, sash, and shawl. Some parts of the costumes took as long as two years to complete. The handsewn linen blouses are embroidered in intricate traditional designs: Edite's attention to detail is evident. In the years before Latvian independence, Edite obtained linen fabric from Denmark for her blouses. Today, she is able to use linen from Latvia, which she prefers.

Latvian embroidery typically is geometric, depicting ancient symbols and deities and worked in just a few colors. On shirts and blouses, the embroidery is worked over fine, evenweave linen at the cuffs, collar, and neck opening, across the shoulders, and/or around the upper arm. Shawls are of twill-woven wool with the embroidery worked along the edges and across the bottom. Cross-, straight, back-, and running stitches are used either alone or, often, in combination. She embroiders the blouses for her costumes before the sewing is complete. Edite has made eight folk costumes in all. How fitting that in 2004, she was honored by the Cultural Center in Gulbene and invited to host an exhibition of her work there.

Edite's love for needlework hasn't dwindled with the years. She speaks of all the pieces that she still plans on making and the shawl that she dreams of embroidering. Her enthusiasm is contagious: it's no wonder that her embroidery students created such beautiful work.



TOP: A beaded collar and ornately embroidered cuffs embellish this traditional Latvian blouse made by Edite Mogensen.

Photograph by Joe Coca.

BOTTOM: One of Edite Mogensen's handsewn linen blouses embroidered in intricate traditional Latvian designs at the cuff, collar, and neck opening.

Photograph by Joe Coca.

Since Latvian independence in 1991, Edite has been able to return about every three years to visit family and friends as well as to spend time on her grandfather's farm, a place of so many happy memories. Even though the house is long gone, the land and forests that surround it evoke the strength and resolve of the Latvian people wherever they may live. Through their fine workmanship and intricate stitchery, Latvian folk costumes reveal a highly skilled culture with a long and rich heritage. The people's stories resonate with pride and what it means to be Latvian. Through their exquisite and colorful needlework, Edite and people like her

bring us wishes for good health, happiness, and prosperity. I wish the same for them. ❖

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A Cloth with Latvian Symbols to Embroider

CATHARINA FORBES

With the guidance and inspiration of Edite Mogensen (see preceding article), I designed a small embroidered cloth with the typical Latvian symbols of sun, tree, and small crosses in the traditional colors of blue, green, red, and gold. The sun represents perpetual life and brings luck; the tree, reaching upward and growth; the crosses, happiness and energy; and the small horizontal lines, stability and peace.

Catharina Forbes's small embroidered cloth with the typical Latvian symbols of sun, tree, and small crosses in traditional colors.

Photograph by Joe Coca. Scissors courtesy of the Loveland Museum / Gallery, Loveland, Colorado.



MATERIALS

Zweigart Linen, 20 threads/inch (8 threads/cm), White, 14 inches (35.6 cm) square, 1 piece; www.zweigart.com

Presencia Embroidery Floss, 6-ply 100% cotton thread, 8.75 yards (8.0 m)/skein, 1 skein each of #1068 Medium Gold Brown, #3324 Navy Blue, #4823 Military Green, and #1490 Dark Coral; www.presenciaamerica.com

John James Needle, tapestry, size 24 or 26; www.colonialneedle.com

Finished size: 8 $\frac{5}{8}$ × 8 $\frac{5}{8}$ inches (21.9 × 21.9 cm)

INSTRUCTIONS

Cloth

Count 60 threads from the design center to begin stitching. Each square on the chart represents 2 threads. Stitches are worked over 2 linen threads with 2 strands of floss, except for the inside of the sun, which is worked with 4 strands of floss in satin stitch.

The chart represents one-fourth of the design; turn chart to complete design.

Finishing

Trim the finished piece 20 threads from the outside edge of the design. Count 3 threads out from the design and gently pull out the 4th thread. Turn the outside edge in twice, aligning the inside folded edge with the channel where the thread was removed. Repeat for remaining sides. To hemstitch, use 2 strands of #4823 floss; with needle go around 2 threads in the channel, catch a thread along the fold underneath and bring needle up and around 2 threads to the left in the channel (encircle 3 threads at the corners). Miter each corner as you come to it.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND DESIGNER. *Catharina Forbes learned all forms of needlework at her mother's knee. Now retired, she spends her days surrounded by knitting, spinning, weaving, and embroidery. She also enjoys traveling and looks forward to revisiting Latvia.*

Cloth

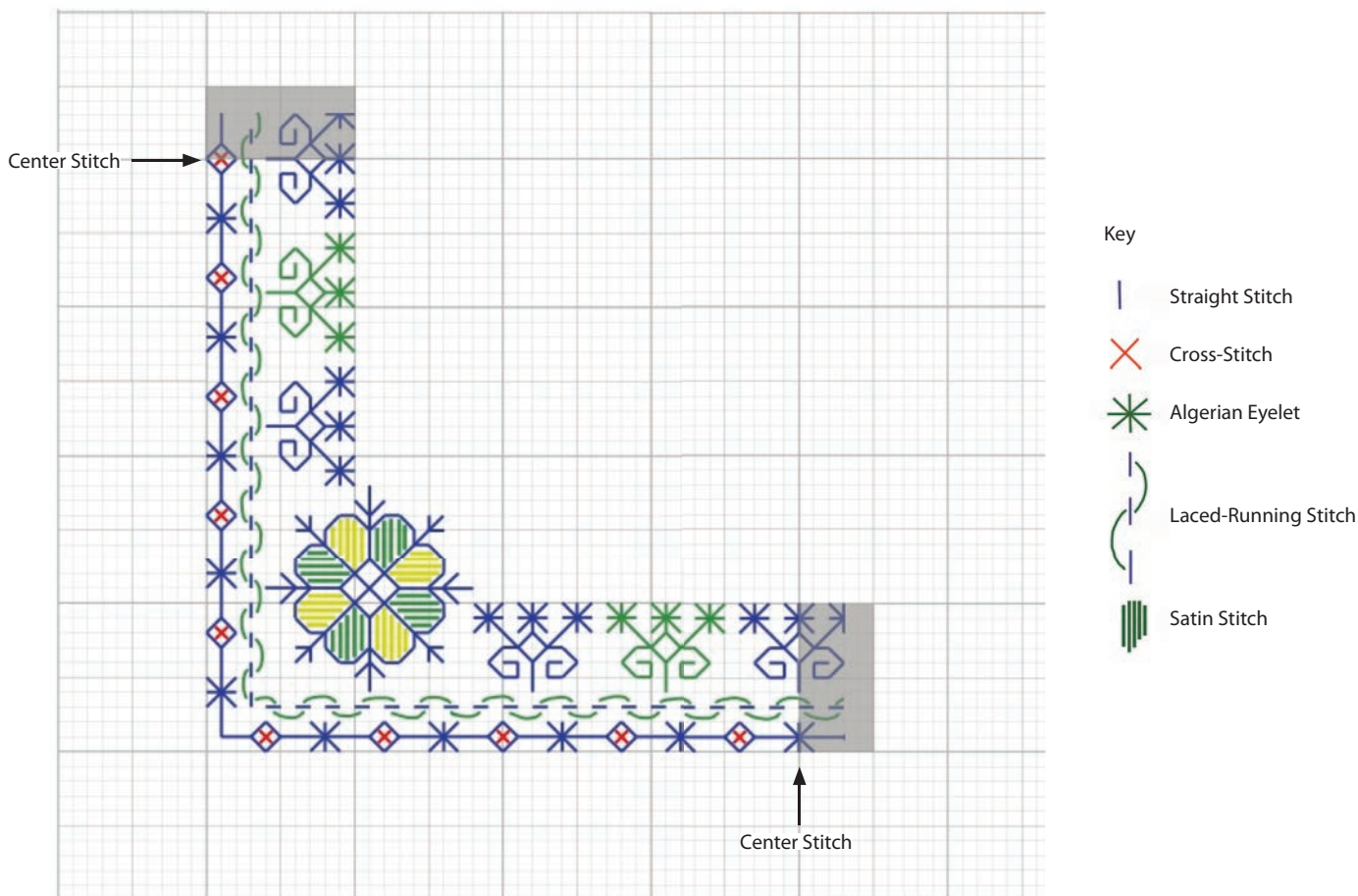


Chart may be photocopied for personal use.

Sarakatsani Aprons

Ply-Split Darning, Embroidery, *and* Life

BOBBIE SUMBERG



SETTLED SINCE THE MID-TWENTIETH CENTURY, the Sarakatsani people of Greece and the Balkan countries were once nomads. Sheep and goats were the center of their life. Families moved with their herds, following the grass into the mountains in the spring and fleeing the snow and cold of the highlands in the fall. The needs of the animals dictated their owners' life while the animals themselves provided materials

necessary to sustain that life: milk, meat, and fiber. The Sarakatsani's past is shrouded in mystery, but their language, a pure and slightly archaic form of Modern Greek, strongly suggests that they have inhabited the land for centuries.

Sarakatsani women used handspun wool and goat hair from their flocks as well as cotton to weave fabric for clothing, bags, soft furnishings, and the tents that they

used when traveling between grazing areas. Women even built the dwellings that the family used when they reached the next grazing spot: round huts made from small tree trunks stuck in the ground and covered with branches, rushes, or reeds as available.

Sarakatsani dress was distinctive, differing in form and decoration from that of any of their neighbors. The only point of similarity was in the layering of garments to disguise the shape of the female body. Of the two regional variants of Sarakatsani dress, I will be discussing the materials and techniques used by the eastern group, now settled in Thrace but formerly wide-ranging between the Aegean Sea and the Rhodope Mountains in Bulgaria. Although they no longer wear traditional dress, a few Sarakatsani herders still move seasonally with their flocks, and the women still weave household furnishings and shepherd's capes. Since the 1950s, store-bought clothing worn with a scarf and sometimes an apron has replaced women's ethnic dress.

Sheep's wool and goat hair were the primary fibers used to make textiles for clothing and furnishings. The men sheared the animals, and then the women took over: processing the fiber from cleaning, fluffing, and combing or carding to spinning and finally weaving the yarn on a two- or four-shaft floor loom. Woven cloth often was sent to a fulling mill, where it was wetted and beaten to felt it. The finished fabric was then cut, sewn, and embellished according to the garment and its intended use.

Sarakatsani women of Thrace wore black. Their only white garment was a cotton chemise with embroidered sleeves. Layered on top of the chemise were a pleated skirt, a wide decorated belt, a short and a long sleeveless jacket or vest, an apron, a dickey with ruffled collar, knitted leggings, detached sleeves, a shawl, and a headcloth. Jewelry, worn from the top of the head to just below the waist, was plentiful or sparse depending on the circumstances, but a large silver metal belt buckle and a small ornament worn on the forehead

were standard. A woman's dress changed over the years as she grew up, married, had children, and aged. Although their culture demanded strict seclusion from unrelated men, their nomadic herding life required that women spend most of the day outside where strangers, male as well as female, could see them. Their stiff, somber garments disguised their female curves, effectively creating a safe zone around their bodies.

The small, trapezoidal apron was the focal point of the ensemble. Called *podia* or *panaúles* and worn throughout a woman's life, it was decorated with embroidery and with bands of split-ply (or ply-split) darning. Worn slung low on the hips, it covered the bottom of the skirt. On the five examples in the Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe, New Mexico, the embroidery stitches used are couching and a type of cross-stitch; the motifs, believed



OPPOSITE: Apron. Maker unknown. Wool, goat hair. Thrace, Greece. Twentieth century. 16½ × 21¼ inches (41.9 × 54.0 cm). (A.2001.45.1). Collection of the Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe, New Mexico. Gift of Betsy Carpenter. Photograph by Blair Clark and courtesy of the Museum of International Folk Art.

ABOVE: Apron. Maker unknown. Wool, goat hair. Thrace, Greece. Twentieth century. 22¾ × 15½ inches (57.8 × 39.4 cm). (A.1996.53.6). Collection of the Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe, New Mexico. Gift of Robert Holzapfel. Photograph by Blair Clark and courtesy of the Museum of International Folk Art.

A Sarakatsani Apron: Techniques and Materials



In the center of the apron (A.1996.53.5) is a trapezoid of fulled wool covered with darned colored cords, possibly of silk, and couched metallic thread. On the long sides are a pair of S- and Z-twist cords, a section of six Z-twist cords, one pair of alternating twist, an area $\frac{1}{4}$ inch (6 mm) wide where two cords are interlaced to create a zigzag effect, a pair of S- and Z-twist cords, a section of six Z-twist cords, and one pair of alternating twist. Next is a piece of fulled wool 1 inch (2.5 cm) wide, fifteen Z-twist cords, a pair of alternating twist cords, another section of zigzag $\frac{1}{4}$ inch (6 mm) wide, a pair of alternating twist cords, fourteen Z-twist cords, and a pair of alternating cords. The entire edge is finished with a braid that has been wrapped and sewn in place and a crocheted picot edge. Metal-wrapped braided cotton cord has been worked at intervals into the outermost zigzag portion. All of the cords are composed of five highly twisted plies of tightly spun goat hair, stiff and shiny, except for the cords used in the zigzags. The zigzag cords comprise four three-ply yarns twisted together.

This apron is more complex in its decoration than the others in the museum's collection. The presence of metallic thread suggests that it was worn for special occasions though not for a wedding. Bride's aprons would be more heavily embroidered and would be made entirely from red cloth or have at least some red elements.

—B. S.

Apron. Maker unknown. Wool, goat hair, silk, metallic thread. Thrace, Greece. Twentieth century. $15\frac{1}{2} \times 12\frac{1}{2}$ inches (39.4×31.7 cm). (A.1996.53.5). Collection of the Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe, New Mexico. Gift of Robert Holzapfel.

Photograph by Blair Clark and courtesy of the Museum of International Folk Art.

to protect a woman from evil, are geometric flowers, vines, plants, and crosses. Further, as Popi Zora notes in *Embroideries and Jewelry of Greek National Costumes* (see Further Reading below): “The various embroidered motifs of the *panoula*—the cross, the serpent, the moon, the grape-vine, inter alia—reflect not only the most important events of a lifetime—birth, marriage and death—but they also serve to express the psychological states accompanying such momentous events—joy, sorrow, and loneliness. In addition, such archetypal motifs become symbols of religious experience.”

Of the two ply-split techniques used to create and decorate textiles, ply-split braiding is a technique used mainly in India to create bands used as camel girths. A multi-ply yarn is untwisted enough to create an opening, and another yarn is passed through the space; the size of the finished band is determined by how many yarns are used. In ply-split darning, multiple elements, plied yarns or braids, are sewn together through the plies. The number of elements determines the width of the trim. In addition, the appearance of the final product depends both on whether a braid or a plied cord is used and on the direction of spinning and plying. When a Z-twist and an S-twist cord are darned next to each other, they look like a braid. It wasn't until I purchased a bag that was made from a Sarakatsani apron and started taking it apart that I realized the V shape had been achieved this way. For more information on the techniques and materials used in one of

the Sarakatsani aprons in the collection, see the sidebar above.

Although little has been written in English about this intriguing group of people, it seems clear that their material culture was so tightly tied to their nomadic way of life centered on their livestock that when they settled down, they didn't need to maintain those traditions and boundaries represented by women's distinctive dress. Today, the Sarakatsani are trying to restore their distinctive culture and material life. In 2011, at a conference devoted to Sarakatsani history and culture, a reenactment of a caravan was staged—men and women dressed in their traditional attire led horses decorated with embroidered textiles on a symbolic journey to reconnect with their nomadic roots. ❖

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR. *Bobbie Sumberg earned her M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota. She is the curator of Textiles and Costume at the Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and the author of Textiles: Collection of the Museum of International Folk Art (Layton, Utah: Gibbs Smith, 2010) and editor of Young Brides, Old Treasures: Macedonian Embroidered Dress (Santa Fe: Museum of International Folk Art, 2011) as well as articles on ethnic dress and research on the museum collection.*

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A B B R E V I A T I O N S

beg—begin(s); beginning
 BO—bind off
 CC—contrasting color
 ch—chain
 cir—circular
 cn—cable needle
 CO—cast on
 cont—continue(s); continuing
 dc—double crochet
 dec(s) (‘d)—decrease(s); decreased;
 decreasing
 dpn—double-pointed needle(s)
 foll—follow(s); following
 hdc—half double crochet
 inc(s) (‘d)—increase(s); increased;
 increasing
 k—knit
 k1b—knit 1 in back of stitch
 k1f&b—knit into the front and back of
 the same stitch—1 stitch increased
 k2b—knit 2 in back of next 2 stitches
 knitwise—knitwise; as if to knit
 k2tog—knit 2 stitches together
 k3tog—knit 3 stitches together
 k5tog—knit 5 stitches together
 lp(s)—loop(s)
 m(s)—marker(s)
 MC—main color
 M1—make one (increase)
 M1k—increase 1 by knitting into the
 front and then the back of the same
 stitch before slipping it off the left-
 hand needle

M1p—increase 1 by purling into the front
 and then the back of the same stitch
 before slipping it off the left-hand
 needle
 M1l—(make 1 left) lift the running thread
 between the stitch just worked and the
 next stitch from front to back, and knit
 into the back of this thread
 M1r—(make 1 right) lift the running
 thread between the stitch just worked
 and the next stitch from back to front,
 and knit into the front of this thread
 p—purl
 p2tog—purl 2 stitches together
 p3tog—purl 3 stitches together
 p4tog—purl 4 stitches together
 p5tog—purl 5 stitches together
 p7tog—purl 7 stitches together
 patt—pattern(s)
 pm—place marker
 prev—previous
 pssso—pass slipped stitch over
 p2sso—pass 2 slipped stitches over
 pwise—purlwise; as if to purl
 rem—remain(s); remaining
 rep(s)—repeat(s); repeating
 rev St st—reverse stockinette stitch (p
 right-side rows; k wrong-side rows)
 rnd(s)—round(s)
 RS—right side
 sc—single crochet
 sk—skip
 sl—slip

sl st—slip(ped) stitch
 sp(s)—space(s)
 ssk—slip 1 knitwise, slip 1 knitwise, knit 2
 slipped stitches together through back
 loops (decrease)
 sssk—slip 3 stitches one at a time as if to
 knit, insert the point of the left needle
 into front of slipped stitches, and knit
 these 3 stitches together through their
 back loops (decrease)
 ssp— slip 1 knitwise, slip 1 knitwise, purl
 2 slipped stitches together through
 back loops (decrease)
 st(s)—stitch(es)
 St st—stockinette stitch
 tbl—through back loop
 tch—turning chain
 tog—together
 tr—treble crochet
 ttr—triple treble crochet
 WS—wrong side
 wyb—with yarn in back
 wyf—with yarn in front
 yo—yarn over
 yo twice—bring yarn forward, wrap it
 counterclockwise around the right
 needle, and bring it forward again to
 make two wraps around the right needle
 *—repeat starting point
 ()—alternate measurements and/or
 instructions
 []—work bracketed instructions a
 specified number of times

T E C H N I Q U E S

Invisible (Provisional) Cast-On

Place a loose slipknot on needle held in your right hand. Hold waste yarn next to slipknot and around left thumb; hold working yarn over left index finger.



Figure 1

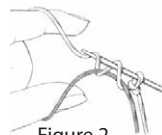


Figure 2

*Bring needle forward under waste yarn, over working yarn, grab a loop of working yarn (Figure 1), then bring needle to the front, over both yarns, and grab a second loop (Figure 2). Repeat from *. When you're ready to work in the opposite direction, pick out waste yarn to expose live stitches.

Kitchener Stitch (Grafting)

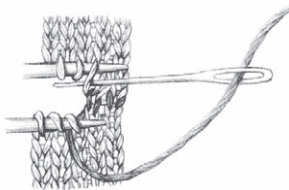
Step 1: Bring threaded needle through front stitch as if to purl and leave stitch on needle.

Step 2: Bring threaded needle through back stitch as if to knit and leave stitch on needle.

Step 3: Bring threaded needle through first front stitch as if to knit and slip this stitch off needle. Bring threaded needle through next front stitch as if to purl and leave stitch on needle.

Step 4: Bring threaded needle through first back stitch as if to purl (as illustrated), slip this stitch off, bring needle through next back stitch as if to knit, leave this stitch on needle.

Repeat Steps 3 and 4 until no stitches remain on needles.



Three Needle Bind-Off

Also called binding two pieces together, this method seams two pieces together (such as the front and back of a garment at the shoulders) at the same time as the stitches are removed from the needles.

With right sides of the two pieces facing each other and the needles held parallel, insert a third needle knitwise into the first stitch on each needle (Figure 1), wrap the yarn around the needle, and knit the two stitches together (Figure 2). *Knit the next stitch on each needle together, then slip the first stitch on the third needle over the second stitch and off the needle (Figure 3). Repeat from *.

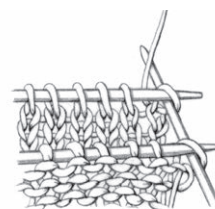


Figure 1



Figure 2

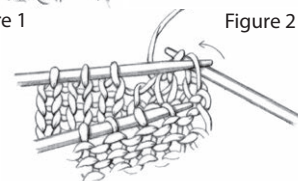


Figure 3

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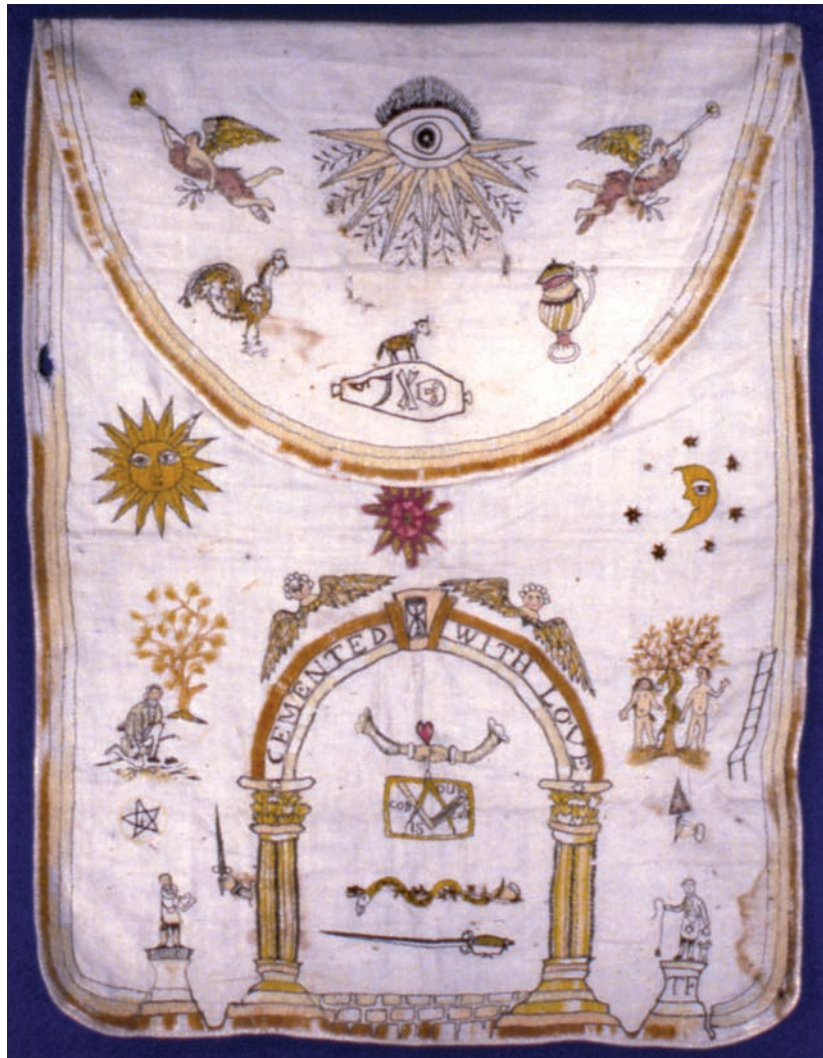
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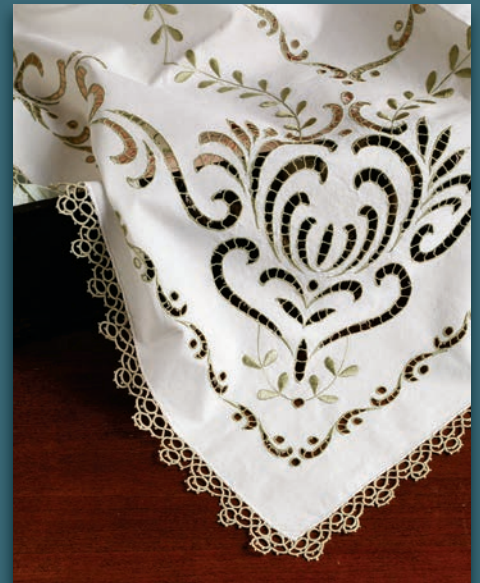
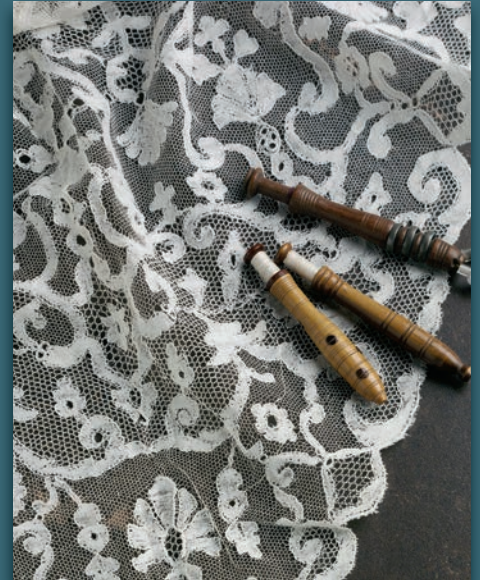
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Masonic apron. Maker unknown. Embroidered Masonic symbols and the motto "Cemented with Love." America. 1796. Collection of the Scottish Rite Masonic Museum & Library, gift of Mr. and Mrs. Robert C. Streeter Jr. (79.70). Photograph courtesy of Aimee Newell.

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