SAMPLERS Across the Seas—Scotland and Maine

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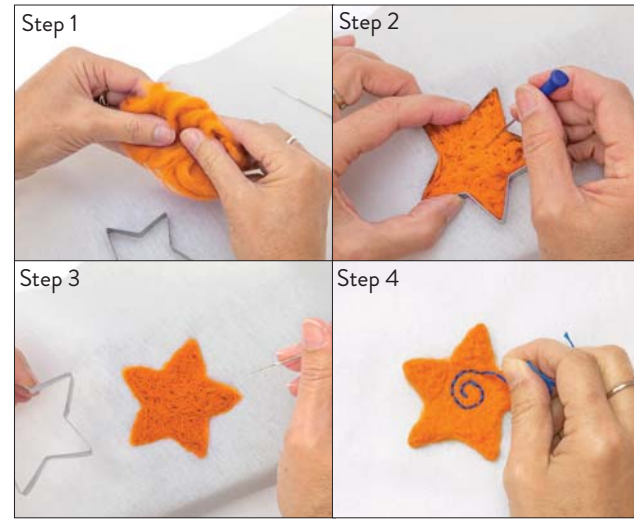
Pleat & Smock: Knit this *Exquisite* Baby Jacket

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- *Portrait of a Sock:* Knitting in the Golden Age of Danish Painting p. 26
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Summer 2019

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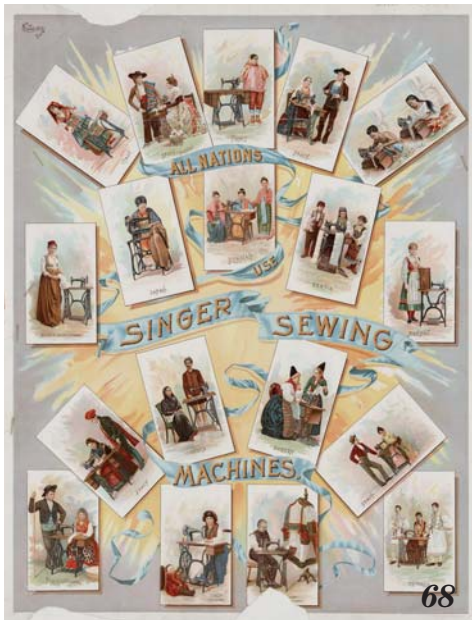
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Don't miss out!

We post new content every day to the *PieceWork* blog. You'll find quirky, informative, and fun posts, each with the *PieceWork* slant. Visit **www.interweave.com/needlework**. The website also has the *PieceWork* index, editorial calendar, contributor guidelines, charts and illustrations from previous issues, the current issue's Calendar, and much more.

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Notions

Welcome to the Who Knew? issue of *PieceWork*! As I have said on this page many times, each issue of the magazine always brings something new to me. This issue, however, has outdone itself. Take, for example:

- The preponderance of sock knitting shown in Danish portraits, particularly those painted during Denmark's Golden Age of Painting in the nineteenth century. The two images shown here are in addition to the images that accompany Mimi Seyferth's engaging article, "Sock Knitting during the Golden Age of Danish Painting." Mimi quotes Anna Schram Vejlby, a curator at the Hirschsprung Collection in Copenhagen: "The knitting of stockings in portraits . . . became a tactile sign of romantic and maternal love . . . a textile symbol of emotion." The phrase "a textile symbol of emotion" struck a chord with me. It's perfect for the context of Anna's article; it's also perfect for talking about sock knitting. But it's much larger—it applies to the creation of all textiles.
- Ole Olufsen (1865–1929), an explorer from Denmark's Randers County, made not one but two expeditions to the Pamir Mountains. At that time, the latter years of the nineteenth century, expeditions to exotic locales were fairly common for the world's explorers. What was *uncommon*, however, particularly with Olufsen's second expedition in 1898, was his focus on knitted stockings. Not only did he examine them closely during the expedition, Olufsen also brought pairs back with him and wrote about them: "These stockings are quite valued, and are presented as valuable gifts between the locals and strangers. A great deal of effort goes into the production of the stockings." Read more in our excerpt from Lita Rosing-Schow's newest book, *Knitting from the Pamirs*.
- In 1892, Martha Ann Ricks, at age seventy-six, sailed from her home in Liberia to London to present a quilt she had stitched for Queen Victoria. The quilt was received, and Martha Ann met the queen. In 1893, Queen Victoria had Martha Ann's quilt sent to the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. What happened to the quilt once the exposition ended? Therein lies a mystery. If you have even an inkling about the whereabouts of the quilt, please email us at piecework@interweave.com.



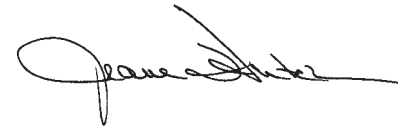
Three Young Girls. The Artist's Sisters: Alvilde, Ida, Henriette by Constantin Hansen (1804–1880). Oil on canvas. 1827. Denmark. 24½ x 32 inches (62.5 x 81.0 cm). Collection of the Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen, Denmark. (KMS125).
Photograph © Statens Museum for Kunst.



A Knitting Lesson by Otto Haslund (1842–1917). Oil on canvas. 1890. Denmark. 28 x 35 inches (71.0 x 89.5 cm). Collection of the Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen, Denmark. (KMS1356).
Photograph © Statens Museum for Kunst.

And these are only three examples. The issue is brimming with information on needlework history. I hope you enjoy every word, every image, and every step-by-step instruction to make one of the projects.

Happy summer,



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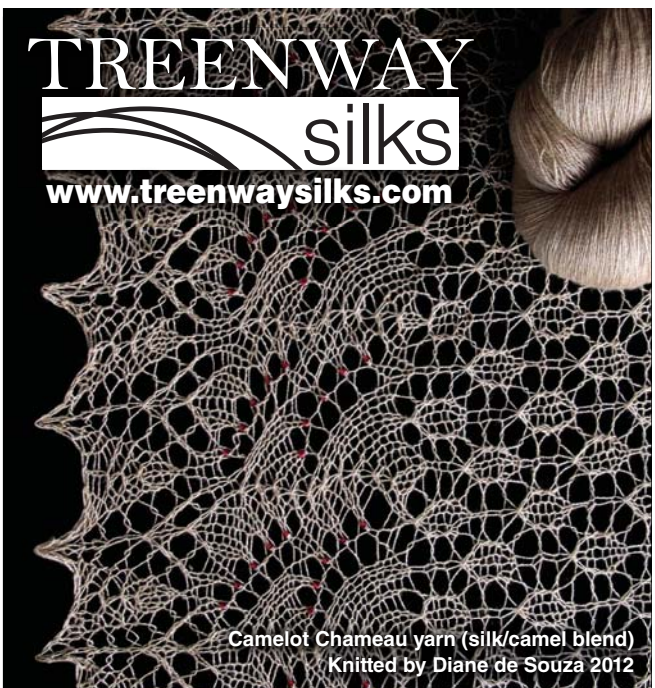
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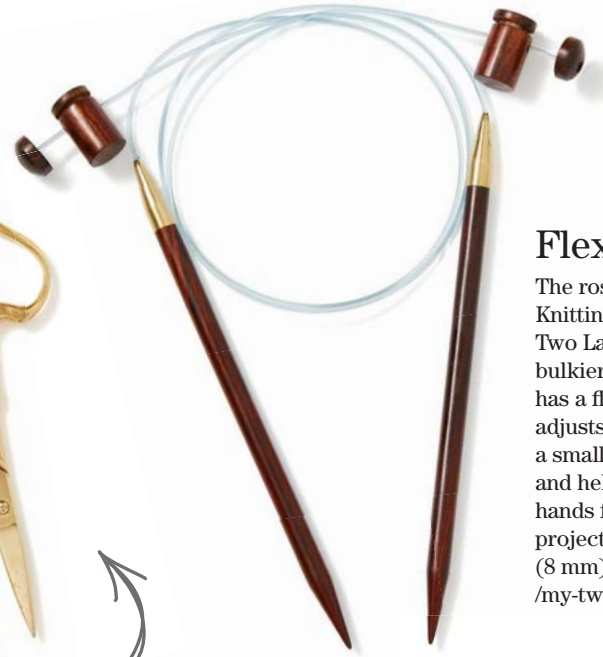
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Necessities



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The rosewood Adjustable Straight Knitting Needle System from My Two Ladies was designed to manage bulkier knitting projects. Each needle has a flexible rotating cord that adjusts in length to accommodate a small or large number of stitches and helps reduce stress on your hands from the weight of your project. Shown in needle size 11 (8 mm). www.thegrommet.com/my-two-ladies.



Gilded Snips

The Art Nouveau Gold Embroidery Scissors from Snuggly Monkey Crafts make an elegant gift for the special needleworker in your life. The 1-inch (2.5-cm) blades will cleanly cut your most delicate flosses and threads. Plus, the embossed sheath will protect you from being poked by the sharp tip when the snips are not in use. Scissors measure 4½ inches (11.4 cm) long. www.snugglymonkey.com.



Timeless Tools

The bone and horn nålbinding needles from Warm Hearth Creations are timeless tools that work well for both traditional nålbinding and seaming your latest project. The big-eye needles thread effortlessly and weave in and out of your knitting or crochet with ease. The needles are available in several sizes and sold individually or in sets of two to six. www.warmhearthcreations.etsy.com.



Long and Lustrous

Cascade Yarns presents a new yarn just in time for summer. Noble Cotton is spun from 100% mercerized long-staple cotton, which has a subtle sheen and offers durability. The DK-weight yarn can be machine washed and dried, making it perfect for easy-care garments. Shown in color #60 Periwinkle. www.cascadeyarns.com.



Smooth Operator

Wherever you may roam this summer, soothe your dry and chapped hands with Love + Leche's Little Bee 1-ounce (28.3-g) lotion bar. New Mexico sculptor Bien Irizarry created the delightful bee design, and the lotion bars are available in seven scents. They're perfect for stashing in your project bag. Shown in citrus-rose. www.loveandleche.com.

Discover

a new knitting tradition with Galina Khmeleva



For over 300 years, the elegant lace shawls from Orenburg, Russia beguiled knitters and collectors alike. While many lace knitters may be acquainted with the delicate "gossamer webs" for which Orenburg is famous, in this online workshop **Galina Khmeleva** focuses on the "warm shawl," a much sturdier, yet more luxurious cousin seldom found outside the region.

Through a series of instructional videos, interview segments, and archival photographs, this online workshop will cover a brief history, tools and materials, 10 basic motifs, the unique construction of the warm shawl, how to wash, block, and finish your shawl, and so much more.

Plus, this online workshop also features downloadable charts and 2 full patterns for an Orenburg warm shawl.



Learn more about the Orenburg Warm Shawl at **Interweave.com**



Calendar

Exhibitions

Berkeley, California: May 18, 2019–May 5, 2020. Shawls of Lace: A New Beginning, at Lacis Museum of Lace and Textiles. (510) 843-7290; www.lacismuseum.org.

Los Angeles, California: Through July 28. Power of Pattern: Central Asian Ikats from the David and Elizabeth Reisbord Collection, at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. (323) 857-6010; www.lacma.org.

District of Columbia: Through June 23. Empresses of China's Forbidden City, 1644–1912, at the Freer|Sackler. (202) 633-1000; www.freersackler.si.edu.

Evanston, Illinois: Through July 21. Caravans of Gold, Fragments in Time: Art, Culture, and Exchange across Medieval Saharan Africa, at The Block Museum of Art at Northwestern University. (847) 491-4000; www.blockmuseum.northwestern.edu.

Baltimore, Maryland: October 5, 2019–October 12, 2020. Spectrum of Fashion: Highlights from the Fashion Archives at the Maryland Historical Society. www.mdhs.org.

Boston, Massachusetts: Through August 25. Gender Bending Fashion, at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. (617) 267-9300; www.mfa.org.

Kent, Ohio: Through June 30. Beyond the Suit: Contemporary Menswear from the Collection of Alexandre Marr and Dominic Iudiciani, at the Kent State University Museum. (330) 672-3450; www.kent.edu/museum.

Providence, Rhode Island: Through June 30. Repair and Design Futures, at the RISD Museum. (401) 454-6500; www.risdmuseum.org.

Madison, Wisconsin: May 9–July 26. A Diverse Continent: African Textiles in Context, at the Lynn Mecklenburg Textile Gallery at the University of Wisconsin. www.sohe.wisc.edu/research-development/centers-of-excellence/cdmc/textile-collection.

London, England: Through June 2. Swinging London: A Lifestyle Revolution/Terence Conran – Mary Quant, at the Fashion and Textile Museum. 44 7407 8664; www.ftmlondon.org.



Silk taffeta court coat. Embroidery, silver and gold lace, hand-cut glass sequins. 1800. Ceremonial court attire presented wearers a canvas for exuberance. By wearing such ornate ensembles, one publically validated his or her high social status and proximity to the monarch. Collection of the Maryland Historical Society; gift of Mr. James R. Herbert Boone. (1973.48.12). From the exhibition Spectrum of Fashion: Highlights from the Fashion Archives at the Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, Maryland.
Photograph courtesy of the Maryland Historical Society.

Symposiums, Workshops, Consumer Shows, Travel

LaVerne, California: June 21–23. The Smocking Arts Guild of America (SAGA) California Stitch-In, at Hillcrest. www.smocking.org.

Dallas, Texas: September 17–23. 2019 Smocking Arts Guild of America (SAGA) National Convention, at the Crown Plaza Hotel. www.smocking.org.

Spokane Valley, Washington: July 21–27. 66th Annual Convention of the International Organization of Lace, Inc. (IOLI) cohosted with the Walla Walla Lacy Lacers and the Shuttlebirds Tatting Guild, at the Mirabeau Park Hotel. www.internationalorganizationoflace.org.

The Netherlands, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Russia, Finland, Sweden: May 12–26. Baltic Jewels Knitting Cruise with Galina Khmeleva, with Craft Cruises. www.craftcruises.com.

Morocco: September 8–18 or September 20–October 2. Textiles, Art & Cuisine: Morocco, with Behind the Scenes Adventures. (925) 957-6690; www.btsadventures.com.

Please send your event information no later than January 2 for Summer, April 1 for Fall, July 1 for Winter, and October 1 for Spring. Email piecework@interweave.com. Listings are made as space is available; we cannot guarantee that your listing will appear.



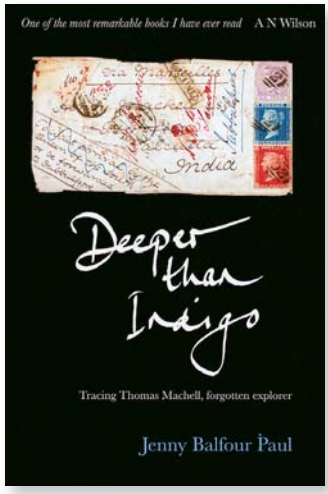
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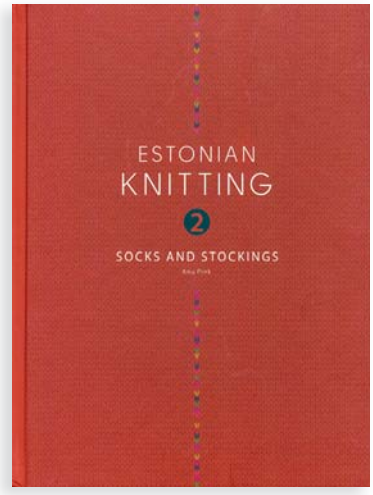
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The Last Word

To learn more about the rich and ongoing tradition of various forms of needlework, we recommend these books.
—Editor



Deeper than Indigo:
Tracing Thomas Machell, Forgotten Explorer
Jenny Balfour Paul
Surrey, England: Medina Publishing, 2015.
Hardbound, 320 pages, £18.99.
ISBN 978-1-909339-53-8.



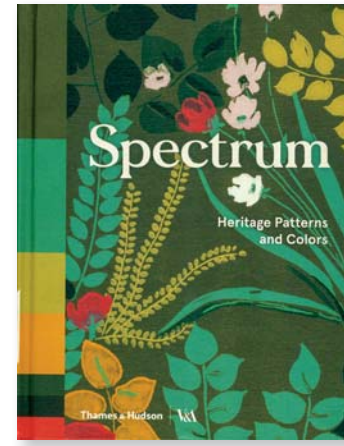
Estonian Knitting 2:
Socks and Stockings
Anu Pink
Türi, Estonia: Saara Publishing House, 2018.
Hardbound, 384 pages, €36.80.
ISBN 978-9949-7268-2-0.



Fray:
Art + Textile Politics
Julia Bryan-Wilson
Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 2017. Hardbound, 326 pages, $55.
ISBN 978-0-226-07781-9.

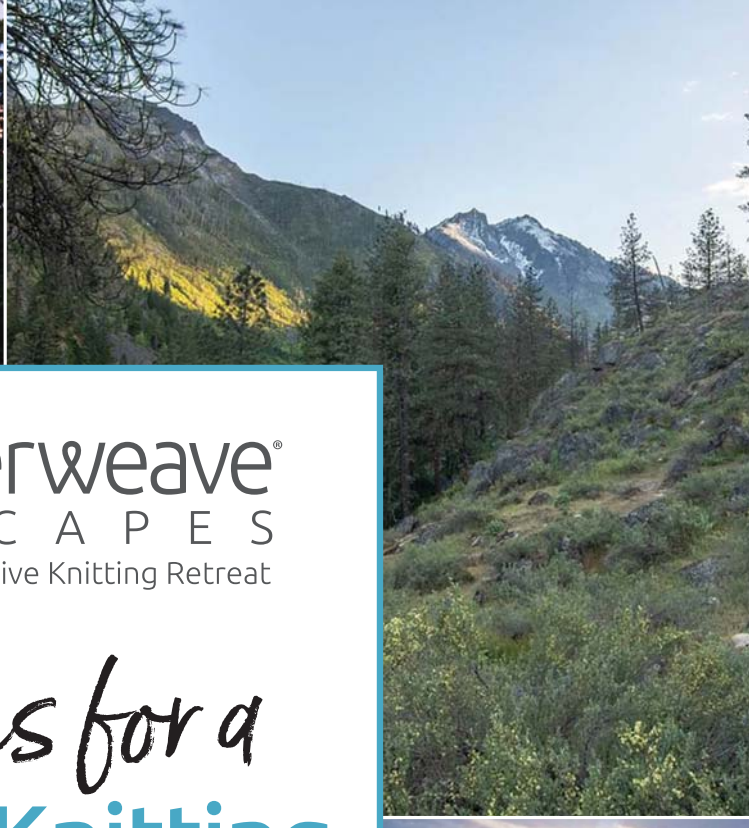


Mending Matters:
Stitch, Patch, and Repair Your Favorite Denim & More
Katrina Rodabaugh
New York: Abrams Books, 2018. Hardbound, 224 pages, $24.99. ISBN 978-1-4197-2947-0.



Spectrum:
Heritage Patterns and Colors
Introduction by Ros Byam Shaw
New York: Thames & Hudson, 2018. Hardbound, 256 pages, $34.95. ISBN 978-0-500-48026-7.





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Embroidered Stories

The Leslie B. Durst Sampler Collection

KATHY TROUP

Embroidered samplers were originally a way to practice and record stitches, and they provided tangible evidence of needlework skills. They are also windows into the past, recording details of lives and providing glimpses of personal stories. It was this combination of embroidery and personal and social history that captivated Leslie B. Durst, American collector, philanthropist, and supporter of the arts.



Sampler by Jane Lindsay. Silk and silk chenille on wool. Glasgow, Lanarkshire, Scotland. 1838. 19¾ x 20¼ inches (50.2 x 51.4 cm). Private collection of Leslie B. Durst. Jane's sampler is unusual because it was made when she was an adult. It records her own birth in 1807 at Provanmill, north of Glasgow, and also her marriage to John Jackson in 1838. An epitaph in the center commemorates the death of John's brother William, also in 1838. The striking large-scale squirrel is copied from Thomas Bewick's *General History of Quadrupeds* (1790), while the cuckoo is from Bewick's *History of British Birds* (1797). Bewick's images were often used for applications such as needlework. *Photograph © Leslie B. Durst and courtesy of the National Museum of Scotland.*

I met Leslie last year at the opening of the exhibition Embroidered Stories: Scottish Samplers at the Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh. The exhibition showcased seventy Scottish samplers from Leslie's collection. "These embroideries have so many stories to tell, and I just love the title of the exhibition—Embroidered Stories—it's the perfect way to describe samplers," Leslie notes.

With more than 1,200 samplers, her collection is one of the largest and most comprehensive collections in the world. But how did it start?

"I've stitched since I was five years old, but my interest in samplers began when I moved to Washington State," Leslie told me. "I'd started to take harp lessons and when I saw a sampler with a harp on it, I had to have it. That was the beginning of the collection."

Leslie admits that at first she wasn't very discriminating. "Nineteen ninety-five was a bad year, and I bought just about every sampler I saw on eBay," she recalled. "Now, I know what I want and dealers find them for me."

Leslie has traveled to Scotland three or four times, and the collection now includes more than 500 Scottish samplers. "I love Scotland, and I'm particularly interested in Scottish samplers as they contain so much information. Most samplers include the names of the girls who made them, but Scottish samplers in particular often have the initials of other family members and where they lived. This additional information allows me to research the girls' lives, through church and census records and also through ancestry websites," Leslie explained. It is her in-depth research that makes this collection such a unique archive of Scottish social history, offering glimpses into the lives of the women, girls, and at least one boy (Douglas Graham) who made the samplers.

"Sometimes the information on an ancestry website is a closed family thread, but you can contact the family and ask for permission to access the records. When I explain the reason behind my research, people are generally more than happy to allow access and keen to know the outcome." This tenacious pursuit of information has enabled Leslie to acquire Scottish samplers stitched by siblings, a set stitched over a period of time by one person, and even a set of twelve samplers made by members of the extended Swan family.



Sampler by Isabella Cook. Silk on wool. Saddell and Skipness, Argyll, Scotland. Circa 1836. 6⅞ x 8¼ inches (17.5 x 21.0 cm). Private collection of Leslie B. Durst. This sampler is one of a pair of mirror-image samplers that were perhaps intended to hang at either side of a third, larger sampler. (The mirror-image sampler may be seen here: www.embroideredstories.org/items/show/126.) Containing the only zebras known to have been depicted in Scottish samplers, the pieces also include traditional Dutch motifs. Because of historic trade links between Scotland and Holland, Dutch motifs are particularly common in samplers from the East of Scotland, but Mary grew up on the Kintyre Peninsula in the Western Highlands.
Photograph © Leslie B. Durst and courtesy of the National Museum of Scotland.

"Katharine and Margret Sheriff were sisters born in 1753 and 1755, and the samplers they made were almost identical. Both samplers feature the Ten Commandments and an unorthodox version of the coat of arms of Great Britain. This could have been deliberate, or the girls may simply have been copying an old coat of arms. My research did reveal that Katharine and Margret had six brothers and sisters, but Katharine is the only one whose later life can be traced. I know that in 1775, she married Robert Scott, a minister in nearby Haddington, and they had five children."



Sampler by Margaret Rodger. Silk on linen. Anstruther, Fife, Scotland. 1805. 26½ x 13½ inches (67.3 x 34.3 cm). Private collection of Leslie B. Durst. The maker was the daughter of a merchant in Anstruther on the east coast of Scotland. Cultural and trading links between the Netherlands and the Baltic coast were strong, and the horizontal format and spot motifs on Margaret's sampler reflect these influences. The distinctive image of two men carrying a large bunch of grapes represents Joshua and Caleb, who were sent by Moses to find a new home for the Israelites (the story is from the Book of Numbers in the Old Testament), and has appeared on Northern European textiles since at least the seventeenth century.
Photograph © Leslie B. Durst and courtesy of the National Museum of Scotland.

Samplers

The word "sampler" comes from the old French *essemplaire* or from the Latin *exemplum*. Historically, samplers were means of developing or demonstrating needlework skills and of recording patterns.

In an age when wives and mothers had to make household linens and undergarments, needlework skills were essential. Decorative needlework was considered an appropriate pastime for young girls (for boys as well, although only occasionally) and for those with the leisure time to pursue it. But for most wives and mothers, sewing was probably just another chore that had to be done.

The materials and techniques used to create the samplers no doubt depended largely on what was available to the makers. Early Scottish samplers were most often sewn with silk thread on a linen ground, but in later samplers, a fine wool cloth was often used instead of linen.

Samplers were also used as teaching aids and contained themes of religion, morality, and education, with religious texts that would reinforce the maker's virtuous nature. Arithmetic was deemed a suitable subject for girls who would later need to keep household accounts, and multiplication tables appeared frequently on samplers. Geography was the first science deemed suitable for women, and maps became well-liked motifs. The stitched maps were usually based on the nation or county where the maker lived, but maps of the world appeared in atlases and were sometimes copied onto samplers.

Samplers had a number of elements in common. Most samplers include the name and sometimes the age of the maker, and houses and other buildings are the most common motifs. The buildings are often generic, but sometimes a particular house, school, or significant building is shown. Birds, flowers, animals, alphabets, figures, coats of arms, and geometric designs appear in many samplers. But there can be more local touches, such as ships in samplers if the maker lived in or near a port. Many motifs were copied from designs found in books, and from the early 1800s, the popularity of Berlin woolwork had a widespread influence because motifs could easily be copied from the painted charts used in the technique.

Until the middle of the nineteenth century, almost all dyes came from natural sources including plants, insects (red from cochineal), animals (purple from shellfish), and minerals. While an amazing range of colors could be produced by natural means, some of the colors were liable to fade or even to rot the dyed fabric, which no doubt explains why certain elements of samplers could be so degraded. The introduction of aniline (an extract of coal tar) dyes began in 1856 with mauveine (aniline mixed with other compounds), a bright purple. This purple was the first mass-produced chemical dye and the starting point for the amazing range of colors that soon became available.

Traditionally, samplers were handed down through the female line of a family, possibly as a way to hand down skills. They remain a treasured form of needlework.

—Kathy Troup



Sampler by Douglas Graham. Silk and wool on linen. Probably made in Scotland. 1851. 16⅝ x 17½ inches (42.2 x 44.4 cm). Private collection of Leslie B. Durst. The vast majority of surviving samplers were created by young girls, making this sampler unusual because it is signed by a boy. However, enough boys' samplers survive to suggest that the skills were useful to them as well. Men were in a number of professions that involved sewing; in fact, during the eighteenth century, trade guilds only permitted men to be professional tailors and embroiderers. Sewing skills were also useful for men in the military and at sea.
Photograph © Leslie B. Durst and courtesy of the National Museum of Scotland.

The knowledge that Leslie acquires about the stitchers and their families gives her a real connection to the samplers. "I feel that giving each and every sampler maker the chance to tell her or his story is my life's calling. Revealing the stories awakened a serious passion in me, and I discovered that I was a researcher at heart," Leslie said. "I call the samplers 'my girls'; their stories mean so much to me, they feel like family." Leslie speaks of the sampler makers with real affection, and she feels quite protective of them.

Although samplers are generally perceived as decorative, most girls began with "plain sewing" samplers, focusing on seams, hems, and buttonholes. These skills were essential in an age when all undergarments and items of household linen were made at home.

"Once the girls had mastered the plain-sewing techniques, they could move on to the decorative stitching demonstrated in samplers," Leslie explained. "Plain-sewing samplers are rare as the pieces weren't considered worth displaying, but Jane Howse's





Left: Sampler by Elizabeth Hadden. Silk and wool on wool. East Saltoun, East Lothian, Scotland. 1770. 9 x 12¾ inches (22.9 x 32.4 cm). Private collection of Leslie B. Durst. This extremely fine sampler was worked when Elizabeth was only eight years old and is, remarkably, almost identical on the reverse. This achievement would have involved meticulous work, including planning the direction of the stitches and working in the ends of the threads. Each coronet in a neat row is labeled with a letter indicating rank—K (for King), P (for Prince), D (for Duke), M (for Marquess), E (for Earl), L (for Lord), V (for Viscount), and B (for Baron); it is uncertain what the "F" stands for. Stitched coronets, combined with initials, were often used to mark linen, so this skill was useful for a girl working in a large household.
Photograph © Leslie B. Durst and courtesy of the National Museum of Scotland.

Right: Reverse side of Elizabeth Hadden's sampler (see the caption for the front side of the sampler for details.) Private collection of Leslie B. Durst.
Photograph © Leslie B. Durst and courtesy of the National Museum of Scotland.

exercises in plain sewing are still attached to their original blue board. The samples, worked in 1840, follow the instructions published in the British and Foreign School Society's manual, which was first published in 1816." (Jane's plain-sewing sampler may be seen here: www.embroideredstories.org/items/show/33.)

A set of four samplers worked by Elizabeth Gardner illustrates her progression through increasingly complex techniques. "Sets of samplers are rare, so I'm delighted when I can add to someone's story. Elizabeth was born in Glasgow in 1806. Her father made mathematical instruments and Elizabeth's husband, John Spencer, was involved in building the first camera in Scotland. Stitched between the ages of twelve and sixteen, her samplers clearly show her developing skills, and they include many of the stitches found in Scottish samplers of that time." (The four may be seen here: www.embroideredstories.org/items/show/20; www.embroideredstories.org/items/show/21; www.embroideredstories.org/items/show/22; and www.embroideredstories.org/items/show/23.)

The group of twelve samplers made by members of the extended Swan family is remarkable, and their stories are enhanced by Leslie's meticulous research, which revealed that the pieces were the work of three generations. "The group demonstrates the way that motifs and styles were handed down from one generation to the next. Three of the samplers are signed by Betty Ballingal, the youngest of nine children. Betty's father died when she was only two years old, and it's possible that she was adopted by the wealthy Swan family, which would explain why her samplers were in the collection."

The sampler by Dorothea Clerk is one of the earliest dated Scottish samplers and a rare example of a sampler stitched by a member of a titled family, but it is the story behind it that intrigues Leslie. "Dorothea was born in Edinburgh in 1720, but her father died the following year, and her uncle became her guardian. When her mother died in 1728, Dorothea was heiress to the family estates and a legacy from her stepfather. She was sent to live with her uncle at Penicuik House, the Clerk family seat. But just before her fifteenth birthday, an 'irregular' marriage with her nineteen-year-old cousin, George, was recorded. Soon after the marriage, George was sent away to study law as his father considered them too young to live together. Maybe the marriage was encouraged because of Dorothea's inheritance, but Dorothea's first child was born in 1736," Leslie explains, allowing me to come to my own conclusions.

"All of the samplers have a story to tell, but I haven't discovered all of the stories yet. I love to have the samplers around me; at any one time, there are about 100 samplers on display in my home. The display is changed quite regularly; light could fade them, so they are hung in a room with north light and in a corridor that has no natural light." The frames on the samplers are in good repair, and I assumed that they

Leslie B. Durst and the National Museums of Scotland

Embroidered Stories: Scottish Samplers ran at the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh from October 26, 2018, to April 21, 2019. The museum currently holds some 270 samplers in its collection, around half of which are Scottish. Leslie B. Durst's intended bequest of her Scottish samplers (currently about 550) to the National Museums of Scotland will be a highly important addition to the national collections. Visit the museum's website: www.nms.ac.uk.

I wrote about the exhibition at the National Museum of Scotland and included samplers not seen here in one of my "Postcard from Scotland" blog posts for the Needlework section of Interweave's website. Visit www.interweave.com/article/needlework/postcard-from-scotland-stories-samplers.

—Kathy Troup





Samplers by Katharine and Margret Sheriff. Silk on wool. Athelstaneford, East Lothian, Scotland. Circa 1770. 12¾ x 14¾ inches (32.4 x 37.5 cm). Private collection of Leslie B. Durst. These near-identical samplers featuring the Ten Commandments and an unorthodox version of the coat of arms of Great Britain were made by sisters Katharine and Margret Sheriff. The rose and thistle springing from a single stalk symbolized the union of the crowns of England and Scotland. The omission of the arms of Hanover could be read as a statement of support for the exiled Stuarts, but by 1770, that interpretation would seem unlikely, and the image may have been simplified to make it easier to stitch. Katharine and Margret had six brothers and sisters, but Katharine is the only one whose later life can be traced.

Photograph © Leslie B. Durst and courtesy of the National Museum of Scotland.



Sampler by Dorothea Clerk. Silk on linen. Penicuik, Midlothian, Scotland. 1732. 8¾ x 17¾ inches (22.2 x 45.1 cm). Private collection of Leslie B. Durst. One of the earliest dated Scottish samplers, the narrow format has bands of floral patterns. This piece is one of the few samplers in the Leslie B. Durst Collection that was stitched by a member of a titled family. Dorothea married her cousin, George Clerk, before the age of fifteen, which may have been advisable because her mother was a Catholic (it might have affected Dorothea's right to own property). When the marriage was formalized in 1740, George took on Dorothea's name as a condition of his gaining the right to her property and became known as George Clerk Maxwell. In 1793, George lost Middlebie estate (inherited by Dorothea) and Dumcrieff (gifted to the couple by George's father, Sir John Clerk) and died the following year. Luckily, part of Dorothea's inheritance was protected against her husband's debts, and she lived on the newly constructed Princes Street in Edinburgh until her death in 1793. *Photograph © Leslie B. Durst and courtesy of the National Museum of Scotland.*

Although samplers are generally perceived as decorative, most girls began with "plain sewing" samplers, focusing on seams, hems, and buttonholes. These skills were essential in an age when all undergarments and items of household linen were made at home.

had been reframed. However, Leslie explains that most of the frames are original. "The frames have been restored, and museum-grade glass has replaced the original glass, but, whenever possible, I prefer to keep the original frame. A pair of mirror-image samplers by Isabella Cook features the only zebras known in Scottish samplers. The samplers had been separated for a number of years and came into the collection via very different routes, and we chose to reframe one of them so that they matched. The treatment on the newer frame is still a bit too bright, but it will settle down as it matures."

Even with 100 samplers on display in her home, many remain in storage. "When the samplers are not on display, each one is stored in an individual custom-made double-quilted bag."

Although the exhibition in Edinburgh is finished, the good news is that the samplers in the Leslie B. Durst collection can be viewed at any time. Housing a collection of 1,000+ samplers, the collection website is described as an online museum intended to "foster the study of and education about antique samplers in their historic as well as needlework context." The curators do genealogical research and post new findings to the website frequently and also upload images of new samplers. The images are excellent and include many detail photographs, as well as information on and stories about each sampler. To view any pictures, you need to sign up as a member, but membership is free: www.antiquesamplers.org. ❖

KATHY TROUP, born in the north of England, has lived in Scotland for many years. She edited a U.K.-published stitching magazine for seventeen years and continues to write about the subjects she loves. She extracted information about the samplers from www.antiquesamplers.org and also from *Embroidered Stories: Scottish Samplers* by Helen Wyld, senior curator of historic textiles at the National Museums Scotland (available at https://shop.nms.ac.uk/collections/new-products/products/embroidered-stories-scottish-samplers).

Schoolgirl Samplers in Maine's Lincoln County

SUSAN J. JEROME



Sampler worked by Lydia Twycross, aged seven. Cross, Algerian eye, back, and satin stitches. Dresden, Maine. 1816. Collection of the Lincoln County Historical Association, Wiscasset, Maine. (78.895.5). 17 x 17 inches (43.2 x 43.2 cm); 27 weft yarns x 35 warp yarns per inch (2.5 cm). "The Memorandum Book No. 1" of the *Thos. Johnson Journal 1793–1816* in the Lincoln County Historical Association Archives states: "Monday 25th July 1814 Abigail and Lydia Twycross first went to school to Miss Chandler's."
Photograph by Susan J. Jerome and © the Lincoln County Historical Association.

Lincoln County is situated along the rugged coast of Maine, with town names such as Bristol and Newcastle offering evidence of its English heritage. By the time of the American Revolutionary War (1775–1783), Wiscasset, today the county seat, had become a center for shipbuilding, fishing, and lumber, emerging as the busiest port north of Boston.



Sampler worked by Sarah Ann Chamberlain, aged seven. Cross and Algerian eye stitches. Maine. 1815. Collection of the Lincoln County Historical Association, Wiscasset, Maine; gift of Mrs. Roy L. Miles. (68.3.1B). 18 x 8⅞ inches (45.7 x 22.5 cm); 31 x 24 yarns per inch (2.5 cm). The warp and weft yarns appear to be different colors, creating the blue-green base fabric. This color difference suggests a mixture of two different fibers: linen (a cellulosic or plant fiber) probably used for the warp and wool (a protein or animal fiber) as the weft. Each fiber reacts differently to the dye and would have aged differently.
Photograph by Susan J. Jerome and © the Lincoln County Historical Association.

Federal-style architecture, built with money made by privateering, has given Wiscasset the contemporary title of "the prettiest little village in Maine" (according to *The Boston Globe* and others). However, when Maine became a state on March 15, 1820, the honor of becoming the new capital was given to Augusta. Carved away from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, in which it had been included since 1691, Maine statehood was part of the Missouri Compromise, the agreement that attempted to limit ownership of slaves in the United States.

Maine's relationship with Massachusetts created coastal towns that contained vibrant and sophisticated cultural communities. Ships provided access to a world beyond northern New England. Some families sent their daughters to Boston to be educated, while others relied on a local teacher to provide them with basic needlework skills along with reading, writing, and arithmetic. (Both Betty Ring in *Let Virtue Be a Guide to Thee: Needlework in the Education of Rhode Island Women, 1730–1830* and Leslie L. Rounds in *I My Needle Ply with Skill: Maine Schoolgirl Needlework of the Federal Era* discuss the importance of education for young women given by families in New England communities during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.)

Organizations such as the Lincoln County Historical Association (LCHA) preserve local history in the 1811 Old Jail in Wiscasset and the 1761 Pownalborough Courthouse in Dresden. These buildings house the collection of samplers discussed in this article.

As with many collections, the samplers are much alike. Most provide us with the name and age of each girl as well as the year in which the sampler was completed. Several identify Dresden as the town in which, we presume, the maker lived. Lewiston and Bristol are also each carefully worked into a sampler. Of those with dates, most were made between 1800 and 1820. Two have dates from the 1830s, and one is dated 1858. Three of the young women were named "Lydia." Alphabets and various verses or poems are worked in cross, Algerian eye, satin, stem, outline, rococo, queen, and other stitches. Horizontal bands organize the predominant design elements. All but two were stitched on off-white, plain-weave fabric, most likely linen woven from flax grown and processed in Maine. The two exceptions were worked on a dark ground: one made in 1815 on fabric that appears to be a linen warp and wool weft (possibly dyed blue or green) and the other made in 1835 on a dark brown fabric, probably wool warp and weft.

Five samplers in the LCHA's collection came from the same family, giving us the opportunity to consider skill level and design characteristics from one generation to the next and between sisters. Sarah Hunter (1775–1837) "workt this in the sixteenth year of her age" in 1791. Sarah added "Taught by Mrs. Bruto" (or possibly Bruton or Brutin) to her sampler. These words provide us with rare information on the possible teacher that taught the finer points of needlework. The 1830 census for Bristol, Maine, lists a Mary Bruntin, age between sixty and seventy, as the head of a household in that community. Could this be the same

woman who had taught Sarah thirty-five years earlier? (Research in the U.S. Census records has yet to reveal any other information.)

Sarah married William Chamberlain (1765–1851) on February 5, 1795; together they had six boys and four girls (one died at a very young age). Daughter Sarah Ann Chamberlain (1807–1889) stitched three samplers at ages seven, eight, and ten, while another daughter, Nancy Ann (1811–1858), produced her sampler in 1819 at the age of nine. At sixteen years and four years before her wedding to William Chamberlain, Sarah Hunter had been considerably older than her daughters, Sarah Ann and Nancy Ann, when she made her sampler in 1791.

Sarah included a wide variety of sizes and scripts in the bands of alphabets and numbers on her sampler. Most noticeable are the rows of diamonds with concentric outlines in different colored floss. This element can also be found in her daughter Sarah Ann's earliest samplers. A noticeable difference between the samplers from each generation can be seen in the wide embroidered borders found in the two worked by Sarah Ann and Nancy Ann in 1818 and 1819. This design suggests that each was meant to be framed and hung on a wall to display the talents of a young lady of the house.

Sarah Ann Chamberlain's three samplers showed developing needle skills. The first is stitched on dark blue or green linen and wool blend. She had trouble spacing out the words for the verse, the author of which is unknown:

Jesus engage my heart to
Seek thy love while oer th
is cloth my infant fingers
move

Sarah Ann stitched numerals following the word "move." Her second sampler, done just a year later, contains alphabets, as did the first, a more balanced design of floral and geometric patterns, but no verse. The third sampler includes a sophisticated border containing floral designs in padded satin stitch surrounding the obligatory alphabets, numbers, and the following verse credited to Philip Doddridge (1702–1751), an English nonconformist and hymn writer whose works were available by 1755:

Remark my soul The Narrow Bounds
Of The Revolving Year
How Swift The Weeks Complete Their round
How Short The Months Appear

Also stitched on the piece are "Sarah Ann Chamberlain Performed This Work In The 10 Year of Her age" and "Bristol July / First 1818."

Nancy Ann Chamberlain's sampler, "Marked in the 9 year of her age 1819," contains this verse:



Sampler worked by Sarah Ann Chamberlain, aged ten. Cross, satin, outline, and Algerian eye stitches. Bristol, Maine. 1818. Collection of the Lincoln County Historical Association, Wiscasset, Maine; gift of Mrs. Roy L. Miles. (68.3.1C). 15½ x 17¾ inches (39.4 x 45.1 cm); 22 warp x 28 weft yarns per inch (2.5 cm).
Photograph by Susan J. Jerome and © the Lincoln County Historical Association.



Sampler worked by Nancy Ann Chamberlain, aged nine. Cross-stitch. Maine. 1819. Collection of the Lincoln County Historical Association, Wiscasset, Maine; gift of Mrs. Roy L. Miles. (87.0.4). 17¼ x 16 inches (43.8 cm x 40.6 cm); 24 weft x 24 warp yarns per inch (2.5 cm). The brown dye from the embroidery floss has migrated into the surrounding fabric, causing the shadows around the lettering.
Photograph by Susan J. Jerome and © the Lincoln County Historical Association.



Sampler worked by Lydia Johnson, aged fourteen. Cross, satin, stem, and outline stitches. Maine. 1797. Collection of the Lincoln County Historical Association, Wiscasset, Maine. (86.0.64). 11½ x 7¾ inches (29.2 cm x 19.7 cm); 24 x 24 yarns per inch (2.5 cm). The Lincoln County Historical Association has a sampler from each of Lydia's daughters as well as a granddaughter. Abigail Goodwin Twycross finished her sampler in July 1813 when she was eight years old (78.895.12). Lydia Twycross (married named, Goodwin) was aged seven when she completed her sampler in November 1816 (78.895.5). Lydia's daughter and Lydia Johnson's granddaughter, Mary Louise Goodwin, born in 1848, identified her town, Dresden, and age, ten years, but neglected to finish her sampler in 1858 (87.0.2). *Photograph by Susan J. Jerome and © the Lincoln County Historical Association.*

Jesus Permit Thy Gracious Name to Stand as
The First Efforts of an Infants Hand
And While Her Fingers Oer This canvas
Move engage her tender hert [*sic*] to seek
thy love

Nancy Ann also had trouble with the spacing of these words attributed to John Newton (1725–1807), who wrote the poem for a sampler for his niece to stitch. (Newton is best known for writing "Amazing Grace.") A second suggested author is Isaac Watts (1674–1748), also writing for a niece. The verse was a common choice for girlhood samplers and was listed in *The Sacred Cabinet of Literature and Art* as "Lines Worked on a Little Girl's First Sampler." Nancy Ann's sampler also includes lines of neatly executed capital and small letters surrounded by an unusual wide border with irregularly sized squares centered with pastel-colored circles of cross-stitch. The outermost border is similar to the one stitched by her sister Sarah Ann in 1815. Each of the sisters used verses from religious publications, showing that their lives in Bristol, Maine, at the beginning of the nineteenth century included an education for girls focused on reading, writing, and religion.

Could there be more Chamberlain samplers? They may have passed to other family members and been lost. Or they may be comfortably hanging on a wall, yet to be identified. Perhaps the third surviving sister did not like to sew, and, as Lucy Larcom describes in her autobiography, *A New England Girlhood: Outlined from Memory*, would "never conquer fate with [her] needle."

The Sampler Consortium and the Sampler Archive

The Sampler Consortium is an international membership organization dedicated to the study of historic samplers and related girlhood embroideries. Members include scholars from diverse disciplines, curators of museums and historical societies, genealogists, librarians, collectors, dealers, publishers, attorneys, needlework teachers, designers, and "stitchers." Also represented are more than 35 museums or historical societies with collections of early girlhood needlework and more than 180 private collectors.

The goals of the Sampler Consortium are to advance the study of historic samplers and other girlhood embroideries; to increase access to information and research relevant to the study of historic samplers and girlhood embroideries; and to design, develop, and support projects that advance the study of historic samplers and other girlhood embroideries. The Sampler Consortium publishes an online newsletter once a month. For more information or to apply for free membership, please visit www.samplerconsortium.org.

The Sampler Archive, of which the Sampler Consortium is a founding partner, is an online searchable database designed to showcase historic schoolgirl needlework and support scholarly inquiry. Its development is a multiyear, multiphase digital collections endeavor, leading to the eventual documentation and inclusion of all known American schoolgirl samplers and related pictorial embroideries. This free-access database has been designed to share detailed information and high-resolution images of girlhood needlework from the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, working with museums, historical societies, and private collectors across the country. Major funding for the Sampler Archive has been provided by grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and conducted collaboratively by the University of Delaware's Winterthur Program in American Material Culture and the University of Oregon's Center for Advanced Technology in Education. Additional funding for statewide sampler initiatives has been provided by the Delaware Humanities Forum, the Rhode Island Humanities Council, and the Coby Foundation. For more information, and to explore the Sampler Archive database, please visit www.samplerarchive.org.

—Susan J. Jerome

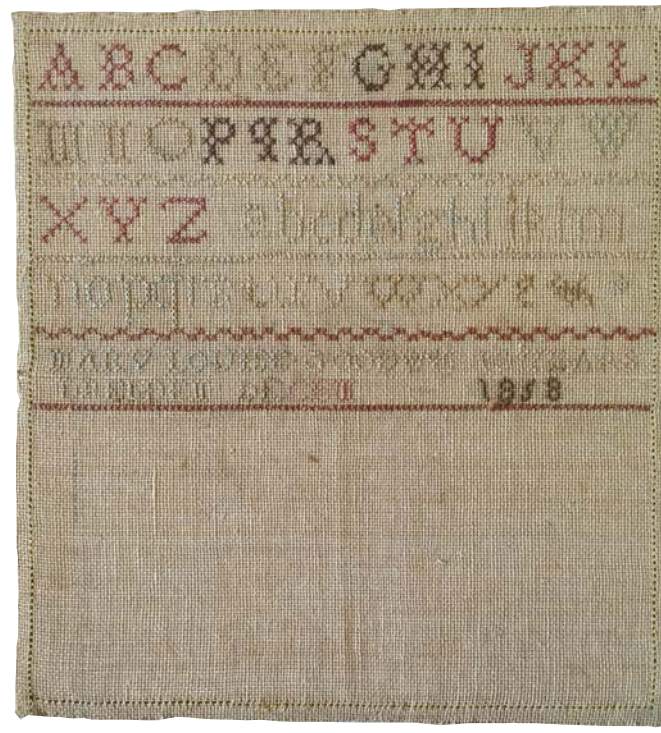
Lydia Johnson probably created her sampler when she was fourteen. Her name and age are difficult to see; they appear below the verse. I believe this is the Lydia Johnson born April 20, 1783, in Dresden, Maine. She married Stephen Nymphas Twycross, a cousin, in Boston in 1799 and settled back in Maine to raise a family; she died in 1812. The notable verse on her sampler was probably written by James Hervey (1714–1758), an English clergyman and author. His *Meditations Among the Tombs in a Letter to a Lady* was published in 1746 and often quoted:

When Faith Presents The
Saviours Death and Whispers
This is Thine Sweetly My Ris
ing Hours advance and Peac
efully Decline

Lydia Johnson also had trouble spacing out her words, and she added numerals following the word "Decline." She sewed each "s" backwards, whether on purpose or not, we will never know. The sampler has a charming design of birds and trees on the lower third. Lydia has even placed a bird within the row of numbers that follows the alphabet. Her sampler has a narrow border along the sides and top. This combination of a marking sampler, in which a girl learns to embroider the letters and numbers necessary to mark her household linen, and a picture can be seen in other eighteenth-century samplers from Massachusetts.



Sampler worked by Abigail Goodwin Twycross, aged eight. Cross, Algerian eye, satin, and back stitches. Maine. 1813. Collection of the Lincoln County Historical Association, Wiscasset, Maine. (78.895.12). 18 x 16¾ inches (45.7 x 42.5 cm); 27 x 20 yarns per inch (2.5 cm). *Photograph by Susan J. Jerome and © the Lincoln County Historical Association.*



Sampler begun by Mary Louise Goodwin, aged ten. Cross-stitch. Dresden, Maine. 1858. Collection of the Lincoln County Historical Association, Wiscasset, Maine. (87.0.2). 9½ x 8½ inches (24.1 cm x 21.6 cm); 22 x 22 yarns per inch (2.5 cm). *Photograph by Susan J. Jerome and © the Lincoln County Historical Association.*

Lydia Johnson Twycross's daughter Lydia (1809–1903) stitched her sampler at the early age of seven. She identified her town of Dresden and that she completed the sampler in November 1816. Lydia's sister, Abigail Goodwin Twycross (1805–1895), completed a sampler in July 1813, when she was eight years old. The two samplers are remarkably similar in size, choice of colors for the floss, and design. Could they have been made under the tutelage of the same schoolmistress in Dresden?

The verses on the two samplers, however, are different. Lydia's is taken from a poem by Mary Lee Chudleigh (Lady Chudleigh; 1656–1710), whose book *Poems on Several Occasions. Together with the Song of the Three Children Paraphras'd* was published in 1703 and explores the joys of friendship based on shared morals and women's shared intellectual pursuits. Lady Chudleigh is considered one of the first English feminists who advocated for marriage reform and women's education during the 1600s. Her beliefs make her poem an interesting choice for Lydia's sampler, which would prominently display her feminine ideals:

Sincerity is my chief delight
The darling pleasure of my mind
O that I could to her invite
All the whole race of human kind



Sampler worked by Sarah Hunter, aged sixteen. Cross, Algerian eye, and satin stitches. Maine. 1791. Collection of the Lincoln County Historical Association, Wiscasset, Maine; gift of Mrs. Roy L. Miles. (68.3.01). 16¼ x 14⅞ (41.3 x 37.8 cm); 24 warp x 23 weft yarns per inch (2.5 cm).
Photograph by Susan J. Jerome and © the Lincoln County Historical Association.

Abigail chose (or was given) a verse that can be found in *The Universal Magazine of Knowledge and Pleasure* published in October 1782 (a sampler stitched in Ireland in 1802 by Elizabeth Band includes the same lines, and Charlotte Mary Yonge repeated the same stanza in a story titled "The Governess" in 1870):

Virtue soft balm of every woe
Of every grief the cure
Tis thou alone that will bestow
Pleasure unmixed and pure

Lydia Johnson Twycross's granddaughter, Mary Louise Goodwin, began her sampler in 1858 and embroidered several different alphabets, her town, Dresden, and age—ten years—until she put the work aside. Hers is not the only unfinished sampler in this collection. For others, the artists remain anonymous, a situation that is all too common when studying women's work from the past.

Samplers became an opportunity for a girl to claim her labor as her own and an opportunity for her to create something of which her family would be proud and which would be displayed and treasured. Historical societies and museums continue to preserve these valuable artifacts. The samplers in the LCHA collection suggest that there was a schoolmistress, perhaps in Dresden, who helped young women design and execute samplers. They also show us that the samplers made in Maine have a sophistication and skill level equal to those made in more settled communities. ❖

Further Resources

Chudleigh, Mary Lee. *Poems on Several Occasions. Together with the Song of the Three Children Paraphras'd*. 1703. 2nd ed. Farmington Hills, Michigan: Gale Ecco, 2018.

Hervey, James. *Meditations Among the Tombs in a Letter to a Lady*. 1746. Reprint. N.p.: Palala Press, 2016.

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The Lincoln County Historical Association

The stewardship of three historic buildings is the primary function of the Lincoln County Historical Association (LCHA) in Maine. The buildings—the Pownalborough Court House (1761) in Dresden, the Old Jail (1811) in Wiscasset, and the Chapman-Hall House (1754) in Damariscotta—are now museums and "feature collections of textiles and costumes, tools, furniture, baskets, housewares, photographs, maps, manuscripts, and other ephemera that help to tell Lincoln County's stories." For hours and addresses for each, along with more information, contact LCHA, PO Box 61, Wiscasset, ME 04578; (207) 882-6817; www.lincolncountyhistory.org.

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Sock Knitting during the Golden Age of Danish Painting

MIMI SEYFERTH

Sock knitting is a recurrent motif in Danish paintings of the nineteenth century. During the Golden Age of Danish Painting (circa 1810 to 1850), Danish artists painted portraits of middle-class women knitting socks to illustrate the values of hard work and industriousness that the Danish middle class espoused. Furthermore, in portraits that are otherwise devoid of emotion, sock knitting symbolized the knitter's affection for the intended sock recipient. As Anna Schram Vejlby, a curator at the Hirschsprung Collection, asserts in her article "Diligence and Emotion: Knitting in Danish Golden Age Portraiture": "The knitting of stockings in portraits . . . became a tactile sign of romantic and maternal love . . . a textile symbol of emotion. A young woman knitting for her future husband, or [a] mother making stockings for her children, produced emotionally invested tokens of love."

The Golden Age of Danish Painting was framed by two periods of war. Unsuccessfully pursuing a policy of neutrality at the outset of the Napoleonic Wars (1803–1815), Denmark found itself engaged in violent conflicts with the British, who bombarded Copenhagen and seized the Danish fleet in 1807. In 1813, Denmark went bankrupt; in 1814, Denmark was forced to cede Norway to Sweden; and in the 1820s, Denmark suffered a period of economic depression. However, in the aftermath of these events, Denmark entered a period of prosperity that continued until the Three Year's War (1848–1851), a conflict resulting from secession efforts by Denmark's two southern provinces, the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein.

According to the art historian Patricia Berman, during the period between the Napoleonic Wars and the Three Years' War "politicians and intellectuals saw it as their mission to rebuild Denmark culturally and economically," with the growing Danish middle class viewing art as a means by which "to crystallize some sense of national essence." In this Golden Age, painting flourished under the leadership of the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, which had long been regarded as the best art college in northern Europe for the rigorous education it provided to budding artists. The Danish artists whose works are discussed in this article studied—and, in some cases, taught—at the Royal Academy.

Considered the "father of Danish painting," Christoffer Wilhelm Eckersberg (1783–1853) taught at the Royal Academy for thirty-five years. In 1818, he painted what is perhaps the best-known Golden Age portrait of a Danish sock knitter: *The Portrait of Mrs. Frederikke Christiane Schmidt*. The portrait shows an unsmiling Mrs. Schmidt, the wife of a prosperous East India merchant, sitting in her apartment in Copenhagen and knitting a utilitarian white sock in the round on double-pointed needles in the English method, with the working yarn held over the index finger of her right hand. The Schmidts' affluence is illustrated by the opulent black satin dress Mrs. Schmidt is wearing and the cashmere shawl she has draped over the back of the sofa on which she is sitting. Her elegant attire, topped by an ostrich-plumed hat, and the placement of her gloves and purse on a table by her side suggest that Mrs. Schmidt is about to leave her apartment, but in a spare moment before her departure, she is knitting a sock, even though she clearly could have purchased socks or hired someone to make socks for her.

Vejlby contends that Mrs. Schmidt's diligent sock knitting and commitment to utilitarian textile work show that she was satisfying the nineteenth-century societal expectations that upper middle-class women engage in productive activity. The Danish art historian Kasper Monrad posits that Mrs. Schmidt's "plain, straightforward, yet at the same time well-to-do appearance, reveals that she belongs to the hard-working and thrifty Copenhagen bourgeoisie, the sort of person who never wasted a moment."



Mendel Levin Nathanson's Elder Daughters, Bella and Hanna by Christoffer Wilhelm Eckersberg (1783–1853). Oil on canvas. 1820. Denmark. 54¾ x 39 inches (139.0 x 99.5 cm). Collection of the National Gallery of Denmark, Copenhagen, Denmark.
Photograph courtesy of the National Gallery of Denmark/USEUM.

In this Golden Age, painting flourished under the leadership of the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, which had long been regarded as the best art college in northern Europe for the rigorous education it provided to budding artists.

Eckersberg's 1820 painting *Mendel Levin Nathanson's Elder Daughters: Bella and Hanna* also features a sock knitter. In that painting, one of Nathanson's daughters is knitting a white sock in the round on double-pointed needles in the English method; the other daughter is caring for a caged parrot, both a traditional symbol of a girl's virtue and an indicator of social status given that parrots were at that time expensive and exotic pets. Notwithstanding Mendel Levin Nathanson's status as a successful cloth retailer, his daughters were expected to learn domestic textile work, including knitting. Vejlby suggests that Eckersberg and Nathanson chose to show Nathanson's daughter knitting rather than pursuing a more intellectual pursuit because of "knitting's association with good housekeeping and emotional warmth." Vejlby further states that "[t]he parrot and the knitting speak volumes about care, housekeeping and affection, and about the future of these young girls as excellent wives and mothers."

Like his teacher Eckersberg, Martinus Rørbye (1805–1848) featured both knitting and a parrot in his 1829 portrait *The Surgeon Fenger with His Wife and Daughter*. In a charming domestic scene, Mrs. Fender is knitting as she stands between a parrot perched atop his cage and her seated husband, a physician to the king and an avid art collector, who is holding an engraving. According to Monrad, the portrait includes only a modest representation of Fenger's art collection in "an expression of the generally thrifty attitude prevailing in the nation during the depression of the 1820s: as a civil servant Fenger would not have wished to boast about his privileged position in society." Vejlby observes that "[d]iligence and a snapshot-like realism trump vanity in this painting, particularly for the mother," who, in Vejlby's words, "never seems to stop knitting."

Three Young Girls, painted in 1827 by Constantin Hansen (1804–1880), is another example of a Golden Age painting depicting a sock knitter. The son of the portrait painter Hans Hansen (1769–1828) and the godson of Maria Constanze Mozart (1762–1842), the widow of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791), Hansen studied painting under Eckersberg at the Royal Academy. Like many of Hansen's early works, *Three Young Girls* features Hansen's three younger sisters: one is drawing, the second is knitting, and the third is observing. According to Monrad, the sculptural forms and distinctive coloring in the painting differ from the works Hansen executed after he became Eckersberg's pupil, when his work became more subdued.

Hansen's *A Hunter Shows a Little Girl His Bag*, painted in 1832, also depicts knitting—another sock being knitted in the round. The painting shows Jørgen Roed (1808–1888), a Danish painter and a friend from Hansen's youth, displaying the magpie he has just shot to his younger sister, who has left her knitting on a sofa as she inquisitively studies the dead bird. At the same time, a small cat is playing with a ball of yarn that has fallen from the knitting to the floor. As noted in a museum catalog from the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek in Copenhagen, the painting exudes a "whole atmosphere of friendliness both in the home and between the two siblings. . . ."

In his 1836 portrait, *The Waagepetersen Family*, Wilhelm Marstrand (1810–1873), another of Eckersberg's students at the Royal Academy, emphasized a sock-knitting housewife, the daughter of Mrs. Schmidt of Eckersberg-portrait fame, as the calm, central figure in a family with six active children. Mrs. Waagepetersen sits sedately in the center of the portrait, holding a sock being knitted in the round on double-pointed needles in pink and white yarn, while four of her children are energetically playing a game to her right and an older daughter is taking a toddler from a nurse to her left. According to Lene Bøgh Rønberg, a curator at the Danish National Gallery, Marstrand's focus on Mrs. Waagepetersen illustrates the housewife's significant role as "the vehicle for the values of the family and the home. . . ." Rønberg concludes that "[t]he knitting, which is rarely missing from the women in the Danish Golden age portrayals of domestic life, appears almost programmatically as a reference not only to the busy housewife, but also to the industry and hard work that formed the foundation for the middle classes' activities and the position they occupied in society."

Christen Købke (1810–1848), the son of the master baker at the Citadel in Copenhagen and a pupil of Eckersberg, depicted his sister knitting outdoors in his 1831 painting *View from a Grain Loft in the Citadel.*



The Portrait of Mrs. Frederikke Christiane Schmidt by Christoffer Wilhelm Eckersberg (1783–1853). Oil on canvas. 1818. Denmark. 16½ x 11 inches (42.0 x 28.0 cm). The Hirschsprung Collection, Copenhagen, Denmark.
Photograph © The Hirschsprung Collection.

Heinrich and Pauline Hirschsprung's Art Museum

The Hirschsprung Collection is a small, charming Copenhagen art museum founded by the wealthy Danish tobacco manufacturer Heinrich Hirschsprung (1836–1908) and his wife, Pauline (1845–1912). Heinrich and Pauline began collecting Danish paintings in 1866. Their collection eventually grew to include works from the Danish Golden Age of Painting, as well as contemporary works by the Skagen painters, who gathered in the northernmost part of Denmark to paint *en plein air*, and the Funen painters, who met in an art colony on the Danish island of Funen.

Heinrich became a close friend and patron of Peder Severin Krøyer (1851–1909), a Skagen painter who made a number of family portraits of Heinrich, Pauline, and their five children. One of these, *The Hirschsprung Family Portrait* painted in 1881, shows a happy family with the women—Pauline and the Hirschsprung's daughter, Ellen (1870–1948)—both working with yarn. Pauline appears to be crocheting or nålbinding a long chain, and Ellen appears to be knitting a sock. According to the museum's website, this family portrait was a private painting that was never intended for public display, but Pauline gave the painting to the museum after Heinrich's death, and the painting was eventually moved from the museum director's office to a public exhibition room.

In 1902, Heinrich and Pauline donated their extensive collection of nineteenth-century Danish art to the Danish nation on the condition that the nation and the city of Copenhagen provide a suitable site to display the collection. Heinrich wanted the collection to be given a building of its own to be constructed in an area left open by the demolition of the ramparts around Copenhagen where a number of other museums were constructed at the turn of the century. After a prolonged public discussion on art and cultural policy, the Hirschsprung Collection was given its own site in Østre Anlæg Park near the Danish National Gallery of Art.

Construction of the building for the Hirschsprung Collection commenced in 1908, the year of Heinrich's death. In accord with Heinrich's wishes, the building was specially designed to offer visitors an intimate atmosphere akin to that of a private home. To further this homelike atmosphere, the museum was outfitted with furniture that harmonizes with the paintings in the museum's collection.

The Hirschsprung Collection opened in 1911, the year before Pauline's death. Upon the opening of the museum, its first director offered the following tribute to Heinrich:

> He created a collection that is not only rich in works which are splendid in themselves, but a collection in which each individual work seems to have been collected with wisdom and clever calculation as building blocks for a truly historical monument to Danish art. Yet far more than shrewd planning, the main driving force behind this endeavor was an effusive enthusiasm.

For additional information, contact The Hirschsprung Collection, Stockholmsgade 20, 2100 Copenhagen, Denmark; 45 3542 0336; www.hirschsprung.dk/en.

—Mimi Seyferth

Købke shows his sister walking up a footbridge to a grain loft while looking intently at a project she is knitting in the round on double-pointed needles, with the ball of yarn hanging from a looped ribbon on her right wrist. According to Vejlby, Købke's mother "needed her daughters to knit stockings, as well as doing so herself, because she was a baker's wife and had 11 children—in total a family with 26 feet!" Vejlby asserts that this depiction of knitting in a lower middle-class household illustrates that "utilitarian work was used to emphasize that hard work was a key middle-class value."

In his 1828 painting *Family Portrait*, another example of knitting in a lower middle-class household, Emilius Bærentzen (1799–1868) depicted three of his family members engaged in needlework: one of his sisters is knitting, a second is sewing, and his mother is spinning wool. Before studying art at the Royal Academy under Eckersberg, Bærentzen had served an apprenticeship in a pharmacy and worked in government offices on the then-Danish island of St. Croix in the West Indies. Vejlby notes that Bærentzen's *Family Portrait* "shows women who actually had an economic incentive to knit," and who were doing "what was necessary for a family of their station." Yet, as Rønberg observes, the depiction of the three women working in a "warm atmosphere" epitomizes "[the] quiet, pleasing, happy, family life" that was the ideal of the Golden Age.

Vejlby concludes that the inclusion of knitting in Danish Golden Age portraiture is a motif that is "peculiar" to Denmark. Although other Europeans probably knitted as much as the Danish, the artists of the Golden Age were unique in adopting knitting as an emblem of the country's middle-class values. As Vejlby explains: "Knitting may have been a small everyday task, but these citizens regarded it as an important part of their integrity, their emotional investment in family, and a symbol of their own path towards security, prosperity, and God."

Even after the Golden Age ended, Danish artists continued to paint knitters. For example, in his 1855 painting, *A Jutland Shepherd on the Moor*, Frederik Vermehren (1823–1910), a Danish artist who also studied at the Royal Academy, depicted a modest and diligent shepherd knitting a light-colored wool sock while watching his sheep. The shepherd, in a standing posture, is knitting the sock in the round on double-pointed needles and holding the working yarn over his left index finger. As in portraiture from the Golden Age, sock-knitting in Danish painting after the Golden Age continued to illustrate diligence and



The Hirschsprung Family Portrait by Peder Severin Krøyer (1851–1909). Oil on canvas. 1881. Denmark. 43 x 53 inches (109½ x 135 cm). Left to right: sons Ivar and Aage, father Heinrich, son Oscar, eldest son Robert, mother Pauline, and daughter Ellen. Krøyer painted the family on the balcony of their summer residence at Svanemøllen outside of Copenhagen. The Hirschsprung Collection, Copenhagen, Denmark.
Photograph © The Hirschsprung Collection.

industriousness, values that in the shepherd's case were driven by economic necessity, not by a desire to satisfy societal expectations.

Artist Otto Haslund (1842–1917), in *A Knitting Lesson* painted in 1890, shows a peasant mother teaching her three children—two girls and a boy—how to knit in a dark room with a dirt floor strewn with straw. Both the mother and one of the daughters are knitting white socks in the round on double-pointed needles. Haslund, who had abandoned most Golden Age influences from the Royal Academy after studying French realism in Paris in 1881, became well-known in his later life for his paintings of children.

Both during and after the Golden Age, Danish artists used sock knitting as a recurrent motif in their paintings to illustrate central values in Danish society. In portraits of upper middle-class women in the Golden Age, sock knitting symbolized the subjects' commitment to diligence, even in the absence of financial need. In contrast, in portraits of lower-middle-class and peasant subjects both during and after the Golden Age, sock knitting reflected industriousness driven by economic necessity. For the modern knitter, the recurrent images of sock knitting in Danish portraiture are a reminder that sock knitting stands for more than the creation of footwear: Sock knitting, like all knitting, always reflects—and in portraiture, also projects—the knitter's circumstances. ❖



A Jutland Shepherd on the Moors by Frederik Vermehren (1823–1910). Oil on canvas. 1855. Denmark. 31½ x 23½ inches (80.0 x 59.6 cm). Collection of the National Gallery of Denmark, Copenhagen, Denmark. [Editor's Note: Two additional portraits painted during the Golden Age of Danish Painting that depict sock knitting are shown on page 4.]
Photograph courtesy of the National Gallery of Denmark.

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MIMI SEYFERTH, an attorney who lives outside Washington, D.C., first became aware of the prevalence of knitting themes in Danish paintings when her friend Mary Omond suggested a visit to the Hirschsprung Collection (see the sidebar on page 30) during a recent trip to Copenhagen. Although her knowledge of Danish paintings is recently acquired, Mimi's fascination with Danish knitting dates back many years to her enrollment in Vivian Høxbro's and Beth Brown-Reinsel's knitting classes about Danish *nattrøjers* (bed jackets).

A companion project follows

Danish *Nattrøjer* Socks to Knit

MIMI SEYFERTH

Inspired by the preceding article



Mimi Seyferth pays tribute to all of the nineteenth-century Danish painters who included sock knitting in their portraits with her stellar white socks with the star motif common to the Danish *nattrøjer*, a traditional knitted garment worn by Danish peasant women in the nineteenth century.



Although the socks in nineteenth-century Danish paintings appear to be knitted in plain stockinette stitch, I wanted to design a patterned sock for a companion project to my article. Accordingly, I turned to the star motif common to the Danish *nattrøjer*, a traditional knitted garment worn by Danish peasant women in the nineteenth century.

Although nattrøjers are often called "nightshirts" in English, *natsjorte* is the actual Danish word for nightshirts. *Nattrøjer* is more accurately translated as "night jacket" or "bed jacket." The Danish scholar Maj Ringgard, a conservator at the National Museum of Denmark, notes that the nattrøjer references to a night-time garment are "puzzling" because Danish peasants wore nattrøjers during the day under sleeveless bodices or jackets. According to Ringgard, "[s]ome say they even wore these when going to bed, but this might be a later interpretation endeavoring to explain the name." Looking at the issue from the opposite angle, knitter and author Donna Druchunas suggests that the "nightshirts doubled as undershirts for those who could not afford two separate garments."

Regardless of their original purpose, nattrøjers evolved into tightly fitted T-shirtlike garments finely knitted in knit-purl or small cabled patterns featuring star motifs. The nattrøjer knitted patterns represent damask knitting because, as Ringgard notes, "the pattern is visible due to the light being reflected differently by the two directions in the stitch used, just as the effect in woven damask." Ringgard observes, however, that nineteenth-century peasants' nattrøjers were frequently knitted of soft wool, which could obscure the "damask" quality of the patterning. The garments might be "fulled or perhaps merely felted due to wear and tear and washing, [which] was not exactly beneficial to the purl pattern. . . ."

Knitted from natural-colored wool, nattrøjers were usually dyed a monochromatic dark red, green, or blue upon completion; the dark dye also tended to obscure the damask-knitting pattern. Ringgard posits that the monochromatic damask knitting reflects "a stricter, almost minimalistic Protestant fashion . . . ," and that the star motif might be "a symbol of divinity and supremacy, and the eternal and immortal." According to the Danish knitter and author Vivian Høxbro, stars were believed to be holes in the sky through which paradise could be glimpsed.

The pattern of a traditional nattrøjer features eight-pointed stars centered in diamonds formed by intersecting oblique lines. In this project, cabled eight-pointed stars are centered in narrow hexagons created by truncating the sides of diamonds; the trimming of the sides of the diamonds was necessitated by the limited circumference of the sock. The project is knitted in white yarn, the yarn color that appears in most Danish paintings showcasing sock knitting.

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Materials

- Cascade Yarns Heritage Silk, 85% merino superwash wool/15% mulberry silk yarn, 437 yard (399.6 m)/100 gram (3.5 oz) skein, 1 skein of #5618 Snow

- Needles, 2 circ each, sizes 00 (1.75 mm) and 0 (2.0 mm)
- Cable needle
- Tapestry needle
- Stitch marker

Finished size: Foot circumference, 8¼ inches (21.0 cm); top of cuff to base of heel flap, 8¾ inches (22.2 cm); foot length, 10 inches (25.4 cm)

Gauge: 37 sts and 51 rnds = 4 inches (10.2 cm) in St st on larger needles; 39 sts and 54 rnds = 4 inches (10.2 cm) in patt from Star Chart on larger needles

Special Stitches

Cable Left Back Loop

Slip one stitch to cable needle, hold in front of work, knit the next stitch through the back loop, knit the stitch from the cable needle.

Cable Left Purl

Slip one stitch to cable needle, hold in front of work, purl the next stitch, knit the stitch from the cable needle.

Cable Left Knit

Slip one stitch to cable needle, hold in front of work, knit the next stitch, knit the stitch from the cable needle.

Cable Right Back Loop

Slip one stitch to cable needle and hold in back of work, knit the next stitch, knit the stitch from the cable needle through the back loop.

Cable Right Purl

Slip one stitch to cable needle and hold in back of work, knit the next stitch, purl the stitch from the cable needle.

Cable Right Knit

Slip one stitch to cable needle, hold in back of work, knit the next stitch, knit the stitch from the cable needle.

Slip 1

Slip one stitch as if to purl with yarn in back.

Instructions

Notes: See above and visit www.interweave.com /interweave-knitting-glossary for Abbreviations and Techniques. These directions are written for working in the round using two circular needles.

In order to make the "jog" in the pattern at the beginning of the round less obvious, the leg rounds begin on the inside of the leg at the start of the back-of-leg stitches for the right sock and at the start of the front-of-leg stitches for the left sock. The Star Chart is worked on the front of the leg and top of the foot for 185 rounds from the cuff to the end of the toe. The chart is worked on the back of the leg for 81 rounds from the cuff to the top of the heel flap. Round 13 is worked according to the directions as a transition round to prepare for the heel flap.

Right Sock

Cuff

With 1 larger circ needle, use the Old Norwegian method to CO 78 sts. Transfer sts to 2 smaller needles (39 sts each needle) and join in the rnd.

Rnds 1–10: *K1, p1; rep from * to end of rnd—piece measures ¾ inches (1.9 cm).

Change to larger needles.

Next Rnd: K.

Leg

Work Rnds 1–6 of Star Chart once, work Rnds 7–40 twice, then work Rnds 7–12 once more—80 chart rnds completed.

Next Rnd: On Needle 1 (back of leg), work Rnd 13 of chart, working each 2-st cable as k2; on Needle 2 (front of leg), work Rnd 13 of chart as shown—piece measures 6¾ inches (17.1 cm) from CO.

Heel Flap

The heel flap is worked back and forth on the sts of Needle 1 (back of leg).

Row 1 (RS): *Sl 1 (see Notes), k1; rep from * to last 5 sts, sl 1, k2tog, sl 1, k1, turn work—38 sts.

Row 2 (WS): Sl 1, p to end of row.

Row 3: *Sl 1, k1; rep from * to end of row.

Row 4: Rep Row 2.

Rep Rows 3 and 4 fourteen more times—32 total heel flap rows; flap measures about 2 inches (5 cm).

Heel Turn

The heel turn is worked back and forth on the sts of Needle 1.

Row 1 (RS): Sl 1, k20, ssk, k1, turn.

Row 2 (WS): Sl 1, p5, p2tog, p1, turn.

Row 3: Sl 1, k to 1 st before gap, ssk (1 st from each side of gap), k1, turn.

Row 4: Sl 1, p to 1 st before gap, p2tog (1 st from each side of gap), p1, turn.

Rep Rows 3 and 4 six more times, ending with a WS row—22 heel sts.

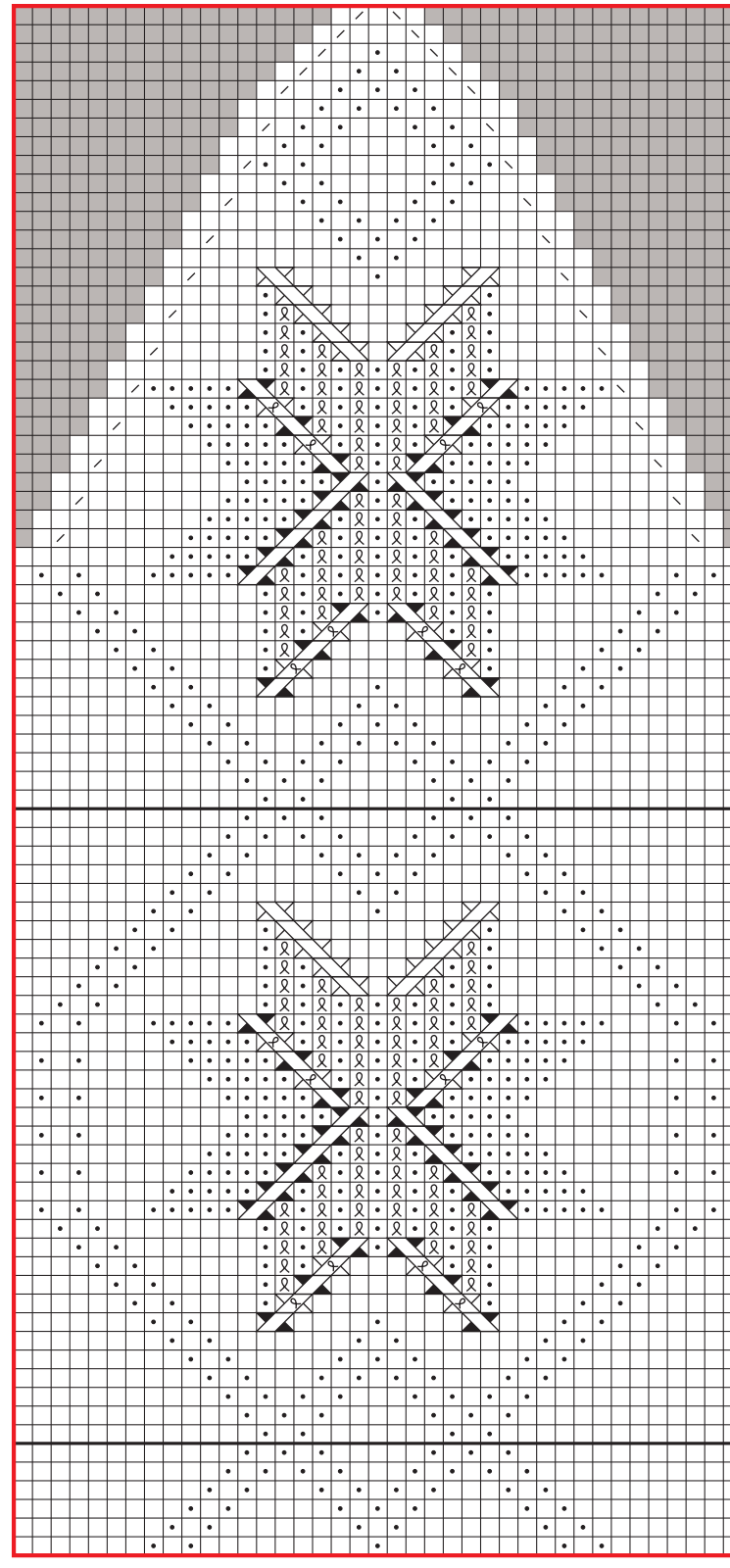
Instep

Set-Up Rnd: On Needle 1, sl 1, k10, M1, k11, pick up and k 17 sts along side of heel flap and 1 st in corner between leg and flap; on Needle 2, work Rnd 14 of chart across 39 sts, pm, pick up and k 1 st in corner between leg and flap and 17 sts along side of heel flap—98 sts; 41 sts on Needle 1 and 57 sts on Needle 2.

Rnd 1: On Needle 1, k to last 2 sts, k2tog; On Needle 2, work established chart patt on 39 sts, sl m, ssk, k to end of needle—2 sts dec'd, 1 st from each needle.

Rnd 2: On Needle 1, k to end; on Needle 2, work established chart patt on 39 sts, sl m, k to end of needle.

Star



Key

- k
- p
- k1tbl
- k2tog
- k2tog tbl
- no stitch
- pattern repeat
- cable left back loop
- cable left purl
- cable left knit
- cable right back loop
- cable right purl
- cable right knit

see Special Stitches for cable definitions

39-st rep dec'd to 5-st repeat

Charts may be photocopied for personal use.
The charts for this project are available in PDF format at
www.interweave.com/piecework-charts-illustrations.

Working sts on Needle 1 in St st and cont chart patt on marked 39 sts of Needle 2, rep the last 2 rnds 9 more times—78 sts; 31 sts on Needle 1 and 47 sts on Needle 2.

Transfer the last 8 sts of Needle 2 to the beg of Needle 1, removing the m—39 sts on each needle; rnds begin at start of sts on Needle 1.

Foot

Working sts on Needle 1 in St st and cont chart patt on Needle 2, work even until 156 chart rnds have been completed, which is Rnds 1–6 worked once, Rnds 7–40 worked 4 times, and Rnds 143–156 worked once—foot measures about 7¾ inches (20 cm) from center back heel.

Toe

Dec Rnd: On Needle 1, k1, ssk, k to last 3 sts, k2tog, k1; on Needle 2, work in chart patt, dec 2 sts as shown—4 sts dec'd, 2 sts from each needle.

Next Rnd: On Needle 1, k; on Needle 2, work in chart patt.

Rep the last 2 rnds 11 more times, ending with Rnd 180 of chart—30 sts rem; 15 sts on each needle.

Cont as established, work the Dec Rnd every rnd 5 times, ending with Rnd 185 of chart—10 sts rem; 5 sts on each needle. Graft toe sts tog using Kitchener stitch.

Left Sock

Cuff

Work as for right sock—78 sts, 39 sts on each needle.

Leg

Work Rnds 1–6 of Star Chart once, work Rnds 7–40 twice, then work Rnds 7–12 once more—80 chart rnds completed.

Next Rnd: On Needle 1 (front of leg), work Rnd 13 of chart as shown; on Needle 2 (back of leg), work Rnd 13 of chart, working each 2-st cable as k2—piece measures 6¾ inches (17.1 cm) from CO.

Heel Flap

The heel flap is worked back and forth on the sts of Needle 2 (back of leg).

Row 1 (RS): On Needle 1, work Rnd 14 of chart; on Needle 2, *sl 1, k1; rep from * to last 5 sts, sl 1, k2tog, sl 1, k1, turn work—38 sts on Needle 2.

Cont on Needle 2, complete the heel flap as for right sock—32 total heel flap rows; flap measures about 2 inches (5 cm).

Heel Turn

The heel turn is worked back and forth on the sts of Needle 2 as for the right sock, ending with a WS row—22 heel sts.

Instep

Note: The heel needle now becomes Needle 1 and the needle with the patterned instep stitches now becomes Needle 2.



Set-Up Rnd: On newly renamed Needle 1, sl 1, k10, M1, k11, pick up and k 17 sts along side of heel flap and 1 st in corner between leg and flap; on newly renamed Needle 2, work Rnd 15 of chart across 39 sts, pm, pick up and k 1 st in corner between leg and flap and 17 sts along side of heel flap—98 sts; 41 sts on Needle 1 and 57 sts on Needle 2.

Work as for the right sock until the instep decreases have been completed—78 sts: 31 sts on Needle 1 and 47 sts on Needle 2.

Transfer the last 8 sts of Needle 2 to the beg of Needle 1, removing the m—39 sts on each needle; rnds begin at start of sts on Needle 1.

Foot

Work as for right sock, ending with Rnd 156 of chart—foot measures about 7¾ inches (20 cm) from center back heel.

Toe

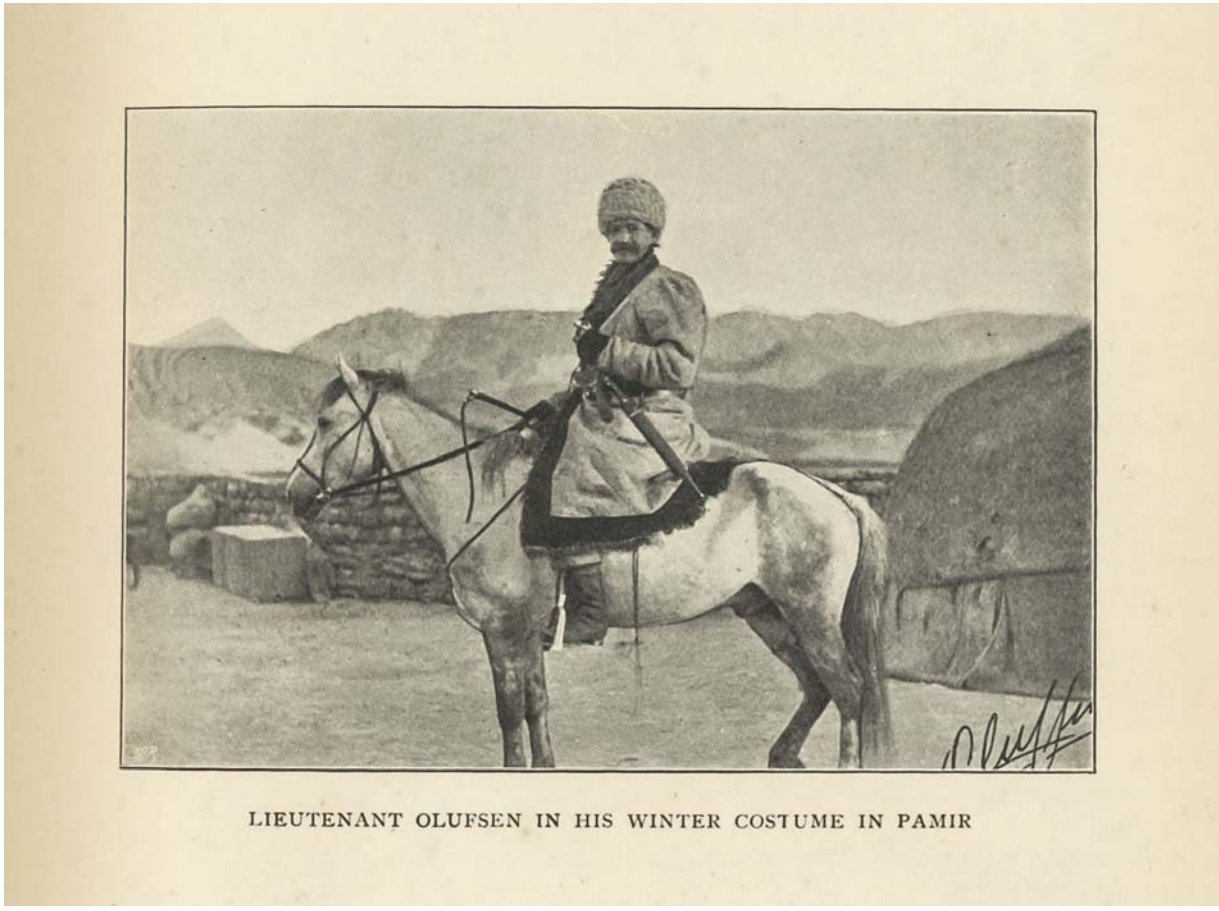
Work as for right sock, ending with Rnd 185 of chart—10 sts rem: 5 sts on each needle. Graft toe sts tog using Kitchener stitch.

FINISHING

Weave in ends and block socks as desired.

Knitting from the Pamirs

LITA ROSING-SCHOW



Ole Olufsen pictured on horseback. From *Through the Unknown Pamirs, The Second Danish Pamir Expedition 1898–99* by Ole Olufsen, published in 1904.
Photograph courtesy of Forlaget på Tredje.

The following is excerpted with permission from Strik fra Verdens Tag *[Knitting from the Pamirs] by Lita Rosing-Schow. The author offers this from her Foreword: "This book is dedicated to Henriette Hauser. Her maiden name was Paulsen and she was the granddaughter of the botanist, Ove Paulsen, who was a member of the team accompanying Ole Olufsen on his expedition to Tajikistan in 1898–99. Henriette (nicknamed "Jette") had inherited three pairs of knitted stockings, which had been saved in a chest together with other objects from the expedition. These items from the expedition are now housed in the National Museum of Denmark." For more information on this fascinating book, see the sidebar on page 41.*
—Editor

The Roof of the World—or the Pamirs—is one of the designations for the large mountain range which covers an area of more than 46,332 square miles / 120,000 square kilometers in Central Asia. The Roof of the World has mountain plateaus 9,842–13,123 feet / 3–4,000 meters high and impassable mountain peaks which are 19,685–22,965 feet / 6,000–7,000 meters high. The area encompasses parts of Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan, China, and Pakistan. A considerable area of Pamir is situated in Tajikistan, where the knitted stockings under discussion originated.

The Tajiks primarily live in the western part of the country. Their history goes back more than 6,000 years and entails shifting political and historical affiliations. Tajikistan is divided into regions or provinces, each with differing characteristics. As an extension of its rising imperialism, Russia conquered much of the region in the 1860s.

The area has always been alluring for expeditions seeking to explore the impassable ranges. Most of the expeditions occurred in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, starting out from Russia, Germany, and Denmark as well as other countries. Among the various expeditions, Ole Olufsen's two expeditions, in, respectively, 1896–97 and 1898–99, are often referenced.

In 1898, Lieutenant Ole Olufsen went out on his second expedition to southern Tajikistan. Traveling with him were the physicist Anton Hjuler and the botanist Ove Paulsen. The main objective of their journey was in-depth research of the conditions and life in south Pamir, especially the Vakhan and Garan regions, which are adjacent to the large Pandsh River and on the border with Afghanistan. The expedition was financed by the Danish state, the Carlsberg Foundation as well as a group of private citizens, which, among other things, was to pay for the artefacts the expedition would bring home to the National Museum in Copenhagen.

The equipment for the trip was brought down from Denmark. Measuring equipment, rifles and ammunition—everything had to be transported by horse and mule. They had two large tents to live in during the journey. The remaining supplies were purchased in the town of Osh. The expedition had permission to travel in Tajikistan from His Royal Highness, the Emir of Bukhara, Saït Abdul Akhad. Throughout the journey, the expedition had an attaché and translator, Murza Abdel Kader. The book about Olufsen's expedition [*Through the Unknown Pamirs, The Second Danish Pamir Expedition 1898–99* by Ole Olufsen, published in 1904] includes a lovely picture of this man with his full beard and wearing a kaftan and turban.

After a winter spent in Osh while the expedition was prepared, the team of 14 men and 30 horses loaded with the supplies for the expedition finally got underway on 15 June 1898. The first part of the journey was familiar from the first expedition in 1896–97. The entire summer, which lasted into September, was used for research. Later, they prepared the supplies for winter, and the group expanded by 8 men.



Four stockings from the collection brought home by Ole Olufsen from his expedition in 1898–99. From *Through the Unknown Pamirs, The Second Danish Pamir Expedition 1898–99* by Ole Olufsen, published in 1904. *Photograph courtesy of Forlaget på Tredje.*



Map of the Pamirs, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan. The dotted line marks Lita Rosing-Schow's trip in 2015 from Dushanbe to Osh. *Map by Lars Pryds and courtesy of Forlaget på Tredje.*

The following winter, when they had to remain encamped from November to May because of the snow, they came into the little town of Khorog, which is considered the capital of the Pamir region. From September to October, the expedition traveled in the Vakhan and Garan regions. The group was once again increased, now counting 83 men, when they needed bearers because the horses simply couldn't continue.

While they were understaffed for the winter, they used the time to speak with the locals, and the attaché proved to be a good help here. Olufsen and Paulsen spoke some Uzbek which the attaché understood, and Hjuler could speak with him in Persian. In March, it was once again time to travel and, even though there was still a lot of snow on the ground, they were able to

Pamir Stockings—Shawl Motif and the Wheel of Life

Note: The following are the author's technical notes for one pair of stockings knitted in the Pamirs.

Patterns

The top pattern is the so-called "mir-i-bota," or shawl pattern, knitted in three colors. The figures lie in horizontal tiers, diagonally offset with each other. The main color is a very dark natural brown while the figures are knitted in two colors, either a red figure with green outlining or yellow outlined with blue. The little shawl pattern is repeated and offset on every repeat. After eleven repeats, the main and pattern colors shift. The lower pattern is composed of round shapes, the wheel of life or flowers. They have jagged tips and red or yellow centers. As on the top patterning, the figures are arranged in bands and offset with each other. Red motifs have a yellow center and the black-brown ones have a red center; in the top tier, the red motifs have brown centers.

Measurements

Circumference at top: 17¼ in / 44 cm.
Total length to tip of toes: 36 in / 91 cm.
Length of top pattern sequence: 15¼ in / 38.5 cm.
Length from heel shaping to point of toes: 14½ in / 37 cm.
Crocheted bobble at top of toes: ¾ in / 2 cm.

Yarn

Most likely handspun yarn dyed with plant dyes. The blue possibly indigo-dyed. The yarn is wool, thin, Z-spun and S-plied.
Knitting Gauge: stitch count in 2 inches / 5 cm:
On the top pattern sequence: 23 stitches.
On the lower patterns: 26 stitches.

Cast-On Method

The stockings are knitted from the top down, beginning with a "drawstring" cast-on [or two-end cast-on]. Two colors were used for the cast-on, and a yarn bundle is drawn through the casing. After one single-color round, the color pattern knitting begins.



Photographs courtesy of Forlaget på Tredje.



Decreases Shaping the Foot

A band of four stitches is centered at the back of the stocking and knitted with doubled yarn, one strand of each pattern color. The decreases are placed on each side of this band. One stitch is decreased at each side on every other round. Finally, when a few stitches remain, the decreases are spaced evenly around to round the toe. The doubled yarn is drawn through the remaining stitches, and the toe is finished with a tiny bobble, crocheted with five chain stitches.

—Lita Rosing-Schow

travel north again, where it was necessary to trade the horses for yaks. Now the temperature reached down to -22°F / -30°C.

Olufsen's Stocking Collection

Ole Olufsen [in *Through the Unknown Pamirs, The Second Danish Pamir Expedition 1898–99*] described how the local people dressed:

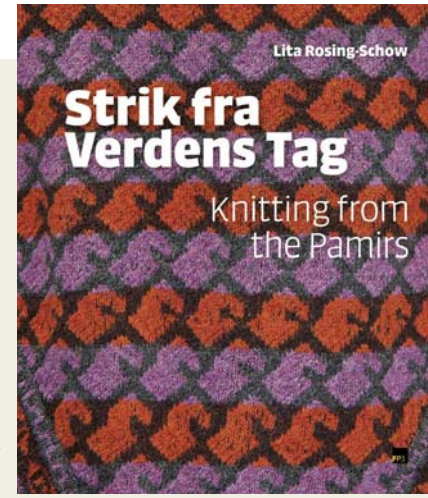
> For the most part, people dressed in clothing made in the white and brown natural colors of wool. White, dark brown, and black sheep lived in the area. The men wear a type of kaftan which reaches down to the middle of the shin. Under this, they wear a shorter wool shirt or a cotton shirt which would have been imported from Afghanistan or India. The trousers are brown or white and reach just below the knee. The waist of the kaftan is cinched with a wool cord. They wear short soft leather boots on their feet or perhaps a type of leather stockings, which are held in at the ankles with a colorful band braided in wool. The better-off from the Upper Pandsh Valley wear stockings (*jirab*) while the poor twist some strips of fabric or rags around their feet. The stockings, which go up to the middle of the thigh, are knitted like a bag, without a heel, and embellished with very tasteful patterns. Each of the three provinces has their own pattern, which is easily recognized. These stockings are quite valued, and are presented as valuable gifts between the locals and strangers. A great deal of effort goes into the production of the stockings. The multi-colored patterns are certainly the reason why they are so highly valued—the dyes are expensive and rare.
>
> They wear little brown woolen hats on their heads, which can be pulled down over the head like a hood when it is cold. This is the oldest form of head covering but the more modern men prefer to wear turbans. A scarf or sash, completely speckled with colors, is tied around the waist to hold the kaftan together. The longer and more colorful, the better, preferably long enough so the sash can wrap twice around the waist. These sashes are imported from Afghanistan or Kashmir. Silk scarves are preferred but very few have them. A cotton scarf might be one of the person's few possessions. The men cut their black and brown hair short while the older men have a full beard. Women usually dress much the same way as the men. They might also wear boots like the men's. Those who have the means wear leather shoes, with the pointed toes pulled up. These are embroidered with gold threads, imported from Kashmir. The women cover their heads with a small white wool or cotton cap, which is then covered by a scarf when they are out or on a journey. During the winter, they wear fur cloaks as do the men. Jewelry is rare but desired. The women might wear a silver chain with lapis-lazuli from the mines in Badakhshan around their necks, but usually the necklace is constructed with strings of apricot seeds. ❖

LITA ROSING-SCHOW, of Melby, Denmark, specializes in historic knitting and worked as a guest researcher at the Center for Textile Research at the University of Copenhagen in 2014. While there, she analyzed stockings from Tajikistan, which inspired her to write *Strik fra Verdens Tag* [Knitting from the Pamirs]. Among the articles she has written for *PieceWork* are "Danish Knitted Vests" (January/February 2005) and "Two Pairs of Knitted Gloves from Denmark" (January/February 2008).

Discover *Strik fra Verdens Tag*

Published in 2018 by Forlaget på Tredje, Sakskøbing, Denmark, *Strik fra Verdens Tag* [Knitting from the Pamirs] by Lita Rosing-Schow explores late-nineteenth-century knitted stockings from the Roof of the World (the Pamir Mountains), which includes parts of Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan, China, and Pakistan. The text is in both Danish and English. For information, contact forlag@fp3.dk.

—Editor



A Riot of Color

Vintage Socks to Crochet

SARAH READ



Sarah Read's amazing re-creation of the vintage socks shown on page 46. She used size 20 cotton thread in six colors—an approximation of what the colors in the original socks would have been before fading.
Photograph by Joe Coca.

On a visit to Interweave, Susan Strawn, a *PieceWork* contributing editor, brought the pair of vintage crocheted socks shown on page 46. She had received them as a gift from a friend with an antiques/collectibles business. I fell in love with their blending of techniques and eventually offered to try to re-create them.

It was a blur of counting stitches, drawing charts, and untangling dangling threads—rewarding yet so humbling as I repeatedly failed to replicate these extraordinary socks. Going over each stitch of the original allowed me to experience the work alongside the maker as she or he snuck in an increase to make the colorwork repeat match up or embroidered over a stitch done in the wrong color. It's a comforting personal bond to be able to laugh and say, "I would have done the same thing" to this person who is now long gone.

The fine gauge, colors, and elaborate patterns on these socks call to mind Kurdish embroidery; the floral motifs appear eastern European but the Tree of Life, central Asian. They could have been made between 1800 and 1925, but where? Is this blend of techniques possibly a reflection of the blend of cultures that occurred in this country at the dawn of the Industrial Revolution? If you have any information about these socks or their origin, please email us at piecework@interweave.com. In the meantime, below are the instructions for my re-created version of these amazing socks. The original colors on the vintage socks have faded over time. The colors used in the re-creation are approximations of what the original colors would have been.

Materials

- Handy Hands Lizbeth, 100% cotton thread, size 20, 210 yard (192.0 m)/25 gram (0.9 oz) ball, 1 ball each of #670 Victorian Red (A), #603 Ecru (B), #654 Navy Blue (C), #653 Antique Blue Medium (D), #684 Leaf Green Medium (E), and #694 Harvest Orange Medium (F)
- Crochet hooks, steel, size 12 (1 mm) and 8 (1.25 mm) or sizes needed to obtain gauge
- Tapestry needle, small
- Scrap thread for marking sts

Finished size: 14½ inches (36.8 cm) long from cuff to toe; 9½ inches (24.1 cm) long from heel to toe; 8 inches (20.3 cm) foot circumference; 9½ inches (24.1 cm) leg circumference

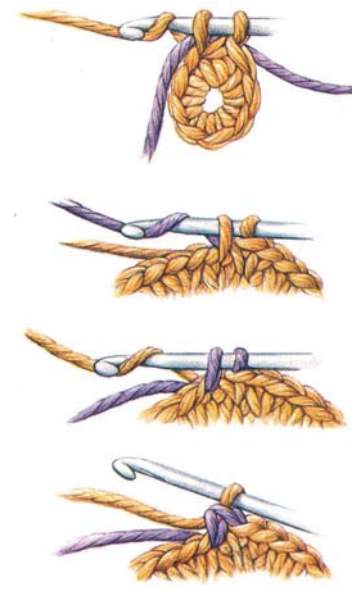
Gauge: 32 sts and 24 rows = 2 inches (5.1 cm) in tapestry sc blo with smaller hook; 34 sts and 27 rows = 2 inches (5.1 cm) in sl st blo rib on larger hook

Special Abbreviations

blo—back loop only
ch—chain

Special Technique

Tapestry Crochet Color Change



Single crochet provides a natural format for multicolor patterning in the reversible fabric known as tapestry crochet. This technique allows you to create simple geometric or pictorial designs. Normally, the designs are charted on graph paper, with each square representing a stitch and each line representing a row. The blank squares are the background color and the filled-in squares are the second color.

The method for crocheting with more than one color is as follows: Carry the second color inside the background color of the stitches being worked and change colors as needed. Simply lay the color not in use across the top of the stitches to be worked. When you want to change colors pull the new color to the back and into a working position around your finger and lay the old color forward across the top of the stitches. Avoid twisting the yarns. Don't work with more than two colors per row to avoid tangling and distorting the row gauge. Tension can be tricky when you're working in tapestry crochet, especially with a slippery yarn such as silk. Take care not to pull too tightly when you pick up a carried color, otherwise the previous stitch in that color can become very tight and difficult to work into on the next row or round. At the same time, a stitch that is too loose will distort a design.



Sarah Read's re-creation sock showing the heel flap.
Photograph by Joe Coca.

Instructions

Notes: See above and visit www.interweave.com /interweave-crochet-glossary for Abbreviations and Techniques. All stitches are worked in single crochet back loop only (sc blo) unless otherwise indicated. The sock is worked from the toe up in spiral rounds of single crochet back loop only. A chain is made for the afterthought heel, and the leg is continued upward in spiral rounds. The ribbed cuff is worked in rows side-to-side in slip stitch back loop only (sl st blo), joined to the stitches of the leg each row with slip stitch. The cuff edging is joined in row-ends of the ribbing. Thread is joined at the heel opening, and the heel is worked in spiral rounds with tapestry colorwork. The colorwork is done in tapestry crochet, with the unused color carried along the working row and stitches worked around the unused strand. To change colors: Work the last stitch before a color change until two loops are still on the hook; yarn over with the next color and pull it through both loops on the hook ready to work the next stitch with the new color. Secure ends as you go, as some ends may be difficult to reach when the work is completed. Working over ends for a run of stitches will help secure as you go. The foot and heel are worked with the smaller hook; the cuff is worked with the larger hook.

Sock

Foot

With smaller hook and A, ch 11.

Rnd 1: Sc blo in 2nd ch from hook and in next 8 ch, 5 sc in next ch, rotate to work along other side of ch, sc in next 8 ch, 5 sc in next ch, do not join—27 sc.

Rnd 2: [Sc in next 12 sc, 3 sc in next sc, mark center st of this inc with scrap thread] 2 times, sc in next sc—31 sc.

Rnds 3–9: Cont working in spiral rnds, working 3 sc in center st of every inc on sides of toe—63 sc.

Rnd 10: Sc to next center st, 3 sc in marked st, sc in next 14 sts, pm for new beg of rnd at bottom of foot—65 sc.

Rnds 11–13: Beg working over B, work Chart 1 (Inverted Pyramid).

Rnd 14: With B, work over A for 60 sc, cut A, beg working over C for rem 5 sc.

Rnd 15: With C, inc 5 sts evenly around—70 sc.

Rnds 16–18: Work Chart 2 (Crosses), inc 5 sts evenly in 1st rnd—75 sc.

Rnd 19: With C, inc 1 st on either side of toe—77 sc.

Rnds 20–22: Work Chart 3 (Keyhole), inc 3 sts evenly in 1st rnd—80 sc.

Rnd 23: With C, inc 5 sts evenly around—85 sc.

Rnd 24: With B, inc 5 sts evenly around—90 sc.

Rnds 25–27: Work Chart 4 (Pyramid), inc 3 sts evenly in 1st rnd—93 sc.

Rnd 28: With D, inc 2 sts evenly around—96 sc.

Rnds 29–46: Work Chart 5 (Large Roses), inc between motifs on Rnd 32 as shown on chart—101 sc.

Rnd 47: With D, inc 1 st on each outside edge—103 sc.

Rnds 48–50: Work Chart 6 (Inverted Pyramid).

Rnd 51: Work with B.

Rnd 52: With C, inc 5 sts evenly around—108 sc.

Rnds 53–55: Work Chart 7 (Keyhole), inc 5 sts evenly in 1st rnd—113 sc.

Rnd 56: Work with C.

Rnd 57: With B, inc 5 sts evenly around—118 sc.

Rnds 58–60: Work 20 repeats of Chart 8 (Pyramid) centered at the top of the sock, keeping the sole of the foot in E, inc 6 sts evenly in 1st rnd—124 sc.

Rnd 61: Work with E.

Rnds 62–81: Work 3 repeats of Chart 9 (Tree of Life) centered at the top of the sock, keeping the sole in E, inc between motifs as shown on the chart, maintaining 4 sts in E between each motif—139 sc.

Rnd 82: Work with E.

Rnds 83–85: Work 24 repeats of Chart 10 (Inverted Pyramid) centered at the top of the sock, keeping the sole in E.

Rnd 86: Work with B.

Rnd 87: With C, inc 5 sts evenly around—144 sc.

Rnd 88: With D, inc 6 sts evenly around—150 sc.

Rnd 89: Work even with A. Fasten off.

Create Heel Opening

Rnds 90–104: With top of sock facing, join B with sl st in blo in 6th st from end of top, sc blo in next 5 sts, ch 75, sk 75 sts for heel, beg Chart 11 (Small Roses), inc 2 sts evenly in 1st rnd—152 sc.

Rnd 105: With B, inc 5 sts evenly around—157 sc.

Rnds 106–109: With E, sl st blo, inc 18 sts evenly in 1st rnd—175 sts. Fasten off.

Cuff

With larger hook, join B in center back of leg. Ch 90. Sl st blo in 2nd ch from hook and each ch across, sl st in sl st on leg at base of the ch, sl st in next sl st on the leg, turn, sl st blo along cuff. Cont as established in

Chart 1. Inverted Pyramid

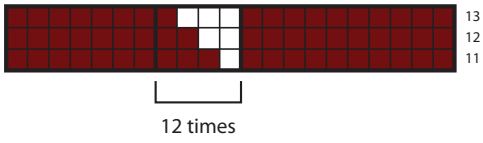


Chart 2. Crosses

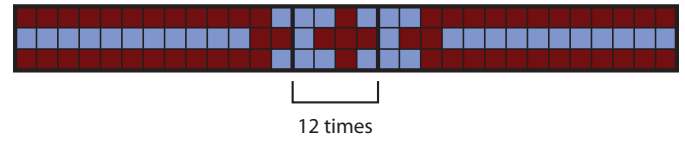


Chart 3. Keyhole

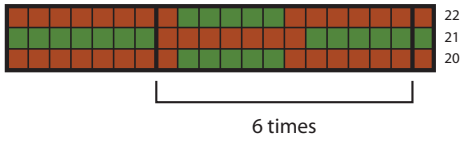


Chart 4. Pyramid

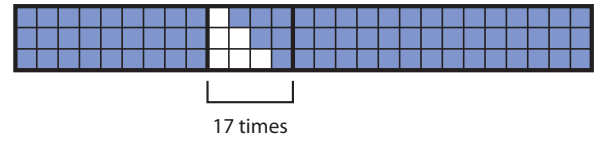
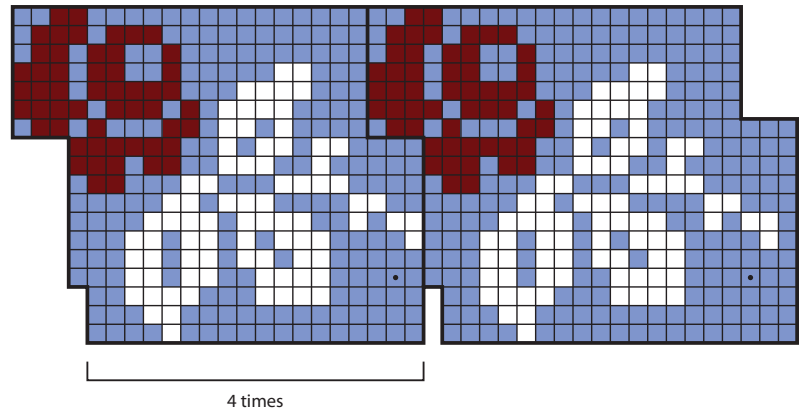


Chart 5. Large Roses

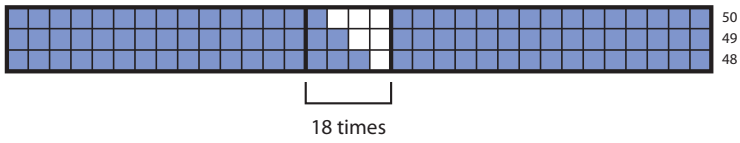


Key

- Red (A)
- Cream (B)
- Navy (C)
- Light Blue (D)
- Green (E)
- Orange (F)
- Inc by working in same st as prev sc

Note: Beg of rnd will shift 3 sts to the left after Rnd 40.

Chart 6. Inverted Pyramid



Charts may be photocopied for personal use.
The charts for this project are available in PDF format at
www.interweave.com/piecework-charts-illustrations.

Chart 7. Keyhole

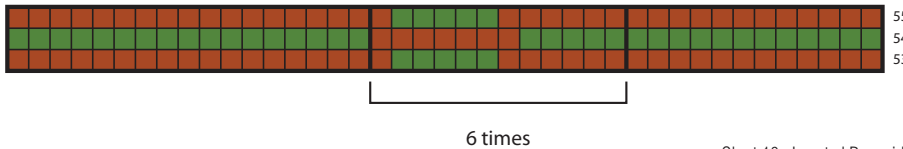


Chart 8. Pyramid

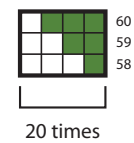


Chart 9. Tree of Life

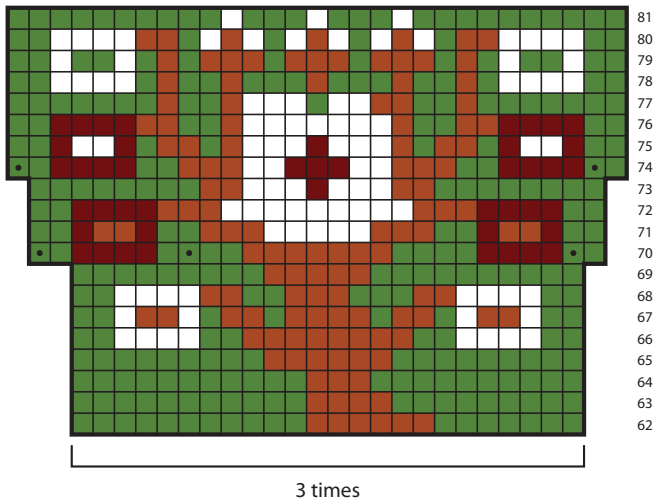


Chart 10. Inverted Pyramid

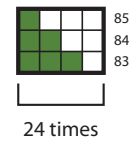


Chart 11. Small Roses

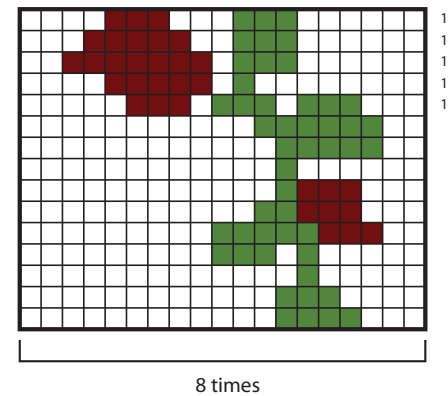


Chart 12. Keyhole

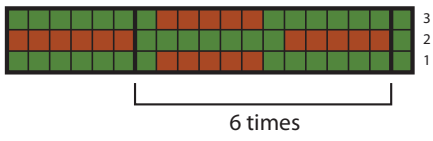


Chart 13. Crosses

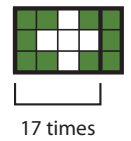


Chart 14. Keyhole

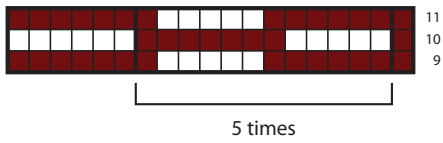
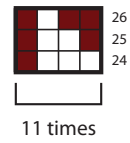


Chart 15. Pyramid



sequence as foll: (4 rows in B, 2 in E, 4 in B), (4 in D, 2 in B, 4 in D), (4 in F, 2 in C, 4 in F), (4 in E, 2 in A, 4 in E), (4 in A, 2 in E, 4 in A), (4 in B, 2 in E, 4 in B), (4 in D, 2 in B, 4 in D), (4 in B, 2 in E, 4 in B), (4 in E, 2 in F, 4 in E), (4 in F, 2 in E, 4 in F), (4 in C, 2 in B, 4 in C), (4 in B, 2 in E, 4 in B), (4 in A, 2 in E, 4 in A), (4 in E, 2 in A, 4 in E), (4 in A, 2 in D, 4 in A), (4 in F, 2 in B, 4 in F), (4 in B, 2 in E, 4 in B), 4 in C. Sl st seam blo last row to 1st. Fasten off.

Edging

Join E in row-end of cuff at back leg.

Rnd 1: Working in row-ends with E, work 176 sl st evenly around.

Rnds 2–4: With E, sl st blo around.

Rnds 5–6: With A, sl st blo around.

Change to B and sl st in next 5 sts for new beg of rnd.

Rnd 7: With B, *ch 1, sk 1 sl st, dc in both loops of next st; rep from * around, ch 1, sl st in next dc to join—88 dc.

Rnd 8: With B, sl st blo in each st around—176 sts.

Rnds 9–10: With A, sl st blo around.

Rnd 11: With E, *sl st in next 4 sts, ch 3, sl st in 3rd ch from hook; rep from * around, sl st in 1st 3 sts of rnd. Fasten off.

Heel

With smaller hook and back of heel facing, join A in corner of heel opening. Sc blo across back of heel opening, sl st in opposite corner. Fasten off.

Join E 2 sts before 1st corner of heel (new beg of rnd).

Rnds 1–3: Work Chart 12 (Keyhole) across back of heel, keeping sole of heel in F, dec 1 st at both corners each rnd—146 sc.

Rnd 4: With A, dec 9 sts evenly around—137 sc.

Rnds 5–7: Work Chart 13 (Crosses) across back of heel, keeping sole of heel in B, dec 1 st at both corners each rnd—131 sc.

Rnd 8: With B, dec 2 sts at each corner—127 sts.

Rnds 9–11: Work Chart 14 (Keyhole) across back of heel, keeping sole of heel in A, dec 2 sts at both corners each rnd—115 sc.



The astounding pair of intricately crocheted socks that Susan Strawn received from a friend who owns an antiques/collectibles business. There was no information on the colorwork socks, leaving them with their maker, place of origin, and date unknown.
Photograph by Joe Coca.

Rnds 12–13: With D, dec 2 sts at both corners each rnd—107 sc.

Rnds 14–16: With F, dec 2 sts at both corners each rnd—95 sc.

Rnd 17: Work with E.

Rnds 18–19: With E, dec 1 st at both corners each rnd—91 sc.

Rnd 20: Work with A.

Rnds 21–23: With A, dec 1 st at both corners each rnd—85 sc.

Rnds 24–26: Work Chart 15 (Pyramid), keeping sole of heel in A.

Rnds 27–34: Cont with A, dec 3 sts at both corners each rnd—37 sc.

Turn heel to WS. Sl st seam heel closed. Fasten off.

Finishing

Weave in the ends and trim the tails on the inside of work. Soak a white cotton towel in warm water with wool wash. Place the sock flat on a towel on an ironing board and place the wet towel over a section of the sock. Iron on cotton setting over the wet towel. Repeat for each section of the sock, pulling the sock into shape before ironing each part. Lay flat to dry.

SARAH READ'S original version of this project appeared in the Fall 2012 issue of *Crochet Traditions*, a *PieceWork* special issue.

The Arts and Crafts Movement in Britain

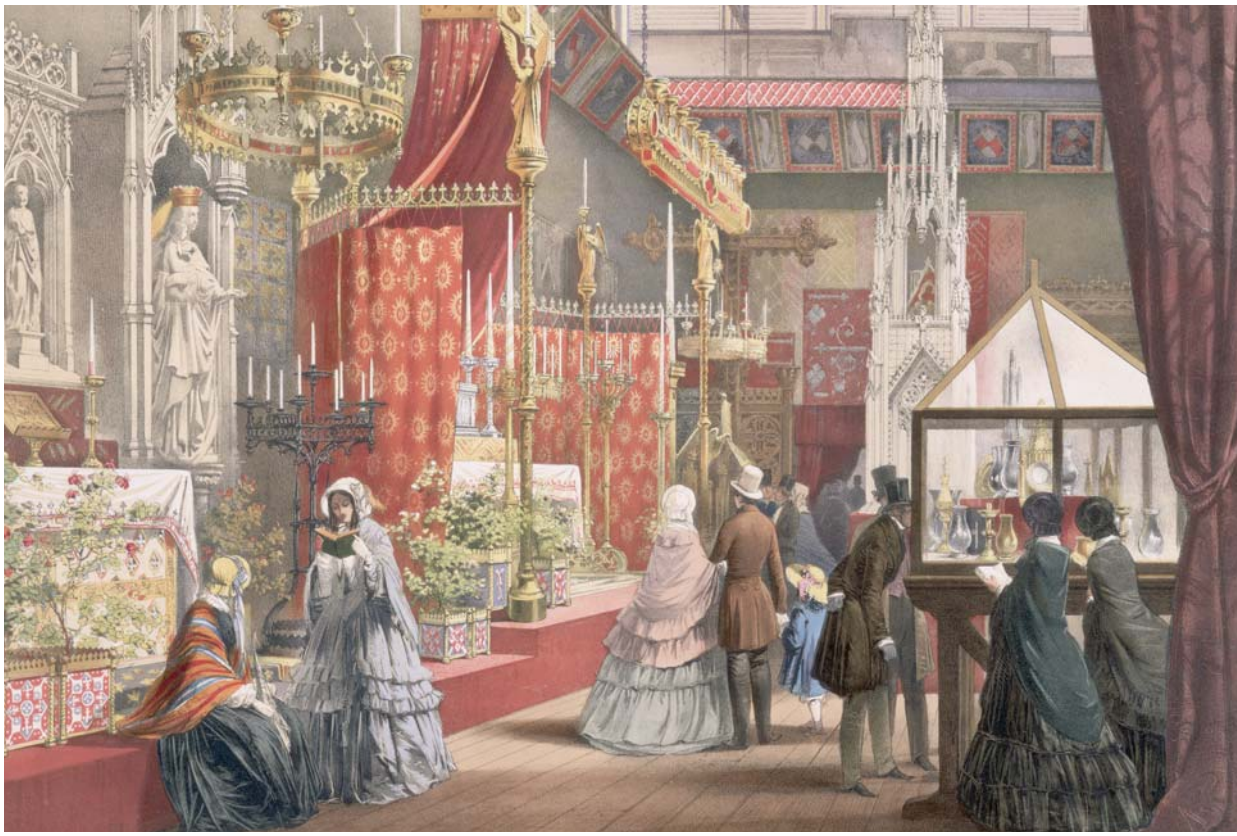
Progress from the Past

CAROL HUEBSCHER RHOADES



William Morris (1834–1896) was one of the principal founders of the British Arts and Crafts movement. Illustration from *The Connoisseur,* December 1901.
Photograph © The Print Collector/Print Collector/Getty Images.

Britain's nineteenth-century Arts and Crafts movement had a curious relationship with Victorian notions of social advancement. Whereas proponents of the Industrial Revolution encouraged mechanization and new technology, people in the Arts and Crafts movement looked back to the Middle Ages. Both camps firmly believed in progress—the improvement or even perfectability of the human condition—yet one group looked to the future while the other favored a return to the past.



The Medieval Court at the Great Exhibition, London, 1851.
Photograph © Historical Picture Archive/CORBIS/Corbis via Gerry Images.

Best known through the works of William Morris (1834–1896), Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828–1882), and Edward Burne-Jones (1833–1898), the British Arts and Crafts movement represents one of several directions taken in fine and decorative arts from the middle to late nineteenth century. Morris and his friends combined concepts of art, design, and workmanship from others; they in turn inspired later trends such as North American Arts and Crafts, Art Nouveau, and Bauhaus. Arts and Crafts advocates reacted against industrialization and factory-made goods on aesthetic and moral grounds: mass production dehumanized workers, while the cheapness of low-quality decorative items encouraged people to decorate their homes with excessive ornamentation. Ironically, although Prince Albert (1819–1861) wanted the Great Exhibition of 1851 in London to encourage beautiful design, several of the event's own organizers publicly decried poor designs throughout the exhibition. William Morris idealized medieval craftsmen, who made their products by hand, and medieval art, which expressed profoundly Christian themes in beautifully designed furniture, textiles, and architecture.

Mechanization caused rapid and dramatic social changes that continued into the Victorian period (1837–1901). It seemed that everyone in Britain felt these effects even if they did not work in the factories, leading to government reports, parliamentary acts, moralizing sermons, and satirical novels such as Dickens's *Hard Times* (1854). Starting with James Hargreave's 1764 spinning jenny, technology virtually reinvented the textile industry. Other inventors soon developed the spinning mule, vertical power looms, the flying shuttle, and the cotton gin—all powered by steam in factories rather than home workshops. By 1800, Manchester was the center

of British cotton production with forty-two mills. Workers left the land and the drudgery of agricultural work; they flocked to cities or company towns at the mills for the chance of better incomes and educational opportunities and a wider social circle. Yet factory work was often dangerous and the hours very long. Many reformers felt that industrialization not only disrupted the connection between the producer and product, but also destroyed moral character and responsibility.

At the same time, Victorian artists, writers, and intellectuals often expressed a longing for simpler times, which to them meant the Middle Ages. (They assumed that the working classes shared these attitudes as well.) Early in the century, medieval-inspired romances and more emotional and fear-raising Gothic novels by Walter Scott (1771–1832) became popular. Several prominent designers explored the Gothic and its implications for a moral, sometimes Christian, aesthetic that resisted the mechanical. Architect Augustus N. Pugin (1812–1852), for example, promoted a return to medieval Gothic style as well as to the "faith and social structures of the Middle Ages." Unlike later designers, he was not averse to mechanical production when it eased labor.

John Ruskin (1819–1900) did more than anyone, however, to glamorize the Middle Ages, for he was a major art critic, prolific writer, and social thinker during the Victorian period. Ruskin's studies of architecture and art focused as much on the social conditions from which an object arose as on the object itself. In his 1853 essay "The Nature of Gothic," he set out three principles for labor and workmanship:

1. Never encourage the manufacture of any article not absolutely necessary, in the production of which *Invention* has no share.
2. Never demand an exact finish for its own sake, but only for some practical or noble end.
3. Never encourage imitation or copying of any kind, except for the sake of preserving record of great works.

Ruskin believed that a medieval system of production allowed for individual expression by artisans who designed *and* produced their work. Workshops could properly nurture their moral and daily needs, whereas nineteenth-century industrialization destroyed that expression and morality. While some circles ridiculed his ideas about art and social welfare, the founders of the Working Men's College embraced them. Liberal educators established this men's education center in 1854 as "one of the first institutions which had for its object the giving to the manual workers some opportunity of satisfying the human instinct for knowledge and beauty," according to Gillian Naylor in *The Arts and Crafts Movement: A Study of its Sources, Ideals, and Influence on Design Theory*. Women had less support for training, although schools for lacemaking, design, painting, and needlework (the School of Art Needlework, for example) were established to provide women with paid work opportunities in handcrafts.

Ruskin's ideas on art and craftsmanship particularly resonated with two artistic circles in the mid-nineteenth century, the Pre-Raphaelites and the Arts and Crafts movement. The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, founded in 1848 and essentially dissolved by 1853, originally consisted of the aspiring painters John Everett Millais (1829–1896), Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and William Holman Hunt (1827–1910). They carefully studied nature to develop genuine ideas for expression. Their paintings, based on medieval subjects, abounded in intricate details and were distinguished by their brilliant jewel-toned colors. The Pre-Raphaelites also overlapped with the burgeoning Arts and Crafts movement through the Working Men's College, university associations, shared ideals, and design and production collaboration. In particular, they wanted to redefine design and to comprehensively understand the materials they used in their work. In their enthusiastic admiration for the Gothic and medieval, they emphasized a quality of workmanship that was human and individual (therefore not perfect) as opposed to the standardization of industrial products. However, they



May Morris. George Grantham Bain Collection, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C. *Photograph courtesy of the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division.*

rejected any work that was shoddy, whether hand- or machine-produced.

William Morris remains the most enduring representative of the British Arts and Crafts movement. An intelligent man from a well-off family, he embraced the medieval idyll in his childhood, supposedly reading all of Sir Walter Scott's Waverley novels by the age of seven. At Oxford, he met Rossetti and Burne-Jones, read Ruskin's writings, studied medieval illustrated manuscripts, and developed as a writer and poet. A walking tour in northern France with Burne-Jones impressed upon both men a lasting sense of beauty in nature and the organic essence of Gothic architecture. Both men imagined the Middle Ages to be "founded on respect, moral leadership and a true sense of a morally ordered society," according to biographers Rosalind Ormiston and Nicholas Michael Wells. In 1861, the men's dream of a society where manual labor and handicraftsmen were respected led to the establishment of Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co., Fine Art Workmen in Painting, Carving, Furniture, and Metals. Rossetti and Burne-Jones collaborated in The Firm (as it became called), and they honed their design and production skills by completely furnishing and decorating Morris' Red House east of London. Morris was particularly adept at learning all manner of artisan crafts, including embroidery, printing of textiles and books, weaving, and natural dyeing. He taught his daughters to embroider, partly through unpicking and studying old examples; the younger daughter, May (1862–1938), eventually managed the company's embroidery department.

While the participants in the Arts and Crafts movement produced all manner of designs, home furnishings, and paintings, Morris's work is best remembered for his designs from nature that were printed or embroidered onto fabric. Even now, you can buy Morris designs on fabric, wallpaper, and accessories. While the original inspiration for the style came from medieval tapestries and embroideries, Morris's designs were not meant to be historical or imitative. They were inventive, intricate, and orderly. The overarching rule for Morris was to "have nothing in your houses that you do not know to be useful, or believe to be beautiful." While early on he acknowledged that the working class he honored and tried to help could not afford his products, he wanted to instill his ideals through all social levels as a way to creating a more equitable social order.

While we may not reach the artistry of the movement's original designers, we can honor the Arts and Crafts ideals by studying and employing our materials to express our environmental, social, and personal aesthetics. ❖



Interior of Kelmscott Manor, Oxfordshire, England. Late nineteenth century. Kelmscott Manor was the home of William Morris (1834–1896) between 1871 and 1896.
Photograph © by Historica Graphica Collection/Heritage Images/Getty Images.

Further Resources

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A version of this article by CAROL HUEBSCHER RHOADES of Madison, Wisconsin, appeared in the Fall 2017 issue of *Knitting Traditions*, a *PieceWork* special issue.

A companion project follows

A Morris and Company Design to Embroider

MELINDA BARTA

Preceded by a companion article



Melinda Barta's stunning embroidered and appliquéd design is a tribute to May Morris, brilliant Arts and Crafts designer and embroiderer. Here, the design is appliquéd to a velveteen table runner.
Photograph by Joe Coca.

Attributed to May Morris (1862–1938), this elegant and classic floral design is a versatile motif that can be used to embellish table linens, clothing, bags and purses, and much more. Melinda Barta embroidered the design on douppioni silk and appliquéd the finished pieces on each end of a velveteen table runner. The fresh summerlike design pays homage to the very talented May Morris, daughter of William Morris (1834–1896). Both daughter and father left their stamps on the Arts and Crafts world.

MATERIALS

- Caron Collection Soie Cristale, 100% silk 12-strand thread, 6 yard (5.5 m)/skein, 1 skein each of #1032 Olive Gray, #1146 Golden Brown, #2031 Brown Rose Dark, #2032 Brown Rose Medium, #2035 Brown Rose Very Light, #5004 Sage Green, #6021 Brown Purple, #7053 Cornflower
- Douppioni fabric, 100% silk, 14 x 14 inches (35.6 x 35.6 cm), 2 pieces of Beige
- Velveteen fabric, 100% cotton, 10½ x 59 inches (26.7 x 149.9 cm), 1 piece of Maroon
- Cotton fabric, 100% cotton, 10½ x 59 inches (26.7 x 149.9 cm), 1 piece of Maroon
- John James Needles, embroidery sizes 6 and 8
- Embroidery hoop, 12 inches (30.5 cm) in diameter
- Sewing thread, Maroon
- Colored pencil, White
- Graphite pencil

Finished size: Design, 4⅝ x 8½ inches (11.7 x 21.6 cm); table runner, 9½ x 58 inches (24.1 x 147.3 cm)

INSTRUCTIONS

Notes: Unless otherwise noted, use long-and-short satin stitch and two strands of thread in the size 8 needle. The letters in the instructions correspond to the letters on the pattern. Repeat the embroidery instructions for the other end of the runner.

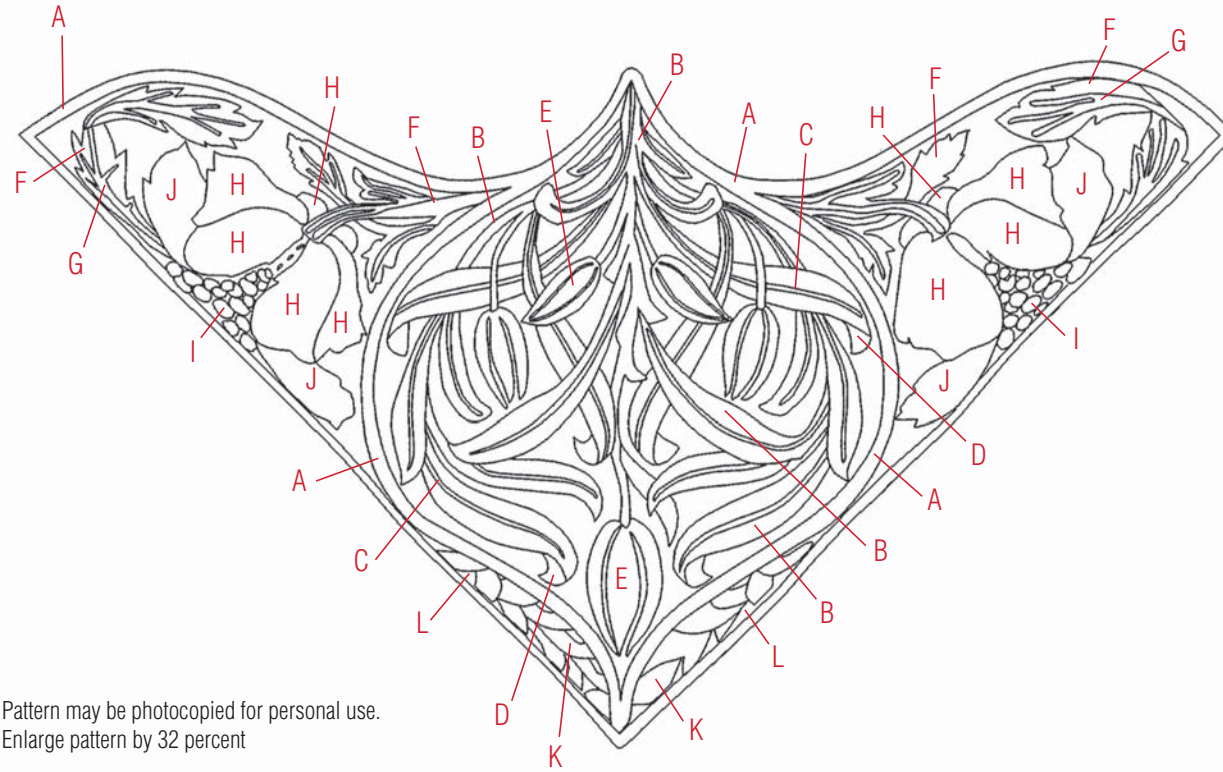
Table Runner

Transfer the pattern to the center of the douppioni fabric using the graphite pencil and a light source. Mount the fabric in the embroidery hoop.

Use three strands of thread to outline the entire design and the center motif (A) with #1146 Golden Brown and two rows of stem stitches. Work the stems and leaves of the tulips (B) with #1032 Olive Gray, the veins (C) with #1146 Golden Brown, and the tips of the leaves (D) with #5004 Sage Green. Outline the petals of the tulips (E) with #6021 Brown Purple. Starting at the base with #2032 Brown Rose Medium, fill in the petals shading the color toward the tips with #2035 Brown Rose Very Light and ending with #1146 Golden Brown. Work the stems and leaves of the poppies (F) with #7053 Cornflower and the veins (G) with #1146 Golden



Detail of Melinda Barta's embroidered and appliquéd design.
Photograph by Joe Coca.



Pattern may be photocopied for personal use.
Enlarge pattern by 32 percent

Brown. Fill in the petals of the poppies (H) with #2031 Brown Rose Dark, #2032 Brown Rose Medium, and #6021 Brown Purple, shading as indicated in the photograph; use #1146 Golden Brown to divide the petals. Work the poppy seeds (I) with satin stitch and #6021 Brown Purple, filling in the spaces between the seeds with #1146 Golden Brown. Beginning with the narrowest point, work the undersides of the poppy petals (J) with #1146 Golden Brown, shading to #2035 Brown Rose Very Light. Work the leaves at the tip of the embroidery (K) with #2032 Brown Rose Medium; fill the spaces around the leaves (L) with #6021 Brown Purple. Remove the fabric from the hoop.

Trim the embroidered fabric ½ inch (1.3 cm) beyond the embroidery and cut notches at ¼-inch (6-mm) intervals around the curves. With the embroidery face down on a terry towel, finger press, and using the size 6 needle, whipstitch the seam allowances to the back, carefully trimming and folding the fabric at the corners to avoid bulk.

Lay the piece of velveteen face down with the embroidered fabric face down on top of it; the 90-degree point of the embroidery should be 1½ inches (3.8 cm) from one short end of the fabric and centered side to side. Lightly trace around the embroidered fabric with the colored pencil. Set the embroidered fabric aside.

Draw a line 1 inch (2.5 cm) to the outside of one of the traced straight edges; repeat on the other straight edge; cut along both lines. Repeat on the other short end of the velveteen. With right sides facing, place the velveteen on top of the cotton fabric, draw around the outside of the velveteen with the colored pencil, and cut the cotton fabric to the same shape as the velveteen fabric. Pin the fabrics together and sew using a ½-inch (1.3-cm) seam allowance and removing the pins as you sew, leaving a 4-inch (10.2-cm) opening in the center of one side for turning. Trim the end points to within ⅛ inch (3 mm) of the seams and turn the fabrics right sides out.

Finishing

Using the size 6 needle and the sewing thread, slip-stitch the opening closed to complete the table runner. Press with the velveteen face down on a terry cloth towel. Slip-stitch one embroidered piece to the velveteen on each end of the table runner with the straight edges of the embroidery parallel to the straight sides of the pointed table runner and ½ inch (1.3 cm) from the sides and points.

MELINDA BARTA, a former assistant editor of *PieceWork* and editor of *PieceWork*'s sister magazine *Beadwork*, is the author of numerous books, including *Hip to Stitch: 20 Contemporary Projects Embellished with Thread* and *Mastering Herringbone Stitch: The Complete Guide* (Fort Collins, Colorado: Interweave, 2005 and 2013, respectively). She is a beading designer, teacher, and technical editor; visit www.melindabarta.com.

From Field to Palace

One Quilter's Journey to Meet the Queen

DIANE KENNEDY

Most young girls have hopes and dreams. For some, those ideals come and go like the passing of the wind. Others cling to their aspirations, striving for years to make them come true. Martha Ann Erskine Ricks was one who held to her belief that she could achieve what others thought unlikely. Though she was a poor Liberian woman, Martha Ann Ricks sailed across the Atlantic Ocean to meet Queen Victoria (1819–1901) and made headlines with her gift of a handmade satin quilt.

Born into slavery in the southern United States in 1817, Martha Ann was the daughter of George M. Erskine (circa 1779–1830), a former slave whose freedom had been purchased by Presbyterian pastor Isaac Anderson (1780–1857). Erskine later became a Presbyterian minister himself, traveling throughout the eastern and southern states, spreading God's word to earn the money to purchase his family's freedom. By 1830, Reverend Erskine had accumulated the necessary funds to free his wife and seven children. Because American citizenship was unattainable for free slaves, the family set sail for Liberia, believing they could create better lives for themselves in Africa. Sadly, within one year of leaving the United States, most of Martha Ann's family members perished from illness. At just fourteen years of age, she was left with two brothers and a hard road ahead, resettling in Clay Ashland, on the banks of the Saint Paul River near Liberia's capital, Monrovia, as a farmer.

Martha Ann was an industrious farm woman. In addition to flowers and vegetables, she grew sugarcane, arrowroot, pepper, ginger, and coffee. Coffee trees were in great abundance and flourished on her land. She wove and spun cloth for her family's clothing and gained a reputation as an excellent seamstress. Her homemade silk stockings won prizes at national fairs. As Martha Ann went about her daily work, she often thought about the British naval ships that patrolled the Liberian coastline, preventing slave catchers from kidnapping free blacks. She knew of England's Queen Victoria—the most powerful person in the world, at that time. "I had heard it often, from the time I was a child, how good the Queen had been to my people—to slaves—and how she wanted us to be free," Martha Ann once told an interviewer. Martha Ann longed to thank Queen Victoria for her kindness and diligence in protecting the African people.



Martha Ann Ricks. Albumen cabinet card by Elliott & Fry. July 18, 1892. Collection of the National Portrait Gallery London, England. (NPGx38887).
Photograph © National Portrait Gallery London.

Martha Ann Ricks made up her mind; she would visit Queen Victoria and thank her in person. For fifty years, Martha Ann saved every spare penny she had to pay the passage to England. Neighbors and friends scoffed and teased Martha Ann. No one believed she would ever set foot in Queen Victoria's palace. Confident and tenacious, Martha Ann Ricks continued to believe in her ability to reach her goal. Perhaps what continued to spur her on was the quilt she was making—a beautiful gift to present when she finally

Martha Ann Erskine Ricks was one who held to her belief that she could achieve what others thought unlikely.

gained an audience with the queen. After all, Martha Ann was taught it was bad form to pay a visit to someone without a gift in hand.

Looking out the window of her corrugated iron house, Martha Ann saw her coffee trees stretching toward the sky, branches laden with berries, and knew she'd found inspiration for her thank-you gift. Likely setting up her frame and materials on the long front veranda, she began to sew a quilt made of white satin. It was 9 feet (2.7 m) square and depicted a coffee tree in full bloom, complete with branches, green satin leaves, red berries, and a man gathering coffee beans. The border was prettily conceived of passion flowers.

In Liberia, it is said that the rainy season is the time for quilting. It makes a cozy image, picturing Martha Ann during the rains, plying her needle and thread, utilizing quilting skills learned and passed down through generations of slave women in America. One day, news came to Martha Ann that the wife of the president of Liberia, Jane Roberts (1820–1911), had heard of her endeavor and wanted to help her achieve her dream.

At the age of seventy-six, Martha Ann Ricks booked passage to Liverpool, England. Jane Roberts escorted her on the journey. Speaking to a reporter for the *London Times*, Martha Ann said, "I want to go to London and see the Queen. I know I cannot speak to her, but I hope to see her passing along, and then I will return to my farm in Liberia and die contented. The Lord told me I should see the Queen, and I know I will." On July 16, 1892, dressed in her best cape with fancy trim, kid gloves, and a bonnet tied with ribbons, Martha Ann was admitted to Windsor Castle. Because royal protocol prevented commoners from handing gifts to the queen themselves, Martha Ann handed her quilt to a member of the household, who promised it would be given to her majesty, becoming the first quilt ever presented as a diplomatic gift. The Inspector of the Castle gave Martha Ann a tour of the library and royal apartments. She was then led into the East Corridor, where Queen Victoria, as well as her children, grandchildren, and courtiers were waiting to meet her. The *Daily Graphic* newspaper stated that the queen told Martha Ann she "felt greatly honored by the trouble you have taken to come to see me." The two shook hands and Martha Ann found it difficult to end the embrace, prolonging the moment by holding and repeatedly shaking the monarch's hand. Later, speaking with a reporter from the *Pall Mall Gazette*, Martha Ann said, "She did not stay long in the golden room and I forgot what she said, but I shall never forget how she smiled and how she shook hands with me." To mark the visit, Martha Ann was given a lantern. A royal escort was also provided to see her home to Liberia.

As Martha Ann sailed home, Queen Victoria wrote about her visitor in her diary, describing her as "very loyal . . . with a kind face." Meanwhile, British citizens delighted in purchasing cabinet cards imprinted with Martha Ann's photograph. In Liberia, crowds came to the pier to greet her returning ship, as marching bands played. No longer laughed at for believing in her dreams, people instead asked how she dared to have such audacity. "I asked God and God said yes," she reportedly replied.



Liberian coffee tree as drawn for the *Tea and Coffee Trade Journal*, New York. Printed by H.C. Kropp & Co, Milwaukee.
Photograph © Culture Club/Getty Images.

On July 16, 1892, dressed in her best cape with fancy trim, kid gloves, and a bonnet tied with ribbons, Martha Ann was admitted to Windsor Castle.

In the following year, Queen Victoria felt Martha Ann's quilt had been created with such talent, she sent what has come to be known as the "Coffee Tree Quilt" to the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, Illinois. Its workmanship prompted one attendee to describe it as "a most beautiful creation . . . a quilt which showed a complete coffee tree all in green and yellow on a white ground, its branches and leaves perfectly formed, the flowers at the root of the leaves and its berries—exquisite in tracery and workmanship. The design was so unique and true to nature that it was admired by all who saw it." By all accounts, Martha Ann created a true piece of artwork. Florence Dennis Huskin, a descendant of Martha Ann, recalls seeing the quilt on display in what she believes was the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, England, around 1965, when she was just a young girl. "It was quite memorable. I could not forget that," Florence has attested.

Unfortunately, the fabled Coffee Tree Quilt has not been seen for many decades. Writer, quilter, and quilt historian Kyra E. Hicks has been searching for the quilt for more than seven years. Hicks became interested in Martha Ann's story while researching her first book, *Black Threads: An African American Quilting Sourcebook*. Moved by Martha Ann's faith and audacity, Kyra took it upon herself to learn the circumstances behind the Coffee Tree Quilt and share Martha Ann's story with others. Most notably, her nonfiction book for children, *Martha Ann's Quilt for Queen Victoria*, offers a springboard for parents to speak with children regarding slavery, as well as perseverance and working to achieve dreams.

In searching for the original Coffee Tree Quilt, Kyra has written to all of Queen Elizabeth II's current residences, asking if the coverlet is stored somewhere in her vast collection of gifts or home goods. Staff members responding on behalf of the queen have not been able to locate the quilt. No one seems to be familiar with the item or what may have become of it since being shipped to Chicago for the Columbian Exposition. Neither has Kyra Hicks been able to find documentation that the quilt was ever returned to the Queen.

Did Martha Ann's Coffee Tree Quilt sail back across the ocean? Could it have been part of a temporary display at the Victoria and Albert? Art historians know that museum objects sometimes disappear. Similarly, items from the royal collections must occasionally be removed and dispersed. Kyra Hicks has said she harbors hope that one day Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge, may open a cupboard and discover Martha Ann's gorgeous handwork in a distant corner.

Until then, the Quageh, a quilting group located in Caldwell Township on the outskirts of Monrovia, specializes in keeping Martha Ann's work alive by re-creating her Coffee Tree design. A member of the group known as "Maudie, the Quilt Lady," refers to Martha Ann as the "Coffee Tree Queen." Though Martha Ann Ricks died in 1901, it's not likely she'd object to this honorary moniker. With her piecework, she sought to honor a compassionate monarch who took the lead in recognizing Liberia and the dignity of its people. By perpetuating Martha Ann's artistic vision, the Quageh group has crowned a lesser known, but relevant woman, who made her people proud through her spirited determination and lovely needlework. ❖

Further Resources

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DIANE KENNEDY writes and does needlework in her spare time. She resides in a suburb of Detroit, Michigan.



Portrait of Queen Victoria of England (1819–1901). 1887.
Photograph © Culture Club/Getty Images.

The Liberian Exhibition at Chicago's 1893 Columbian Exposition

Author Hubert Howe Bancroft mentions Martha Ann Ricks's quilt in his account of the exposition in *The Book of the Fair: An Historical and Descriptive Presentation of the World's Science, Art, and Industry, as Viewed through the Columbian Exposition at Chicago in 1893*, published in 1893. Here is a portion of page 381 from the book:

> In the extreme northwest corner of the main building is the Liberian exhibit, which, though small in size, displays to excellent advantage the resources of the West African republic. . . . As to implements, weapons, clothing, and curios illustrative of life in Liberia, there are bracelets of iron, brass, and copper, leather bags and water bottles, blue and white cloths, warriors' caps, and women's skirts and headdresses of grass, with leather charms, hideous wooden idols, spears, swords, daggers, and dirks, looms, inkstands, pens, bars of iron, wooden sandals, embroidered gowns, hammocks of cloth, yarn, and grass, powder horns, photographs, postage stamps, postal cards, metal and paper money, newspapers and books, strainers for palm butter, palm oil gourds, blacksmiths' tools, and bellows, chairs, stools, and trunks of bamboo, fishing nets and baskets, and fine needlework. Among the last is an embroidered satin quilt, upon which is represented in raised work a coffee tree in full bloom. . . .

Luisa Sanfelice

Martyr of the Parthenopean Republic

MIMI SEYFERTH

Luisa Sanfelice (1764–1800) is known as the martyr of the Parthenopean Republic, a French-supported republic that briefly governed the Kingdom of Naples between January 21, 1799, and June 21, 1799. For revealing a royalist plot against the republicans, Luisa was sentenced to death after the royalists overthrew the republic and restored the monarchy. Despite postponing her execution by pretending to be pregnant, Luisa was ultimately put to death on September 11, 1800.



Luisa Sanfelice in Prison by Gioacchino Toma (1836–1891). Oil on canvas. Italy. 1874.
24¾ x 31 inches (63.0 x 79.0 cm).
Photograph © DeAgostini/Getty Images.

The daughter of a Spanish father and a Genoese mother, Luisa Molino was born in Naples on February 28, 1764. A young woman of great beauty, she married the Italian aristocrat Andrea Sanfelice (1763–1808). Luisa and Andrea had three children, but they were unable to live together as a family because of Andrea's numerous business misfortunes. While various authorities administered his affairs, Andrea was frequently relegated to prisons and monasteries. Andrea and Luisa's children were reared apart from their parents in convents; Luisa lived with her mother, separated from both her husband and her children.

Although largely apolitical, Luisa became part of the prominent social circle of Neapolitan republicans

who sought to implement the ideals of the French Revolution (1789–1799)—*liberté*, *egalité*, *fraternité*—in the Kingdom of Naples, which covered the area south of the Papal States to the province of Calabria in the southernmost part of the Italian peninsula. The Kingdom of Naples had been ruled by the Bourbon royal dynasty since the Spanish had conquered Naples and Sicily in 1734 and installed Charles, Duke of Parma (1716–1788), as King of Naples and Sicily in 1735. When Charles succeeded to the throne of Spain in 1759, he abdicated his Neapolitan and Sicilian titles in favor of his son Ferdinand IV (1751–1825), for whom a regency council was established until he reached his majority in 1767. In 1768, Ferdinand IV married Maria Carolina (1752–1814), a daughter of Empress Maria Theresa (1717–1780) of the Holy Roman Empire and a sister of Marie Antoinette (1755–1793), the last queen of France.

The Neapolitan republican idealists were emboldened by the French, who, under the leadership of Napoleon Bonaparte (1760–1821), invaded northern Italy (1796–1797) and occupied Rome on February 10, 1798. But these French victories were soon followed by Bonaparte's unsuccessful invasion of Egypt and the destruction of the French fleet by England's Vice Admiral Horatio Nelson (1758–1805) on August 1, 1798, at the Battle of the Nile. Taking advantage of Napoleon's absence from Italy, Maria Carolina—who feared the fate that befell her sister Marie Antoinette—persuaded Ferdinand IV to go to war against France in order to preempt any French-sponsored republican uprising in Naples. Nelson and England's ambassador to the Kingdom of Naples, Sir William Hamilton (1730–1803) and his wife, Emma (1765–1815), assisted Maria Carolina in her efforts to encourage Ferdinand IV to wage war.

On November 24, 1798, Ferdinand IV led 50,000 men in an offensive against the French troops occupying Rome. Although Rome initially fell without resistance, the French quickly counterattacked, overwhelming the royalists with a much smaller force. Ferdinand IV swiftly retreated, stopping in Naples—as the modern historian John Davis notes, "only long enough to collect his family, closest courtiers, the crown jewels, and the cash deposits of public banks." On December 21, 1798, less than a month after he started his offensive, Ferdinand IV and Maria Carolina sailed with Nelson and the Hamiltons to Palermo, Sicily. Davis describes Ferdinand IV's offensive against Rome as follows: "Unlike Caesar who 'came, saw and conquered,' King Ferdinand 'came, saw, and fled.'"

As Ferdinand IV retreated, the French invaded the Kingdom of Naples. After a period of negotiation, a French-sponsored republic was established in Naples on January 21, 1799. It was called the Parthenopean Republic after Parthenope, the ancient name for Naples, which was thought to have been built on the site of the tomb of the siren Parthenope.

From its beginning, the Parthenopean Republic rested on a shaky foundation. The republicans—mainly young lawyers, scholars, journalists, noblemen, and clerics—had lofty ideals, but they were impractical and ignorant about governing. Moreover, they lacked support from the poorest people of Naples, the *Lazzaroni*, who were loyal to the crown. Furthermore, the new republic was in financial distress; not only had Ferdinand IV absconded with the crown jewels and raided the public banks, France also sought to tax the new republic.

Even more troubling, as the modern historian Tommaso Astarita notes, "the republicans never developed loyal military forces independent of French support and never established control over most of the provinces." Thus, in February 1799, royalist forces, comprised mainly of peasants and provincials, gathered in Calabria under the leadership of Cardinal Fabrizio Ruffo (1744–1827), whom Ferdinand IV had appointed his vicar-general, to form a Holy Faith Army. By the end of April 1799, when France recalled the French troops that had been supporting the republic, the Holy Faith Army had already subdued all of Calabria and most of Apulia. In June 1799, the Holy Faith Army began a land siege against the city of Naples, which Nelson's fleet had blockaded by sea.

As the royalist forces neared Naples, one of Luisa's admirers, a royalist cavalry officer named Gerardo Baccher (1769–1799), advised Luisa of a royalist conspiracy to organize an insurrection among the *Lazzaroni* and provided Luisa with a written pass assuring its holder of safe passage among the royalists. Luisa, in turn, gave the pass to one of her republican admirers, warning him that he might be a target of the insurrection. There are conflicting reports on the identity of this admirer: it may have been either Ferdinando Ferri (1767–1857) or Vincenzo Cuoco (1770–1823). Regardless, Luisia's republican admirer immediately disclosed the royalist conspiracy to his republican colleagues. When the republican authorities questioned Luisa about the conspiracy, she reportedly provided details about the planned insurrection but refused to reveal the source of her information. A day after Luisa was questioned, the republicans arrested Baccher, his three brothers, and his father; Baccher and one of his brothers were subsequently shot.

Although Luisa expected to be punished for her association with the royalist cavalry officer, she was instead heralded as a republican heroine for providing

the republican authorities with details about the royalists' planned insurrection. Lauded as the savior of the republic and the mother of her country, Luisa became the subject of popular songs and newspaper articles. This prominence sealed Luisa's fate when the royalists eventually regained control of Naples.

On June 21, 1799, the republicans surrendered to the royalists pursuant to an armistice, which provided that the republicans should be left unmolested and allowed to leave Naples for France, if they wished. But Ferdinand IV refused to abide by the terms of the armistice. On June 24, 1799, Ferdinand IV unleashed a fierce repression, supported by Nelson, who oversaw the arrests and imprisonment of thousands of republicans. According to historian Davis, 3,818 republicans were tried, of whom 216 were executed, 492 were exiled, and the remainder given lesser sentences.

Luisa was among those arrested and sentenced to death. Luisa postponed her execution, however, by pretending to be pregnant. (Although the Neapolitan general and historian Pietro Colletta [1775–1831] wrote that Luisa gave birth to a baby while in prison, the consensus of other historians is that Luisa faked her pregnancy.) Sympathetic doctors and midwives supported her pretense. But in July 1800, Ferdinand IV—egged on by the Bacchers, who were eager to extract revenge for the republicans' treatment of their family—ordered that Luisa be transferred to Palermo for another examination, and her ruse was discovered.

Many decades later, popular Italian artist Gioacchino Toma (1836–1891), an antimonarchist known for capturing historical events with psychological insight, depicted Luisa in her prison cell in the Castel Sant-Elmo in his 1874 painting, *Luisa Sanfelice in carcere* (Luisa Sanfelice in Prison). In the painting (of which there are two nearly identical versions), Luisa works on what appears to be a baby's dress, with a pile of baby clothes in a basket by her side. The theme of the painting is an obvious nod to the ruse—a fake pregnancy—by which Luisa postponed her execution.

Luisa did have one last hope for survival: Ferdinand IV's daughter-in-law, the Hereditary Princess Maria Clementina (1777–1801), gave birth to a baby boy on August 26, 1800, and by a custom observed in the royal family, the princess was entitled to ask the king for three favors. The princess asked for only one: that he spare Luisa's life. But Ferdinand IV obdurately refused to grant that request. After reading a petition on Luisa's behalf that the princess attached to her baby's swaddling clothes, Ferdinand IV allegedly threw the baby back on the princess's pillow, left the room without saying a word, and did not return to see his new grandson for several days. Ferdinand IV ordered that Luisa be returned to Naples, where she was brought to the executioner on September 11, 1800. Although some historians report that Luisa was hanged, others assert that, as an aristocrat, she was beheaded.

After her death, Luisa was viewed as a martyr of the Parthenopean Republic. The French writer Stendhal (1783–1842) described her as an "enchanting" victim. Alexandre Dumas (1802–1870) portrayed her as a romantic heroine, as did the American journalist Vincent Sheean (1899–1975). The story of Floria Tosca, the heroine of the opera *Tosca* by Giacomo Puccini (1858–1924), resembles that of Luisa. And Luisa's life is recounted in two twentieth-century films, each titled *Luisa Sanfelice* (1942 and 2004). Even today, the story of Luisa's life is a compelling tale of a fragile beauty overwhelmed by political events. ❖

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MIMI SEYFERTH, an attorney who lives outside Washington, D.C., first learned about Luisa Sanfelice on a trip to Naples in June 2018. While in Naples, she visited both the Capodimonte Museum, which houses one of the two versions of the painting *Luisa Sanfelice in carcere* (Luisa Sanfelice in Prison) by Gioacchino Toma (1836–1891), and the Castel Sant-Elmo, one of the prisons where Luisa was kept. Captivated by Luisa's story, she is pleased to have this opportunity to share that story with *PieceWork* readers.

A companion project follows

Sanfelice Baby Jacket to Knit

MIMI SEYFERTH

Inspired by the preceding article



Mimi Seyferth's exquisite knitted baby jacket is fit for a royal baby. Unusual knitting techniques such as pleating and crossed cables add to the allure. This jacket is destined to become a beloved family heirloom.

This baby jacket was inspired by the baby clothes Luisa Sanfelice was making in the painting *Luisa Sanfelice in carcere* (Luisa Sanfelice in Prison) shown in the preceding companion article. Painted in 1874 by Gioacchino Toma (1836–1891), the painting offers a sympathetic historical portrait of Luisa Sanfelice depicting her ruse of pregnancy to delay execution. She had been imprisoned in Naples for revealing a royalist plot against a republican government that ruled briefly. *Luisa Sanfelice in carcere* is not Toma's only painting about Luisa Sanfelice; in his 1884 painting *Luisa Sanfelice transportata da Palermo a Napoli il 2 settembre 1880 per essere decapitate* (Luisa Sanfelice Transported from Palermo to Naples on September 2, 1880, to Be Beheaded), Toma depicted her being brought by boat to Naples for her execution.

Arrested in 1857, also as a conspirator against the monarchy, Toma began painting seriously after he was exiled to Piedimonte d'Alife in the Campania region north of Naples. But Toma did not abandon political activism after his exile; in 1859, he fought under Giuseppe Garibaldi (1807–1882) in furtherance of the unification of the different states of the Italian peninsula.

In the early 1860s, Toma held several exhibitions in Naples and Florence and then retired from

public life for a decade. He began exhibiting again in 1874 and became a professor of design at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Naples. Of special interest to needleworkers, he published collections of designs for the manufacture of lace; one of these collections received a silver medal at the Esposizione Generale Italiana of Turin in 1884. His *Scuola per cioccolatini ciechi* (School for Blind Lace Makers), painted in 1872, shows a group of blind women being instructed in lacemaking.

In designing the baby jacket, I selected an ivory-colored yarn to resemble the color of the baby clothes in Toma's painting of Luisa Sanfelice. I inserted a crossed-cables motif in the yoke of the jacket to evoke the bars of Sanfelice's prison cell. The full, pleated skirt of the jacket echoes the full skirt Sanfelice is wearing in the painting.

Further Resources

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Materials

- Brooklyn Tweed Peerie, 100% American merino wool yarn, fingering weight, 210 yard (192.0 m)/50 gram (1.8 oz) skein, 5 skeins of Hammock
- Needles, size 2 (2.75 mm)
- Cable needles, 2
- Stitch markers
- Stitch holders
- Tapestry needle
- Buttons, 5/16 inch (8 mm), 6
- Sewing thread, Ivory
- Sewing needle
- Satin ribbon, 2 yards (1.8 m) 1/8 inch (3.2 mm) of Ivory

Finished size: Chest circumference, 22½ inches (57.2 cm) with fronts overlapped ½ inch (1.3 cm); to fit a baby six to twelve months old

Gauge: 38 sts and 40 rows = 4 inches (10.2 cm) in patt from skirt charts; 39½ sts and 44½ rows = 4 inches (10.2 cm) in patt from yoke charts

Special Abbreviation

CDD (centered double decrease)

Slip two stitches as if to knit two together, knit one, pass two slipped stitches over—two stitches decreased.

Special Stitches

Pleat Left

Slip three stitches onto one cable needle, slip next three stitches onto second cable needle. Hold the cable needles together with wrong sides of stitches touching and the first cable needle in front with its right side facing you. Place the stacked cable needles on top of the next three stitches on the left needle with the first cable needle on top of the three-layer stack. *Insert the tip of the right needle into the first stitch of all three needles (both cable needles and then the left needle) and knit three stitches together; repeat from * two more times—nine stitches decreased to three stitches.

Pleat Right

Slip three stitches onto one cable needle, slip next three stitches onto second cable needle. Hold the cable needles together with right sides of stitches touching and the first cable needle in front with its wrong side facing you. Fold the stacked cable needles behind the next three stitches on the left needle with the stitches of the left needle on top of the three-layer stack. *Insert the tip of the right needle into the first stitch of all three needles (the left needle, then both cable needles) and knit three stitches together; repeat from * two more times—nine stitches decreased to three stitches.



Smock 2

Knit two stitches onto cable needle, wrap yarn around stitches on cable needle two times counterclockwise, slip stitches from cable needle to right needle.

Smock 3

Knit three stitches onto cable needle, wrap yarn around stitches on cable needle three times counterclockwise, slip stitches from cable needle to right needle.

Smock 5

Knit five stitches onto cable needle, wrap yarn around stitches on cable needle five times counterclockwise, slip stitches from cable needle to right needle.

Instructions

Notes: See above and www.interweave.com/interweave-knitting-glossary for Abbreviations and Techniques. You may set off each pattern repeat using stitch markers, if desired. Instead of binding off the tops of the sleeves, the live sleeve stitches can be joined to a corresponding number of picked-up armhole stitches using the three-needle bind-off method, if desired.

Jacket

Back Skirt

Using the long-tail method, CO on 225 sts.

K 5 rows, beg and ending with a WS row.

Rows 1–78: Work Rows 1–4 of Back Skirt Chart 19 times, work Rows 1–2 once more—piece measures 8 inches (20.3 cm) from CO.

Next Row (RS, Row 3 of Patt): Work 9 sts in patt, *work Pleat Left over 9 sts dec them to 3 sts, work Pleat Right over 9 sts dec them to 3 sts, k3; rep from * 9 more times, work 6 sts in patt—105 sts rem.

Next 3 Rows: K, beg and ending with a WS row.

Next Row (RS, Eyelet Row): K2, *yo, k2tog; rep from * to last st, k1.

Next 3 Rows: K, beg and ending with a WS row—piece measures 8½ inches (21.6 cm) from CO.

Back Yoke

Next Row (RS): BO 3 sts (st on right needle after last BO counts as 1st st of chart), work Row 1 of Back Yoke Chart to last 3 sts, k3—102 sts.

Next Row (WS): BO 3 sts (st on right needle after last BO counts as 1st st of chart), work Row 2 of chart to end—99 sts.

Work in patt to Row 16 of chart, work Rows 1–16 once more, then work Rows 33–42 of chart—upper back measures 3¾ inches (9.5 cm) from 1st armhole BO row.

Next Row (RS, Row 43 of Chart): Work 25 sts in chart patt, BO center 49 sts as they appear (st on right needle after last BO counts as next st of chart), work chart patt to end—25 sts each for right and left shoulders.



Working sts of left back shoulder while allowing sts of right back shoulder to rest on the needle, work Rows 44–50 of chart on 25 left back sts—upper back measures 4½ inches (11.4 cm) and piece measures 13 inches (33.0 cm) from CO. Place sts on holder.

Rejoin yarn to 25 right back sts with WS facing, and work Rows 44–50 of chart. Place sts on holder.

Left Front Skirt

Using the long-tail method, CO 118 sts.

K 5 rows, beg and ending with a WS row.

Rows 1–78: Work Rows 1–4 of Left Front Skirt Chart 19 times, work Rows 1 and 2 once more—piece measures 8 inches (20.3 cm) from CO.

Next Row (RS, Row 3 of Patt): Work 9 sts in patt, *work Pleat Left over 9 sts dec them to 3 sts, work Pleat Right over 9 sts dec them to 3 sts, k3; rep from * 4 more times, work 4 sts in patt—58 sts rem.

Next 3 Rows: K, beg and ending with a WS row.

Next Row (RS, Eyelet Row): K1, *yo, k2tog; rep from * to last st, k1.

Next 3 Rows: K, beg and ending with a WS row—piece measures 8½ inches (21.6 cm) from CO.

Left Front Yoke

Next Row (RS): BO 3 sts (st on right needle after last BO counts as 1st st of chart), work Row 1 of Left Front Yoke Chart to end—55 sts.

Work Rows 2–41 of chart—upper front measures 3¾ inches (9.5 cm) from 1st armhole BO row.

Next Row (WS, Row 42 of Chart): BO 30 sts as they appear (st on right needle after last BO counts as next st of chart), work chart patt to end—25 sts rem.

Work Rows 43–50 of chart—upper front measures 4½ inches (11.4 cm) and piece measures 13 inches (33.0 cm) from CO. Place sts on holder.

Right Front Skirt

Using the long-tail method, CO 118 sts.

K 5 rows, beg and ending with a WS row.

Rows 1–78: Work Rows 1–4 of Right Front Skirt Chart 19 times, work Rows 1 and 2 once more—piece measures 8 inches (20.3 cm) from CO.

Next Row (RS, Row 3 of Patt): Work 7 sts in patt, *work Pleat Left over 9 sts dec them to 3 sts, work Pleat Right over 9 sts dec them to 3 sts, k3; rep from * 4 more times, work 6 sts in patt—58 sts rem.

Next 3 Rows: K, beg and ending with a WS row.

Next Row (RS, Eyelet Row): Sl 1 pwise wyf, k1, *yo, k2tog; rep from * to end.

Next 3 Rows: K, beg and ending with a WS row—piece measures 8½ inches (21.6 cm) from CO.

Right Front Yoke

Next Row (RS): Work Row 1 of Right Front Yoke Chart to last 3 sts, k3.

Next Row (WS, Row 2 of Chart): BO 3 sts (st on right needle after last BO counts as 1st st of chart), work chart patt to end—55 sts.

Work Rows 3–42 of chart, working buttonholes in front band on Rows 3, 10, 17, 24, 31, and 38 as shown—upper front measures 3¾ inches (9.5 cm) from 1st armhole BO row.

Next Row (RS, Row 43 of Chart): BO 30 sts as they appear (st on right needle after last BO counts as next st of chart), work chart patt to end—25 sts rem.

Work Rows 44–50 of chart—upper front measures 4½ inches (11.4 cm) and piece measures 13 inches (33.0 cm) from CO. Place sts on holder.

Sleeves (make 2)

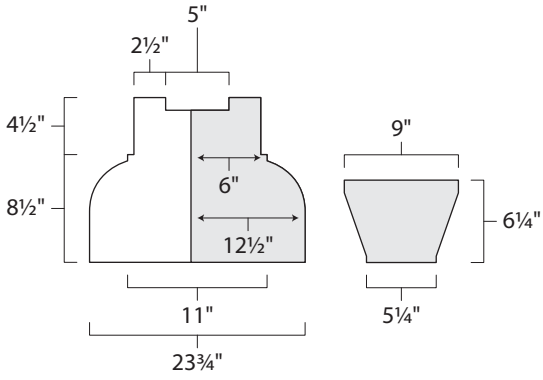
Using the long-tail method, CO on 49 sts.

K 5 rows, beg and ending with a WS row.

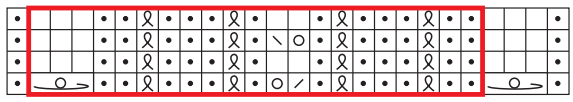
Row 1 (RS): K1 (selvedge st), M1R, pm, work Row 1 of Sleeve Chart over 47 sts, pm, M1L, k1 (selvedge st)—51 sts.

Row 2 (WS): K1 (selvedge st), k1, sl m, work Row 2 of chart over 47 sts, sl m, k1, k1 (selvedge st).

Charts may be photocopied for personal use.
The charts for this project are available in PDF format at
www.interweave.com/piecework-charts-illustrations.



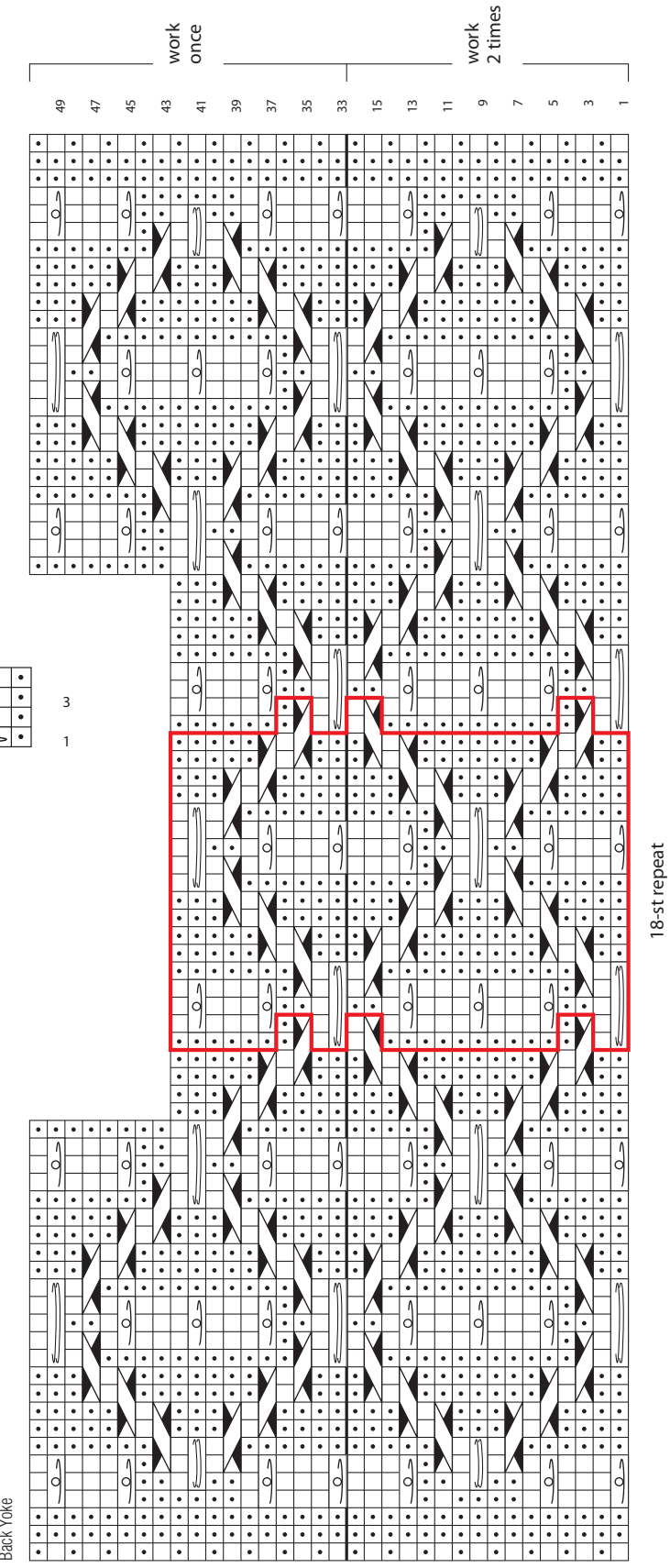
Sleeve



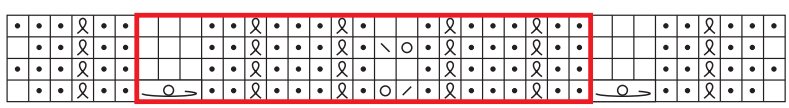
21-st repeat

Key

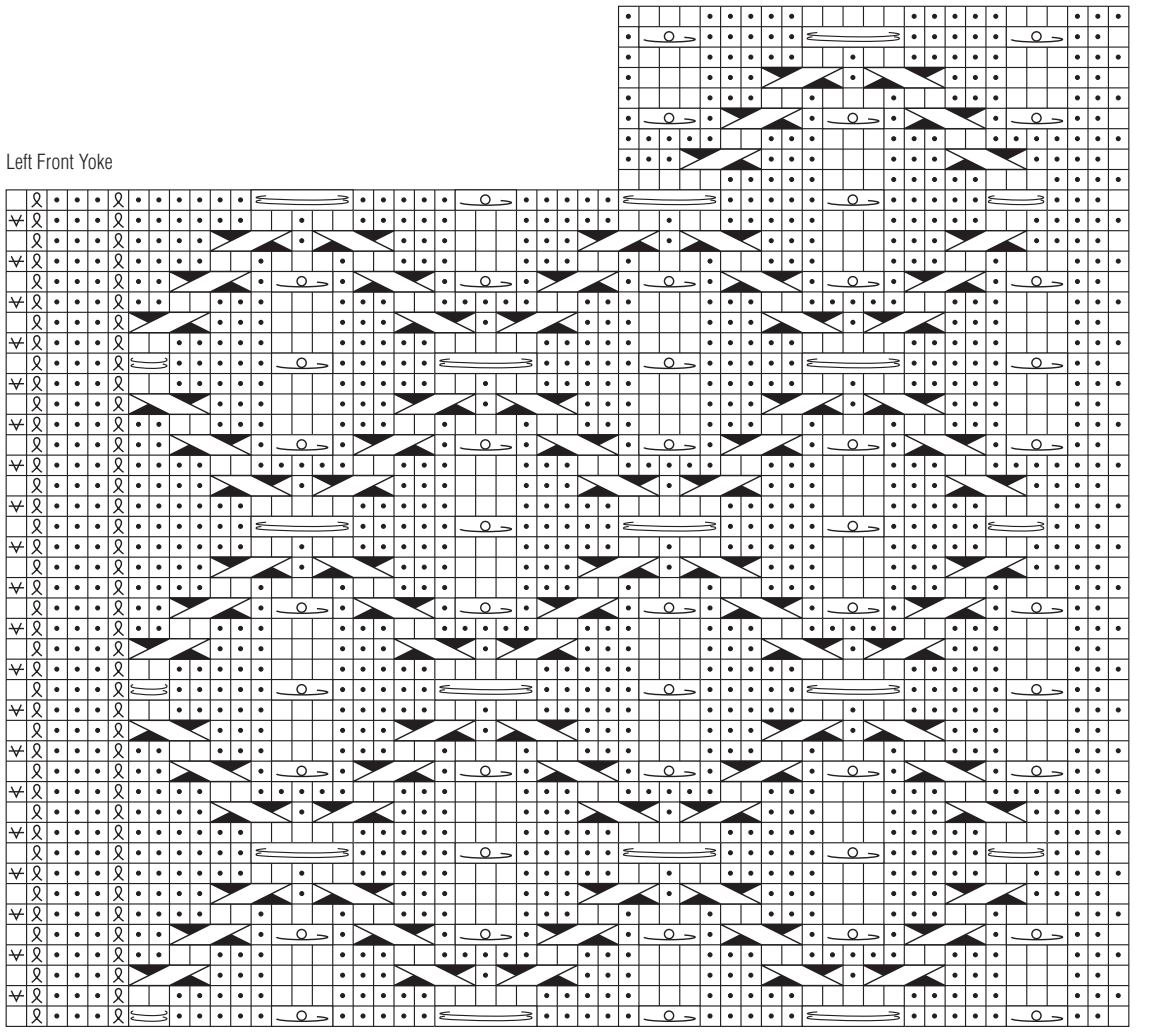
- k on RS; p on WS
- p on RS; k on WS
- k1tbl on RS; p1tbl on WS
- yo
- k2tog
- ssk
- p2tog on RS; k2tog on WS
- sl 1 purlwise wyf on RS and WS
- pattern repeat
- pass 3rd st on left needle over first 2 sts and off needle, then work first 2 sts as k1, yo, k1
- sl 2 sts onto cn and hold in front of work, p2, then k2 from cn
- sl 2 sts onto cn and hold in back of work, k2, then p2 from cn
- smock 2 (see Special Stitches)
- smock 3 (see Special Stitches)
- smock 5 (see Special Stitches)

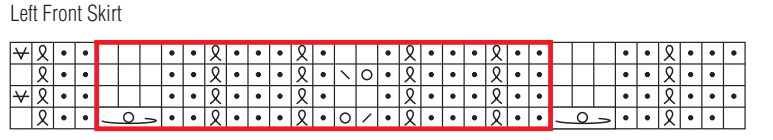


Back Skirt



21-st repeat





Row 3: K1, p to m, sl m, work chart patt to next m, sl m, p to last st, k1.

Row 4: K1, k to m, sl m, work chart patt to next m, sl m, k to last st, k1.

Row 5 (RS, Inc Row): K1, M1R, p to m, sl m, work chart patt to m, sl m, p to last st, M1L, k1—2 sts inc'd.

Row 6: K1, k to m, sl m, work chart patt to next m, sl m, k to last st, k1.

Rows 7–46: Work Rows 3–6 ten more times—73 sts.

Rows 47–54: Rep Rows 5 and 6 four times—81 sts.

Rows 55–58: Rep Rows 3 and 4 two times—piece measures 6¼ inches (15.9 cm) from CO.

BO all sts as they appear or place sts on a holder if joining with the optional three-needle bind-off.

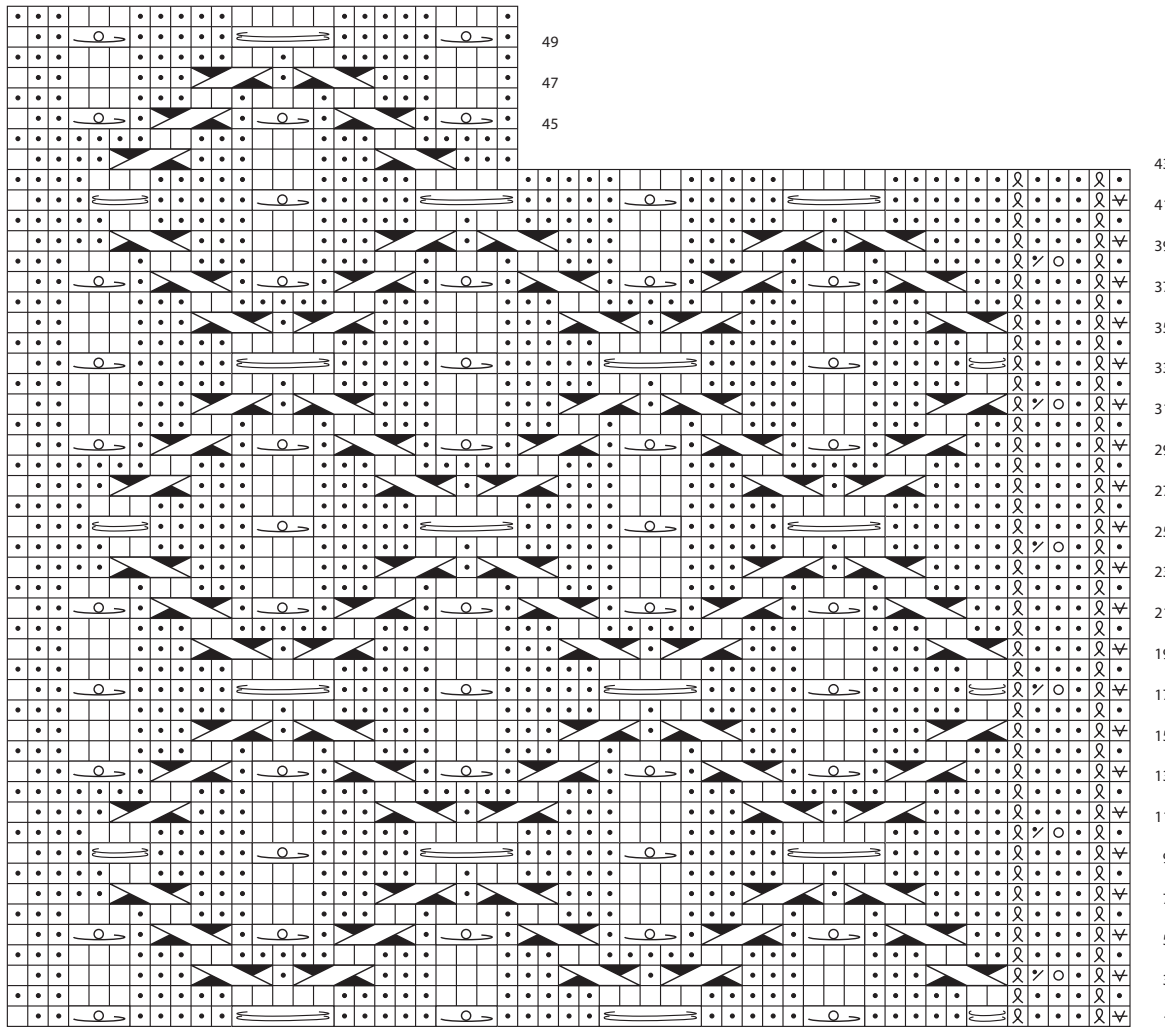
Block to measurements; the right front is not shown on the schematic. Join shoulder seams using three-needle bind-off method.

Neckband

Note: The neck bind-off on the left front is one row lower than the neck bind-off for the right front and back. To make the pattern appear to meet the neckband on the same row for all pieces, pick up and knit stitches from the right front and back one row below the bind-off.

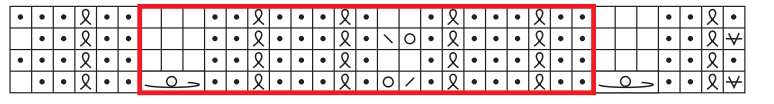
With RS facing, pick up and k 29 sts along right front neck BO edge, pm, pick up and k 3 sts in corner,

Right Front Yoke



55 sts

Right Front Skirt



21-st repeat

pm, 7 sts along side of front neck, 1 st in shoulder join, 7 sts along side of back neck, pm, 3 sts in corner, pm, 49 sts across back neck, pm, 3 sts in corner, pm, 7 sts along side of back neck, 1 st in shoulder join, 7 sts along side of front neck, pm, 3 sts in corner, pm, 29 sts along left front neck BO edge—149 sts.

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

Row 2 (RS): Sl 1 pwise wyf, *k to m, sl m, CDD, sl m; rep from * 3 more times, k to end—141 sts; 1 st rem between each pair of corner ms.

Row 3: Sl 1 pwise wyf, k to end.

Row 4: Sl 1 pwise wyf, *k to 1 st before m, [sl next st temporarily to right needle, remove m] 2 times, return 2 slipped sts to left needle, CDD; rep from * 3 more times, k to end—133 sts.

With WS facing, BO all sts as if to knit, slipping the 1st st pwise wyf at the start of the BO.

Sew sleeves into armholes or join to body using optional three-needle bind-off. Sew sleeve and side seams.

Finishing

Weave in ends. Using the sewing needle and thread, sew the buttons to the left front yoke, opposite the buttonholes. Thread the satin ribbon through the eyelet row below the yoke, trim to desired length, and tie in a bow at the front as shown.

The Turbulent History of the Sewing Machine

KAREN C.K. BALLARD

Numerous inventors, marketers, and lawyers were involved in the history of inventing a practical sewing machine. Its tumultuous development resulted in successes and failures, concerns over job losses, personality conflicts, and intense ongoing litigation, as well as innovations in patent-sharing and marketing. Its history had far-reaching effects, even affecting the way many things are made and marketed today.



Chain-stitch sewing machine invented by Barthélemy Thimonnier (1793–1857), a French tailor. 1830. The machine imitated tambour embroidery: the thread was drawn by a barbed needle from a reel below the table through the cloth to form a chain-stitch on the upper surface of the fabric. The machine shown here is a copy of an early machine made in accordance with Thimonnier's patent.
Photograph by and © SSPL/Getty Images.

The Primary Inventors

The earliest sewing machines tried to replicate the motions made by a handsewer using a single thread. In 1830, Barthélemy Thimonnier (1793–1857), a French tailor, patented the first commercially used sewing machine. It had a hooked needle and created a chain stitch from a single thread. By today's standards, it was a very slow machine but was eventually improved to sew up to 200 stitches a minute. However, that was faster than a handsewer and resulted in a contract for Thimonnier to make uniforms for the French Army in his shop containing eighty machines. In 1831, a mob, afraid that tailors would lose their jobs, stormed his shop and smashed all of his sewing machines. Although Thimonnier continued to perfect his machine throughout the remainder of his life, he had no further commercial success.

The next significant inventor was Walter Hunt (1796–1859) of New York. Hunt, an extremely ingenious individual, loved inventing, had many inventions to his credit, and wanted to create things to make lives easier. Around 1834, he built a sewing machine with the eye in the point of the needle (called an "eye-pointed needle," unlike the handsewing needle in which the eye and the point are at opposite ends) and a shuttle with a second thread for creating a lockstitch. This machine was the first to depart from an attempt to replicate handsewing. When his daughter, Caroline, expressed concern that the sewing machine would cause seamstresses (one of the few respectable jobs available to women) to lose their jobs, Hunt abandoned his invention without securing a patent.

Elias Howe Jr. (1819–1867) of Cambridge, Massachusetts, motivated by profit, patented the machine that offered the next major step in the development of the sewing machine in 1846. His was another lockstitch machine that sewed about 250 stitches a minute. His innovations included a method for suspending the cloth and feeding it through the machine, a moving top arm that carried the thread to a curved eye-pointed needle, and a rod that held a loop from the needle for the shuttle to interlock with a second bobbin thread. Yet the machine had many drawbacks: it was tedious to use (once a small section of stitching was done, the operator had to remove



Portrait of Elias Howe (1819–1867). Oil on canvas. Artist unidentified. Circa 1850s.
Photograph by and © SSPL/Getty Images.



Portrait of Isaac Merritt Singer (1811–1875) by Edward Harrison May (1824–1887). Oil on canvas. 1869. Collection of the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.; gift of the Singer Company. (NPG.75.37). 57 x 44¼ inches (144.8 x 112.4 cm).
Photograph courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution.

the cloth from pins and reset it), it only sewed straight seams, it was costly to produce and sell, and it was costly to repair (primarily because it didn't have interchangeable replacement parts). Consequently, his machine did not sell well, despite Howe's Herculean sales efforts over many years.

In 1849, Allen Benjamin Wilson (1824–1888) built his first working sewing machine, using a double-pointed shuttle to form a lockstitch, in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. He patented it in 1850, but before he could market it, John A. Bradshaw (dates unknown) threatened a lawsuit claiming he owned the patent for the double-pointed shuttle. Not having the funds to fight the lawsuit, Wilson abandoned that invention. In 1851, Wilson devised a completely unique way to create stitches with a rotating hook and a stationary bobbin. A couple of years later, he invented the four-motion feed to move the fabric on the sewing machine bed. With Nathaniel Wheeler (1820–1893), a businessman, he founded the Wheeler and Wilson Sewing Machine Company. Their smooth-running, compact sewing machines were the most popular sellers from 1857 through 1866; the company eventually was overtaken by the Singer Sewing Machine Company.

William O. Grover (dates unknown) and William E. Baker (1828–1888), tailors from Boston, Massachusetts, patented a double-thread chain-stitch machine in 1852 and, with Orlando B. Potter (1823–1894) as lawyer and president, they formed the Grover and Baker Sewing Machine Company. In 1856, they developed a carrying case, making their machine the first portable sewing machine. Although the bulky, double-thread chain-stitch was impracticable for household sewing, it proved ideal for knit underwear. The major contribution of Grover and Baker Sewing Machine Company wasn't its machine, but rather its development of the Sewing Machine Combination (more about that later).

By far the most colorful and most successful character in the panoply of sewing machine innovators was Isaac Merritt Singer (1811–1875). Born in Pittstown, New York, he was a second-generation American with a dream of becoming a Shakespearian actor. Although he had little interest in inventing, he was talented at it. He invented things solely to finance his acting career and is quoted as having said, "I don't give a damn for the invention, the dimes are what I'm after."

In 1850, while working at Orson C. Phelps, a Boston, Massachusetts, machine shop, he noticed that Blodgett and Lerow sewing machines were constantly being brought back for repair. Singer quickly recognized design flaws in those machines and convinced Phelps (dates unknown) and George B. Zieber (dates unknown), a financier, to enter into partnership with him to develop a better sewing machine.

To produce a practical working sewing machine, seven to ten features were required, including lockstitch capability, an eye-pointed needle, a shuttle for

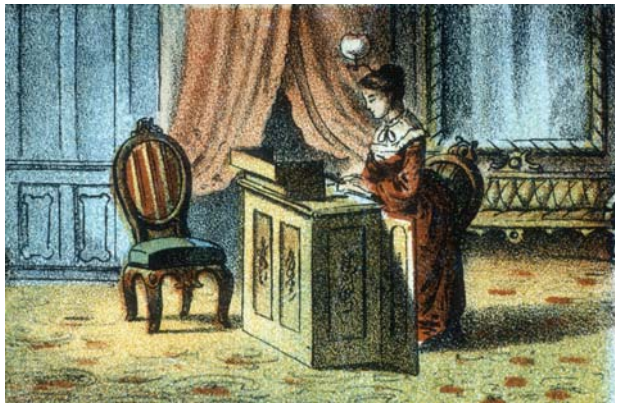
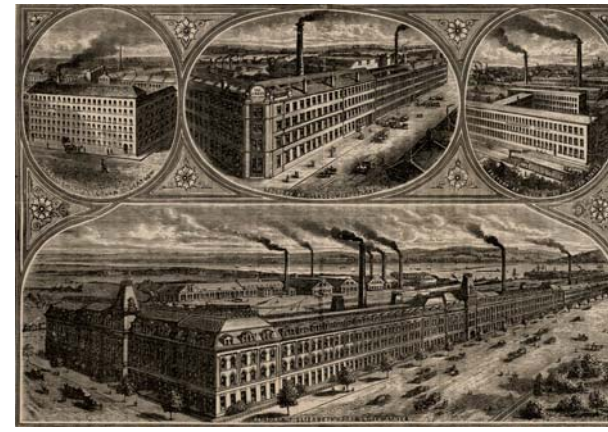


Illustration of a woman using a sewing machine patented by Elias Howe. Circa 1878. From *Adam's Illustrated Panorama of History*. *Photograph by and © Oxford Science Archive/Print Collector/Getty Images.*



Factories of the Singer Sewing Machine Company. Top left: Cabinet works at Govan, Glasgow, Scotland. Center top: Factory at Glasgow, Scotland. Top right: Factory at South Bend, Indiana, United States. Bottom: Factory at Elizabethport, New Jersey, United States. Circa 1880. *Photograph by and © Universal History Archive/Getty Images.*

a second thread, a continuous thread from a spool, a horizontal table for the operator to stabilize the fabric, an overhanging top arm to feed the top thread, a continuous fabric feed capability synchronized with needle and shuttle motions, a presser foot, thread-tension control, and the ability to sew both straight and curved lines. No one person or company had patent rights to all these features.

By 1852, Singer was the originator of only the presser foot and the ability to sew straight and curved seams. According to one source, however, his was the only practical sewing machine containing all the requisite features. The legality of including all the other features would eventually be disputed. His next challenge was to convince the public that his machine really worked, unlike so many failed predecessors. He met the challenge by taking his machine on tour. Ever the actor at heart, he would recite an 1843 poem by Thomas Hood (1799–1845), "Song of the Shirt." Following the recitation, Singer would emotionally assure his audience that his machine would be the deliverance of seamstresses everywhere. The first of eleven stanzas is reproduced below (for the complete poem, visit www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/song-shirt):

With fingers weary and worn,
With eyelids heavy and red,
A woman sat in unwomanly rags,
Plying her needle and thread—
Stitch! Stitch! Stitch!
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
And still with voice of dolorous pitch
She sang this "Song of the Shirt."

As his sales started to improve, Singer decided his partners were no longer advantageous. So he made their lives miserable, constantly disparaging them and giving them work they disliked. He finally wore down Phelps and bought him out. He then got another financial backer, Barzillan Ransom (dates unknown). Ransom was an elderly, sickly man with little to offer the company beyond providing funds. Singer convinced Ransom to sell out and accept forty sewing machines as payment.

Meanwhile, Elias Howe hounded his competitors with lawsuits for patent infringement, and Singer astutely realized he needed a top-notch lawyer. Without consulting his remaining partner, George B. Zieber, he gave lawyer Edward Cabot Clark (1811–1882) a one-third partnership "without payment of any money." Clark was a pious man, but he also was a hardened businessman. Zieber complained to Clark about Singer, only to be encouraged by Clark to leave the partnership. When Zieber became very ill with undulant fever, according to Zieber, Singer told him that the doctor said he was dying; therefore, he should sell out. In his weakened state, Zieber, who detested both of his partners, did sell his portion. He later recovered and resented Singer's duplicity for the rest of his life.

By 1851, I.M. Singer & Company's partnership consisted of just Singer and Clark, a formidable team. Singer, an inventive genius, was matched by Clark, a legal and marketing genius. But these two did not get along. Clark was well-educated, conservative, and a paragon of respectability. In contrast, Singer was a barely literate, frequently blasphemous, ostentatious, self-made man who would have preferred to have been an actor (a less-than-respectable career at the time). Regardless of his faults, Singer was a charming rascal who went on to have five "wives," many of them simultaneously, and a total of twenty-four children; he set up multiple households but only legally married two of the women. By all accounts, he treated his many children well.

Although there was no personal friendship between them, Clark and Singer needed each other to make their fortunes. That, however, didn't stop Clark from



Front and back of a Davis Sewing Machine Company card with an invitation to a reception. Produced for the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, Illinois, in 1893. Collection of Karen C.K. Ballard. *Photograph by George Boe.*

periodically exiling Isaac Singer to Europe when he felt that Singer's exploits were damaging the company's brand.

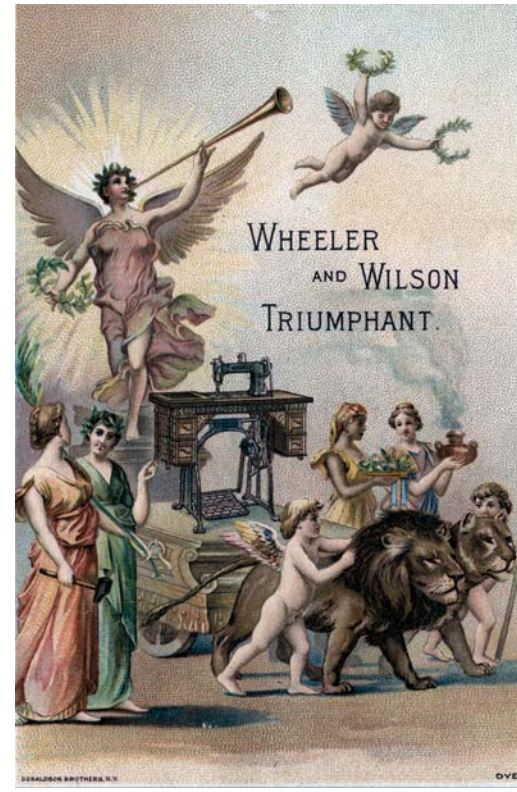
Sewing Machine Wars

Elias Howe realized that although he held the major patent, and was therefore the "inventor of the sewing machine," others were profiting and he was not. He started suing all of his competitors, claiming the eye-pointed needle and the lockstitch as his own innovations, as well as the baster plate (which held the fabric) and the shuttle mechanism. He was said to have litigated his way to a fortune. Most of his competitors accepted his terms, but Singer and Clark would not, which ignited the "Sewing Machine Wars."

To counter Howe's lawsuit, Singer and Clark sought out Walter Hunt, contending that he, and not Howe, had invented the eye-pointed needle and the lockstitch. Hunt hadn't kept any of his machines but found parts in an attic that had survived a fire. Hunt reassembled his machine for presentation in the May 1854 *Hunt v. Howe* lawsuit. The court ruled in Howe's favor, and Howe retained the rights to those innovations.

Howe brought and won a lawsuit against Singer in July and planned further suits against Singer. Instead, Singer and Clark agreed to pay Howe a $25 royalty fee on every machine he sold, a big cut, considering that each machine retailed for roughly $100.

Once the Hunt/Howe/Singer disputes were resolved, the remaining sewing machine manufacturers started suing each other for patent infringements. Advertisements suggested that customers might have to pay twice if they bought machines that infringed on patents and that newspapers would be sued if they advertised infringers.



Wheeler and Wilson Sewing Machine Company trade card. Circa 1880. New York, New York. *Photograph by and © Transcendental Graphics/Getty Images.*



Singer Sewing Machine Company trade card by J. Ottmann Lithograph Company, New York, New York. Circa 1892. Collection of the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C. *Photograph courtesy of the Library of Congress.*

Even Howe couldn't escape the lawsuits. He wanted to improve his slow and clumsy method of feeding cloth on his own machines, but when he sought to do so, he was threatened with suits by Singer, Wheeler and Wilson, and Grover and Baker. All this litigation was costly in both profits and time; it was an unsustainable situation.

Sewing Machine Combination

The principals of I.M. Singer, Wheeler and Wilson, and Grover and Baker met in Albany, New York, in October 1856 to discuss the current state of affairs. Orlando B. Potter, the lawyer and president of Grover and Baker, suggested they pool all their patents. A license fee of $15 was to be paid for each machine sold under the "Sewing Machine Combination." Part of the money collected would be used to fight nonlicensed patent infringers. This patent pool could only work if Elias Howe would join them. Although Howe was reluctant at first, the prospects of being able to improve his own machine and increasing sales for all participants won him over, but with stipulations: Howe was to receive $5 on every U.S. machine and $1 on every exported machine. Additionally, he required that there be at least twenty-four licensed members in the Combination to prevent a monopoly.

Interchangeable Parts

Even as demand for sewing machines grew, sewing machine manufacturers realized that they still needed to decrease production costs. In the 1850s, all sewing machine parts were produced by hand by skilled machinists. The results were high wages, long production times, and slightly inconsistent parts, making sewing machines expensive to produce and to repair. The need for precisely made, interchangeable parts would require expensive machinery that could make components to exact measurements. Interchangeable parts led to assembly-line production. Sewing machines were only the second type of machinery to exploit this technology, increasing their startup costs but greatly reducing production costs. I.M. Singer and Wheeler and Wilson were among the first to tool up for interchangeable parts, giving both companies considerable market advantage. (Firearms were the first products made using these industrial techniques, with funding from governments.)

Marketing Innovations

Popular beliefs of the time weren't advantageous to selling sewing machines to average householders. As mentioned earlier, the first sewing machines on the market didn't work very well. It was now up to the Sewing Machine Combination licensees to convince the public that their improved machines functioned and were practical.

It was generally believed (at least by men) that women didn't have the intellect or temperament to operate machinery. Additionally, it was questioned whether respectable women would even want to operate them. Retailing for between $100 and $125 each, sewing machines were expensive, costing about one-quarter of an average family's yearly income. Men controlled most of the money. Although women's expected duties included sewing to clothe their families, their time was not highly valued, so it was hard to sell something that would save their time. Some men were suspicious of what women would do with the free time; they might join the emerging suffragette movement!

Sewing machine manufacturers, especially I.M. Singer, did many things to counter these preconceptions. They employed young women to demonstrate and teach sewing-machine operation in store windows and at fairs and exhibitions, proving that women were capable of handling sewing machines. Even though sewing machines were primarily marketed to women, sewing machine advertisements reassured men that their ladies would be free to devote more time to household duties, to produce more clothing to keep families tidy, to spend more time training children, and to participate in family cultural outings. In addition, there was the possibility of sewing employment. Clark also offered half-price machines to wives of

Threads for Sewing

Prior to the advent of the sewing machine, handsewing was done with cotton, silk, and linen threads, mostly sold in hanks. Although these threads worked well enough for handsewing, only the most expensive fine linens and silks were durable enough to work in sewing machines. The sewing machine spawned the sewing machine thread industry.

The first to answer the call were the Clark Brothers, thread manufacturers from Paisley, Scotland. In 1863, George A. Clark (1824–1873), William Clark (dates unknown), and Alexander Clark (1837–1877) formed a U.S. company, and by 1864, they were operating a large mill in Newark, New Jersey, to create spooled, supple, stronger cotton threads for machine sewing. They improved their threads and in the 1880s developed a stronger-still, six-cord cabled thread called Clark's "Our New Thread," or O.N.T. Other thread companies followed suit.

— Karen C.K. Ballard

clergy, thus proving respectable women did use sewing machines.

Edward Clark devised a new plan to rent sewing machines and apply the rental fees to the price of the machines. In 1856, this plan, precursor to today's "installment" and "rent-to-own" plans, increased Singer's sales fourfold over the previous year. In 1857, Clark offered a $50 trade-in on any brand of older sewing machine. In order to prevent old machines from being cheaply resold, the trade-ins were immediately destroyed.

Much of the success of the Singer Manufacturing Company (renamed in 1863) was attributed to its becoming one of the first multinational corporations. Initially, the company set up dedicated Singer agents in Paris, Glasgow, and Rio de Janeiro. Doing so was especially important during the U.S. Civil War (1861–1865), when U.S. sewing machine sales for all companies dropped significantly. Singer's exports, sold through their agents, carried the company through those difficult years when many other U.S. companies failed. In 1867, Singer opened its first foreign factory in Clydebank, Scotland, further solidifying the company's position as a multinational corporation.

The Legacy

Having produced one of the best-working sewing machines, employed modern production methods, and used innovative marketing and advertising techniques, Singer machines became the best-selling sewing machines in the world by 1867. Singer and Clark both made all their heirs wealthy. Singer's immediate heirs tended to invest their inheritances in the entertainment industries, while Clark's heirs invested in art and sponsored museums. Isaac Singer died at his estate in Devon, England, in 1875. In 1882, Edward Clark bought land on Central Park West in New York City and began construction of The Dakota, a structure that would become one of the world's most famous apartment buildings. He died in 1882, two years before The Dakota was completed.

The sewing machine has changed little in its design since the days of the Sewing Machine Combination. The machines did save time, at first in household sewing, but later in producing factory ready-made clothing. Of course, in the interim came sewing sweatshops with all their inherent horrors, eventually largely resolved in the United States by labor laws.

Industrial and marketing innovations were even more far-reaching: patent pools, interchangeable parts, assembly lines, rent-to-buy contracts, installment purchase plans, trade-ins, and multinational corporations are all common practices today. They owe their roots to the development of the sewing machine. Indeed, we owe much of modern-day manufacturing and financial practices to the development of the sewing machine. ❖



Two vintage sewing-machine table covers. Machine-embroidered. Blue thread on beige and white fabric. Collection of Karen C.K. Ballard. *Photograph by George Boe.*

Further Resources

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We Have Only the Needle

WPA Sewing Rooms

DEBRA MALONEY

In 1929, the United States entered one of its most painful eras, the period known as the Great Depression. In the depths of this economic disaster, nearly 25 percent of the work force was unemployed. Even this grim statistic, however, is deceiving: what it doesn't tell us is the toll of the Depression on women. Few married women worked outside the home, so when their husbands lost their jobs, the entire family income vanished; unmarried women, widows, and divorced women who held jobs were usually the first fired when factories and businesses reduced their workforce. Local and state governments, as well as private charities, tried to help, but as the Depression deepened, American leaders had to come up with creative methods to protect those who were most vulnerable—women and children.



In a Works Progress Administration (WPA) sewing class at the Farm Security Administration (FSA) labor camp in Caldwell, Idaho. Photograph by Russell Lee. June 1941. Collection of the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C.
Photograph courtesy of Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division.

In 1933, newly elected President Franklin D. Roosevelt (1882–1945) ushered in his New Deal, a mixture of various relief and jobs programs, designed to put people (mainly men) back to work and revive economic activity. Early programs—such as the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), the Civil Works Administration (CWA), and the Works Progress Administration (WPA)—created jobs in construction and heavy labor, but few of these jobs were open to women, and millions of families still had no means of support other than relief payments from state and local sources. As First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt (1884–1962) knew from the thousands of heartbreaking letters she received weekly, women and children suffered as much as men; her desk was piled high with pleas for used clothing and warm blankets. When the president and Congress established the WPA in November 1935, Mrs. Roosevelt made sure



A woman in the Works Progress Administration (WPA) sewing room at the Farm Security Administration (FSA) labor camp in Caldwell, Idaho. The women are shown how to make overgarments. Photograph by Russell Lee. June 1941. Collection of the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C.
Photograph courtesy of Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division.



Works Progress Administration (WPA) Sewing Room at 475 Tenth Avenue, New York City, from the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration.
Photograph courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

that there was a Women's Division to address the needs of these letter writers.

Under the leadership of Ellen Woodward (1887–1971), assistant administrator of the WPA, the Women's Division funded projects for both skilled and unskilled women. Projects for skilled (known as "white collar") women included researching in libraries, writing travel brochures, recording oral histories, and binding books. But as Woodward quickly realized, there were still hundreds of thousands of unskilled women living in poverty with their families. Drawing from her own experience in creating jobs for poor women in her native Mississippi, Woodward strove to establish "Sewing Rooms" with several goals: first, to provide unskilled women with the means to support their families; second, to produce blankets, coats, bedding, and other items needed by the poor; and finally, to train unskilled women for future employment in the private sector. By 1936, 56 percent of all women employed by the WPA worked in these Sewing Rooms; ultimately, by the termination of the WPA during World War II (1939–1945), between 300,000 and 400,000 women had benefited from this WPA program. As one woman employed in a Sewing Room remarked, "For unskilled men, we have the shovel. For unskilled women, we have only the needle."

Under the rules of the WPA, local or state governments or agencies applied for funding and were responsible for about 30 percent of the costs of labor and materials. Federal regulations limited working hours to fewer than eight hours per day or fewer



A camper receives help in fitting a coat from a Works Progress Administration (WPA) sewing instructor. Shafter Camp (for migratory agricultural workers). Farm Security Administration (FSA), California. Photograph by Dorothea Lange. November 1938. Collection of the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C.
Photograph courtesy of Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division.

When the president and Congress established the WPA in November 1935, Mrs. Roosevelt made sure that there was a Women's Division to address the needs of these letter writers.

than forty hours per week, but otherwise WPA projects reflected the needs and composition of their communities. Local administrators, not Washington bureaucrats, decided what items would be produced by each Sewing Room, who was eligible to work in the Sewing Room, and how much the workers would earn. Thus, Sewing Rooms in Southern states such as Mississippi were segregated by race; in Tampa, Florida, Hispanic women worked in a separate Sewing Room from white women.

Sadly, women employed by the WPA were not treated as the equals of male WPA workers. Reflecting the widespread fear that working women would take jobs from the real breadwinners—men, Sewing Room workers received on average just 60 percent of the hourly rate of men working in other WPA projects. Administrators also created stringent requirements for employment. In order to get a job in the WPA, women had to prove there was no man in the household of age to hold a job, as well as demonstrate their "neediness" for the job. Even when eligible women got the jobs, they were only employed as part-time, temporary workers, usually working four or five hours a day and subject to frequent work stoppages. Neither the federal government nor local administrators were interested in changing stereotypes or tinkering with social norms by providing women with full-time, permanent jobs.

And, as Ellen Woodward quickly discovered, funding for the Sewing Rooms also was uncertain from one year to the next. As the Great Depression waxed and waned, so did Congress's support for New Deal programs, and the WPA was a controversial program from its inception. Many Americans viewed a number of the WPA's projects as wasteful and of questionable value. By creating projects that put artists, actors, musicians, historians, and engineers to work, the WPA frequently was accused of being a political boondoggle, and thus was constantly targeted for funding cuts. Because the Sewing Rooms required a great deal of planning and supervision, as well as training, they were perceived by many in Congress as being too expensive, and male politicians who were uncomfortable with women working outside the home found it easy to eliminate these projects. Typical was the experience of the eighty-eight women, aged twenty-one to sixty-two, employed in a WPA Sewing Room in Pleasantville, New Jersey, in December 1936. Despite their complaints at city council meetings, as well as picketing at City Hall, their jobs were the first to be eliminated when the city claimed it did not have the money to provide the materials the women needed for their sewing.

Even with the many challenges to their success, the Sewing Rooms were popular on the local level and were largely viewed by local politicians as being efficient and productive. In large part, this was because the products coming out of the Sewing Rooms could be counted (unlike the work of a musician or actor). In the Mississippi Sewing Rooms, 2,600 women turned out more than 4 million garments by the time the WPA wound down during World War II. When massive flooding devastated the Ohio River Valley in 1937, Sewing Rooms from the region produced thousands of sandbags, blankets, clothing, mattresses, and pillows for those affected. In Oregon, more than 78 percent of the women employed by the WPA worked on sewing projects that created appliquéd draperies and hooked rugs for hotels and lodges in state and national parks. Some of the Sewing Rooms employed large numbers of women (the Milwaukee project at its peak in 1939 employed more than 1,300, while nearly 14,000 were employed in New York City's Sewing Rooms). However, others, such as the one in isolated Sylva, North Carolina, had only 20 women working at any one time.

One of the most significant contributions of the Sewing Rooms was in preserving traditional handcrafts. In rural New Mexico, older women were employed in the Sewing Rooms to teach younger women the ancient Navajo art of rug weaving; in Florida, the WPA paid women to make traditional hats, rugs, and other articles for the tourist trade. In Milwaukee, Wisconsin, women were taught to make handcrafts such as quilts, rugs, costumes, books, and dolls, which found their way into public buildings and museums, thus preserving local traditions that were rapidly disappearing.

The WPA hired skilled seamstresses (many had lost their jobs when department stores and women's shops went out of business during the Depression) to plan and supervise Sewing Room projects, and they made



Works Progress Administration (WPA) workers start sewing on a project in the old Siegel Cooper Building at 18th Street and Sixth Avenue in New York City. Eight-hundred-and-eighty women were employed on the project, which called for the manufacture of dresses, layettes, and towels for home relief families. All the workers were taken from the relief rolls. April 24, 1936.
Photograph © Bettmann / Getty Images.

up about 20 percent of the employees in the Sewing Rooms, with the rest of the labor force composed of unskilled or less-skilled women. In the larger Sewing Rooms, workers were taught design and dressmaking skills in the hopes they would find permanent employment as the economy improved. Those larger Sewing Rooms used industrial sewing machines and often assigned women to particular tasks, such as cutting fabric or pressing the finished goods. In the smaller Sewing Rooms, however, women shared the tasks, and relied on handsewing or their own sewing machines to produce items.

Regardless of the size of the Sewing Room, WPA supervisors emphasized efficiency and professionalism. Because one of the goals of the WPA Sewing Rooms was to prepare women for future employment, and many of those hired had never worked outside the home, punctuality, accuracy, and neatness were



First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt inspecting a Works Progress Administration (WPA) Sewing Room in Washington, D.C. July 6, 1936.
Photograph © CORBIS/Corbis via Getty Images.

demanded of laborers. In some Sewing Rooms, the women were required to wear uniforms and hairnets, but even in the smaller, less formal Sewing Rooms, women were expected to come to work neatly dressed. Women learned how to operate in a formal work environment, a skill that would prove useful in the future.

In Syracuse, New York, 100 women were initially hired to produce knickers (short pants) for boys, but eventually some 600 seamstresses turned out a variety of children's garments, blankets, and men's and women's coats, which were then distributed by a city agency, the Clothing Bureau, to the destitute. (In a region where winters are particularly brutal, these items were precious.) They also were hired to repair torn or discarded clothing and leftover scraps were then sewn into toys for distribution. The women employed in the Syracuse Sewing Rooms worked one of two daily five-and-one-half-hour shifts and were proud of their work, lobbying the local administrator to arrange for them to display some of their work at the 1936 New York State Fair.

Ironically, the Sewing Rooms found themselves vulnerable because of their success. Owners of textile mills complained that the Sewing Rooms were too productive and were reducing consumer demand for the mills' products. Some members of Congress argued that the Sewing Rooms were creating products for less-needy organizations. But the main factor that led to the demise of the WPA, including the Sewing Rooms, was the demand for war goods as Hitler raged across Europe in the early 1940s. Thousands of factories desperately needed workers to make war materials. In Syracuse, for example, local industries were contracted by the federal government to make rifles and electrical components; women, because of their sewing skills, were widely viewed as being more skilled using small tools, so were in demand in these industries. As American men went off to war after December 1941, they were replaced by women workers. The need for publicly funded works programs quickly dwindled, and on July 1, 1943, President Roosevelt officially shut down the WPA.

Although there is little evidence that many workers in the Sewing Rooms found permanent jobs as seamstresses, the other two goals that Ellen Woodward had for the Sewing Rooms were clearly met. The workers were able to feed and house their families while creating clothing and bedding for distribution by local governments. Moreover, the WPA Sewing Rooms gave women the means to survive a challenging time, although they had "Only the Needle." ❖



Works Progress Administration (WPA) toy repair projects from the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration. Toys and dolls were mended by workers and many were made available to underprivileged children through Toy Lending Libraries, given to WPA Nursery Schools, and given at Christmas to families dependent on relief.
Photograph courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

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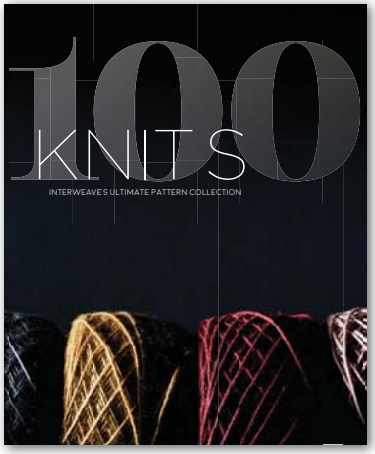
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Then and Now



Singer Featherweight Sewing Machine. 1935–1942. Collection of Bekah Thrasher.
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Singer Featherweight C240 Sewing Machine. 2019. Visit www.singer.com/Featherweight-C240-Sewing-Machine.
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