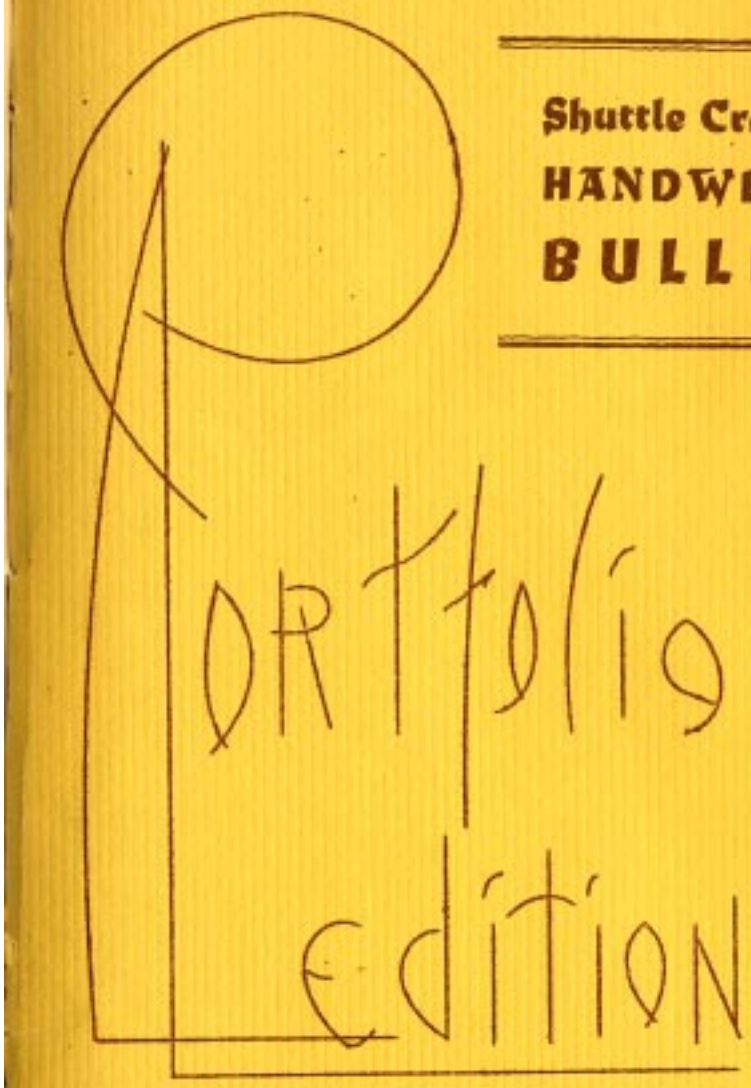
Shuttle Craft Guild
HANDWEAVER'S
BULLETIN



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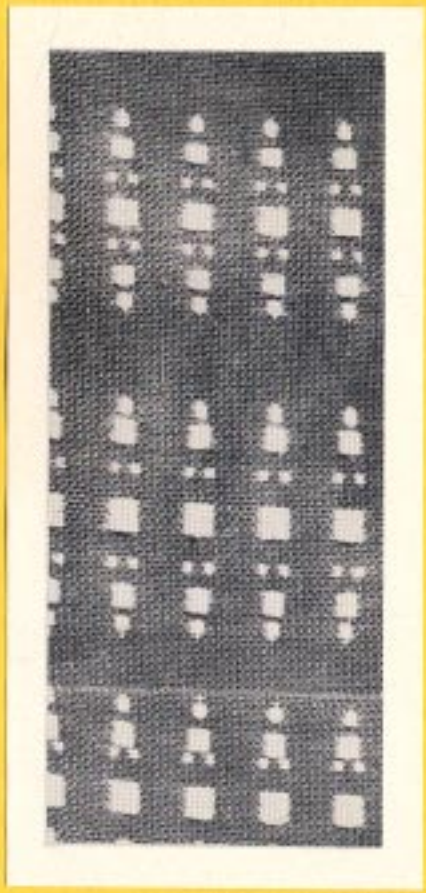

The Shuttle Craft Guild
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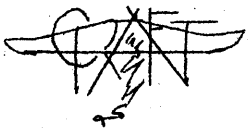

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The Shuttle Craft Guild Handweaver's BULLETIN is published monthly by Mr and Mrs Martin Tidball (Harriet Douglas Tidball), the Shuttle Craft Guild, Kelseyville, Calif, and mailed to all members of the Shuttle Craft Guild throughout the world. Annual membership $7.50, with PORTFOLIO edition $17.50.

Shuttle Craft Guild FORUM

Change is a healthy sign of progress, and in the past few years Guild members have noticed many changes in form, type of subject-matter, and in manner of presentation in the BULLETIN. The average BULLETIN of 8 years ago and earlier years was 4 - 8"x 10½" pages devoted to a single subject, containing 1½ pages of patterns, a 2-page article and ½ page of news items, 1500 to 2000 words in all. The average BULLETIN since

since the new form was introduced in January 1952 h has had 12 - $8\frac{1}{2}$"x$6\frac{1}{2}$" pages stapled into a cover, from 2,500 to 4,000 words, a photograph, drafts and diagrams incorporated in text. Instead of one article, there are 3 or more on different subjects. In addition to the BULLETIN Guild members have received the STYLES sheet containing directions for a photographed project, and the Threadbender Letter of 1,000 or more words with current news and general interest items. This indicates the fact that Guild members now receive more than 3 times as much service as formerly for their annual membership fee.

Original price of Guild membership was $5.00 a year. Current fee for annual membership is only $7.50, though costs of printing and paper have increased fourfold and many costly experimental projects have been added to broaden the scope of the BULLETIN. In what other consumer item today has there been a price increase in 20 years of only 50% with a service increase of 300%?

A further small change in the BULLETIN will be made in August and is lightly introduced here. The STYLES sheets will be dropped as a separate item and all special projects for handweavers will be presented in the BULLETIN, which will be expanded from 12 pages to 16 pages. Several new features will be added: a Table of Contents and a Shuttle Craft Guild FORUM on page 1, a draft and illustration sheet (with return to the graphic form of draft notation) on pages 8 & 9, a Question and Answer section, and a Guild Member Contribution section. BULLETIN form will remain as is, since most Guild members find it easier to use, more convenient to file and more pleasant to receive. The changes are a result of Guild-member comments which indicate that all material assembled into one cover would be more desirable. Single-copy BULLETIN price will advance, but not until January 1954. For the time being the Threadbender letter will continue as is.

FUNCTIONAL DESIGNING

It was Frank Lloyd Wright, the grand figure of modern architecture, who revolutionized the approach to modern designing with his philosophy of FORM FOLLOWS FUNCTION. This short formula, applied now to all well designed objects and articles, is in fact the basis for all good design. It means that the function of the article, the purpose it is to ultimately serve, is the starting point for the design. But not only is it the starting point, as appropriateness to function is the guiding factor in every stage of the designing.

To the handweaver, this means that the first designing step is the selection of the project. With the ultimate function in mind, the selection of suitable materials, weaving technique, warp setting, pattern, and colors are worked out step by step, usually in this order. In most cases the very nature of the proposed functional project pre-determines a number of the factors entering into each of these designing steps. For instance, if the project is draperies, at the outset the designer does not start simply with any kind of drapery fabric but will have in mind something like this: medium weight, translucent, full-length, traverse drapery of a strong, durable material, with blue-green color dominating and a design which will give a shadowy vertical movement. Thus the FORM FOLLOWS FUNCTION has been enlarged from merely the selection of project to the providing of a starting point in every stage of the designing. This illustrates another important point in the creation of a well designed fabric -- that the basic ideas are not pulled out of thin air but that they must be pre-existant or pre-determined through analysis of the situation and through relating the situation to already known facts regarding actual loom techniques which enable one to secure pre-determined rather than "happy accident" effects, yarns, the use of color and

pattern, and texture, and all fundamentally related to good taste. The individual's knowledge of color, pattern, texture and good taste has been a matter of continuous conscious and unconscious education from babyhood, whereas the problems of knowledge of yarns, weaving techniques, and loom limitations are part of the education and experience of the handweaver.

Illustrating this approach to the designing of a functional textile was a project recently carried through, with guidance, in the Shuttle Craft Guild Studio by a student-in-residence, Mr L W Anderson. A full description of Mr Anderson's project follows, to help others who wish to produce a good design in the same manner.

A SUMMER DRESS FABRIC

Project: The designing of a fabric for a dress with the skirt to be made similar to that given in STYLES #37 which has patterned weft stripes arranged to hang vertically. The dress was to be for summer wear, of light weight cotton, in light colors preferably yellow and white, with a delicate, unobtrusive pattern.

Materials: A warp of 24/2 cotton (Lily Art 314), yellow, was selected to give a light weight but firm fabric which would be completely washable and very durable. Weft for tabby was to be the same size, and for pattern a heavier material; but the selection of the actual colors and the pattern-weft yarn was delayed until sampling could be done.

Weaving Technique: Before determining the desired technique, the designer studied the illustrations in many weaving books and in periodicals which pictured fabrics. After noting the many delicately beautiful designs woven on the 8-thread Extended Point Twill threading known as Rosepath as illustrated in many

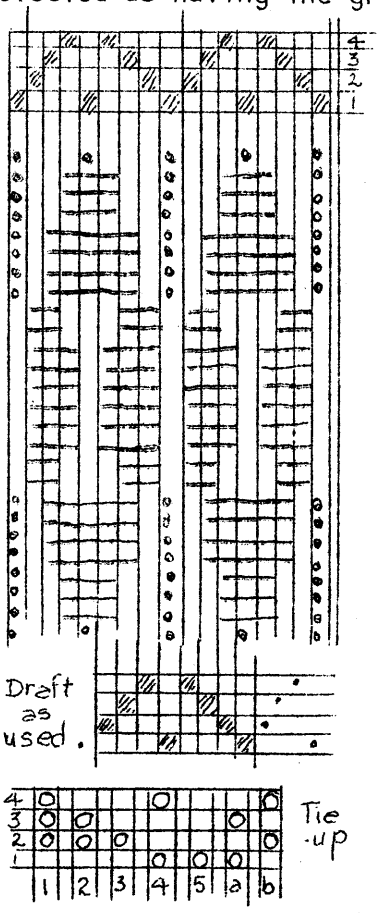
Scandinavian books, this 4-harness draft was threaded to a sample warp of yellow 24/2 cotton.

Warp Setting: The warp was set at 36 ends per inch, determined thus because of previous experience in weaving the selected material at many different warp settings (although the experience was in this case that of the teacher). Without this prior experience it would have been necessary to weave samples at different warp settings and wash and iron each one to determine what setting gave the most suitable textile.

Colors and Pattern Material: In this case part of the color experiments were made prior to pattern experiments. After weaving the yellow warp with several inches of tabby in each of the colors (yellow, white, chartreuse, coral, topaz) chartreuse was selected as the desirable tabby color. It gave the yellow warp a slightly green tinge which was cooler than any of the other colors. The two-color textile had a greater visual depth and texture interest than did the flat, single color textile. After experimenting with several pattern weft yarns in pure white, the 6-strand Pearl Floss (Lily Art 114) size 20/6 was decided upon because it filled the pattern areas well, wove with practically no distortion of the tabby background, caused no take-up problems sometimes related with the use of two different fibers during the weaving or after the sample had been washed, and made a pleasing texture contrast because of the mercerized surface on the dull base.

Pattern or Design: The next step was experimenting, using the selected materials, with different treadling arrangements by making a sampler of many different borders, working freely at the loom, following imagination with some suggestions from photographs, but using no treadling directions or set patterns. For this experimenting the skeleton or single tie-up which ties one harness only to a treadle, was used, with tabbys tied to harnesses 5 and 6. This gave

This gave full control over 12 sheds (the harnesses used alone, used in pairs, or used 3 together) whereas if the loom had been counter-balanced the designer would have been restricted to the 4 sheds made by raising pairs of harnesses. When a goodly number of experimental borders had been designed, some good, some bad, the sample warp was removed from the loom for study. After leaving the experimental sampler over night, and approaching its analysis in the morning with a refreshed and objectified mind, the border illustrated below was selected as having the greatest potentialities.

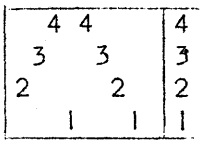


It did not, however, meet the idea which the designer had originally planned. The oval motifs were good in general, but they were too small (less than 1") and were so closely spaced that when viewed from a short distance the pattern was lost and the impression was of a rather heavy stripe, rather than of a delicate pattern. This effect was increased by the half-tones between the ovals. The next designing step was obviously to eliminate these faults but to use the selected design as the basis for creating an arrangement which would carry out the original idea of the designer.

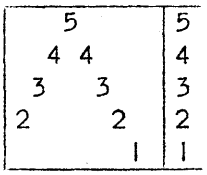
First the pattern was analyzed by comparison with the draft. It was seen that the pattern was made in the 7-thread point twill.

and that the individual motifs were separated by the center thread on harness 1, and that it was this same separating thread which created the undesirable half-tones. The half-tones could easily be eliminated by placing this offending thread on a separate harness where it could be individually controlled, by making the threading: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 4, 3, 2, repeated. However, this simple threading adjustment did not correct the fault of the too close spacing between motifs. This problem was therefore approached exactly as it was in the problem of the isolated motifs given in the April and May BULLETINS, by threading a tabby separation unit on two harnesses. Thus, the draft which was originally Rosepath became:

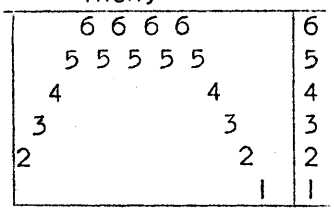
Rosepath,



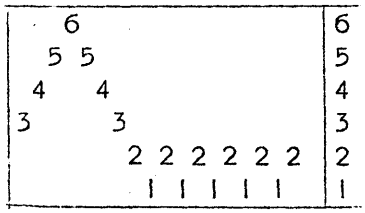
then,



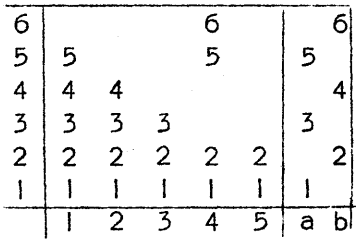
then,



And this was more conveniently arranged:



Tie-up:



This last is the identical threading given in the May BULLETIN, which is an indication of the versatility of this threading. As a loom was available already threaded thus, it was logical to simply make the correct tie-up, as shown above, for doing further experimental work.

The first sampling step was to weave each of

the blocks in order, with space between each, to fully understand the individual design elements as they appeared on this new threading. This is shown at the bottom of the photograph. This arrangement suggested a spacing of the blocks to give a wider border of greater interest, so the spacing arrangement was tried in the second border. Analysis of the results indicated that the border was improving but that it lacked cohesion, giving the impression of simply organized spots. This fault was corrected through a slight adjustment in the number of tabby shots between pattern blocks and through substitution of a second tabby color in the center, introduced after the pair of dots had been woven and discontinued before the second pair of dots was started. The top and final border was woven in this manner, though unfortunately the shift of tabby color does not show in the photograph (see PORTFOLIO sample). If a loom with the correct threading had not been available, the yellow sample warp would have been rethreaded for this step in the designing.

The final designing stage was the threading of the 6-harness draft on a yard-wide warp of 24/2 yellow cotton set at 36 ends per inch. It was decided to eliminate in the final fabric the small dot woven on treadle 1, as this almost disappeared in the design and also created an undesirably long weft float on the wrong side. After weaving a few sample borders at the beginning of the warp, white was selected as the second tabby color. The final treadling order was: (See PORTFOLIO sample)

On treadle 2 - 3 shots, weaving with chart. tabby
2 extra shots of tabby
On treadle 3 - 4 shots, with chartreuse tabby
4 extra tabby shots
On treadle 4 - 2 shots, with chartreuse tabby
4 extra tabby shots in white tabby weft
On treadle 5 - 6 shots, white tabby; CENTER.
Repeat in reverse, then weave 10 inches chartreuse.

TRUDE GUERMONPREZ ADDRESSES HANDWEAVERS

At the Second Annual Conference of California Handweavers held at Stockton, June 5, the address of Trude Guermonpres, noted San Francisco handweaving designer and teacher, to the entire group of about 400 weavers presented a challenge to every single handweaver in the country. Her remarks under the subject, "Structural Weaving," might be considered a general guide for the approach to handweaving.

Miss Guermonprez explained that there are four different approaches to handweaving and to designing for the handloom; that these do not represent independent attitudes, but rather, form a growth series. The first three are stages through which the weaver passes while progressing toward the fourth, which is the designer stage.

The first stage is book weaving (or instructor-guided weaving) in which the beginner is learning his tools and how to handle them. He takes known weaves and follows them in a traditional manner in order to gain knowledge, understanding and technical skill, producing during this period textiles which are good and well designed because they have been worked out in advance by an expert.

The second stage is the one in which the handweaver begins to insert his own personality into this foundation through making personal interpretations and individual variations of known weaves in order to achieve desired effects.

The third stage is the one in which the weaver takes the simplest of weaves --- tabby and twill --- and with this limited basis investigates the field of tasteful combination of colors and yarn textures. (Although Miss Guermonprez treated this as an independent stage because of her later exposition, it would more logically be considered as part of the second stage since it is merely the making of per-

sonal interpretations of the simplest of known weaves. With many handweavers this stage actually comes first, as it requires a minimum of technical knowledge and can therefore precede the investigations of known weaves.)

The fourth stage is the one toward which the serious student of handweaving is working from the outset. It is the stage in which the handweaver has already gained a sound foundation of control over many known weaves, a knowledge of yarns with suitable use of many types, and a feeling for the combination of colors toward the end of producing desired harmonies. This is the stage of planned weaving, in which all characteristics of a textile are integrated.

Miss Guermonprez went on to say that, "The third approach is the one for which little can be said. It is the one through which most of the downfalls in weaving have occurred. The variety of modern yarns has brought about an enthusiasm leading to nothingness." If the pitfalls are to be avoided here, Economy of means must be the guide." "In the over enthusiastic use of color and texture, the basic structure and purpose of a textile has been lost. Fabrics have been approached as a painter approaches a canvas. But the real weaver must recognize the difference between a textile and a painting. Nor can we approach the weaving of a textile the way a potter approaches his clay. Rather, the weaver must use the approach of the architect, as we have to erect a sound structure. And in order to construct well, we have to understand well."

"The limitations which must be considered in designing a textile are:

1. Thread structure, or the texture behavior of yarns.
2. The limitations of the loom.
3. The character of the interlacing or the textural value of interlacing.

Considering all these leads to the fascination and

~~satisfaction~~ satisfaction of producing an integrated fabric.

"The integrating of experiences into planned weaving involves:

1. Knowledge from books and teachers.
2. Knowledge of techniques and threads (from weaving).
3. Experience and observation of texture and color.
4. The working out of a fabric on paper in advance of weaving.

But there always remains the moment of sprprise at the end. This is most healthy, and leads toward progressive development." (There is only one fact which I would add to Miss Guermonprez' remarks -- an amplification of point 4: that the fabric may be worked out by loom experiments altogether, by the method outlined in the previous article, instead of only on paper.)

Guild Member CONTRIBUTION

A comment from a Guild member who is a modern artist-craftsman in the silversmithing, tapestry and rug weaving, and painting fields who was staying in an ancestral New York home which was filled with treasures of craftsmanship collected throughout the world a century ago. "Of course no modern here, but somehow I don't miss it. After all, these are source pieces from which one has to begin anyway. I sometimes think most of the poor work seen today comes from those people without solid background such as can only be obtained through familiarity with the old craft artists." (Dr J K Colman)

THE HARNESS CAPACITY OF LOOMS

Acknowledging that the selection of the best possible loom is one of the major problems of any handweaver, whether a beginner or an experienced

weaver, there is one problem in loom selection which is given little analytical thought even though it will influence and direct the course of an entire handweaving career. This is the problem of how many harnesses the loom should contain. The problem is oversimplified or overlooked because of the general misunderstanding that there are 4-harness looms which most beginners consider as much as they can handle at the outset, and 8-harness looms which are intended for weaving very fancy patterns. These assumptions are altogether wrong.

There is another factor which if misconstrued has strong influence on the number of harnesses which the loom purchaser selects, and this is the cost factor. To consider this point first: the beginning weaver often mistrusts his interest in the craft and is unsure about whether he will "take to" handweaving sufficiently to justify investing several hundred dollars in good equipment, and he therefore wishes to purchase the most inexpensive equipment he can at the outset. This approach, if the weaver buys a cheap 4-harness loom, is actually the most costly one which can be taken. Two situations result: the potential weaver finds that he derives so much satisfaction from weaving that almost immediately he feels the necessity for owning adequate equipment and his first purchase is a total loss; though more often the potential weaver is so hampered by the nerve-wracking battle with poor equipment and so limited by its performance that he finds no pleasure in handweaving and abandons the whole thing, thereby losing a lifetime of satisfaction in this practical, creative craft of weaving.

But there is a good solution to the desire to start weaving with a minimum investment. This is through the purchase of a good, strong, treadle-operated, two-harness loom. Such a loom is relatively inexpensive since its construction is simple, but it gives the beginner a complete experience.

(This article to be continued in August)

This series of samples illustrates the development of a designed textile. The first sample, woven in Rosepath, is not on the sample warp described in the BULLETIN, but studio expediency (the amount of time required to beam and thread a new warp for a single sample if it is not a major one) must sometimes be considered. You will detect a small variation from traditional Rosepath -- a 2-thread instead of a 1-thread half-tone separating the patterns -- due to the fact that the threading already on the loom was a versatile one which was adapted by the tie-up. In other respects the design is identical to Rosepath. And by the way, this is the end of the wine 10/3 warp set at 20 per inch, so you won't see it again.

We enjoyed the spontaneous reaction of a skeptical male when he saw the yellow and white textile completed -- one who believes that the potters are the designers but who raises his eyebrows at the weavers; "That's a knockout. No kidding. I didn't think the weavers could do it."

There has been a bit of overbalance in favor of the multiple-harness weaves in recent Portfolios; but the 4-harness weavers will come into their own in the year ahead with the series of twelve articles on MODERNIZING OUR MOST USEFUL WEAVES. For each Portfolio we plan a sample, classically woven, of a traditional 4-harness weave; another with a modern interpretation of the weave; and when feasible a third showing a multiple-harness extension of the interpretation.