

SHUTTLE-CRAFT GUILD

Cambridge, Massachusetts.

BULLETIN No. 1.

September 1924

Dear Guild Members:-

It gives me great pleasure to greet you through the medium of our first Bulletin. It is my hope that this monthly letter will serve to keep us all in closer touch with one another, to the advantage of all.

VALUE OF ORGANIZATION

Keeping in touch is desirable for many reasons. Hand-weaving is rapidly growing into a large industry in this country, but is still almost entirely unorganized. Here and there, to be sure, an Arts and Crafts Society or local handicraft guild is doing much toward educating the public and toward raising the standard of acceptable work, -- but there are not enough such organizations.

There has unfortunately been a good deal of professional jealousy among hand-weavers.-- many of whom have actually tried to hold as a secret the bits of knowledge they had gained, and have been quite unwilling to share what they knew with others.

This seems to me not only the wrong spirit, but a very foolish policy. A woman in the next street who is turning out good work is a help to me and to all other hand-weavers,-- while a woman as far away as across the continent can do me harm by turning out bad work. Also anyone who sells good work at a price too low to allow a fair profit is not only unfair to herself but to all other weavers,-- while the sale of poor work at a high price is simply ruin to the industry.

As an organization let us stand four-square for good work and for prices sufficient to make good work worth doing.

THE ECONOMIC PROBLEM

Hand-weaving, like any other art, is primarily a pleasure and only secondarily a means of livelihood or a profitable occupation. However, most of us like to make it pay, -- profit is, after all the measure of success -- and the burning question among hand-weavers is how to do this.

The hand-weaver is, on a small scale, a manufacturer, and faces the same economic problems as any manufacturing concern. Three things must be considered: (1) How to buy the best equipment and most suitable grade of raw materials at the lowest price; (2) How to turn out the best possible product at the lowest cost for time and trouble; (3) How to sell the product at a profit.

(1) One of my chief aims in starting the guild was to find a solution for the first problem. On another page will be found the plan for co-operative buying through which I hope to make it possible for guild members to buy materials in small quantities at wholesale prices. If this service proves feasible it may be possible to extend it much further than indicated in this first venture.

(2) The second of the manufacturer's problems -- how to make the best product with the least work and in the shortest time -- is the subject matter of the course of instructions for which all of you have subscribed. For the time being nothing further will be said on this phase of the work.

(3) The selling problem appears to be for many weavers a knotty question. They do not know what to sell, nor where to sell it, nor what prices to demand.

Selling is an entirely different business from manufacturing. Those of us who have had no experience in selling usually resent, as though they were unfair, the sellers percentages, both on the things we buy and the things we sell through a sales-agency. This attitude of mind is, of course, entirely unreasonable. It takes time and trouble, and special talent of an uncommon order, and usually a considerable investment -- for rent and fixtures -- in order to sell things. The seller's percent is just as legitimate a part of the price to the consumer as are the cost of raw materials and the time of the weaver. If we want hand-woven fabrics to be sold we must make the selling of such things sufficiently profitable to be interesting to the sellers.

The costs of selling vary with the type of products sold. A staple product -- a thing used generally by everyone -- sells itself, and selling costs are at a minimum. Such things, for instance, as sugar and pencils. New things -- things whose uses and values are unknown to most people -- cost a lot to sell. For instance, when typewriters were first put on the market it cost eight times as much to sell as to build one. At present typewriters are practically a staple, and selling costs are very much lower, even if they be taken to include the expensive service furnished by most manufacturers and distributors.

Hand-woven fabrics, -- though better known and more in demand every day -- are still in the novelty class, and selling costs are consequently high. The general public does not yet recognize any difference in beauty or worth between hand-woven and machine made textiles. A great deal of educational work has to be done, and this does not always show an immediate return on the time and money spent. People are slow to spend money on something they know nothing about, they are afraid of being cheated, they are afraid they may not like the thing after they get it, or that it may not be as durable or as useful as claimed. You and I know that hand-woven fabrics are very different in texture, in beauty and in wearing qualities from machine-made textiles. The "man in the street" does not know these things and until we can make him see it he will not spend his money on our wares. We have either to sell him a thing he knows and already wants, or make him want the thing we have to sell. How are we going to do this last? -- as we must if we are to sell hand-woven textiles.

There are two ways, -- either by spending money on advertising and on other selling methods, or by being content with slow returns at first and building up sales little by little, selling direct and selling only things that will please, so that customers will come back for more and bring others with them.

Either way may be made to pay. The slow way is the better for those who have little capital, but it takes patience and persistence.

Suppose you wish to devote part of your time to weaving for profit and do not care to sell your own product. You must find an outlet for your work through a shop or a sales-agency of some sort. There are many "gift" shops and such places that display articles sent in to them on consignment and sell on a commission basis. This is practically the only way to market little odds and ends of weaving made from time to time as fancy dictates. The returns are not very great, but bring many a woman a very pleasant bit of "pin money".

A more profitable and business-like thing to do is to sell to the shops that order in quantity and pay on delivery.

Shops that sell on consignment usually operate on a 33-1/3% commission. This is entirely legitimate. In fact they cannot conduct an attractive shop for less and make any profit at all. Shops that order in quantity and pay on delivery have to sell for twice as much as the article cost in order to do business. An article, for instance, that sells at \$6.00 in the shops will net the weaver \$4.00 if sold on consignment and \$3.00 if sold the other way. There is, however, more money and a steadier trade in dealing with the shops that order and pay than with the shops that sell on consignment. Their orders are usually in quantity, so that there can be the greatest economy in the making, and there is no long wait for a return on the money invested in materials or for the time spent. Things sold on consignment may be rather slow in moving, which may mean having a good deal of capital tied up.

The hand-weaver who conducts no shop, does no advertising, but builds up a regular business little by little, selling direct to customers, can afford to sell at a lower price than one who sells through shops or who conducts an active advertising campaign. Some very successful weavers have done exactly this. It takes time and patience, but the results are often highly satisfactory.

PRICES

A majority of hand-weavers do not intend to make a regular business of weaving. They like to make and sell a few things for "pin money", or to meet an extra expense of some sort. They often sell their things to friends and neighbors, and are at a complete loss when it comes to setting prices. Some charge much too little while others overestimate their work. It is manifestly impossible to lay down any hard and fast rules, as the value of a piece of hand weaving depends so much on how beautiful it happens to be,-- one might as well try to make a scale of prices for, say, oil paintings. One may, however, arrive at a minimum price by the following method: set down the cost of materials, allowing for waste, postage charges, etc.; add to this the time for weaving, figuring the time on the basis of what a fairly proficient weaver could do in an eight hour working day, and figuring the cost of the time according to the local scale for work by the hour; add to this a suitable charge for use of equipment and time in designing and arranging the work, double this result, and you will have the lowest price at which the article could be sold at a profit.

STANDARD OF QUALITY

The most important rule to make for oneself is the rule NEVER UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES TO SELL POOR WORK. Poor hand-woven things are not as good as machine woven fabrics.. They should not be sold, even at a reduced price,-- they should never be produced, and there is in fact, no excuse for producing poor work. If a piece turns out badly, through some accident, find a home use of some sort for the thing if possible, or destroy it, rather than sell it to someone,-- even though that someone may in ignorance be perfectly satisfied with it. This is the craftsman's honesty. The craftsman's pride is expressed through demanding a just price, and the craftsman's patience is required for the making of any worthy thing.

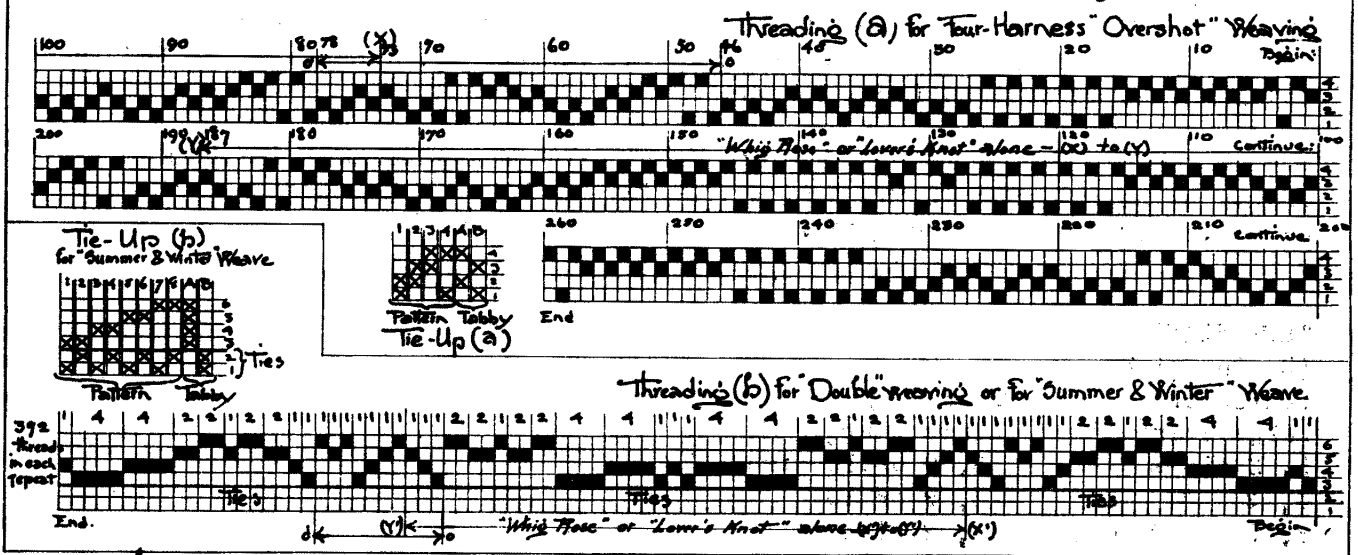
I am anxious to make the Bulletins of the greatest possible practical value to the circle and shall welcome suggestions, or questions of general interest to be answered through the bulletin. I should like also to have an "experience" page, -- if you have found a "short cut" or a new use for material, or a new wrinkle of any sort will you not share it with the rest? Hard luck stories are not barred, either. It is all interesting.

MARY M. ATWATER.

NOTE: The "Guild Bulletins" will go forward by third class mail. If you change your mail address, be sure to notify us promptly, as third-class mail is not forwarded by the postoffice, but is returned to the writer.

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(MARY M. ATWATER)
Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Shuttle-Craft Guild Pattern No. 1.—a Combination of "Whig Rose and "Lover's Knot," arranged from a design in an old book of drawings — by "John Landes" — in the Pennsylvania Museum.



The pattern illustrated is from a book of drawings in the Pennsylvania Museum, by one "John Landes".

Not much is known of this John Landes. He appears to have been a professional weaver of the Revolutionary period -- perhaps one of those itinerant weavers who travelled about the country with their looms on a cart.

He was, very certainly, an artist, and it is a pleasure to set into circulation again this work of his that has been so long buried in oblivion.

His drawings are unaccompanied by drafts, and were plainly intended for "double" weaving, but -- as you will see by the diagram -- this one may be adapted for the four-harness overshot weave, as at (a). The illustration at (b) shows the pattern in double or in "Summer & Winter" weave, and the threading draft for this weave as well as one for the overshot weave, are given above.

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THREADING

Both drafts are written from center to center of one of the large star figures. For a coverlet, begin threading with the beginning of the draft -- which will be the center seam of the coverlet -- put in as many repeats as required, ending with thread 78 -- the point marked "o". Repeat from "o" to "o" as often as desired for a border.

A simple "Whig Rose" or "Lover's Knot" pattern may be threaded from these drafts using the part of the drafts from "X" to "Y" or from "X'" to "Y'" as a repeat. Treadle to correspond.

TREADELING

(Begins with center of

Large Star(A)

3, 2 times
4, 2 "
3, 9 or 10 times
4, 9 or 10 "

Small star (A')

1, 4 times
2, 3 "
1, 2 "
2, 3 "
1, 4 "

Diamond (A'')

4, 2 times
3, 2 "
2, 2 "
1, 3 "
2, 2 "
3, 2 "
4, 2 "
1, 2 "
2, 3 "
1, 2 "
4, 2 "
3, 2 "

Small Star (B')

2, 4 times
1, 3 "
2, 2 "
1, 3 "
2, 4 "

(Continue)

Large Star, (B)

3, 9 or 10 times "
4, 9 or 10
3, 2 times
4, 2 "
3, 2 "

4, 9 or ten times
3, 9 or 10 "

Repeat Small Star (B')

Diamond (B'')

3, 2 times
4, 2 "
1, 2 "
2, 3 "
1, 2 "
4, 2 "
3, 2 "
2, 2, "
1, 3 "
2, 2 "
3, 2 "
4, 2 "

Repeat Small star (A')

Half of large Star (A)

4, 9 or 10 times
3, 9 or 10 "
4, 2 times

Repeat from the beginning.

Note: these directions are for use on treadle looms with the tie-up as shown on the draft. For use on the Structo and other looms operated with a "rising shed" use the following key:--

for "1", bring down levers 3 and 4

" "2", bring down levers 1 and 4

" "3" bring down levers 1 and 2

" "4" bring down levers 2 and 3

Tabby, 1&3 against 2&4

PLAN FOR CO-OPERATIVE BUYING OF
WEAVING MATERIALS
FOR "SHUTTLE-CRAFT GUILD" MEMBERS

A 10% discount from regular prices -- as on price list already sent you -- will be allowed on all orders for weaving materials, in small or large lots, sent us, under the following conditions.

(a) Orders must be marked in the lower corner of envelope, "Shuttle-Craft Guild Order for Materials."

(b) Orders must be received by the 15th of the month -- for shipment as soon after the fifteenth as possible.

(c) Orders marked "Shuttle-Craft Guild Order for Materials" received after the fifteenth of the month will be held over to the next Guild date, or will be filled at regular list prices.

(d) More Guild dates during the month will be announced from time to time, as business warrants.

(e) Of course, it will be necessary to look ahead a bit, and possibly order in larger amounts to take advantage of the monthly savings.

(f) Orders not marked "Shuttle-Craft Guild Order for Materials" will be filled as heretofore, at regular list prices.

It is the idea that there will be sufficient saving in the handling of orders by this plan to make the discount possible.