

Shuttle-Craft Bulletin Number 12, September 1925

“How much yarn?” is the subtitle for this month’s Shuttle-Craft Bulletin article by Mary Atwater. It was written in response to the Guild members’ request for quantities of materials needed for various articles.

Here are some rules given by Mary: Allow for loom waste, for the “personal equation,” and for samples. Yes, that’s right, samples. Mary is a believer in making sam-



ples of EVERY threading put on the loom. A sample collection is a valuable thing. Having just completed a round robin with Rebecca Winter on weaving stars and coming home with 17 samples, I have to agree—see the photo of one of them (at left).

Knowing the yards per pound for a particular yarn, the yardage for the warp needed can be calculated by the following formula:

Warp length (in yards) X warp width (in inches) X number of warp ends to the inch ÷ yards per pound = pounds of material needed.

Cotton yarn yardage can be calculated based on the rule of 840. That is the yardage per pound of a number 1 yarn. A 20/2 yarn is 2 plies of 20 yarn and the yardage per pound would be $840 \times 20 \div 2 = 8,400$ yards per pound. Carpet warp, an 8/4 yarn, would be calculated as $840 \times 8 \div 4 = 1,680$ yards per pound.

Thankfully, there are now many references available that list the yards per pound of a particular sized yarn. One of the most complete ones is available through the Handwoven magazine—their master yarn chart. The link for the document download is here: <http://www.weavingtoday.com/media/p/70.aspx>. It includes the yards per pound for yarns used for projects in Handwoven since 2000, with suggested setts, and is a great resource.

The Schacht spindle site also has one that may be

found at this link: http://www.schachtspindle.com/support/yarns_chart.php.

I’ve included a few from Mary’s list below:

Rag rug: 36x60”, with carpet warp: 1 lb warp and 1.5 to 2 lbs cotton fabric, or 10 to 12 yards of cotton material. Deanna showed me just this week, at the Pioneer Craft House, that she was able to weave 24 in2 from one fat quarter cut into 1.5” strips for weft in the chicken tracks pattern, a twill variation also known as double seed.

Wool rug: probably the same size, ¾ lb warp and 2.5 lbs yarn for pattern and tabby. Jason Collingwood stated in his workshop here last November that his general rule is ½ lb wool weft/ft2 woven rug.

Cotton chenille rug, same size: carpet warp 1 lb and 1.5 lbs chenille or 2.5 lbs chenille if used for pattern and tabby. I happen to have some cotton chenille yarn and I’d like to test this one.

Coverlet: Full size: 84–86 X 108” in overshot weave, Egyptian cotton set at 30 ends per inch: 1.25 pounds, with the same amount for the tabby weft and pattern yarn: homespun 3–3.5 lbs or Zephyr 4.5–4.75 lbs. The Zephyr is probably the worsted weight Germantown wool yarn, no longer available, not the Jagger spun wool silk blend that we are familiar with today.

All of this points to the value of keeping records on your weaving. So, when you start a new project, you may have some guide as to the materials you’ll need and whether you already have them.

Mary also includes directions for winding a warp using a warping board or wheel for a plain beam, rather than a sectional beam. It can be wound with single or double cross and with 1 or up to 5 threads at a time to save time. There are several warping tutorial resources available to today’s weavers: there are a few videos available for purchase from Interweave or for free on YouTube.com.

Mary gives instructions for warping a plain beam from front to back. There are several options for warping, but the advice she gives that it is of first importance that the warp is wound evenly applies to all of them. Mary recommends that a first warp be a short one, no longer than 8 yards. ☒

—Maureen Wilson