

The Shuttlecraft Bulletin; Weaving for Curtains

There are 6 Bulletins covered in this article: April 1926 (#19), February 1929 (#53), April 1931, May 1932, March 1933, and July 1934. From the number of issues covering the topic, weaving for draperies and curtains was in demand by the Shuttlecraft Guild members.

There are many reasons for weaving your own curtains and drapes—you can make them to fit your windows exactly. Curtains soften the lines of windows, bring harmony to a room's décor, they block or allow light in as desired, and provide privacy. They do not have to be elaborate; cotton is recommended for an informal look in bedrooms or morning rooms, and linen, silk or rayon for a more formal look in a dining or living room. Mary M. Atwater called weaving curtains one of the most interesting and difficult problems.

Design considerations for curtains include the size and shape of the room and windows, number of windows, the use of the room and limitations of one's loom. Curtains can improve the size and dimension of a window. For casement windows or in a low ceiling room, vertical stripes, with a plain color weft is recommended. For tall narrow windows, a series of horizontal stripes are recommended.

There are two parts considered for window coverings: 1, a thin, or openwork "scrim" curtain over the glass, referred to by Mary as "glass curtains" and 2, side draperies and a valance over the top of heavier material—this a classic combination.

For the glass curtains, recommended yarns are Egyptian cotton (24/3 - 20/2 cotton is described as not strong enough to wear well in a loose weave), or fine linen, such as 40/2 set at 20 epi. Weave structures commonly used for these curtains include twills, gooseye, Bronson and lace weaves—a more recent curtain pattern is in the 2009 Nov/Dec *Handwoven: A Lacy Linen Curtain in Spot Bronson Blocks*. The use of a border or patterns in pickup at the bottom or distributed throughout the length of the window, depending on the window dimensions is an option. Borders may also be formed by beating heavier for a specific width. A wide border with several narrower bands on either side of it is considered attractive. Mary does not recommend overshot on glass curtains, as they are not attractive with the light shining through.

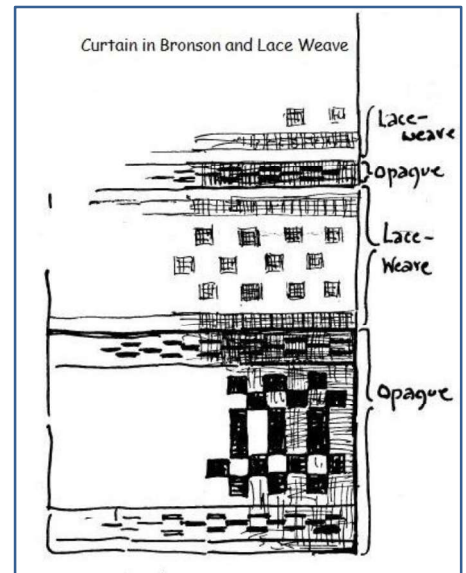
With openwork weave, an even, consistent beat is essential. A strip of paper to measure the window height and the placement and width of borders to get the correct dimensions and to match curtain length is recommended. The weaves for these curtains should be done in the same warp and weft.

For the side draperies and valance, the weave structures are more varied and include plainweave, basketweave, waffle, Bronson, or double weave, with pickup. Several Finnweave diagrams are given in the 1934 issue, for example.

The use of color is recommended here; the number of colors to be used depends on the style of the room furnishings. Other weave structures offered include overshot and Summer and Winter, although Mary believed that the emphasis in the fabric for the drapes should be on color and texture, rather than pattern. Materials recommended for these are also more varied. Examples such as a Shetland warp and rayon weft, or an Egyptian cotton warp and wool pattern weft are given.

In 1931, drafts for Ms and Os, crackle and a description of a series of pickup figures done in bands, using bright colors, described as in the "Spanish Manner" are given.

The most intriguing design to me is one recommended for windows on the street or that come almost to the floor, in the 1933 issue. It is in Bronson and lace weaves, recommended for linen and has an opaque section in the lower portion and a more open lace weave nearer the top - shown here.



And to close, here is an image of a woven side drape that offers another design option.

