

Shuttle Craft Bulletin #3— The Matilda Bacon Overshot Pattern

The following information, written by Maureen Wilson, helps us understand and appreciate Mary Atwater's Shuttle-Craft Bulletin #3, November 1924. This is the bulletin that we are reading in June. The first three bulletins were sent as a group to everyone on the Guild list, or you can find the bulletins on the Guild website.

Matilda Ellen Kimball was born in 1799 in Russia, Herkimer County, New York. She married Hosea Bacon on Christmas Eve 1828, in Gaines, Orleans County, New York, which was 184 miles to the west. She had six children, three daughters and three sons, and died there in 1886. She was a weaver. The pattern featured in the Shuttle Craft Bulletin #3, November 1924, is from the coverlet she wove in 1820, at the age of 21, at Graystone, Albion, Orleans County, New York. A coverlet from this time period would be considered an old pattern by Helene Bress, who wrote the two-volume work titled The Coverlet Book: Early American Handwoven Coverlets. This pattern was lent to Mary Meigs Atwater by

Matilda Bacon's great-great grandson, who is not named. How wonderful would it be to have a weaving draft handed down from a great-great grandmother?

Mary Atwater did not know the "old name" for the draft, and she proposed that we know it by the name of the weaver. Hence, we have the Matilda Bacon pattern. Perhaps we will hear of another name from one of the Shuttle-Craft Guild members in a later bulletin. Helene Bress pointed out in her book that not all coverlet patterns were named.

Mary Atwater pointed out that the charm of the pattern is the halftone stars that accompany the star figures, like reflections in water. Deanna Baugh helped me determine, as best

we could, that these halftone stars are those outlined in figure 1.

The copy does not show the halftones very well, so I've included the figure from Judie Eatough's Weavenotes online site (see figure 2), which indicates the pattern floats, background, and halftones.

In Weaver's Craft, Spring 2001, Jean Scorgi states that the halftones occur because the shafts are used in more than one combination. Halftones occur on either side of the weft floats.

Mary Atwater explained that the draft is written from the beginning of the flowery figure (see figure 3) to the end of the plain figure (see figure 4), also known as a table. She indicated which section might serve as a border, where to begin the draft, and where to place the center seam for a coverlet. There is a lot of information in this draft.

Mary Atwater also described other ways that the pattern might be used. For example, one could weave the small figure between threads 40 and 96, which she called "Butternut" (see figure 5) or other sections within the whole pattern. She then describes a way to better see these patterns using two mirrors.

I'm looking forward to seeing this pattern woven up. I hope to do so soon.

—Maureen Wilson ✨

Note: The Matilda Ellen Kimball Bacon family history may be found at skives.net/genealogy/tng/familygroup.php?familyID=F3554&tree=ski

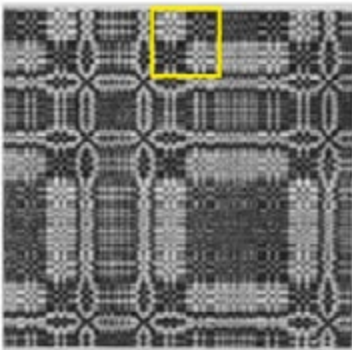


Figure 1. Matilda Bacon Overshot Pattern, stars and halftone stars.



Figure 2. Halftones identified, from Judie Eatough's Weavenotes site: weavenotes.net/overshot.htm

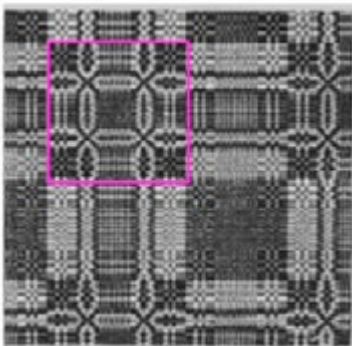


Figure 3. Matilda Bacon Overshot Pattern, flowery figure.

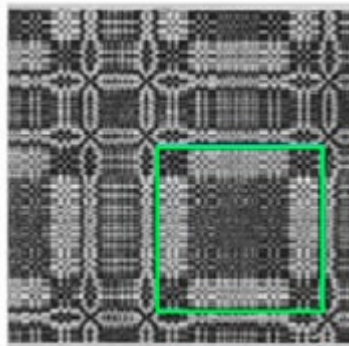


Figure 4. Matilda Bacon Overshot Pattern, plain figure or table.

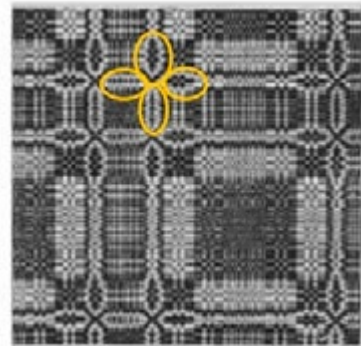


Figure 5. Matilda Bacon Overshot Pattern, butternut section.