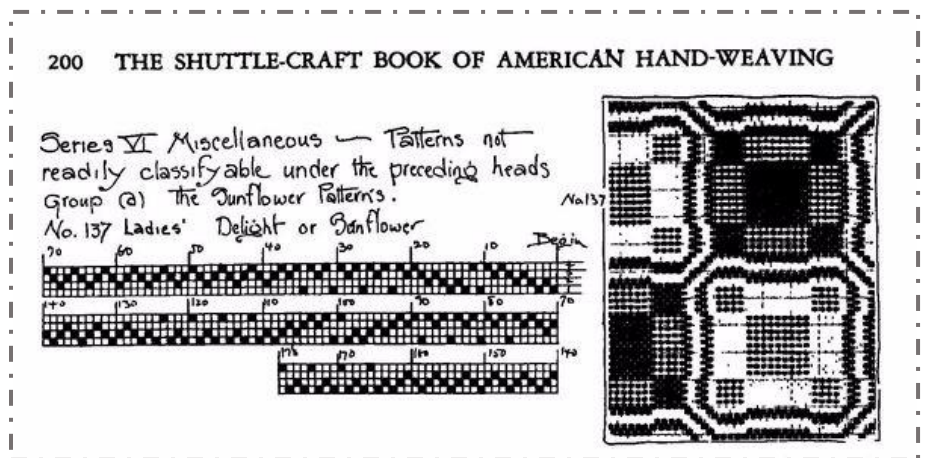


Shuttlecraft Bulletins: Overshot weaves for upholstery

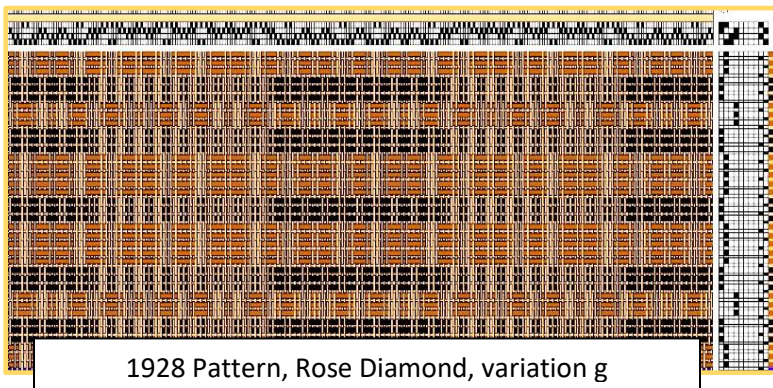
This issue's topic is weaving overshot for upholstery. The Shuttlecraft Bulletins on overshot upholstery fabric are November 1926, March 1928 and September 1927. In the 1926 article, Mary Meigs Atwater begins by describing Colonial Coverlet Patterns as the "foundation of our weaving". The pattern in the 1926 Bulletin is one that she considers appropriate for upholstery. One name for the overshot pattern is "Ladies Delight". Many of the overshot patterns had many names, this one is also called "Sunflower" as seen here in the clip from *The Shuttlecraft Book of American Hand-Weaving*.



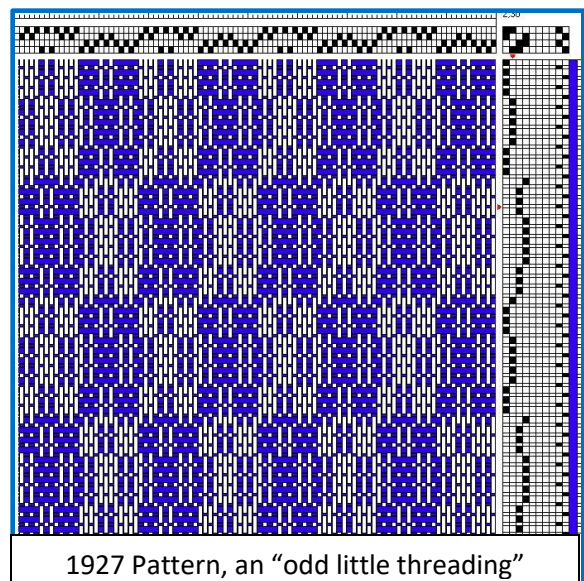
It has no long overshot blocks or floats and Mary says it would make an enjoyable new cover for a wing chair or old couch.

Traditionally, overshot might be woven using a white, or natural warp and tabby weft, usually a tightly spun cotton (Egyptian cotton, a 24/3 was popular in the 1920s but is no longer available, a 10/2 cotton might be used today); and a blue or navy wool pattern weft, like an 18/2 weight. Although several colors may be used in combination to make a more interesting fabric. The draft below from the 1928 article is done with a tan warp and dark brown and black pattern stripes, assigning each pattern color to one or two of the four pattern treadles.

Here is an overshot version rendition of the "Rose Diamond" pattern draft "g" from 1928 in the color scheme that Mary suggests, notice that it has a lower color contrast than the traditional blue and white combination:



Mary describes the "Rose Diamond" as a little old pattern with variations. Treadled overshot



or as for the "Bronson" weave, it has many options.

The pattern recommended for upholstery in the 1927 issue is referred to by Mary as a very odd little threading, not symmetrical and quite unreasonable but very charming in effect. With that description, I had to draft it up:

What all these patterns have in common make them suitable for upholstery is the small blocks, giving shorter floats and a more resilient and durable fabric. When designing upholstery fabrics an important consideration is durability or strength, or how well does the fabric resist abrasion.

The consideration of color is a matter of personal taste, but as Mary writes, color combinations in weaving are more difficult than in other work with color because of the way in which the threads interweave and produce intermediate shades. Really, the only way to know what will work is to weave up a sample-experiment with several colors. The intermediate shade may be just the one.

Patterns for upholstery, beyond the practicality of producing a durable fabric is also a matter of taste. A very fine pattern may look like plain weave from a distance; a large or obvious pattern may detract from the design of the whole piece of furniture. Mary describes a fabric that is too “patterny” as having a tiresome effect and in a room with many objects, distinctly “bad”. The scale of the pattern depends on the scale of the piece and the room in which it will be used. She gives recommendations for each of the variations in the 1928 Bulletin collection that are a good guide.



There aren't too many examples of overshot upholstery to be found, but there is a good one shown in the photo in the article on weaving (used with permission) for upholstery in the Schacht Spindle 2013 newsletter article by Melissa Ludden Hankins at this link: http://www.schachtspindle.com/yearning-to/2013/issue_34.php

The article gives a particularly good introduction to the overshot structure that I'd recommend.

There is another example from a blog entry on the Website My Lithuanian home: <http://www.mlshop.com/>



Here is a completely different, fun approach to upholstery from a designer in Istanbul, Turkey: www.namedesignstudio.com who describe this option as “The wood chairs were nicely covered by striped fabrics with special glue.”

