

Shuttle-Craft Bulletin, December 1926, The “Sesqui” Number – or – Travels and Textiles

Mary Meigs Atwater traveled to the Sesqui-Centennial International Exposition in 1926 and wrote up a Bulletin about the trip and the handwoven pieces that she saw there. The Sesqui-Centennial International Exposition was a world's fair in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the signing of the United States Declaration of Independence. The critics called the event the “flop heard round the world; the fair drew a smaller crowd than expected and was not able to cover its expenses.

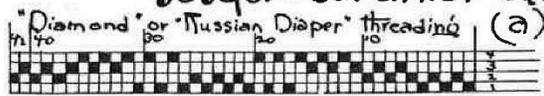
Mary reported that a short street with replicas of famous ancient houses was the most attractive part of the exhibit. One of the houses, the “Washington” house had examples of handwoven fabrics, including coverlets, rugs, and chairs upholstered in handwoven fabric. Not taken with the upholstery fabric, calling it too modern, she wrote about the rugs. One of them woven in Summer & Winter on opposites in two colors, an example of something like it is shown here from the *Weaving for Fun* blog. The rug was done in a cotton roving-like a cotton mop yarn, but Mary recommended a woolen rug yarn for a better effect.

The Spanish exhibit had rugs that also caught her attention, including those woven in a diamond or Russian diaper pattern, with a warp of fine cotton, like a 20/2, set at 40 epi and threaded double. The weft was a wool similar to the weight of Shetland woven in strands of 8 ends. The rug fabric was soft and beautiful, but heavy enough for a good rug. They were woven with color borders by weaving the top and bottom borders all the way across and weaving the middle section, using three shuttles, one for each border and a third

for the center portion. The yarns were dovetailed along the edges of the center and borders. Mary described this technique in Lesson 3 of the weaving course. These rugs were done in vivid colors of green, red and yellow, or navy blue and purple and red. She drew up these and several other pieces she saw at the exhibit in a beautiful fashion for guild members-see below for one.



Some Spanish Weavings, ~ sketched at the "Bicentennial" Exposition, Philadelphia, 1926

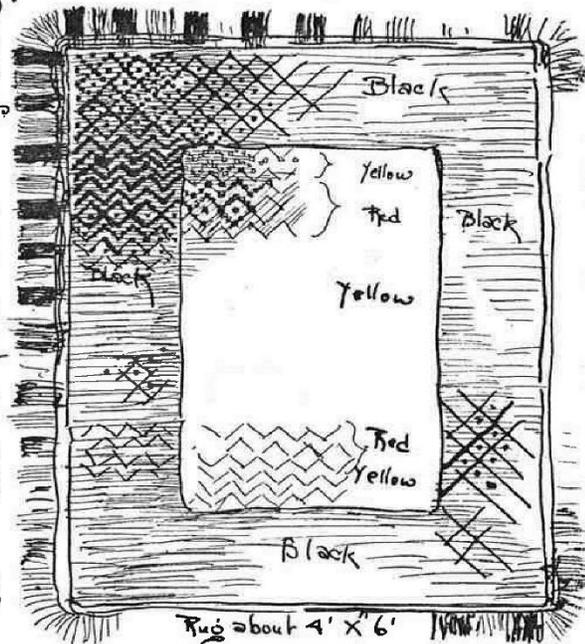
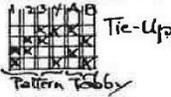


Rug in three colors —

Warp, a fine white cotton, set about 40 threads to the inch and threaded double through the heddles. Weft, a two-ply woolen yarn similar to "Shetland", — a strand of eight ends being used for pattern shots. Border all around in black — center, yellow with stripes of red. A tabby each way, in fine cotton, is thrown between shots of weft, and between pattern blocks there are also three shots of red wool — single — as follows: first block (treadle 1, four times, in heavy wool with two tabby shots between) treadle 2, single red; treadle 4, single red, treadle 3, single red.

Second block (treadle 2, four times, heavy wool, two tabby shots between) treadle 1, fine red; treadle 3, fine red; treadle 4, fine red; etc. etc.

The tabby shots and the shots in fine red wool go all the way across. The heavy wool shots, in the body of the rug, go part way only, overlapping along edges of borders. Other rugs had borders in green, center in red and black, etc..



All of this reminds me of travels and weaving exhibits. Often I see on the email lists that I subscribe to a request from a member stating "I'm traveling to, are there any fiber-related exhibits or things to see there?" When I travel, I look for what the local weaving guild is doing for meetings or shows to see in the area. This last spring trip we took to southern California, where I found that the Getty Center (<http://www.getty.edu/>) had an exhibit, "Woven Gold, Tapestries of Louis XIV", with a weaver demonstrating the technique on the day we could be there. The tapestries were large enough to cover an entire wall, woven at the Gobelins manufactory or other tapestry centers in Paris in wool, silk and gilt metal and

silver wrapped threads, and hung in dimly lit rooms. They were woven from the back, in a sideways direction and rotated to hang. The weaver demonstrating was Yadin Larochette, the daughter of the tapestry weaver, Jean Peirre Larochette (http://americantapestryalliance.org/exhibitions/tex_ata/jean-pierre-larochette-yael-lurie-a-study-in-national-treasures/artist-statement/) . She had been weaving since the age of 5. She demonstrated the technique on a student loom built by her father.

So, as you travel this summer, look for weavings and textiles, it will make the trip more memorable and inspiring.