

Shuttle-Craft Bulletins, Weaving Rugs: Wool Chenille or Tufted

This month, I am writing about what Mary Meigs Atwater had to say on rug weaving, particularly wool chenille rugs and tufted rugs. The topic is taken from the December 1927 and May 1928 Bulletins.

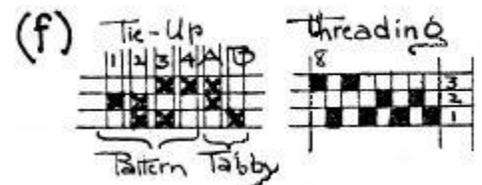
In 1927 Mary discussed wool chenille for rug weaving, a material that “makes a very excellent and serviceable heavy rug.” A substitute for this might be the popular Pendleton wool selvages. These rugs are especially good



for small rugs in hallways and doorways where the traffic wear is high. She recommended 5 lbs of weft material, woven plain weave, without a tabby. Adding a tabby in carpet warp will decrease the weft material required. Mary identified a heavy carpet warp set at 12 ends/inch, doubled, as the best setting for rugs in plain weave. Renee says that is her favorite sett. Other

weaves recommended for wool chenille is Summer and Winter, with a sett of 15 epi, doubled, or in what Mary called the three-harness weave.

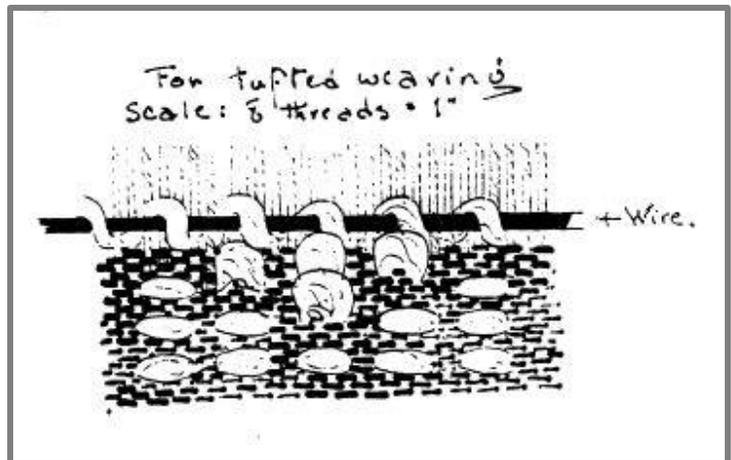
She recommended weaving a border at each end in one color and the “ground” in another. Some color combinations listed are: borders of black, orange and tan, with a brown ground; black, brown, orange and tan borders with a blue ground; black, blue borders and a vivid green ground.



Three Harness weave

In 1928, Mary examined a Spanish tufted weave piece done in 2 or 3 colors. She called the “foundation” linen and the weft a heavy wool, done in red and black, or in yellow, red and black. The weave is not complicated, but it is time consuming. The warp, if fine, should be set at 30 epi, if coarse, at a more open sett. She

recommended starting with several tabby shots (4-6), then open a shed for tufting, and throw a shot of all colors to be used in the same shed and pick up on a wire (knitting needle or crochet hook) loops of the color you desire for the design. Weave 4 tabby shots and repeat. Or you can weave solid tufting, to get an effect to resemble a hooked rug. If you use fine materials, the resulting fabric may work well for a bag.



The pattern woven on the pieces that Mary saw were done in a series of narrow borders of different colors around a large central figure. She called the technique as one that would lend itself to rugs and other textiles in a free “modernistic” design. Mary said in 1928: “We are here in an entirely new world that will, I am sure, prove fascinating and exciting to many of our more expert designers.”

To see how to weave pile, search You-tube videos at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/>. Syne Mitchell demonstrates pile weaving with a knitting needle and crochet hook for a linen spa washcloth on a rigid heddle loom, and there is a video on weaving a pile towel by Rigidheddleweaving.com, also on a rigid heddle loom.