

My Four Handwoven Coats

By RUBY V. HARSTINE

It occurred to me, that perhaps, descriptions of my four handwoven coats, might be interesting and helpful to other weavers who might be thinking about patterns, textures, colors, etc., if they are, perchance, planning to weave a fall or winter coat. Each of mine has been a very satisfying weaving experience and may suggest creative possibilities to others. The coats all have very distinctly different textile personalities. Very simple pattern drafts were used but interesting textures were obtained by the choice of yarn combinations, and treadling arrangements. Wearing coats which I weave and tailor myself is beginning to be one of my most fascinating, as



Figure No. 1

well as practical hobbies. I have also woven quite a few unusual coat materials for appreciative friends. Thus, I've discovered that designing successfully an individual, beautiful but likewise practical handwoven coat material is indeed a real artistic challenge. The results of my experiments are as follows:—

COAT NUMBER 1

Reed dent — 30 per inch or 15 dent, two threads to each dent.

Pattern — Rosepath.

Width set up on loom — 34 inches, 30 inches wide when removed from loom and steam shrunk.

Warp — Bernat's cream afghan.

Tabby — Bernat's cream afghan.

Weft — A. Body of material, Bernat's glorine, Beige color #421

B. Border of material, Bernat's Shetland.

1. Poppy orange #1157

2. Light yellow #1206.

3. De Oro #1178

4. Almond green #1175

5. Lavender #1180

6. Black

Color scheme inspired by the hills and poppy fields of California.

Texture notes — firm — close weave — due to fine close warp and small weft floats of Rosepath pattern.

Lining — Pure dye, beige color, silk crepe Cheney brand.

Interlining—Light weight, white canton flannel was used for extra body and warmth.

Tailoring accessories — heavy muslin used to make collar and front lapels hold shape and set better.

When woven — 1928. Berkely, California, on the first four harness loom, made by Flashman's for me.

Additional notes —

This coat has been very satisfactory in every way. It wore well and for several years cleaned beautifully, but gradually the colors seemed to grow dingy. It was tailored very simply, with straight lines — when it was woven dresses were quite short and the coat came to the bottom of my skirts.

About 1932, coat styles changed. They became more fitted and dresses longer. Somewhat sadly, I concluded the coat was too faded and out of style for further enjoyment. An economical side of my nature decided to take out the lining, wash the coat, and perhaps remodel it into a jacket. Imagine my surprise, when soap and water removed oil and grime which had been driven into the yarns by numerous dry-cleanings. After this process, the colors in the material, when compared with original new scraps, were practically unchanged. Washing also restored the yarns until they were again as soft and silky as when new. The lining was likewise washed and put back into the coat. I then decided not to alter the coat, but keep it to use as a three-quarter length garment. In conclusion, "believe it or not", this last spring, 1938, the coat acquired its tenth birthday. Styles were again short. The coat material is still beautiful. Even the original lining, still in use, proves that it pays, in the planning of a clothes budget, to invest in the best textiles obtainable. The coat always calls forth admiration concerning the texture, the colors, and the weaving.

I was proudly amused this spring when I wore my ten year old coat, to have people who had never seen it before, exclaim somewhat thus, "What a lovely new coat!"

Perhaps the fact it was my first handwoven coat causes me to like it better than any I have woven since. Nevertheless, ten years of satisfying service from a coat which I have worn with constant comfort and dependability is indeed a fine record for Bernat's yarns.

Note:—Because I do not have an old yarn color number card, I have used numbers on a new card which compare with the yarn colors chosen for this coat material.

COAT NUMBER 2

Reed — 18 dent, 1 thread to dent.

Pattern — Plain weaving.

Width set up on loom — 34 inches. 30 inches wide when removed etc.

Warp — Bernat's navy blue Fabri.



Figure No. 2

Weft — (a) Bernat's novelty knob yarn mixture of blue wool with grey rayon knots. This gave an interesting rough texture.

(b) Bernat's navy blue Germantown.

The material was planned so that instead of pattern, weaving interest was obtained by using plain weaving in arrangements of contrasting textures. An area of plain blue tabby was woven to be used for a yoke effect and at intervals stripe arrangements of plain blue tabby weaving were used for borders.

Texture notes — The rayon knob weave gave a very nice effect — The material was firm but not as heavy as coat #1 because the weft was not as close and the weaving plain instead of pattern.

Lining — For this coat a gray rayon crepe was used. It wore fairly well, but the coat had to be relined.

Interlining — Light weight unbleached muslin.

Tailoring accessories — Heavy muslin used in collar and lapels and down front of coat.

When woven — 1933. Berkeley, California.

Additional notes — This coat was tailored along fitted lines — hand-knotted fringe of the fabri yarn was designed to finish the ends of the long, half sash belt and the matching beret. It was an interesting, stylish coat when made, but did not give the long practical service that coat number 1 gave.

R. V. HARSTINE

WEAVING DRAFTS USED FOR COATS

By Ruby V. Harstine

#1—Rosepath

Thread heddles — 1-4-3-2-1-2-3-4.

Repeat as often as needed for width. Work out patterns as desired with treading combinations.

#2—Plain weave

Use tabby treading of Rosepath or (2 & 3) (3 & 4) of any pattern weave.

#3—Mrs. Flashman's Original Draft

Thread heddles 1-2-1-2-3-2-1-2-1-4-3-2-1-2-3-4.

Repeat as often as needed for width. (work out patterns as desired.)

#4—Broken Diamond Twill

Thread heddles — 2-1-4-3-1-2-3-4.

Repeat as often as needed for width.

(No tabby) Treadle thus:—(3 & 4) (1 & 4) (1 & 2) (2 & 3) (1 & 4) (3 & 4) (2 & 3) (1 & 2). Then repeat.

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FIGURE No. 3

COAT NUMBER 3

Reed — 18 dent. 2 threads per dent.
 Pattern — Original draft composed by Mrs. Flashman—
 (see draft enclosed)
 Width set on loom — 30 inches. 28 inches when removed
 from loom, steamed and shrunk.
 Warp — Bernat's dark seal brown afghan.
 Weft — Seal brown Germantown #1256.
 Tabby — Lighter shade of brown Shetland #1190.
 Texture notes — This gave a very heavy firm material
 due to close fine warp and heavy weft and tabby.
 Lining — Again — Cheney's seal-brown pure dye silk
 crepe was selected.
 Interlining — Wool coat interlining.
 Tailoring accessories — Light weight tailor's canvas and
 padding for collar.
 When woven — 1934. Kansas City Missouri. To be used
 for a heavy winter coat.

Additional notes — This coat was designed to wear in
 zero weather. A solid dark color which would not show
 smoke and winter soil was desired. However, the several
 shades and weights of brown yarn which were used gave
 a lovely texture and a subtle vibration of dominant color
 tones. Variations of pattern treading were used to weave
 a wide border for the bottom of the coat. The coat was
 quite distinctive when finished. It was tailored in semi-
 fitting English lines, with a brown mink fur collar. For the
 past three winters it has been a warm durable companion,
 outstanding in coat character, as I wore it almost daily
 to my work. The "Kansas City Star" photographed it
 and gave it a feature story in the Sunday edition.

In conclusion, I must not forget the little beret made
 from the scraps which completed the ensemble, and kept
 my ears cozy.

COAT NUMBER 4 R. V. HARSTINE

Reed — 18 dent. 1 thread per dent.
 Pattern — Broken diamond and twill. (see draft en-



FIGURE No. 4

closed) threaded thus:—1, 2, 3, 4, — 2, 1, 4, 3.
 Width set up on loom — 30 inches. 27 inches when taken
 from loom and steamed.

Warp — Three shades of Bernat's Fabri.
 grey blue #854
 green blue #856
 gray green #807

Weft — Green grey Shetland dyed to order.
 No tabby used.

Treading used — (3 & 4) (1 & 4) (1 & 2) (2 & 3) (1 & 4)
 (3 & 4) (2 & 3) (1 & 2) In weaving repeat for the
 entire length of material.

Texture notes — This was an interesting all over pattern
 material, firm — yet light in weight.

Lining — To find a harmonizing lining was indeed a
 problem. After a great deal of shopping a seven-
 yard remnant of blue-green Cheney, silk crepe was
 found. The entire piece was bought so that later
 material which I intend to weave for a matching
 suit, to make an ensemble for fall, can be lined with
 the same silk.

Interlining — Thin white outing flannel.

When woven — Spring 1938. Kansas City, Missouri.
 Additional notes — A longing for the Pacific Ocean,
 which I have greatly missed, the past five years during
 residence in Kansas City, caused me to design this color
 harmony. The green and blue tones for warp were sug-
 gestive of the colors of the ocean waves. They were set
 up in the loom in the following order — grey blue, green
 grey, blue green, repeated again and again the entire
 width of the material.

Fogs coming across the blue green ocean suggested the
 color chosen for the weft. The completed material —
 woven in the broken all over texture pattern resembles
 as nearly as a texture can resemble the ocean covered
 partially with fog clouds. It is an unusual material and
 tailored up into a simple, attractive coat. No border or
 trimming was used except hand finished tailoring stitch-
 ery details on the shoulder darts, lapels and patch pockets.
 The blue-green Cheney lining adds a lovely color note to
 the inside of the coat.

Enough of the warp was set up on the loom to weave
 a jacket and skirt to go with this top coat for a fall en-
 semble. Instead of the grey green Shetland warp, how-
 ever, I plan to use a dark blue green warp. This will
 make a nice contrasting material.

This coat, like my others, has been greatly admired
 wherever I have worn it — but as yet it is a very young,
 woven creation as compared to the first hand-woven coat
 —which I have fondly described in the first of these
 articles. The two coats hang side by side in my closet,
 and I must confess I'm still quite partial to my old one.

R. V. HARSTINE