WEAVING VARIATIONS ON "M's" and "O's"

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One of the textures used for linens in the colonial days was the M's and O's threading. M's and O's in its simplest form is based on a two block pattern. There are many interesting patterns one can achieve in varying the size or proportion of these two blocks.

from this you can see each unit consists of eight threads and the number of threads in each block must be a multiple of eight. If one is working with heavy thread for the warp, it is possible to make the unit of four threads. Block "A" is

threaded then
$${4\atop 3}$$
 and block "B" is threaded ${4\atop 3}$ and ${2\atop 1}$

each block may be any multiple of four threads.

According to Miss Helen L. Allen's book, "American and European Handweaving"; the weaving as done for the colonial linens was treadled as threaded in, the same thread being used for the weft as for the warp. She also mentions other effects one may get by changing the color of the weft thread for various combinations. An example of this is shown in the belt given in illustration number one. A more



Illustration 1

detailed account and further illustrations of this variation are shown in her book.

Illustration number two shows a profile of a two block pattern, each square of the profile representing four warp threads. The threading for M's and O's texture is given below the profile in illustration number three. The warp used for the threading was Bernats number 10 perle cotton of light green color, number 1051, set twenty two threads to the inch. There are 328 warp threads, which makes a piece of material fourteen and three fourths inches wide.

Illustration number four shows a mat woven as the design is threaded in, from point "a" to point "b" in the illustration. The weft used in this piece was Bernats perle cotton number five of dark green color, number 1054, wound double on the shuttle. M's and O's is a one shuttle weave which makes the actual weaving go much faster. To start the weaving of the mat in illustration number four, use combinations 1-4 and 2-3, alternating one with the other for about an inch of weaving. This makes as near a plain weave piece of cloth as possible on the M's and O's threading and gives you sufficient material to hem back when the piece is completed. After this first inch of weaving, then you continue the weaving as follows, squaring each block of the design as it is threaded in.

TREADLING FOR MAT in illustration number four (to the center of mat).

$$4-2$$
 $3-1$ repeat $3x$ $4-3$ $2-1$ repeat $3x$



Illustration 2-Profile of a two block pattern

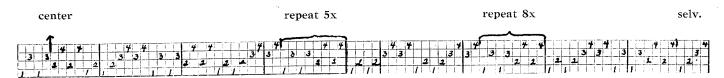


Illustration 3 —Threading draft for the profile of the two block pattern in M's and O's texture

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4-2 repeat 23x or until block is square

4-3 repeat 6x

4-2 repeat 15x

4-3 repeat 3x

4-2 repeat 3x

4-2 repeat 3x

4-3 repeat 3x

4-3 repeat 3x

4-2 repeat 3x

4-2 repeat 3x

4-3 repeat 3x

4-3 repeat 3x

4-3 repeat 3x

4-1 repeat 3x

4-2 repeat 3x

4-2 repeat 3x

4-3 repeat 3x

4-1 repeat 3x

4-2 repeat 3x

4-2 repeat 3x

4-3 repeat 3x

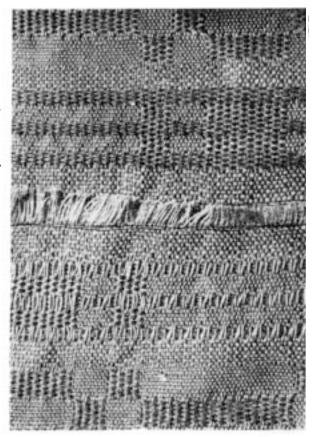
4-3 repeat 3x

4-3 repeat 3x

4-3 repeat 3x
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in the change are 1-2 alternated with 3-4, the usual way of treadling one block of the M's and O's texture. Because of the overshot of the warp threads on the reverse side of

Illustration 5 "a"



"a"

Treadling Combinations 1-2-3 2-3-4 alternated

Illustration 5 "b"

This makes a mat when finished and hemmed seventeen inches long, enough of these being made so they can be used as luncheon mats with pottery dishes.

Illustration number five shows a sample of weaving that is a variation in the treadling of an M's and O's threading. The treadling used to get the continuous horizontal line is treadles 1-2-3 alternated with 2-3-4 or when using a lever loom you would alternate lever one with lever four. This variation is shown in illustration five with the letter "a". The reverse side of the piece of weaving is shown in illustration five "b" and from this you can see that some of the warp threads are not caught down so that they float on the surface. Thus the above combinations cannot be used for too wide a stripe before the combination is changed. This change gives a hollow block effect. The treadling combinations used

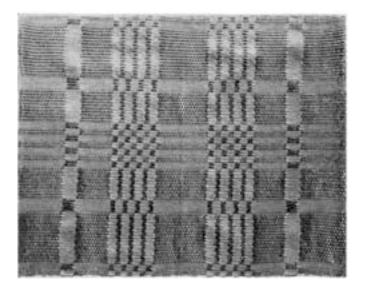
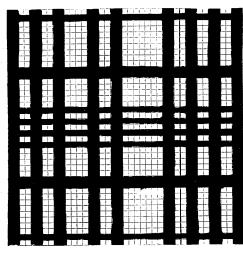
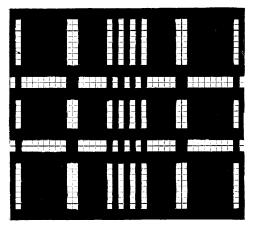


Illustration 4



Treadling Combination 2-3-4 1-2-3{ alternated 1-2} alternated 3-4}

Illustration 6-Pillow top design

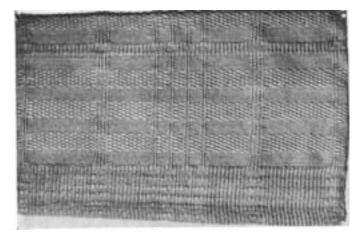


Treadling Combinations 1-2-3 2-3-4 alternated 1-3 alternated 1-2-3 2-3-4 alternated 1-2 al alternated

Illustration 7—Pillow top design

the horizontal stripe, this textile is definitely non-reversible and adapts itself best to pillow tops, or bags which are lined. Illustrations number six and seven show two designs for pillow tops designed by combining the usual treadling of M's and O's with the treadling shown in five "a".

Illustration number eight shows a bag with another variation of M's and O's treadling. Indicated by "a" in illustration eight is shown the texture achieved by this treadling



"a'

"a"

"a"

Illustration 8

which is using each treadle singly; treadle 1, treadle 2, treadle 3, treadle 4, and repeat from beginning to give the desired width. This in combination with the usual M's and O's treadling gives a textile that may be used on either side. As you will notice in illustration number eight at "a" the treadling makes for a short weft overshot, while on the reverse side it gives a short warp overshot.

To summarize the various treadling combinations one can experiment with on M's and O's threading are as follows:

First the 1-2 alternated with the 3-4 which gives you the "A" block; and 1-3 alternated with 2-4 which is the "B" block; these combinations will give you a material that is identical on both sides. The result being the usual M's and O's texture.

Second the 1-4 alternated with the 2-3 will give you a material similar in appearance to plain weave.

Third the use of the single treadles 1, 2, 3, 4, which gives a twill effect to the material, made by short weft overshots on the one side and short warp overshots on the reverse side.

Fourth the 1-2-3 alternated with the 2-3-4 combination which gives a continuous horizontal line of short west overshots on the right side while on the reverse side a few of the warp threads are not caught down, which makes the textile usable on one side only.

These treadling combinations give various texture effects to the M's and O's threading making it possible to obtain many different types of textiles from one threading of the loom.