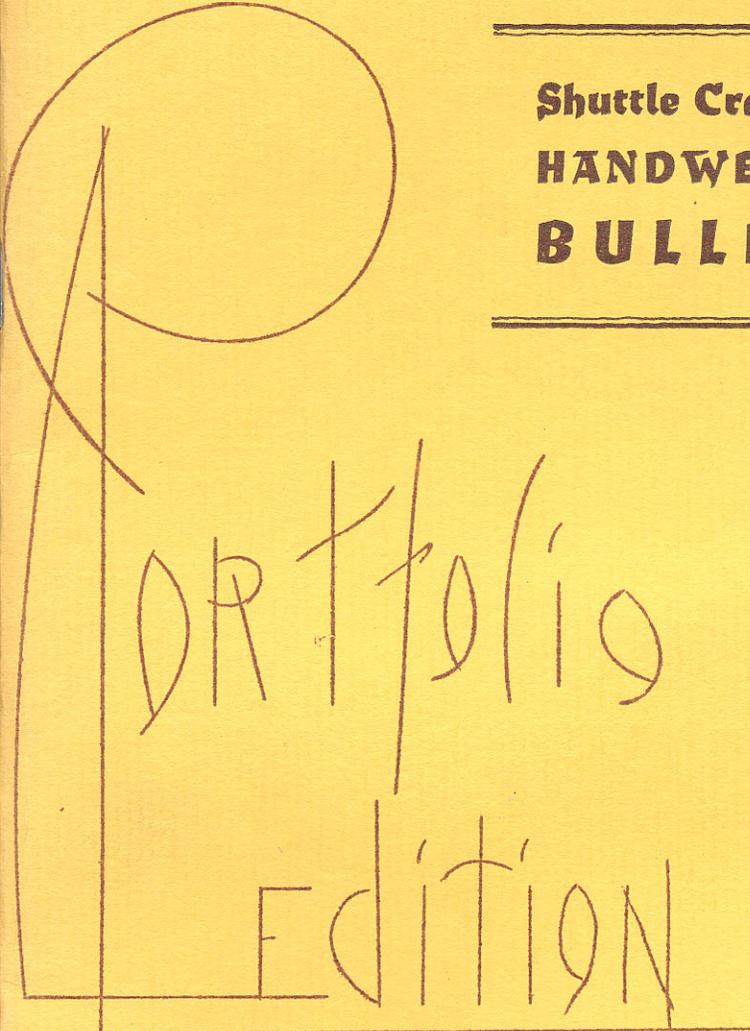


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**Shuttle Craft Guild  
HANDWEAVER'S  
BULLETIN**

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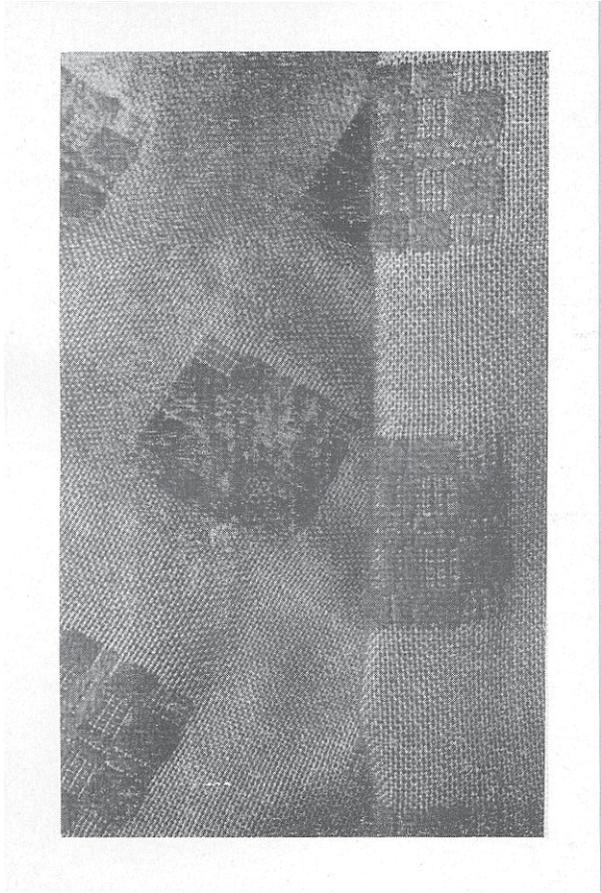


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The Shuttle Craft Guild  
Handweaver's BULLETIN  
Volume XXXI, Number 4  
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### CURRENT TRENDS IN TEXTILE DESIGN

Have you followed the decorating magazines in the past year? Have you noticed the trend which has been gaining force with each passing month as illustrated in the better periodicals and particularly in that fashion-setting volume *AMERICAN FABRICS* and in *INTERIORS*, the trade periodical of the decorating field? What does one find in advance textile trends?

The most notable trend is toward patterns. Yes, patterns -- designs, prints, decorations -- patterns on every type of fabric; patterns which are printed, painted, blocked onto the surface of a textile and patterns which are woven into the textile as part of its basic design. The leadership of patterns is undeniable. Many plain fabrics accompany the patterned fabrics and these seem to be almost altogether of the smooth, simple-weave type. The textured fabric which one sees owe their texture to the type of weave, that is, to the technical handling of the interlacement of threads. The rough, three-dimensional textile made by combining thick-thin, rough-smooth, nubby-plain, shiny-fuzzy threads seems to have passed from the scene except for the inevitable lag which follows any high-styled fashion. The manufacturer of fancy threads

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is no longer the textile designer; the artist-designer seems to be coming into his own. The trend is particularly noticable in upholstery fabrics which, in the advance magazines, are striped, figured or patterned cloth or plain fabrics which are smooth. Gone is the sand-paper or gravel-textured upholstery which was so harsh to the touch and so abrasive to clothes. It seems apparent that among high-styled fabrics, the textiles which depend upon texture and color of threads only for their design -- that type of designing which has been tossed back and forth between handweaver and powerloom manufacturer for the past ten to fifteen years -- has practically disappeared from powerloom production except among woolen and worsted clothing fabrics.

Can the handweaver meet the challenge in this current trend in fabrics? Is the handweaver so blindly entranced with the thread manufacturer's achievements in making "fancies" that the designing lag of fifteen or twenty years ago when weavers were still reproducing classical patterns while the industry has passed on to the Textured period, to be repeated?

The answers to these questions are matters of purely personal preference, since the handweaver is his own determiner and always an individualist, while the industry must keep up with or ahead of the trends in order to survive. One of the happiest advantages in being a handweaver is that one can design fabrics to suit the individual pleasure in the activity and the individual needs in design. Keeping abreast of fad and fashion is of secondary importance, taking second place to the individual designer-draftsman to self expression. In concentrating on following the fashion, individuality is often lost by the wayside and imagination hardly crosses the path, unless the fashion trend happens to be unusually challenging.

The return to pattern in textiles indicates a reawakening to one of the eternal elements of design and a reacceptance of one of the principles of art which has held from the most primitive expressions down to present times -- that both the eye and the mind find satisfaction in pattern. The trend is healthy and is one through which the handweaver can find enlarged pleasures and satisfactions in his craft, and in the use of the textiles he creates.

The "texture" period has been an easy one for handweavers and consequently will be relinquished with displeasure in many cases, or even tenaciously clung to, whereas in other quarters release from "texture" will open broader fields of expression. Texture has been easy because the requirement for this type of weaving is dexterity rather than skill or knowledge. About fifteen years ago one of the country's most talked of handweavers made a published statement which was in effect, that it was absurd for any handweaver to have more than a four-harness counter-balanced loom and the technical knowledge to weave a twill and a plain-weave, because the wealth offered by the new fancy threads and the excellence of modern commercial dyeing could sustain one's handweaving for a lifetime. The fact that this same weaver has now turned to jack-type looms, and to looms with multiple harnesses and double warp beams, indicates the fallacy of dogma and that time brings growth.

The fact that handweavers are ready for this new period is indicated by the tremendous expansion in sales of multiple-harness and jack-type loom within the last two years. Probably no weaver ordering a multiple-harness loom has exhausted the design potentialities of the balanced 4-harness weaving with fancy threads included, just as no one in a lifetime could exhaust the possibilities of designing with simple threads for a 2-harness loom, but the interest in more sophisticated designing indicates that the

that the imaginative weaver soon wearies of the simple and obvious techniques. They become monotonous instead of stimulating, like trying to view every individual tree in a woods when hills and streams and other woods lie beyond.

This new period which is beginning to emerge in handweaving will be more demanding than those which have preceded. Two periods might be considered in handweaving in the United States: first the "copy" period when weavers were dependent upon the reproduction of designs from Colonial and European sources, and second the "mixed-thread" period when weavers largely abandoned technique and relied upon thread textures and colors for design. This of course is a broad generality which applies to broad groups rather than to individual weavers and the attempt to pigeon-hole has the weakness of any generality. But it does appear that the handweaving period ahead, in which progressive handweavers realize the necessity for understanding a wide variety of techniques sufficiently to be able to apply them creatively, is a challenge. Sound knowledge of both technique and designing is beginning to replace the frivolous seeking for surface glamour. The weaver is beginning to want to KNOW as well as to DO.

During the past fifteen years when there has been strong emphasis on textured or three-dimensional textiles particularly in the interior decorating field, the patterned textile has not disappeared from the scene of powerloom production. So one may wonder why the use of pattern has met so much opposition among handweavers. A brief analysis of the nature of pattern and of the manner of producing patterns on the handloom might give the answer to this question.

A pattern is a pleasing arrangement of lines, mass and space on a flat surface. Therefore the pen, the paint brush, the silk screen, the wood block, are natural tools through which lines and mass may

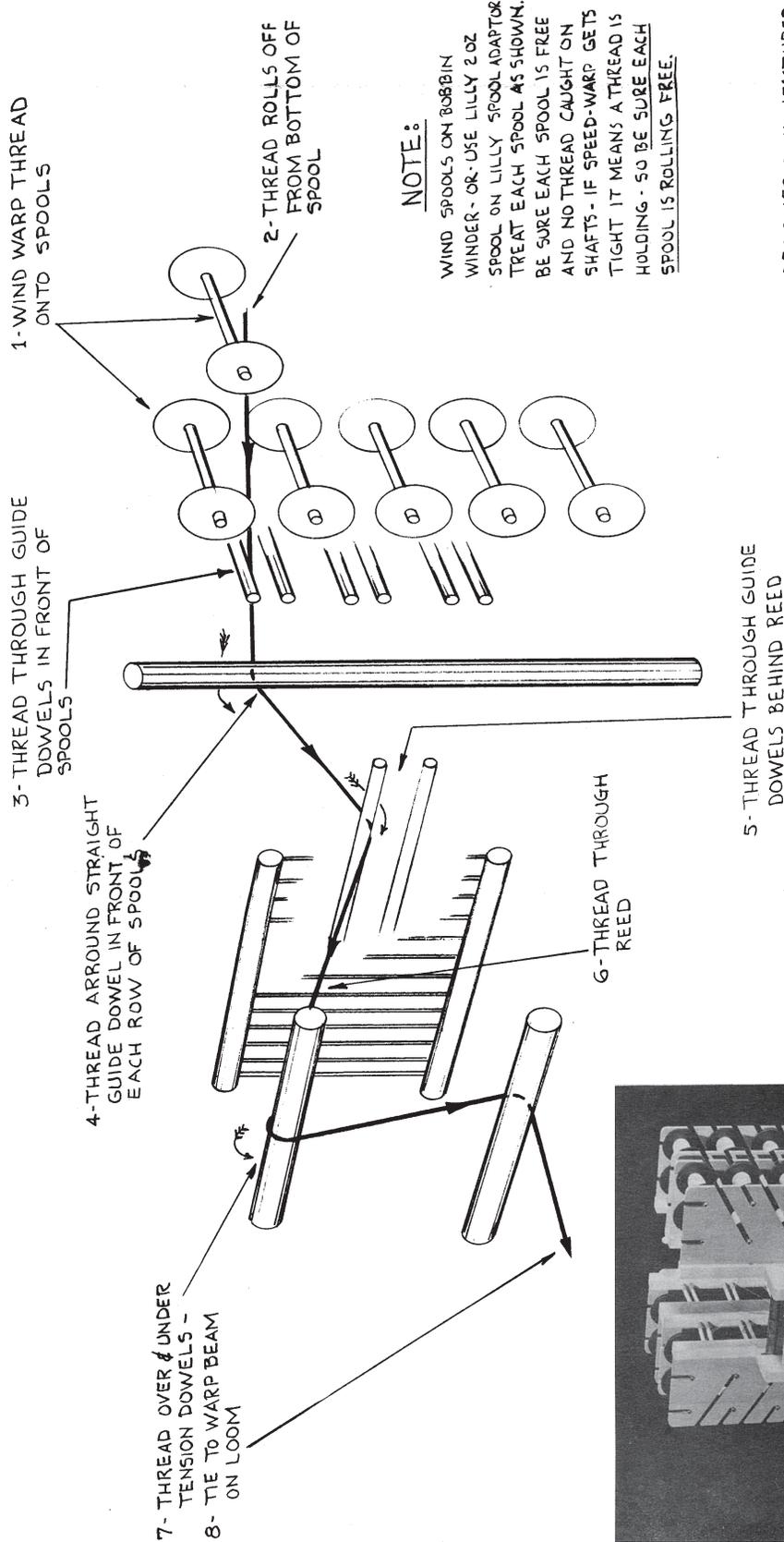
be arranged in space to form patterns. But the handweaver is working with a limited mechanical medium through which lines and mass cannot be arranged in space according to the dictates of the designer's fancy, but must always be controlled by the manner in which warp threads are drawn through harnesses, unless the weaver is working with one of the tapestry or inlay techniques. With the use of a 4-harness loom the pattern potentiality is limited to the arrangement of four, stylized, pattern block elements, and a further limitation is imposed by the fact that the fabric must be practical and long floats on the surface must be avoided. The use of the counter-balanced loom brings a further designing limitation in that this loom does not permit control over individual harnesses but has the structural necessity of harnesses rising and sinking in pairs only. Weavers who have adopted the jack-type loom have freed themselves of this last designing limitation. (It should be mentioned here that the ingenious weaver, Mr. Zielinski, has introduced a shed regulator, now made and sold by Leclerc, which may be attached to the Leclerc counter-balanced loom to permit individual harness control, and reports are that it works satisfactorily.) Probably no greater ingenuity has ever been applied to designing than that shown in the multitudinously varied four-block patterns for the counter-balanced loom than that shown in the Colonial coverlets. But the extensive use of these Overshot patterns became monotonous because the patterns, though unquestionably beautiful, had the limitations of a stiff symmetry, and the variations cannot be freely controlled. The patterns are composed of small blocks or masses which of necessity are square or oblong. The lines are limited curves, circles and diagonals. The spaces are merely small spots which are cluttered with the inevitable half-tones elemental to the technique. It is possible to eliminate the blurred half-tones, but in so doing, two of the four pattern blocks are lost so that the resulting pattern can be

better) and skilled, patient assistants. After sufficient warps have been beamed by this method so that skill is developed, many commercial weavers who work on relatively short warps use it exclusively. And I am told that in the Southern Highlands the method is used for warps up to 150 yards long.

However, the large proportion of amateur handweavers are working at home with limited space and no assistants, and do not warp their looms often enough to develop the skill required. Though many weavers feel that a loom is a delightful piece of livingroom furniture and that handweaving is most pleasantly carried on, or from necessity must be carried on, in the living area of the home, few would feel that the cumbersome vertical warping mill is a desirable addition to the livingroom. While recognizing that this traditional warping method will give the best beam for a mixed-thread warp, few amateur weavers would care to prepare or beam a yard wide, 36 per inch (1296 ends), 30 or 40 yard long warp by this method, even though many like to weave on such a warp.

An alternative variation of this method which lends itself to efficient variations when the circumstances demand, was described in the BULLETINS for June and August 1953. This was with the use of a collapsible, two-yard around, horizontal warping mill, and a tensioner and multiple-skein holder or creel as auxiliary equipment. The use of this equipment has proved exceptionally efficient and versatile though it has the disadvantage of requiring considerable space (at least 5 x 8 feet in addition to the loom space) and storage space for the folded equipment when it is not in use. The horizontal reel recommended was not as rigid as might be desired, but concessions were made to size, weight, cost of construction and shipping, and many weavers are greatly pleased with the equipment. The correction of the rigidity factor has, since that time, been made in

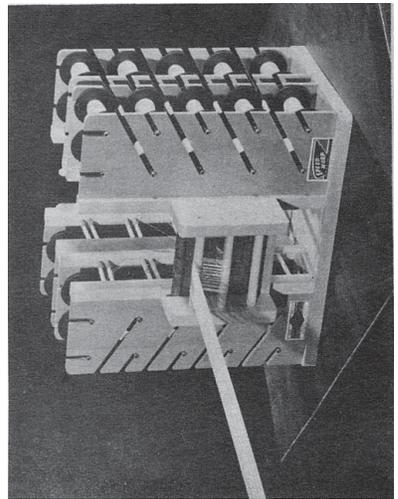
# HOW TO THREAD THE "SPEED-WARP"



## NOTE:

WIND SPOOLS ON BOBBIN WINDER - OR - USE LILLY 202 SPOOL ON LILLY SPOOL ADAPTOR TREAT EACH SPOOL AS SHOWN. BE SURE EACH SPOOL IS FREE AND NO THREAD CAUGHT ON SHAFTS - IF SPEED-WARP GETS TIGHT IT MEANS A THREAD IS HOLDING - SO BE SURE EACH SPOOL IS ROLLING FREE.

DESIGNED & MANUFACTURED BY  
**W.H. WADE**  
 LOS GATOS, CALIF.



the horizontal warping mill now made by Leclerc, though the cost is several times as great and the weight and space requirements are greater. Users of the new Leclerc reel are pleased with its performance and report that it is as satisfactory as the other high-grade equipment made by Leclerc.

The answer to many warping problems, particularly those of the weaver with limited space who must warp without assistants, was long ago found in the sectional warping method. Many amateur weavers feel that sectional warping is the only feasible warping method and to bear out this idea some loom manufacturers supply only sectional beams, while others supply plain beams only on special request. In the revised SHUTTLE CRAFT BOOK OF AMERICAN HANDWEAVING, Mrs Atwater says, "As a matter of fact, a better warp, with less wear on the warp-material, may be made sectionally than in any other way, and the saving in time and effort is worth considering." Those of us working in the Shuttle Craft Guild studio while believing that the sectional method is best for long, wide, and fine-material warps, have never found it particularly efficient for all projects. For instance, the material which cannot be purchased on sufficient small tubes to permit winding without having to first wind many spools, or the short warp, or the warp utilizing unusual or delicate threads, or stripes which do not have a color-sequence of exactly two inches.

However, there is now available to handweavers a group of remarkably fine equipment which has brought about a small revolution in our attitudes toward sectional warping. This is the "Speed-Warp" invented and manufactured by W H Wade, illustrated on the center sheet, used in conjunction with the "We-Go" Winder and the "We-Go" Counter invented and manufactured by Mr and Mrs Fred J Blum, illustrated on the enclosed sheets. It is significant to know that both Mr Wade and Mr Blum are practicing engin-

eers who are trained to recognize and efficiently solve the technical problems of constructing such equipment, who know the suitable materials to use, and who also understand production methods for achieving maximum efficiency at minimum cost. Each one of these three pieces of equipment is of top quality, an unusual value for the price, and constructed to give a lifetime of service.

We have mentioned the Blum equipment previously as we have been using it in our studio for about three years. The bobbin and spool winder is of the lathe type which is the only efficient type for winding wooden, metal or plastic bobbins or spools. The motor is sufficiently heavy that it does not heat as quickly as many, and the speed is high enough at maximum that winding is accomplished very speedily.

The Blum yardage counter, as we have told you before, is the only practical device we have ever seen for measuring the yarn which goes onto a spool or a bobbin, and it is so accurate when correctly used that no extra allowance beyond the yardage requirement need be made. It is very light and easy to handle. In the current models the counter, which may be reset to zero for each winding, counts in yards rather than in feet, as formerly. The enclosed sheets, supplied by Mrs Blum at our request, will make the nature and the use of these two items clear.

The Wade "Speed-Warp" is a new form of combined creel or spool rack and tensioner. The standard size has a 40-spool capacity, though it is made in add-a-structure so that additional spool banks, each one containing 20 spools, may be added. The spools with which it is equipped are the finest we have used for warp and help eliminate the barrier toward spool winding; they are 3 inches long inside measurement and  $2\frac{1}{4}$  inches in diameter. At slight additional cost

the Speed-Warp is also equipped with adaptor bars for holding the standard 2-ounce tubes supplied by Lily Mills. The Speed-Warp is so compactly built that its dimensions are  $14\frac{1}{2}$  inches deep,  $16\frac{1}{2}$  inches wide, and 10" high, with the tensioner device protruding only 3 inches at the front. Since it is best used set so closely to the sectional warp beam that the beam pegs just clear, it can be said that the warping equipment takes no extra space. This compactness will solve the storage space as well as the operating space problems for many weavers. Since the photograph on the illustration was taken, improvements have been made to perfect the tensioner: there are now three rods to give every necessary tension variation, and there are guides which adapt to warp-ribbons of one or two inch widths which eliminate the possibility of edge warp threads catching on pegs.

The initial reaction to the Speed-Warp of the average handweaver who has used sectional warping will probably be about the same as mine was, "What good is a 40-spool creel?" Since we use so many warp settings of 30 to 40 ends per inch and sectional beams are divided into 2 inch sections, a creel-capacity of 80 spools seems necessary. The obvious answer is to add more spool banks to enlarge the capacity, but at a cost of \$10 per extra bank, one hesitates. My second reaction is one which has become almost a dogma after working for years with wooden and cardboard warp spools, "I wouldn't think of winding all those spools of warp."

But finally curiosity became stronger than the barriers and we decided upon an expediency which we have been turning over in our minds for years -- the conversion of a sectional beam to one inch rather than two inch sections. This is an exacting job, and it should not be attempted by the amateur who is not expert in handling tools, but any cabinet shop can add the extra pegs at nominal cost.

Our first experiment with winding the Wade spools with the Blum equipment proved that this could be done quickly and accurately and that winding considerable yardage on 24 spools was much more efficient than winding half as much on 48. The actual beaming with the Speed-Warp was so efficient that the time-factor between beaming 15 and 30 sections was of little importance. The warp beamed in one inch sections was as perfect as those beamed in two inch sections. With the acceptance of the practicality of beaming one inch section, other advantages followed. I had been working over a Lily order for projects for the next few months and had made plans for four different warps. But having to order sufficient tubes for two inch sections made the warps so costly that I was trying to combine the ideas for only two warps. But with this new system I could order only half as many tubes and have the four warps. Other weavers may react the same way, as we must all be guided somewhat by economy. We now have two one inch sectional beams and have sent to Mr Macomber for pegs for further conversions. Macomber tells us that he has always made one inch sections on request, at a small additional charge. (Here is a foot-note on Mr Macomber, since we mentioned that Wade and Blum are engineers. Mr Macomber is also a practicing engineer, which explains the quality, efficiency and economy of his looms.)

One cannot mention new equipment without a thought to costs, and the items mentioned here are costly. The Speed-Warp with 40 spools is \$34.00 and with Lily tube adaptors added is \$37.00. The Blum Winder with adaptor bar for paper bobbins is \$32.50 and the yardage measurer is \$20.00. This means that the entire set is \$89.50 and when one includes the cost of converting a sectional beam (or adding a spool bank) and shipping, about \$100.00 would be more accurate. The weaver who already owns expensive warping equipment will probably hesitate, but many weavers have had the same experience we have in order-

this equipment and that gadget and finding that a great deal more than \$100 has been spent in two or three years, and much of it may be unsatisfactory, space consuming, or too specialized. A good electric bobbin winder costs from \$15 to \$35 (our best one but it won't wind spools, cost much more), A warping reel is from \$20 (the Gilmore) to \$60 (the Leclerc, but this is FOB Quebec so add duty) or about \$35 for the vertical type, a good creel is \$15 to \$20, a tensioner about \$6.50, most warp measurers \$20 to \$30 (but not very efficient) and so it goes, and so does the money. In thinking of this equipment one must consider its versatility and suitability to purpose, its high quality which will make it last for a lifetime of weaving, and of primary importance, its efficiency. The fact that through the use of this set of equipment the nervous strains of the warping process are removed and probably many hours of warping time are saved with each warping, is of utmost importance. And there is a value, even monetary, in having light, compact, space-saving, easily stored equipment. In purchasing any tools the ultimate cost cannot be judged from the price tag.

Where to buy spools for winding warp? An oft' asked question. Heavy cardboard spools may be secured at reasonable price from Robin and Russ, 10 Anapamu, Santa Barbara, Calif or from Contessa Yarns, 3-5 Bailey, Ridgefield, Conn. Securing wooden spools is a real problem, as Mr Macomber learned when filling the equipment order for Dr Ludowyk in Ceylon. He finally solved the problem with a special order to a spool manufacturer, but in order to get the necessary 120 he had to buy several thousand. The remaining ones he will sell at about cost (30¢ each) so if you wish some write to L W Macomber, 166 Essex St, Saugus, Mass. The Wade spools are not available except with the Speed-Warp. And I should mention that Mr Wade has an unusually fine skein holder (swift) for \$10 which is as compact and efficient as his other equipment.

## POLKA DOTS

4		4		4
3		3	3	
2	2			2
1	1		1	
	1	2	a	b

4	4								4
3	3								3
2	2	2	2	2	2	2			2
1	1	1	1	1	1	1			1

This draft gives small dots on a tabby background. It is woven: tabby treadles a, b alternated 10 shots, treadle 1 - 4 shots, with tabby.

A variation for simple stripes may be made by weaving treadle 2 in pattern weft with tabby, if the warp set is sufficiently fine that the floats are not too long. The tabby space between dots may be lengthened by increasing the number of warp ends threaded to 1, 2 as desired, or it may be shortened by decreasing them.

The six-harness polka dot has more interest because of the staggered spots.

6		6	6		6
5		5	5		5
4	4		4		4
3	3		3		3
2	2	2			2
1	1	1			1
	1	2	3	a	b

6	6									6
5	5									5
4				4	4					4
3				3	3					3
2	2	2	2	2	2		2	2	2	2
1	1	1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1

Weave: tabby treadles a, b alternated - 10 shots  
treadle 1 - 4 shots with tabby  
tabby treadles a, b alternated - 10 shots  
treadle 2 - 4 shots with tabby.

The same variation for borders may be made as suggested above, using treadle 3. Spaces between dots may be enlarged or decreased in the same manner.

The fabric woven on this draft (see PORTFOLIO sample) was designed for upholstery. The warp was 10/3 mercerized cotton, Lily Article 714, in Tuscan

Wine color K-108, with tabby identical. The warp was set at 20 ends per inch in a 10-dent reed. Pattern weft was in five colors of Pearl floss: peacock #1455, light olive #1451, crab apple #1458, heliotrope #1456, and old gold #79. The colors were used in the given order in rotation, with one 4-shot dot in each. The resulting textile was of high quality and its charm lay in the sparkling, jeweled effect of the dots on the rich background.

This design would adapt beautifully for a dress or skirt fabric in 20/2 or 30/3 cotton set at 30 ends per inch. The spaces between dots should be enlarged to 16 to 24 ends by increasing the number of warp ends threaded to 1, 2. If larger dots are desired, the 3, 4 and the 5, 6 blocks may be enlarged from 4 to six threads. If the fabric is designed to include borders as well as dots, the space between dots should remain 10 warp ends. Dots may be scattered more by increasing the tabby between rows.

It is of utmost importance in weaving a pattern of this nature that the background be woven in true tabby -- that is, that the warp and weft are balanced so that there are exactly as many weft shots per inch as there are warp ends, when tension is released. This means that the beat must be much sharper where the dots occur than in the tabby areas. Otherwise the background is in alternating bands of tabby and of a loose, sleazy, warp-emphasis weave, an all-over effect which is both unpleasant and impractical. Perfect uniformity of background is imperative. Careful attention to the selection of the proper pattern weft is necessary for achieving this required background. If the pattern weft is too heavy or too stiff or tightly twisted, it will be impossible to balance the background. A soft, fine wool is the pattern weft which is most easily controlled, but some of the new synthetic yarns will serve well, as will fine stranded cotton or floss, provided a sufficiently sharp beat is used.

This problem is the one which presents itself when weaving any conventional interpretation in a two-shuttle technique, and is equally important in many of the unconventional treatments.

There is a further pattern-weft problem for these patterns, created by the very long floats which occur on the wrong side of the fabric. If a wool pattern weft is used -- that is, an elastic weft fiber -- it must be placed very loosely in the shed. Otherwise it will take up in the background sections to pucker the fabric. It is possible to correct this fault by clipping the floats on the wrong side, the method used for the fabric in STYLES #37, and also for the textile illustrated in the photograph. But it is usually more desirable to use a non-elastic pattern weft such as the mercerized floss or a synthetic. Clipping should never be done in an upholstery fabric, but neither is it necessary because even if the fabric puckers when tension is released, the upholstering will place it under tension again.

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Having left the drafts and actual fabric descriptions for the end this month, space has run out so that it is impossible to give the second style planned. This means that the textile photographed and the one shown in the second PORTFOLIO sample will have to be described in the May BULLETIN. I do not apologize for this, as I believe that this April space has been used to greater advantage. Every handweaver has books and other publications which are full of drafts, patterns and directions. But the development of a good handweaver requires a great deal more than drafts and directions. The problems of methods and evaluation can be solved only through long experience, research and observation, and one finds little help with them in books. We feel that the Shuttle Craft Guild can bring you the greatest value by concentrating occasionally here.

