

practical weaving suggestions

VOL. 1-70



a fuchia silk
b heavy gold
c fine gold
d olive silk

SOME EXPERIENCES IN ECCLESIASTICAL WEAVING

Mary E. Black

A very beautiful display of handwoven and embroidered church vestments, hangings, wall panels and other ecclesiastical apparel was recently shown in the foyer of the library of St. Mary's University in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

This, probably the most unusual exhibition shown in Canada this year, was a collection of some of the work of Mrs. Douglas (Bessie) Murray and Mrs. John (Evelyn) Longard completed during the last three years. The dozen or so chasubles, in crimsons, greens, purples and whites and golds of the four church seasons, hung against the mellow rusty-pinks of the brick walls of the building were breath-taking. Each chasuble set included a matching stole, maniple, burse and veil. These were displayed in glass cases together with shuttles, bobbins, spools and skeins of raw silk, gold threads and other yarns in a galaxy of color. Working drawings of some of the designs were also shown.

Mrs. Murray received her art training in England; Mrs. Longard hers in Nova Scotia, other Canadian centers and in the United States. They have both exhibited widely in Canadian exhibitions and in some cases by invitation in exclusive American shows. The highly specialized talents of one supplements that of the other resulting in exquisitely beautiful creations.

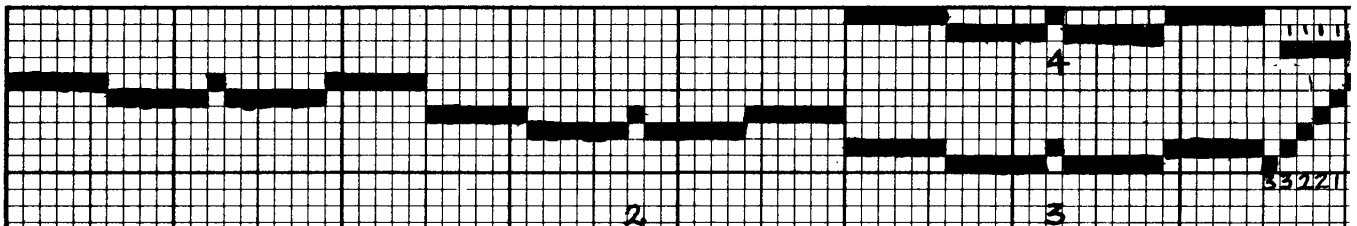
Mrs. Murray plans all the projects, chooses the yarns, decides on the type of fabric required, cuts and tailors the article or garment after adding the decoration which she designs especially for each set. Whether she uses stitchery with its longer looser thread treatment, or embroidery which gives her fine compact results, depends entirely upon the effect she wishes to achieve. Mrs. Longard weaves the webs, in itself no small part of the whole. Their work is unique in that it is entirely hand done, all designs are not only original but are created specifically for the person who is to wear the garment, or the place in which it is to be used. No designs are ever repeated. They work only to order and no project is ever started until both the customer and designer are satisfied that all details are fully discussed and completely understood and accepted by both parties. Presently, while they are accepting orders from only Protestant and Roman Catholic Churches, Jewish Synagogues and Universities they hope later to design hangings and wall panels for some of the new modern buildings now being built in the Halifax area.

When questioned about her design source and inspiration Mrs. Murray replied that "design is wherever you look. Aside from the many liturgical books from which can be obtained traditional design forms, we find inspiration in the study of a tree, a flower, a leaf, an animal, the sea and even from such things as a piece of sheet plastic whipping in the wind. This latter suggested the shoulder treatment for one chasuble. Some times a new design is formed by combining parts of others as in the case where the Chi Rho symbol was combined with the crown from the crest of a boy's school. This design, because a feeling of the ruggedness of youth was desired, was enlarged to cover a good part of the back of the chasuble."

Mrs. Longard finds she can seldom use any of the standard drafts, as written in the weaving books, but must adjust them to meet the requirements of each particular web. Her natural mathematical skill and extensive knowledge of the theory of weaving enables her to rearrange, add to, or subtract from, the standard drafts to achieve the results she desires whether 2,4,6,8,10 or 12 harnesses, plus in some cases finger manipulated pick-ups, are involved. She has found that various arrangements of the crackle weave can be used to good advantage, and in one instance brought up a third dimensional quality to a web. Various combinations of different types of threads, colors and techniques are experimented with to obtain the exact result desired for each particular project. Startling results have been achieved by using only a few colors and as few harnesses as two or three.

When asked to suggest what kind of person they felt was best qualified to succeed with this exacting type of weaving they felt first of all it was necessary to be well trained in design and color, be an accurate weaver with unlimited patience, with a willingness to follow direction cheerfully, and with insight into the needs of the customer and an inherent feeling for the fitness of beautiful things. Another important attribute is to have the ability to recognize approaching fatigue and to stop before mistakes occur because due to the nature of the materials with which one is working it is almost impossible to cover up mistakes. Having perfectionist tendencies is all to the good!

Each project should be carefully planned in collaboration with the customer considering the eventual setting where the article, or garment, will be used. Design and color are very important. Color choice must be checked not once but several times, to assure that the final choice is the correct one. The color of the walls, ceilings, floors, furniture all enter into the picture. Consideration must be given to the time of day the garment is to be worn, and the changing position of the wearer. Is he standing or kneeling, does the sun streaming through a stained glass window fall upon him completely changing the original color? Will the chosen color be pleasing under artificial light or on a cloudy day? Do the walls absorb the color; intensify it? Does the color advance or recede when placed in various locations in the church or building? If all of these elements enter into the final choice of color, and they usually do, the problem can be at least partially solved by blending yarns of many shades of the same color in the warp, or using a warp of one color and



a weft of another, or by combining a dull and shiny yarn, or a rough and smooth. Where the garment is designed for, and will be worn by one individual only, his personality, coloring and stature should be considered in the choice of fabric, color and decoration. Is he a rugged individual; a quiet person; is he dignified; has he a simple or complex personality; does he tend toward contemporary or traditional; is he youthful or mature? On the other hand if the garment is to belong to the church and will be worn by different individuals it should be designed rather as a church furnishing than as a personal garment.

With regard to the embellishment or decoration to be added. Unless the customer has a clear idea of what he wants it will be necessary to show him some of the liturgical books. After a choice has been made prepare sketches for his consideration. If he chooses a traditional design it should be followed as closely as possible to the original but within the limitations of the medium of the materials being worked with and this should be explained to him. If the customer requests a contemporary interpretation of a traditional design considerable leeway can be permitted the designer, allowing him to use his creative talents to the fullest. The present trend in liturgical garments and hangings is toward unlimited freedom in design and the use of bright, but rich, colors.

All yarns used must be of excellent quality, the best procurable, with colors clear and fast. They must be spotlessly clean before using and kept clean throughout the various processes of construction of the article or garment.

Because of the extensive size and color co-ordinated color range, and the fine dependable quality of Lily threads, Mrs. Murray and Mrs. Longard use them exclusively for their warps for many of their wefts and pattern threads. There are some highly specialized gold and silver, and heavy silk threads for which there is at best a limited demand, that they can obtain only from firms dealing exclusively in threads for liturgical work.

It must be remembered that the web from which a chasuble is cut is large in concept. Exact tension, beating, and measuring must be maintained throughout, and pattern units or stripes which are later to be joined, must not show the least deviation, and joinings must be invisible. This calls for meticulous weaving. Some weaves, and thread combinations, take up more than others so in order to be on the safe side always plan and weave more than seems enough; the extra can always be put to some good use. Weather changes from hot and dry, to humid and damp, will cause trouble. These weather changes were particularly troublesome during the weaving of a large hanging and drapes for a university chapel. The upper part of the hanging called for a gauze weave to allow the everchanging lights from the sea to filter through. At the bottom was a series of graduated stripes in solid bands. Because of the width required it was necessary to join six separately woven widths together. As this weaving was done during changeable summer weather the problem was a serious one, but fortunately it was possible to solve it eventually to the satisfaction of the customer and the great relief of Mrs. Murray and Mrs. Longard.

The following notations, covering but a few of the many pieces produced by Mrs. Murray and Mrs. Longard, are given here with the hope that they will offer an incentive and challenge to the designer-weaver who has "woven everything" and is seeking new fields to conquer.

ROSE WINDOW WALL HANGING

Warp: Lily Art. 114. Mercerized Pearl, 20/2, Navy 522.
1800 threads wound. Wove Web 45" wide

Weft: Same as Warp

Pattern Colors:

1. Pimento 773 and Maroon 665	5. Peacock 1445 and Emerald 429
2. Beauty Rose 419 and Burnt Orange 1457	6. Yellow 404 and Canary 1459
3. Orange 402 and Burnt Orange 1457	7. Peacock 1455 and Jade 501
4. Orange 402 and Yellow .04	8. Peacock 1455 and Purple 407

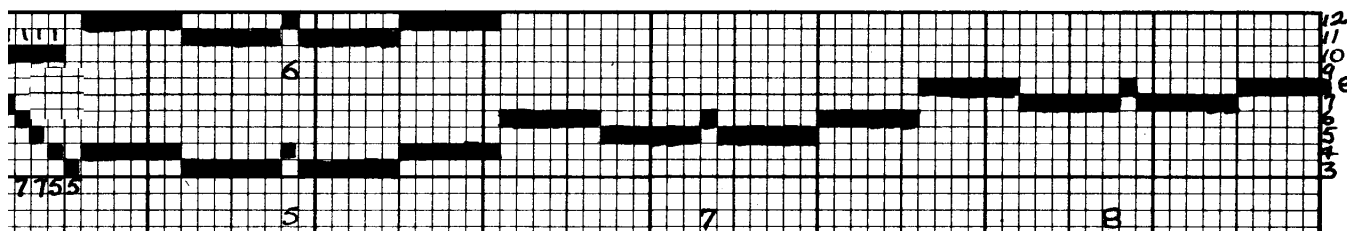
Pattern source: Variations one of Marguerite Davison's "Rose Overshot".

Draft: Pattern threaded in warp.

In her notes Mrs. Longard states that the roses can be any five colors using 2 harness for each and 2 for the background. This means one rose has to be the same in each half. Any rose could be bi-colored as well. The center motif could be gold or any chosen color rather than varied. The colors as listed above were warped together but threaded separately, ie a Pimento thread through one heddle and a Maroon through the next one, and so on with the other colors.

THREADING DRAFT: (Below)

78 threads on each side for border. All background is threaded 1 and 2.



PATTERN: Harness No. 1 Navy background
 Harness No. 2 Navy background
 Harness No. 3 60 color No. 3 60 color No. 5
 Harness No. 4 70 color No. 3 70 color No. 5
 Harness No. 5 60 color No. 2 60 color No. 7
 Harness No. 6 70 color No. 2 70 color No. 7
 Harness No. 7 60 color No. 1 60 color No. 8
 Harness No. 8 70 color No. 1 70 color No. 8
 Harness No. 9 empty
 Harness No. 10 36 color No. 1
 Harness No. 11 60 color No. 4 60 color No. 6
 Harness No. 12 70 color No. 4 70 color No. 6

Each square represents 10 navy threads and five colored threads except in the center where each square represents 8 navy threads and 4 colored threads.

THREADING PLAN:

After each 1,2 of navy is threaded and sleyed, a colored thread is brought forward from the back harnesses and put through the same dent as the navy. Each dent contains 4 navy threads and 2 colored threads for blocks on colors 1,2,7,8; and for blocks on colors 3,4,5,6, there are 2 colored threads for each 1,2 group making 4 navy threads and 4 colored threads in each dent.

WEAVING: Each block was woven 1½ inches plus 2 shots. The center section had 5 shots to each block.

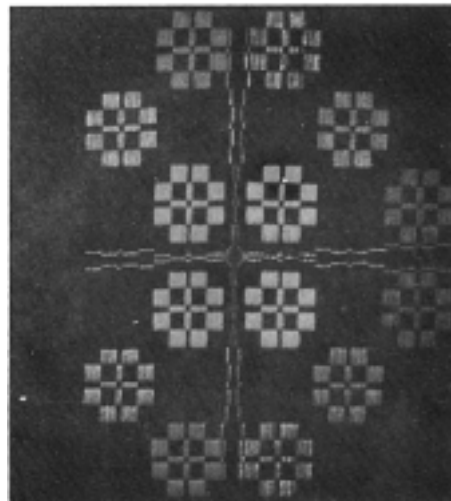
3 inches in tabby, navy, using harnesses 1 and 2 alternately.

Block A — Raise harness 3 and keeping it raised weave 1½ inches in tabby, navy.
 Raise harness 4 and keeping it raised weave 1½ inches in tabby, navy.
 Raise harness 3 and keeping it raised weave 5 shots in tabby, navy.
 Similarly harness 4 1½
 Similarly harness 3 1½

Block B — Continue as block A but raising harnesses 5 then 6.

Block C — This also weaves block D so raise harnesses 7 and 11 then 8 and 12.

Center: Raise harness 8 weave 5 shots
 Raise harness 7 and 10 weave 5 shots
 Raise harness 6 and 10 weave 5 shots
 Raise harness 5 and 10 weave 5 shots
 Raise harness 4 and 10 weave 5 shots
 Raise harness 3 and 10 weave 5 shots
 Raise harness 4 and 10 weave 5 shots
 Raise harness 5 and 10 weave 5 shots
 Raise harness 6 and 10 weave 5 shots
 Raise harness 7 and 10 weave 5 shots
 Raise harness 8 weave 5 shots
 Reverse pattern starting with Block C



“Rose Window” Wall Hanging

MANY PURPOSE MATERIAL

This material is suitable for purposes where firmness is required; altar frontals; pulpit and lectern falls; prayer stools; wall hangings and dividers, etc. It is not suitable where draping is essential, nor for any of the church garments.

It is not usually necessary to line webs of this weight, but if it seems desirable it is suggested that the lining be a natural color linen, preferably handwoven.

Because of the extreme contrast in the two sizes of the threads used a distinct three dimensional result is obtained. The beating must be very hard, and done both before and after changing shed.

The pattern blocks can be enlarged, reduced or rearranged in any order, and the treadling adjusted to achieve any desired effect. There is a take up of about 3 or 4 inches in the woven material per yard while still on the loom with additional shrinkage after removal of the web from the loom. It is suggested that an extra yard of warp be allowed, and extra yardage woven to compensate for this shrinkage.

WARP: Lily Art. 215 Super Sheen, size 50/3, Wine 152.

WEFT: Same as Warp.

PATTERN: Lily Art. 114, Mercerized Perle, Size 3, Scarlet 440.

THREADING: Crackle.

Block A 1,2,3,2, (1)

Block B 2,3,4,3, (2)

Block C 3,4,1,4, (3)

Block D 4,1,4,3, (4)

Thread blocks in the following order:

B A B C D C B C D C B A B C D C ETC

3 3 3 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 3 3 3 2 2 2 times

TIE-UP — Standard:

Block A 1-2

Block B 2-3

Block C 3-4

Block D 4-1

TREADLING:

Block A 6x

Block B 6x

Block A 6x

Block D 6x

Block C 6x

Block D 6x all with alternate tabby.

CHASUBLE FOR KING'S COLLEGE BOYS' SCHOOL

Shown on front and back pages

Mrs. Longard noted that this web presented few, if any, difficulties and wove up rather quickly. It was effective when made up into the chasuble, would wear and clean well and would eventually become part of the school heritage and be long remembered by successive generations of students. Because of its weight a lining was not required. All seams were finished invisibly with a heavy gold thread couched over them and at the edge of the bottom hem. This gave an extra finish and is visible from time to time as the wearer moves about his duties.

The accompanying sketch shows a few details of the symbol embroidery on the back.

WARP: Lily Art. 909, Trinklette Novelty Yarn, Natural 862 or, heavy pure silk, natural.

WEFT: Lily Art. 909, Trinklette, and

Lily Art. 305 Metallic, Gold or, Natural and Gold variegated.

SLEY: Single in 12 dent reed for Lily Trinklette, or, single in 15 dent reed for the raw silk.

THREADING: 1,2,3,4, for plain weave.

TREADLING: Alternate one shot Trinklette with one shot gold, or gold variegated.

BEATING: Beat hard to make heavy compact web, approx. 14 shots per inch, 7 Trinklette and 7 gold.

In the 240" woven there was a take-up of 3½ inches.

CHASUBLE FOR CHURCH OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

This material shows two quite different appearing webs though both were woven on the same warp. After the pieces for chasuble and frontal were woven, metallic threads were wound together on the bobbin; blue and green, green and chartreuse, or blue and turquoise chosen at random and each woven for a few inches. Treadling was the same as for the heavier material. The metallic material was used for the fish and leaf applique. Other metallic yarn bits could be used at random to give additional color and interest.

WARP: Lily Art. 114, Mercerized Perle, 20/2 Olive 1452.

WEFT: Same as Warp.

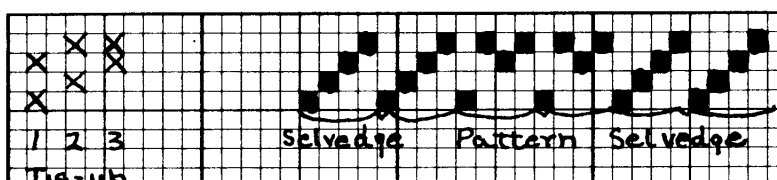
PATTERN: Lily Art. 114, Mercerized Perle, Size 5, Light Olive 1451.

SLEY: Double in 20 dent reed.

For the metallic material for the fish and leaves, warp, weft and sley as above.

PATTERN THREAD FOR METALLIC: Lily metallic yarn, use 2 threads together on shuttle mixing at random gold and silver; copper and gold; copper and silver or other combinations.

THREADING DRAFT:



TREADLING: Heavy Material

Treadle 1 green cotton
Treadle 3 perle cotton
Treadle 2 green cotton
Treadle 3 perle cotton, etc.

Metallic

Treadle 1 cotton
Treadle 3 metallic
Treadle 2 cotton
Treadle 3 metallic, etc.



Mrs. Murray and Mrs. Longard
with the King's College Boys' School Chasuble



Chasuble for the Church
of the Holy Spirit

Order All Your Weaving Supplies From

The Handweavers Headquarters

LILY MILLS COMPANY • Shelby, N. C.