



Dr. Ralph H. Pino, founder of Plymouth Colony Farms, with one of the Karakul lambs from the farm flock—wool from the karakul sheep is used in the weaving.

PLYMOUTH COLONY FARMS

RIGHT on the edge of mass production conscious Detroit is to be found Plymouth Colony Farms, at Plymouth, Michigan, one of the most recently established handweaving centers. The Colony, itself, was founded some nine years ago by Dr. Ralph Pino, noted eye surgeon of Detroit, who is pioneering a venture combining agriculture and the crafts, which will provide recreation, education and employment for interested persons, regardless of their age. He has planned the project as a restoration in spirit if not in fact of Old Plymouth Colony in Massachusetts.

Weaving, the first of the crafts to be put in operation, was started in the fall of 1947. Shortly after, the Farms purchased some Karakul sheep, little known in that section of the country, to provide some of the wool for the weavers.

Shropshire sheep also have been purchased and the entire flock now numbers thirty. Black and gray Karakul wool and white Shropshire is spun for the Plymouth weavers by the Biltmore Industries in Asheville, North Carolina. This wool, enthusiastically received by the weavers, is used chiefly for upholstery fabrics, which recently attracted widespread attention when exhibited in Detroit.

An unusually beautiful upholstery fabric designed by Mrs. Antoinette Webster of the Farms was exhibited in "For Modern Living," at the Detroit Institute of Arts last fall. This exhibition was designed to present outstanding contributions to interior design, home furnishings, and useful objects generally by American designers and manufacturers. It also highlighted American contributions to so-called "modern" architecture

and interior decoration, which there has been a definite tendency to ignore.

Mrs. Webster obtained a subtle silvery overtone for her fabric by combining a warp of Oxford gray wool, white and gray ratine and flax with a weft of gray wool and rayon. She used a plain weave, proving that imagination in the use of yarns can produce unusual textures in the simplest technique. In another unusually attractive upholstery fabric, the Plymouth Farms gray wool, several blue yarns, and a cotton novelty yarn are combined in a plain weave.

Plymouth linens attracted a great deal of attention at the 17th Annual Housewares Exposition at the J. L. Hudson Company in Detroit in January. Sometime before the show, the china department of the store brought samples of 22 fine patterns to the weavers, who designed and wove place mats to harmon-

Linens woven at Plymouth Colony Farms shown in the Housewares Exposition at the J. L. Hudson Company, Detroit, Michigan.



ize with the different styles. During the exhibition weavers were at work in the store. In the "Turn of the Century" room, a 1900 dinner table was shown beside a 1950 table, set with Plymouth Farms linens and a fine American china pattern.

As a result of the interest in hand-woven products in Detroit, a sample line of place mat sets has been ordered by the store and the fabrics listed in the Bride's Registry as suggestions for wedding gifts. The interior decorating department also has samples on hand.

Upholstery and drapery fabrics are woven to order, while table linens, towels, scarves, and baby blankets are on display and sale at the Weaving Shops at the Farms. Bamboo and other types of window shades also are woven to order.

Enrollment in the weaving school in-



Weaver from Plymouth Colony Farms demonstrating work at J. L. Hudson Company Exhibition.

creased as a result of the Hudson exhibition. Only individual instruction is given, which is continued through the summer. Students usually work two days

a week from 10 A.M. to 5 P.M. although schedules can be arranged to suit individuals. Advanced lessons in design are offered. ● ● ●