Original fabric designs influenced by those imported by Scandinavian immigrants

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Original fabric designs influenced by those
imported by Scandinavian immigrants

by

Ruth Ann Royer

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Signatures have been redacted for privacy

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INTRODUCTION

The American Bicentennial has rekindled the interest of most Americans in their heritage. Many national studies have been made in conjunction with the commemoration of our nation's two-hundredth birthday. This involvement with the past affected the author and stimulated her desire to study the Swedish and Norwegian textiles which had been brought to the United States by the immigrants from those two countries. Her fascination in the textiles had developed when, as a child, she was shown the hand woven fabrics brought by her grandmother who had immigrated to the United States in the early 1900's. All of the fibers had been prepared and woven into textiles by the author's great-great-grandmother in Sweden during the 19th Century. This early fascination with Scandinavian textiles plus a personal interest in hand weaving as an art form provided the incentive for the following study.

The wave of Swedish and Norwegian immigrants began in the 1840's. During this decade there were 5-10,000 immigrants from these two countries. The following decade 45-50,000 additional immigrants came, and during the first great wave, from 1865-1874, the annual quota of Norwegians rose dramatically, totaling 119,545 for the period. By this time the American Civil War had ended, which made it more appealing to come to the United States. Poor farming conditions in Sweden and Norway which caused crop failure prompted many of them to leave farming in their homeland. Between 1875-1880 an economic decline in the United States and better conditions at home caused the wave of immigration to ebb. However, in the 1880's an agricultural depression hit Scandinavia, and a second wave of immigrants
began. In this decade 186,290 Norwegians immigrated to the United States, and the Swedish total was greater, 194,337. There was a slow decline in the figure during the 1890's, but from 1901-1905 there was one final influx in which 97,185 Norwegians and an average of 25,000 Swedes came each year. It must be remembered that not all immigrants chose to remain in the United States. A small proportion did return to their native lands.

The early immigrants moved into the sparsely populated upper Midwest, forming ethnic communities. They chose the upper Midwest for its fertile soil and its similarity to their homeland—forests and rolling hills. Since most of these people were from farm families, they came primarily to escape the disastrous crop failures at home and to start new homes and farms in the United States. The amount of land available for farming in Sweden and Norway was limited due to the large areas covered by forests and mountains. Tradition dictated that the land, which was used for agriculture, be given to the eldest son on the death of the father, leaving the other children to fend for themselves. Also, because of the crowding which was occurring at this time, the news of rich, cheap American farmland was very tempting.

Letters from the early immigrants to their homelands and publicity sent to Europe by land and railroad agents here promoted the belief that the United States was a land of plenty. This propaganda stirred the populace encouraging the migration from Sweden and Norway.

The later immigrants' influx was prompted by the same factors as the early wave, however, an additional incentive was the avoidance of mandatory military service by the young men and their preference for the higher wages offered in the United States. The prospects for domestic service in this
country had a greater appeal to the young women than did farm work back home.

Most of the immigrants arrived with one trunk and the clothes on their back. In 1888 one young man's textile goods were inventoried as follows: two new suits of clothes, two old suits of clothes, winter overcoat, spring overcoat, four suits woolen underwear, four suits cotton underwear, four woolen shirts, four cotton shirts, four white starched shirts with cuffs, four night shirts, eight pairs of socks, three pair shoes, one pair high boots, one pair slippers, two hats, cap, blue sweater (9, p. 7).

In this work the author will be referring to fabrics produced by the emigrants of Sweden and Norway who came to the United States during the period of the great immigrations, 1840-1910. When the author refers to Scandinavia, she will be discussing only these two countries. Visits were made to The Swedish Institute, Minneapolis, Minnesota, Bishop Hill State Memorial, Bishop Hill, Illinois, The Norwegian-American Museum, Decorah, and Scandinavian Days, Story City, Iowa, where she observed the available fabrics. The author has classified these fabrics by their fiber content, construction process, purpose, use of color, and the motif or pattern. No detailed analysis was done concerning thread count, yarn diameter, or yarn structure in the textiles. Such information was not vital to the study. The intent of the classification was to determine the art qualities of the pieces rather than technical aspects.

In most cases the fabrics observed by the author were not strictly plain functional pieces but were found to be decorated. This was somewhat contrary to her expectations because she had anticipated that most items would have been utilitarian in nature. However, she had not taken into
account the textiles which would find their way from Sweden and Norway to
the United States as gifts and keepsakes. Many of the decorative pieces,
which composed the majority of the collections, likely were not brought by
the immigrants but came over later either when visits were made back to the
homeland or received as presents sent from friends or relatives back in
Norway or Sweden. She also had not expected to find the large amount of
decoration used on clothing and bedding items.

The author has begun her written record with a short history of Scan-
dinavian weaving from early times to the present. The second chapter is
concerned with the research done by the author in the chosen Swedish and
Norwegian communities and the correlation of these results. The third
chapter describes the original fabrics designed and executed by the author
which were inspired by her background readings as well as the textiles and
fabrics observed. One table and a glossary are included to aid in the
understanding of this study. The glossary defines Swedish and Norwegian
terminology while the table charts the textiles studied, explaining their
purpose, and then classifying fiber content, construction, techniques, use
of color, and pattern types.
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Scandinavians of Norway and Sweden, throughout their history, have used a variety of construction techniques to achieve the desired patterns in their woven articles. The composite of techniques used appears at different periods and has been altered and adapted down through the years to suit the contemporary needs of the weavers. Among those used with proficiency in the past are sprang, netting and lace work, card weaving, inkle weaving, braiding, and a wide variety of shuttle and laid in loom techniques. Included in the weaver-controlled weaves are double weave, brocades, tapestry, and knotted pile.

At the present time, there is a question concerning the origin of several of the early fabric processes. Although the grave finds in these countries have been discernibly richer than those of central and southern Europe, there is still a comparatively large gapping hole in our knowledge of the past in these countries. Through archeological discoveries, some of the controversies have been settled, but for the most part there is still disagreement on the geographic source of several of the techniques employed.

Southern Scandinavia was clear of ice about 10,000 B.C., but it was 7,500 B.C. before Stockholm and the surrounding area attracted man. As primitive nomadic tribes advanced, they brought with them the skills developed in their former hunting grounds. Traces of wool and plant fibers have been found which date from the Stone Age, although there is no knowledge of the type of looms or tools they might have used.
During the Bronze Age (1500-500 B.C.), slightly more is known about textiles than in the Stone Age. From this period there are existing specimens of coarsely woven wool pieces as well as textile implements found in the graves and bogs. Band weaving as well as braided (fläta) and twined forms had developed during this period. Evidence of both card weaving (brikkevev) tablets and hole and slot looms has been found buried with the people of the Bronze Age. Bands were probably first braided and twined, but at some point card weaving, which actually is a form of twining with the aid of a turning mechanism, was introduced. This gave a somewhat firmer strip of warp-faced finished material. It is thought by some that card weaving or bandväving med kort originated in Egypt or in the Middle East. Other sources indicate that the technique probably began in Europe.

Branting and Lindblom support their beliefs by quoting an observation made by Pliny in his Historia Naturalis. They summarize his statements by saying that in Alexandria many heddles were used, while in Gaul small "shields" were used for this purpose (2, p. 19). A full set-up of a card weaving loom, including the warp, was found in the Oseberg burial ship. The warp was strung through holes in the corners of the plates, made of wood. When several colors of warp were strung through specific holes and the cards rotated in certain sequences, patterns were developed. Patterns were also produced by the hand manipulation of the cards or specific yarns.

The hole and slot loom (bandgrind or bandvävstol) was also used for making woven bands. With this device, two sheds were possible. Because of the apparatus used, in other words, the bars used to separate the yarns, it was easier to form a wide band. A pattern (grindvev) was added by picking
up specific threads by hand before inserting the weft. Weft could vary in color.

As card weaving and hole and slot weaving developed, the motifs also changed. Stripes and chevrons evolved and grew more complicated until the early Migration Periods when animals and other figures were introduced as unit designs. This marks the beginning of brocade in these countries. Weaving of figured bands was gradually replaced by embroidered designs during the Renaissance.

By the Eighteenth Century the woven patterns were strictly geometric. These tapes and bands have been used on costumes of Swedes and Norwegians in both a decorative as well as a functional manner as far back as we have records.

Loom weights found in the bogs indicate that at some time during the Bronze Age the warp-weighted loom (or Norwegian Uppstadgogn) came into use. Archeologists believe this loom was probably invented once and then was carried from culture to culture. This is evident because of its unique construction and working principle which differs from all other looms (6, p. 17). This loom or some of its offspring has continued in use in remote valleys of Norway well into the present century. The weaving on the warp-weighted loom was often started with a card woven border which was attached to the top beam. The free ends of weft from the card weaving became the warp and hung vertically. Stones, bones, and clay pieces were attached to the warps to provide tension. It is by the construction of these weights that the approximate age and sometimes the original location of the loom weights are told (6, p. 17). At first similar sized stones were collected and used. Later the stones were altered with grooves or holes to be more
useful. Finally fired clay pieces were made to the exact shape and weight desired by the weaver. Because of these weights and the bundles of yarns they caused, the warp was usually unevenly spaced. Thus we are able to identify, without too much trouble, weaving produced on this loom. It is possible to tell if more than one person had worked on a particular piece of cloth by the variation in the beating of the weft and/or the presence of threads crossing in the middle of the piece (18, p. 195). At first the weft was probably inserted with the fingers. At sometime during the Bronze Age it is probable that shed sticks and shuttles were first used; this would help explain the quantities of cloth found in the graves of this period (4, p. 107).

It is not known precisely when knotless netting (nōlebindning) was introduced into this culture, but it was well-developed by the end of the Bronze Age. It was probably brought to the area by the first agrarian cultures. Fabrics using this technique were generally made with a needle and have included such diverse items as milk strainers, mittens, foot and leg protectors, and hats. The milk strainers, probably one of the oldest items made from the technique, often used hair from the tail of the cow for the piece, thus the raw materials for straining the milk were always available.

Knotless netting was used in later years to achieve a very smooth and flexible fabric for mittens and stockings and is still practiced to a limited extent today in areas which have an interest in traditional handicrafts. It has attracted the contemporary handweaver in our country. Some of the popularity of knotless netting was due to its softness and flexibility (10, p. 102). The great admiration for these fabrics is shown in the old saying "He who wore knitted mittens had an unskilled wife" (10, p. 99).
From the Roman Iron Age textile finds in Sweden and Norway are more numerous than they were earlier. Pieces have been unearthed showing twills, such as herringbone (fiskbensmönster) and birdseye, as well as more advanced forms of previously mentioned techniques. Because of the patterns found in the yardage pieces from this period, we can assume that the weavers had invented an aid, perhaps a heddle rod system, to change the pattern in the woven shed in order to vary the design in the fabric. It was also during this period that one-piece scissors were developed.

It is assumed that a majority of the tools used today for preparation of the fibers and the actual weaving existed by the Viking Age. Devices designed for clipping, carding, spinning, and weaving underwent only slight modification before the Industrial Revolution quietly slipped in and all but took over their job functions. The excavation of the burial mound of Queen Asa at Oseberg (800-840 A.D.) has given us a wealth of information relative to all aspects of weaving developed by that time. The ship contained, among other things: four standing looms, spools, a distaff, linen roll, stool, wooden pressing iron, scissors, sewing awl, a whetstone, linen, hemp, woad (blue) dye, and bales of woven goods (11, p. 197).

Among the looms contained in the Oseberg ship was one which was used for sprang (sprangning) though at the time the ship was unearthed its use was not known. Sprang was a common technique used for many purposes, but European textile experts at the turn of our century did not seem to be familiar with it (3, p. 35). Experts cannot be sure if the technique of sprang developed in the Scandinavian area or if it was brought from another culture, but, because of its very early use, the assumption is that the technique may have been developed here independently from other areas.
Pieces of sprang have been found in Scandinavian graves which post-date the Stone Age.

Sprang is a process requiring one set of fixed yarns. The parallel warp threads are wrapped on a frame and interlinked to form a springy, flexible lace-like fabric (pinnbandsspets). Because the warp yarns are fixed at both ends, the fabric develops on either side of the center simultaneously. What occurs in the top half happens in mirror image in the lower half. In the center of the piece, one yarn can be inserted through the final loops to prevent unraveling.

It was during the Viking Period that the first tapestry technique was used. The Oseberg ship fabrics included some textiles showing the insertion of colored threads by hand to form figures. Woven pieces from the bales on the Oseberg ship were totally matted together requiring an endless effort to separate the pieces for study. Woven pieces from these bales which have been untangled show a festive pageant with horses, carts, tents, ships, and many types of figures all in a seemingly unrelated, decorative whole. Such textiles were probably woven by the women while waiting for the men to come back from their sea excursions. It is believed the tapestry technique had worked its way north from Gaul where Romans had sent Coptic weavers to teach those people to weave tapestry bands for use on the Roman costume (1, p. 155).

Many of the cloth pieces still surviving from the Viking Age are woolen. Some have a thread count of 125+ per inch, which proves a high technology in the textile area. Vegetable fibers were used to some extent, but those fibers deteriorate readily, consequently few remain. The vegetable fibers which have survived are generally found next to metals. Due to
the action of metals, the patina or rust, the chemical makeup of the fibers was changed which preserved them. Some silk pieces have been unearthed which are believed to be remnants of a larger body of fine textiles obtained in trade locally or during one of the far-reaching sea excursions. These excursions took the Vikings along the coast south of their homeland to western Europe and parts of Russia and the Mediterranean areas to the Middle East. They also made expeditions to North America to a place now called L'Anse aux Meadows in northern Newfoundland where a group colonized for a time. It was here that a Norse soapstone spinning whorl was found dating the site to around the year 1000 A.D. ± 80 years (8, p. 214). This was the first of two items found which verified the site to be of Viking origin, proving the theory that the Vikings did explore the northeast coast of North America several centuries before the explorations of Columbus.

During the Viking raids and excursions, they not only brought back trade goods but also kidnapped or married women from Russia, Ireland, Sicily, and Normandy. These women brought with them the handicraft techniques they had learned in their homelands. Thus at the end of the Migration Era several new types of weaving had been introduced either by trade, textiles being easily transportable, or through the acquisition of female servants or consorts.

The arts of Sweden and Norway may be considered as belonging to one developmental area until the Christian Era, approximately 1100 A.D. when a separation in the cultures of Sweden and Norway became obvious. Textiles during this period became a highly important indicator of wealth and, therefore, power in both a religious as well as a secular sense. Textiles were relatively easy to transport, provided an obstruction for drafts in
the poorly insulated dwellings of the times and were effective in symbolizing the mores of the Middle Ages. We know that the horizontal loom came into use during the Middle Ages in Sweden and Norway because of the presence of patterned weaves and double woven counterpanes and rugs. These double woven fabrics were common to all of Scandinavia and have been used at various times for different purposes among which are rugs, blankets, spreads, pillows, and tablecloths. Their use was a natural answer to the need for thick, warm fabrics to keep out the cold.

The double weave (bohusväv, finnväv, rysse vev, or flensvevnaden) had been in use for some time in Scandinavia (in Norway examples exist from the Fifth Century) and may have originated there (14, p. 12). This method of cloth construction depended on the weaving of two separate layers of material simultaneously, which may interlock at specified points to form a design. The tubular type was known as rundväv. Double weaving in Norway and Sweden can be divided into two general periods, an early one around the time of the Viking or Christian Era and a second period during the late Renaissance. The early period seems to have taken its motifs from the Orient as well as using the traditional Medieval motifs which included birds, animals, flowers, magical and religious symbols, biblical motifs, and the great occasions of life: birth, marriage, and death. The common colors used were red, brown, yellow, and blue. The early pieces were often made to be rugs or hangings in long narrow strips usually having geometric borders placed above the wall benches.

During the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, the draw loom was introduced which destroyed the spontaneity of design because of the increased speed, thereby replacing the handwoven double weave. The later
double weaves were made from coarser yarn with a pattern limited to one or two motifs based on Renaissance designs. The fabrics were used as counterpanes and vertical hangings. Interior furnishings had changed by this time, and windows became more common. Therefore, with more limited open wall areas, wall hangings changed from being horizontal to vertical. In the late Eighteenth Century, double weave was used by the upper class and new patterns were constantly developed, but as the peasant class learned to use the technique they were satisfied to repeat designs already existing (17, p. 2).

From the Middle Ages on, one of the largest bodies of textiles which has been preserved was the religious pieces. Sweden's comparative wealth in medieval church textiles as well as fabrics for other purposes was due in part to the absence of large scale wars after the Sixteenth Century. Following the Reformation, money was not available for securing new clerical garments necessitating conservation of the older ones. As a result such garments gained appreciation and respect. The church vestments were woven using a variety of techniques including double weave, tapestry, and brocades. Embroidery, netting, and laces were often added to the woven items. Each geographical area had its own characteristic embroidery. Embroidery was commonly used to highlight certain motifs or when there was not enough time to weave a needed piece such as a brocade or tapestry. It was a substitute for the more elaborate time consuming weaves. Various stitches were employed, but by far the most common was the thread-counted cross stitch (tåströmmen). A variety of stitches was also made to decorate wall hangings, pillows, napkins, table runners, and tablecloths. Embroidery, making use of the cross and satin stitches in bright colors, was
popular as early as the late Renaissance for the native dress especially for the special costumes worn on feast days.

Pile fabric, using ghiordes-type knots, became an important textile during the Renaissance. At first most pieces were plain, but if pattern was used it was usually stripes, circles, or checks. They were made as bed covers, blankets, and all purpose throws. The fabric was turned with the pile side toward the inside to insulate. The ground weave was often a twill or rosengang to hide the knots below. Pieces have been found dating from the Bronze Age, and most sources agree that the Scandinavian piles probably originated independently of the Middle Eastern piles because their construction technique had a continuous weft for looping the pile (1, p. 176). It is thought that pile pieces developed as a result of man's attempt to find a substitute for animal skins which provided warmth but became hard and stiff and could not be washed. On early pieces the pile was simply made of loosely spun wool which gave the appearance of an animal hide without the undesirable qualities of the skin. Some later pieces were constructed with pile on both sides to enhance the appearance.

The rya or ryer pile fabric came into its own in the Renaissance Period, and its development climaxed during the Eighteenth Century. The definition of the terms in the pile (nock) weaving is not universal. Therefore, the author has chosen the definitions which are the most frequent uses of the terms. The ryer technique resembles the ghiordes knot from the Middle East, except that the knotting is done continuously around a gauge, with or without cut pile. If the loops are cut later, the piece is sometimes known as a flossa. Flossa generally has a longer, thicker pile than the ryer. Several rows of filling weft were woven between the
rows of knots, the amount being just short of the length of the pile, which varied from one-half to three inches. Around 1690 the middle-class women in the cities started patterning the pile, and not much time elapsed before the idea spread to the women of the country middle class. The patterns used were copied from imported baroque textiles, but when those were unavailable they made use of the local motifs on the cross stitched samplers. These pieces had a short, close knotted pile to allow the incorporated design to stand out more clearly. They were often placed on the beds in the day only, but in this way they lost their original function.

Another pile technique, soumak, was probably introduced to the Scandinavian countries in early trade with the Middle East. It was used often in weaving a type of tapestry for wall hangings and altar pieces, rather than as a floor carpet. The technique was altered somewhat in that the entire piece was not covered with the low pile as in the Middle Eastern rugs, but instead only the patterned areas used the soumak.

A type of geometric tapestry known as rökalan or alkaer developed during the Middle Ages though the technique was first known in Sweden during Viking times. This was to become one of the primary textile arts during the later part of the Middle Ages through the first part of the Nineteenth Century. It was common to special areas, such as Skåne in Sweden and the districts in southern Norway, particularly those along the west coast. Rökalan peaked during the 1700's. The technique is identified by the stepping stone-like changes in color as the pattern moves upward. The areas of color are not built up individually, but rather as the weaving progresses weft yarns of adjacent pattern areas are locked around each other and return the way they came. At first locking was done in every row to
prevent slits from occurring in the fabric, but later to speed the weaving process the locking was done in every other row. The primary designs chosen were geometric or geometrically oriented. The latter group incorporated common motifs used during the time included the rose, lily, tree of life, and certain simple animal motifs. Because of the geometric pattern, the weaving could be done on the horizontal loom. Typical colors were red, blue, yellow, black, and white, with some brown and green. The finished pieces became hangings, coverlets, carriage cushions, robes, bench covers, rugs, and pillows. Backs of the cushions and pillows were generally made of leather or were woven with an overshot in krabbasnår, dukagäng, or rosengång (13, p. 38).

During the last years of the Middle Ages, crafts had deteriorated (16, p. 157). With the Renaissance came an increased appreciation of the crafts including weaving. Improvements developed in southern Europe found their way during the Renaissance to the Scandinavian weavers. One of the major changes came in the Seventeenth Century when the spinning wheel was introduced. This innovation greatly reduced the amount of time needed for yarn preparation.

In 1540 Gustav Vasa, the reigning King of Sweden, imported Flemish weavers (the source of the peasant term flamskvävad) to produce tapestry pieces for use in his Royal Palace. The oldest surviving example of this technique, found in Malmö, was made around 1515. The tapestry process was first used by professionals or the ladies of the upper class and produced results similar to the tapestries of southern Europe, commonly depicting scenes or pictures and was known as billedvevna in Norway. As the demand for flamskvävad increased, native artists learned the process. The
designs continued to have a two-dimensional or flat perspective while the
tapestries in southern Europe were developing a three-dimensional or life-
like perspective. The first local weavers (men) who used the technique
generally taught their daughters or servant girls to help them when they
found that one person could not weave a great enough quantity to support a
wife and family. The women slowly took over the production, and it eventu-
ally became a cottage craft around 1750. Use of tapestries in the upper-
class homes had declined by that time due to a change in the interior
furnishings of those homes. Furniture was no longer attached to the walls,
and the pieces were upholstered in silk and brocaded yardage available by
trade from southern Europe. It became fashionable to use silk and brocaded
yardage which was cheaper than the tapestries for covering the walls.

The flamskvävand continued to be used by the peasant class who could
not afford the luxury of the silks and brocades. The fabrics were charac-
terized by a limited number of colors, red being dominant, and a solid line
which helped define figures. Vertical lines were made by interlocking two
adjacent color areas or "hatching" which produced a saw-tooth edge. Hatch-
ing is the overlapping of two adjacent color areas by weaving three or four
shots of one color and then overlapping three or four yarns of the adjacent
color area around a common warp. The motifs chosen were generally tradi-
tional designs using foliage, animals, people, buildings, birds, and bibli-
cal motifs. Popular biblical themes were the Wise and Foolish Virgins or
the Three Wise Men. Pieces were covered with pattern leaving very little
plain background. The work developed from drawings called cartoons. A
full scale cartoon was placed behind the warp on a vertical loom to assure
the proper proportion of design parts while weaving. The patterns were
re-copied until the original meanings and forms were lost. The pieces became stylized and abstracted. Weavers were more interested in the total decorative effect than in the life-like reproduction. Skåne and especially Dalarna (with over 700 pieces still existing) in Sweden and Østland and Gudbrandsdal in Norway have a rich history in Flemish weaving.

Overshot, an extension of the twill (kypert) and lozenge (diamantbindning) weaves, probably was introduced with the horizontal loom during the Middle Ages. Overshot is a two-part weave—ground and pattern in which the pattern makes long skips. It usually employs a linen warp with a fine linen weft thread weaving tabby or a ground to supply continuity to the textile between each wool pattern weft. The Scandinavians were responsible for developing the technique to the extent to which it is used today. They added extra harnesses and developed a multitude of threading and treadling combinations, including the intricate Damask-type weaves. A majority of pieces using overshot technique was for either rugs or counterpanes (sängöverkast). The counterpanes were usually woven in two pieces because looms were narrow and then seamed down the middle. Typical threading drafts were monksbelt or patch pattern (munkabålte or tavlebragd), rosepath (rosengång) as well as complex twill and diaper weaves. About this same time the Swedes developed several types of weaver-controlled hand brocades—dukagång, krabbasnär, and halvkrabba.

During the Eighteenth Century, there was a gradual improvement in the prosperity of the peasant class. A direct result of this was that the art forms for this group, including weaving, also improved. On holidays or feast days the prosperity of a farm was evidenced by the amount of woven and embroidered hangings displayed on the walls, the rafters, and floors.
Elaborate fringes (firtletting) decorated the edges of the woven pieces as well as the shelves and rafters.

Until the Industrial Age, farms had been self-sufficient, producing all the goods they used. Their decorative arts echoed those found in the cities with the exception that the rural craftsmen lacked any type of formal training. As a result the designs they adapted from the urban areas were often misunderstood and misrepresented. The more the designs were recorded, the less like the originals they became. The pictorial quality of the rural weaving was two-dimensional and decorative, a continuation of the perspective used in the Middle Ages, whereas the professionals had changed to the Renaissance influence employing three-dimensional, lifelike motifs. The country craftsmen held tightly to the forms used in the past, and when an old piece wore out, after use by one or more generations, it was copied as closely as possible to preserve the family pattern. They never tried mass production for they felt each piece should be the best they could produce in craftsmanship.

An example of the bedding, given in the *Decorative Arts of Sweden* by Iona Plath, might help in visualizing the amount of weaving done (12, p. 9):

The sleeping places in old Swedish peasant houses were, in most cases, built into the wall, bunk style, and if they were not provided with shutters, they would have striped blue and white linen bed curtains that could be drawn. The beds were made up with bed straw and several feather-beds, the higher the better, to show the wealth of the house. A coarse, heavy homespun covered the bedstraw while the feather-beds had beautiful blue-and-white striped linen covers. On top of the bedding was a white linen spread which hung to the floor; it was either stretched out straight or pleated, it always ended in embroidery, fringe, or lace at the lower edge. On top of the white spread, a smaller gay-colored coverlet would be used; this extended only halfway to the floor, so that the decorative white under the spread would show. These colorful woolen coverlets were sometimes made of woven cloth, blue being the favored color, and were heavily
embroidered in bright colored woolen yarns. More often, the patterns were woven into the material. The most striking of the woven covers were those done in double weave.

Weaving was an important pasttime for the peasant class as is shown by its importance in the courting procedure. When a girl was young, she wove and sewed a fine linen shirt for her husband-to-be long before she was at an age to be betrothed or even knew who he would be. Therefore, to be sure it was ample, the shirt was made large with voluminous sleeves and a large body. Before she could marry she needed a chest full of all the fabric items required in a home. These included woolen coverlets, embroidered cushions, seat covers for all the chairs, bench runners, yards of fringed borders for the shelves and rafters, wall hangings, linens and towels, all matching, tablecloths, and carriage cushions (13, p. 10). It was the amount of these and the proficiency in their completion that gave her the final permission to marry (7, p. 22). When she became of age, young men offered presents of such homemade tools as a mangling board, batlet, skutching knife, and distaff. If she accepted these gifts, it meant the young man could start courting in earnest.

As the Nineteenth Century dawned, industrialization slowly crept in. At first the weavers took their raw fibers into the mills and had them spun by machine. The next step was the change over from the natural vegetable dyes to the commercial dyes which also shortened the preparation time of the yarns. As the quality of the materials became more standardized, so did the condition and quality of the weaving. Slowly hand weaving began to disappear. Weaving did not die out completely for in the 1870's in Sweden an association called Handarbetets Vänner was organized to attempt a revival in the home crafts, especially weaving. In 1899 the first society
was formed in Stockholm, Föreningen Svensk Hemslöjd, which was followed within the next two decades by hand craft societies in all the provinces in Sweden. Members studied the surviving pieces of weaving in their provinces and revived the designs by copying the old pieces and drafting new patterns similar in character. They revived vegetable dyeing and hand spinning. The hemslöjds sold the work, which was produced in the small home studios. The revival in this century of weaving had interested artists of the brush to design pieces to be "painted with the needle" (1, p. 159). The early pieces were done without regard for the limitations of the technique, but now that the cartoonists have become more familiar with the materials and their properties, they have used this knowledge to create new dimensions for the art. The products include both consumer goods, such as blankets, placemats, and tablecloths, as well as art objects with no direct utilitarian function (5, p. 9).

Weaving in Sweden and Norway had been a primary activity throughout the history of these two countries. The bright colors and vivid two-dimensional patterns they have used are continuing sources of inspiration for today's weavers not only in Sweden and Norway but in other Western European countries as well as in the United States.
MUSEUMS VISITED BY THE AUTHOR

The first Swedish and Norwegian immigrants to America were a group of 53 Norwegians who arrived in 1825, but the beginning of the eventual hordes of Scandinavians actually started in the early 1840's. The early immigrants were generally family groups and relatives who chose to homestead in the upper Mississippi River Valley. Later they also settled in the upper Missouri River Valley. By the end of the 1800's, three-fourths of the Scandinavian immigrants were single men and women who settled in the cities.

Bishop Hill, Illinois, Minneapolis, Minnesota, Decorah and Story City, Iowa, were the settlements selected and visited by the author in collecting data for her study. Two locations were chosen to represent each of the two Scandinavian countries. Bishop Hill, Illinois, and The American Swedish Institute in Minneapolis, Minnesota, were visited in regard to Swedish textiles while Decorah and Story City, Iowa, were selected in relation to fabrics from Norway. The specific sites for the author's observations were chosen because of the extent of fabric collections and their accessibility to the author.

With the exception of Minneapolis (The American Swedish Institute being an ethnic organization in a metropolitan area), these were typical communities pioneered and settled primarily by immigrants from either Sweden or Norway. The early settlers of one community were usually families and friends who had embarked together on the emigration from their homeland. Because these pioneers had a need for a variety of textiles,
there was a great chance that some original articles were still preserved in these areas.

The American Swedish Institute is an American organization in the Minneapolis area which promotes Swedish American relations with programs and displays which relate to a positive interaction of these two countries. It was founded in 1929 by Mr. Swan J. Turnblad, the owner of the Svenska Amerikanska Posten (claimed to be the largest Swedish newspaper in the United States). The building, with its furnishings, has become the center for a continually growing collection of Swedish goods assembled by the Institute. More than half of the textiles originated in Sweden, some coming during the immigration period, some being added later. The materials are well preserved. Most were of high quality and fairly decorative. All were labeled with the approximate production dates, origin, and sometimes the use of the article.

Bishop Hill, Illinois, was founded by Eric Jansson in 1846 as a colony for Swedish religious dissenters, called Janssonites after their leader. They believed that the Bible was the only true book of God, and simplicity and cleanliness were the ways to salvation. These they expressed in their life styles. Simplicity was reflected in the well-constructed plain textile items the colonists used for their needs. The goods made for use in their local hostelry or for sale in the area markets were more decorative because the Janssonites realized the appeal of this type of fabric to the nonmembers of their society. The pieces remaining from this period were generally plain and functional while later pieces were similar to other pioneer textiles of that era. The colony remained in communal hands until
1861 when dissension on religious and social doctrine arose splitting the colony which then divided the property among its members.

The area around Story City, Iowa, was settled during the late 1840's and early 1850's by a group of Norwegian immigrants. The primary reason most of the settlers had come from their homeland was to earn a better living in the new country by farming, and so only a small shopping district was formed. As soon as the area was stabilized most of the time was spent in maintaining homesteads during the summer, spring, and fall leaving the winter months free for carrying on home crafts. The fabrics from Story City reflect this tendency toward the functional item with simple decoration.

Decorah was also settled by would-be farm families from Norway in the late 1840's. The terrain, being well-wooded with rolling hills, was similar to that part of Norway from which the immigrants came. Decorah was considered the jumping off point for Norwegian immigrants west of the Mississippi. Because of this the area residents have kept in close contact with Norway and have held their heritage in high regard. Vesterheim, the Norwegian-American Museum in Decorah, was founded in 1877 by Luther College and is internationally known for its collection of items related to Norwegian immigration. Their textile collection was more comprehensive than any of the others observed in terms of showing the variety of technology used in Norway as well as the quality of items and the displays.

In most instances, it was difficult to learn much about the textiles except that they were of Swedish or Norwegian origin. Unless the donor had given a history of the article when it was acquired by the museum, the origin and age of the piece could only be approximated.
Most textiles seemed to be articles used for special occasions, some originating here in the United States, some in Sweden and Norway. These items survived because of their special functions. They were stored for use with company or on festive occasions. The care with which they were stored and limited use prolonged their lives. Everyday goods such as blankets, sheets, and clothing were used and when threadbare were made into rag rugs and finally destroyed leaving little in the way of everyday items for observation. The articles available for observation were as follows:

- 2 pair of socks, 2 sweaters, 5 shawls, 5 aprons, 4 kerchiefs, 6 various items of linens, 8 tapestries, 9 hangings, 2 baptismal robes, 1 jacket,
- 2 belts, 2 skirts, 13 blankets, 6 rugs (1 rya, 5 rag), 2 pair of mittens,
- 3 shirts, 2 caps, 2 quilts, and 1 matching set of collar and cuffs. These items were classified according to their construction, fiber content, color, and pattern use. Table 1, page 43, gives the specific characteristics of these articles.

The Industrial Revolution was having an influence on life in the United States at the same time the immigrants were coming to this country. Power looms were replacing home operated looms in large numbers. By the end of the Civil War, most of the fabrics used in the well-settled sections of the United States were the power-loomed fabrics. In fact there was almost no hand weaving done except in the isolated, sparsely settled or newly developed areas where power-loomed fabrics were either unavailable or too costly.

The immigrants generally wove for their own needs for the reasons just mentioned. This weaving was done in the homes by both women and men, especially during the winter months when time was available for such things.
The children helped prepare the yarns—the younger ones filled shuttles, and the older children often combed or carded and spun the fibers into yarns. One weaver could supply the family with all the simple goods it required, but it took five to ten spinners to keep a good weaver working. The loom was usually constructed of rough hewn logs fitted together with pegs or nails. The heddles were made of string and easy to supplement when necessary.

The majority of the early weaving done by the homesteaders was a simple tabby fabric. It was the most versatile and the easiest to set up and weave. Tabby could be used for many purposes—blankets, linens, clothing, and rugs. The tabby fabric used for "Sunday Best" was generally decorated. This decoration was sometimes applied as crocheted edgings, lace, and applique borders, or the item may have had embroidery added using cross, satin, feather, and buttonhole stitches. Hardangar and crewel were two of the most popular types of embroidery.

Later when there was more time the four-harness loom was threaded for more elaborate weaving such as the double weave, twill variations, and overshot or brocades. Because much time was required for threading the loom, weavers, when working with twills or the overshot weaves, would often wind many yards of warp yarn at a time to save the redressing of the loom.

The blankets and coverlets were probably some of the first items woven to add color and life to the dark, sparse cabins. The details in the twill, laid-in, overshot, and double weave were an important part of their popularity. The patterns were not difficult to weave, yet they could be varied in size and motif for almost unlimited variations providing the
weaver with some variety other than plain tabby weave in her home loomed textiles.

Probably the most popular of the four-harness weaves were the twills and brocades. Many variations of the twills were employed as is shown by the number of pieces in the collections, which included straight, lozenge, herringbone, and birdseye pieces. The laid-in techniques were generally dukagång, krabbsanår, and halvkrabba, all variations of brocades. These were decorative and were most often grouped in units like stripes (often a border) across the textile item. The ground fabric was generally a tabby in the natural fiber color, although it was not uncommon to have a green, black, red, or especially blue base fabric. The overshot patterns of rosengång (rosepath) and monksbelt were popular and the most used during the early period of the immigrants' life in America. Because rosepath and monksbelt employ specific threading patterns, they were not as adaptable to changing motifs, but the weaver was able to alter the overall effect by varying the number of threading units in a repeat, the number of shots in a unit, and the color of the yarns.

As the Scandinavian immigrants interacted with the existing culture brought to America by earlier immigrant groups, there was a great deal of exchange. The Scandinavians began to weave more overshot coverlets and adopted the quilt while other groups tooks the simpler overshot drafts brought from Europe by the Scandinavians and changed them in balance and motif combination, thus resulting in an increase in the number of draft possibilities.

Very few textiles were designed with double weave once the immigrants were in the United States. Too much time was involved in relation to the
quantity of fabric produced. It should also be remembered that the Jac-quad loom, capable of creating equally satisfying complex designs, was introduced in the United States in 1826. Weaving on this loom eventually replaced the time-consuming double weave.

Accessories such as sweaters, shawls, mittens, hats, and scarves were knit or crocheted. The stretch in these construction techniques allowed the piece to fit snugly. The technique also allowed for a change in the surface, decorating the piece.

Tapestry, as far as the author could observe, was not executed to any great extent in this country. All of the pieces observed had been imported from Sweden and Norway. Both röskalan and flamskvävnad types of tapestries were observed and noted. There were several methods of construction found in the collections which the author will not discuss because she did not use them as the basis for any of her original work. Among the group are sprang, macrame, band weaving (card, inkle, and hole & slot), lace netting, and knotless netting.

Fibers used traditionally in the home country were generally the same as the ones used in the new homes the immigrants were settling. The most common were linen and wool since the knowledge of preparing these two fibers was brought from Sweden and Norway by the immigrants. However, they soon learned from earlier pioneers that much time was saved if the raw materials could be taken to a mill to be spun thus leaving more time for weaving and knitting. With time a limited commodity, the slow process of spinning was discontinued. It was at about this same time that linen was replaced by cotton as the fiber for items of everyday use. Linen was retained for "Sunday Best" and holiday purposes, but there was too much
work involved in preparation to rationalize its use for everyday. Cotton accepted dyes almost as easily as wool (linen accepted few dyes and these were not colorfast), and the dye was fairly permanent. Cotton's lower cost, however, was probably the major consideration in the adoption of the fiber. No time was needed to grow, harvest, or spin the fiber; it was ready to be dyed and woven when purchased.

Of the total individual fabrics examined by the author, there were 21 all-wool items, which included blankets, sweaters, mittens, socks, shawls, skirts, and a rug. The 22 all-linen pieces included aprons, linens, kerchiefs, cardwoven belts, and shirts. Two shawls, two quilts, two handkerchiefs, a bedspread, and a bonnet summed up the nine entirely cotton items. Twenty-two of the fabrics were constructed of a combination of two or more fibers. Thirteen were linen and wool, and of these nine were tapestries. The remaining linen-wool combinations were three hangings and one embroidery. Four of the five cotton and wool combinations were blankets or coverlets; the fifth was a hanging. The remaining pieces were rag rugs, cotton as the warp and rags employing some of each of the fibers, with the cotton or linen rag being dominant as weft.

The colors in the fabrics used by the immigrants were at first influenced by the colors popular in Sweden and Norway, but they soon became familiar with the native plants and were able to discern which could be used for dyes. These colors were in ranges of gold, green, and brown; some oranges were also developed. As the population of the areas grew, traders or peddlers, often with imported natural (and later chemical) dyes in their wagons, made stops at the homesteads. They brought Bengal indigo (deep
blue), cochineal (bright red), saffron, and other dyestuffs which produced deep browns and blacks as well as other colors.

It was generally the wool that was colored because it was the easiest to dye. Most of the textiles produced at home were in two or three colors, including the natural fiber color. The most common dye used was the indigo because of its availability and fastness when washed. Nearly every farmhouse had its own indigo pot, and if there was a universal dye color for wool, it was blue. Linens were the natural color unless they were for special occasions in which case they were bleached to white.

The apparel items used for Sundays and festive occasions were often the only decorative clothing. The shirts and underclothes were simply bleached white while the outer clothing was often embroidered. Sometimes this embroidery was done in bright colors and echoed their folk art. Crewel embroidery was generally done stitching red, blue, yellow, gold, green, white, brown, and black on a dark background of black, dark blue, brown, green, or red, though it was also done to a limited extent on light ground fabric. Other embroidery was worked to add richness but of the same color as the base fabric. Both the Norwegian and Swedish immigrants used white on white embroidery, as is shown by the large amount of these in the collections. Of the 70-some pieces studied, 16 were white with white embroidery. These included shirts, tablecloths, linens, aprons, and baptismal robes.

The knitting and crochet work frequently used two or more colors. The yarn of the decorative color or colors was carried across the back of the piece until used. Again, the natural wool color was most popular as the
ground, and the design color most often chosen was indigo though greens, reds, or rusts were sometimes used.

Tapestries the immigrants brought from Sweden and Norway had colors very similar to those used on the clothing. The pieces were generally woven in one or two values of each color instead of the multi-values of color which was the common procedure in the southern European pieces. The tapestries examined were all executed in the parent countries and imported. There is no record in these areas of Scandinavian influences in American works. These pieces used as subject matter Norse mythology, various animals and "super" animals, geometric shapes, and well as Biblical themes.

The tapestries varied from the majority of the more professional pieces in the use of the motif, for their subject matter was very stylized. The edges of the figures were usually straight, tending towards the geometrical, which subtly complemented the color in the piece (the straight edges made the color change more noticeable).

It was this stylization which lent itself so well to use in all areas of Scandinavian fabric decoration. The geometric lines allowed the same patterns to be chosen for most fabric techniques whether knit, crochet, embroidered, or woven (double weave, tapestry, overshot, or laid-in) into a piece. Thus the same basic motifs appear in varied ways again and again on all types of fabrics. Commonly used geometric motifs were the rose (which looked like an eight-pointed star), the star, triangle, diamond, cross, and the square and its six- and eight-sided relatives. Steps of color were combined in many of these motifs as well as the use of what the author has termed a speckle, a spotted or dotted effect which carries the eye over the
piece and reduces the contrast between the background and the area of pattern.

The subject matter for the figural pieces arose from many different sources: religion, folk tales, and unusual happenings as well as the common occurrences. Many of the crewel embroidery pieces depicted stylized floral designs using the needle to "paint" the traditional rosemaling on fabric.

Common motifs were usually simplified into basic geometric shapes. An object, such as the rose, since it was repeated intensively from generation to generation, entirely lost its original form. Most stylized figures, however, simply lost their original identity but not their form. After the immigrants had settled, the tendency was to adopt the American culture which was growing up around them allowing the forms and colors of many of the Scandinavian fabrics to be misunderstood and eventually forgotten. The Norwegian and Swedish designs were partially replaced by those of their adopted culture. It must be remembered, however, that the American cultural heritage is composed of all the sub-cultures arising from the many and varied origins of its populace. Thus Sweden and Norway have had their fair share of input into the web of American life and culture. Supplemental to this we must also take into account the unconscious propensity of immigrants to continue in the directions of their forefathers.

In general it may be concluded from the author's study that Swedish and Norwegian immigrant pieces were very similar. The resources the immigrants had when settling in the Midwest were much the same, sheep for wool and flaxseed for linen. Therefore, with similar cultural backgrounds the immigrant textiles could vary little. There was as much difference between
Norwegian and Swedish settlements as there was between the two Norwegian and the Swedish ones themselves. The only difference which was noticeable to any extent was that which existed between the religious dissenters and the economically motivated colonies. The pieces from the Janssonites were simpler in style and decoration than the pieces observed in the other communities studied.

It should be noted that the Norwegian and Swedish people were some of the first immigrants to seek American citizenship and adapt to the American way of life. To survive on the American frontier, the immigrants were forced to adjust their accustomed ways of living to fit their new environments. Often this was accomplished by adopting the procedures and customs of the previously established American pioneer.
The original pieces woven by the author were designed, using as inspiration, the motifs, colors, techniques, and yarns gleaned from her library research and excursions. Each area by itself could have been a separate unit of study, but the author chose instead to incorporate several of the major areas. The various techniques and motifs previously discussed gave her an almost endless list of ideas for pieces. Those which seemed most promising at the time were developed into the author's creative work. The vast majority of the design ideas has been recorded for possible weaving inspiration at a future date. All the pieces designed and constructed used one or more of the general categories (patterns, colors, yarns, and techniques) as a starting point for the drafting process.

Several of the pieces were inspired by Norse legends. These include "Bif-rost," "Loki," "Ygdrasil," and "Vingolf: Baggin's Womb Room." Slide #6 was influenced by the legend of Bif-rost. Bif-rost was the curved bridge which the gods crossed when traveling to and from Asgard and earth. The bridge was lined with flames which flickered at the base. This is why it is believed that the legend was based on the awe due to their primitive conception of the Aurora Borealis or Northern Lights. The fuzzy border of this phenomena suggested the design and technique for the rya piece entitled "Bif-rost."

Loki, one of the Norse gods who represented fire, was the mischief-maker and tempter. In later years he was corrupted by the giants and then aided in the destruction of Asgard, the home of the gods. The soft
sculptural depiction of this character was designed from descriptions found when reading tales of Norse Mythology (9, p. xxx).

"The tree of existence" (tree of life), always an ash tree, was known as "Ygdrasil" which provided and sustained all life, physical and spiritual. At the base of one of its roots dwelled the three Norns or Fates, Urd, "present"; Verdande, "past"; and Skuld, "future." They spun, at will, the fates of gods and men. The roots of this particular tree are spread through the special divisions of the worlds that fill the wide expanse of space, and the tree's branches were high above the city of the gods. The squirrel, Ratatosk, ran up and down the trunk and brought strife into the lives of the people of the time, while the hawk, Vedfolner, would perch in the top branches of Ygdrasil or fly the heavens to report to Odin, leader of the gods, any wrong doings observed on earth below. The wall hanging inspired by these tales was constructed using a variety of laid-in and hand techniques to depict the tree and the three Fates spinning their webs.

Vingolf, "abode of friends," was a structure erected by the Norse gods as a sanctuary for their friends. The original work based on this myth is a structure designed especially to serve as the abode for Bilbo Baggins, a feline friend, and thus the title, "Vingolf: Baggin's Womb Room."

The original inspiration for "Helofa Cloverleaf" came from observation of patterns formed by the arrangement of the characters in the runic form of writing. The lines of the word symbols were intertwined with each other going over and under a type of maze. The title was derived from the object with which it bears a striking resemblance, the highway cloverleaf.

Several of the original weavings capitalized on the typical color combinations of the Scandinavians. "Snow Blanket" uses the white on white
effect, while the colors in "Country Corn Flakes," "Norphy P. Tree," and "Ygdrasil" were influenced by the colors resulting from the natural dyes commonly used in Scandinavia.

The techniques used by the author typical of those used by the Scandinavian immigrants were crochet, double weave, rya, waffle weave, split tapestry, flamskvävad tapestry, soumak, and several variations of the twills. These were basic processes employed by the immigrants both in the "fatherland" and in their adopted home. The construction technique for each original work was developed from items viewed by the author at one of the museums. Each piece was designed to solve a different problem; sometimes this was in a new area and sometimes simply a new facet in an area in which she had previously worked. During the development of a fabric, the original plans often had to be altered because the material and construction technique would dictate a change in procedure from that which had been previously planned. For example, in "Pine Meadows" the traditional herringbone twill was used in combination with two contrasting tensions in the warp. "Country Corn Flakes" is woven with a tapestry border for a skirt rather than a wall hanging. Some pieces do follow methods of construction set down by the Scandinavian weavers in the last half of the previous century, such as "Norphy P. Tree," which used the flamskvävad tapestry technique. Others take a technique and adapt it for use in a special situation such as "Vingolf: Baggin's Womb Room," and "Helofa Cloverleaf." These were done using a single crochet stitch over a core for rigidity.

The author was somewhat limited in her choice of materials because an allergy to wool prevented her using that fiber which is the most common fiber for weaving in the Scandinavian countries. Instead she substituted
polyester and acrylic yarns with varying degrees of success. In some cases the acrylic yarns worked well, having the right amount of bulk and texture, but in pieces such as "Bif-rost" and "Loki" the natural wool fiber would have given a more pleasing, less artificial, effect. Cotton, linen, and novelty yarns as well as cloth strips and plastic wrap comprised her wefts. The warps were generally linen, although cotton and acrylic were used in some woven works. The acrylic was incorporated as warp in the color studies ("Frostbite," "Image," "Scape," and "Midnight Sun") and in the skirt, "Country Corn Flakes." The cotton was used in "Snow Blanket."

The colors selected for the author's works were often typical of the colors found in the Scandinavian pieces. The bright colors which were favored by the Norwegians and Swedes made it easier for the author to plan the work she wove or crocheted from the acrylic yarns. Generally the color combinations chosen were analogous or complementary.

Overall, the pieces are related only through their sources of inspiration. Each had its roots in the color, technique, pattern, and sometimes fiber of the Swedish and Norwegian textiles. The broad base which these fabrics provide gives almost unlimited freedom to the weaver.
SLIDE IDENTIFICATION

1. North Window - hanging
   10 x 31 inches, 25.4 x 78.74 centimeters
   Split Tapestry
   Linen, acrylic

2. Country Corn Flakes - skirt
   34 x 29 inches, 86.36 x 73.66 centimeters
   Twill body, tapestry border
   Acrylic

3. Snow Blanket - shawl
   31 x 84 inches, 78.4 x 213.36 centimeters
   Pointed twill derivative
   Cotton, acrylic

4. The Pine Meadows - curtains
   39 x 40 inches, 99.06 x 101.6 centimeters
   Herringbone twill, two tension warp-double beamed
   Linen, acrylic

5. Norphy P. Tree - hanging
   28 x 45 inches, 71.12 x 114.3 centimeters
   Flamskvävnad tapestry
   Linen, acrylic, cotton

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1The slides which accompany this thesis are available from the Media Resources and Microforms Department in the Library.
6. Bif-rost - hanging
   36 x 45 inches, 91.44 x 114.3 centimeters
   Rya, twill base
   Linen, acrylic

7. Loki - soft sculpture
   23 x 62 inches, 58.42 x 157.48 centimeters
   Doubleweave body, Rya, waffle weave, crochet
   Linen, acrylic, cotton

8. Helofa Cloverleaf - hanging
   54 x 54 inches, 137.16 x 137.16 centimeters
   Single crochet over core
   Polyester core, acrylic

9. Vingolf: Baggin's Womb Room - environment
   28 x 24 oval base x 78 inches, 71.12 x 60.96 oval base x 198.12 centimeters
   Single crochet over core, rya mat
   Jute core, acrylic

10. The Tulip Caper - hanging
   37 x 58 inches, 93.98 x 147.32 centimeters
   Waffle weave
   Acrylic
11. **Frostbite** - hanging  
   37 x 58 inches, 93.98 x 147.32 centimeters  
   Birdseye twill variation  
   Acrylic

12. **Image** - hanging  
   34 x 72 inches, 86.36 x 188.88 centimeters  
   Twill variations  
   Acrylic

13. **Scape** - hanging  
   34 x 56 inches, 86.36 x 142.24 centimeters  
   Herringbone twill in three variations  
   Acrylic

14. **Midnight Sun** - hanging  
   34 x 32 inches, 86.36 x 81.28 centimeters  
   Waffle weave  
   Acrylic

15. **Ygdrasil** - hanging  
   40 x 62 inches, 101.6 x 157.48 centimeters  
   Rya, soumac, satin, tabby, pick-up  
   Linen, cloth strips
SUMMARY

There is an increasing interest in the history and heritage of the populace of the United States due in part to the country's bicentennial birthday anniversary. Many people are taking a fresh look at the contributions of their ancestors. The author's Swedish grandmother immigrated to the United States in the early Twentieth Century and brought with her many textiles including some which had been woven by her grandmother. These textiles were often shown to the author as a child while visiting her grandmother. This early exposure to Swedish handweaving spawned an interest which has blossomed into a study of Scandinavian textiles. She visited four localities in Iowa, Illinois, and Minnesota where she was allowed to examine Swedish and Norwegian textiles for use of color, construction technique, fiber content, and motif or pattern. She found that the textiles differed very little from one community to the other except in a normal way and that perhaps a greater percentage of the more elaborate pieces had survived due to their decoration. Decorated fabrics were considered more precious than the everyday textile items. Many of those more treasured were stored in chests and trunks for future use and were thus preserved. She learned that the majority of the pieces in the museums had arrived in the United States years after the initial immigration, either brought back during visits to the homeland or sent here as gifts to friends or relatives. The prevailing patterns or motifs tended to be similar throughout the four museums. They were predominantly geometric in character using similar colors. This information is recorded in a table which follows. It gives a brief description of each piece.
The author designed and produced a body of original woven work which was influenced by those items imported by Scandinavian immigrants of the Nineteenth Century. Crocheting was used as well as weaving. The pieces are related by inspiration only as each has its own personality.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article item</th>
<th>Technique</th>
<th>Fiber warp, weft</th>
<th>Color(^a)</th>
<th>Pattern if any</th>
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<td></td>
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<td>specific category</td>
<td>basic-background</td>
<td>applied-decoration</td>
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<td>linen, linen</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>geometrics</td>
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<td>linen, linen</td>
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<td>8. belts</td>
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\(^a\)W-white, N-natural, Y-yellow, Go-gold, Or-orange, Pi-pink, R-red, Ru-rust, Ma-maroon, P-purple, B-blue, G-green, Br-brown, Gr-gray, Bl-black.
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<td>Navy 2G,2B,R,W,Y</td>
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<td>tabby</td>
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<td>21. coverlet Bishop Hill</td>
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<tr>
<td>22. coverlet Bishop Hill</td>
<td>twill</td>
<td>wool, wool</td>
<td>B,N,R</td>
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<tr>
<td>23. dressed manikin Minneapolis</td>
<td>tabby, fringe</td>
<td>(wool, linen, cotton)</td>
<td>Multi</td>
<td>ikat, plain</td>
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<td>24. dresser scarf Bishop Hill</td>
<td>tabby</td>
<td>cotton, wool</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>geometric</td>
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<td>25. gloves, scarf Decorah</td>
<td>knit</td>
<td>wool</td>
<td>B,G,Br,R</td>
<td>stripes</td>
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<td>26. handkerchief Bishop Hill</td>
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<td>floral, folk</td>
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<td>27. hand towel Bishop Hill</td>
<td>tabby</td>
<td>linen, linen</td>
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<td>lace border</td>
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<tr>
<td>28. hanging Minneapolis</td>
<td>rep weave</td>
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<td>48. quilt Bishop Hill</td>
<td>quilting</td>
<td>cotton, cotton</td>
<td>R, Y prints on W</td>
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<td>quilting</td>
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<td>B, R, W, Go</td>
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<td>B, Or, N, Br</td>
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<td>cotton, rag</td>
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GLOSSARY

aaklaer, åkle, or ålkær - N, weaving depicting a stylized geometrical pattern

bandgrind - N, hole and slot loom (or frame)

bandvävning med kort - S, card weaving

bandvävstol - S, band loom, inkle loom

billedvæv, billedvevnad - N, tapestry or picture weaving

bingning - S, weave, interlacing, binding

bohusväv - S, figured double weave, also called finnväv

bragd - N, weaves, hand laid, usually used in place of square tapestry weave

brikkevev - N, plate loom, card weaving

diamantbindning - S, diamond twill weave

dräll - S, two to four block overshot weave

dukagång - S, hand laid brocade, usually blue wool on white linen ground, inlay technique characterized by vertical stripes

firfletting - N, fringing

fiskbensmönster - S, herringbone twill

flamskvävnad - S, method of tapestry weaving in which adjoining color areas are joined by hatching

flensvevnaden - N, double weave, meaning to hang softly, also Finnish and Russian weaving

flossa - Sc, rya fabric, with cut loops

flåta - S, braid, plait

grindvev - N, overshot band weave, both ground and pattern warps used, weft generally hidden

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1Sc, Scandinavian, N, Norwegian, and S, Swedish.
halfkrabba, halvkrabba - S, inlay technique, pattern based on squares
halvrya - S, half rya, relief rya
hardangar - N, a type of embroidery using satin cross and stem stitch, cutwork and often lace
hemslöjd - S, homecraft movement, promotes weaving and supplies home weavers with new designs which keep to the characteristics of the different provinces
krabbasnår - S, inlay technique with pattern diagonal in character
kypert bindning - S, twill weave
munkabälte - S, monks belt
mönster - S, pattern or design
nock - S, pile, knot
nåle bindning - Sc, needle binding, knotless netting
pinnbandsspets - S, the fabric sprang when it shows the typical hole designs (spets-lace)
rosengäng - S, rosepath
rundväv - S, tube weave, circular weave
rya - S, soft pile fabric made by securing fill yarns in ground as weaving progressed, long pile
ryer - N, see rya
rysse vev - Sc, Russian weave, double weave
röllakan, rölakan - S, tapestry weave, interlocking of wefts between color groups, geometrical, also, meaning back cloth-back of chairs and walls
slojd - S, crafts, handiwork, arts and crafts
soumak, soumack - S, inlay technique characterized by back-stitching
spets - S, lace
sprang - net-like lace or fringe made by intertwining fixed vertical warps with each other
sprangling - S, refers to the process sprang, the open work effect produced
strikking - N, knitting
sangöverkast - S, coverlet, bedspread
tavlebragd - N, patch pattern or monks belt
uppstadjogn - N, refers to the warp-weighted loom
virka - S, crochet
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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