

SUE PAYNE – FIBER ARTS

I am a Textile Specialist for Conner Prairie which means I spin wool, dye wool with natural colors, weave cloth on a 200 year old barn loom and create blankets, coverlets and other historic pieces. Weaving on a loom is challenging in many ways although it can be as simple as interlacing over and under strips of paper or making pot holders on a little frame loom.

For example, there is math.

1. How many threads will I need and how long will they need to be? The piece will shrink when it comes off the loom.

2. How many threads per inch will I need to set the width of the piece?

3. How many threads per inch will I weave back and forth?

The loom itself has harnesses connected to foot treadles which move groups of threads up and down. That creates an opening, called a shed, which the shuttle holding the weaving thread can be passed

through.

I like to use cotton or wool yarn for the warp: threads that run from back to front on the loom. Silk is used for the weft: the threads that are woven in back and forth.

The silk comes from the cocoons the silkworms wrap themselves up in to become moths. The cocoons need to be stretched out on a form the size of a hankie then they can be dyed beautiful colors.

The combination of the threads makes a fabric that is lightweight, comfortable, and soft, and can be worn year-round.

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