

Whitework bookmark

FOR THE QUEEN'S TREASURE CHEST

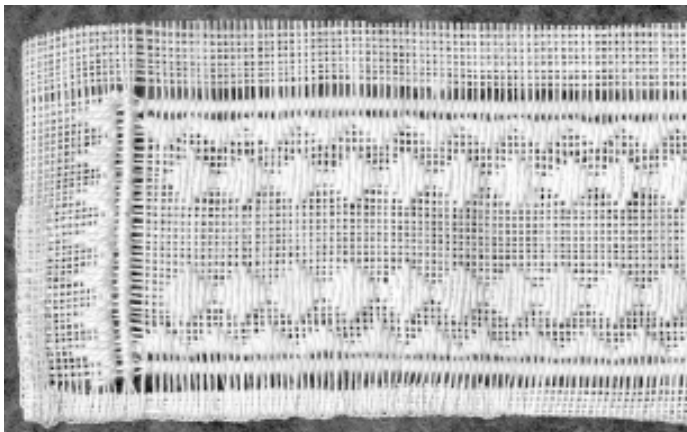
Materials

28-count linen,
about 3 x 11
inches

10 to 15 yards
DMC size 8
white perle
cotton

White sewing
thread (not
included)

Blunt-pointed
tapestry needle, approx size 24



Layout and hemming

Since this is a lightweight linen that is prone to fraying, you may want to hem this piece before you embroider it, rather than afterward.

Fold or "pinch" the piece of linen in half lengthwise to find the center. Count 21 threads out from the center in one direction and carefully pull out the 22nd thread, the whole length of the bookmark. Repeat to the other side of the center. Count about 20 threads in from each end and pull a crosswise thread. These mark the edges of your embroidery. If you prefer, you can run a light colored contrasting thread along these lines rather than pulling a thread completely out.

For the side hems, carefully fold the strip of linen that is outside the pulled or marked area in half. (A little gluestick may help it stay in place.) Fold in the same size hem on each end. Work a buttonhole stitch all the way around in ordinary white sewing thread, taking a stitch between each 2 or 3 threads of the linen, reaching from the pulled thread to the folded edge (see diagram on back). Pull the stitches snug, but not so tightly as to move any threads of the linen. This makes a thin, but sturdy, hem. (continued →)

Embroidery

Starting at one side, take the first three threads inside the pulled thread and whip them tightly together with pearl cotton, taking a stitch between each thread of the linen. These are the only stitches in this project that you should pull tight enough that the threads of the linen are moved close together. Continue this "frame" around all four sides of the bookmark. Hide the ends of your thread as well as you can inside the stitching, so the bookmark will be reversible.

Choose one or more of the counted-thread satin-stitch patterns on the back of this page and work the center of the bookmark as you prefer. (Simple patterns are just fine! The back includes a couple of examples.) Remember NOT to pull your stitches too tight!

In the space at each end between the frame and the hem, work a row of "crown points" as in the diagram on the back of this page..

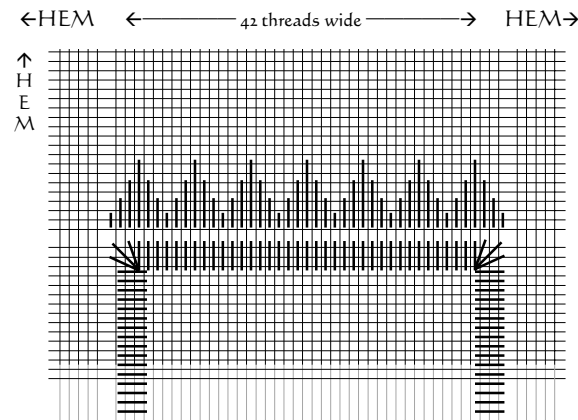
Sources

German whitework, or "Opus Teutonicum" to give its Latin name, was a popular style of embroidery in the Germanic principalities in the 13th and 14th centuries. It was worked in white linen thread (with occasional areas in color) on very fine white linen fabrics -- 55 to 60 threads to the inch.

We see it used mostly for church linens, especially for the white veils hung in the church in front of the altar during Lent. Light shone through these veils, highlighting the complex patterns of the embroidery. It was also used for altar cloths, and may have been used for table linens or curtains in homes as well, or even for collars, cuffs and borders on linen clothing, though there don't seem to be surviving examples.

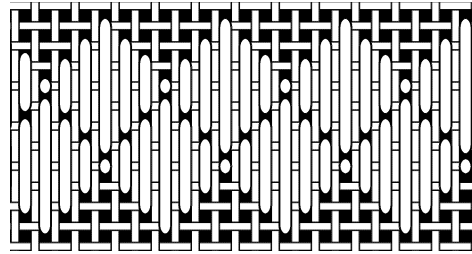
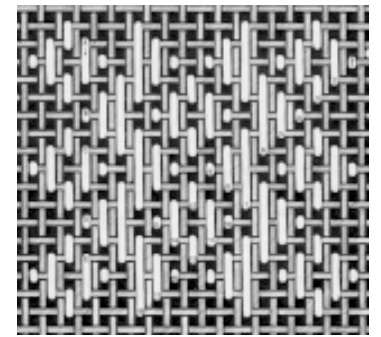
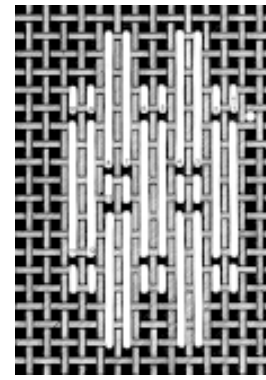
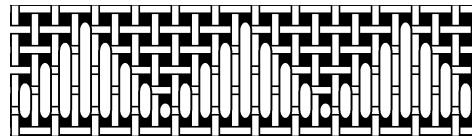
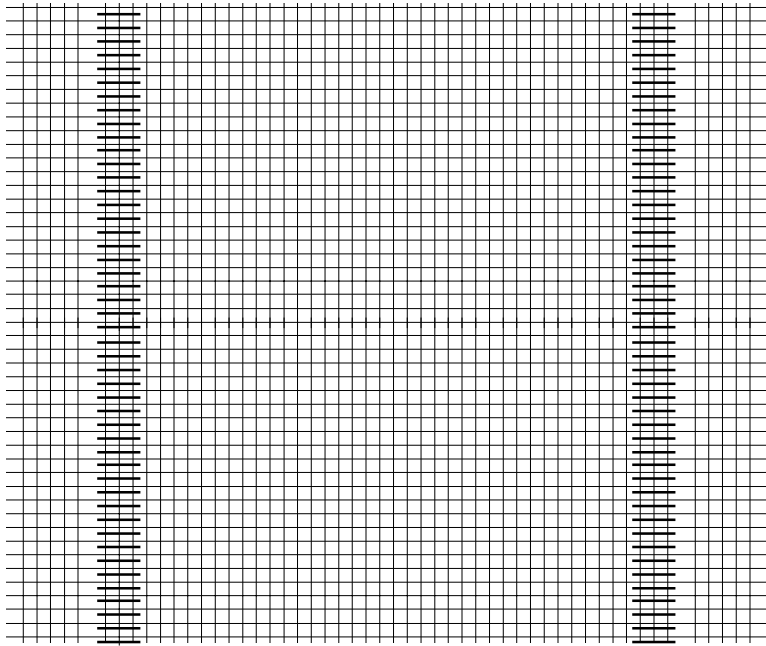
These stitch patterns were used as fillings for borders, bird and animal figures, and scenes from the Bible or the lives of saints. Flat areas of the figures were marked off and filled with stitch patterns to indicate different textures or parts. The finished figures or borders were often out-lined with blue or brown silk after they were worked. —

BOOKMARK LAYOUT



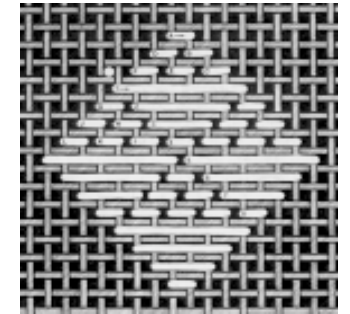
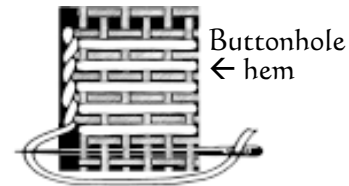
The Needleworkers Guild of the Kingdom of the West (SCA)

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Some patterns to try: from a few simple ones to start with, to some more complex. There are many more; or invent your own!

← And a bit of graph paper to doodle with....

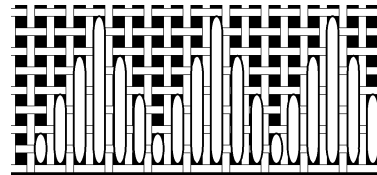


Bibliography

Schuette, Marie, & Sigrid Mueller-Christensen, *A Pictorial History of Embroidery*. 1963, Prager Publishers, Inc. n New York (no ISBN)

Lantz, Sherlee, & Maggie Lane, *A Pageant of Pattern for Needlepoint Canvas*, 1973, Atheneum, New York. ISBN 0-689-10571-1. (Source of the stitch diagrams on this page.)

At right, from the Art Institute of Chicago, an example of *Opus Teutonicum* using color as well as white textures. This is a section of a Lenten church hanging showing the Last Supper with Christ and his disciples.



"Crown points" top & bottom border ↑

