

Family Craft Workshop

Woman's Projects Become 'Family Heirlooms'

By NANCY DAILEY
For The Muncie Star

Family heirlooms make up the vast majority of needlework projects assembled by rural Yorktown resident Norma Robbins. Most of her work is given away to relatives, especially children and grandchildren.

"As a child, I watched both my mother and father work on tatting a baby cap," she says. "I picked up my knowledge by watching them work."

Tatting is a beautiful form of needlework and not a widely practiced art. "I like tatting the best of all my needlework," says Mrs. Robbins, "because it is the most challenging. Because I remember my parents tatting, I edged their picture with a tatted border." The picture hangs in the Robbins' living room.

She also brought out several tatted white baby caps for this writer's viewing. Patterns varied from scallops to geometric designs. Her work is done on several shuttles, including a ceramic shuttle designed and made by Mrs. Robbins' sister in California.

At this year's Lions Delaware County Fair, she exhibited a crocheted afghan featuring an original design. Mrs. Robbins duplicated the Indiana flag and crocheted a navy afghan with gold detailing. It was worked in single crochet with reverse crochet used around the edge. She cross-

stitched in yarn part of the design on the afghan, and whipstitched other pieces into place.

"One of my nephews is an Indiana State policeman, and he had given me a small Indiana flag which I used as a pattern," she explained. "I wondered if I could do it. I drew the pattern on a large piece of cardboard before I began work. It took me several months to finish."

A similar afghan crocheted by Mrs. Robbins is a replica of an American flag. "I found that pattern in a *Workbasket* magazine the year of the Bicentennial."

She has been exhibiting at the county fair for six years. "Before that time, I never considered my work good enough to enter," she added modestly. The majority of her ribbons are blues with a few reds accumulated during the years of competition. Among her other entries this year were a plaid knitted afghan and a crocheted basket of flowers against a pink and white-checked gingham background with a real preserved butterfly mounted above the flower basket.

She recalled that at the age of 14, she knitted her first sweater. "I made the sweater without a pattern, and then I had to wear it, of course," she chuckled. "I still make almost all my own clothes, and I like to add my tatting to doilies and pillowcases, towels and washcloths."

One of her future goals is to provide tatting for the wedding dress of granddaughter Kelly Rob-

bins, a Cowan High School student. "Kelly is only 16, so I have some time to get it done," she said.

In June, Mrs. Robbins retired from Zayre's Department Store in the Meadows where she had worked in the fabric department for 14 years. Her husband, Walter, recently retired from Chevrolet-Muncie.

In the garage, the couple are working on an 11-room dollhouse. Robbins made all the window frames and his own woodwork, using plexiglass for the windows. The house opens both in front and back and will be wired for electricity. They hope to enter it in the miniatures category at next year's fair.

Robbins also made his wife an afghan rack which she uses to display several coverlets, including one made by her mother and another entered in a yarn company's design competition.

August is the month many groups are gearing up production for fall and winter craft bazaars. If you would like news of your club or organization's craft work this year, please send general information, plus the name and telephone number of a contact person, to this columnist, The Muncie Star, P.O. Box 2408, Muncie, 47302. We plan to feature bazaar news throughout the fall months.



KEEPSAKES — Norma Robbins designed her own pattern for the afghan featuring an Indiana flag which she entered in this year's fair. She also enjoys tatting, and edged her parents' picture with a tatted border. (Star Photos)

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