

Community Outreach Committee

Tool Kit for Demonstrations / Workshops. OHCG Website: www.ohcg.org

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Introduction

The OHCG was formed in 1966 by a group of women who wanted to promote the art and craft of traditional rug hooking across communities in Ontario. This continues to be the goal of the OHCG today and our Newsletter attests to the fact that our members have been very active in sharing their love of rug hooking in their local communities.

This “Tool Kit” has been developed to assist members when they are giving demonstrations or setting up workshops in their communities. What you take from the kit will depend on the setting you find yourself in such as giving a talk and demonstration in your local library or going to the local fair and being available for people to ask you questions as you hook. Take what you need from the Tool Kit and along with sharing your love of rug hooking, you are also promoting membership in the OHCG.

Demonstrators must also be aware that many of the people who come to demonstrations today are involved with more than one craft and bring a wealth of experience with them. We need to assure potential hookers that they can start hooking with what interests them and that the OHCG has a large group of certified teachers who are available to teach classes and help them fulfill their wishes.

All OHCG members doing demonstrations / workshops should be able to speak to the craft as a whole and be able to advise potential new hookers on how to get started and find branches and teachers in their area. Our website (www.ohcg.org) is a valuable resource so please use it to identify Area Reps and certified teachers in your region. **Members doing demonstrations or workshops should also take membership forms with them to promote membership in the OHCG.**

The Tool Kit is made up of information about :

1. The history of rug hooking: We need to be able to tell people how the craft started and be able to talk about the different types of hooked rugs that have evolved over time, particularly the Grenfell mats that are specific to Canada.
2. The materials used: Each person doing a demonstration should be able to speak to the types of backings and types of wool used today.
3. The history of the OHCG: We need to be able to address the benefits of belonging to the OHCG.
4. How to set up demonstrations: this is an overview or recommendation on how to set up demonstrations and outlines the materials you should have on hand.

1. The History of Rug Hooking

Traditional Rug Hooking has been described as “Quite likely the oldest art form introduced to our continent by European settlement”. (Conrad: Rescued From Oblivion 2010.)

Rug hooking is a very old craft, brought to Acadia / Canada by the early settlers arriving from England and Scotland. According to an article in the New Glasgow paper of 1934, rug hooking was believed to have started in Nova Scotia in the early days of immigrants coming to the new world for a better life. It was also believed that sailors on the sailing vessels bringing new immigrants to the country also hooked rugs to pass time on the long journeys across the ocean.

These people came with little in the way of personal possessions or household goods. Their living accommodation was usually log cabins or wooden houses with little to keep them warm. Women hooked mats or rugs to brighten the home, keep the cold out and keep the floors warm and early rugs known as ‘Primitives’ reflected the home life of the hooker. The women hooked what they saw in their environment.

Traditional rug hooking started with scraps of material and potato sacks or feed bags were used for backing. Since then, the craft has evolved and today, according

to Conrad, “the hooked rug is likely the only art / craft form that was designed to be walked on” (pg. 82).

Bluenose rugs - In 1892, John A. Garrett of New Glasgow, Nova Scotia developed the largest rug pattern factory in the world (Conrad p.17). These patterns were highly popular among rug hookers and in time, Garrett began colour stamping the patterns and recycled material was used to provide colour to the hooked piece. These patterns were sold by retail outlets such as Eaton’s, Simpsons and Stedman’s and could be purchased for \$7.00.

Grenfell Mats

The Grenfell Mission was founded in 1865 by Dr. Grenfell, a medical missionary stationed in the area of St. Anthony, Newfoundland. Dr. Grenfell and the mission he established provided medical care to the inhabitants of the small fishing villages along the Newfoundland and Labrador coasts.

Dr. Grenfell believed that each community should be as self-sufficient as possible and as a result, a “cottage industry” developed that resulted in the production of crafts of which mat making was one.

Women had already been making mats long before Dr. Grenfell arrived however, they were made mainly for personal use. The women used bold colours in their mats, and developed their own distinctive patterns both geometric and floral.

Once the Grenfell Mission became involved, the patterns became standardized along with the colour planning and women were offered a financial incentive to produce mats for sale to the public. The mats were distinctive in that they were hooked with rayon and silk stockings, the hooking was done in a straight horizontal line and every hole on the background had to be used.

Eventually, kits were prepared for the women and when they picked up a new kit, the pattern often had been colour coded for them and the materials they were provided with were weighed and a record was kept of what each woman had been given. When the finished mat was returned, it was weighed to ensure that all the materials that had been given out were used in the mat. A woman could earn between \$3.00 and \$10.00 and payment was usually taken in the form of clothing vouchers. Most of the mats that were made were sold in the eastern United States.

The mat making industry was highly successful until the 1930’s when it became difficult to obtain silk and rayon stockings required to make the mats.

2. Materials Used for Hooking

Wools

Women didn't have access to a lot of material so were forced to use whatever was at hand. Worn out clothing and blankets were put to good use by being hooked into rugs. Much of the used clothing would have been wool and various other fibres known as reclaimed wool. Many hookers still look to Thrift Stores looking for wool and wool blends with which to hook.

If you plan to put your hooked piece on the floor, 100 % wool is recommended as it is durable and will last for many years. A variety of wools are available from the various vendors and most of the wool is dyed by the vendor. There are specialty dyed wools such as spot dyes, dip dyes, casserole dyes and wool swatches as well textured wools. The craft has evolved into a mixed media format and today, you can hook with anything you can pull through the backing such as nylons, sari silk, yarn, leather and T- shirts materials.

Backings

Each backing has its advantages and disadvantages. The most commonly used backings are burlap and linen. Linen is more durable than burlap and more expensive but it is not as rough on your hands. Scottish burlap is known for its quality and even weave. Monk's cloth and Rug warp made from cotton fibre can also be used as backings.

3. History of the OHCG

This information comes from a talk that Jayne Nevins gave about the craft of rug hooking. The benefits of belonging to the OGCH are outlined and we must emphasize this to the members of our branches who have not joined the OHCG.

The OHCG was founded in 1966 and today, we have over a 1000 members across Canada and the United States. We have 70 branches throughout Ontario and we have 60 certified teachers who are available to teach rug hooking in their communities and at rug hooking schools throughout Canada, the United States and Internationally.

Benefits of Belonging to the OHCG

- Provides members with a quarterly magazine of rug hooking news and photos

- Provides a link to the world of Textile Art / Craft
- Provides a link to a province wide rug hooking community.
- OHCG has a Facebook link
- Provides for an annual business meeting and conference for its members
- The Annual provides opportunity to display rugs hooked by our members and have their work adjudicated by their peers.
- Provides a rug hooking teacher accreditation program
- Provides a rug hooking school for those who wish to expand their knowledge and learn new hooking techniques.
- Provide information about rug hooking suppliers.

Support and Collaboration

- We are members of Craft Ontario who support our organization by supplying an award for one of the judging categories
- Craft Ontario can provide a venue for our members to display and sell their hooked pieces. The OHCG encourages members to attend the Craft Council shop and events
- We are members of the Textile Museum of Canada where we demonstrate hooking, offer classes and display our rugs
- Our teachers teach at rug hooking schools throughout the province and in the United States and Europe
- Our members hook duplicate rugs for museums who wish to preserve antique rugs, donate rugs to charities for fund raising, and demonstrate at fairs, libraries, seniors' centres. We also hooked 41 Canadian themed rugs for the 2015 Pan Am games and Para Pan Am Games.

Schools

- The OHCG sponsors a school for rug hooking in the Fall and Regional workshops are planned held in various regions of the province.

Branches: There is a list of the Branches and Area Reps on our website

Teachers/ vendors: There is a list of certified OHCG teachers and their bios on the website.

Vendors: Can provide supplies and their contact information is available on the internet.

4. Planning for Demonstrations / Workshops

Below are suggestions to assist members of your branch when participating in demonstrations and holding workshops. ATHA also has a kit that branches can request.

a. Demonstrating to School-age Children and Youth (Elementary to Secondary)

Setting – where the young people have the opportunity to try different crafts moving from one station to another.

- Have two or three hoops and hooks available with backing and lots of brightly coloured worms (suggested size of worms - #6)
- Set up chairs around the table so that the young people can be encouraged to sit-down and try their hand at hooking
- In simple terms, explain how to pull up an end, a loop, and let them freely carry on
- Children will be accompanied by an adult who may also wish to try hooking

It is recommended to have the following on hand:

- Some finished pieces and a piece in progress
- Information on your branch and the OHCG for the adults

b. Number of Demonstrators

Having two demonstrators is optimal. However the number of demonstrators is dependent on the number of young people expected and the space allotted

c. Demonstrating to Adults

Setting – local fairs, exhibits, National Rug Hooking Day

- This may be an opportunity for members to come and hook while also demonstrating the craft.
- It is recommended that the space and chair be set-up facing out to the approach area so the lead demonstrator is clearly visible and accessible.
- Have hoops and hooks with backing and brightly coloured worms available. (suggested size of worms – #6)

It is recommended to have the following on hand:

- Some finished pieces and a piece in progress
- Information on your branch, the OHCG, local teacher in your area and where resources can be found
- A “sign-up” sheet for those who would like to know more about hooking and who might be interested in a class offered by your branch

d. A Workshop for Adults: One full day or two half-days

Setting – any location which is willing to host a rug hooking workshop. A location where your branch has recently had a show of their rugs, Museum, Art Gallery, Senior Centre, partnering with a local art council. It is also possible to advertise and host your own workshop at your meeting location.

Time: six to six and one-half hours

Number of Participants: this is dependent on the number of volunteer instructors and location space. The lead instructor is included in the ratio.

Sample Advertisement for your Class

Traditional Rug Hooking

Date and Time of Class, Location

“In this introduction to rug hooking, participants will learn how to "pull loops" to hook the design and how to finish your hooked piece. Discussion will include a brief history of rug hooking, colour planning, cutting wool and sources of materials for future projects. The course fee includes a kit with all necessary materials to hook and complete the project, as well as handouts. Hoops and hooks will be supplied for the class and will be available for purchase. A sample of the design we will hook is available at Location of Class. Instructors are members of the Branch Name and the Ontario Hooking Craft Guild.”.

Materials to have on hand: Hoops, Hooks, Resource Books (see listing below), Rug Hooking Magazines, OHCG Magazines, Hooked rugs, and works in progress.

Kit: What to include

- Colour picture of finished piece (finished piece – small – under 10”)

- Backing with design* with the finishing stitching in place
- Cut wool to complete the design (#6 cut)
- Cording for finishing (if that is the selected choice)
- Whipping yarn (if that is the selected choice)

***It is important to remember that Free Patterns in the Rug Hooking magazines and books are not meant to be copied several times or used for instructional purposes. If wanting to use someone's design, please seek permission.**

A Sample Agenda for the Day

Traditional Rug Hooking

Location, Date and Times of Class

- Welcome and Introductions – All Volunteer Instructors
- Participants introduce themselves and answer the question – what experience do you have with hooking – Volunteer Instructor
- Format of the Class – explanation – Lead Instructor
- Brief History – Volunteer Instructor
- Let's Hook – Lead Instructor
 - Contents of Kit
 - Backing and Wool/Other Materials
 - Putting Linen on Hoop/Holding Hook, etc.
 - Demonstration of Hooking
 - Let's Begin – What should I hook first?

Throughout the afternoon/day, assistance from All Instructors

- Hoops (price) and Hooks (price) available for purchase – Volunteer Instructor
- How to Steam Press your Hooking – Volunteer Instructor
- Colourful Wool – Volunteer Instructor
- Demonstration of Cutting Wool (Fraser cutter) – Volunteer Instructor
- Finishing Demonstration (Whipping Over Cording (roll-forward method) or your method of choice) – Lead Instructor
- Information Sharing –Local branch and the OHCG – Volunteer Instructor

- Invitation to join your branch at an upcoming meeting where they can continue to work on their project with assistance – Lead Instructor

For a two-day workshop, items 8-12 were accomplished on the second day. Participants were asked to bring a sewing needle, thread, and a darning needle. For a full day workshop, it is recommended that items 8-12 be completed in the afternoon.

- Provide the name, email address and telephone number of the Lead Instructor so that participants can contact someone if help or advice is needed.
- Ask participants to give you their names, email addresses and telephone numbers so that you can contact them for invitations to meetings, events, etc.
- Lead instructors should also recommend opportunities for further learning from teachers, the OHCG School, regional workshops and the Annual.
- Hand-outs included the Agenda for the Day, Steaming your Rug, Where to find resources for future projects, and Finishing Your Rug.
- Have a finishing sampler on hand
- Volunteer Instructors should bring their hooking and hook with the participants.

How to Get Started

For a branch to run a workshop, they should purchase hoops, hooks, linen backing, and wool for the workshop. Hoops and hooks were available for sale to participants after the class if they wished to purchase them. The Colour picture, photocopying, and cording were donated by the volunteer instructors and all proceeds including the instructor fee were donated to the branch.

How to determine the cost of a workshop

Cost / person:

- Cost of the kit
- Cost of photocopying of handouts
- Instructor Fee if any
- Location fee

How to Involve More Members in a Workshop

Not everyone will want to be a volunteer instructor. However, members can be involved in drawing the design on the backing, cutting wool, preparing the kits, and sharing their worms for demonstrations.

Publications Used / Sourced.

1. Conrad, Suzanne and Hugh: Rescued From Oblivion
AuthorHouse 2010
2. Kent, William Winthrop: Rare Hooked Rugs
The Pond-Ekberg Co. 1941
3. Fitzpatrick, Deanne, Hook Me a Story
Nimbus Publishing Ltd. 1999
4. Miller, Kris, Introduction to Rug Hooking , A Beginners Guide to Tools, Techniques and Materials
Stackpole Books 2015
5. Shepard, Gene, How to Hook,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?=-JVCaRxQ-jo>
6. Boissinot, Anne, et al, Finishing Hooked Rugs, Favorite Techniques from the Experts; Stackpole Books 2013
7. Publication from the Grenfell House Museum, St. Anthony , Newfoundland