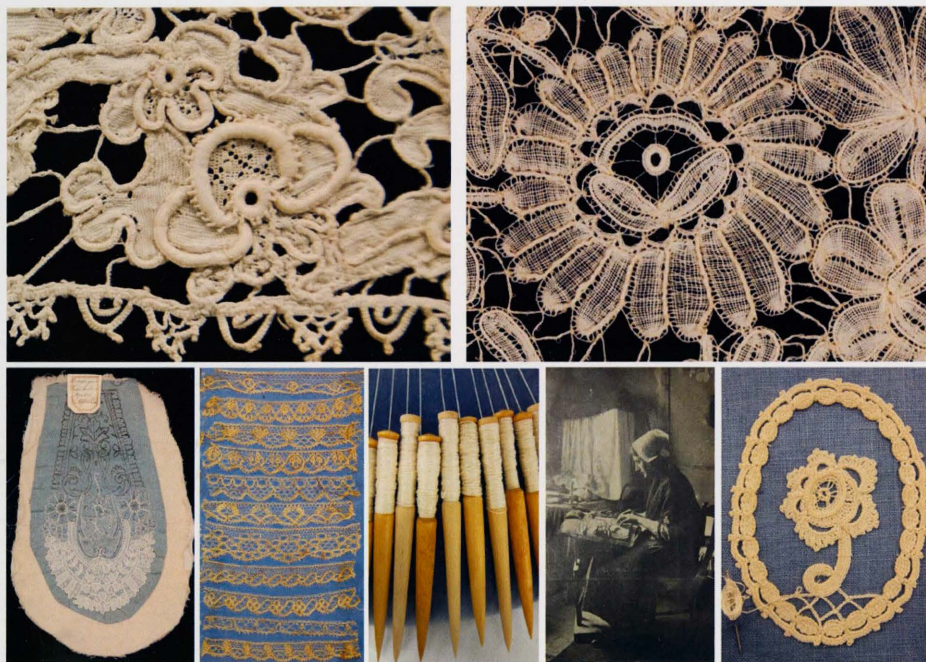


THE INTRICATE WEB

Lacemaking, Trade, and Tradition



August 30, 2013-May 16, 2014
The Avenir Museum of Design and Merchandising
Colorado State University
Fort Collins, CO

The Intricate Web: Lacemaking, Trade, and Tradition

...lace has survived for three centuries with a fragile confidence whose secret is known to it alone."

Marie Risselin-Steenbrugen

Lacemaking is an art. The lacemaker uses simple thread or fabric to create a web that is ethereal and mysterious. It is a web of contrasts – one time gossamer and light, another dense and heavy. Through the centuries, lace has been coveted and condemned, copied and imitated, smuggled and saved over and over again. The history and tradition – the journey of lace – is as rich as the lace itself.

The Intricate Web exhibit traces the history and tradition of lace as a textile embellishment and trade commodity, with a focus on traditional lacemaking techniques, its use, and the history and importance of lace in the European and North American textile trade. Over 100 pieces of lace illustrate all of the major hand- and machine-made types of lace—bobbin, needle, and embroidered laces, crochet and Irish crochet, tape and Battenberg laces, tatting, hairpin lace, teneriffe, netting, and knitting. Lacemaking tools, equipment, accessories, sample books, and references are also featured.

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Special thanks to Dr. Bruce P. Hellmann and Dr. Margaret A. Hellmann.

The Avenir Museum of Design and Merchandising would like to thank the following individuals for assistance with the exhibit:

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This exhibit was funded in part by contributions from:

International Organization of Lace, Inc.
Lilla B. Morgan Fund
Drs. Thomas and Jo Ann Eurell
Avenir Exhibition Education Programming Endowment Fund

Text: Dr. Jo Ann Eurell and Dr. Susan J. Torntore

Photography: Dr. Jo Ann Eurell unless otherwise noted.

Cover: Gros Point de Vense, Duchesse, Point de Gaze, Point ground bobbin laces, Lace bobbins, Lacemaker image, Irish Crochet from the Hellmann Collection.

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What is Lace?

Ornaments of fine thread curiously woven

—definition of lace by Samuel Johnson
A Dictionary of the English Language, 1755

A delicate, openwork fabric made entirely by the laceworker by looping, interlacing, braiding or twisting one or more threads of flax, cotton, silk, gold or silver, wool or other filament. It is distinguished from other forms of handwork such as embroidery and drawn work by not having a woven material as its basis. While it includes such openwork fabrics as those made by crocheting, knitting, knotting and tatting, its most important types are those made with a needle on a parchment pattern with variations of the buttonhole stitch, and those made with bobbins on a pillow

—definition of lace by Ruth Payne Hellmann
A Brief History of Lace, 1973

Defining Lace

In a broad sense, lace is a fabric or textile with holes in it. The holes are a defining part of the structure of lace. Threads surrounding the holes are manipulated to create a design. How the threads are manipulated is the technique of the lace—is it made from only thread or from a combination of thread and a ground fabric or net? Is a needle, shuttle, hook, or a set of bobbins used to manipulate the threads? Are the stitches simple or complex? Is the work done by hand or machine? Lace is also defined by design which varies from geometric to floral or pictorial. Many complex factors come together to create an intricate web.

Identifying Lace

As you will see in this exhibition, lace originating in different lacemaking centers has been widely imitated and transformed to create changing identities throughout history. The three major distinguishing characteristics that are used to identify specific types of lace are **the technique** (bobbin, needle, embroidered, etc.), **the design or pattern** (types of motifs, curvilinear or angular, open or dense, light or heavy, flat or dimensional, etc.), and **the type of ground** (mesh, bars or brides, picots, filling stitches, etc.). Although certain laces are named based on techniques that were developed in a given town or country, it is difficult to say that a lace piece was actually made in that location because lacemakers often migrated. After the beginning of the nineteenth century, the structure of lace also needs to be closely examined to determine if it is hand- or machine-made.

Ruth Payne Hellmann

Ruth Payne Hellmann (1912-1999) had a successful career as a chemist and science librarian, but her lifelong passion was lace and lacemaking. Ms. Hellmann's lacemaking talents were recognized nationally in the USA, and she received several awards for design and execution of her pieces. She volunteered as the assistant to the curator of the textiles department at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York for many years. Ms. Hellmann was responsible for identifying, cataloging and arranging the lace in the museum's collection, one of the largest lace collections in the world. Her personal collection, consisting of lace samples and smaller pieces such as collars, doilies, handkerchiefs, and other items, reflects her scholarly interest in lace. Ms. Hellmann also collected sample books, lacemaking pillows, tools, and books on lace. Donated to CSU in 2000, Hellmann bequeathed her collection to CSU because she wanted it to be used as for study and research by others as it had been for her. Many of the laces in this exhibit are from the Hellmann collection.





Lace Created by Ruth Payne Hellmann

This prize-winning crochet piece won the National Crochet Contest sponsored by the National Needlecraft Bureau in 1950.

The Origin and History of Lacemaking

Lace structures such as nets, bags and fringes are traced to the river people who lived in the Indus valley (Pakistan today) around 3500 BC. Textiles spread via the trade routes into Europe and beyond. Spain, Italy, France and Belgium have all claimed the honor of the origin of lace.

Lace design evolved with fashion over the years. Early laces for clothing of the sixteenth century followed the embroidery tradition. Threads were pulled or drawn aside to create openwork in fabrics. The designs were geometric and the embroidered laces were worn as elaborate ruffs, trims, or cuffs. Later, Punto in Aria ("stitches in air") laces were made with needle and thread only, abandoning the use of fabric within the lace. The elaborate ruff gave way to a collar supported on a framework, and lace made of precious metals became popular as a sign of wealth.

In the early eighteenth century, there was a very high demand for all types of lace. Economic conditions had improved and laws that prohibited the wearing of lace were repealed. The light and airy Flemish laces gained popularity over the heavier Italian lace. Bright colors dominated the clothing in the first part of the century and the light-colored laces helped tone down the intense colors. Women began to wear more lace than men as femininity gained a foothold. Lappets and other head pieces were made entirely of lace. Elaborate ladies' ruffles, called *engageantes*, were worn in multiple layers. Lace appeared on underwear and dressing gowns later in the century. Men's fashion changed from large collars to cravats of fine lace worn with matching cuffs. Late in the century, the political upheaval of the French Revolution caused many lacemakers to lose their lives. The popularity of lace began to decline and lace fell from fashion.

Napoleon I wasted no time in putting French lacemakers back to work in the early nineteenth century. He required both men and women to wear lace when attending court. But fashion trended toward more somber woolen clothing, and lace disappeared entirely from men's clothing. However, lace did return to women's fashion. Alençon needle lace and diaphanous Blonde bobbin lace became popular as overlays or wide edgings on full skirts. Black silk Chantilly lace became a fashion standard. Large shawls, skirts, fans and parasols were very popular, especially during the Victorian era toward the end of the century. Lacemaking saved the lives of many people during the great famine in Ireland in 1846. But the handmade lace industry was doomed. Lacemaking machines were invented and by the end of the century, machine lace was faster to make and less expensive.

In the twentieth century, old laces became a collector's item. Lace and embroidery were important elements of many significant textile collections. Soldiers brought gifts of lace home to the USA after World War I, but the Second World War put an end to the handmade lace industry of Europe. Lace cycled in the world of couture fashion – popular one day but not the next.

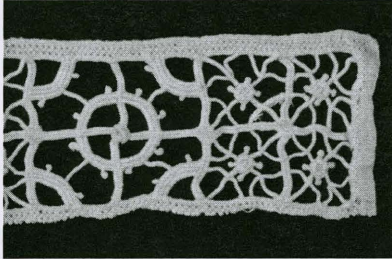
Today, lace is studied and made by a few lacemakers around the world who continue to pursue the art. Historical laces are analyzed and conserved. New laces are invented and the intricate web of thread continues the tradition of enchantment and mystery.

The Early History of Lace



Embroidered laces are made with a needle and thread and net or fabric. Reticella was created in Renaissance Italy in the late fifteenth century and is one of the earliest forms of lace. The lace is a form of embroidered cutwork or drawnwork, in which square holes were cut in linen fabric. Open spaces were filled with guide threads and then covered with buttonhole and needlepoint stitches to create the lace design.

Reticella, square, circa mid-late nineteenth century, (Avenir 2009.0183a).



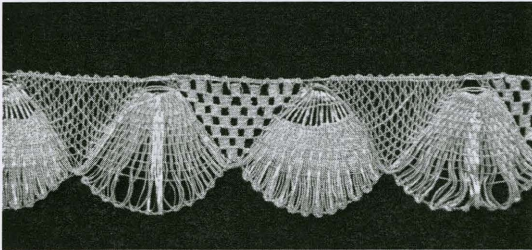
Reticella, insertion, seventeenth century, (Avenir 2009.0178).

The next stage of early lace was called Punto in Aria or “stiches in air,” referring to the process of making needle lace designs completely removed from a ground fabric.

Metal Lace

Precious metals were used to make lace as early as the fourteenth century. Lace was made from gold and silver drawn wire in Genoa. Later, men wore metal lace as an expression of wealth. Henry III of France (r. 1574-1589) was reported to have worn “4,000 yards of real gold lace on his person.” Until the end of the sixteenth century, Spain produced a wealth of gold and silver lace at a time when she had the greatest wealth of these precious metals in all of Europe. Few of these early laces still exist as they were thrown into the melting pot by those interested only in the value of the gold and silver.

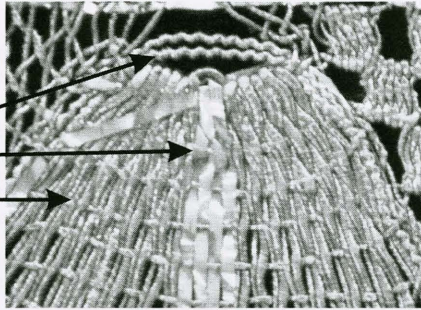
Metal lace is often made of several materials. Wide ribbons of metal called *Plätt* are flat and thin. *Gespinst* is fine *Plätt* wrapped around a fiber core. *Frieze*, or check purl, is made by wrapping the ribbon around a square mold which causes it to undulate and sparkle. Metal lace of this type is common in Germany and is used on traditional costumes.



Metal lace, edging, age unknown, (Avenir 2009.0170).

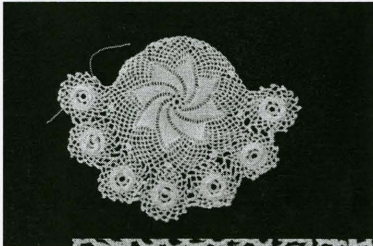
Detail of metal lace
on previous page.

Frieze
Plätt
Gespinst

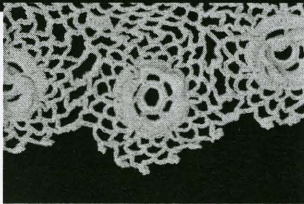


The Migration of a Lace Technique—Crochet

Historians speculate that crochet originated in Iran, South America, or China, but there is no decisive evidence before its popularity in Europe during the nineteenth century (the term *croche* means “hook” in French). From Europe, crochet traveled to Ireland, where it took on the distinctive style called Irish crochet. Made with a crochet hook and fine cotton thread, and known for its intricacy, fineness, and dimensional textures, Irish crochet is thought to be an imitation of Italian needle laces like Venetian Gros Point (Italy). An important Irish famine-relief project for women, Irish crochet was a significant hand-made lace in fashion during the Victorian and Edwardian periods, reaching its peak 1902-1914.



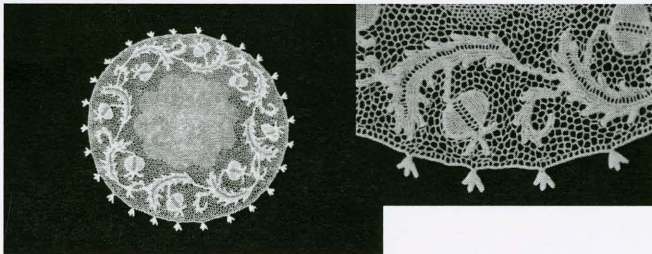
In Irish crochet, separate motifs such as leaves or flowers are crocheted and then assembled with a mesh background. Because of its free-form nature, Irish crochet has been transformed in several ways and is a good example of how one technique can be adopted and take on new, recognizable identities laces, such as Picot Bigouden in Brittany, France and Orvieto crochet from Orvieto, Italy. Orvieto crochet is made using a very thin crochet hook; the ornate design is made first from medium-weight thread and then outlined by heavy thread. Finally, the design is surrounded by a ground net of fine thread.



An unfinished piece of Irish crochet with a pinwheel center is edged by smaller motifs with the traditional Irish rose. Made by Ruth Payne Hellmann.

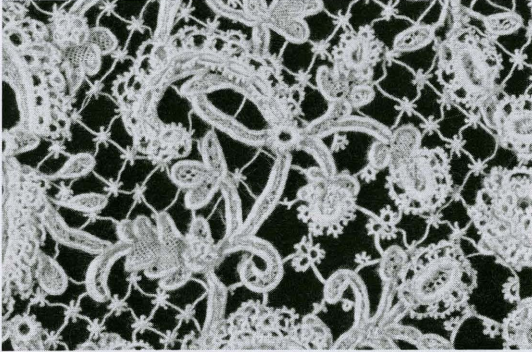
Irish crochet (left), unfinished doily, twentieth century, (Avenir 2009.1077).

Orvieto crochet (below), doily, early twentieth century, (Avenir 2009.1071).



Lace in Italy

Embroidery and needle-made laces first appeared in Italy around 1493 during the later Renaissance period. Wealthy Italians set fashion trends and Italian art strongly influenced lace design.

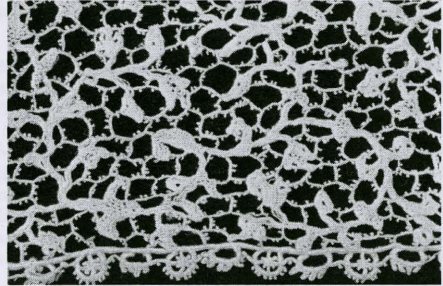


Point de Neige dates to the late seventeenth century. The name "Point de Neige" refers to the snowflake-like features of the design. The lace is heavily crusted with layers of picots and is more ornate than Point de Venise à la Rose.

Point de Neige lace, edging, late seventeenth century, (Avenir 2009.0380).

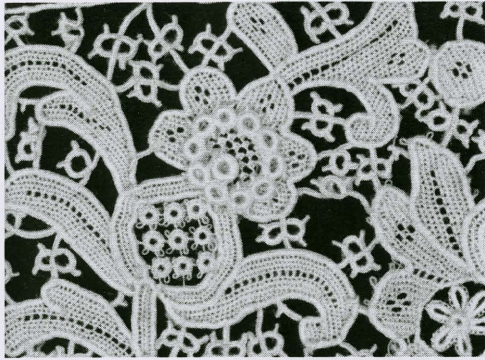
Coraline lace was made in the late seventeenth century. Closely packed branching stems were reminiscent of coral, but the lace was not actually named "Coraline" until the 19th century. Also known as "Mermaid's Lace," Coraline needle lace was not made outside Italy.

Coraline lace, edging, late seventeenth century, (Avenir 2009.0379).



From the early seventeenth century through the mid-eighteenth century, dense laces with flowers, scrolls and heavy raised padding were popular. Venetian Gros Point, a rich needle-made lace, dominated fashion during this time. The raised padding was made by stitching over multiple threads gathered in a bundle.

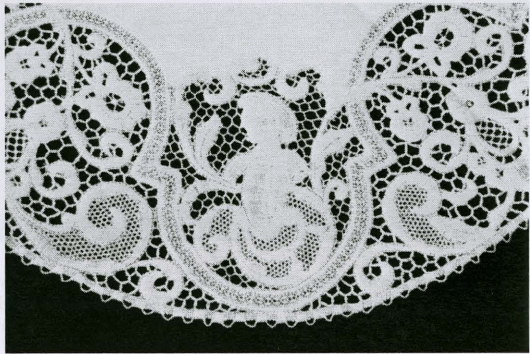
Venetian Gros Point lace, edging, eighteenth century, (Avenir 2009.0372).



Closely worked buttonhole stitches create design within the fillings and form the veins in the leaves of Point de Venise à la Rose lace. A cordonnet (thicker thread) is placed around the outer edge of the design features. Small wheels or stars decorate the brides (thin braids) connecting the design elements. In this lace, the term “rose” refers to the raised nature of the lace rather than to the presence of flowers.

Point de Venise à la Rose lace, edging, late nineteenth century, (Avenir 2009.0388).

Milanese lace originated in Milan in the early seventeenth century and is probably the best known Italian bobbin lace. The meandering tape forms scrolls and floral designs. In early lace, the motifs were connected by mesh and known as Milanese a réseau. Later, long, thin twisted brides connected the motifs and the lace was known as Milanese a bride. Figures of men and women are common motifs in Italian laces. In the table cloth on the right, a hunter is depicted along with flowers, scrolls, and Milanese braid. Both brides (thin braids) and réseau (net) fill the space between the motifs.



Milanese lace, edging on table cloth, nineteenth century, (Avenir 2009.0728).

Lace in Belgium

The western region of Belgium, northern France, and southern Netherlands was known as Flanders from 895 AD to 1795 AD. Early laces of this region were collectively called Flemish lace which was generic throughout the region. Later, in the sixteenth century, a printer named Christopher Plantin moved from Paris to Antwerp with his family in the sixteenth century. Antwerp was a well-known city for international trade. The Plantin family developed a business around embroidery and lace and stimulated the lacemaking industry of the area. Their business supplied the courts of France and England, and major trading posts throughout Europe and America. Lacemaking thrived in future Belgium.

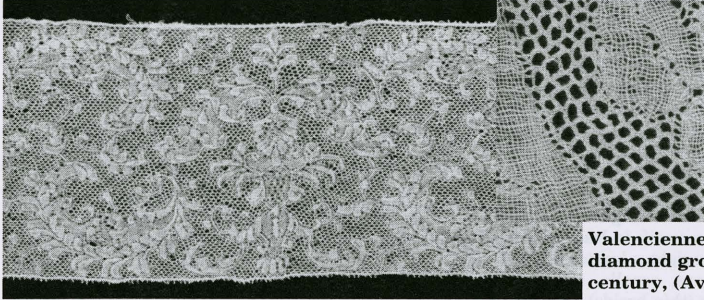


Flemish lace represents some of the earliest bobbin lace. This piece is perhaps the oldest in the Hellmann collection, dating to the late 1600s. Narrow meandering tapes in a very dense lace are typical of early laces.

Flemish lace, edging, late seventeenth century, (Avenir 2009.0722F).



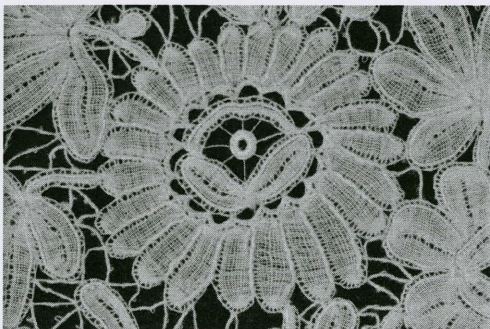
Valenciennes lace, edging with round ground, nineteenth century, (Avenir 2009.0598).



Valenciennes lace, edging with diamond ground, nineteenth century, (Avenir 2009.0597).

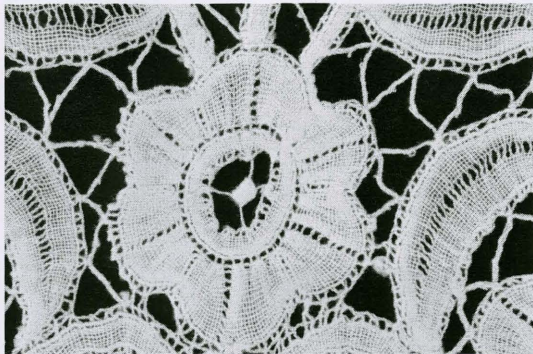
Valenciennes lace was originally a Flemish lace, but when the town of Valenciennes was captured by the French in 1678, lace designs were then influenced by French fashion and taste. In 1789, the French Revolution forced many French lacemakers to flee their home country and Valenciennes became a Belgian lace.

Two types of Valenciennes ground, round and diamond, are characteristic of the lace. The round ground preceded the diamond ground which appeared around 1750. Both grounds were revived in the 1800s.



Brussels Duchesse lace is a non-continuous bobbin lace made as motifs that are joined by plaited brides which often have picots. The edges of the motifs are sometimes raised. This lace was copied in Italy and many machine-made versions were later embroidered with the Schiffli machine. The name "Duchesse" was intended to honor Marie Henriette, the Duchesse de Brabant, consort of Leopold II of Belgium. A similar but coarser version, Bruges Duchesse, was also made in Bruges at the same time. The lace is related to English Honiton lace which has similar designs.

Brussels Duchesse lace, fragment, nineteenth century, (Avenir 2009.0689).

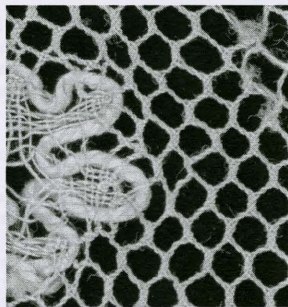
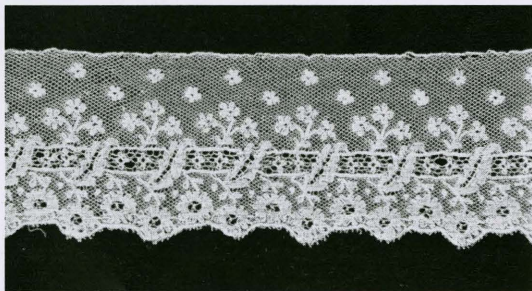
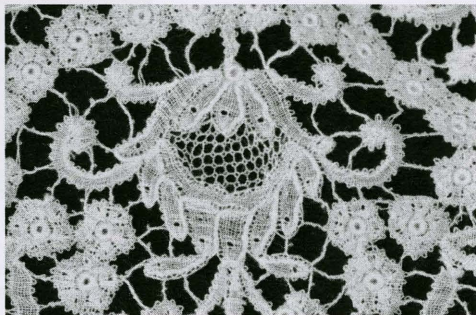


Bruges lace, also known as Brugge Bloemwerk, is the “Flower Lace of Bruges.” A simpler and poorer version of Duchesse bobbin lace, Bruges lace was made by women and families to relieve poverty after the Napoleonic Wars in the early nineteenth century. Important for the tourism industry, this lace is still demonstrated and sold in Bruges today.

Bruges lace, collar, nineteenth century, (Avenir 2009.0675).

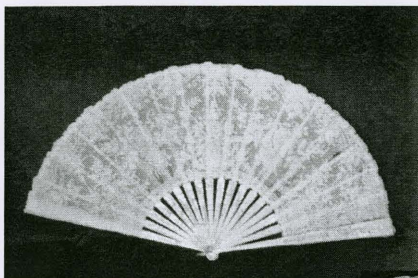
Later in the nineteenth century, Belgian lacemakers copied Venetian raised bobbin laces. They added small button roses (*couronnes*) made with needle and thread to Rosaline lace, and the lace was renamed Rosaline Perlée.

Rosaline Perlée lace, collar, nineteenth century, (Avenir 2009.0681).



Design of Mechlin lace in the early eighteenth century featured heavy flowers such as carnations or chrysanthemums. Later, French influence resulted in lighter designs with ribbons and flowers flowing the length of the lace and more open mesh work. This lace, along with other Belgian laces of the period, was often termed “Malines.” In the late eighteenth century, Mechlin came to be regarded as the “summer lace” of the French court. The light, airy features of the lace countered the heavier French needlepoints worn in winter. By 1800, the making of Mechlin lace had died out, but a revival occurred in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. A distinguishing feature of this bobbin lace is an extremely fine hexagonal ground which is plaited on two sides of the hexagon and has twisted threads on the other four sides. The fine details of the ground can only be seen with strong magnification.

Mechlin lace, edging, nineteenth century, (Avenir 2009.0629). Detail of Mechlin ground (right).



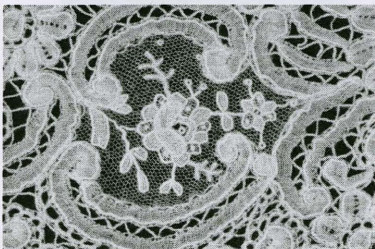
One of the most recognized of Belgian laces is Point de Gaze, a needle lace. Originating in 1847, Point de Gaze was made by hand until around 1914. Early lace was flat with very little design shading. From 1860 to 1914, two and three-tier petals of three-dimensional flowers, and occasionally dimensional butterflies, were used as design elements. Machine copies of the lace were popular but expensive because the three-dimensional work had to be added by hand.

The Point de Gaze fan above has flowers with raised buttonhole rings in the flower centers. Traditional bundles of threads are buttonhole-stitched around the edges of the design, and interesting filling stitches are worked in the spaces of several design elements. A fine mesh of looping buttonhole stitches made with a single thread forms the airy mesh surrounding the design. The lace is mounted on a fragile silk backing. A vine of gold and silver decorates the mother of pearl fan blades and guards.

The fan belonged to Lillie Suzanne Moulton (1864-1946), the lender's great grandmother. It was presented to Ms. Moulton by Margherita of Savoy, queen of Italy (married to King Umberto, upon the announcement of her engagement to Count Frederick Raben-Levetzau of Denmark in March of 1886 in Rome. Ms. Moulton was the daughter of Lillie de Hegerman Lindencrone and her first husband, Charles Moulton.

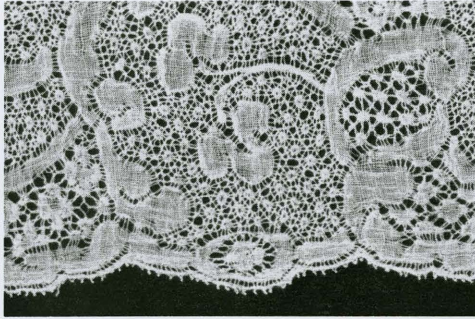
Point de Gaze lace, fan, 1886, from the collection of Marion Banks Jones.

Portrait of Lillie Suzanne Moulton by permission of the family. Photographer unknown.



Brussels mixed lace is a combination of Duchesse bobbin lace and Point de Gaze needle lace. Another Brussels mixed combination is Point de Gaze mesh with Duchesse motifs, also known as Point d'Angleterre. The bertha has Duchesse motifs joined by brides with scattered areas of Point de Gaze present as small flowers and stems with leaves surrounded by mesh.

Brussels mixed lace, bertha collar, nineteenth century, (Avenir 2009.0748).



Binche is a small town in southern Belgium. For almost 300 years, fine bobbin lace with a snowflake ground has been named after Binche although the origin of this lace points more toward Antwerp. The design of Binche lace is often pictorial with people or animals surrounded by endless variations of complex grounds which were sometimes named. The grandfather in Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* pulled Binche lace from a cupboard for Cosette's wedding dress. The Binche lace sample on the left has solid design areas of cloth stitch surrounded by Partridge eye and armure grounds.

Binche lace, edging, circa 1780, (Avenir 2009.0623).

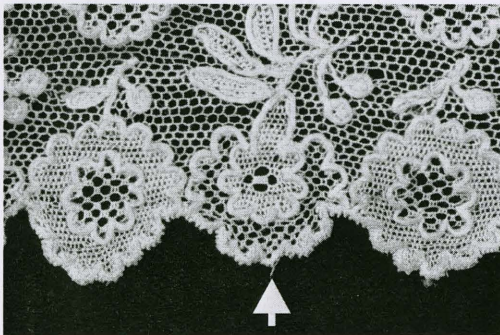
Lace in France

Lace came to France from Italy with Catherine de' Medici when she married Henry II. Lace ruffs and cuffs first appeared in France in 1540. The ruff was adopted by King Henry II to conceal a scar on his neck, and ruffs continued in favor with his sons. By 1579, ruffs were so large that the wearers could hardly turn their heads. The ruff suddenly disappeared in favor of the rabat, or turn-down collar, in Henry III's court. As luxury in dress continued, the French imported huge quantities of Flemish and Italian laces to the consternation of the French government. Sumptuary laws prohibiting the import of lace soon followed.

During the seventeenth century, Venetian raised needle laces, including Gros Point de Venise, continued to be very popular in France and the sumptuary laws were largely ignored. In 1665, Jean Baptiste Colbert, minister of finance to Louis XIV, started the government-subsidized French lacemaking industry at Alençon, France to stop the outflow of money for lace to other countries. He imported Italian and Flemish workers to stimulate the industry. But Italian law prohibited the making of Venetian laces outside Italy, so the new French laces were renamed and further adaptations were made by the French lacemakers.

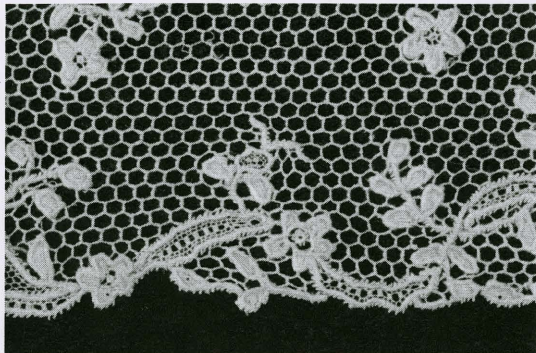
During the reign of Louise XVI (1774-1791), society began to tire of ceremony and the elegant court laces were replaced by flowing fabrics. The French Revolution (1789-1799) brought the end of lacemaking in France for a time. Many lacemakers perished on the guillotine or fled the country. Lacemaking was later revived by Napoleon in 1801 only to flounder again in 1818.

In the late nineteenth century, Chantilly and Blonde laces were very popular in fashion. For a brief time, until machine-made lace was invented, French handmade laces were sought after by clothing designers and the wealthy.



Alençon has been called the "Queen of Lace." Early Alençon lace had brides connecting the floral motifs, but in 1720-1730, the characteristic Alençon ground was adopted. Alençon is the only lace in which horsehair (arrow) was included to stiffen the outlining cordonet (1710-1760). The early designs were elaborate bunches of flowers, ribbons and garlands. Later, the ground was better executed and shading of the flowers appeared. Alençon lace reached its peak as a "winter lace" of the French court late in the eighteenth century. Today, the machine lace industry still produces so-called Alençon lace, but it has little resemblance to the original handmade lace.

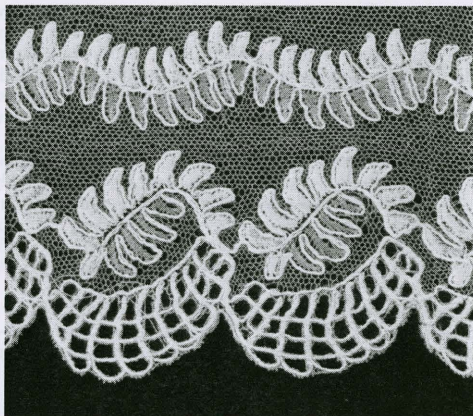
Alençon lace, edging, circa 1750, (Avenir 2009.0374).



Argentan lace originated in a town of the same name in Normandy. The early lace had brides similar to Alençon, but a unique ground was also developed for Argentan around 1720 and the two laces diverged. Argentan ground is hexagonal with nine to ten tiny buttonhole stitches on each side of the hexagon. Design elements include flowers with feather-like plumes, buds, and stems.

Argentan lace, edging, (Avenir 2009.0376).

Blonde lace appeared in 1745. Cream-colored or "blonde" silk was used to create large dense designs which were primarily floral. Blonde lace is characterized by dense motifs made with special cloth stitch rather than more open half stitch as seen in Chantilly. The ground is extremely fine silk and virtually disappears such that the motifs were prominent. Cream blonde was made primarily in the summer to avoid discoloration caused by smoke from a warming fire in the lacemaker's work area, while black blonde was made in the winter. The most successful blonde laces were from Caen. In 1847, lacemaking in Caen employed more than 50,000 workers. Much of the black blonde lace made in France was exported to Spain.

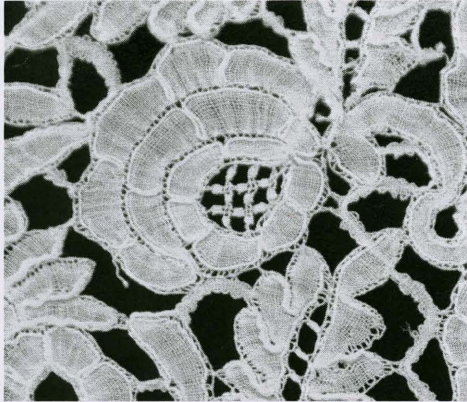


Blonde lace, edging, nineteenth century, (Avenir 2009.0649).



The Dukes of Lorraine brought Italian lutemakers and their lacemaker wives to Mirecourt, France in the early seventeenth century. Mirecourt became an important center for trade boosted by the production of lace and stringed instruments. Lacemaking flourished in Mirecourt and the laces were sold to lace merchants and peddlers in Switzerland, Italy, Germany and Spain. Dentelle arabe lace was named for the arabesque designs surrounded by heavy corded gimp. Invented at Mirecourt, this lace was highly fashionable from 1865 to 1890. In 1890, the lace designer Eugene Bastien was selling Mirecourt lace to notables such as Sarah Bernhard, the famous French actress, and the fashionable Parisian department store, Le Printemps. Although many other laces were originally made in Mirecourt, the arabesque form is referred to as "Mirecourt lace" today.

Mirecourt lace, motif, (Avenir 2009.0717a).

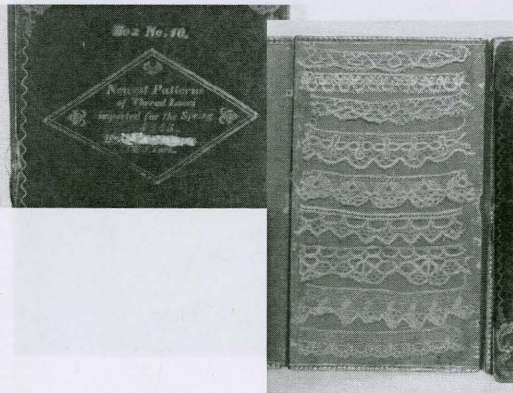


Honiton, in East Devon, is probably best known as the lace selected by Queen Victoria for her wedding dress. Honiton lace has mostly floral motifs which are made first and then later joined by four-strand plaits or sometimes applied to machine net. Motifs seen in Honiton lace include roses, thistles, foxgloves, and convolvulus.

Honiton lace, fragment, nineteenth century, (Avenir 2009.0665).

Tambour means drum which net was stretched over to work early tamboured laces. The art of tambouring reaches back to antiquity and is practiced in many countries. In early nineteenth century England, tamboured Coggleshall lace became popular. Designs were created as chain stitch on diamond net with a tambour hook. The lace was usually white but sometimes colored silk thread, beads, or pearls were included. Coggleshall lace is similar to Irish Limerick lace.

Detail of Coggleshall lace, cuffs, circa nineteenth century. (Avenir 2009.0285a and b).



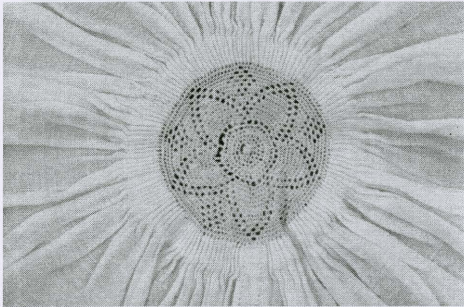
**Lace Dealer's Sample Book
Newest Patterns of Thread Lace imported
for the Spring 1845 by..... New
York.**

The importer's name is scratched out on the cover of this lace dealer's sample book. Written over the scratch out appears to be "JP Ogleo." Records could not be found for the dealer, but some of the lace is similar to laces made in the southern part of England. At least one of the laces matches a Downton lace pattern made in the Salisbury area. The laces are narrow edgings sometimes referred to as "baby lace" which was used on young children's christening gowns

Lace in England

Gold and thread laces came to England from Italy in the fifteenth century, and they became a major item of commerce. Later, cutwork laces began to appear in fashion and the church used lace on vestments. English kings and parliament passed a variety of sumptuary laws to prohibit the import of foreign lace giving rise to a smuggling industry. During the reign of Henry VIII, the "Actes of Apparell" against the wearing of costly clothing were put into place. Queen Mary continued the act by forbidding the wearing of lace by low-ranking citizens. But her sister, Queen Elizabeth I, collected an extensive wardrobe of cutwork lace in the sixteenth century and lace grew in importance. Royal patronage revived the handmade lace industry again in the late seventeenth century. Two areas of England – Devon in the southwest and the East Midlands counties of Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, and Northamptonshire – were the main regions where the English bobbin lace industry developed. Lacemaking remained strong until mechanization appeared in the early nineteenth century.

Lacemaking was first introduced to the peasantry of Bedfordshire County by Queen Katherine of Aragon. Bedfordshire lace reached its pinnacle in the 19th century. Characteristics of "Beds" lace include 4-strand braids, cloth stitch areas, and leaves or wheatears. Under the direction of Thomas Lester, a lace dealer and designer, some of the lace made in Bedfordshire excelled. Mr. Lester combined the traditional Bedfordshire techniques with techniques from other laces to create a lace that could not be imitated by machine.

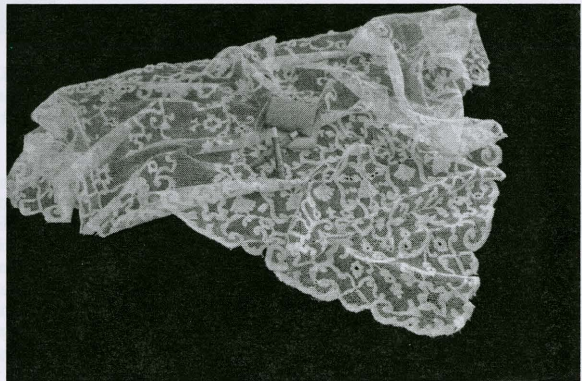


Hollie Point is the only truly original English lace. A plain loop stitch with an extra twist is stitched over a cord to create a dense cloth. Small spaces left between stitches create holes that define the design. The lace is usually used for church purposes and the designs are often religious symbols. The Annunciation Lily is present on the back of the baby bonnet (left) which was likely made for a christening.

Hollie Point lace, baby bonnet, circa eighteenth century, (Avenir 2009.0377).

Buckinghamshire was the home of many lacemakers who engaged in bobbin lace in the early seventeenth century. "Bucks" lace is characterized by a mesh ground which surrounds cloth stitch motifs. A thicker gimp thread outlines the motifs. A variety of filling stitches are used in the best quality Buckinghamshire Point lace.

Buckinghamshire Point lace, triangular shawl, circa 1870, South Bucks bobbins, parchment pricking, from the collection of Jo Ann Eurell.



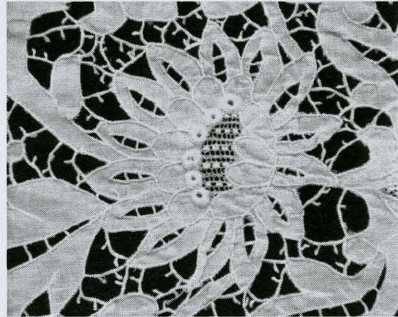
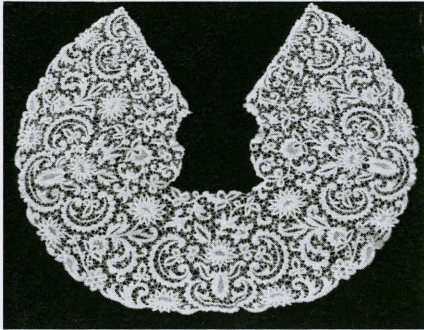
Lace in Ireland

Many different laces were made in Ireland, but the techniques originated in other countries until the unique Irish laces, Carrickmacross, Irish Crochet, and Youghal, were developed in the nineteenth century. Other Irish laces include Limerick, a needle-run and tambour lace similar to English Coggleshall, and Inishmachsaint needlelace. Lacemaking provided important income for many families during difficult times.

Carrickmacross lace originated as an embroidered lace in Ireland around 1816. Mrs. John Grey Porter and her husband honeymooned in Italy. While there, she and her maid became fascinated with Italian needle lace. Upon their return to Ireland, they developed a new type of appliqué work and taught young girls to make lace in imitation of the Italian lace. During the famine of 1846-48, lacemaking was further encouraged by philanthropic ladies and the church to help relieve poverty. The Bath and Shirley Lace School, particularly noted for guipure work, was the chief center of Carrickmacross lacemaking until the end of the 19th century. The lace was actually not called "Carrickmacross" until it won prizes at the 1872 Dublin Workingman's Exhibition.

The earliest designs for Carrickmacross lace were thought to have been copied from old Italian lace, but as the lace evolved, naturalistic floral designs became popular around 1850. The rose, shamrock and thistle are common motifs still seen today. Ornamental motifs such as scallops and scrolling strapwork are also typical of the lace.

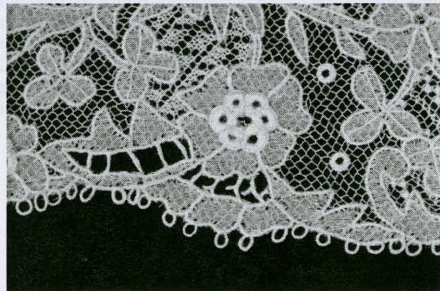
Two forms of Carrickmacross lace are recognized. The appliqué style of Carrickmacross lace was produced initially, and Carrickmacross guipure followed. In appliqué lace, a layer of organdie is placed over net on a pattern. After the design outline is couched, one or both of the fabric layers are cut away. In guipure lace, the pattern is overlaid with slightly heavier cambric and the net layer used in appliqué is either omitted or added in small areas later. Following couching of the design outline thread, bars are then placed in the open spaces of the guipure lace and then unwanted fabric is trimmed away.



This piece was likely worked at the Bath and Shirley Lace School in Ireland.

Carrickmacross guipure, bertha, circa 1850-1870, (Avenir 2009.0189A).

Note the flowers, leaves and shamrocks typical of this lace. Buttonholed circles called "pops" are an identifying feature. The edge of the lace is decorated with picots.



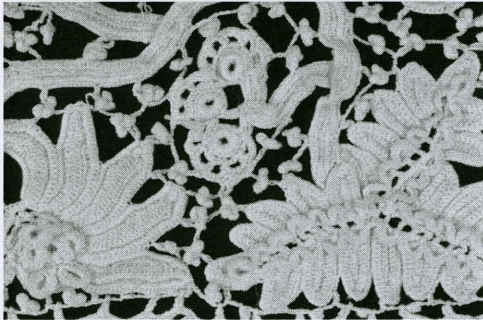
Carrickmacross appliqué, cuff, circa 1900, (Avenir 2009.0308).

Crochet is thought to have originated in the Far East and then spread through Europe to Ireland. The Ursuline Convent, with French affiliations, may have been responsible for bringing crochet to Ireland. Expansion of Irish crochet occurred during the famine and post-famine years and reached its peak in 1902-1914. Irish crochet is made with a crochet hook and fine cotton thread. Motifs such as the shamrock and Irish rose are made and joined with chain stitch, mesh, or bars. Elaborate raised work signifies good quality Irish crochet. Clones knots, a wrapped stitch similar to French knots of embroidery, are unique to the crochet from the Clones area.



Circles, leaves and three-dimensional flowers surrounded by mesh highlight this large collar.

Irish crochet, collar, (Avenir 2009.1150).

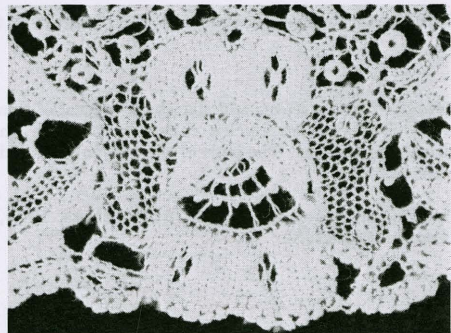


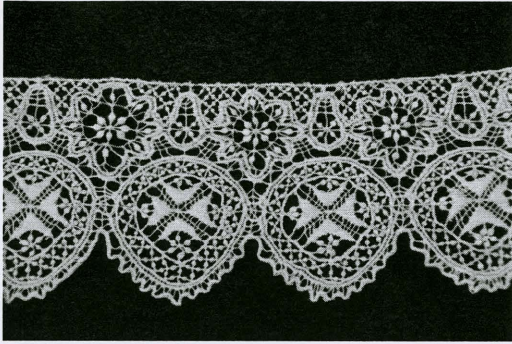
Clones knots fill the spaces between the leaf motifs.

Irish crochet, (Avenir 2009.1145b).

Youghal needlelace began in a convent school in the town of Youghal located between Cork and Waterford in southern Ireland. The period of this lace is brief – from 1845-1940 with a brief revival in the late 1980s. Youghal lace is known for its fine craftsmanship and charming design of scattered flowers on an open ground made of bars decorated with picots.

Youghal lace, edging, (Avenir 2009.0411).





Lace in Malta

Malta is an archipelago in the Mediterranean Sea south of Sicily. Two of the larger islands, Malta and Gozo, have a lacemaking tradition which started in the early nineteenth century. There are two different accounts of the later development of distinct Maltese lace. One story credits Friar John who introduced lacemaking techniques to Gozo in 1846. Another version reports that Lady Hamilton Chichester brought Genoese lacemakers to Malta from Italy in 1833 to provide work following a famine in 1820-30. Maltese and Genoese lacemakers developed a unique bobbin lace with a profusion of fat "wheatears"

and the Maltese Cross composed of crossed scimitars. This lace was copied in many countries around the world. In England, it was made without the cross and renamed Bedfordshire Maltese.

Maltese lace, edging, late nineteenth century, (Avenir 2009.0511).

Lace in Switzerland

Lacemaking was introduced in Switzerland by merchants from Italy in 1536. The Swiss industry grew as a result of lacemakers who fled France in turbulent times. Large quantities of lace were produced and then smuggled back into France for sale. Neuchâtel was a center for premiere Swiss lacemaking, and the lace trade resulted in great profit in the late 18th century. In 1814, there were 5628 lacemakers in the Neuchâtel district. Thirty years later, few remained as the industry fell to the pressures of the revival of French laces.

The era of machine embroidered laces took hold in Switzerland in the 1850s. The making of white embroidery by machine in the St. Gallen region was soon well-established. The Iklé family played an important role in the Swiss lace industry. Leopold Iklé exported lace to his father in Germany as early as 1854. His brother and cousin also operated lace firms based in Switzerland and Paris. In 1857, the Swiss introduced machine embroidery techniques into Plauen, Germany. Later, in 1883, manufacturers in both Germany and Switzerland learned to make "chemical lace," a close imitation of heavy needlelaces, which became the vogue of the day. Large quantities of Swiss embroidered lace still survive as a testament to the success of the industry.



Appenzell is a mountainous region in the northeast corner of Switzerland. Throughout history, the area has had strong ties to France. Whitework embroidery was brought to this region from France in 1850-1875 and Appenzell lace was developed. Grids of drawn threadwork form the background around the design outlined by running or satin stitches. A satin-stitched small boy holds a pig in front of the drawn threadwork mountains (left).

Leopold Iklé was a business man initially, but later he developed a strong interest in collecting old lace. Around 1900, he gave a large part of his lace collection to the St. Gallen Textile Museum. The label which accompanies the Appenzell lace in the Hellmann collection indicates that it belonged to Iklé.

Appenzell lace, fragment and label (SAMMLUNG Leopold Iklé 493) on red satin, (Avenir 2009.0213). (above left). "Sammlung" translates from German as "Collection."



Detail of Appenzell lace (left).

Lace in the United States of America

Ipswich Lace

The town of Ipswich, Massachusetts was incorporated in 1634 and was a prosperous port until the Ipswich River became impassable and ships could no longer reach the harbor. Around 1750, a group of Ipswich women started making and selling bobbin lace for collars, cuffs, trims, and linens. Lacemaking in Ipswich was probably the first women's industry in America. Ipswich lace has unique design and is considered the only true American lace. The bobbins used to make the lace were often made from local reeds that grew in the area and they were passed down through families. Popularity of the lace grew, especially after the American Revolution and George Washington's purchase of an Ipswich shawl for his wife. Lacemakers produced more than 40,000 yards of lace in one year ending in 1790. By 1820, men imported machines to make net and within 20 years, the handmade lace industry was gone. Today, Ipswich lace is rare. Samples are housed in the Ipswich Historical Society and a few other museums. The largest collection of Ipswich lace, belonging to Alexander Hamilton, is in the Library of Congress.

Oneida Native Americans

Another historical source of lacemaking in this country is the Oneida Native Americans in the upper Midwest. Sybil Carter, a Deaconess of the Episcopal Church, was a missionary serving in Japan. She observed Japanese lacemaking and promised to send a teacher to the Oneidas. Carter sent Mrs. Charles Bronson who taught the Oneida women on the reservation and an industry was born. Their lace won awards at many of the prestigious exhibitions of the early twentieth century. The industry declined and disappeared by 1940.

Marian Powys

Marian Powys, considered to be one of America's leading experts on lace in the twentieth century, emigrated to New York City from England in 1912. Ms. Powys said that "America offered a woman far greater opportunity for success than any country in the world." In 1916, she opened the Devonshire Lace Shop. Among the first ladies to come shopping were Mrs. J.P. Morgan, Jr. and Isadora Duncan. Over the years, her distinguished customers included Eleanor Roosevelt and Katherine Hepburn. The store closed in 1945 after the value of lace dropped following World War II.

As a designer, historian and lacemaker, Ms. Powys was outstanding. She regularly incorporated Art Nouveau, Art Deco and Cubist motifs in her work. Reaching beyond tradition, she used airplanes in a triangular veil for Anne Morrow Lindbergh.

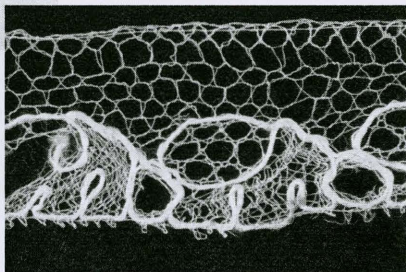
As a consultant to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, she frequently lectured on lace. In 1953, she self-published *Lace and Lacemaking*.

Her son reports that Marian Powys died in 1972 in her Sneden's Landing home at the age of 89 with a piece of Gros Point de Venise in her hand.

THE DEVONSHIRE LACE SHOP
556 MADISON AVENUE
NEW YORK
TEL. PLAZA 3-3364

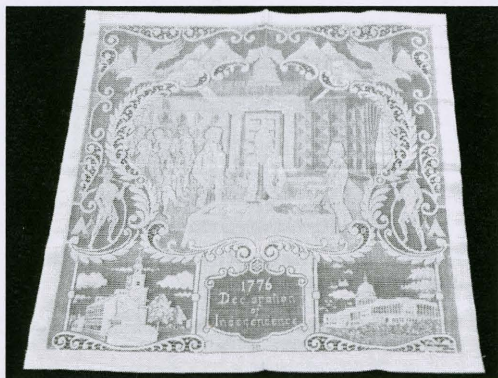
Miss Hague left this little
Blonde lace here by accident.

M P



The note written on Devonshire Lace Shop stationery (above), refers to Miss Marian Hague, an officer of the Needle and Bobbin Club in New York. In the early 1900s, Miss Hague traveled and studied in Italy, England and France. Along with Frances Morris, she wrote *Antique Laces of American Collectors* in 1920. She also served as Chairman of the Technical Committee, Scuola d' Industrie Italiane in New York. The school was created to help daughters of Italian immigrants learn and revive Italian needlework.

Blonde lace and note from Marian Powys, edging, late nineteenth century, (Avenir 2009.0645).



Bicentennial Lace

The Nottingham Lace Curtain machine was invented in England in 1846. By 1914, 21% of the world's curtain machines were in the U.S.A. The bicentennial piece on display was made on a curtain lace machine. The lace celebrates scenes of this country including the signing of the Declaration of Independence, Liberty Hall, and the Liberty Bell as well as eagles, mountains, and Native Americans.

Machine-made, Nottingham curtain lace machine, 1976, (Avenir 2009.1281).

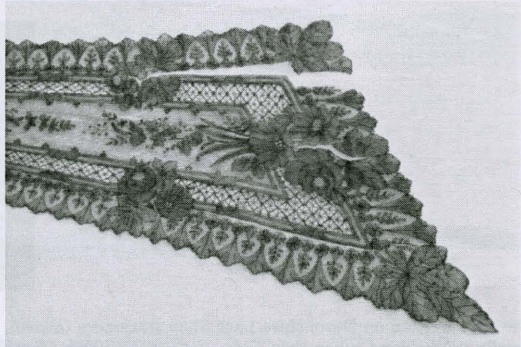
Black Lace

Disappearing Black Lace

The origin of black lace, which first appeared in fashion in the early sixteenth century, is a mystery. Catharine of Aragon, daughter of Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand of Spain, was reported to have dresses with black silk lace in 1501. Black laces were later documented in Italy, Spain, France and Flanders in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, but few of the laces from these early times still survive. Metal mordants such as iron were used in the dyeing process and caused the silk thread to deteriorate. The thread became brittle over time and the lace crumbled. Chantilly lace was made in strips, usually less than four inches wide. Strips were joined to create larger pieces such as scarves, lappets, flounces and stoles. Highly skilled sewers used an invisible joining stitch called *Point de Raccroc*. Today, the thread used for the *Point de Raccroc* often deteriorates before the rest of the lace. The joins open and may be mistaken for tears in the lace.

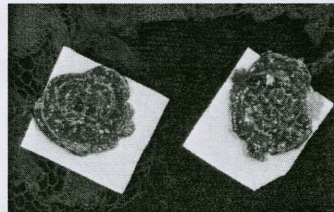
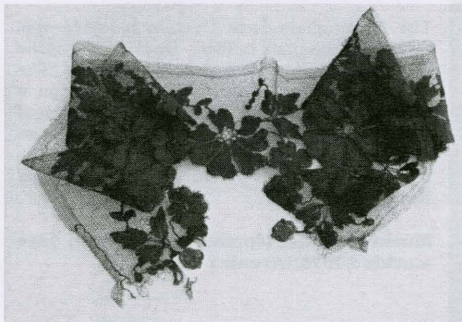
Point de Raccroc stitch in this scarf has deteriorated leaving gaps between the narrow strips of lace that were once joined to form the larger piece.

Chantilly lace, scarf, circa 1850, (Avenir 76-17-119).



Lace Dealers and “Short Sales”

The lace trade was supported by lace dealers who acted as middle men between the lacemakers and the market. The dealers hired lacemakers to work from their homes and provided them with lace patterns and supplies including thread needed to make the lace. The dealers would return at regular intervals to cut off the work completed to date. Since the dealer supplied the thread, he wanted to know that the lacemaker was not cutting off lace and “selling him short” so he would mark the end of the lace with a wax seal that was expected to be in place when he returned for the next “cut off” day.



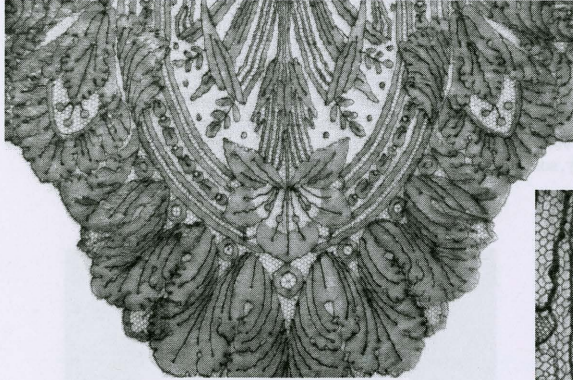
Blonde lace (left), England, circa late nineteenth century.

Detail of wax seals (above) on the black Blonde lace (left).

From the collection of Jo Ann Eurell.

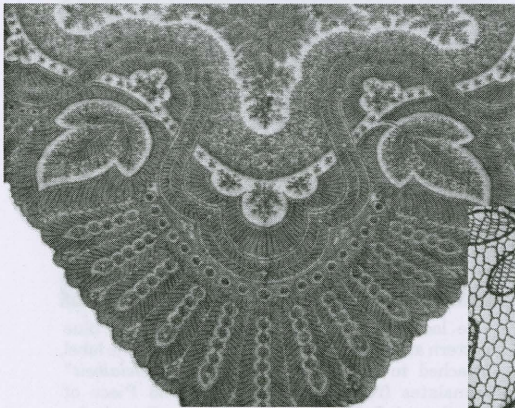
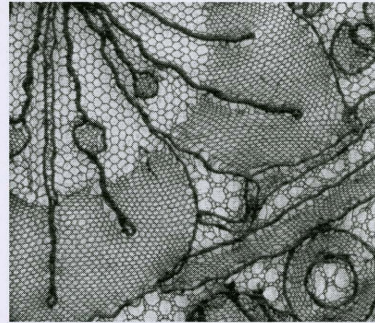
Chantilly Shawls in Fashion

In the late 1800s, large Chantilly shawls worn over crinoline skirts were the height of fashion. The wide skirts provided a perfect stage on which to display the rich design of the Chantilly lace. By 1862, 50,000 lacemakers in France were making Chantilly lace by hand, but the industry rapidly declined as more-affordable machine-made lace became popular. Less than 20 years later, in 1880, most Chantilly lace was made by machine.



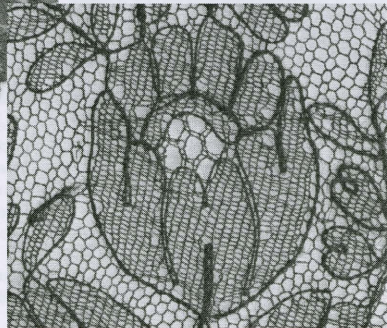
Chantilly lace, shawl, handmade, 1850-60, (Avenir 2009.2375A).

Detail of shawl to the left (below).



Chantilly lace, shawl, Pusher machine, circa 1860, (Avenir 2009.2317).

Detail of shawl to the left (below).



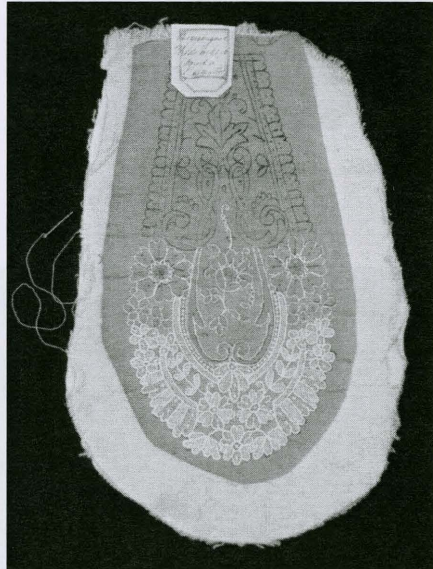
Lappets - Embellishment for the Head

Lappets were the height of fashion in the eighteenth century. *Lappet*, or *barbe*, is French for "beard." Initially, the beard-shaped lace pieces were worn attached to a veil or cap. Court etiquette in France and England demanded the wearing of lappets and strict guidelines were observed. For mourning, the lappets were pinned up at different levels above, at, or below the chin depending on rank; the higher the rank, the higher the lappets. On grand occasions, the lappets could be let down. During the first half of the eighteenth century, lappets were made of Brussels, Valenciennes, and Mechlin laces with fine, dense designs. In the latter half of the century, net ground became a notable part of lappet lace.

After the French Revolution in the nineteenth century, the shape of lappets changed. The center section was narrow and the ends were very wide. The *fanchon*, with a wide center section that narrowed and then became wide again, was also worn during this time period. England, Malta, France and Germany played a role in the production of lappets in Lester, guipure, Duchesse, and Chantilly laces. Queen Victoria insisted that married ladies wear lappets at court while unmarried ladies wore veils. When lappets went out of fashion around 1900, the lace was detached from the caps and used independently, sometimes as a scarf.



Point de Gaze lace, lappets, nineteenth century, (Avenir 2009.0350).

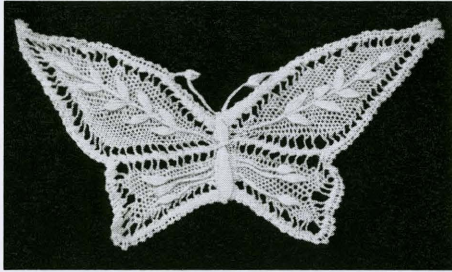


The lace is being needle worked over the blue pattern attached to layers of a fabric pad. The label attached to the lace "*Augefaugene Nadelarbeit*" translates from German as "Started Piece of Needlework;" "*Point à l'aiguille*" is French for needle lace.

End fragment of a lappet in progress. (Avenir 2009.1298).

Birds, Butterflies, and Elephants

Various birds, insects, and animals have been used as figural motifs in all types of lace.

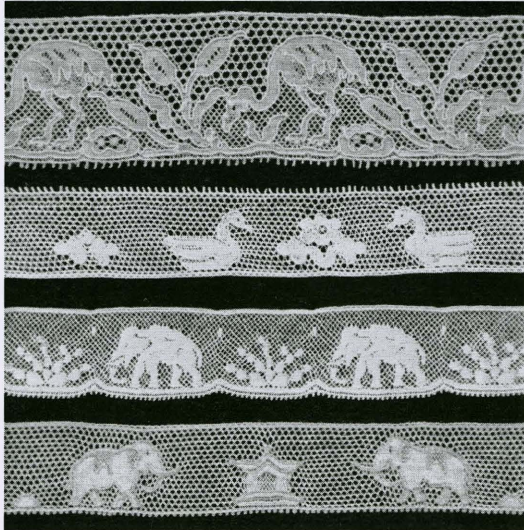


The wings of the bobbin lace butterflies are outlined by cloth stitch with a half-stitch center overlaid with leaves. This work is similar to some Puerto Rican designs.

Bobbin lace, butterflies, twentieth century, (Avenir 2009.0496a, b, and c).

Two birds face a central thistle in the bobbin lace of the cuff. Cutwork embroidery is attached on either side of the lace. The lace on the edge of the cuff has cloth-stitch diamond motifs. The narrow lace on the upper edge of the cuff has an alternating circle and trefoil design. Point de Paris lace originated in Paris, France.

Point de Paris lace, cuff, late nineteenth century, (Avenir 2009.0655a).



Machine-made laces – Leavers machine, twentieth century.

Emus and plants. (Avenir 2009.1199).

Two ducks face a central flower. (Avenir 2009.1194).

Elephants alternate with bushes. (Avenir 2009.1195).

Elephants and a temple outlined in pink. (Avenir 2009.1196).

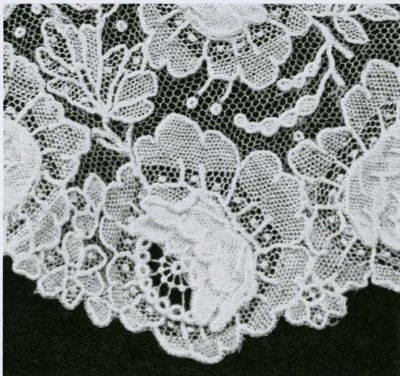
Handmade vs. Machine-made Laces

Before 1800, lace was made entirely by hand using a variety of techniques. Lacemakers worked largely as a home-based cottage industry although a few groups were more organized. Many lacemakers worked for lace dealers who supplied the patterns and thread. The dealers acted as middle men, collected the lace, and sold it to businesses in larger cities.

Highlights of the machine lace industry include:

- 1488 - Hand-knit stockings were first recorded for sale.
- 1589 - The Stocking Frame was used to produce solid knit fabric on a machine.
- 1764 - Lace was first produced on a Stocking Frame.
- 1795 - Warp frames began producing net.
- 1808 - Heathcoat's first bobbinet machine imitated bobbin lace production of netting.
- 1812 - Pusher machine invented. Bobbins with thread were propelled along combs between warp threads by long prongs called "pushers." Lace could now be patterned.
- 1813 - Leavers machine invented. Patterning became more complex with the addition of Jacquard mechanisms.
- 1828 - Swiss Machine or Handembroidery Machine which could imitate drawn threadwork, embroidery on net, and Venetian raised laces was invented.
- 1846 - Nottingham Lace Curtain machine invented.
- 1863 - Bonnaz Chain Stitch machine which could imitate tambour work was invented. Later in 1870s, the Cornely machine was invented which was more diverse and is still in use today.
- 1870 - Schiffli Embroidery machine was perfected. The Schiffli machine did a lock stitch that allowed production of eyelet, embroidered, and chemical laces.
- 1875 - Demand for lace declined and many machines went silent.

Early in the machine-made lace industry, great care was taken to imitate handmade laces as closely as possible. Some machine-made laces are obviously not handmade; their construction is messy and design is disorganized. Recognizing handmade vs. machine-made often takes knowledge of lace construction and technique. Careful observation of the cloth work, outline of designs, mesh construction, joins and filling stitches is often the only way to separate machine-made from handmade lace.



Compare this handmade lace to the machine-made handkerchief. Note the crisp detail of this piece.

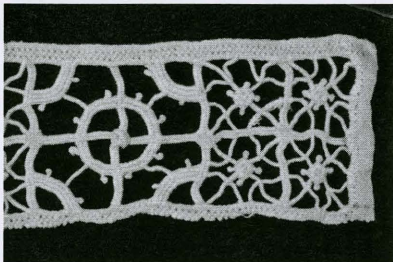
Point de Gaze lace, collar, circa 1875, (Avenir 2009.0339).



This example of imitation Point de Gaze was made by embroidering the lace and then dissolving away the background fabric with chemicals.

Chemical lace, handkerchief, early twentieth century, (Avenir 2009.1249).

Lacemaking Techniques



Embroidered Laces

Embroidered laces are made with a needle, thread, and net or fabric. Reticella is a form of embroidered cutwork where the fabric is cut away and then the design is embroidered.

Reticella, insertion, 17th C, (Avenir 2009.0178).

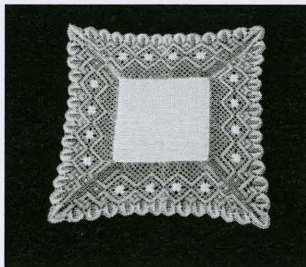
Needle-made Laces

Needle-made laces are stitched on top of a pattern with a needle and thread only. No fabric is used other than to pad underneath the pattern.

French Protestant lacemakers fleeing their country at the time of the French Revolution took refuge in Austria. Laces from Austria were sent to the International Exhibition of 1874, and needle lace designed and made for the Empress of Austria was shown at the Paris Exhibition in 1878. The Vienna Lace School was established the following year. Lacemakers at the school produced exquisite needle lace. While some of the Viennese laces were influenced by French laces, others had naturalistic floral designs worked in a three-dimensional padded lace technique which goes far beyond laces. At the turn of the twentieth century, Vienna was a center for modern lace design small lacemaking businesses were set up in Austria and Germany by students who attended the Vienna Lace School.



Austrian needle lace, Edging, late nineteenth century. On loan from the private collection of Marion Banks Jones.

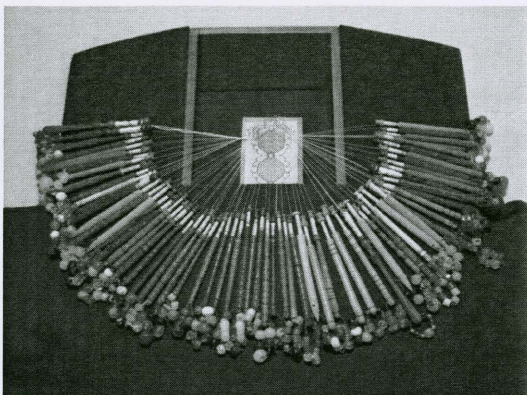


Bobbin Laces

Bobbin lace is made with bobbins which are wound with individual threads. The threads on the bobbins are twisted around pins in a pattern by passing the bobbins back and forth. Bobbins are made of wood, bone, metal and other materials. Bobbin types vary with the country of origin and the type of lace being made. The lacemaking pillow to which the pattern is fastened is also variable in shape.

The origin of Torchon lace is unknown. It is possibly one of the oldest laces and may be the "Thread Lace" in old records. Over time, unlike other laces, Torchon lace has changed very little. The techniques have spread worldwide and Torchon lace is often made in commercial ventures. It is frequently the first bobbin lace that aspiring lacemakers attempt. Torchon lace can be simple or very challenging to work.

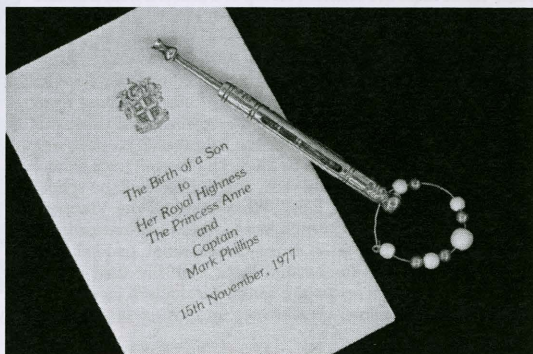
Torchon lace, edging on handkerchief, twentieth century, (Avenir 2009.0576).



Buckinghamshire Point lace is in progress on this block pillow. Antique English Midlands bobbins hold the thread used to work the pattern.

Bobbin lace pillow from the collection of Jo Ann Eurell.

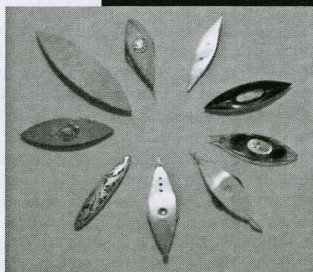
Lacemaking bobbins vary in shape and size. English Midlands bobbins are often highly decorated and include a ring of beads known as a "spangle." Commemorative bobbins are issued for special events. The "Mother-in-Babe" style bobbin (right) on display has a smaller bobbin inside. The bobbin commemorates the birth of Peter Mark Andrew Phillips (born 15 November 1977), the only son of Anne, Princess Royal, and her first husband, Captain Mark Phillips. He is the eldest grandchild of Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. The bobbin was commissioned by the Luton Museum (Luton, England) and made by Peter Phelan, a London silversmith.



Commemorative bobbin from England, sterling silver, 1977.

Tatting

Many people are familiar with tatting as a form of lacemaking as it was very popular in the mid-twentieth century. Tatting is a knotted lace. The thread for tatting is wound on tatting shuttles and the shuttles are manipulated to create a knotted lace. Tatting shuttles (right) are made from a variety of materials including wood, bone, silver and celluloid.



Tatting, edging, late nineteenth century, (Avenir 2009.0873b).

Crochet

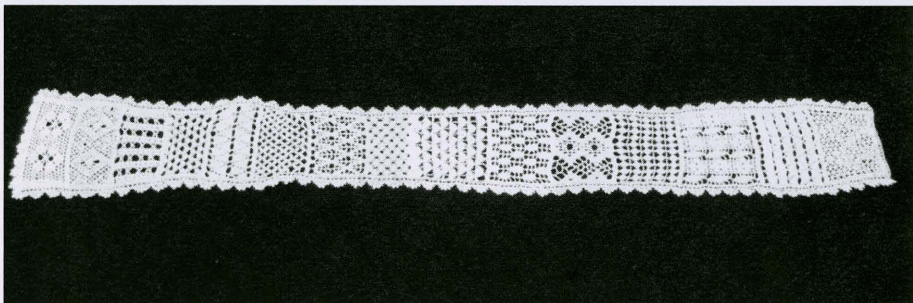
Crochet is made with a hook and thread or yarn. Early thread for crochet was usually cotton but more contemporary crochet is worked with a variety of fibers including exotic yarns.

The word *crochet* is a French word meaning "hook." Annie Potter wrote that the modern art of crochet developed during the sixteenth century. Other authors believe that crochet may have begun in Iran, South America or China. Records note its popularity in nineteenth century Europe where it was first referenced in *The Memoirs of a Highland Lady* by Elizabeth Grant (1797-1830). Eleonore Riego de la Branchardiere published many books on crochet and other needle arts in the nineteenth century, and she is attributed with the introduction of Irish crochet techniques. Unlike other needle arts, the true origin of crochet is unclear.

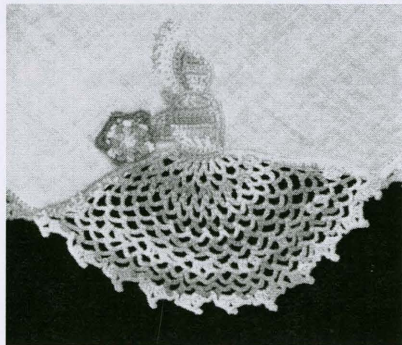
Some historians believe that the development of crochet is rooted in tambour work where a hook is used to make chain-stitch loops through fine fabric or net. Tambour work then evolved into "crochet in air." Others feel that the design of the tambour hook interfered with crochet work and therefore this path is not valid.

Early crochet hooks were made of whatever was available including bent wire in a cork handle, walrus tusk, and teeth from discarded combs. Later hooks evolved as an art form – made from bone, silver, ivory, brass or steel.

Irish crochet of the early nineteenth century gave way to modern crochet with more texture and complex stitches. Popularity in fashion on the runway today has caused a resurgence of interest in crochet.



Crochet, sampler of crochet stitches, (Avenir 2009.0986).

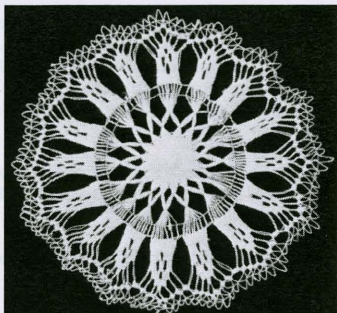


Crinoline Lady patterns were popular in the mid-twentieth century. This motif is crocheted in bright-colored variegated thread.

Crochet, handkerchief motif, (Avenir 2009.1040).

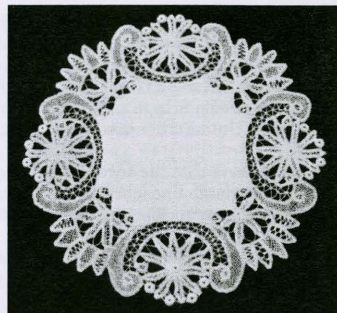
Various Lace Techniques – Doilies

The doily is a decorative mat used for household decoration. Originally named for fabric made by a London draper in the seventeenth century, doilies usually include some type of openwork so that the object below is visible.



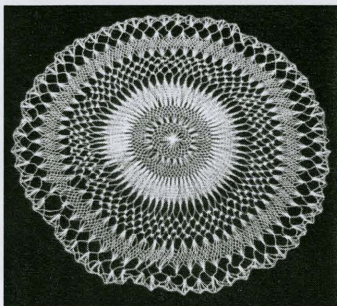
Teneriffe is a needle lace that originated on the Canary Island known by the same name but spelled Tenerife.

Teneriffe lace, late nineteenth-early twentieth century, (Avenir 2009.0455).



Battenberg lace is made by attaching machine-made tape to a pattern and then filling spaces with decorative stitches.

Battenberg lace, late nineteenth – early twentieth century, (Avenir 2009.0808).



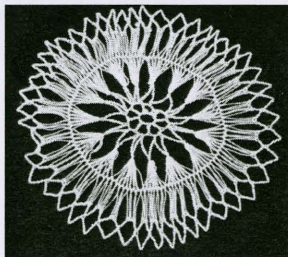
Netted laces are knotted from a single thread wound on a netting shuttle. Gauges of various sizes regulate the size of the mesh holes.

Netted lace, 19th century, (Avenir 2009.0850).



Knitted lace is usually made with very small knitting needles. Special stitch techniques create the holes in the lace.

Hand-knitted lace, (Avenir 2009.0953).



Hairpin lace is made with a crochet hook and a metal frame similar to a large hairpin.

Hairpin crochet, (Avenir 2009.1065).