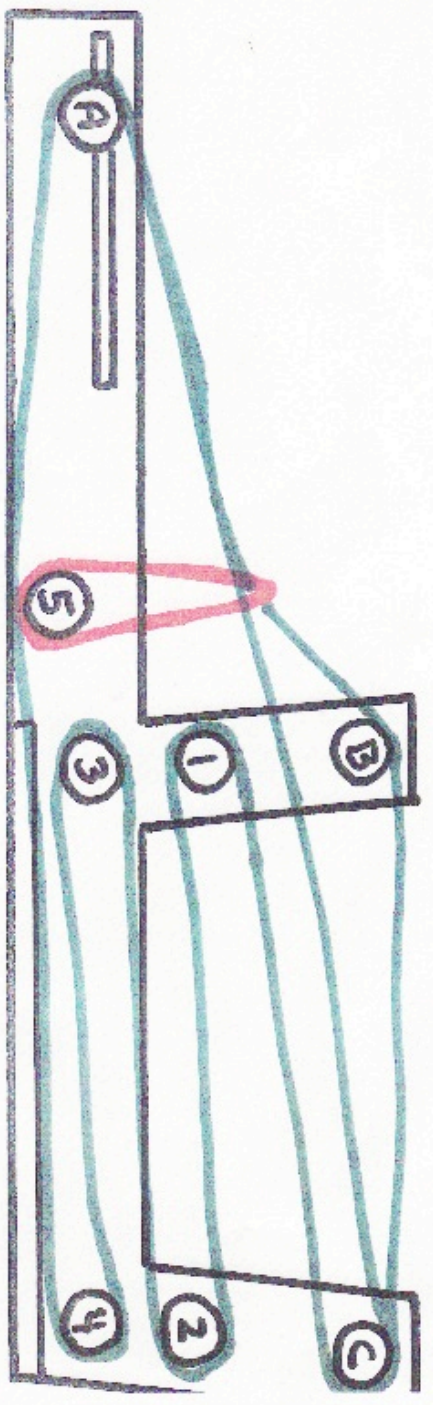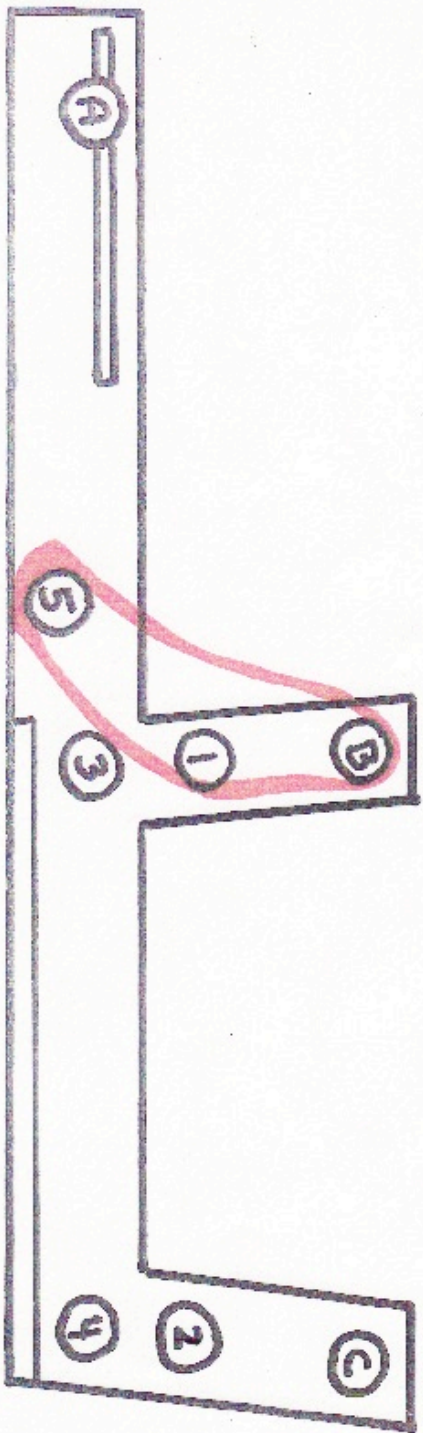INKLE LOOM

INKLE LOOM

use posts B-1-5
to measure heddles

INKLE WEAVING

"Inkle" refers to the technique and the loom, as well as the narrow warp-faced belts and bands that they produce. Some form of inkle weaving has been evident in every culture that has developed textiles.

Inkle looms use string heddles to create two sheds. The warp threads are laid one beside another without a reed or other device to spread them apart. Thus, the resulting textile is warp-faced plain weave.

Through the use of color effects a large variety of plain weave designs can be created. This workshop will focus on technique and the designing that is possible through the order in which colors are threaded onto the loom.

There are several pick-up techniques that can be used to create much more elaborate designs. Good references for learning these techniques are <u>Inkle Weaving</u>, by Helene Bress, and <u>Weaving Inkle Bands</u>, by Harriet Tidball.

Certainly it would be to your advantage to learn basic technique and patterning first and then move on to pick-up techniques. While they are not difficult, it is nice to have the basic skills mastered while concentrating on pick-up patterns.

WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH INKLE BANDS?

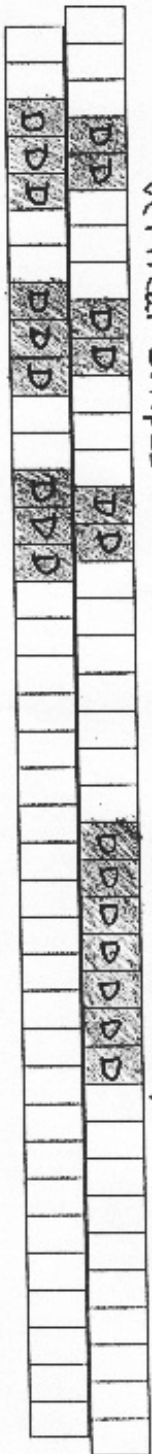|		
Belts	Hair Ties	Laces
Hem Facings	Book Marks	Bag Handles
Napkin Rings	Coasters	Jewelry
Change Purses	Eyeglasses Cases	Guitar Straps
Camera Straps	Curtain Tiebacks	Clothing Trims

WHAT KIND OF YARNS CAN YOU USE?

For the warp it is important to choose smooth, strong yarns that do not have a lot of stretch or elasticity. The size can be as fine as sewing thread or as heavy as 3/2 cotton. (If you would like to use a fuzzy mohair or bumpy novelty yarn, thread it in the "open" position and avoid taking it through the heddle.) Some of my favorites are Perle Cotton, Spun Silks, Embroidery Floss, and Linen.

The weft is invisible for the most part. The one place it shows is on the selvedges. If you don't want it to be obvious, use the same yarn that you used for the edge warps. Of course, using a contrasting color for a decorative effect is fine, but wait until your inkle weaving is smooth and regular -- it comes with practice!

It is also possible to alter your pattern by choosing very thick or very thin wefts. Alternating the two creates "rep weave blocks" (i.e., the color that is raised when weaving the heavy weft predominates). This is something to experiment with after you have mastered basic inkle weaving.

MAKING AN INKLE SAMPLER

Make 33 string heddles. If you have the Schacht booklet, see page 5, diagram 4. We are using the double heddle method. Use a very strong, smooth cotton yarn such as carpet warp. Tie three tight knots and trim the tails to about 1/4 inch.

Before warping the loom, position the tension peg about 1 inch from the left end of the slot. This leaves space to put more tension on the warp before you begin weaving. The larger space on the right will be used to accommodate the shortening of the warp as your weaving progresses.

Warp your loom carefully. Avoid wrapping any one warp yarn completely around a peg. All of the warp yarns must follow the same path and the entire warp must be free to move around the loom as your weaving progresses.

Use a loose slip knot with a big loop and long tail to hold the beginning of each color on the tension knob. Do not cut a yarn until you have completely finished with that color. Then remove the big loop at the tension knob and securely tie the beginning and end of that color yarn together. It is okay that it crosses the width of the warp.

As you warp your loom be careful to always alternate one yarn through a heddle and one yarn under the bar and open (ie, not through a heddle). The pattern below shows the "Heddle" yarn colors in the top row and the "Open" yarn colors in the bottom row. Thread top-bottom-top-bottom-etc. You should begin and end with a "Heddle" yarn. ("D" = dark yarn color; "L" = light yarn color)

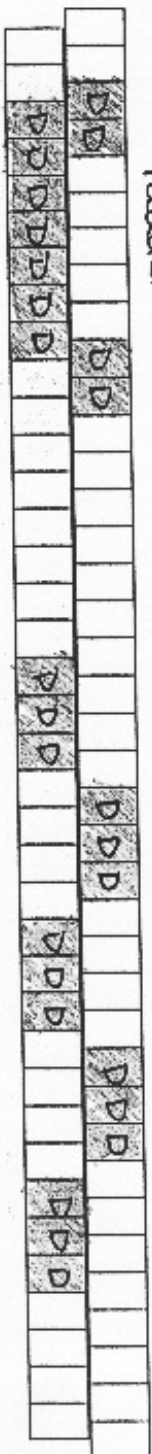| Heddle | D | D | L | D | | D | D | D | D | L | D | | D | D | D | | D | D | D | | D | D | | D | | D | D | D | D | | D | D |
| Open | | L | D | | D | | | D | D | L | | D | | | D | D | D | D | | | D | | | D | | | | | | D | D |

INKLE PATTERNS
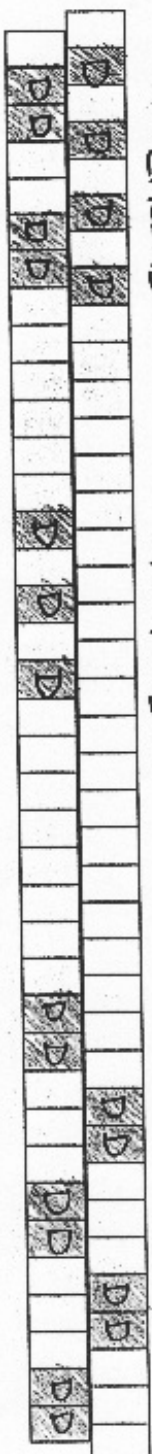
vertical stripes

horizontal stripes

ladder

checkerboard

chains

spots, aligned

dashes, staggered

INKLE PATTERNS