



## **HANDWOVEN TAPE: UNDERSTANDING AND WEAVING EARLY AMERICAN AND CONTEMPORARY TAPE**

*by Susan Faulkner Weaver*

*Schiffler Publishing Ltd. 4880 Lower Valley Road,  
Atglen, Pennsylvania 19310. 2016. Hardcover. 208 pages. \$24.99.*

This book is unusual in that it deals exclusively with American tape weaving and is remarkably complete. The author studied extensively the history, function and processes of weaving tapes that served so many useful purposes. She shows the beauty of the tape weaving equipment and the tapes themselves in a book full of lovely photographs.

The book begins with a historical overview of handwoven tape in America. The differences between larger English households and the usually smaller log dwellings for the Pennsylvania German immigrants determined what was woven. Where there was room for large looms, household linens and woolens were woven. Closer

quarters meant small narrow (tape) looms, which were used for everyday, much-needed bands. The well-to-do English housewife might have also used these tape looms for making small fancy bands for trim rather than for functional ties. So common was the production and use of these tapes that they are seldom included in the estate lists of household goods, although long bundles of tape have survived.

The uses for these tapes are enumerated. Women's clothes used many (think of an era when zippers, snaps, and Velcro® had yet to be invented). Ties were needed for caps (all women wore them), petticoats, garters, aprons, and pockets. Men used tapes as well for suspenders, garters, adjustable waistbands for trousers, eye spectacles, pocket watches, and around wallets. Household uses included candle and lantern wicks woven of cotton or linen, seed bags and satchels, tape to lace cradles for baby safety, ties for bed linens, and tabs for towels. Chair tape was woven by the Shakers, and "red tape" was used to tie legal documents. All of these tapes are shown in photographs, including those produced on commercial looms.

The chapter on looms known as "tape," "fringe," "box," "paddle," and "knee" looms is fascinating. All were hand made of wood and came in floor as well as lap or table versions, and most used ratchet and pawl brakes. Again, a wonderful number of photographs illustrate this section.

A short section is devoted to the materials and dyes used for the tapes in early America.

In the section on contemporary tape weaving, readers are shown the way to measure and put the warp threads on a tape loom—one with a hole and slot (rigid heddle) board. A couple of examples of New England style looms with built-in beater and two sets of heddles are also shown. The warping is not explained, but it is similar in method to that used on a large loom.

The last chapter deals with contemporary tape and shows modern uses as well as patterns and finishes.

There are four Appendices: #1 Contemporary Threads for Tape, #2 Resources on Tape, Tape Looms, and Coverlets (for Floor Loom Fringe Weaving), #3 Suggested Museums with Tape Collections, #4 Draft and Chart Templates. There are Notes for sources and origins of references, a Weaving Glossary, and a Bibliography.

*Reviewed by Diana Frost  
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