



RAG RUG HANDBOOK Revised Edition

by Janet Meany and Paula Pfaff
Fusion Press, 1210 E 115th Street,
Burnsville, Minnesota 55337
2016. Softcover. 127 pages. \$26.95.

When I graduated from the university with a degree in Textile Arts, I was determined to come up with a textile craft that was uniquely my own. A friend showed me how she sewed fabrics to make rag rugs. It did not take long for me to become totally hooked. I wanted to develop something that was my own way of weaving, not influenced by the work of others. As a result, I refused to read the books that were available on how others completed their weaving. I worked hard and I managed to come up with a style that was my own. It is only recently that I have begun to read the books that are on my shelves.

One of the first books I picked up was the original edition of the *Rag Rug Handbook* by Janet Meany and Paula Pfaff. I did not really read the whole book. I read the cut lines under the illustrations and bits here and there. Even with that slap-dash way of reading, I learned a trick or two. My loom was sitting on a hardwood floor and it would walk across the room because with rag rugs, you need to beat hard to pack the weft into place. Page six contained an illustration of how to brace the loom against a wall with boards laid on the floor. I found two boards for each loom and I have not had that problem since.

When I was asked to review this revised edition of the book, I actually sat down and read the book from cover to cover. Once again I found information that was useful. When you weave a header on a rag rug using the same thread that is used for the warp, it produces a fine header but when the rug is washed, the header is inclined to shrink more than the fabric portion of the rug. Under *Hints for Headings*, I found that you should use doubled or tripled warp thread for the weft and the header will not shrink as much.

The book has a dozen different ways that you can weave rag rugs with pattern instructions included for each. The new edition includes a color photo section showing how each rug appears. There are also color photos of other rugs to inspire readers and an updated list of suppliers. A history of the technique, illustrations of antique looms, information about the manufacturers and the claims that they made to sell their looms make interesting reading. If you did not have any other book, you could learn how to tie up your loom, cut your fabrics, and weave many different rugs. This book tells you everything that you need to know to be a rag rug weaver. I highly recommend it.

*Reviewed by Bonnie Montgomery
Watkinsville, Georgia*