

HOBBIES



MINIATURE LOOM is used by Mrs. Gordon Mitchell to weave wefts of hair, part of the process in making doll wigs. Dolls

in foreground all have wigs of natural hair which she made and styled.

Doll Wig Art Is Revived

By MILDRED ANN SMITH

Several beauty operators in town are saving shorn locks of hair these days.

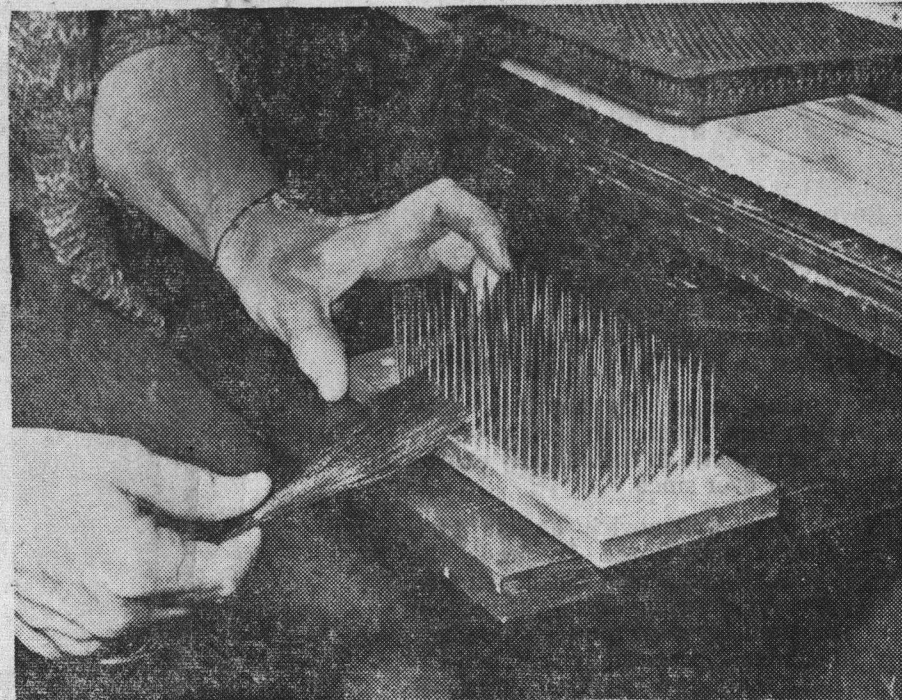
And they're giving them to Mrs. Gordon Mitchell of 161 Sixth avenue for her hobby—making doll wigs of real hair.

It all started when she decided to repair some dolls for her grandchildren, sad dolls without any hair. First she tried to make a wig by sewing it on her sewing machine. This was a complete failure.

Mrs. Mitchell, however, was a persevering grandmother. She didn't give up because she was sure there was a way.

Then she heard of 84-year-old Mrs. Birdie Tucker of 420 Pennsylvania avenue who formerly ran a doll repair shop in Stockton. Mrs. Tucker's specialty was making doll wigs as was her mother's before her.

Under her expert tutelage Mrs. Mitchell began her wig-making and learned it's becoming a lost art—only one doll wig maker is listed in the national Hobby magazine. (Part of this is probably due to the increased use of synthetic materials and also the



FIRST STEP in making a wig is to pull the hair through hackle to separate the short hairs from long ones and give it added sheen. Locks of hair then are placed in weaving card, in background, and pulled out a few at a time to be woven into wefts on a loom.

increased use of natural hair in wigs for human "dolls," Mrs. Mitchell explained.)

This was five months ago. After she completed the wigs for her grandchildren's dolls she was so fascinated by the hobby that she continued on with it. Her husband is manager of Graham's Music store and she works there too, so she keeps her wig-making para-

phernalia handy to work on when she's not busy.

Her 12-year-old granddaughter, Terry Horton of Albuquerque, N.M., even sent some of her own hair and asked to have a doll wig made of it. Mrs. Mitchell obliged by buying a china doll reproduction (head, hands and feet), made the body, again with the help of Mrs. Tucker, dressed it in an

old-fashioned gown and made the wig with long curls.

Since then Mrs. Mitchell has made wigs for the dolls of several of her young friends here.

"It makes a doll special when its hair is the same as its young owner, she points out.

Here's the way she explains the wig-making process;

Most wigs are made from locks of hair at least six inches long. First the hair is pulled through a hackle (a nail device which separates the short hair from the long and gives it sheen.)

The "hackled" hair then is tied and placed between weaving cards (two pieces of masonite also with nails) until ready for weaving on the loom.

Mrs. Mitchell's loom was made by her husband from specifications supplied by Mrs. Tucker. On the loom the hair is woven in and out between

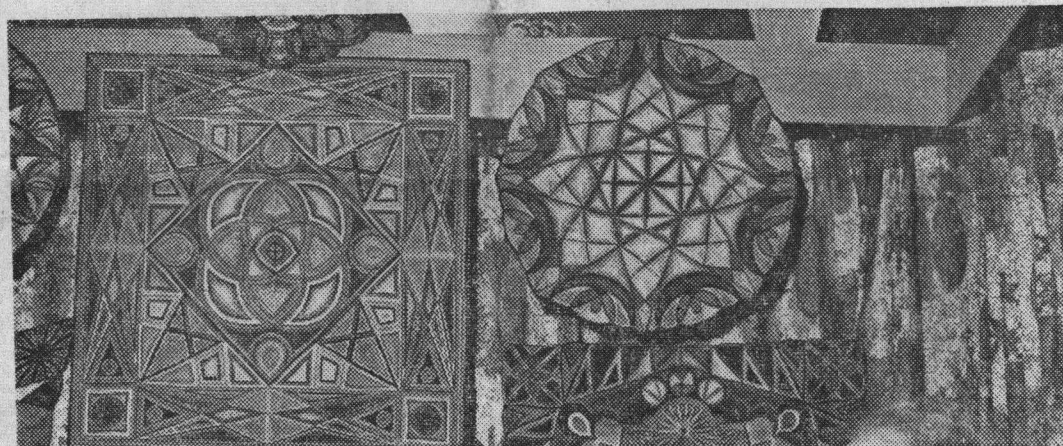


TEDIOUS PART of wig making is sewing the wefts of hair on the crown as Mrs. Mitchell is doing above. Hair is kept braided until the wig is finished.

strands of thread. Two threads are used for short-haired wigs and three for longer bobs. The completed lengths of woven hair are called wefts. Separate weaving, using four threads, is done for the wig's part.

The wig crown is made from the toe of a lisle stocking, first starched with glue and shaped over the doll's head. With enough wefts completed, Mrs. Mitchell is ready to sew them on the crown. The manner in which they are sewn depends on the way the completed wig is to be styled. In some cases she begins at the base of the crown and continues in a circle. For other hairdos the wefts are sewn across the top of the crown.

The hair, kept braided until the wig is completed, and glued on the doll's head, then is ready to be styled. It can be pincurled, put up in rollers or even given a permanent—just like a real live doll's.





UNIQUE HOBBY — *Making geometrical-patterned needlework "pictures" has been the long-time hobby of Mrs. Marie Fries of 2120 North Pacific avenue. She*

creates the intricate patterns as she sews, yet each is perfect to the eye and there are no two alike.

She 'Paints' Pictures With Needle And Thread

Mrs. Marie Fries is a non-painting member of the Santa Cruz Art League.

Yet she is rightfully classified as an artist, known for her outstanding work in color and design.

But instead of using oils or watercolors, she "paints" with a needle and thread. Her "pictures" are like fine tapestries, each done in intricate geometric pattern with delicately shaded colorings.

Seeing them on the walls of her mobile home at El Rio park one is reminded of stained glass windows or seeing a collection of many-faceted jewels. And no two are alike.

Using a form of backstitch, she does these without following a pattern, turning out her own continuous set of designs which are all eye perfect.

"I couldn't even copy my own work if I tried," says Mrs. Fries, noting that she's as amazed as anyone at the unique results. "The designs and colors just seem to come to me as I go along."

She achieves all of her combinations without the use of variegated thread, preferring to create her own shadings with the pure colors. Boilfast thread, she's found, doesn't dim with the years, some of her older pieces still looking as clear and sparkling as when they were made.

Many of her "pictures" take the form of wall hangings, table scarves and doilies. Each is composed of thousands of stitches, completely covering the original piece of linen which serves as her "canvas."

One five by five-inch piece she did for the Toronto fair contains 12,812 stitches.

Mrs. Fries has a stack of blue ribbons from fairs on the east coast and also from the Santa Cruz county fair since moving out here in 1951.

But now that she's not sewing "quite as much" as she used to (she's doing less fine needlework and more sewing for charity projects), Mrs. Fries thinks she's through displaying her unusual hobby — with one exception:

She will have an exhibit at the "family heirlooms and keepsake" show at her church, First Congregational, on November 16.

"It is something to look at," she admits.

—Betty Bushman