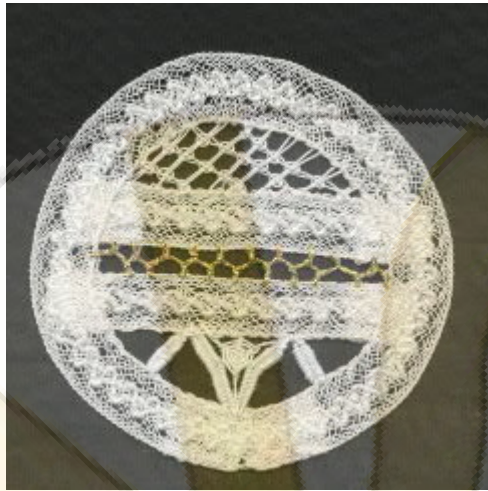


A Taste of Battenberg Lace



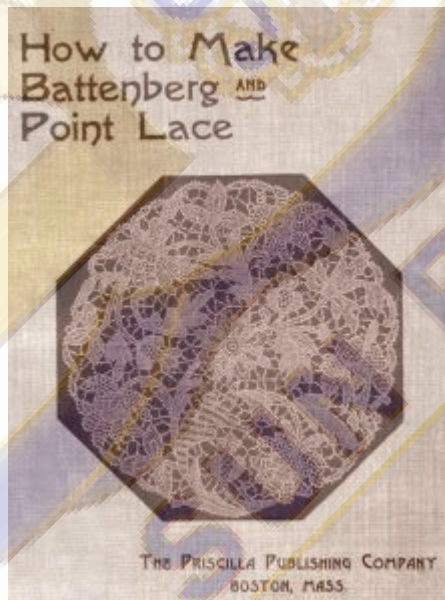
a project inspired by

How to Make Battenberg and Point Lace

by

Nellie Clark Brown

(Published in 1900 by The Priscilla Publishing Company, Boston, MA)



Available in hardcopy from: Amazon.com, Lacin, and other sources

Available for digital download from:

Archive.org (<https://archive.org/details/howtomakebattenboobrow>)

Antique Pattern Library (<http://www.antiquepatternlibrary.org/html/warm/6-DA018.htm>)

and the Arizona State Pattern Library (https://www.cs.arizona.edu/patterns/weaving/books/bnc_lace.pdf)

1. Getting Started

Battenberg patterns are usually printed or traced on paper. In 1900, I suspect the paper was probably a kraft paper like butcher paper or brown grocery-bag paper. I've printed my pattern on card-stock which I feel makes for an easier-to-handle foundation for a beginning project but wouldn't be suitable for a larger project.

A) Basting the tape to the pattern

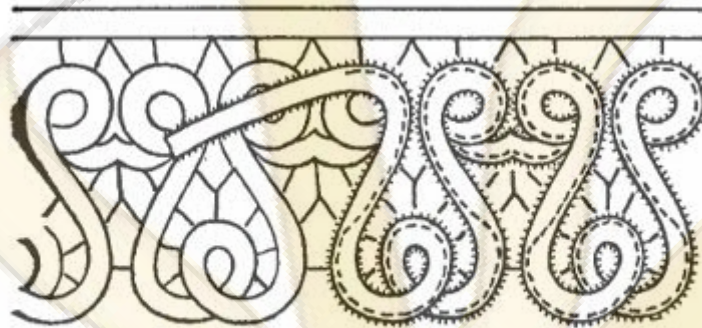


FIG. 2. METHOD OF BASTING BRAID IN BATTENBERG AND POINT LACE.

In most patterns the braid is represented by a double line. In basting, one edge of the braid should follow the outer line of the pattern, and the basting threads should be placed through the open edge of the braid and upon the outer line of the pattern designating the braid. When the progress of the pattern changes the outer line or curve, to which you have been basting, to the inner curve, the basting thread should be carried across the braid as is shown in the illustration (Fig. 2), and the basting continued along what is now the outer edge (How to Make Battenberg & Point Lace (H2MB&PL) p 6.)

I used a polyester sewing thread in a contrasting color to do my basting. I started basting about $\frac{3}{4}$ " from the raw end of the tape. That allowed me to "tuck and tack" the raw ends later on.

B) Overcasting

After the braid has all been carefully basted into place, the full inner edges of the curves must also be brought into place. To do this they must be overcast with a very fine linen thread. This overcasting thread should pass over and over the edge of the braid and into each of its marginal loops. Only occasionally, on very large, slightly curved lines, may a loop be here and there omitted.

The overcasting thread should not be drawn tight enough to draw the braid from its place on the pattern, but it should be tight enough to hold the inner gathered edge smoothly down to the pattern, where it must fit as flatly as its opposite outer edge. (H2MB&PL p 6.)

Notes

The pattern I created for this "taste" is NOT a typical Battenberg pattern. Typical Battenberg patterns snake along in a continuous line. The tape is laid across itself, frequently with tight folds and sharp corners, as in Fig. 2 from the Clark book.

Also, when I made my sample, I basted the circle first and finished the raw ends on top of the tape. Then I basted the horizontal bars into place on top of the circle and finished their raw ends on top of the tape. Since Battenberg lace has a right side and a wrong side, this meant that I worked the filling stitches on the wrong side.

This proved to be less than ideal.

If I make the motif again, I'll baste the bars first, with their raw ends finished toward the bottom of the tape, not the top. Then,

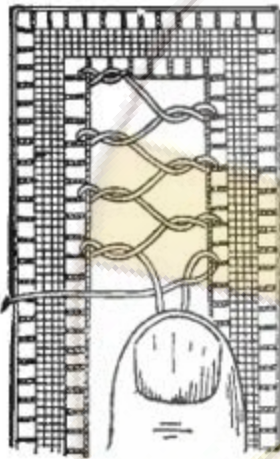
I'll baste and overcast the circle and, although it will be more difficult (I might have to wait until after I remove the basting) I'll finish the circle's raw ends to the bottom of the tape. This will allow me to work the filling stitches on the right side of the motif, which will look better.

I didn't have a "very fine linen thread" available, so I used my DMC Cordonet 60/0, which worked all right. I also used a non-contrast polyester sewing thread, and that worked all right, too. I tried overcasting into "each of its marginal loops," and that didn't work very well (I suspect that the tapes have changed since 1900). Overall, I wound up overcasting into every other loop.

In my first attempt, I did about four inches of overcasting before I tried to gather/draw up the inner edge. That didn't work at all! Gather/draw up the inner edge every half-inch, or less, if you're working a tight curve.

2. Filling Stitches

1) Twisted Russian Stitch (insertion between the two bars – done in Kreinik #4 gold braid in the sample)

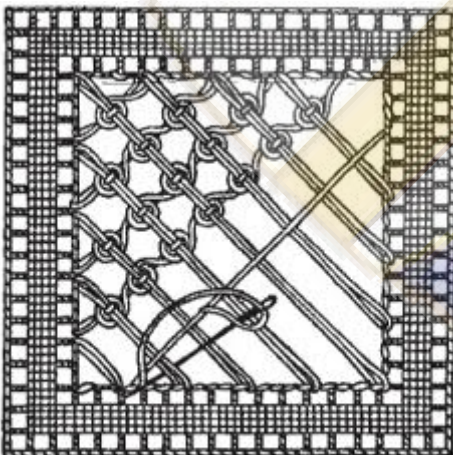


The twisted Russian stitch, is a trifle more complicated (than the Plain Russian Stitch). As in the plain Russian stitch, the stitches alternate from right to left, but the method of holding the thread down with the left thumb differs. The thread is fastened at the upper left-hand corner and carried forward over the space to be filled. The thumb is then placed upon it as near the point of fastening as is practical, and the thread is brought to the right and again slipped under the thumb, forming an open loop, upon both sides of which the thumb rests. The needle is then thrust through the edge of the braid at the right, with the point directed to the opposite left. It is then passed over the right-hand thread of the loop, under the left-hand thread, and drawn up. It is well to leave the thumb on the loop till the stitch is nearly completed, as it avoids tangling the thread and causes a more even twist.

Again the thumb holds down the thread, which is then brought up on the left side and slipped under the thumb as before. The needle is thrust through the braid at the left over the loose side of the loop and under the other or right side. This is repeated until the space is filled. The same effect may be produced by using the plain Russian stitch, and with an overcasting stitch producing the extra twist; but this takes more time and is not as even in results. (H2MB&PL p 12.)

Note: this stitch is reversible

2) Spider on Wheel Stitch (cross-hatched section of the motif)



This is a very rich and beautiful filling for large spaces. Beginning at the upper left corner, a diagonal line is laid across the space at an angle of forty-five degrees. The thread is then returned, but without twisting, to the first end of the diagonal line, so that the two threads form a double line lying close together but not crossing. At the selected distance a second line parallel with the first is laid across the space, and the thread as before returned to its beginning. This is repeated until the space is filled with rows of double parallel lines at equal distances apart.

Beginning near the upper right corner, a diagonal line is laid across the first lines at an angle of forty-five degrees, which makes it at right angles with the first series. The thread, on its return to the starting place, is passed three or four times around the threads of the intersections, which are not tied. This working thread most always pass under the double threads of the completed series of parallel lines and over the single lines. When the wheel is sufficiently large, the thread is passed to the next intersection (which in case of the first row is the braid). A second thread is thrown across the space parallel with the first, and upon its return wheels are made at each intersection. This is continued until the space is filled. (H2MB&PL p 26)

FIG. 70. SPIDER OR WHEEL STITCH.

Note: this stitch is NOT reversible and looks best when viewed from the right side

3) Woven bars (symmetrical filling in the last section of the motif)

I divided up this space with some plain-ol' Hardanger woven bars, which, at least in the Nellie Clark book, are not standard-issue Battenberg fillings. But they're not completely unknown in Battenberg, either, as Ms Clark explains at the very end of her description of the Point d'Anvers Bar...



FIG. 18. POINT D'ANVERS BAR.

For the filling in of leaf-shaped spaces, and need as an insertion for long narrow spaces, Point d'Anvers bars are equally good. The thread is fastened at the middle of one end of the space to be filled, and carried along the edge of the braid, one stitch to the right. It is then brought across the length of the space and attached to the braid, the same distance from the centre of the space as it is removed by the overcasting stitch at the opposite end. The thread is then carried by overcasting stitches a distance to the left, equally distant from the centre. It is then carried back in a parallel line to the opposite, or first end of the space, and fastened. The two lines of thread should be perfectly parallel, and drawn tightly across the space, but not so tightly that they will draw the braid out of place. Keeping these foundation threads absolutely parallel, the working thread is passed in a darning or wearing stitch over and under them for the desired distance. Then the first pair of side loops or leaflets is made. The process of the weaving brings the working thread over the right bar. It is then passed behind it and over the left bar as during the preceding weaving, and is passed through the edge of the braid at the left side of the space, with the point of the needle toward the already Woven end of the work. The thread is then

brought under the right bar and under the last passing of the thread across the bars. It is then passed behind the left bar and over the right, and the two side loops being in place, the weaving of the bar is continued until the place for the next pair of side loops is reached, when the process is repeated. This is continued until the filling of the space is completed. For short connecting bars the Point d'Anvers bar is sometimes used without the side loops. (H2MB&PL p 10)

Note: this stitch is reversible – with or without the “leaflets”

4) Wheels (or spiders – between one of more of the woven bars)



FIG. 20. SPINNING WHEEL.

Again, these are plain-ol' Hardanger wheels and spiders, but the instructions for how to make them, are pure 1900...

Wheels or spiders are made on a foundation of plain twisted bars. The number of bars depends on the size of the space. They are cast across the space to be filled at distances from each other, and in such a manner that they all cross in the centre [of] the space. They form diameters, whose halves of are radii of a circle. The first bar divides the space into halves and is overcast back to the starting point. The thread is then overcast along the edge of the braid for the required distance and again carried across the space, crossing the first thread and entering the braid at

the right place and overcast back to its beginning. This is repeated until the last bar has been overcast to the centre, when all the threads may be fastened together with a buttonhole knot or not, as preferred. The spider is then woven.

This is accomplished by passing the needle over and under the different radii formed by the bars and keeping the woven thread drawn tightly or snugly to the centre. This is continued until the spider is of sufficient size, when the remaining radius or half bar is overcast and the thread cut. (H2MB&PL p 10)

Note: the “spinning wheel” is completely reversible

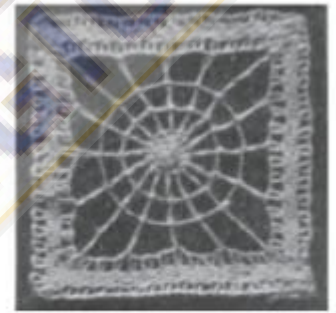


FIG. 21. SPINNING WHEEL WITH KNOTTED CIRCLES.

2. Finishing

Remove the basting. Block the motif gently with dampened pressing cloth

In addition to the Nellie Clark book, which has a lot of instruction but very few patterns, there are several other public-domain Battenberg books available for download from the Internet.

Madame Goubaud's Point Lace Book (<http://www.antiquepatternlibrary.org/html/warm/6-DA001.htm>)

Instructions and Patterns, Numerous Illustrations. London: Ward, Lock and Tyler, [c. 1880], 56 pgs.

Battenberg-type laces; with an encyclopedia of point stitches - points, bars, edgings, wheels -and patterns for the laces.

La Dentelle Renaissance (<http://www.antiquepatternlibrary.org/html/warm/7-JA001.htm>)

Therese de Dillmont, editor (DMC publication 1890)

Needle laces made with manufactured tapes and braids (many no longer available) that work up quickly to stunning results. The linen patterns tracing patterns can also be used by Battenberg and Romanian Point lacemakers

Treatise on Embroidery, Knitting and Modern Lace Work, with color illustrations from original models

(<http://www.antiquepatternlibrary.org/html/warm/heminway.htm>)

M. Heminway & Sons Silk Co. NY c.1910; 152 pages

Detailed embroidery instructions, exquisite embroidered flowers, Battenberg lace instructions and examples, church embroidery patterns, fancy bags, doilies, knit and crocheted children's and baby items, beaded bags with pattern charts.

How to Make Lace – author unknown, Christie & Co, NYC, 1899

https://www.cs.arizona.edu/patterns/weaving/books/archive_023.pdf

Old Point Lace and How to Copy it (https://www.cs.arizona.edu/patterns/weaving/books/archive_036.pdf)

Daisy Waterhouse Hawkins, Chatto and Windus; Piccadilly (London, UK), 1878

102 pages

