

TRADITIONAL MAT HOOKING WORKSHOPS -

L'ANSE AU LOUP - February 24-28, 2010

MARY'S HARBOUR -March 1-4, 2010

REPORT

by

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**Sponsors: Labrador Straits Development Corporation
Southern Aurora Development Corporation
Rug Hooking Guild of Newfoundland and Labrador**

INTRODUCTION

Introductory Mat Hooking Workshops were held in L'Anse au Loup (30 hours) and Mary's Harbour (24 hours) in late February and early March, 2010. There were ten participants in the workshop at L'Anse au Loup (all beginners) and eleven participants at Mary's Harbour (four with some previous experience). The instructor was Joan Foster of Springdale. Funding for the project was provided primarily by the Craft Industry Development Program and supplemented by a \$1000 contribution from the Rug Hooking Guild of Newfoundland and Labrador as well as payment of a \$50 fee by each participant. Evaluations Forms are attached.

PARTICIPANTS

L'Anse Au Loup: Initially the proposal was for an 18 hour weekend workshop but was increased to 30 hours. Several of the participants of this group work full time. Therefore, the workshop had to be scheduled for evenings as well as Saturday and Sunday and some applicants were not aware of the increase in hours until just before the workshop started. This was one reason some backed out. Also, several participants were late in starting due to a death in the community. Two spots went unfilled at this location.

Michelle Normore Ryland	L'Anse Au Loup
Deidre Barney	L'Anse Au Loup
Pauline O'Dell	L'Anse Au Loup
Selma Normore	L'Anse Au Loup
Selma Ryland	L'Anse Au Loup
Evelyn Russell	L'Anse Au Loup
Vera Hancock	L'Anse Au Loup
Caroline O'Brien	L'Anse Au Loup
Josephine O'Dell	West St. Modeste
Agnes Cabot	West St. Modeste

Mary's Harbour: This workshop ran one evening and three full days for a total of 24 hours.

Nine of the participants attended the full course, one left a day early to catch a flight for an appointment and another started on the last day. Weather conditions closed the road leaving two participants unable to get home on the first day - only one of these decided to start once she made it to Mary's Hr. One spot went unfilled.

Rosalind Rumbolt	Mary's Harbour
Ivy Moss	Mary's Harbour
Loretta Campbell	Mary's Harbour
Doretha Rumbolt	Mary's Harbour
Patsy Rumbolt	Mary's Harbour
Joan Rumbolt	Mary's Harbour
Jean Tumbolt	Mary's Harbour
Mary Stevens	Mary's Harbour
Rosetta Smith	Mary's Harbour
Ella Simms	Mary's Harbour
Verna Pye	Lodge Bay

The three remaining frames and kits were sold at Mary's Harbour to individuals who will be taught to hook by workshop participants.

COURSE CONTENT

The goals of the workshop were to (1) introduce the participants to the basics of traditional mat hooking including history, preparing patterns on burlap, equipment and materials to use, hooking technique and methods of finishing and caring for mats and (2) to introduce them to the concepts of design, color planning, and dyeing materials for use in hooking mats and to raise awareness of copyright, quality control, pricing and marketing issues.

These goals were met although they required very intensive work by the instructor and participants especially at Mary's Harbour given the shorter time period. Each person hooked a

10" x 10" sampler using materials such as polyester knits, home spun yarn, wool material and hosiery. At L'Anse au Loup four people completed the project entirely including cording and whipping the edges and sewing binding tape to the back so that the piece was ready to hang. The other four had most of the hooking finished and felt they could do the finishing on their own. At Mary's Harbour several had the hooking almost finished and were confident they could do the finishing themselves.

At each location a session was spent dyeing materials using stove top and microwave methods. Again, all four types of materials were dyed using Kool-Aid and Tintex dye. Natural dyeing was also discussed. Each student also designed and put on burlap either a full size floor mat or a smaller pattern which will serve as their next project. Color planning for these designs was also discussed as well as instruction in how to use the color wheel.

A number of heritage mats belonging to residents of the area were brought in at each location. Participants were able to observe first hand the patterns, types of materials used, the workmanship and creativity of their forebearers and to realize the mat hooking heritage which exists along this coast especially the Grenfell style of mat hooking. There is definitely potential to use this heritage and these older mats as a tourist attraction and an opportunity for income from the sale of mats once these participants have honed their skills.

The Rug Hooking Guild of Newfoundland and Labrador donated two copies of its book *Hooked Mats of Newfoundland and Labrador: Beauty Born of Necessity*. A draw was held at its location with Michelle Normore Ryland and Joan Rumbolt winning copies. A year's subscription to *Rug Hooking Magazine* is also being donated by a Guild member for each site and will be sent to the Library at L'Anse au Loup and to the Anglican Church Women President in Mary's Harbour. Each participant was also given a \$5.00 voucher which can be used towards the cost of Guild membership for 2010-2011. All were encouraged to join the Guild.

FACILITIES

At L'Anse au Loup the Town Hall's Recreation Room and at Mary's Harbour the Multi-purpose Room of the Recreation Centre were used. Both these facilities are excellent for such workshops. The rooms were sufficiently large and well lighted. Access to kitchen areas for the dyeing demonstrations were available at both locations. I would definitely recommend both sites for future workshops.

OUTCOME/RESULTS

These workshops resulted in twenty-one people learning the traditional skill of mat hooking including the four who improved their skills and learned new techniques. It is unfortunate that the workshops were not filled. Due to various circumstances people backed out or were unable to attend at each location.

The majority of the participants indicated that they took the course mainly as a hobby although some see the potential to become producers and to augment their income through the sale of hooked items such as coasters, wall hangings or floor mats. One participant at Mary's Harbour has previously produced hooked items and sold them. The workshops also seemed to revive an interest in mat hooking in both areas and I feel there is potential for many more participants in such workshops especially since these workshops seemed to target people in the communities in which they were held. A number of visitors dropped by at both locations to see what was happening.

RECOMMENDATIONS/COMMENTS

Because of the revival of interest in this traditional skill and the likelihood that there are many more people in the area who would be interested, I would recommend **that this workshop be repeated at other locations along the Straits and/or along the Coast and that it be offered at a time of year when travel would not pose potential problems for either the**

students or the instructor.

Some of the participants of this workshop seem interested in producing to sell so every encouragement should be given to increasing their skills. Regular weekly or monthly hook-ins where they would get together were suggested and should be encouraged. I would recommend **that follow up workshops be given possibly in the fall to increase their design and marketing skills; to develop a set of designs specific to the area; and to in service them on the hooking of these designs, especially if they are pictorial type mats.**

The time frame for the L'Anse au Loup workshop was very rushed, both for the students and for the instructor and very tiring for those working full time. Doing what is normally a five day workshop in evenings and the weekend is stressful on all concerned and I would recommend **that this be avoided in future as a maximum of six hours per day of mat hooking instruction is preferred** and will get the best results.

There is sometimes a breakdown in communications when multiple groups and people are involved in organizing workshops. It is essential that **the groups and individuals doing the organization, the instructor and all participants be kept informed of all developments.**

Students are more likely to not back out of a workshop if they have preregistered. In order to ensure full classes in future I would recommend **that participants preregister paying a non refundable deposit in advance.**

March 5, 2010