Weaving

Women were taught to weave using surplus wool waste from weaving mills and jute from surplus burlap bags furnished by the government. (At the suggestion of Victor Schmitt, who directed the unit, the bags were dyed before they were unraveled – to brighten the workplace and help women see the relationship of their unraveling work to the finished products.) In the early days project workers made table runners, mats, napkins and simple rugs. Later drapery fabric was woven.
Handwoven drapery fabric could be ordered by the yard in a variety of colors and textiles.
Since teachers often requested samples of handicrafts to use as supplementary teaching materials, workers produced educational portfolios on weaving, bookbinding and blockprinting techniques.
Women were frequently asked to explain their work to visitors. Workers provided a week of on-site demonstration at Schuster’s Department Store.
Men built 40-inch-wide floor looms using Elsa Ulbricht’s design. Small table looms were also used to experiment with new materials, weavings and color combinations.
With the introduction of furniture, sturdy upholstery materials were made.
See Mary Kellogg Rice, *Useful Work for Unskilled Women: A Unique Milwaukee WPA Project* (Milwaukee County Historical Society, 2003) for references and photo credits.