

Coverlet c 1850

Blue wool weft - natural cotton warp.
Ref. Keep me Warm One Night, Burnhams #313

The Comfortable Arts - Burnham #116

Charles Irvin

Peel County Weaver

Mount Charles (Derry & Dixie Rds)
Single Chariot Wheel "

pattern variation
Signed "Charlie" in reed for the weaver or son Charles

It is certainly one of the most important pieces in the collection since it came with extensive biography since family history and direct provenance from the granddaughter of the weaver Charles Irvin. It was purchased from David Wells, some other times Antiques, Strickville. He acquired it from his neighbour Miss Hengill who was a direct descendant of the weaver Charles Irvin. He wove in what is now north east Mississauga NE. of the Derry and Dixie Road intersection. Charles Irvin is buried in the pioneer cemetery beside his farm.

The name Charles Irvin became public when his loom was purchased for the weaver's shed restoration at Black Creek Pioneer Village c 1970. They were able to acquire one coverlet (rust red) also for their collection. Dorothy Burnham featured that coverlet in the Comfortable Arts - Natural Gallery of Canada touring exhibition in 1981. The ROM does not have one in their collection. This is the only the second one known.

The pattern variation is "Single Chariot Wheel." It is a dramatic weave not often seen. (The Black Creek sample is a Five Roses variation (also here in the tower))

This is the only known sample with the name "Charlie" carefully stitched into the top left front.

Condition: Exceptional - unused condition

Source: Direct family line - through Hengill of Strickville some other time Antiques, Strickville Miss Hengill lived next door to David Wells owner of the shop.

Dimensions 69" (175.5 cm) wide x 79" (201 cm) l. not incl. fringe
great fringe and quality weaving



Charles Linn
See Masons Coat of arms pattern



"Charlie" signed embroidered
name on the Charles Ives Charles Ives
corset. Perhaps intended for his son.
Some other time Antiquer - David Wells
purchased this attributed Corset.
from his neighbour Miss Newgill
in Strutsville a descendant of
Charles Ives

Charles Irvin (2) (1793 - 1862)

weaver & yeoman of Mt. Charles
Upper Canada
Mt. Charles at Elvie Road Cherry Rd corner
2 miles west of Malton

William Irvine (1796 - 1860) bachelor

Cabinet Maker & yeoman of Mt. Charles

Both born in N. Ireland

Both sent to Preston Lancashire England for training in their respective trades after their father Charles Irvine) a cavalry officer with the British army in N. Ireland was accidentally killed.

Emigrated to New York in 1826.

In New York Charles Irvin set up a weaving business. He spent some six years there as a manufacturer at 153 Eighth Avenue.

In 1832 Charles followed his brother William to Upper Canada. Each brother established himself on 100 acre lots at Mt. Charles.

The Charles Irvin (2) loom, set up in the house (3rd line lot 12 and finished in 1837), wove many yards of material for settlers in the district. The account books of Charles Irvin record the accounts with these people from 1833 to 1855. ^{the} Later books have been lost.

William Irvine built several houses in Malton (lots 13 & 14) (lots 153 & 154) as mentioned in his will dated Dec 29, 1859. Several pieces of furniture he made are still with the family.

Charles Irvin died in 1862. He and many descendants are buried in Mt. Charles cemetery. William Irvine who died in 1860 is also buried there.

The Irvine farm house in Nov. 1923.

3rd line near Mt Charles corner
Built in 1837 by Charles Irvine (weaver) - loom now in Pineau village
additions + remodeling about 1880 hanging wheel maybe Toronto
around 1880

Basement 1st floor had huge fireplace - several rooms there
used as bedrooms before renovations.
Probably loom + hanging wheel setup in this part of house.
There were several large fireplaces used for heating + cooking
but these had been blocked up when new additions put
in and when stones came into use.

2 farms 100 acres on 3rd line Charles Irvine (1793-1862) weaver
100 acres on 4th line William Irvine (1796-1860) cabinet
maker
on deed to John Irvine (grandson of Charles) 1919
in township of Toronto in County of Peel being comprised of West half of lot 12
in the 4th Con. Twp. to Twp. East of Hurontario St 100 acres more or less

Charles Irvine (weaver) Dublin England trained born in N Ireland 1793
to New York 1826 - to Canada 1832

This Picture taken by Arthur Irvine
(great grandson of Charles) November 1923

Irvine Farm house as seen from lane
at right end - the start of long verandah
old structure is the central part large chimney
front wing added about 1880
verandah left - large driveway etc.

Farm house original part finished 1837 built by Charles Irvine
additions put on about 1880 by Mrs Charles Irvine (Harriet Barton)

Original deed - "Enter King's College Register Vol 2 Page 172
dated 1842 some
years after the
family had settled
and built on property
1832"

to Charles Irvine
South East half of lot 12 in 4th Con. Twp.
East of Hurontario Street

Irvine Farm (3rd line, Dixie Rd, Mt Charles)
1972 owned by J. Boylen.

This picture taken by Arthur Irvine Nov. 1923
(great grandson of Charles)

3rd line (Irvine Rd) above Cherry Rd (Maitland Rd)
 Looking south from Irvine farm gate
 can see where Rd crosses Etobicoke River bridge
 dark spot to left with white dot is
 Mt Charles cemetery. Buried there are
 weaver Charles Irvine 1793-1862 } brothers
 William Irvine 1796-1860 }
 Charles Irvine 1822-1869 - son of Charles Irvine
 and family

Note: Bridge built by Price & Grafton for Jno. Price Barker Hooper

Picture taken in Nov 1923 by Arthur Price Irvine
 grandson of Charles Irvine
 great grandson of Chas. Irvine
 weaver

Irvine farm house as seen from lane
 at right end the start of long verandah
 Old structure is the central part - large chimney
 Front wing added abt 1880 -
 Entrance left - large driving shed

Farm house original part 1837 built by Charles Irvine 1837
 additional portion abt 1880 by Harriet Barker Irvine (mythology)
on original deed "Entered Kings College Register Vol 2 Page 172"
 To Charles Irvine
 South East Half of Lot 12 in 4th Con of Toronto
 East of Hurontario Street "

Picture taken by Arthur Irvine Nov. 1923

Weaver's Shop

by
R. Cooper



Warping the rag rug loom is a slow and tedious job which requires lots of patience and a good working knowledge of looms.

RESearch FOR CREATING an 1867 weaver's shop is an intriguing proposition, and one learns that a flying shuttle is not an air commuter service between Toronto and Montreal, and the pick is not the ice pick which one uses to do away with one's mother-in-law. To put it quite simply, a flying shuttle was the invention that made possible the eventual mechanization of the loom, and its development forecast the end of the cottage weaving industry. The pick is a little piece of wood with a leather attachment which is used to propel the flying shuttle as it speeds on its way busily weaving cloth.

Each year at Black Creek Pioneer Village, in Metro Toronto, we open at least one new building, and in 1972 we decided that we should unveil an 1867 weaver's shop. It seemed impossible to find a building which was used at that period as a weaver's shop, and so we decided to use a section of a building which had originally stood in Kettleby and was built as a Temperance Hall. The area involved was not large, but we thought it would be sufficient to show the activities of a weaver in a village with a population of approximately 200 people.

One of the first problems of course, was to make sure that the room could cope with well over 250,000 visitors a year, and at the same time, not destroy the appearance of authenticity which is so important in a living historical village. The room which had been decided upon was ideal for visitors in that there are two doors which means there could be a constant traffic flow in and out. By slightly redesigning a store counter, which had been purchased from a dealer in Baden, we were able to create a traffic flow pattern which has worked out well.

The colour decor in a weaver's shop is most important because the room must be kept as light as possible in order to save the eyes of our 1972 weavers. Of course, colours must be authentic and we picked a mustard yellow for the walls, but left the ceiling almost a natural

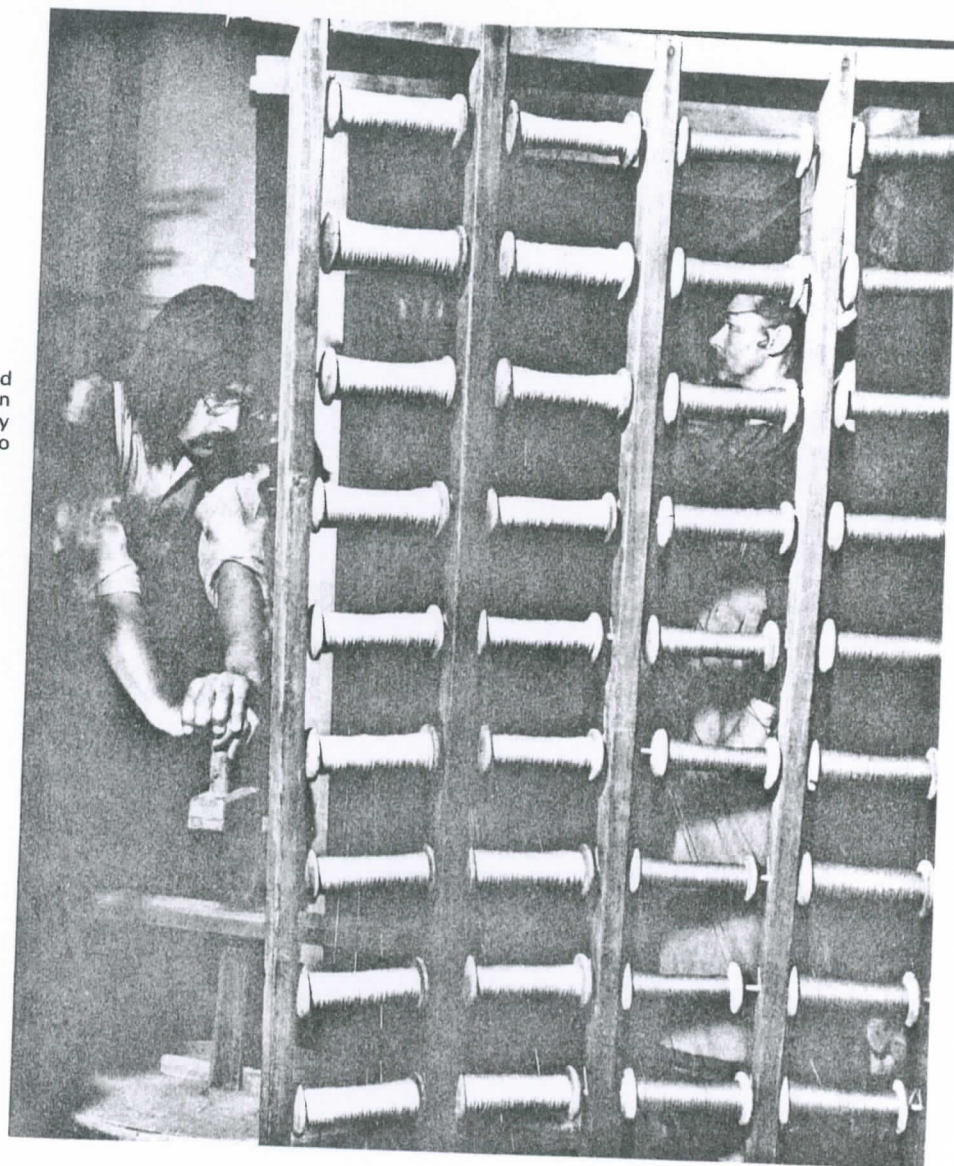
white. The counter top which is solid walnut, was finished with a dark stain.

While the building was being prepared, the Village research staff was busy finding out every conceivable detail that was available about 1860 weavers' shops. This was a time consuming project under the direction of Miss Lorraine Sewell. Sources such as contemporary and modern authors, newspapers and periodicals, and of course, deeds, wills and bankruptcy notices of Ontario weavers had to be researched. It was difficult finding anything resembling an inventory, but eventually Miss Sewell was able to locate a bankruptcy notice in the Street papers at the Provincial Archives. This produced an interesting list, but it was handwritten, and took considerable time and stamina to decipher it.

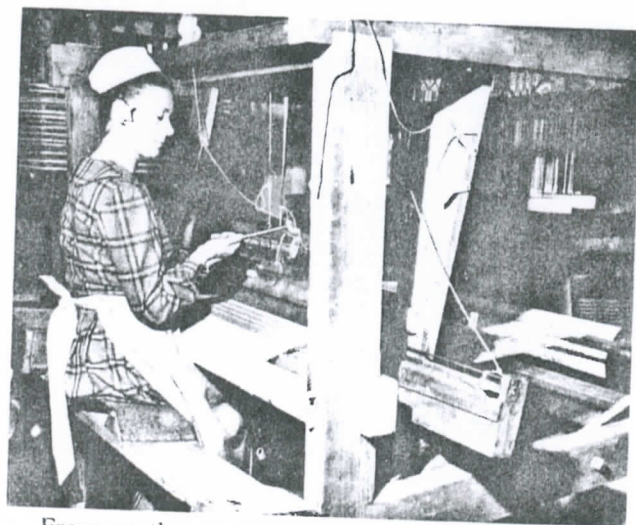
Contemporary books of the period were great, however most of the authors assumed that the reader had some knowledge of weaving at that time, and neglected to give the basic information which we required. We were able to learn many interesting facts about the weaving profession in the middle of the 19th century. As an example, the Canadian Classified Directory of 1865-66 listed the incredible number of 630 persons registered as weavers who were working in rural Canada West. Canadian author, Catherine Parr Traill, verified that rag rugs were being woven in 1853, and we decided right from the first that one of the looms in the Village should be used for this purpose.

From contemporary newspapers we found out the approximate layout for advertising signs in a weaver's shop and what the wording on these signs should be. Newspapers also gave us some idea of the costs and values associated with a weaver's business and we were able to confirm something of which we were almost positive—that the weaver was deeply involved in barter with his customers.

The creel in the foreground holds 48 spools. The man on the left turns a large pulley which winds the warp on to the mill.



An experienced operator working a flying shuttle loom can weave about three times as fast as on the conventional loom but she requires good co-ordination of hands and feet.



From another source we were able to find that cotton warp was readily available in the very early 1800's. One paper also verified that the spinning wheel was an integral part of a weaver's shop, and that the weaver oftentimes took in raw wool and had it spun on his premises.

Once the research was completed, the next step was to decide on the equipment, and as mentioned earlier, we

had already decided on a rag rug loom. The logical one was used by a weaver in Newcastle and was presented to us a number of years ago by the Francis Jose family. It was more difficult deciding upon the second loom. The first one we looked at was a counter marche loom, and after getting our workmen to put it together, we decided that although this type of loom was used in our period, the particular one in our possession had been made well after 1867. We knew that there was a flying shuttle loom in storage and we decided to try it next.

It had been acquired in Oakville about ten years ago and we had no further information on it. The unfortunate part of it, was that the loom was in pieces when we picked it up and hadn't been used for at least thirty years prior to that. The problem of putting it together was interesting in that we could not find anyone in the Toronto area who had ever operated or knew anything about the flying shuttle loom of 1867. There are at least two or three experts who are using modern flying shuttle looms, and although they were only too willing to help us put it together, they were unable to tell us about some of the mechanical idiosyncrasies. It soon became obvious that we had a few parts missing, and we were left with some very nagging problems.

100 years

When research fails and the experts are unable to help, the only thing to do is to go back to plain old logic. By method of trial and error, we eventually, after countless hours, came up with a working loom. The basic problem was developing a mechanical method of turning the rollers to advance the warp.

For the uninitiated, there are, on every loom, two large rollers known as beams, one at the back to hold the warp, and one at the front to hold the finished weaving. We had to design simple mechanical devices which would allow the weaver to move both of these rollers without moving from his bench. We finally devised a system using ropes, weights and springs, which works very satisfactorily, and we are quite sure that our final design is almost identical to that used by the weaver who first used this loom.

One of the next problems was to get the two picks which control the flying shuttle into working order. The leather pieces had considerably altered over the years from their original state, and we went back to the research books to find out what type of leather should be used. Finally, one book mentioned buffalo hide—naturally we assumed that it was the native Canadian buffalo which is actually a bison. However, when we went to the leather suppliers to find out about buffalo hide, we found that it wasn't a Canadian bison at all that we were looking for, but the hide of the African water buffalo. This is a hard thickish leather which can be cut with a saw and shaped with a file—another problem had been solved.

Once the loom had been completed, the next job was to get it warped. We found that an ancient warping mill had been picked up with the flying shuttle loom, but again in many pieces and the problem was to make it work. There is an excellent book on weaving written about the turn of the century, by Luther Hooper entitled "Hand-Loom Weaving Plain and Ornamental". It contains a great deal of information about warping mills. After a great number of trials and errors, we were able to put the mill together. Then came the problem of making it work.

The principle is very simple—spools filled with thread are placed on a bobbin frame or creel, and from there they are threaded through a heck and then wound around a large circular frame which is capable of holding hundreds of yards of thread. The heck is a simple device for separating the odd numbered threads from the even threads. The separated threads are then placed over pegs on the warping frame in such a manner as to create a cross. When the warp is transferred to the loom, this cross makes it much easier for the weaver to control the threads. This sounds complicated doesn't it—and it really is, but weavers understand it perfectly.

Finally, we had the three large pieces of equipment working, and all we had to do was to find three other small machines known as—a quill winder, a bobbin winder, and a flax spinning wheel. Of course, the flax spinning wheel was quite simple to secure, as we had some in the Village collection, and in no time we were able to put one in working order. The bobbin winder required a little more preparation, but we had no real difficulty in getting it to work and loading enough bobbins to produce a warp. However, winding the bobbins by hand is not nearly as speedy as using a little electric motor which is used by modern weavers. The quill winder resembles a spinning wheel in many respects, and we have seen them sold as such at auction sales. The one we decided to use did not have a spindle, but one was found on the head of



This little machine winds spools used in making a warp. It consists of three pulleys connected from two circular leather belts. Turning the handle one revolution makes the spool turn 16 times and winds on approximately 45 inches of thread.

an old walking wheel and it served the purpose quite satisfactorily. The winding of quills for the flying shuttle is an art in itself and we had some help from a couple of expert modern-day flying shuttle weavers.

The last week prior to an official opening of a Village shop is usually hectic, and it was no exception with the weaver's shop. The final panic is in "dressing" the shop. This includes putting in all the small things which a weaver would need. The finished result should give the appearance of a shop which was used on a daily basis in the 1860's, rather than a conventional museum display. Samples of weaving, wool, and textiles were taken out of storage and placed in logical locations. Advertising signs had to be nailed up, and a dozen other things attended to.

The grand opening was a great success and almost 200 people came out to see Premier William Davis cut a section of warp which officially opened the shop.

Almost five months later, Mrs. Helen Morrall from Ottawa, came into the Village to see a loom which was owned by her great-grandfather. We had long since given up any hope of finding detailed information regarding the history of our flying shuttle loom. As you have probably guessed, the loom that Mrs. Morrall was inquiring about was that same flying shuttle loom. Of course, the warping mill had come from the same source.

The original owner was Charles Irvin, who lived at Mt. Charles, a tiny village located between Malton and Brampton. Charles and his brother William, who was a cabinet maker, came from Lancashire, the great weaving county of England. After spending some time in New York, Charles arrived at Mt. Charles in 1832. One of Charles' specialties was weaving blue serge. Mrs. Morrall has two of his account books from the 1840 period listing sales of serge and other material, and she is going to give these to the Village.

Charles died in 1862, but the loom and weaving equipment remained in the house until the property was sold around 1930. One of the relatives took the loom and warping mill apart, and stored it at Oakville until it was turned over the Authority. Of course, we are now seriously thinking of naming the shop at Black Creek Pioneer Village after Charles Irvin.

1923



Charles Linn Coon at
Black Creek Pioneer Village
in action in the Weaver's Shed.
