

# Illinois Prairie Weavers

## *“Hepped on Rep”* - About Rep Weave

What we call “Rep Weave” is an ancient weave structure which has been discovered in archeological digs in Peru, Egypt, Asia, Turkey and Syria. Because of its sturdy nature, it has been utilized for tents, bags, belts and straps for camels. The name “Rep” derives from the Swedish term, “Ripsmatta”, which means “a mat made from Rep”.

Loosely defined, Rep is a warp-faced weave structure in which a densely sleyed warp covers the weft, producing a ridged fabric. It is a plain weave, but “derivative” in that it is usually not a balanced weave. Instead, many fine warp threads cover a thick weft. Because the warp covers the weft, the colors of the warp remain “undiluted” by being crossed by the weft, allowing for bold true colors.

Rep Weave has been popular in Sweden for centuries, first used to decorate the home for very special occasions. With the new availability of affordable cotton fiber in the 1800s, Rep Weave proliferated as table runners, placemats, and especially rugs. The Swedish tradition combined 2 colors in stripes or checked patterns, both easily produced with simple 2-shaft looms (and their countermarch looms handled the dense warp very well). The mid-1980s saw the first books about Rep Weave translated into English, beginning its popularity in the United States.

Rep can be woven in simple stripes, or in 2-block designs with only 2-shafts, much like log cabin. Switching blocks in order to have certain colors appear “on top” or reverse to being “on bottom” is easily done with a thick weft alternating with a thin weft. Checkered patterns are relatively easy to design and create, along with decorative borders. Of course, more shafts mean more design possibilities. Good books:

Custom Woven Interiors, Kelly Marshall (Guild library)  
Rep, Catharina Carlstedt & Ylva Kongback  
Rep, Rips, Repts Weave, Lucienne Coifman (Guild library)  
Rep Weave and Beyond, Joanne Tallarovic  
Rep Weaves, Laila Lundell