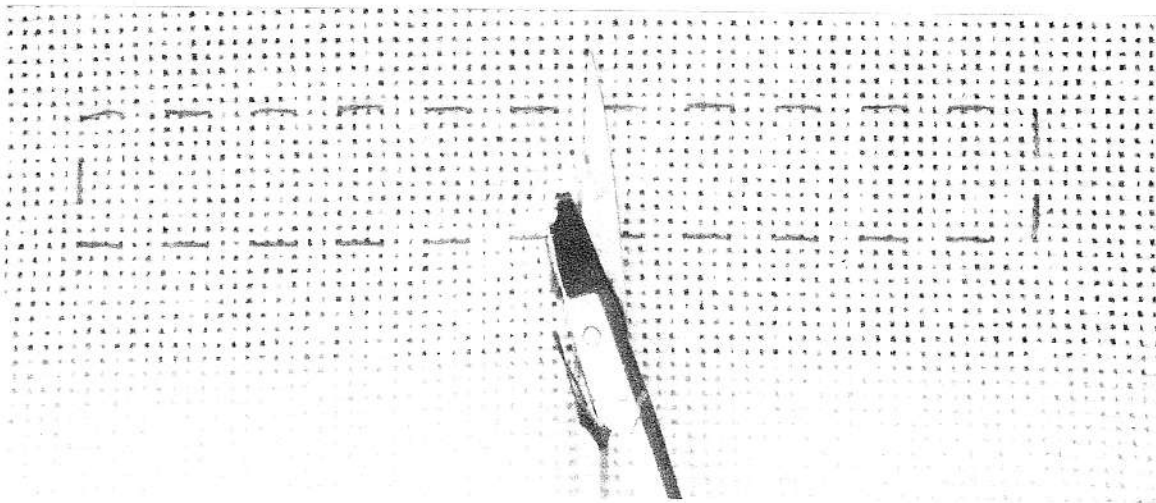


## DRAWN THREAD

In drawn thread embroidery, certain warp or weft threads are withdrawn from the fabric and decorative stitches are worked over the remaining threads. My task today is to discuss preparing the fabric for the decorative stitches. I will be talking mostly about the traditional method with some added hints to help ensure an accurate set up.

Step 1 is to outline the area in which the threads are to be withdrawn. In our case, it is in the borders. It helps to know the pattern that will be put into the border as this will give you the number of remaining threads that will be used in each element of the border design. For example, you have be using a pattern that wraps 4 threads or maybe 6 threads. Lets take the example of 4 threads. You will be outlining the area of the border using a contrasting colour thread (I like to use 2 ply floss) and a blunt needle....stitch over 4 and under 4 the entire length of the border. Repeat this on the other side of the border. If you have made a mistake in counting the threads for this stitching it will be quickly apparent and you can make the correction....much easier now than when stitching the pattern!!! Now you know that a) I like to keep things simple and b) I am kind of lazy as it is easier to do the corrections at this stage.

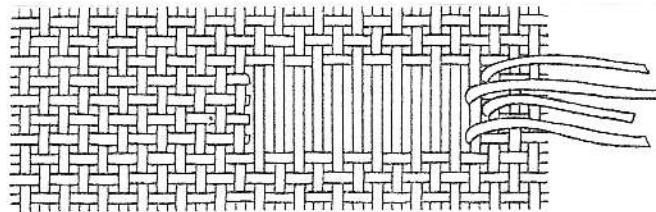
This method is also easy to determine if you have allowed the correct number of threads to complete the entire pattern within the border. For instance, you don't want to do all of the pattern across the border only to find that you are 1 or 2 threads short to complete the last element! Should you find that this happens, it is easy in Step 1 to add or subtract a thread or two at this point.



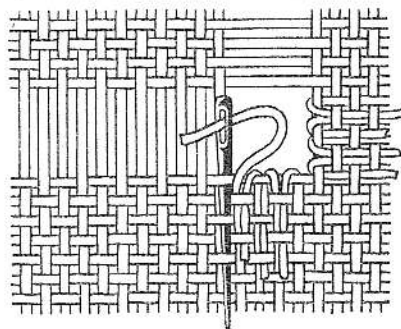
For those with experience with drawn thread, you may choose to mark the area with a water soluble marking pen.

Step 2 is cutting the threads to be withdrawn. For this you will need a sharp pair of pointed scissors and cut through the threads in the centre of the border. See the example on page 1.

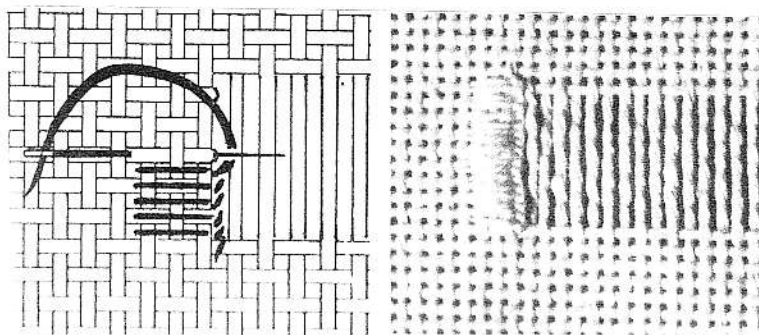
Step 3 will be the withdrawing of the threads. Use a blunt tapestry needle and carefully pull each thread from the centre to the end of the area. The first thread is more difficult as all of the border threads are within the area....once you have removed one the rest will come out easier. Pinch the material at the end of the border between your thumb and forefinger of the left hand to make sure the threads do not pull out further than required.



Step 4 is securing the withdrawn thread ends. This can be done in a number of ways. Traditionally they were woven in. The first sample shows this method. Take the withdrawn threads through to the wrong side, then thread one at a time into a tapestry needle. Following the weave of the fabric, darn in the ends. I like to weave the threads as I withdraw each one. I find it is easier than having several threads floating around and trying to keep them out of the way. This weaving area will be within the hems when the project is completed.



Another way of fastening the ends of the borders is to do a row of buttonhole stitches along the ends of the borders. I have never used this method but my research has shown me this can be done in two ways. The first is carefully cut the withdrawn threads and to use a sharp needle and matching thread to do the buttonhole stitch....be sure that the needle pierces one of the threads for each stitch. I could not do a sample of this as the threads in my fabric were too fine to pierce.



The second version of this sounded too complicated for me!!! It was to fold under the ends of the withdrawn thread and using a sharp needle and matching thread pierce both layers of the threads when doing the buttonhole stitch.

All of the above methods have been used down through the ages. Now we have sewing machines and that means a couple of ways of finishing off the ends with the machine. It can be done with either a straight stitch or with a zig zag. I have given you a sample that shows both types of stitches over the folded back ends on the wrong side. You could also do this stitching first, pull back the threads and then cut them off close to the stitching. Of course, you would use matching thread but I have used contrasting. Unfortunately my machine and I are not on speaking terms and it decided to act up a bit while I was doing this!!!! I am sure those who are proficient with their machines will achieve a much neater result.

At this stage, I would then complete the hem to provide a more stabilized fabric when working the pattern. It helps me keep the pattern more even. However, I believe you will be doing it once all of your stitching has been completed.

Next meeting we will talk about withdrawing threads around a design.

Resources: **Drawn Thread Embroidery, by Anchor and Drawn Thread Embroidery by Moyra McNeill**