

# Introduction

Candlewicking or Colonial embroidery has become very popular in recent times because of the simple stitches that are quick and easy to do. Candlewicking does however date back more than two hundred years to colonial America where embroidery threads were difficult to get in those times.

Here, so my grandmother told me, women often used the calico from 50lb flour bags and unravelled the cotton used in the seams for the embroidery thread.

I have tried this just for fun but found the thread was thicker than that now called candlewicking thread, and of course one side of the bag is printed. You can still purchase flour bags from some bakers and wash out the remaining flour but I do prefer Homespun as it isn't nearly as hard to iron.

Until coloured embroidery threads became cheap and easy to obtain, most work was done in either cream or white thread.

Now we have many choices and I have done some embroidery in coloured threads and these look just great.

I've also painted parts of the designs before doing the stitching and it provides a most attractive result. There is an enormous number of colour combinations but some of the ones I have had excellent results with are, red with black thread, pink with maroon, pale blue with navy, and of course many others.

We also quilt many of the designs. Quilting will give a raised effect to some parts of your design and can be done around whatever part of the design you wish to emphasise. There are different thicknesses of bating and you can decide yourself or ask the advice of your local craft shop which one would be best for your particular project, be it place mats, cushions or quilts etc.


Take a square of fabric, 40cm x 40cm is a good size, in either Calico or Homespun. Trace the design onto your fabric using a water soluble transfer pencil. The best method is to use a light table - a glass top with a light underneath, but in the case of homespun you can see through the fabric well enough to trace off your pattern. Another method is to trace your pattern onto a piece of net material with a waterproof Arline pen, lay the net on your material and retrace over the net with a water erasable pen. This method gives you a permanent pattern you can use over and over. If all else fails, the dressmakers carbon will do the job just as well.

Use an embroidery frame 30cm or 35cm in diameter. If you have one with legs, so much the better as it will leave your hands free.

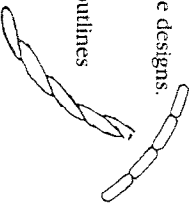
I use a No. 7 crewel needle and candlewicking cotton or a No. 8 crochet thread used double, in most of my work. I still keep most of my work in the simple stitches, as this is much quicker. If you would prefer plain edges to your leaves instead of serrated, then just trace the pattern going from point to point of the serrate, this being easier to embroider.

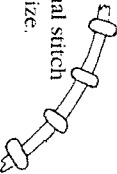
Note: If you need to enlarge or reduce a design then you'll find the grid method most effective. However modern photocopyers are a lot quicker and accuracy is assured.


Some of the most often used knots and stitches are as follows:


Colonial Knot - One of the oldest candlewicking knots. It's also one of the most important and is quite easy to master. 


Back Stitch - Used in curly lines and fine designs.

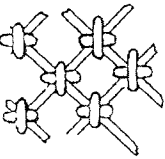
Stem Stitch - Useful for embroidering outlines more than floral stems. 

Couching Stitch - Another more traditional stitch producing a rope-like effect of variable size. 

Fishbone Stitch - Creates realistic leaves and butterfly bodies. 

Leaf Stitch - Also makes realistic leaves, is quick and creates a lovely rib pattern up the centre of the leaf. 

Chain Stitch - Very suitable for outlining and can also be used for filling in sections. 

Trellis - Ideal for covering large areas. 

Other Design books by Jean Jensen include:  
 Candlewicking and Colonial Stitchery Volumes 1-6  
 Designs for Fabric Painting  
 Designs for Stencilling  
 Designs for "This and That"  
 Embossing Paper The Easy Way Volumes 1-3  
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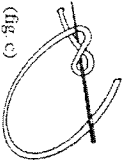
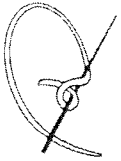
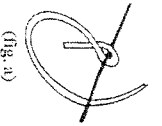
### COLONIAL KNOT

Take your time to begin with and don't try to pull the knot too tight.

Take the thread in your left hand between thumb and forefinger and with the needle between your right thumb and forefinger wrap the thread around the needle as (fig. a). Then take the thread over the end of the needle (fig. b) to form a figure 8.

Insert the needle back through the fabric as close as possible to the original point of emergence.

On pulling the thread through firmly to the other side a knot will be formed and will rest on the fabric (fig. c).



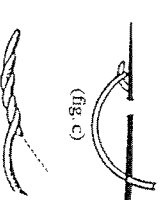
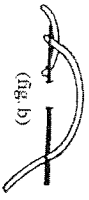
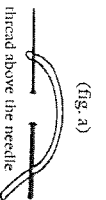
### STEM STITCH

Work this stitch from left to right and keep the thread always above or below the needle (fig. a).

To begin, go back a small stitch and bring the needle up slightly in front of the starting point.

Continue working in this way (fig. b), from left to right, entering the needle at the same point where the last stitch finished (fig. c).

Note: on turning your fabric over you'll see a close similarity with back stitch.

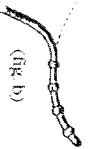
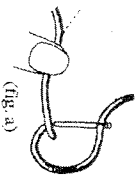


### COECHING STITCH

Using 1, 2 or 4 threads, work long stitches on to the design. If the line is curved you must ensure that there's enough thread to conform (fig. a).

Hold these down with small even stitches of a single thread (fig. b).

Work back over the whole longstitch in this manner but don't over tighten.



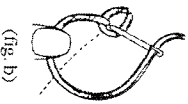
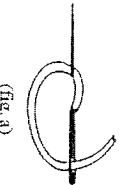
### CHAIN STITCH

Working from left to right, bring the needle up through the fabric and form a loop by taking the needle back through the same hole.

Bring the needle back up through the fabric inside the loop and pull the thread through (fig. a).

Take the needle back through the fabric at the same point leaving another loop and once again push the needle back through the fabric to form another link (fig. b).

Stitches must be kept as even as possible and if this stitch is pulled too tight, the effect will be lost.



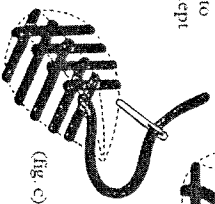
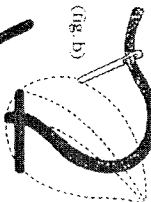
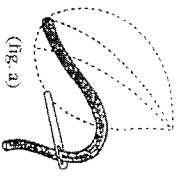
### LEAF STITCH

Two converging lines are placed on the leaf design and the stitching is begun as (fig. a).

Bring the thread back up through the fabric on the centre line near where the last stitch finished and this is taken over the top of the last stitch to an adjacent point on the other side as (fig. b).

Keep stitches running at 45 degrees to the centre line and ensure they are kept even (fig. c).

NOTE: The narrower the crossover is worked, the more like a leaf vein it becomes.

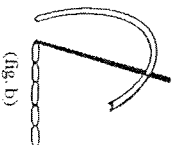
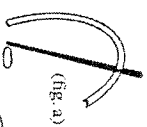


### BACK STITCH

Take a stitch backwards along your line as in (fig. a) and bring the needle back through the fabric on the forward side, one stitch in front of the first.

Continue as (fig. b), finishing the stitch exactly where the last one began.

Make sure all the stitches are even.

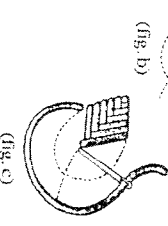
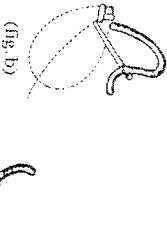
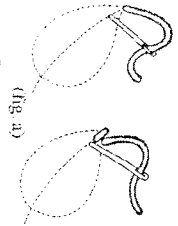


### FISHBONE STITCH

Working along the centreline of the design, from top to bottom, make a small stitch as (fig. a).

Continue backwards and forwards from the centre line, overlapping the end of the previous stitch as (fig. b), each stitch being a little lower than the last.

Each will also become a little longer as you progress. It is essential that the design is done with the stitches at 45 degrees to the centre line (fig. c) until finished.



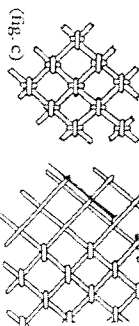
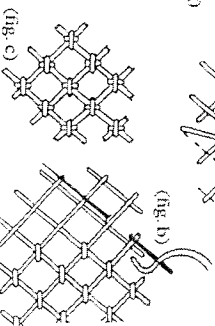
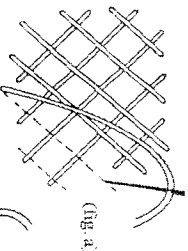
### TRELLIS

These are long stitches anchored by one or two small stitches at each intersection.

Make long stitches, evenly spaced over the area and then stitched back over the top at 90 degrees to the first (fig. a).

Working evenly go back again and anchor each of the intersections with a small locking stitch (fig. b).

Two stitches can be used if desired (fig. c).



REPEAT BORDER PATTERN

