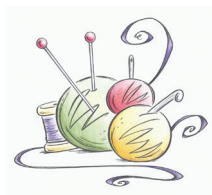# An heirloom doily pattern reborn

Recreating the Tidy Chair Back has been a most interesting and enjoyable adventure. Beginning as a chat about the historical needlework collection at the Huron County Museum and Historic Gaol, in Goderich, Ontario, Canada, the project evolved into recreating one of these works—specifically, the Tidy Chair Back, made in 1880 by six-year-old Ann Rath of East Wawanosh Township, near Belgrave, Ontario.

The original was completed with fine crochet cotton and consists of a motif strip joined by a chain. After comparing test swatches to the original, I recreated the doily using size 20 cotton thread and a size 7 (1.5 mm) steel crochet hook.

While working on this piece, I couldn't help imagining the life and circumstances of the little girl who created the original. I am impressed by the quality of her work and the fact that it has endured for so long. I am also impressed by how simple the pattern actually is, when broken down to the basic components: a strip of pattern and a joining. These two simple steps lend themselves to a wide variety of other projects.
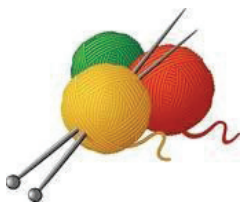
One could create a simple choker, a cowl, an afghan, or a jacket. The possibilities are endless. As a result of this crocheting adventure, I have developed an interest in exploring other samples of needlework from long ago, looking to the past to create for the future.

Stitch Revival Studio
inspired by vintage needlework

About the designer
Irene Kellins is the owner of Stitches with a Twist, a yarn and sewing shop in the village of Blyth, Ontario, Canada. She has had years of experience knitting, crocheting, and sewing, and she especially enjoys instructing others in the needle arts and helping solve their problems. Visit www.stitcheswithatwist.com for more information and pattern support.

Tidy Chair Back
a pattern to crochet by Irene Kellins

This Tidy Chair Back, also once known as an 'antimacassar', is a recreation of an heirloom original in the collection of the Huron County Museum & Historic Gaol in Goderich, Ontario. Six-year-old Ann Rath of East Wawanosh Township near Belgrave, Ontario crocheted the museum's original in 1880.

FINISHED SIZE
15 x 24 inches (38.1 x 61.0 cm), excluding fringe.

GAUGE
1 strip and 20 rows = about ½ x 4 inches (1 x 10 cm)

YARN
Handy Hands Lizbeth, 100% cotton thread, size 20, 210 yards (192.0 m)/25 gram (0.9 oz) ball, 8 balls of #603 Ecru; www.hhtatting.com.

CROCHET HOOK
Crochet hook, steel, size 7, or size needed to obtain gauge

Tidy Chair Back Pattern

INSTRUCTIONS

The tidy chair back consists of twenty-five strips joined with chains and edged with chains and a knotted fringe.

Chair Back Strip (make 25)

Note: The strips before joining will be longer than the desired finished length.

Row 1: Ch 3 (skipped 2 ch count as 1st dc), (dc, ch 1, 2 dc) in 3rd ch from hook, turn.

Row 2: Ch 2, (2 dc, ch 1, 2 dc) in ch-1 sp of last row, turn.

Rep last row 118 more times (120 total rows including Set-Up Row). Fasten off.
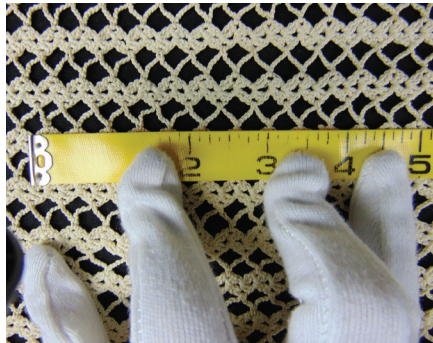
Joining strips

With RS facing, lay 2 strips side by side. Join thread with sl st in ch-2 sp of Row 2 of Strip #1 (left edge), sc in same sp, ch 4.
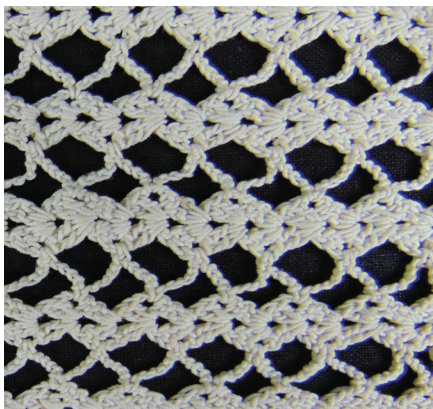
Sc in ch-2 sp of Row 3 of Strip #2 (right edge), ch 4.

*Sc in next ch-2 sp above last join to Strip #1, ch 4.

Sc in next ch-2 sp above last join to Strip #2, ch 4; rep from * until strips have been joined, ending with an sc in last ch-2 sp of Strip #1. Fasten off. Join rem strips in the same manner.

Measuring the original Tidy Chair Back doily. Photo courtesy of the Huron County Museum & Historic Gaol.

A close-up image of the doily's horizontal strips and adjoining chains.

EDGING

After all strips have been crocheted tog, join thread with sl st in 1st ch of Strip #1 (lower right corner), sc in 1st ch-2 sp, *ch 5, sc in next ch-2 sp on outside edge of Strip #1; rep from * to end of right edge.

Top edge, *ch 7, sc in next ch-1 sp at top of strip; rep from * to end.

Left edge, *ch 4, sc in next ch-2 sp on outside edge of last strip, ch 5; rep from * to end.

Bottom edge, sc in 1st ch-1 sp at bottom of strip, *ch 7, sc in next ch-1 sp; rep from * to end, ch 3, sl st in 1st sc to join. Fasten off.

FINISHING

Weave in ends. Block.

FRINGE

Cut fringe thread lengths to 12 inches (30.5 cm). Using 10 strands per space, knot fringe in every space along ends and every other space along sides. Divide fringe tassels in half, creating a

Above: Attaching the fringe tassles to the rectangular Tidy Chair Back.

left (L) and a right (R) section. Working from right to left, weave as foll: cross Tassel 1L over Tassel 2R and tie to Tassel 3R. Cont in this manner all the way around, moving to the left. Trim fringe tassels to 2 inches (5.1 cm).

ABBREVIATIONS

CH chain
CONT continue
DEC decrease
DC double crochet
FOLL follows
SC single crochet
SL ST slip stitch
SP space
TOG together