

Carding

In early times cards consisted of burrs held in place by strips of leather mounted on small boards with handles at one side. These were replaced when metal cards of American manufacture were procurable at the trading posts. When a weaver is ready to card her wool, she first loosens it by hand, then combs it between carding tools until the hairs lie all in one direction. Carded wool emerges in the form of soft pads called "rovings", ready to be twisted into continuous strands. If a weaver wants to produce good gray color, she mixes wool from black sheep with that of white as she cards the wool. This method makes the finest gray used in many rugs, particularly those from the Two Gray Hills area.

Spinning

The Navaho spindle ^{differs} ~~is more like those used by Plains Indians~~ ^{method of} ~~than~~ those of the Pueblo spinners, and its use differs greatly. The spindle consists of a round stick about 25 to 30 inches long, pointed at both ends. The whorl is a flat disk, four or five inches in diameter, with a hole in the center into which the ^{stick} ~~disk~~ fits. The whorl, which acts as a balance, is securely fastened to the stick about five inches from the butt end, ~~of the stick.~~

The spinner first attaches a roving to the upper end of the spindle, and with the butt end resting ~~on~~ the ground, she starts a roving onto the spindle with a spinning motion of the stick. Then, resting the upper part of the spindle on her thigh, she ~~tolls~~ the spindle with the palm of her right hand in a drawing motion toward her body. With the free end of the roving held in her left hand out from the top of the stick(page ----) she stretches the wool as it slips off the top of the ~~twirling~~ ^{stick} spindle. The skill lies in the steady motion of the spindle as she twirls

it with her right hand, while at the same time she uses just the right amount of pull to stretch the twisting strands. As a given length of roving is twisted and stretched into yarn, the spinner winds it onto the spindle just above the whorl where it is stored until she has a sufficient amount to wind off into a ball. Each successive spinning makes the yarn finer and stronger. All Navaho ~~yarn spun~~ yarn is spun at least twice until it is smooth and fine, and all yarn is one ply with the exception of the two ply cords made for the selvages, so characteristic of Navaho weaving.