

SPINNING

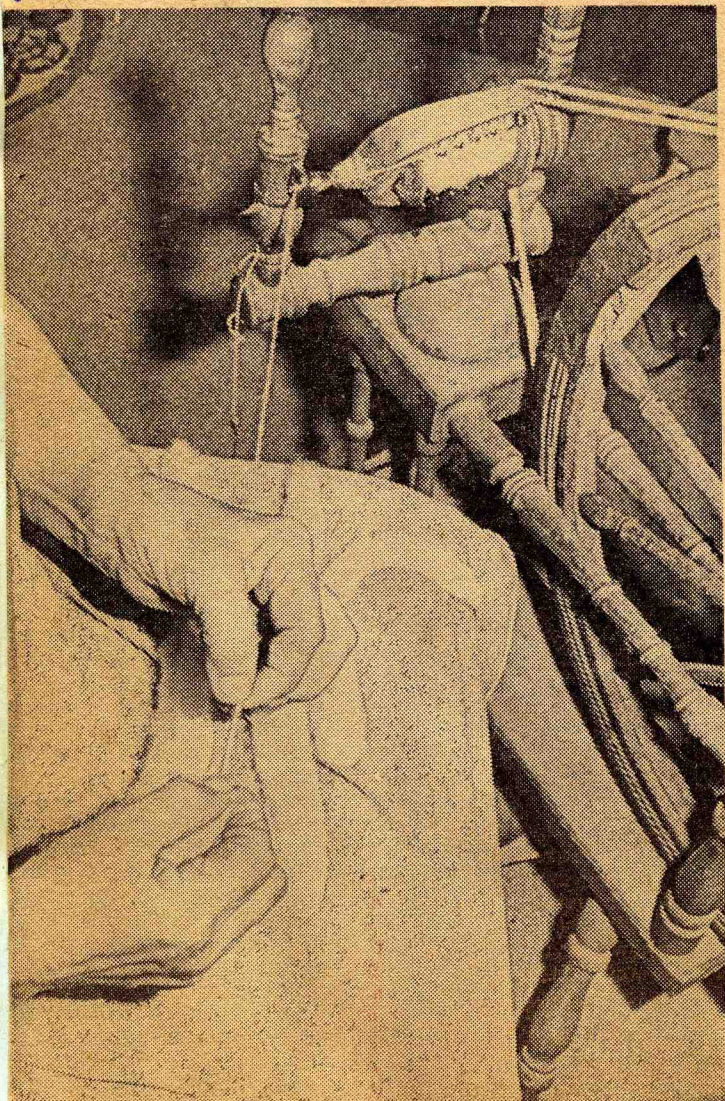
THE OLD FASHIONED WAY



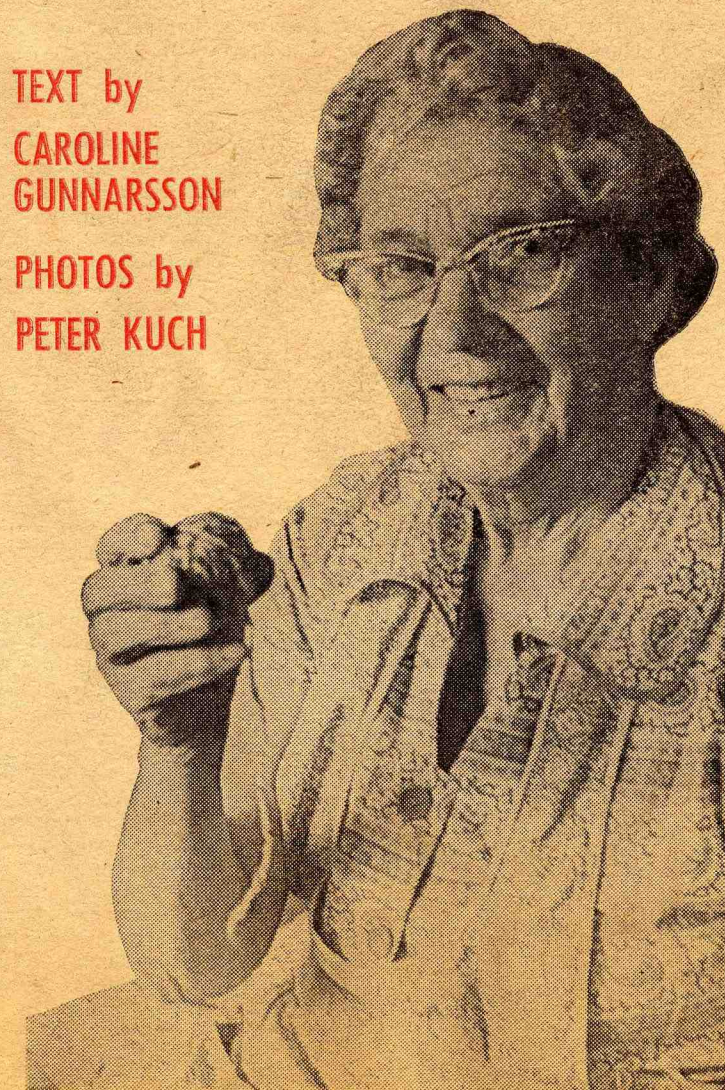
CARDING



SPINNING



PULLING



FINISHED WOOL

TEXT by
CAROLINE
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PHOTOS by
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Pioneer feet have ceased their rhythmic touch on the treadles; hands that fed the carefully worked wool to the whirling spindles are still, and to a new generation, the evolution of wool from sheep to sweater is a mystery of slight interest.

But on a farm at Sandridge, near Teulon, Manitoba, there is a spinning wheel that hasn't known a lazy day for more than a hundred years and still stands at the ready when Mrs. Carl Tillenius has a spare moment for spinning — perhaps after the breakfast dishes have been washed, during the long hours after supper or while the bread rises in pans.

For exactly how many years it has served the will of the women in her family, Mrs. Tillenius does not rightly know. It was made by her grandfather Swenson or one of his forebears, and left Norway with the family in 1863. It worked for grandmother Swenson at River Falls, Wis., and Park Lake, Minn., and for her daughter, Mrs. Smestad, who brought her daughter Inga, to a Manitoba homestead, where she met and married a young Swede, Carl Tillenius.

They tilled the soil, raised cattle, pigs, poultry — and sheep to be shorn of their wool each summer. This the chatelaine washed a dozen times and rinsed as often. She shook the clean fleece free of stray twigs and burrs; she teased it, carded it and spun it, twisted the fine strands into two-ply, three-ply and four-ply yarn, and with flying fingers plied the knitting needles as the balls of yarn diminished and disappeared into warm winter garments for her husband and seven children.

To the four who still survive and to her grandchildren, the evolution of wool from sheep to warm, sturdy garments is a marvel but not a mystery, for they have grown up with a spinning wheel in action, and the end of its career is not yet in sight.



Weaving on the "Loom".