

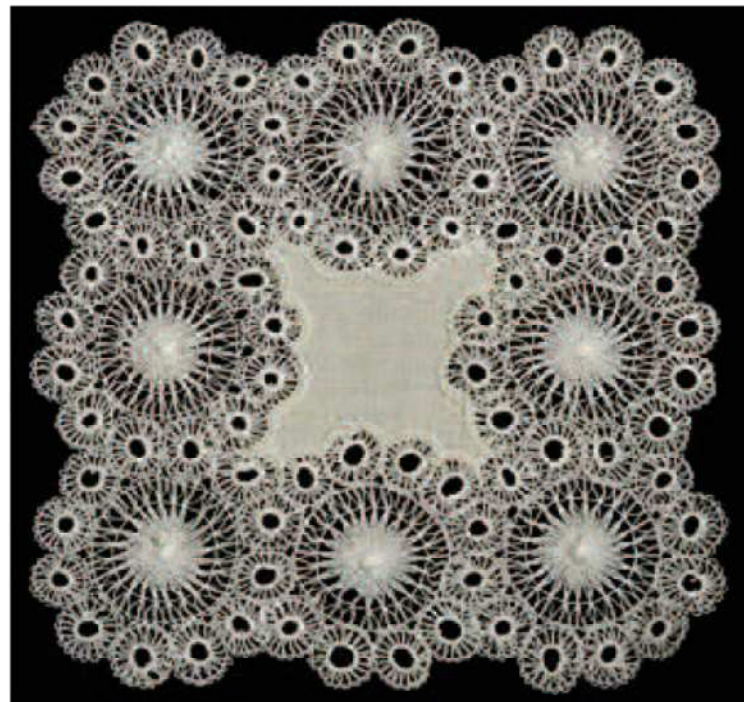
Teneriffe and Ñandutí Lace

by Kate Wild

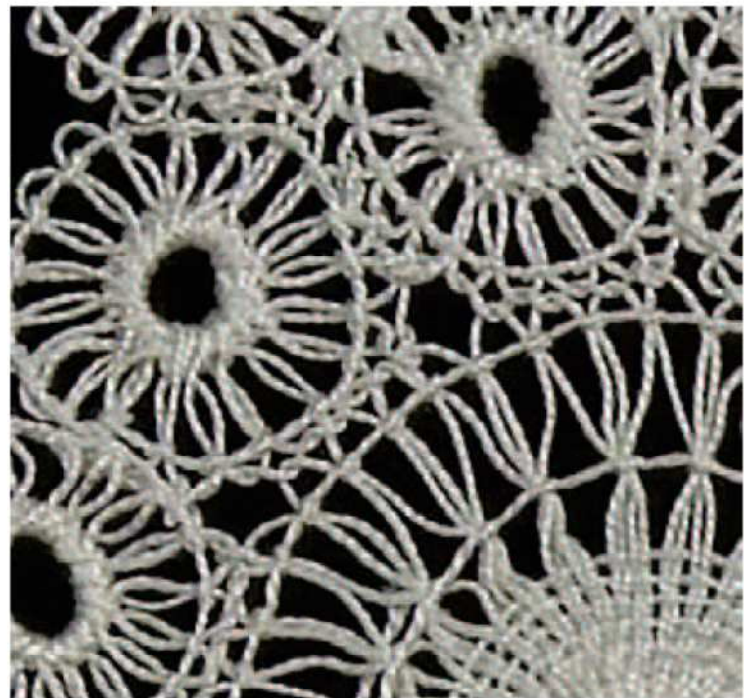
During the 15th century, Spain conquered the Canary Islands off the coast of Africa bringing families to settle the islands. Most of the families settled on the largest of the islands, Tenerife. During this time in Spain a type of drawn work, Sol lace (sun lace), was being done and likely came to the islands with them. This type of lace work was used to fill in the empty square made from the drawn threads on a background fabric, normally linen, by laying threads down in a circular fashion, similar to the spokes on a wheel, then embroidering over the threads to resemble a spider's web.

Over the centuries Sol lace on Tenerife evolved into the lace we know today as Teneriffe lace. (Where the extra "f" came from no one knows.) During this time, the background fabric was no longer being used and the lace was worked with a round template and pins on a small pillow. The thread comes up in the center of the template and is then taken across and around each pin at the edge of the template forming spokes. (See photos at top of next page.) After the spokes are anchored at the center by using a threaded needle, simple knots and needle woven patterns are worked. Once the lace motif is finished the pins are removed and the lace comes off the pillow. The motifs are joined by hand sewing the edges together to make doilies, runners, or edgings for linens. Linen, silk, and later cotton threads were used in this lace. Mainly white threads were used but beginning in the 1800's color and bolder designs were introduced to help keep this lace active in Europe and North America. A new industry developed around this lace by making templates in different sizes and shapes for the home lace maker. Templates were manufactured from brass, wood or in later years Bakelite. Numerous women's magazines in the late 19th and early 20th centuries carried patterns and advertisements for Teneriffe lace making. Another revival for the lace came in the 30's and 40's when it was called Polka Spider Web Lace.

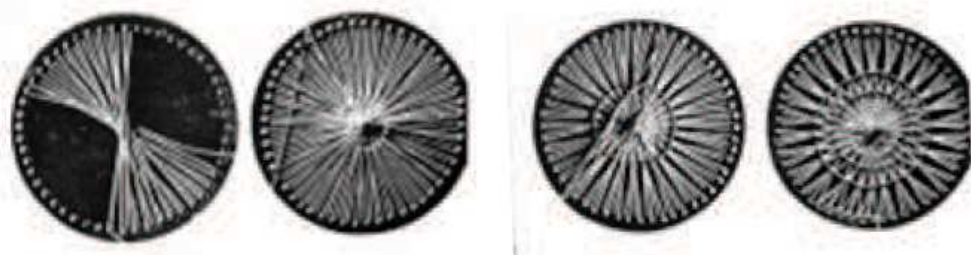
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Teneriffe mat with large and small wheels, cotton.



Detail showing thread joining the wheels together.



Left: Tenerife worked on a wheel form.

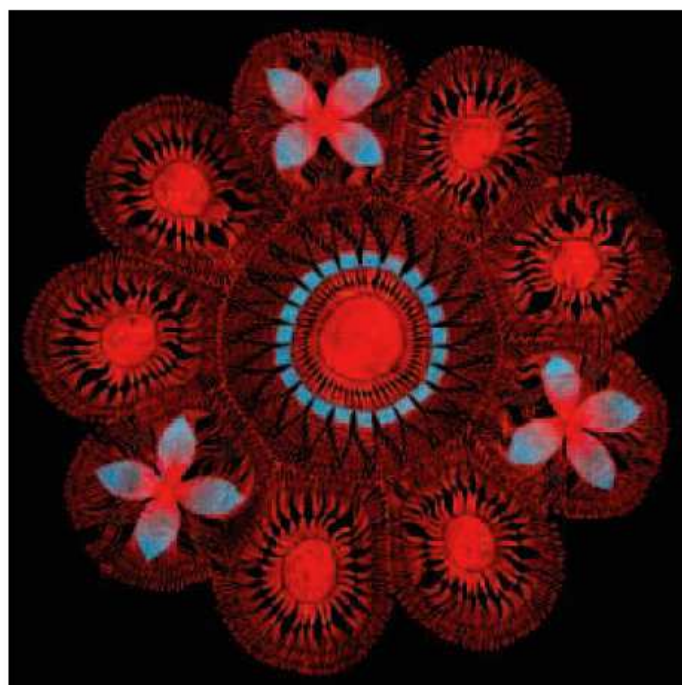
As the Spanish continued to conquer new land in South America, many from Tenerife followed bringing Tenerife lace with them. Some believe missionaries taught the Indians to also make it. In most South American countries the lace is called Sol Lace but in Paraguay, it is known as Ñandutí. Ñandutí is a Guaranian word meaning “web.” Again the lace evolved further becoming more graceful by using finer threads and close weaving rather than using the intricate stitches of drawn work. Ñandutí is worked on fabric instead of using a template. A pattern is drawn onto a ground fabric that has been stretched across a wooden frame and the threaded spokes are either stitched through the fabric or taken through running stitches that are worked along the pattern line. After the motif is done it is released by cutting the running stitches or cutting away the ground fabric. With this technique, a pattern for a collar or runner can be drawn onto the ground fabric and worked entirely as one. Most of the designs for Ñandutí are taken from the webs woven by the semi-tropical spiders in Paraguay.

To find out how to make this simple but graceful lace, Alex Stillwell has graciously put her book *Technique of Tenerife Lace* on the Arizona University website, www.arizona.edu, for free. The site also has the magazines from late 19th and early 20th centuries. There are two other websites to check out the lace, needlelacetalk.ning.com and laceioli.ning.com. Look under Sol laces.

Kate Wild taught our group a beginning class in Tenerife lace in August 2013.



Ñandutí lace from Asunción, Paraguay.



Silk Ñandutí lace from South America.