



BETWEEN 1888 AND 1922, HASTINGS NEEDLE WORK, a company founded and run by Florence and Alice Le Duc of Hastings, designed, embroidered, and sold more than 2,000 pieces ranging from table linens and pillows to hairpin bags and bridge-tally covers. Decades after the firm closed, Alice included its business records, patterns, and a few embroidered pieces in her donation to the Minnesota Historical Society of the William G. Le Duc Family Papers.

The largest of the five embroidered pieces in the collection is this 18.5"-square linen pillow cover. Its "Tree of Life" pattern is an ancient design found in Russian, Middle Eastern, and Indian embroideries. Like some other Hastings Needle Work pieces, this one features bilateral symmetry and has stylized butterflies and trumpet flowers stitched in a lustrous thread called "filo."

Peacocks were favorite subjects for Hastings Needle Work customers, as more than 70 patterns in the collection show. This watercolor-and-ink bird, painted on heavy mat board, illustrates a pattern for a folio cover of green linen or silk. Although Hastings Needle Work used the vast majority of its patterns exclusively to produce items for its own customers, this one was intended for sale to a company such as John S. Bradstreet or William A. French, for whom Alice did some design work during the early 1900s. A note attached to the pattern directs: "The peacock should be worked first in appropriate shades of green and blue filo silk. The pen lines show direction of stitches. The background is put in with bright gold filo silk, in loops. The effect, with the green fabric showing between the filo stitches, is rather suggestive of beaten brass."

For more on the Hastings Needle Work Company, see the article beginning on page 66.



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