Georgia Seitz Ribbonwinners

Tatting Patterns & Shuttles
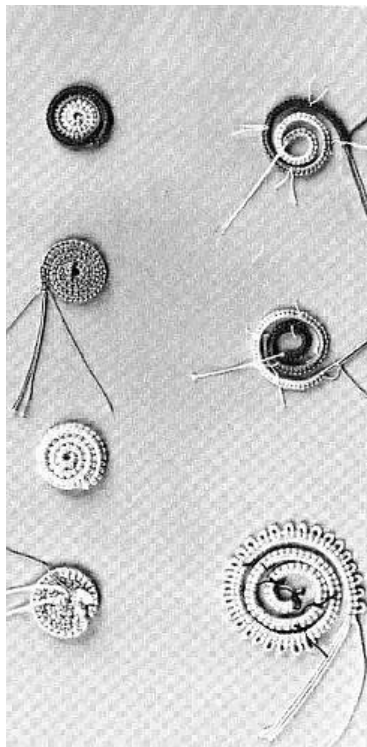
Revised by The Online Tatting Class 2025

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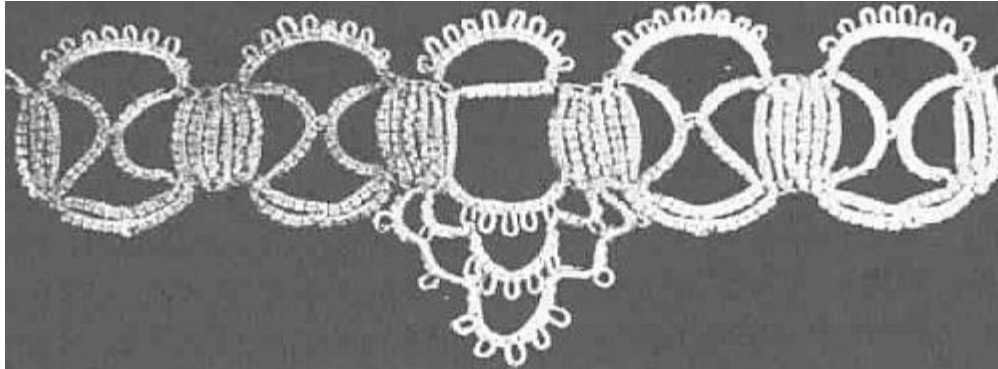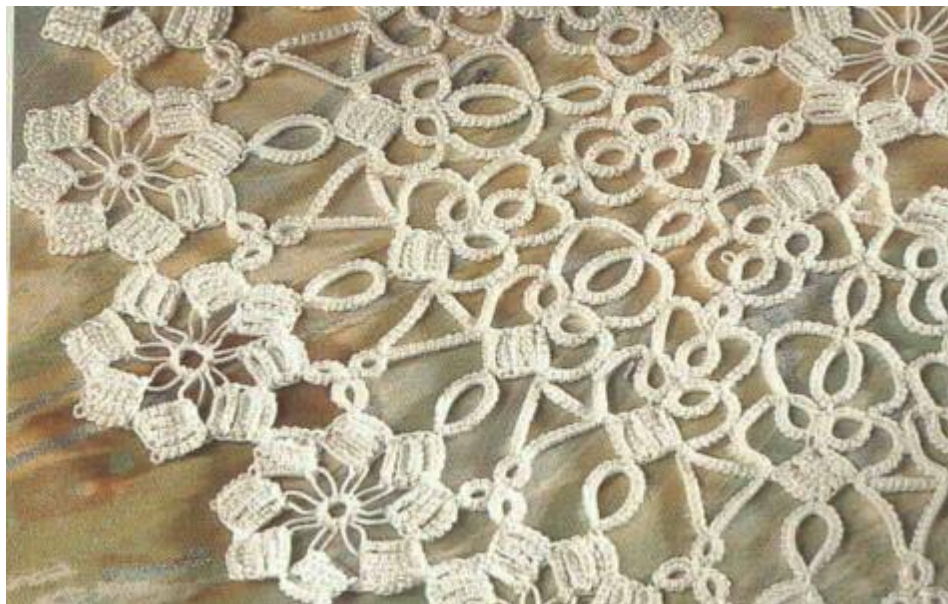
Thoughts on Block Tatting
by Georgia Seitz

In our study of the chain earlier this year we examined how the chain can be coiled (and padded) to form decorative elements. Note the many variations given below in the scan excerpted from the book by Ikuta, "Tatted Lace".

Following this same principle the chain can be formed to compose square and rectangular elements as shown in this scan excerpted from Elgiva Nichol's "Tatting Techniques":
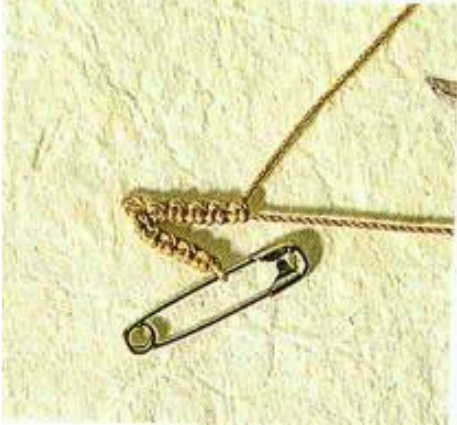

Block tatting refers to a solid motif composed only of chains joined in a manner to create a square or rectangle. This block can be tatted using a shuttle and ball but it is preferable to use two shuttles.
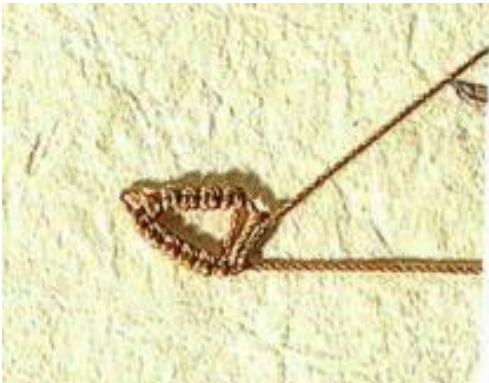

Doily example and the following four scans excerpted from "Burda's OCCHI" which is highly recommended for your tatting library.

To practice this technique use a large thread. If you are using two shuttles wind them in the continuous thread method (CTM) to eliminate one set of tails to hide.

Begin by tatting a simple ring to give you something to hold and then a short strip of chain, OR,

 create a mock picot by wrapping the thread around a paperclip, tapestry needle, safety pin, or anything to give you a bit of slack for the picot.
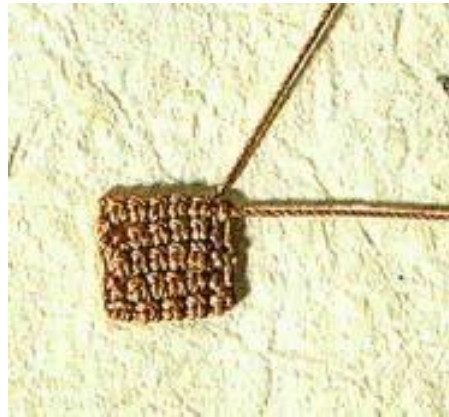
 It is necessary to begin the chain by doing a lock stitch, that is, do not let the transfer of the loop happen. Follow that by a correct second HS and then the # of DS required by the pattern.

All the picots which occur in the process of the block must be extremely tiny, mere bumps.

 As the block is formed the rows of chain will have the bar of the DS all on the same side. Be sure to tighten the chain by compressing all the stitiches back to the previous starting point. The chains should lay flat against one another, with as little curve as possible.

A practice pattern:

Row 1
CH using shuttle #1.
Make a mock picot by tatting a lock stich (the first HS without transfering the loop) and following it with a correct second HS.
continue to CH 8 DS
tat lock stitch (first HS) and then correct second HS.
turn the work in your hand over from right to left as if you were turning the page of a book.

NOTA BENE: if you are using a ball thread and one shuttle you will need to cross your threads using the simple shoelace tie. This brings the solitary shuttle back into proper position.

*Row 2
Using shuttle #2 tat a very tiny picot
CH 8 DS make a shuttle join into the picot of the previous row.
tat a lock stitch (first HS) and then a correct second HS
Turn work in your hand again from right to left as if turning the pages of a book.

Row 3
Using shuttle#1 tat a very tiny picot
continue to chain 8 DS making a shuttle join into the picot of the previous row
tat a lock stitch (first HS) and then a correct second HS
Turn work in your hand again from right to left.

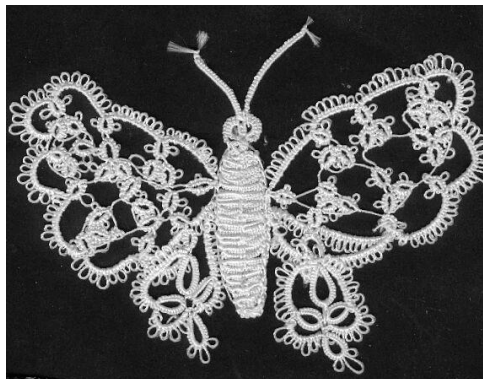Repeat from * for the width of square desired

It takes a least four rows of chain to make a definite block shape.

Be sure that you completely tighten each chain before the shuttle join is made. Run your thumb gently across the chain to help it to lay flat.

You can use the block anywhere you would use a repeating motif.

BUT :)
the "block" does not have to be a "block". Note in this butterfly tatted around 1940 (courtesy Harriet Sharp) that the body is actually a block which increases and decreases to form the shape of the thorax.

This butterfly was tatted around 1940 by Jane Kefford who was born in Lincoln Nebraska and married Fred, an Australian. She died at the age of 92 I hope in mid-ring :) Any questions? You are welcome to email theonlinetattingclass@gmail.com.