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A Brief Summary of the Origin of Afghans and Knitting

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A BRIEF SUMMARY
OF THE ORIGIN OF AFGHANS AND KNITTING

By Becky Nichols
Honor's Project, Fall 1973:
Knitting a ripple afghan,
A short report.

The origins of most types of needlework in general are not known exactly. There are examples of embroidery in early Egypt, Rome and Greece. It was developed later in the Orient, in Europe, England and even later in America. Other types of needlework have similar histories.

There is not much information on the origin of the afghan itself. They were made (usually embroidered) as far back as the Victorian age in England and were used as carriage robes.

An afghan carpet is, and has been for centuries, made in Central Asia. It is a large rug with a pattern of octagons arranged in columns.

The afghan I made is knitted, but most are crocheted. Knitting one is more time-consuming. In fact, there are several crochet stitches especially for afghans called afghan stitches. They can also be ^{weaved} weaved with hand looms and are now made in many other ways.

There is just a little bit more known about the origin of knitting. The earliest known knitted articles were in ancient Egypt. Thick hand-knitted wool socks have been found in a tomb, probably dated in the fourth century B. C.

Knitting was probably common among shepherds tending their flocks in ancient times. Arab traders also knitted as they rode their donkeys leading camel caravans.

The first knitting may have been done on four fingers of the left hand or on pegs in a row or in a circle. Knitting by hand became popular in England and Scotland and soon in the rest of Europe in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

Now, with the use of machines to knit, hand-knitted articles are not used much for commerce--just for at-home use.