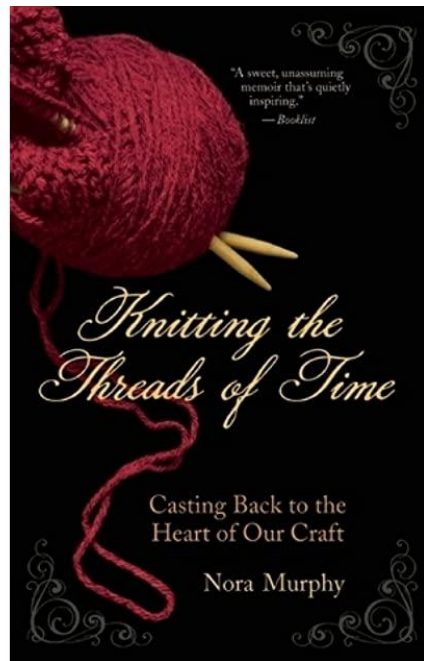


Book Review by Carolyn Ulrich June 2020



The other day I was looking for a specific knitting book I own that I wanted to 'review.' I was looking through a bookcase, and my hand just begged 'pick me up'. As I looked through this book, I was sure I bought it for the patterns but also for the history it contained.

I haven't looked at the book in years, and I honestly have no idea where I got it, but think it was from the Castine (Maine) Town Library annual book sale back in 1989. You can see I've had it a long time. This is a self-published, spiral bound book compiled by The Woman's Auxiliary of St. Paul's Church, Chestnut Hill, Pa. The title is 'Knit One' and contains only baby patterns from crib to highchair. What is intriguing are the inserts I found tucked in the pages. I believe the book belonged to Mrs. Hart as one note is addressed to Bishop and Mrs. Hart. Nowhere did I find any reference to Mrs. Hart's first name. The Harts used to summer in Castine, the village I lived in for 27 years before coming to Hutchinson. I never knew the Harts personally but knew of them. Castine has a lovely little stone Episcopal Chapel and many Episcopal ministers and parishioners 'from away' summer in the village. I thought I'd try and at least find Mrs. Hart's first name so I called my good friend Nina who has lived in the village for many more years than I. She did remember the Harts and that her first name was Mary. One mystery solved.

As I said above, tucked loosely in the pages are patterns for bedroom slippers, golf club covers, a stole, and an invitation. This invitation is to the 'Santa Claus Mail Association's Tenth Annual Exhibit of Knitted Garments and Toys' for distribution to underprivileged children. I have no idea of the date for this event but sometime after the book was published in 1953. It also contained a copy of the proposed constitution and by-laws of the women of St. Paul's.

There is a complete and detailed knitting compendium and the patterns I looked at could be knit today, maybe with a little tweaking.

My original intention was to review a book by a Minnesota author and knew I had three different authors in my book collection. The original book I was looking for still hasn't magically appeared before me, but as I was dusting (not a frequent event) in the spare bedroom I saw three books tucked between bookends. One of them was a Minnesota author, and the title is 'Knitting the Threads of Time.' The book was published in 2009 so am not sure when I bought it but long enough ago that I didn't remember what it was about although I knew it had to be connected to knitting. The author's name is Nora Murphy who is a lifetime resident of St. Paul, living on a bluff above the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers. She is a freelance writer who works for non-profits in various capacities. This is a knitting book written by a novice knitter and her journey, from start to finish, of knitting a sweater for her young son. She starts in October with the idea she's going to finish it for Christmas which, by the way, didn't happen. This is so much more than a knitting story. She delves into the history of the indigenous peoples of both Minnesota and Massachusetts, the Hmong, and her own Irish immigrant background. She even goes back to ancient Iraq. The amazing thing is she ties all she writes back to, or into, knitting or wool. I could not put this book down once I got started. Nora has a wonderful style of writing that is easy to read, and what an education along the way. She has also written several other books but not about knitting. I could go on and on but if you like history and knitting, not such an unlikely combination on a broad spectrum of topics, you should read this book.

There is not going to be a pattern this time as I have no idea who, if anyone, is knitting what I've previously included. You could let Katy Hiltner know if you are interested in something a little more complicated than hats and scarves and if you enjoy, or would rather not read, my ramblings. You could also send a photo of your finished (or unfinished) project to Katy as well at katy.hiltner@pioneerland.lib.mn.us.