



CHURCHILL  
**WEAVERS**  
COLLECTION

*Preserving the creative  
and business history of  
an American treasure.*

**KentuckyHistoricalSociety**



Stole, 1954  
Plain weave  
Wool and  
Lurex®  
2007.45.  
Box 31-873

## The Churchill Weavers Story

Churchill Weavers was a handweaving business founded in 1922 in Berea, Kentucky, by David Carroll and Eleanor Franzen Churchill. For 85 years the company set the national standard for luxury handwoven goods. Baby blankets, couch throws and ladies' accessories were mainstays of Churchill Weavers' production lines — yet the company produced everything from swing capes and bow ties to experimental cloth for NASA's spacesuits.

The Churchills brought an innovative approach to the Appalachian handcraft industry:

- An upscale product line.
- Production practices that changed the work of handweaving.
- Promotion strategies that created national markets that did not exist for other Appalachian handcrafts.

The Churchill family operated the company until 1973 when Eleanor asked Richard and Lila Bellando to take over its operation. Churchill Weavers changed ownership again when the Bellandos sold it to Crown Crafts in 1996 to provide better resources for their employees. Lila continued to manage the company until it closed in 2007.



Loom, ca. 1955  
Cherry wood, iron and steel  
2007.19.1a



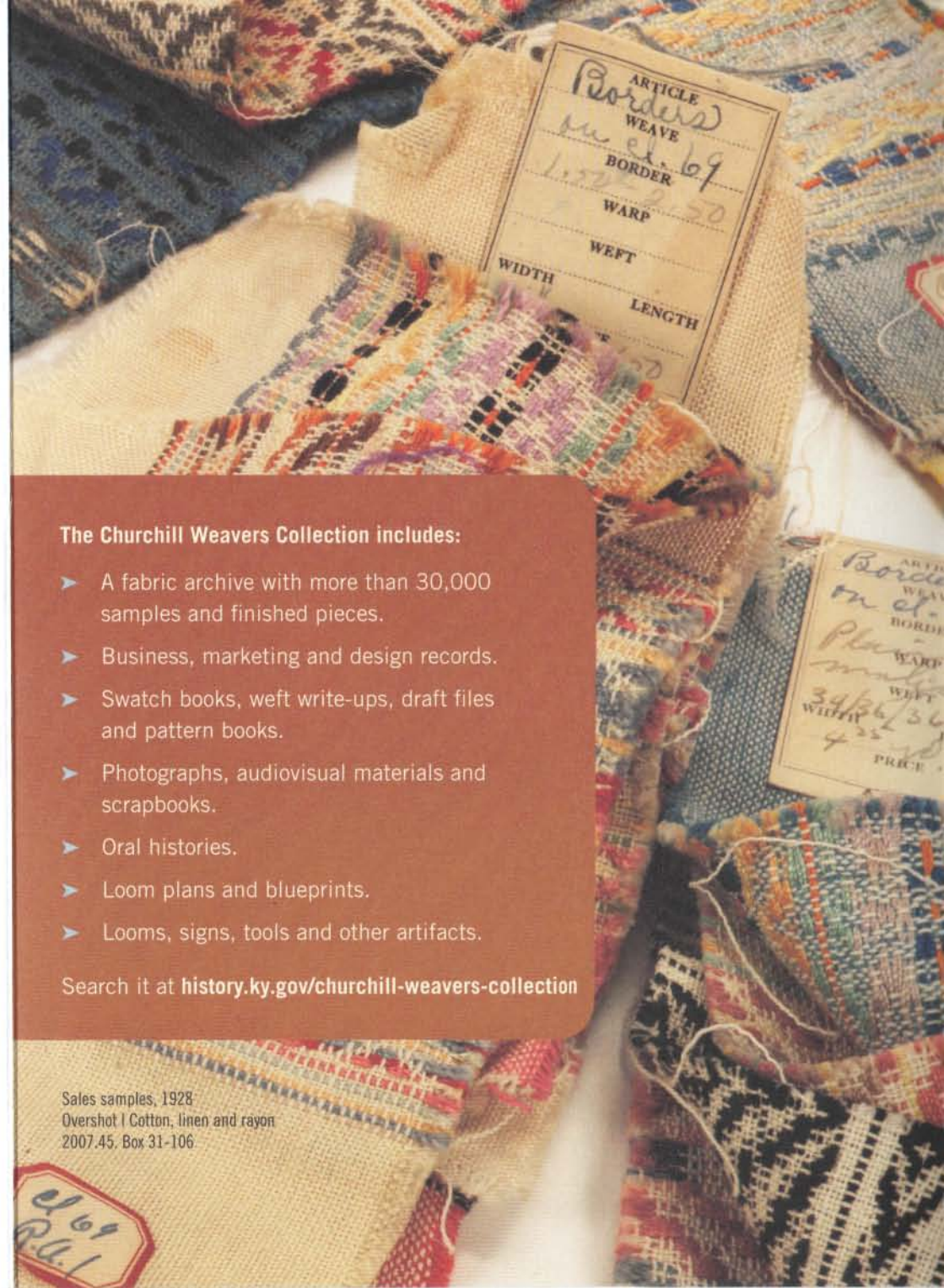
## The Churchill Weavers Collection at the Kentucky Historical Society

After Churchill Weavers closed, Lila recognized the importance of preserving the company's long history. She purchased the company's business and weaving records, textiles and other artifacts and sought a permanent home for them.

The Kentucky Historical Society was able to acquire those materials and others and has made them available for research and institutional loan thanks to generous gifts from Louisville, Kentucky, philanthropist Joan Cralle Day and the Cralle Day Foundation; Lexington, Kentucky, philanthropist Thomas P. Dupree Sr.; and a grant administered by the Council of Library and Information Resources' Cataloging Hidden Special Collections and Archives program (funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation).



Neckties, 1958  
Twill weave | Virgin wool  
2007.45. Box 31-2185



### The Churchill Weavers Collection includes:

- ▶ A fabric archive with more than 30,000 samples and finished pieces.
- ▶ Business, marketing and design records.
- ▶ Swatch books, weft write-ups, draft files and pattern books.
- ▶ Photographs, audiovisual materials and scrapbooks.
- ▶ Oral histories.
- ▶ Loom plans and blueprints.
- ▶ Looms, signs, tools and other artifacts.

Search it at [history.ky.gov/churchill-weavers-collection](http://history.ky.gov/churchill-weavers-collection)

Sales samples, 1928  
Overshot | Cotton, linen and rayon  
2007.45. Box 31-106





The loom house, ca. 1925



Row commissioned by Greyhound Bus, 1952



Purse, ca. 1935  
Plain weave | Wool, rayon  
and plastic  
2007.45. Box 31-1157

## Uses for Scholars and Weavers

Whether you're a weaver looking for inspiration or a scholar, the Kentucky Historical Society invites you to see how the collection can enrich your work.

The collection is of particular benefit to scholars of weaving, labor and social history, small business management, fiber science and experimentation, fashion and artistry in the textile and clothing industries, and Appalachia.

View the Churchill Weavers Collection online through the Kentucky Historical Society's collections catalogs.

Start your search at: [history.ky.gov/churchill-weavers-collection](http://history.ky.gov/churchill-weavers-collection).

Direct research inquiries or schedule an appointment to access the collection on site by calling the Kentucky Historical Society at 502-564-1792. Institutions may request an artifact loan via the same number.



Throw, 2006  
Plain weave | Rayon chenille  
2007.45.Box 31-1878



Eleanor Churchill, ca. 1923

## KentuckyHistoricalSociety

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502-564-1792 | [www.history.ky.gov](http://www.history.ky.gov)



### Cover image:

Stole, 1982  
Double bowknot | Wool  
2007.45. Box 31-1023