



Sampler & Antique Needlework: A Year in Stitches

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From the Introduction: "Needlework possesses a rich and fascinating past that predates recorded history. From records that do exist, we can surmise that from very early times, needleworkers used the crudest of materials and tools to create utilitarian pieces that are today considered to be works of needle art. Within the realm of needlework lies sampler-making. While the earliest surviving example of what is believed to be a sampler from the early Nazca culture dates to between A.D.200 and 500, sampler-making's recognized history dates from approximately the sixteenth century forward. The making of samplers in times past provided a means by which a young lady learned the alphabet and numerals. But much more importantly, it taught her the needle skills she was required to master in order to be considered suitable for marriage. One of her primary responsibilities was to mend, tend and mark the linens and clothing needed for a household. Sampler stitchers of modern times enjoy sampler-making as a pleasurable hobby. While many of us ply the stitches to re-create masterworks from the past, we also have an incredible array of contemporary work from which to choose. The appeal for some may be simply to create beautiful, decorative pieces for their homes. For others, however, their pastime also serves to educate them to the art of the needle while stimulating interest in its origins. For those individuals, existing samplers from days gone by offer not only a glimpse at the techniques that were used to execute them but also a look at the times in which they were created. They speak to the morals and values of their times, as well as to the political and educational influences that affected entire cultures...."

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