



With Needle and Brush: Schoolgirl Embroidery from the Connecticut River Valley, 1740-1840, Stephen Huber, Susan P. Schoelwer, Amy Kurtz Lansing, Wesleyan University Press, 2011, 0983053219, 9780983053217, 98 pages. The Connecticut River Valley was an important center for the teaching and production of embroidered pictures by young women in private academies from the mid-eighteenth to the early nineteenth century. This book identifies the distinctive styles developed by teachers and students at schools throughout the valley, from Connecticut and Massachusetts to Vermont and New Hampshire. Needlework was a means of instilling the values of citizenship, faith, knowledge, and patriotism into girls who would become mothers in the early republic. This book describes and illustrates how these embroideries provide insight into the nature of women's schooling at this time. Over the course of their education, girls undertook progressively more complex and difficult needlework. Before the age of ten, they stitched elementary samplers on linen. As the culmination of their studies, they executed elaborate samplers, memorials, and silk pictures as evidence of the skills and accomplishments befitting a lady. Proudly displayed as enticements to potential suitors, these pieces affirmed a young woman's mastery of the polite arts, which encompassed knowledge of religious and literary themes as well as art and music. This publication has been made possible through the generous support of The Coby Foundation, Ltd., the Connecticut Humanities Council, the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism, Furthermore: a program of the J. M. Kaplan Fund, and several private donors..

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