

The Sampler Archive Project

SIGNIFICANCE

Overview and National Impact

The Sampler Archive Project is a collaborative effort between the University of Delaware's Winterthur Program in American Material Culture; the University of Oregon's Center for Advanced Technology in Education (CATE); the Sampler Consortium, and museums across the country with collections of American needlework samplers and other girlhood embroideries. The long-term goal of the Sampler Archive Project is to create a freely available and easily accessible online searchable database with information and images of all known American samplers in public and private collections nationally and internationally. Scholarly estimates of the total number of samplers that may ultimately be included in the Sampler Archive range from 15,000 to 20,000 unique objects. The first phase of the Sampler Archive Project will focus on four major activities: (a) establishing national standards and protocols for cataloging girlhood samplers and pictorial embroideries, (b) programming an online relational database to house the Sampler Archive and testing its usability with target audiences; (c) populating the Sampler Archive database with information and images for 300 samplers and other girlhood embroideries drawn from the collections of the three museums participating as pilot sites, and (d) developing and testing a dynamic web-based presence to house the Sampler Archive and related materials.

The Sampler Archive Project addresses the interdisciplinary need for a unified research and reference tool providing online access to digitized information and images for the tens of thousands of American girlhood embroideries held in public and private repositories nationwide. The Sampler Archive Project will enhance the field of sampler scholarship by providing easy access to a large body of historic examples, described and documented using the project's cataloging standards and controlled vocabularies, and vetted for accuracy and clarity by a group of national scholars. Sampler scholarship will also benefit from the inclusion of high quality photographs and tools for matching text to images. The Sampler Archive will provide direct access to information and images of needlework artifacts in an environment that facilitates examination, comparison, notation, and publication. Access will be available through the Sampler Archive website (see Appendix A for a mock-up), providing a user friendly interface, multiple ways to search or browse the information and images, and online tools for "collecting", studying, and sharing data derived from the virtual artifacts. The Sampler Archive database will facilitate and increase interdisciplinary interest in the study of historic samplers as important artifacts of American material culture, while simultaneously documenting the products of early female education and transnational influence on American decorative arts.

Introduction to Girlhood Samplers and Pictorial Embroideries

Education in the early years of our country's history was strongly influenced by gender (Monaghan, 2005): boys were prepared for business and the trades and girls were prepared to run a home and raise children. One of the most significant features of female education was its emphasis on needlework, both useful and ornamental (Flynt, 1988), also known as "plain and fancy" (Swan, 1977). The former was seen as critical for ensuring adequate household clothes and linens, and the latter was valued as both artistic expression and outward manifestations of gentility – often part of a family's efforts for upward mobility. Although even 18th and 19th century parents differed in the extent to which they supported the "ornamental branches" of female education (Herr, 1996), evidence suggests that until the mid 1800s nearly all American girls worked at least one needlework sampler (Ring, 1993) and many completed several - graduating to pictorial embroideries on silk, as skill and parental income allowed (Ring, 1993). This tradition of stitching samplers lasted until the mid 19th century, and even longer along the frontier and in some private schools.

It is estimated that tens of thousands of these samplers and pictorial embroideries are still in existence: saved and treasured by family members, donated to historical societies as evidence of local history, preserved in museums as examples of early American textiles and folk art, and researched by social and cultural historians for evidence of regional differences, early schools, and even family migration patterns. As objects of material culture, girlhood embroideries document the curriculum of early female academies, give evidence of familial relationships, chart the history of needlework, and support the expansion of female literacy. In addition, they

clearly and visibly illustrate a broad range of transnational influences on material culture and decorative arts.

Although references to samplers have appeared in the literature as early as 1502 (Bennett, 2001), samplers were originally personalized collections of motifs and patterns recorded for personal use in needlework projects. It wasn't until the 17th century that samplers became associated with more formalized female education, eventually developing conventions and regional variations, determined largely by the needlework teacher. Illustrated below are four different girlhood embroideries, each representing a specific needlework genre. The first example is a *sampler*. Key features on this sampler are the border, alphabets and numerals, embroidered picture and motifs, verse, and inscription identifying it as the work of Esther Coggleshall in 1774. The sampler shares features with other 18th century samplers produced in Newport, RI, including one by Esther's sister Eliza in 1784 (Ring, 1983). The second girlhood embroidery is also a sampler, but normally referred to as a *Family Record* or *Family Register*. In the early 19th century it was popular to create works of art that document a family's genealogy, sometimes with pen and ink, sometimes needle and thread. Birth, marriage, and death dates were recorded, with the intention of adding missing dates over time as individuals married and died. These visual records of family relationships sometimes proved useful as legal documents, substantiating marriage claims by wives seeking war pensions from the U.S. military (Heaps, 2002).

Sampler

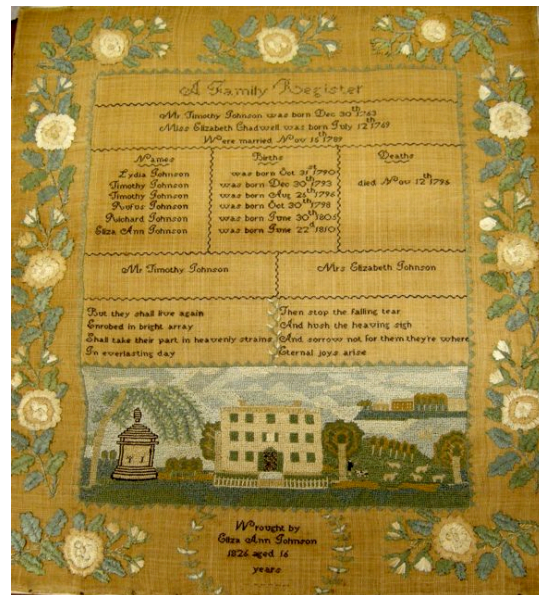


Made by Esther Coggleshall, Newport, RI in the "11th year of her age" (10 years old) 1774. The verse reads:

*Esther Coggleshall is my Name
And so I Tread The Clod
And O that Every Step I take
May Bring me Nearer God*

Below two renditions of the alphabet is a center panel including the Tree of Life, Adam and Eve, birds & animals. A deeply arcaded border appears on three sides.

Family Record/ Register



This Family Register, stitched by Eliza Ann Johnson in 1826 at age 16, is one of several nearly identical samplers by girls attending school in Lynn, MA. Each girl recorded her parents' names, birthdates, and date of marriage; followed by the names, birth and death dates of her siblings. Eliza has also placed the initials of her deceased brother on the monument to the left. Eliza's record of important family dates is surrounded by a lush border of roses & rosebuds.

The third and fourth illustrations are both silk *embroidered pictures*, a more accomplished art form and usually the work of teenage girls with more needlework experience and access to advanced education. Stitched on silk fabric with silk thread, both show an impressive realism and a vast repertoire of stitches. Silk embroideries were the culmination in needlework accomplishment and always shown with pride by the girls' families. The mourning embroidery on the left illustrates a time in our nation's history when mourning was fashionable (Schorsch, 1976), and thus a popular subject in both prints and needlework. The pictorial embroidery on the right portrays a scene from Greek mythology, illustrating the early 19th century interest in classicism, a popular subject of study in female academies (Winterer, 2007).

Mourning Embroidery



Embroidered by Matilda Amalia Winkler c. 1831 in memory of her brother Carl A. Winkler. Pictured are Matilda, her brother Ludwig, and sister Henrietta. Matilda was born Jan. 6 1815 in Salem, North Carolina, and stitched this at the Moravian Salem Academy, using materials & motifs typical of Moravian embroidery.

Silk Pictorial Embroidery



Embroidered in silk on silk by Maria Bissell, East Windsor, CT, probably at Lydia Royce's school in Hartford, CT, 1810. The scene is *The Parting of Hector and Andromache*, copied from an 1808 engraving by W. Durrell. The sky and faces are painted, the remainder is silk embroidery in a variety of stitches.

History of American Sampler Scholarship

American schoolgirl embroideries were accepted as legitimate forms of artistic endeavors as early as the mid 19th century, and therefore appropriate for submission to local and regional needlework competitions. In the 1840s, for example, the Maryland Institute for the Promotion of the Mechanic Arts in Baltimore accepted 18th century needlework samplers as submissions by entrants, along with more contemporary worsted work and other embroideries (Allen, 2007.) This type of juried exhibition of women's needlework resulted in early preservation efforts and the appreciation of fine antique needlework as objects of art.

In 1876, London's Royal School of Art Needlework participated in Philadelphia's Centennial Exhibition, leading to increased American enthusiasm for artistic embroidery. Their exhibition was responsible for the 1878 establishment of a Department of Art Needlework in Philadelphia's School of Industrial Art, and also launched the "Colonial Revival", a period in which samplers as well as other early American arts and crafts were both studied and reproduced. In 1893, the embroidery exhibited in Chicago by various Societies of Decorative Art in the World's Columbian Exposition was "of so high an order, that even those most familiar with the subject can hardly fail to be surprised with the very large amount of first-rate work exposed" (quoted in Krueger, 1978b). The Colonial Revival period lasted until the mid 1930s, characterized by an interest in recording, preserving, and replicating women's handiwork. Fragile textiles from the past were seen as tangible evidence of female accomplishment and worthy of both preservation and replication.

In 1920 the Rhode Island Historical Society held the first major exhibit of samplers on the American continent. On loan were more than 330 samplers and pictorial embroideries worked by American schoolgirls prior to 1830. Designed to help preserve "the memory of our ancestors" and "their domestic virtues" heretofore "scantily recorded", it led to the 1921 publication of *American Samplers*, the first and only serious attempt to catalog all known American samplers. Collated and written by Ethel Stanley Bolton and Eva Johnson Coe for the Society of the Colonial Dames of America, the book contained brief descriptions for 2500 examples of American schoolgirl needlework dating from 1630 to 1830 and represented the work of girls from 17 different states (Bolton & Coe, 1921). In addition to an alphabetical listing of sampler makers by name and century, the authors identified 800 different sampler verses and 125 early schools and teachers.

Interest in American samplers was heightened with the opening of the American wing of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City in 1924. And in 1930, the museum held a special exhibition of samplers, accompanied by a scholarly article describing changes in samplers over time and distinguishing characteristics of samplers from different countries (Philips, 1930). This exhibition coincided with two important initiatives in the collecting of samplers. Launched by a desire to have samplers and other embroideries on display in their historic buildings, the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation began to purchase historic samplers. This initiative resulted in the accumulation of many important early samplers that are now part of the Foundation's needlework collection, housed in the Abby Aldrich Museum of Folk Art. At about the same time, the Whitman Candy Company decided to use a cross-stitch sampler to decorate the top of their box of assorted chocolates. This decision launched a search for more needlework samplers to use as models, and spawned the growth of a significant collection, donated to the Philadelphia Museum of Art in 1969.

Sampler collectors have played a significant role in the study and appreciation of American needlework, both through their efforts at preservation and by increasing visibility to the value of samplers as artistic investments. In 1978, the Museum of American Folk Art exhibited the important personal collection of Theodore H. Kapnek, which awakened people to the refinement of American girlhood embroideries. Following his death, the collection auctioned in January 1981 by Sotheby's, whose highest expectation for the sale overall was \$280,000. They had significantly underestimated the public's level of interest. The Kapnek collection brought in approximately \$650,000 and the sale, "changed the price of samplers overnight" ... "People went nuts" "A fever for American samplers hit the market" (New York Times, 1981).

A recent area of scholarship is needlework stitched by African American girls (Staples, 2006). Although indistinguishable from samplers stitched by girls from white families, historical analysis has revealed that many black girls attended schools where embroidery was an important part of the curriculum. In her book on Maryland samplers, Gloria Seaman Allen discusses the Oblate Sisters of Providence, their "School for Colored Girls", and the sampler making traditions of this Baltimore academy for African American girls (Allen, 2004, 2007). Samplers by Frances Bush (1830) and Mary Pets (1831), for example, fall within the stylistic tradition of elite Baltimore schools - portraying a two story brick building with iron fence and "eyeglass" gate – yet both were stitched by students of the Oblate Sisters of Providence under the tuition of black nuns. A recent acquisition by the Winterthur museum is another example. Worked by Olevia Rebecca Parker using the Berlin patterns popular in the mid 19th century, her sampler documents the enrollment of African Americans in Philadelphia's Lombard Street School. Olevia married Joseph Brister, a dentist, and their eldest son was the first African American graduate of the University of Pennsylvania (Gustafson, 2009).

Mary Pets 1831



Olevia Rebecca Parker 1852



Investigating Local and Regional Variations

Since the 1921 publication of Bolton and Coe's historic work on American samplers, historians and scholars of material culture have taken different approaches to the study of samplers and other girlhood embroideries. One approach has been to locate, describe, photograph and analyze samplers from a specific region, state, county, city, school, or family. Perhaps the earliest of these is a two-part article written by professional genealogist Richard Bowen for the Rhode Island Quarterly in 1943 (Bowen, 1943a, 1943b). He discusses the needlework of three generations of women in the Scott family of Newport, RI as well as a handful of 18th century samplers stitched by other Newport girls. In addition to identifying common motifs, he is one of the first to assert that samplers with similar appearance and verses implied instruction by the same teacher.

The first book to look specifically at American samplers from a regional perspective was *New England Samplers to 1840*, written by Glee Krueger and published by Old Sturbridge Village in Massachusetts (Krueger, 1978). Samplers from New England states were organized into chapters by the century in which they were created and then discussed in groups, making connections by integrating historical and genealogical information. This was followed by a large number of black and white photographs. An important feature is a list of approximately 550 New England schools and teachers, organized both chronologically and by state.

Leading scholars have written books identifying and analyzing the needlework of a specific U.S. state. The earliest was Margaret Schiffer's book entitled *Historical Needlework of Pennsylvania* (1968). Included is a chapter on Pennsylvania samplers, and examples of other girlhood embroideries are embedded in subsequent chapters. This was followed by Betty Ring's *Let Virtue be a Guide to Thee: Needlework In The Education of Rhode Island Women, 1730-1830* (1983) a 276-page book that explored the schoolgirl embroideries of Rhode Island girls, published by the Rhode Island Historical Society to accompany a traveling sampler exhibit seen in Providence, New York, and Houston. This book was followed in 1993 by Betty Ring's monumental achievement: a two-volume analysis of more than 600 American samplers arranged by state (Ring, 1993). Entitled *Girlhood Embroidery: American Samplers and Pictorial Needlework, 1650-1850*, the books focus on girlhood embroidery from identifiable schools in each the New England and Mid-Atlantic states, and is considered a seminal work in American sampler scholarship (Beach, 2005).

Regional scholars have worked to extend this effort by focusing on states to the west and the south. These include publications presenting and analyzing samplers from (a) **Virginia**: *In the Neatest Manner: The Making of the Virginia Sampler Tradition* by Kimberley Smith Ivey (1997); (b) **Ohio**: *Ohio is My Dwelling Place: School Girl Embroideries 1800-1850* by Sue Studebaker (2002); and (c) **South Carolina**: *Virtue Leads & Grace Reveals: Embroideries and Education in Antebellum South Carolina* by Patricia Veasey (2003). More recently, Dr. Gloria Seaman Allen published *A Maryland Sampling: Girlhood Embroidery 1727-1860* (Allen, 2007) to accompany an exhibit of **Maryland** samplers at the Maryland Historical Society. Referencing more than 500 samplers, Allen focused on identifiable regional and school groupings. She included historical information about the girls, their teachers and schools – leading to extensive appendices of all known Maryland samplers, sampler makers, needlework teachers, and schools – kept up to date on the book's website (www.marylandneedlework.com).

The most recent contribution to regional sampler scholarship is a book by Dr. Susan Schoelwer entitled *Connecticut Needlework: Women, Art, and Family 1740-1840*, published to accompany an exhibition of needlework from the Connecticut Historical Society collection in the fall of 2010. Research for the book encompassed the full range of domestic needlework production, positioning samplers and schoolgirl embroideries within the broader context of earlier and contemporary genres and forms— canvaswork , crewel-embroidered bed hangings and garments, quilted petticoats and bedcovers, bed rugs, silk embroidered pictures of classical or religious scenes, whitework dresses and linens, memorial pictures and family registers. This broad scope and long perspective diverges from the prevailing paradigm of focusing on the products of specific geographic areas or particular schools. Investigation of the biographies and families of individual needleworkers provided clear evidence of extensive family connections and interactions, illuminating the little-recognized role of extended family networks in the transmission of needlework practices (paralleling the transmission of craft or professional skills in male occupations). Collectively, this biographical and family information opens up rich areas for further investigation, exploring needlework production in relation to significant historical markers – for example, social class, economic prosperity, educational level, religious affiliation, and slaveholding.

Interdisciplinary Connections in Sampler Scholarship

The study of samplers and other girlhood embroideries is connected to and informed by historical research in a wide range of disciplines. These include the history of female education (Edmonds, 1991); the role of religion in early American education (Humphrey, 2007); the growth of literacy and literary expression (Monaghan, 2005; Ulrich, 1990); socio-economic influences and the rise of the middle class (Van Horn, 2006); women's studies through material culture (Beaudry, 2007; Ulrich, 2001); artistic traditions from Europe and the Middle East (Ellis, 2001; Staples, 2007; Staples & Hogue, 2000); the production and distribution of needlework tools (Rogers, 1983; Taunton, 1997); political and historical events (Deutsch & Ring, 1981); regional geography (Meree, 2000; Ring, 1986); patterns of immigration and migration (Rohrs, 2000; Studebaker, 2002); cultural values and cross-generational ties (Allen, 1989; Hersh & Hersh, 1991); and even the evolution of American architecture (Keith, 1950, Krueger, 2003). Elaborated below are a few specific examples, selected to highlight the types of scholarship that would benefit from access to an online searchable database of samplers from repositories across the country. Please see Appendix A for more examples.

Decorative Motifs. The decorative motifs on samplers are studied as representative of artistic traditions emerging from identifiable sources. Sometimes the same design sources lead to the appearance of identical motifs across different media. For example, Moss (2001) investigated the 18th and early 19th century decorative motifs of North Carolina's "backcountry", finding the same folk art stars, hearts, fylfots, birds, plants, vines, and flowers decorating furniture, frakturs, chimneys, gravestones, powderhorns, rifles, earthenware dishes, quilts, coverlets, and of course, samplers. Similarly, Gabel (2002) explored the decorative motifs on early samplers and gravestones in Massachusetts, concluding that common design sources led to their many similarities. These include stylized borders of fruits and flowers, allegorical representations of Faith, Hope, and Charity; and heraldic symbols such as crowns and lions. Regional similarities in the overall layout and motifs for family genealogical records have also been documented (Allen, 1989; Benes, 2002) leading to similar results regardless of whether the record was carved, painted, printed, or stitched.

Transnational Design Influences. Studying the decorative arts helps to document migration patterns and transnational influences (Snodin & Styles, 2001). For example, variability in sampler designs and decorative motifs can help to distinguish the ongoing cultural influences of a specific nationality or culture. In documenting the samplers of Long Island, for example, Kristen Rohr (2000), divided them into groups based on the origin of their motifs and the ethnic or religious background of the Long Island communities from which they emerged. She discusses the "English samplers", with design layouts and motifs indistinguishable from those of early British colonists; the "Dutch samplers" with motifs brought by immigrants from the Netherlands; and the "Quaker samplers" with motifs, verses, and inscriptions that are unique to the history of this religious community. In a similar manner, early American samplers from the Southwest and "Alta California" are indistinguishable from other Spanish colonial samplers, all deriving from the needlework traditions of Spain. Better known, is the strong German influence on samplers made in Pennsylvania by groups such as the Pennsylvania Germans (Hersh & Hersh, 1991), the Schwenkfelders (Perry, 2008), and the Moravians (Herr, 1996). As argued by Staples and Hogue (2000), common to all samplers is a legacy of visual images, design styles, and stitches – many of which originated in the Middle East (Ellis, 2001; Staples, 2007), spread throughout Europe in the late Middle Ages, and were refined during the Renaissance. Over time, regional traditions and preferences emerged. As families migrated from one place to another the women brought their needlework traditions with them, resulting in a visual record of decorative design on the move.

Female Academies. The rise of female academies in the "New Republic" expanded access to education for young women (Sizer, 1964; Tolley, 2001) but also led to discussions about the appropriate balance between "ornamental and useful accomplishments". Samplers and pictorial embroideries are studied as important artifacts in the history of American education and shed light on curricular decisions. For example, Flynt (1988) discusses an array of "accomplishments" produced by girls attending the Deerfield Academy, 1800-1830. These include multiple forms of needlework (samplers, embroidered pictures, memorials, coats of arms, family records, and firescreens) as well as painted landscapes and boxes. Krueger (1993) describes the Litchfield Academy's emphasis on elegant silk embroidered pictures, requiring both patience and meticulous workmanship. And Herr (1996) documents that as early as 1800, parents debated the value of ornamental

needlework to a girl's education, some choosing the Moravian Girls' School because of its emphasis on the "ornamental branches" and others hoping their daughters' time would not be "wasted" on needlework.

Moral Education. Verses and poems stitched onto samplers were often dictates for good behavior and have been studied to provide insight into the moral education of girls. Bolton and Coe (1921), for example, organized all the verses found on more than 2500 samplers into 11 categories, and also submitted them to Dr. Barrett Wendell (1855-1921), professor of English Literature at Harvard, for professional analysis. Categories related to moral education include those in praise of Patriotism, Love, Virtue, Parents & Family, Friendship, and Learning. Other verses reflected on death and sorrow, or quoted the Bible, both old and new testaments. Marsha VanValin (1999) compared verses found on American and English samplers in *A Stitch in Rhyme*, noting observable changes in focus over time. An essay in the book by Dr. Tom McBride, professor of English Literature, explored the connection between "living well and sewing well", suggesting that stitching verses helped young girls learn to be "natural, modest and pleasing" and that "life's adversities are to be welcomed because they exercise the soul." Feminist scholars have argued that it is exactly this use of samplers as a tool for female socialization that inhibited its evolution as an art form (Fratto, 1973).

Emergence of the "Middling Classes". Female education played an important role in the "construction and strengthening of the middle class" (Nash, 2005) and needlework was critical to this evolution. Skill with a needle was felt to be imperative for "women in a middling rank" (Female Education, 1828), as a way to beautify the home, economize on essential sewing, and earn a living if circumstances required it. Samplers and other schoolgirl embroideries documented a girl's skill with a needle and as such were put on display as evidence that (a) the family could afford to educate its daughters, and (b) a young woman was prepared to care for family and home – hopefully boosting the family's social status through a "good marriage." Middle-class desires for economic self-sufficiency also prompted women to pursue a career in teaching, either out of necessity or as liberation from the confines of domesticity. Again, skill with a needle was an avenue for self-improvement and self-definition. In her biographical treatise on Leah Galligher, a somewhat scandalous 18th century Pennsylvanian schoolmistress, Jennifer Van Horn (2006) argues that teaching needlework to the daughters of America's emerging middle class was a method by which Galligher and other "women of the middling sort used genteel material culture to create both social and individual identities" (p. 220). This strong connection between the expansion of middle class values and the expansion of female schooling has been widely documented (Sklar, 1993), with skilled needlework seen as an outward manifestation of gentility.

Racial and Ethnic Assimilation. For much of our nation's history, sewing was viewed as a critical skill for all girls, and this included those who came into contact with western "civilization" against their will or in educational contexts that did not honor their own needlework traditions. As discussed above, the samplers stitched by African American girls in Baltimore and Philadelphia are indistinguishable from those of girls who attended academies and schools reserved for white children, even when taught by African American teachers (Allen, 2007; Gustafson, 2009). Stitching a sampler was evidence of assimilation into the dominant culture, and many economically strapped parents found a way to pay for this essential element of female education. Native American girls also stitched samplers, although often as a result of forced assimilation or "civilizing" policies launched by the federal government (Severens & Staples, 2003). For example, Colonial Williamsburg recently acquired a sampler stitched by Christeen Baker, the name assigned to a 12-year old Native American girl who attended the Choctaw Mission School in Mayhew Mississippi, 1828-1830. After finishing her sampler the Choctaw nation in Mississippi was marched to Indian Territory in Oklahoma, a winter trek along which many died. Although it is not known what happened to Christeen, her sampler survives, illustrating the story of cultural assimilation, female education, and the forced removal of indigenous peoples (FCWC, 2010).

In conclusion, samplers and pictorial embroideries are moving from the exclusive purview of needlework and textile studies into an array of broader historical and artistic publications, appearing in regional material culture studies; exhibition and museum collection catalogs of American art, decorative arts, and folk art; and innovative historical studies of such topics as social history, religious history, women's history, children's history, and the history of racial and ethnic minorities. Laurel Thatcher Ulrich's book, *The Age of Hometown: Objects and Stories in the Creation of an American Myth* (2001), legitimized the study of needlework and textiles as primary source materials for "mainstream" historians, modeling a methodology that probes these objects as potent evidence bearing on broad historical themes and concerns. The online digital collection of

information and images envisioned for the Sampler Archive will promote the study of schoolgirl needlework within these same broad historical themes and concerns, as well as new scholarly inquiry made possible by recent advances in digital technologies.

Challenges to the Study of Historic Samplers and Girlhood Embroideries

Despite increased references to girlhood embroideries, the scholarly potential of samplers and pictorial needlework is just beginning to be tapped. Their frequency in museum catalogs remains disproportionately low in relation to other categories of material culture, decorative arts, or folk art, and their inclusion in historical works is often accompanied by inaccurate data or limited understanding of forms and techniques. Together, these circumstances suggest growing interest in the evidentiary and interpretive potential of samplers and pictorial embroideries by scholars in a wide range of fields. Unfortunately, more widespread scholarly incorporation of these works is hampered by limited availability of reliable, well-documented information and examples. The observed impact of Ring's work on subsequent scholarship suggests that the creation of a standardized, nationwide electronic database, as proposed by the Sampler Archive Project, will dramatically enhance the utilization of samplers and girlhood embroideries in future humanities scholarship.

There are numerous challenges to studying historic needlework, all of which plague the study of samplers and other girlhood embroideries. The first, and most obvious, is that the objects themselves are often fragile, and many are in poor condition. Samplers are also very sensitive to light, and hence almost never on permanent display. Museums, even those with a major collection, rarely launch sampler exhibits and when they do, the exhibits generally last only a few months. Scholars who know that a museum has a specific piece of embroidery can study the artifact by arranging for a visit, or requesting a photograph. However, both processes require advanced knowledge of a sampler's location, and there is no central database of where these embroideries are housed. Girlhood embroideries are dispersed all across the country, sometimes in major museums, but also in local historical societies, historic homes, and private collections. This means that any effort to study a group of samplers from a specific region or state may require visiting or contacting institutions in numerous locations. And finally, the documentation records on samplers, even those in major museums, are often inaccurate and out of date. The vast majority of a museum's accession cards, which represent the primary means of access, record identifications made at the time of acquisition – sometimes dating back 50, 100 or even 150 years. Not surprisingly, the reliability of these records varies greatly. At the best, museum records are flawed by inconsistencies, inexactness, and omissions. At their worst, they perpetuate obsolete and even erroneous information (Schoelwer, 2007).

Current Efforts to Put Embroidery Collections Online

Over the past few years an increasing number of museums have attempted to address these challenges by digitizing all or part of their needlework collections and making the information available online. For some, this means that the complete collection is available for online viewing (e.g., the Boston Museum of Fine Arts), for others, only a few historically important pieces are posted. Although these efforts offer some improvement in access for both scholars and the public, there are also significant shortcomings. First, and most important, there are no standards for documenting samplers and other girlhood embroideries. This means there is no standard vocabulary in use and no way to compare (or search) across collections. Second, the extent to which the information in any single online collection can be accessed is limited, with emphasis on fields such as type of object, country of origin, and names of maker or donor. Third, the information is static and restricted to the details found in the museum's catalog description. There is usually no way to comment on or augment the information provided by the repository owner; link it to related works in the same or different collection; or add results from more recent genealogical or historical research. Fourth, it is impossible to search across sampler collections, creating real difficulty in finding connections among samplers that may have been produced in the same location but now reside in geographically dispersed repositories. And finally, only a fraction of museums and historical societies can afford the cost of digitization and online hosting, resulting in absence from the online record of any information related to objects in their collections.

In addition to museum collections online, there are at least two major private efforts to increase access to information and images about historic samplers. The first is the Tennessee Sampler Survey (<http://www.tennesseesamplers.com>), an effort to find, record and share information about all known

samplers made in Tennessee. The second is the effort of a private collector who has created a website (<http://www.antiquesamplers.org>), to share her collection of approximately 650 samplers from around the world, including more than 100 pieces that are American in origin. Both are collaborating with this project.

HISTORY, SCOPE, AND DURATION OF THE PROJECT

History

The Sampler Archive Project was first conceptualized in 2007 by a small group of scholars who together represent expertise in designing and implementing digital projects, women's education and material culture, historic textiles, needlework traditions, and the value of girlhood embroideries as primary source documents. This small group launched the Sampler Consortium and four members of the group became its first Steering Committee. Membership to the Sampler Consortium was opened to the public in June 2008, and there are now more than 1000 members, representing 16 countries and 48 U.S. states. Members include scholars from diverse disciplines, curators of museums and historical societies, genealogists, collectors, dealers, publishers, attorneys, needlework teachers, designers, and "stitchers". Included are at least 30 museums or historical societies with collections of early girlhood needlework and more than 100 private collectors.

The Sampler Consortium has three major objectives:

- To advance the study of historic samplers and other girlhood embroideries;
- To increase access to information and research relevant to the study of historic samplers and girlhood embroideries;
- To design, develop, and support projects that advance the study of historic samplers and other girlhood embroideries.

Toward these ends, the Sampler Consortium Steering Committee worked to find collaborators for the Sampler Archive Project, resulting in the academic and administrative leadership of the Winterthur Program in American Material Culture at the University of Delaware and a commitment from the Center for Advanced Technology in Education to provide database programming, website development, and other technical expertise. The Sampler Consortium has also accomplished the following to support the Sampler Archive.

SamplerCentral. To provide a centralized source of online information related to historic samplers, Sampler Consortium members created a collaborative bookmarking site called *SamplerCentral*. Located at <http://delicious.com/SamplerCentral>, this site serves as a portal to all known public websites with information and images related to the study of girlhood embroideries. At present there are more than 940 websites that have been bookmarked, annotated, and "tagged". Below is an entry from June 25, 2009.

Samplers in the Maine Memory Network
Information and images of 20 samplers in the Maine Memory Network. All are owned by the Maine Historical Society. Images can be enlarged, zoomed, put into a personal album, and sent on an e-card. Interesting feature - invitation to viewers to contribute additional information about the sampler in a "Share What you Know" comment section.

EDIT | DELETE

sampler maine historical_society 18th_century 19th_century collection
new_england american united_states

The entry's title links directly to the website. The "tags" (at the bottom) serve as keywords, allowing the full collection of bookmarked sites to be searched for specific types of information. For example, *SamplerCentral* now links to 158 "articles", 38 "online_books", and 192 "exhibits", all related to samplers or sampler scholarship. On a topic such as "conservation", there are links to websites on best methods to care for historic textiles, conservation societies, awards to museums for specific needlework conservation projects, and conservation services. This effort benefits the Sampler Archive Project in two major ways: (a) provides information on museums with sampler collections and (b) provides users with hyperlinked access to updated online resources (articles, books, blogs, websites) providing historical context to the objects in the database.

Item Documentation Form. Members of Sampler Consortium have developed an item documentation form for the Sampler Archive Project, modifying one developed for the Connecticut Needlework Project.

Revisions and additions were suggested by groups of consulting textile scholars, and needlework experts, and by accessing standard reference works on historic embroidery. The current version of the *Item Documentation Form* has seven major sections: General Information, Design Components, Construction, Physical Condition/History, Context, Images, and Additional Information. Appendix C includes a blank copy, as well as one completed by Gloria Seaman Allen for an 1820 sampler owned by the Maryland Historical Society. This form will provide the foundation for the Sampler Archive's catalog elements & controlled vocabularies.

Sampler Collection Survey. Over the last two years the Sampler Consortium has also been working to locate major and minor sampler collections in museums and historical societies throughout the country. This effort has taken two forms: (a) contacting organizations with known or suspected sampler collections (using published materials and the AAM Museum Directory as a guide) to obtain information on the number of relevant objects owned; and (b) programming various Web 2.0 tools to locate museums and other organizations who post samplers from their collection online. Although this effort is entirely conducted by volunteers, members of the Sampler Consortium have already located **10,391 samplers in 126 repositories** nationwide. Although the samplers originate from multiple countries, it is likely that most are American. Please see Appendix B for a list of these repositories, organized by state, along with contact info and the number of known samplers or other girlhood embroideries. These data will help the Sampler Archive Project determine the ultimate size and scope of the Sampler Archive database and the funds needed to complete the project over time. The next steps in this process are to ensure that we have identified all samplers in a given state, and obtain more detailed information about the collection. Appendix B includes the Statewide Survey for Tennessee, organizing all known samplers in that state by type of repository. The Sampler Consortium is working with members in each state to complete a similar form for their state. In addition, the Sampler Consortium has request more detailed information from eight museums with major sampler collections and invited them to join the Sampler Archive Project. Three of these museums were selected to participate as pilot sites during Database Programming phase (see *Partners*) and the remaining five sites will contribute information on samplers in their collections during the Expansion phase (see *Scope and Duration*).

Scope and Duration

The Sampler Archive Project is conceptualized as a multi-year digital collections endeavor, leading to the eventual documentation and inclusion of all known American samplers in an online searchable database designed specifically to showcase needlework objects and support scholarly inquiry. The Sampler Archive Project is comprised of four major components: (1) Standards Development, (2) Database Programming and Initial Population, (3) Database Expansion and Refinement, and (4) Maintenance and Use. Each is described briefly below. Funds are requested in this proposal to support the first two phases only: (1) Standards Development and (2) Database Programming and Initial Population. A list of project activities by Year and Quarter are included in the Sampler Archive Project *Timeline* in Appendix D.

Standards Development. The major objectives for this phase are to (a) develop standards for item level cataloging that can be used across multiple repositories to describe and document the various genres of historic samplers and other girlhood embroideries; and (b) conduct the process in such a way that the resulting standards have national credibility and widespread adoption. Because the three museums participating as pilot sites represent different approaches to cataloging (e.g., decorative arts, social history, and American culture) the process will benefit from diverse input and the need to reach consensus. An underlying goal will be to develop cataloging standards that have a high level of specificity and exhaustivity in order to be of maximal utility to researchers (Baca, 2006). Key to reaching this goal will be adoption of controlled text fields to the maximum extent possible and authoritative controlled vocabularies.

Database Programming and Initial Population. The major objectives for this phase are to: (a) design, develop, and program an online searchable database to contain information and images on historic samplers; (b) design and develop a user-friendly online interface so that data can be inserted into the database; (c) populate the database with information and images from the sampler collections of three museums who will serve as pilot sites; and (d) develop of the Sampler Archive Website so that diverse audiences can access information in the Sampler Archive using effective mechanisms for both browsing and searching. The three museums pilot sites (and the number of American samplers/girlhood embroideries in their collections) are:

Winterthur Museum (250); the DAR Museum (325); and Rhode Island Historical Society (95). Please see Appendix B for more information on the status of their sampler collections and contact information

Expansion and Refinement. Once the Sampler Archive database is programmed and tested for usability with information and images from our three pilot sites, the goal will be to expand the number of objects available to scholars and the public. This will be accomplished by collaborating with the following six museums to document their American samplers: Philadelphia Museum of Art (419); Colonial Williamsburg Foundation (171); Connecticut Historical Society (125); Boston Museum of Fine Arts (75); and the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Art (58). Please see Appendix B for more information on the status of their sampler collections and contact information. In addition, we will use information from the Sampler Collection Survey (conducted by members of the Sampler Consortium) about the location of samplers in the U.S. to seek regional funding for documenting collections in state/local historical societies and historic homes. As of July 10, 2010, the Sampler Collection Survey has recorded the existence of 10,391 samplers and needlework pictures in 126 different repositories in the U.S. (See Appendix B for a listing.) Funds will be sought to document these samplers, following the standards and protocols developed during the proposed project.

We will also seek to include the thousands of samplers in the collections of dealers and private collectors. More than 100 individual collectors have joined the Sampler Consortium, many providing advance information about their collections. We will invite private collectors to add information and images of their needlework collections, entering the information once the web-based form is available and robust enough for private use. Instructional materials with supportive documentation and illustrative examples of each field will foster reliability in these submissions, which will be vetted by project staff prior to inclusion.

The second major objective of this component is to refine the Sampler Archive by adding features to the website's interface that enable individualized approaches to the study of historic needlework as material culture. Four types of refinements are envisioned: (a) search capabilities that enable novel ways to access the text and images stored in the archive, (b) online tools for "collecting", studying, and sharing research based on the text and images in the archive, (c) links to other collections of information online that would extend a scholar's ability to understand the personal, educational, and historic context of any given sampler, and (d) tools for contributing information about objects in the archive (e.g., genealogy, family history, lines of descent, etc.). It is estimated **Expansion and Refinement** will occur over a period of 8 to 10 years.

To elaborate on possible refinements, Appendix B contains a **mock-up** of what the Sampler Archive website might look like. It is envisioned as highly interactive, with opportunities for users to access its informational databases in a variety of ways. For example, in addition to traditional options for browsing and searching on predefined terms, users will be able to conduct whole phrase searches in order to find related sampler verses. Users will also be able comment on the objects in the Sampler Archive, link objects to related ones, and add contextual information. Over time, we hope that the Sampler Archive will also be linked to related databases that support the study of historic needlework – e.g., (a) a searchable online list of diaries and letters from girls and young women in the 17th to 19th centuries, and links to those posted online; (b) a searchable online list of early needlework teachers and female academies; (c) a searchable online list of early known portraits and silhouettes and their current locations; and (d) a searchable online list of published town and county histories, and links to those online. Both professional and lay scholars will be encouraged to create and share "exhibits" using objects and information drawn from the Sampler Archive as well as their own research. And, following guidelines developed in collaboration with the New England Historic and Genealogical Society, users will be able to insert the results of their genealogical research on sampler makers and their families, supporting each contribution with information about its source.

Maintenance and Use. The primary objectives for the Maintenance phase are twofold (a) enable continued contributions to the Sampler Archive as previously unknown samplers or collections surface, and (b) keep the Sampler Archive operating and up-to-date technically. For the former, mechanisms will be put in place to enable easy entry and verification of new pieces as they emerge. By requiring a fee for entering each new item into the Sampler Archive, the project will be fiscally self-supporting, a model pioneered by *The Quilt Index*. To support the Sampler Archive long term - server space, routine database maintenance, and regular archival back-ups will be provided indefinitely by the Center for Advanced Technology in Education at the University

of Oregon. External funding will be obtained as needed for upgrades and refinements to the technological infrastructure, or to transfer the content to new file and database formats.

METHODOLOGY AND STANDARDS

Technical Infrastructure and Specifications

Hardware and Software. The Center for Advanced Technology in Education (CATE) at the University of Oregon will host the Sampler Archive database and its accompanying Sampler Archive website. The university's high-speed network infrastructure will provide access to and from the Internet. Hardware dedicated to support the development work, databases, and image and textual archives will initially consist of an Apple Macintosh Xserver with multi-terabyte hard drive storage capacity, dual state of the art processors, 8 GB RAM, and dual 1 GB Ethernet connections. It will store the database, derivative access images, digital ingest data and website. Automated nightly back-ups will be performed by a high-density digital tape system, and permanent archival copies will be stored on redundant optical data disks.

Software used for the project will include common open-source applications designed to support Web applications relying on Structured Query Language databases (MySQL, Apache, PHP, Javascript, AJAX). We will also adopt and adapt a Web-based archival, search and retrieval system developed at Michigan State University by MATRIX: The Center for Humane Arts, Letters, and Social Sciences Online for their online database of American quilts known as *The Quilt Index* (<http://www.quiltindex.org>). Over the last several years, and supported in part by the NEH, MATRIX has developed the open-source KORA/REPOS system, comprised of a working database system known as REPOS (for Repository), and the highly adaptable KORA suite of programs which enables owners of digital collections to create both the underlying database structures and the Web interface forms needed to interact with that database, all with relatively little programming. REPOS will be used to describe the structures of the underlying database (its tables, fields, and relational structures) to which the KORA software provides access. We will adapt the KORA/REPOS suite, database structures, and documentation to our needs, contributing these changes and documentation to the KORA/REPOS system for use by others as well.

Organization of the Sampler Archive Database. The database will be patterned on that developed for *The Quilt Index*, using the REPOS digital repository software. Written in MySQL, its database structure of tables, fields, and relations has been efficiently bonded with the metadata schema. At its most elemental, the metadata fields of this schema include the group name and number, actual database field names, the order in which fields appear within groups, descriptions, captions (for online management), field types, notes (for any additional information), and character limits. The Sampler Archive's MySQL database will provide full-text information storage and advanced Boolean search capabilities to users through varying interfaces adapted to their individual needs (the historian, the genealogist, the collector, the staff data-entry person, the reviewer, etc.). In a manner similar to *The Quilt Index*, the interface will allow users to search the database on one or more important variables at the same time. These will include: (a) individual names (of sampler makers, teachers, family members, owners, donors, etc.); (b) sampler descriptions (alphabets, borders, motifs, colors, fabric, etc.); (c) sampler verses and inscriptions (lines of poems, Biblical sayings, dedications, locations, etc.); (d) types of alphanumeric information (alphabets in various scripts, sizes, number sequences, ages, birth dates, etc.); and (e) object history (provenance, exhibitions, publications, etc.). In addition, users will be able to browse the database by narrowing their search to specific collections (e.g., the collection of a specific contributor), specific time periods (one year or a range of years), and/or specific locations (e.g., state, county or town of origin.) This flexibility will maximize the ability of diverse audiences to find and use the vast amount of textual information stored in the database from needlework collections nationwide, supporting the study of historic needlework by locating information on objects that match specific search criteria.

Authoritative terms used in the preservation of historic embroideries, as well as controlled vocabularies for describing each field, will enable users to search our database efficiently and also strengthen the links between disparate collections. The thesauri we use will incorporate the Library of Congress Subject Headings, The Textile Museum Thesaurus, Art & Architecture Thesaurus, and others recommended by our digital collection consultants, our Advisory Board, and pilot site coordinators. Identifying and adopting authoritative controlled

vocabularies will also be informed by scholarly works on the study and preservation of historic embroideries. Authoritative practice will be used for administrative metadata as well as for descriptive elements.

The textual database will be integrated with a complete archive of digital images tagged and organized according to the Sampler Archive's Metadata Schema. Our principal guide in developing the sampler schema will be METS, the Metadata Encoding and Transmission Standard. METS is a standard for encoding descriptive, administrative, and structural metadata about objects within a digital library, expressed using XML. METS is the emerging national standard for applying metadata schemas to digital library materials being developed by the Digital Library Federation (DLF) and maintained by the Library of Congress. METS is also the basis for MSU's Quilt Index because of its capacity and specificity for individual 3D digital objects as well as the structure for adding additional object description information.

Entering Information and Images into the Sampler Archive Database

Digitization, preservation, and input of information and images will follow a standardized process conducted by project staff, staff and scholars at collaborating museums, and eventually by individual collectors in the larger sampler community. In all cases, the original physical objects and related materials will be handled according to standard archival practices with attention to preserving them in their current form. These materials will be digitally photographed, measured, and described using standard practices and data input formats developed specially for these three-dimensional archival objects.

Textual Input or Conversion. The Sampler Archive Project will rely on two methods for textual input: (a) by direct entry into the database using online forms and (b) by linking and converting information (sometimes called "cross walking") from existing library and museum databases. Until the web-based interface to the database is developed, an MS Word version of the Item Documentation Form (see Appendix C) will be used. We will adapt MATRIX-developed tools for easing web-based data entry for each of our contributing groups and individuals, borrowing the adaptability of features in the KORA/REPOS system for customizing the web-based interface. Through user-friendly web forms and data entry interfaces, we will be able to provide for ease of simultaneous access from diverse locations, error-checking, and review before updating publicly accessible database information. In addition, we will adapt MATRIX developed PHP programs to facilitate ingestion of informational databases from external sources when these are sufficiently compatible to make this approach to data input more efficient. For cross-walks with major sampler databases, we will work closely with the staff in charge of these other databases to develop efficient ways to interconnect their data with those in the Sampler Archive database. This effort will require careful matching and translation of XML data nodes between the cooperating systems, but because of common adherence to standardized metadata, over time we expect to build a powerfully effective network of information about historic samplers and nationally accepted standards for describing and documenting them. For those databases that are currently online, we can provide folder-level catalog listings and links to their website until the cross-walk can be completed.

Methods for Formatting Material. Digital images will be uploaded and stored on the system in lossless, compressed 1200 dpi resolution, full-color SVG image files named with unique identifying information and sorted into pre-processing folder structures on the server's file system. Detailed descriptive metadata will then be keyed into database records according to these image IDs. Textual information will be entered into the Matrix-based database system as ASCII text using XML tagging, thus allowing the system to apply XSL style sheets for presenting this information in various media (e.g., web forms, pdf, etc.) Images will be processed to clarify image detail and color balance, to include metadata tags, and to allow detailed views.

Digital Image Standards. The Sampler Archive will include derivative access images as part of each sampler record, and will follow digital imaging best practices for establishing the standard for new images. These include best practices and open standards for image capture, metadata schema, quality control, and long-term management and preservation. We will draw upon the following resources:

- National Archives' Technical Guidelines for Digitizing Archival Materials for Electronic Access Guidelines (<http://www.archives.gov/preservation/technical/guidelines.pdf>)
- Getty Institute Standards Program for Delivering Digital Images (http://www.getty.edu/research/conducting_research/standards/)

- Colorado Digitization Program's Western States Digital Imaging Best Practices, June, 2008 (<http://www.bcr.org/cdp/best/digital-imaging-bp.pdf>), which establishes practices and standards for digitizing 3D cultural artifacts such as textiles.

High quality images already on file in a collection will be used if they meet our minimum standards. New images will use the Sampler Archive's established guidelines for digital masters, and for derivative submasters to be displayed online. UO Library Digital Collections will assist in developing a workflow for our pilot sites that incorporates known best practices as well as special handling of historic samplers.

Metadata Schemes to be Used and Rationale. Collections of samplers and their metadata currently lack a unified finding aid or cataloging standards. The Sampler Archive Project has initiated the development of a comprehensive metadata schema with the assistance of historic textile experts from the Sampler Consortium who are knowledgeable about the existing metadata fields already in use on museum sampler/textile documentation forms (see *Item Documentation Form* in Appendix C.) The *Item Documentation Form* will be expanded and updated as we work to develop nationally accepted standards for describing and documenting needlework samplers, as well as controlled vocabularies for each field. It will also be refined as we use it to describe a representative selection of samplers and pictorial embroideries proposed as test models by our collaborating pilot sites (10 objects from each site). When stabilized, the information and vocabularies used in the *Item Documentation Form* will become the basis of our *Sampler Archive Comprehensive Fields* for the database. The database will be programmed to incorporate the *Comprehensive Fields* and a web-based interface will allow direct input to the database. At key intersections during this process of developing cataloging standards and encoding them into the *Sampler Archive Comprehensive Fields*, draft documents will be submitted to advisory board members and volunteers from the Sampler Consortium for feedback and suggestions. For a more detailed chronology of the process envisioned please see the *Timeline* in Appendix D. Following the development of an establish set of *Comprehensive Fields*, project staff and site collaborators will identify

Several metadata schemes are appropriate for use with a digital image archive. For example, some Dublin Core based schemes provide for content as well as internal project tracking, management, and documentation. The NISO IMG draft standard on metadata requirements for digital still images provides extremely detailed specifications for capturing technical metadata for images: (<http://www.niso.org/standards/dsftu.html>). The METS standard has been used to bring together the different types of image metadata required for different project purposes. It will enable us to not only document individual images, but also represent the relationships between multiple images that together constitute a single digital object (for instance, high-resolution archival images, thumbnails and delivery images at lower resolutions, images of particular details at higher magnification). METS can also provide the structure that enables others to reuse, repackage, repurpose, and create services using our data.

Maintaining the Integrity of the Sampler Archive Over Time

Quality Control. Once developed, project protocols (imaging, data entry practices and metadata schema) will be posted in training materials on the Sampler Archive website, and used for training collaborating organizations and other interested groups who contribute to the Sampler Archive. Training materials will enhance the accuracy and consistency of data input and of building cross-links among collections. As image and database record processing is completed, project staff will review images and data for correctness and completeness before making them available for review. After all approvals have been recorded, the materials entered into the system will be available for general search and retrieval in the Sampler Archive.

Plans for Storing, Maintaining, and Protecting Data. The Sampler Archive Project will store the derivative images and the metadata in multiple copies and backups. Images, data, and web site coding will be protected by a three-tiered backup scheme including 1) nightly incremental backups of the entire system along with complete database images that will be written to digital archival tape; 2) full system images that will be archived to tape on a weekly basis; and 3) data archives copied monthly from the digital tapes to more permanent, high-density DVDs for long-term storage both on site and off. Tapes will be cycled off site weekly to a secure, climate controlled location and recycled into the system after data has been off-loaded onto DVD. The Sampler Archive Project will use metadata to track migration and preservation, and capture technical metadata throughout production.

Plans for Archiving and Migrating to Future Media Formats. Periodic backups will be stored in archived sets that will be checked for reliability over time. As media forms emerge that are more capacious and reliable than high-density DVDs, we will convert the archives to such newer forms. Future migration of the archives is assured through the use of extremely common image and text formats (TIFF, JPEG and ASCII). To maintain long-term preservation of the information contained in the Sampler Archive Database, we plan to adopt the best practices of the OAIS, Reference Model for Open Archival Information Systems (<http://public.ccsds.org/publications/archive/650x0b1.pdf>).

Plans for Enhancing Discoverability. The team will pursue an active process to spread the word about the Sampler Archive database, using traditional means of dissemination as well as an extensive and well deployed system of tags, keywords, search engine optimization, and inclusion in aggregated resources (such as digital libraries, cooperative portals, and clearinghouses), link exchanges, semantic web pinging, and related means. Please see the section entitled *Dissemination* for more details.

Plans for Developing a Cooperative Portal for Scholarly and Community Participation. Historical samplers have drawn the interest of a broadly ranging community of both amateur and professional collectors, cultural and arts historians, textile specialists, as well as genealogists, librarians, and museum archivists. The members of this diverse community represent most of the available knowledge about these artifacts and the social and cultural practices they embody. One of the vital dimensions of the Sampler Archive Project will be to provide a means for networking the members of this community so they may more effectively share and record their knowledge and insight about the artifacts digitally archived in the database. To this end, we will ultimately provide a variety of social networking tools on the project's website, such as controlled-access web-base discussion forums, blogs, podcasts, and webcast tutorials.

WORK PLAN

Listed below are the major strands of work conceptualized for the first phases of the *Sampler Archive Project*. A more detailed and chronological timeline for the project, broken into quarters by year, is in Appendix D.

Develop Cataloging Standards for Samplers and Other Girlhood Embroideries. The goal of this strand is to develop nationally accepted standards for cataloging and documenting historic samplers and related embroideries. Work will begin immediately upon funding and is expected to be complete by the end of Year 1. Dr. Pat Keller, Digital Collections Curator, will coordinate the work, assisted by the project's three pilot site coordinators, UO metadata experts, the Advisory Board, and interested members of the Sampler Consortium. The goals are to (a) create a list of catalog elements/database fields that reflect information on the *Item Documentation Form*, (b) establish controlled vocabularies for all fields to enable consistent object description, and (c) design and develop a web-based form for inputting data and images. The process will also be an iterative one, using sample artifacts from pilot site collections for testing decisions.

Design and Program the Sampler Archive Database. The goal is to develop an online searchable database to house information and images of American samplers. Work will begin upon funding and proceed throughout the project. Dr. Len Hatfield will coordinate the database development using input from project staff and our collaborating museums. The process is an iterative one, with each new stage reviewed for compliance with best practice and relevant standards, as well as usability by our multiple constituencies.

Develop and Implement Work Plans with Pilot Sites. The goal is to work with each pilot site to document 100 samplers and use them to populate the database. Work on this strand will begin in the summer of 2010 with a planning meeting of all project personnel and pilot site directors. Additional meetings (held online) will lead to individualized Work Plans for each the three participating pilot sites. Implementation will occur on a staggered basis depending on schedules at the individual sites, resource needs, and staff travel.

Design and Develop the Sampler Archive Website. Work on the Sampler Archive website will begin the fourth quarter of the first year. Using input from project staff, collaborating sites, the Advisory Board, and interested members of the Sampler Consortium, the website will be designed to showcase the Sampler Archive, enable access by diverse constituencies, provide articles and tools for scholarly study of the artifacts, and link to information about events and developments in the broader sampler community.

Develop Online Training Materials for Item Documentation. Work on this strand will be a focus of Year 2. Using experience ingesting information and images from the three pilot sites, we will develop online materials to support cataloging, documentation, and data entry by repositories involved during the Expansion Phase of the project. For example, color illustrations and descriptive details of the different types of embroideries and possible stitches will be link to the appropriate sections of the web-based form to enable reliability and consistency by those charged with item documentation and data entry. Informing our work will be the experiences of the Colorado Project (Kriegsman, 2002).

Collaborating and Supporting Pilot Sites. The Project Director and Digital Collections Curator will work closely with the three pilot sites as they input and cross check data and images during both years of the project. The Digital Collections Curator will focus on two pilot sites (Winterthur and the DAR), and the Project Director will focus on the Rhode Island Historical Society. Both the Project Director and the Digital Collections Curators will meet with staff at the pilot sites for work sessions and debriefing.

Evaluate the Usability of the Sampler Archive Database and Website. The second year of the project will be devoted to usability testing of both the database and the website, requesting feedback from various constituencies and using that feedback for final refinements. All changes will be included in the Sampler Archive documentation. The Sampler Archive and its accompanying website will be made available to the public during the fourth quarter of Year 2.

STAFFING

Project Partners

This initial phase of the *Sampler Archive Project* is a collaborative effort between the Winterthur Program in American Material Culture at the University of Delaware, the Center for Advanced Technology at the University of Oregon, the Sampler Consortium, and three museums with significant collections of samplers and pictorial embroideries. Letters of commitment can be found in Appendix E. Vitas for all project staff, site coordinators, and Advisory Board members can be found in Appendix F.

Winterthur Program in American Material Culture at the University of Delaware

The University of Delaware's College of Arts and Sciences will serve as the academic home and fiscal agent for the Sampler Archive Project. The University of Delaware is a major research university with a long history of successful grants management. In the 2008 Fiscal Year, grants and contracts totaling \$160,000,000 in external funds were administered through the university's Research Office. The University of Delaware is uniquely capable of providing a stable and sustainable home for the Sampler Archive Project, which will benefit from numerous university programs devoted to the study of Material Culture. These include the Center for Material Culture Studies, the Winterthur Program in American Material Culture, the Department of Art Conservation, the Museum Studies Program, the Department of Art History, the Center for Historic Architecture and Design, and doctoral programs in both Preservation Studies and the History of American Civilization (Department of History.) No other university in the country has such a large cluster of scholars and students working on the history, theory, and professional practices associated with material culture.

The Sampler Archive Project will be administered through the Winterthur Program in American Material Culture. Since 1952, the University of Delaware and the Winterthur Museum have sponsored a graduate program on decorative arts and material culture. Alumni of the program have had distinguished careers in our nation's museums, the academy, preservation organizations, libraries, and cultural institutions. Many of the scholars referenced in this narrative have studied or taught in the Winterthur program; an even larger number have done research on samplers in the Winterthur collections and in its library, the finest library on decorative arts in the United States. Dr. Ritchie Garrison, PI for the Sampler Archive Project, has been Director of the Winterthur Program in American Material Culture since 2004.

Center for Advanced Technology in Education (CATE) at the University of Oregon

The Center for Advanced Technology in Education at the University of Oregon will provide the technical expertise for the development and implementation of the Sampler Archive. This includes the design and development of the online searchable database and the construction of the Sampler Archive website. CATE

is a research and outreach center that serves as an administrative umbrella for externally funded projects with a current budget of approximately \$3,500,000 a year. Specializing in projects that incorporate advanced technologies, online learning, and virtual environments, CATE research faculty have years of experience designing and developing web-based environments incorporating dynamic databases for the presentation of content and images. Dr. Anderson, Project Director for the Sampler Archive Project, was director of CATE for 15 years and has long established working relationships with all project staff.

The UO Libraries Metadata Services & Digital Projects (MSDP) department and Image Services Center will provide guidance and oversight on metadata schema and digital photography. MSDP has been active in creating digital collections since 2003 with projects that include historical photographs and documents as well as art and cultural objects (<http://boundless.uoregon.edu/digcol/index.html>). MSDP is also a collaborator in the Northwest Digital Archive (<http://nwda.wsulibs.wsu.edu/index.shtml>) and a participant in the collaborative Western Waters Digital Library (<http://westernwaters.org>), both funded in part by the NEH.

Sampler Consortium

The Sampler Consortium is an international organization of more than 1000 scholars, historians, curators, educators, genealogists, textile conservators, collectors, dealers, and needlework experts interested in the study of historic samplers and other girlhood embroideries. The Sampler Consortium members provide the Sampler Archive Project with intellectual expertise, breadth of scholarship in fields related to the study of historic needlework, experience in designing and developing digital collections, curators of museums interested in digitizing and contributing their collections, and a significant number of needlework teachers, designers, and enthusiasts who are also consumers and producers of information on historic needlework. The Sampler Consortium Steering Committee has actively worked with project staff to conceptualize and write this proposal for NEH funding. In addition, six members of the Sampler Consortium have been tapped to serve on the Advisory Board for the Sampler Archive Project. The Sampler Consortium will continue to conduct the Sampler Collection Survey, identifying the locations of sampler collections, their size and status. In addition, Consortium members will work with project staff to identify, prioritize, and organize the material for the Sampler Archive website in order to provide historical context and study guidelines.

Winterthur Museum

Linda Eaton will be the Site Coordinator for Winterthur Museum in Delaware. Ms. Eaton is Director of Collections & Senior Curator of Textiles at Winterthur Museum and an adjunct professor in the Winterthur Program in American Material Culture at the University of Delaware. Ms Eaton trained at the Textile Conservation Centre at Hampton Court Palace and the Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London. She came to Winterthur Museum in 1991 as head of textile conservation and became Curator of Textiles in 1999. Ms. Eaton has organized three needlework exhibitions and conferences at Winterthur: *This Work in Hand: Philadelphia Needlework in the 18th Century*; *Needles & Haystacks: Pastoral Imagery in American Needlework* (2006) and, most recently, *Who's Your Daddy? Families in American Needlework* (2008-2009).

Winterthur's needlework collection includes 260 samplers and needlework pictures, of which approximately 250 are American in origin. Winterthur is currently involved in a multi-year project to upgrade catalogue records and digitize images for their collection. To date, 36 records include an adequate digitized image, and approximately 150 have upgraded catalogue records. Winterthur uses an electronic database called KE EMU to catalogue their collection. Almost all of the collection is in the system, but information is inadequate for those records that have not been updated. The Winterthur textile department is currently working to get its quilt collection available online, after which it will move to other textile objects.

Rhode Island Historical Society

Kirsten N. Hammerstrom, Director of Collections, will be the site coordinator for the Rhode Island Historical Society. Ms. Hammerstrom graduated from Washington University with a BFA and the Rhode Island School of Design with an MFA. Prior to joining the staff of the Rhode Island Historical Society as Museum Curator she held the same position at the Missouri Historical Society. She is now the Director of Collections. With 18 years of curatorial experience she manages the acquisition, care, storage, preservation and cataloging of the entirety of the Society's collections. Ms. Hammerstrom also has extensive expertise and commitment to museum cataloging standards, collection documentation, and online catalogue record access.

The collection at the Rhode Island Historical Society contains 95 American needlework samplers, all of which have been fully catalogued. The catalogue's descriptive information is available through the Society's online database (<http://rihs.minisisinc.com/RIHS/index.htm>) called NETOP. Sixteen of the Society's samplers were photographed in 1983 for the "Let Virtue Be a Guide to Thee" exhibition catalog. The exhibition was curated by Betty Ring for the Rhode Island Historical Society, and then traveled to New York City and Houston. Unfortunately, some of the color negatives have deteriorated over time so these samplers will need to be re-photographed. The Society is committed to providing public online access to its collections, and feels photographic access for objects that are too fragile to handle or display is essential for preservation.

Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Museum

Olive Blair Graffam, Curator of Collections, will serve as Site Coordinator for the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Museum in Washington, DC. Ms. Graffam is the curator of the schoolgirl art collection and has extensive expertise in the fields of American decorative arts, 19th century cultural and social history, and women's history – both writing and lecturing on these subjects. Ms Graffam received her Master of Arts degree from The George Washington University in American Civilization/ Material Culture. She has served as curator or co-curator of exhibitions at the DAR including *Family Record: Genealogical Watercolors and Needlework* and *Feminine Images: American Portraits, 1750-1860*. She is the author of the DAR publication, *Youth is the Time for Progress: The Importance of American Schoolgirl Art 1780-1860* which accompanied her 1998 exhibition on American schoolgirl art and female education. In 2008 she organized the exhibition and accompanying symposium entitled *Telling Their Stories: 19th Century Samplers and Silk Needlework*.

The DAR Museum holds 350 examples of schoolgirl art, mostly samplers and silk embroideries dating from the early 18th century to the mid-19th century, of which 325 are American. Approximately 75% of the embroideries were donated to the museum, many by descendants of the sampler makers. Current efforts focus on increasing the scope of the collection to reflect all parts of the U.S., with special emphasis on the south, the southwest, and the west. The cataloging is complete for about 50% of the collection, and about 50% have been professionally photographed. Although the sampler collection is not online, the virtual exhibition of *Telling Their Stories* will soon be posted on the DAR website, providing information and images for 70 of its samplers. In 2007, the DAR collaborated with the Quilt Index to put 292 of their quilts online.

Project Staff

Principal Investigator (.05 FTE – contributed) Dr. Ritchie Garrison, Director of the Winterthur Program in American Material Culture since 2004, will serve as Principal Investigator. In this capacity he will provide administrative and fiscal oversight for the project at the University of Delaware. Dr. Garrison is a Professor of History, with an emphasis on American Civilization, and has had thirty years of experience working collaboratively with museums and material culture scholars in the U.S. and abroad. He has been on faculty at the University of Delaware since 1985, where he has also served as Assistant/Associate Director of the Museum Studies Program. Dr. Garrison reports to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

Project Director and Co-PI (.25 FTE) Dr. Lynne Anderson will serve as Project Director and Co-PI, providing conceptual and administrative leadership. She will coordinate the efforts of project personnel at both universities, prepare reports, direct dissemination efforts, and interface with the Advisory Board. Dr. Anderson is professor of education at the University of Oregon (.50 FTE) and adjunct professor at the University of Delaware (.25 FTE on the Sampler Archive Project). At the University of Oregon she has directed more than 30 grant-funded projects, totaling more than \$24,000,000, including three large projects on technology-supported historical inquiry. Dr. Anderson is a nationally recognized expert on technology applications in literacy education and publishes regularly in the research literature. She is currently researching the inter-relationships of samplers and female literacy. In October 2009, she presented at the History in Education Society meeting on *Writing with Ink, Writing with Thread: The Expansion of Female Literacy*.

Digital Collections Curator (.20 FTE for 10 months/year) Dr. Patricia Keller will serve as Digital Collections Curator, coordinating the development of cataloging standards for samplers and providing assistance on project activities involving documentation of sampler collections at participating pilot sites. Dr. Keller has a Ph.D. in American history and an MA in American Material Culture. She has extensive experience in textile documentation for digital collections, most recently with *The Quilt Index*. Dr. Keller will

work closely with the Project Director to refine the protocols for sampler documentation, leading to a detailed specification of all fields in the database and how they interact. She will also work with staff at the pilot sites, documenting samplers in their collections and developing materials to guide documentation procedures at other collaborating repositories. Letters of commitment and support are in Appendix F.

Database Designer and Developer (.30 FTE) Dr. Len Hatfield will work with project staff to design and develop the Sampler Archive database using the KORA/REPOS digital repository software. Dr. Hatfield has over 25 years' experience in humanities computing for research, development, and instruction. During his career at Virginia Tech he co-founded and directed the Center for Applied Technologies in the Humanities (CATH) and the Center for Digital Discourse and Culture (CDDC). Dr. Hatfield also helped to develop the Gravell Online Watermarks Database. In Oregon, Dr. Hatfield is the Systems Administrator at the Center for Advanced Technology in Education (CATE) and Pacific Institutes for Research. He has extensive experience in designing and developing tools for online scholarly collaboration and digital humanities research.

Web Site Developer (.20 FTE) Judith Blair will work with staff to design and develop the Sampler Archive website, as well as the web entry interface and the online training materials for data input. Ms. Blair has been the IT and Communications Manager at the Center for Advanced Technology in Education for 14 years, where she has designed web sites, managed databases for dynamic web content, developed instructional materials, administered web servers and content management systems, and provided technical assistance for multiple federally funded projects. She has over 30 years experience in graphic and multimedia design, with extensive knowledge of usability guidelines and best practices for web and multimedia development.

Research Assistant (.10 FTE) Martha Spark will provide technical assistance to project staff and online support to the three museums serving as pilot sites. Ms. Spark has 25 years experience working in museums and with historic textiles. She served as Curator of Victorian Costume and Textiles at the Clarke Historical Museum in Eureka, CA. From 2003 to 2006 she was Collections Manager at the Rocky Mountain Quilt Museum in Golden, CO, where she was a member of the Quilt Index implementation team. She holds a degree in Clothing and Textiles, with an Art History minor and emphasis on Museum Conservation.

Advisory Board

The Sampler Archive Project will be assisted by a six member Advisory Board of national experts in the fields of American studies, women's studies, material culture, early American education, female education, historic textiles, decorative arts, and art history. The Advisory Board will provide intellectual oversight and guidance in the conduct of the project as well as assistance in project dissemination through their diverse scholarly networks. The Advisory Board will work closely with the Project Director via email and phone, and will meet four times a year with all project staff through web-based video conferences.

Gloria Seaman Allen received her Ph.D. in American Studies with concentrations in material culture and folk life from The George Washington University. She is former curator and director of the DAR Museum in Washington, D.C. Dr. Allen has written extensively on 18th and 19th century textiles and textile workers from Maryland and Virginia. Her most recent book is *A Maryland Sampling: Girlhood Embroidery, 1738-1860* (2007). Articles include: *Architectural Samplers from Frederick County, Maryland*, *Needlework Education in Antebellum Alexandria*, *African American Samplers from Antebellum Baltimore*, *Ann Barclay Cloud's Fruit and Flower Samplers*, and *Samplers from the Oblate Sisters of Providence School for Colored Girls, Baltimore, Maryland*. Dr. Allen is currently writing a book about sampler traditions and needlework teachers in the Washington, DC area.

Maureen Daly Goggin is Professor of Rhetoric and Associate Chair of the Department of English at Arizona State University where she teaches courses on the history of rhetoric, material culture, and research methods. She has also written extensively about the history and the field of rhetoric, gender and race, visual and material culture, and needlework, including an article on the rhetoric of samplers entitled *An Essamplaire Essai on the Rhetoricity of Needlework Sampler-Making: A Contribution to Theorizing and Historicizing Rhetorical Praxis* (Goggin, 2002.) In 2010, Dr. Goggin published three co-edited volumes on Women and Material Culture with Beth Fowkes Tobin: (a) *Women and Things: Gendered Material Strategies 1750-1950*, (b) *Material Women: Consuming Desires and Collecting Practices*, and (c) *Women and the Material Culture of Needlework and Textiles*.

Mary Kelley is the Ruth Bordin Collegiate Professor of History, American Culture, and Women's Studies at the University of Michigan. Dr. Kelley is the author, co-author, or editor of eight books. Most recently she published *Learning to Stand and Speak: Women, Education, and Public Life in America's Republic*. She also co-edited *An Extensive Republic: Print, Culture* (for a series entitled *A History of the Book in America*) and *Society in the New Nation* and the *Gender and American Culture Series* (University of North Carolina Press.) Dr. Kelley has served as President of the American Studies Association and the Society of Historians of the Early American Republic and as Co-Chair of the Council of the Omohundro Institute of American History and Culture.

E. Jennifer Monaghan is Professor Emerita, Department of English, at Brooklyn College of The City University of New York. Her research interests focus on the history of literacy, with publications including *Learning to Read and Write in Colonial America* (2005) and *Reading for the Enslaved, Writing for the Free: Reflections on Liberty and Literacy* (2000). In 1975 she founded the History of Reading Special Interest Group in the International Reading Association and is editor of their 2007 online *Focus on the History of Reading*. In 2002 she and (b) (6) donated their collection of 1,425 old readers, spellers, and grammars to Kansas University as *The Charles and E. Jennifer Monaghan Collection of Books on the History of Reading in the U.S.*

Susan P. Schoelwer is Curator at George Washington's Mount Vernon. As Director of Museum Collections at the Connecticut Historical Society, she designed and directed a major research project surveying the state's decorative needlework. She holds a Ph.D. in American Studies from Yale University and an MA from the Winterthur Program in American Culture, University of Delaware. Dr. Schoelwer has taught at Rutgers, Villanova, and Virginia Commonwealth Universities, and served as a reviewer for the NEH and the IMLS. Dr. Schoelwer is the author of numerous publications on American art, material culture, women's history, and textiles. Her forthcoming book, *Connecticut Needlework: Women, Art, and Family, 1740-1840*, will be released in October 2010, accompanied by an exhibition and symposium at the Connecticut Historical Society.

Kathleen A. Staples is a Research Associate for Brunk Auctions and an independent scholar, author, and curator. She curated the following exhibits and wrote the accompanying books: *Mexican Samplers: Patterns of Continuity and Change* for The Textile Museum in Washington, DC (1993), *British Embroidery: Curious Works from the Seventeenth Century* for the DeWitt Wallace Gallery in Colonial Williamsburg (1998-1999), *A Proper and Polite Education: Girlhood Embroidery in the American South* for The Charleston Museum (2006), and *Needlework and the Sea* for the New Bedford Whaling Museum (2008). She is the author of numerous articles on historic textiles, needlework tools, the relationship of sampler making and women's literacy, the importance of religion in sustaining girlhood embroidery, and sampler making among enslaved African-Americans.

DISSEMINATION

Information about the Sampler Archive will be disseminated using multiple communication vehicles. First is the Sampler Archive web site itself, which will house the Sampler Archive database and provide the broader research audience with ways to search and browse its contents. (See Appendix A for a mock up of how this website might appear.) Once live, information about the Sampler Archive and its companion website will be disseminated to potential audiences in the following ways: (a) postings on historic textile discussion groups; (b) announcements published in historic needlework and sampler guild newsletters; (c) articles published in appropriate magazines and journals (e.g., *Sampler and Antique Needlework Quarterly*, *History of Education*, *Winterthur Folio*); (d) email announcements to the Sampler Consortium membership; (e) bi-directional links to websites with related content (e.g., *SamplerConsortium.org*, *AntiqueSamplers.org*, *Samplings.com*, *QuiltIndex.org*); and (f) invitations to related associations: museums, genealogical societies, historians, and sampler guilds.

Project staff and Advisory Board members will continue to work with the Sampler Consortium to identify the location of samplers and collections throughout the country and extend invitations to repositories/collectors to collaborate with the Sampler Archive by contributing information on their historic needlework. The PI, Project Director, Curator of Digital Collections, members of the Advisory Board, and collaborating site directors are all active researchers, writers, and editors. All will work to spread information and findings through their respective networks. This will include writing articles for publication in scholarly journals using the Sampler Archive database, distributing information about the Sampler Archive at conferences and workshops, and presenting at conferences the results of scholarly inquiry that uses this new online resource.