

# Biggs Museum of American Art

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## Biggs Museum to Host Delaware Sampler Exhibition, Symposium *Sampler Symposium Registration Opens January 1<sup>st</sup>*

Dover, DE (December 9, 2013) - The Biggs Museum of American Art is excited to announce an upcoming exhibition and symposium of American needlework samplers entitled *'Wrought with Careful Hand': Ties of Kinship on Delaware Samplers*. The exhibition, which runs from March 7-April 20, 2014, includes a special three-day Sampler Symposium from March 21-23, 2014. A full day of free lectures is planned for March 22, accompanied by paid needlework classes, research classes, and field trips to see sampler collection. **Advanced registration is required for all symposium activities— with registration opening January 1, 2014 at**

**[www.BiggsMuseum.org](http://www.BiggsMuseum.org). For more information, about Delaware's Sampler Symposium, please see the full agenda at the Sampler Archive website: <http://samplerarchive.org>.**



Image taken from a sampler by Deborah Ferris, 1783, in the collection of the Delaware Historical Society (N1993.001.661)

### About Delaware Needlework Samplers

A (needlework) **sampler** is a piece of embroidery produced as a demonstration or test of skill in needlework. It often includes the alphabet, figures, motifs, dates, decorative borders and sometimes the name of the person (and/or their family member's names) who embroidered it. Most importantly, samplers are an extremely rare window into the lives of girls and young women of early America. Sixty girlhood embroideries stitched in Delaware between 1755 and 1855 were selected for the museum's exhibition *'Wrought with Careful Hand'*. The samplers selected include

historical information about family, friends, and teachers - stitched in silk as names, dates, and initials - illustrating the exhibition's theme of kinship ties. Many of the samplers help to document multiple generations of family members by including names or initials of parents, grandparents, siblings, and sometimes even great aunts and uncles. The samplers appear in one of six thematic groups, each highlighting an important geographic influence; a well-documented school or teacher; or a distinctive way in which the samplers record "ties of kinship".

### **Background**

The Biggs Museum partnered with the University of Delaware's *Sampler Archive Project* and the international *Sampler Consortium* on a statewide initiative to locate, document, and photograph schoolgirl samplers in Delaware's public and private collections. Three Sampler ID Days were held last summer, with funds provided by the Delaware Humanities Forum, leading to the discovery of many new samplers in private collections.

### **Event Quick Facts**

**"Wrought with Careful Hands" Sampler Exhibition:** March 7, 2014 – April 20, 2014

**Sampler Symposium:** March 21-23, 2014

**Exhibition Reception:** March 22, 2014

The Sampler Archive Project was launched in 2011 by the University of Delaware, the University of Oregon, and the Sampler Consortium. The mission of the project was to locate, document, and photograph antique American samplers and related schoolgirl embroideries in Delaware's public and private collections and to create an online searchable database of information and images. Collaborating partners include dozens of museums, historical societies, and historic homes, as well as individual owners, collectors, and dealers from across the country. A collection of approximately 60 Delaware samplers will be on view for the duration of the exhibition to highlight the different styles that were produced during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

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## Related Links:

Biggs Museum of American Art

<http://www.biggsmuseum.org/index.html>

Sampler Archive Project

<http://samplerarchive.org>

Sampler Consortium

<http://samplerconsortium.org>

## About the Museum

The Biggs Museum seeks to serve a diverse public as a regional museum of fine and decorative arts, made from 1700 to present, representing the State of Delaware and the surrounding Mid-Atlantic region. The Biggs Museum engages audiences through a compelling program of temporary exhibitions and programming. The Biggs Museum encourages the development of creativity and an appreciation for art by offering a comprehensive slate of educational programming for all ages. The Biggs Museum of American Art is a private, non-profit 501(c) (3) organization.

**Hours of Operation:** Tuesday through Saturday; 9:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. Sunday; 1:30 p.m. until 4:30 p.m.

**Admission:** Biggs Museum is free to the public year-round. Fees may apply to certain programs and special events.

The Biggs Museum of American Art

406 Federal Street

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[www.biggsmuseum.org](http://www.biggsmuseum.org)

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