

Basic Detail Report



Title Pitkin Family Coat of Arms

Date about 1750-1755

Primary Maker Jerusha Pitkin

Medium Hand-stitched silk and metallic thread; satin-woven silk; plain-woven linen; paint; wood; steel

Description Unfinished Coat of Arms worked in shades of red, pink, brown, and green silk and silver metallic thread on a black satin-woven silk ground, using a shaded satin stitch and other stitches. The coat of arms is on point inside a square piece of black silk. The coat of arms consists of a shield with a rampant lion and helmet above. The shield is divided with a diagonal band; two stars are separated by a circle on the band. Collared and chained swans are drawn at two

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of the four corners of the shield. The shield is flanked by scrolled leaves; a

banner is at the bottom. The unfinished portions of the coat of arms are outlined

in white paint. The ground is whip-stitched to plain-woven linen backing and

nailed to a wooden embroidery frame. The wooden frame is constructed of four

rails, each with a lap joint at the end that is secured with a removable wooden

pin. A later steel needle and thread are attached to the black satin. Several

hands worked on this coat of arms, probably over several generations. The

sampler is accompanied by unused materials for making the coat of arms: 81

skeins of silk thread wrapped in paper, some with printed text; 3 round bundles

of silk floss, in white, pink and salmon; 3 twisted bundles, or sticks, of silk floss in

cream, gold and bronze; 6 lengths of metallic thread wrapped around a wooden

reel or paper; 3 nails; several needles left in the skeins. The unused skeins of silk

were originally wrapped in plain gray paper and tied together in groups by color.

The used skeins were rewrapped in blank, hand-written or printed paper. Two of

the silk skeins were wrapped in paper with a hand-written letter in black ink (see

text entry); one letter is dated "Boston July the 4". Some of the papers used to

wrap the silk contain printed Latin and English text. A later paper has a hand-

written pencil inscription of "To protect the enclosed silk/ This paper placed in

the/ package by Mrs. William Lee/ July 15th 1897". Stitches: The principal stitch

on the sampler is the long and short stitch; it also includes encroaching satin,

couching, and whip stitches. Condition: The ground has split and worn at several

areas at the center of the coat of arms. The top of the needlework has some

discoloration of the silk, probably caused by water damage. The coat of arms

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has an archival mount. Immediately behind the coat of arms is a black cotton-lined support. The wooden frame is attached to a lined aluminum panel.

Dimensions Primary Dimensions (height x width): 25 1/4 x 25 1/4in. (64.1 x 64.1 cm)