

collect

LIVING WITH THE THINGS YOU LOVE

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LET ME LIVE IN THE HOUSE
BY THE SIDE OF THE ROAD
AND BE A FRIEND TO MAN

May Joy be with you
While you stay,
And Peace attend you
On your way.

GUEST

GRACIOUS GIFT
WHEN CAN SEND
GIFT OF A TRUE
YOUR FRIEND

GOOD IDEA!

For an updated look, we had our motto samplers reframed at Brentano's Framing in New York City. Owner Joseph Brentano recommends professionally drycleaning vintage textiles before framing. Also, a framer should stitch (never glue) textiles into a frame.

motto samplers

WHAT ARE THEY?

Stitched motto samplers are distant cousins of educational samplers, traced back to the mid-1800s (see below, right). Later motto samplers came as kits with supplies and directions, and were made by homemakers from about 1927 until 1939. Today, collectors often look for a stitcher's first sampler, in such categories as friendship, black-and-white, welcome home, guest, and more.

WHERE DO I FIND THEM?

Start at flea markets and antiques shows. Brand-new kits are still being sold and made, so avoid reproductions by buying from a trusted dealer, like Joan Carter from New Hampshire's Wiswall House Antiques, who has more than 900 examples. An authentic vintage motto sampler is rarely signed and dated, so look for signs of age and a tightly woven linen without any sheen.

HOW MUCH WILL I PAY?

Carter sells her motto samplers from \$60 to \$150. The quality of linen, scarcity of motto or pattern, and intricacy of stitching affect the value of samplers. Look out for spots, stains, and yellowing, although samplers can be cleaned. Carter removes her samplers from the frame, soaks them in soap and water overnight, then rinses and lightly irons.



1 "Home Sweet Home" was often the first motto a person stitched. This 1931-32 pillow's background came preprinted, then the crafter stitched the outline and motto. Valued at \$75.



4 This newly framed linen sampler's \$135 price tag is justified by the rare motto, signature, date, and intact directions. That's a bargain given its many hard-to-find characteristics.



2 This \$135 black-and-white Shakespearean verse, from 1930-33, is rare. Its intricate images showing the passage of time increase its desirability.

3 This 1928-29 sampler has a very common verse; however, the carriage and horse, rather than an expected cottage scene, places it at \$110.



a bit of history

Learn about original sampler needlework from our antiquing expert, Kathryn Precourt.

The earliest American samplers date back to the Plymouth colony in the mid-17th century and followed the style of 14th-century English pieces. Since they were both an educational tool and a chance for school-age girls to refine the craft, the most common stitches on early samplers were the alphabet and numbers. Today, most very early pieces are found in museum collections only, but you can buy late-18th- and 19th-century examples, starting around \$1,000, from dealers specializing in American needlework.



For more information, turn to Sources on page 176.

PRODUCED BY KATHRYN PRECOURT; PHOTOGRAPHED BY STEVEN McDONALD; PORTRAIT BY WILLIAM STILES