

Elizabeth Brewster & her sampler, early 1700s



Pilgrim Hall owns a sampler that, stylistically, can be dated to the early 1700s. The sampler is signed "Elizabeth Brewster."

Who is Elizabeth Brewster? The candidates are legion. One very likely candidate is Elizabeth Brewster of Kingston, born 1690, a great-granddaughter of Pilgrim William Brewster. In 1710, at age 20, she married Ephraim Bradford of Kingston. They had 11 children. Elizabeth died in 1741, age 51.

Elizabeth Brewster's sampler is a wonderful transition piece. Its long and narrow shape (approximately 8" wide x 17 5/8" high) is 17th century, but it includes the newer style of alphabets, numerals, and a very narrow border all around (not visible in this picture). The sampler is made of wool thread worked on linen. The use of wool thread was very rare. The colors, indigo blue and madder pink, are bright and relatively unfaded. Cross stitch predominates, but other stitches used include the Algerian eye, the Rococo, and the rice stitch.



Elizabeth Brewster Sampler Detail