

EMBROIDERY CANADA SAMPLER EAC- 95-4



Description: This brightly stitched sampler, worked on Aida cloth that is 19 threads to the inch, records pertinent historic data about the Embroiderers' Association of Canada. Three borders, back stitched in gold floss, are decorated with the names of the EAC chapters already formed in 1983; Victoria, North Vancouver, Prince Rupert, Okanagan, Edmonton, Calgary, Regina, Winnipeg, Mississauga, Niagara Peninsula, Toronto, Peterborough, Ottawa, Scarborough, Lakeshore and St. John's. The chapter names are all backstitched in navy floss, two threads high and two threads wide. The fourth border identifies the embroiderers' national

organization the—Embroiderers' Association of Canada. This name, too, is worked in backstitch, two threads high and two threads wide, in two strands of red floss. (The word "the" does not preface the official name of EAC but is included on the sampler.) The sampler also records the name of the designer/stitcher—Connie Wilks, a very active EAC member at one time—embroidered in the same style as the above and in the same navy floss. Serving as a reminder that this is in fact a Canadian sampler, tiny back stitched maple leaf motifs in a spring green floss highlight the four corners of the sampler, while a larger maple leaf, completely cross stitched over one thread in the same green floss, rests in the centre of two navy scrolls just above the bottom border. The sampler measures 49.5 centimetres by 49 centimetres.

Traditional motifs decorate this sampler that is divided into three sections. The first section, just below the upper border is comprised of an alphabet

and various flower and bird motifs, all embroidered in cross stitch over one thread. The alphabet, all in upper case and five crosses high, is embroidered in the same gold floss as the border outline. The motifs below include two simple little tulip designs with a bigger bloom in the centre plus two small basic birds, all stitched in two strands of gold, red, green and navy floss. The legs and feet of the birds are black.



Detail showing bird and tulip motif

The second section is framed in vertical red scrolls on the left, gold and navy Algerian eye stitches on the top, intertwining navy and green cross stitched vines on the right and gold and green cross patterns on the bottom. The main motif features a large heart outlined in numerous rows of red cross stitches while the centre is embellished with two tiny navy and gold flowers atop their green leaves and stems. Rising out of the heart is a semi-circle of greenery and three very traditional tulips with navy and gold petals. All of the stitching is cross stitch worked over one thread.

The words "EMBROIDERY CANADA", all in upper case and embroidered in red cross stitch over one thread with each letter 12 crosses high, adorns the bottom section. Under the words and to the left is the basic magazine identification: volume x, number 3, and May 1983, which are placed one below the other and embroidered in back stitch. On the opposite side, the sampler reads "wrought by Connie Wilks", which is again stitched in back stitch. Five threads from the bottom border and centred is the green maple leaf with the navy scrolls on either side, again worked in cross stitch over one thread.



History: This colourful sampler was created specifically for the cover of *Embroidery Canada* in May, 1983, by Connie Wilks, a highly skilled and well known embroiderer who is a past EAC president and *Embroidery Canada* editor. According to the above issue, Connie had been casually approached by the then-editor of the magazine Barbara Kelcey, with regard to stitching a sampler. However, because nothing was confirmed, the sampler seemingly arrived on the editor's desk as a complete surprise. While the sampler is very much a contemporary piece, it is a happy combination of EAC history, conventional motifs and the Canadian maple leaf symbol, all of which will be most meaningful in years to come.

Materials: Cream coloured Aida cloth, 19 threads to the inch, red, green, gold and navy floss.

Condition: This sampler is in excellent condition.