1987

Friends Departed Live: A Study of the Relationship between Schoolgirl Mourning Pictures, Female Education, and Cultural Attitudes toward Death in Early Nineteenth-Century Eastern Massachusetts

Janet Elizabeth Stewart

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FRIENDS DEPARTED LIVE

A Study of the Relationship Between
Schoolgirl Mourning Pictures, Female Education, and Cultural Attitudes
Toward Death in Early Nineteenth-Century Eastern Massachusetts

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of American Studies
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

by
Janet Elizabeth Stewart
1987
APPROVAL SHEET

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the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, John Louis and Marilyn Delano Stewart. Through their love, encouragement, and support they have helped me to complete this degree and to fulfill many of my dreams.
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to determine the significance of silk embroidered mourning pictures in women's education and to interpret what the pictures reveal about American attitudes toward death between 1800 and 1840. The paper focuses on mourning pictures made in eastern Massachusetts during this period. Silk embroidered mourning pictures were a popular art form made by teenage girls who attended fashionable private schools and academies. Generally the embroideries depict a garden setting with weeping willow trees and a mourning figure leaning against a neoclassical style tomb which bears the name of a departed loved one.

The stylistic analysis of silk embroidered mourning pictures for this study was based on the examination of twenty-four pictures which have been documented or attributed to specific Massachusetts schools or to the region in general. The discussion of the women's education movement, popular ideas about the education of women, the types of schools open to women, and the curriculum of these schools was based on written evidence gathered from women's letters and diaries, family papers, school records, and local newspapers. In addition to these sources, church sermons and religious tracts also provided written evidence for the discussion of attitudes about death in early nineteenth-century Massachusetts.

The examination of the material culture in conjunction with the historical evidence indicates that silk embroidered mourning pictures were most popular in Massachusetts between 1800 and 1820. During this period needlework was an important element of women's education. After 1820 the curriculum of most girls' academies had shifted its emphasis from needlework to the sciences and humanities. This shift was greatly influenced by reformers who advocated better educational opportunities for women. Their goal was to educate women of all classes and to train them to become teachers. By the late 1830s and 1840s the popularity of handmade schoolgirl mourning pictures had declined as a result of changes in the philosophy of female education.

The initial popularity of silk embroidered mourning pictures in the first decades of the nineteenth century also coincided with the emergence of a new attitude toward death. Death became romanticized as a triumphant event which reunited family and friends in heaven. Belief in the everlasting life and the need to be remembered were the most pervasive aspects of this new attitude. Mourning pictures, which were made as memorials to the lives of deceased individuals, were tangible expressions of the survivors' grief and their need to cultivate the memory of the dead.
FRIENDS DEPARTED LIVE

A Study of the Relationship Between
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Toward Death in Early Nineteenth-Century Eastern Massachusetts
INTRODUCTION

On September 11, 1806, Isaac Clark of Brewster, Massachusetts, sent the following letter to his daughter who was away at school:

Dear Daughter,
We are well and hope this will meet you with the same. I wish you now to work in embroidery a mourning piece in memory of your brother Strabo—who died June 29, 1799 aged 8 months and 13 Days. You must wright by every post and let me know how fast you progress in your education and at all times remember to behave well and conduct in Decency in all your transactions through life.

from your affectionate father,
Isaac Clark

We do not know if Isaac Clark's daughter fulfilled his request. If she did, then she was but one of the many schoolgirls in New England and the Middle Atlantic states who worked mourning pictures in silk embroidery in the early nineteenth century. Mourning pictures, also referred to as memorial embroideries, were embroidered with silk threads on silk fabric and generally depicted a pastoral landscape of hillocks and willow trees (Figs. 1-9). In the foreground, one or more mourners in classical dress was shown standing beside a tomb bearing the name of a departed loved one. The pictures were originally made to commemorate the deaths of famous patriots as well as family members whom the needleworker may or may not have known. Today, fine quality mourning pictures are exhibited in museums and are highly sought after by collectors of Americana. Recent auction
sales records indicate that silk embroidered mourning pictures have sold for as little as $500 and for as much as $23,000. Mourning pictures offered by dealers of American antiques are often priced from $2500. Yet despite the growing interest among collectors in schoolgirl mourning pictures, there is surprisingly little scholarly work on the subject. Several studies have acknowledged that mourning pictures were made by schoolgirls, but few have examined the role of the pictures in American culture.

The purpose of this study is to examine the link between silk embroidered mourning pictures, women's education, and attitudes toward death in order to determine what the pictures reveal about American culture in the early nineteenth century. To reach this goal, several questions needed to be asked at the outset: When did mourning pictures first appear and how did they change over time? Why were schoolgirls encouraged to make mourning pictures? What was the popular philosophy regarding female education? How did the academy and female education movements affect educational opportunities for women? What socio-economic class or classes were accommodated by these schools? What were the educational objectives of girls' academies? How did the curriculum meet the stated objectives and how did it change during the first four decades of the nineteenth century? How did mourning pictures reflect the prevailing attitudes toward death and mourning?

I have been able to answer some of these questions by examining a group of twenty-four Massachusetts silk embroidered mourning pictures in conjunction with letters, diaries, memoirs, family
papers, and school records found in fifty-five manuscript collections owned by Boston area libraries and historical societies. More than half of the collections examined were found in *Women's History Sources: A Guide to Archives and Manuscript Collections in the United States*, a two volume catalogue edited by Andrea Hinding. Other manuscript sources were located by consulting the bibliographies published in recent works by historians Nancy Cott, Linda Kerber, and Mary Beth Norton, and by contacting historical libraries and archives in the Boston area. The documents consisted of approximately 65 diaries and journals, 150 letters, and 55 school records, reports, and notebooks. Advertisements and articles published in the *Columbian Centinel*, a nineteenth-century Boston biweekly newspaper, also supplied information about women's education during the period. Supplementary interpretive material was found in studies of women's history, education, and in the so-called death literature or studies of death in America.

Bridging the gap between the artifacts and the literature of the period has proven to be a difficult task. The schoolgirls who made the pictures were not the same schoolgirls who wrote the letters and diaries used in this study. The use of the letters and diaries was limited further by the lack of reflection within them. Education and death were common topics in the letters and diaries yet the girls rarely discussed their opinions or most intimate feelings about the subjects. It is probable, however, that the experiences described in their writings were shared by most girls who attended similar schools.
The decision to study the interrelationship of women's education, mourning pictures, and attitudes toward death was based on the findings of a preliminary bibliographic survey of American needlework. The survey indicated that few detailed studies had been written about mourning pictures and that none had considered the pictures within the proposed context. Two major considerations influenced the decision to limit this study to mourning pictures made by schoolgirls in eastern Massachusetts in the first decades of the nineteenth century. First, a preliminary study revealed that a number of mourning pictures are either known to have been made by schoolgirls in eastern Massachusetts or can be attributed to schools in the area. Although mourning pictures were also made by schoolgirls in other areas of New England and the Middle Atlantic states, the Massachusetts group provided a concise body of evidence. It was also found that during the first four decades of the nineteenth century many female academies had been established in eastern Massachusetts. Because minimal attention had previously been paid to these academies and the relationship between them and the women's education movement, the amount of field work required to uncover the needed historical data precluded extending the study to other states. By so limiting the geographical area, it was possible to visit the region in order to explore local collections for objects and related documents.

Second, the period 1800 to 1840 was selected because preliminary research indicated the trend in mourning pictures closely followed the development of the female education movement. Both trends
emerged around 1800 and reached a turning point in the 1820s. After about 1820 the education movement grew stronger and experienced further developments while the popularity and quality of mourning pictures declined. The changing philosophy of female education was a major influence on the decreasing popularity of mourning pictures. By the second quarter of the nineteenth century popular thought championed a more rigorous curriculum for female academies, one which placed less emphasis on teaching "accomplishments" like needlework.

This study will begin with a review of the secondary literature about needlework, women's education, and death in America. Chapter Two will examine the development of the female education movement in the early nineteenth century, in general, and its particular characteristics in eastern Massachusetts. After an analysis of Massachusetts mourning pictures in Chapter Three, the final chapter will discuss the way mourning pictures related to American attitudes toward death and mourning during this period.
Books and articles which discuss mourning pictures and other forms of needlework, such as samplers and crewel embroideries, have been written primarily by and for collectors and hobbyists. As publications intended for collectors, studies of needlework are part of a vast body of literature which American Studies scholar Kenneth Ames refers to as "recreational decorative arts studies." In contrast to scholarly studies the goal of recreational studies, according to Ames, is "to present facts about objects." The majority of the needlework literature represents this effort to accumulate and disseminate factual data concerning needlework patterns, design motifs, techniques, and regional variations. Hence, the studies tend to focus on stylistic elements and developments in a largely descriptive, nonanalytical manner.

The earliest studies of needlework emerged during the "American movement" of the 1920s and 1930s. The movement was characterized by the founding of Colonial Williamsburg, Greenfield Village, the Metropolitan Museum of Art's American Wing, and the Magazine Antiques. Several books about early American decorative arts, such as Wallace Nutting's Furniture Treasury (1928-1933), and William
Hornor's *Blue Book of Philadelphia Furniture* (1935), were also published during this period.

The standard reference book of samplers, *American Samplers* by Ethel S. Bolton and Eva J. Coe published in 1921, developed from a Massachusetts Society of the Colonial Dames' project which aimed to record the "domestic virtues" of "our ancestors." Colonial Dames affiliate societies in other eastern states contributed to the effort by photographing and describing about 2500 samplers in museum and private collections. These descriptions formed the basis for the compendium of known samplers, sampler verses, and girls' schools in early America. *American Samplers* was the first publication to recognize the relationship between women's needlework and education.

Georgiana B. Harbeson's early study, *American Needlework* (1938), was unique because, in addition to the more common samplers and embroideries, she treated the historical development of American Indian needlework and other ethnic and regional variations. These two comprehensive surveys, like other early decorative arts literature, established the data base for subsequent research efforts.

*American Samplers* and *American Needlework* were the only major studies of needlework for more than twenty years. Then, in the 1960s and 1970s, collectors' renewed interest in samplers and embroidered pictures led to a proliferation of articles and books on needlework. For the most part these topical studies briefly told the history of needlework in America, mentioned girls' schools and needlework instruction, focused on a specific type or types of needlework such
as samplers, crewelwork, or silk embroidered pictures, and provided a "how-to" section in which stitches and other techniques were described in detail. For example, Betty Ring has written several articles about schoolgirl needlework for Antiques magazine since the early 1970s. Ring's well-researched but brief articles discuss the historical, genealogical, and stylistic significance of needlework pictures which have been documented or attributed to specific girls' academies. The majority of recently-published needlework studies treat the objects as aesthetically-pleasing works of art. Furthermore, only a handful of articles specifically consider early nineteenth-century mourning pictures. Two of the best works were written by Anita Schorsch. In Mourning Becomes America, the catalogue of a 1976 exhibition, Schorsch provides the reader with a concise history of the development of various forms of mourning art in America from 1800 to 1850, and in "A Key to the Kingdom" she elaborates on its iconography. Both provide a good introduction to mourning pictures but, like many needlework studies, are more descriptive than analytical.

Schoolgirl mourning pictures, samplers, and crewel embroideries, like other objects of material culture, are readable social documents which manifest change over time in stylistic and verbal terms. Much can be learned about needleworkers and the society in which they lived by examining and interpreting the objects they left behind in conjunction with historical evidence gathered from newspapers, family papers, letters, diaries, and journals. Susan Burrows Swan's exemplary study, Plain and Fancy, examines women's roles in colonial
and federal America through needlework and historical research. Swan's study goes beyond the levels of artifact identification and evaluation by combining a stylistic analysis of needlework with original historical research to place women's needlework within a larger social and historical context. Swan accomplished this by describing material objects and interpreting them through the use of schoolgirls' letters and diaries and contemporary newspaper articles and school advertisements. Swan's survey served as a model for this study.

Background and interpretive information concerning the development of the female education movement in America came from a number of secondary sources. Although published in 1929, Thomas Woody's *A History of Women's Education in the United States* remains the principal study of women's education from the colonial period to the 1920s.¹⁰ This work stands as the most exhaustive study of its kind. Woody describes developments in female education and in several chapters explores the role of the academy in fostering education for women. Although Woody's information about female education in Massachusetts was limited, he did discuss the establishment of several academies in the state.

Another helpful early work on the history of education in America is *Education as Revealed by New England Newspapers Prior to 1850* by Vera M. Butler.¹¹ As its title suggests, Butler's volume chronicles the developments in education for boys and girls in the states of New England based on articles and advertisements published in local newspapers. Like Woody's two volume history, Butler's study
provides a thorough descriptive treatment of the educational system in early America, yet stops short of interpreting the significance of education in a broader historical context.

Since the development of the field of women's history in the late 1960s and 1970s several historians have demonstrated the value of studying education as an integral part of the overall female experience. A wealth of recent scholarly publications thoroughly examine the changing ideals and realities of women's lives in America. In *Liberty's Daughters* and *Women of the Republic*, Mary Beth Norton and Linda Kerber, respectively, provide the most comprehensive treatment of the attitudes and behavior of American women and the influence of republican ideology on them and their roles in the Revolutionary period. Both of these works and an article by Kerber, "Daughters of Columbia: Educating Women for the Republic, 1787-1805," address the subject of education and in doing so go beyond the descriptive level to interpret and evaluate the impact education had on women and society in the new republic. All three studies were based on women's diaries, memoirs, and correspondence, other family papers and documents, prescriptive literature, and organizational records.

Barbara Welter's article about domesticity and "the cult of true womanhood" and Nancy F. Cott's *Bonds of Womanhood* develop the idea of a woman's separate sphere and its effect on women's lives in New England during the first half of the nineteenth century. Welter examined prescriptive literature such as religious tracts, sermons, and magazine articles. Like Norton and Kerber, Cott looked at both
woman's prescribed role and her actual behavior. Cott's chapter on education, for example, relates the philosophy of female education to the reality of the situation. Cott argues convincingly that in the early nineteenth century most girls' schools emphasized the accomplishments or ornamental subjects and thereby contradicted "the emergent ideology of functional education for women."\textsuperscript{15} By 1825, however, many female academies had changed their curriculum to reflect the accepted rationale that women needed a practical education to prepare them for their future roles as wives and mothers.\textsuperscript{16}

Like women's history, the study of death in American culture developed as an outgrowth of the new social history in the mid 1970s. The governing principle of the new social history is to look at the past in new ways, ways that include writing "not only all kinds of people, but all aspects of behavior and value systems" into our history.\textsuperscript{17} Larger trends which affect the majority of the American people are given more emphasis than specific events and exceptional individuals. The new histories concentrate on interpreting the everyday lives and experiences of ordinary people. Hence, they differ greatly from conventional history which is often organized according to political and military events and achievements.\textsuperscript{18}

The majority of the studies about cultural attitudes toward death and mourning were written during the last ten to fifteen years. The most comprehensive, Philippe Aries's 1974 study, \textit{Western Attitudes Toward Death}, examines popular perspectives, how they changed over time, and the factors which influenced these changes
from the twelfth century through the twentieth century. In The Hour of Our Death, Aries elaborates further on death, mourning rituals, and burial customs. About attitudes toward death in Europe and America, Aries suggests that a major shift occurred at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century when a general "complaisance toward the idea of death" became apparent. Moreover, Aries attributes subsequent changes in the American attitude toward death and mourning in the mid-nineteenth century to dramatic social and economic developments which were characteristic of the period. Like his previous studies, Aries's most recent work, Images of Man and Death, traces the changes in cultural attitudes toward death and burial practices from early Christian times to the first part of this century. However, in this lavishly illustrated volume, Aries focuses primarily on the iconography of death in paintings, prints, funerary sculpture, cemeteries, and architecture. "Death loves to be represented," asserts Aries, "despite the body of discourse on death which has flourished ever since the existence of writing . . . the image is still the richest and most direct means that man has of expressing himself, faced with the mystery of the end of life."

In Inventing the American Way of Death, James J. Farrell thoroughly discusses the formation of American attitudes toward death between 1830 and 1920. Although the bulk of the material in Farrell's work is outside the scope of this study, his first chapter provides a concise summary of death before 1830. At the outset, Farrell examines the cosmological contexts of death beginning with a
discussion of seventeenth-century Puritan ideology. "Between 1600 and 1830," he writes, "American cosmologies generally shifted focus from God to nature to humanity." Farrell traces these shifts and suggests how they influenced thoughts about death in the seventeenth century, during the Age of Enlightenment in the eighteenth century, and during the Romantic and Evangelical eras of the nineteenth century.

Studies about death in American culture tend to focus on either the colonial period or the Victorian period, and omit the period from 1790 to about 1830. While some studies have considered death in the first decades of the nineteenth century, few have thoroughly examined the significance of certain attitudes and mourning customs in the period. The Puritan Way of Death by David E. Stannard, for example, is a detailed study of religion, culture, and social change in Puritan society. Stannard's social history is based on documentary evidence gathered from religious tracts, sermons, diaries, poetry, and prose written by ordinary Puritans and on material evidence found in the form of tombstones in New England graveyards.

A work edited by Stannard which has a broader focus is Death in America. The volume contains several scholarly articles written on various aspects of death and mourning throughout American history. Several other articles on American attitudes toward death and customs associated with mourning were published in a museum exhibition catalogue entitled A Time To Mourn. The 1980-81 exhibition focused on the tangible and intangible expressions of grief in the Victorian period. The authors of the articles based their studies on an
examination of both material culture and documentary evidence. David Stannard's article, "Where All Our Steps are Tending: Death in the American Context," traces the changes in attitudes about death from the colonial period through the nineteenth century. Stannard asserts that Americans responded to the dynamic socio-economic forces in the Victorian period by romanticizing and sentimentalizing death and mourning customs. In "The Problem of Time in Nineteenth-Century America," Harvey Green examines the image of nature in Victorian America. Like Stannard, Green attributes the change in the Americans' perception of nature to increased urbanization and industrialization. By mid-century, "nature became less the scene of the struggle for survival," suggests Green, "and more an entity to be preserved and sequestered as park, resort, and camp." Similarly, in "Symbolic Death: An Anthropological View of Mourning Ritual in the Nineteenth Century," Lawrence Taylor discusses how nature and other symbols associated with death and mourning rituals evolved during the nineteenth century.

These are a few of the works which focus on death as an integral aspect of the study of American culture. Like women's history, the study of cultural attitudes toward death and customs related to mourning is still a fairly recent phenomenon. What we now need are more studies which concentrate on specific regions, periods, social classes, and the rituals or customs associated with them. When these are written, there will be a significant step toward the construction of a more accurate and comprehensive view of life and death in American history. In the chapters that follow I hope to advance us
further toward this goal by integrating my study of early nineteenth-century eastern Massachusetts schoolgirl mourning pictures with an examination of popular ideas about women's education and death.
CHAPTER II

"TO QUALIFY WOMEN FOR THE PURPOSES OF LIFE":
Female Education and Its Objectives

Popular thought regarding female education between 1800 and 1840 is perhaps best expressed by the title of this chapter. The purpose of educating women was to enable them to be useful to their families and to society. This theory of social usefulness persisted throughout the first four decades of the nineteenth century despite changes in educational opportunities for women. Prior to 1820 schools open to women consisted of private academies for those who could afford it, or public schools for those less fortunate. By the second quarter of the century educational reformers were advocating changes in female education. Proposed changes included an effort to increase educational opportunities for women of all classes by establishing more state-supported schools and the development of a more challenging curriculum which placed greater emphasis on the sciences and humanities and less emphasis on needlework and other accomplishments. As these reforms became more widely accepted private academies which concentrated on teaching the accomplishments became almost non-existent. In turn, fewer schoolgirls mastered the fine art of needlework. The discussion which follows is based primarily on the private academies because it was in these schools
that privileged young ladies were taught to make silk embroidered mourning pictures.

Following the Revolutionary War rising expectations associated with political independence helped stimulate demands for extended educational opportunities for women. Social leaders acknowledged that educated women were needed to rear loyal and informed citizens. Republican ideology emphasized the importance of educating girls to enable them to become the kind of wives and mothers the new republic required. The ideal of republican motherhood assumed that girls, as mothers one day, would be ultimately responsible for the religious and moral education of the nation's children. Hence, women needed to be educated in order to instill the proper values and virtues in the minds of their children, particularly their sons, since the sons would eventually participate in governing the country.¹

Benjamin Rush of Philadelphia was one of the earliest advocates of better educational opportunities for women in the new republic. On July 28, 1787, Rush presented an address entitled "Thoughts Upon Female Education" to the Young Ladies' Academy in Philadelphia.² In the address, which was subsequently published and widely circulated, Rush set forth his ideas concerning the subjects appropriate for a girl's education. He stressed practical subjects such as English grammar, spelling, reading, penmanship, arithmetic, bookkeeping, history, geography, astronomy, chemistry, moral and natural philosophy, vocal music, dance, poetry, and religion. Rush was one of the first educators to dismiss ornamental subjects like French, instrumental music, drawing, painting, and needlework as frivolous
and unnecessary to a girl's development. By studying more useful subjects, Rush believed women would be able to assist their husbands with the management of their property, the education of their children, and the supervision of their domestic servants. In short, Rush justified improved female education by pointing to its utilitarian purpose.

Rush's philosophy greatly influenced the academy movement in the early nineteenth century. In New England and throughout the nation many academies were established according to his principles. Bradford Academy (1803), Pittsfield Female Academy (1807), Salem Female School (1808), and the Friends' Academy at New Bedford (1812), were all incorporated in Massachusetts during this period. Advertisements and related articles which frequently appeared in the Columbian Centinel, a Boston newspaper, and other local newspapers briefly tell us about schools in eastern Massachusetts and the kind of instruction and training available to girls and boys. A survey of the Columbian Centinel and the Salem Gazette, a biweekly newspaper published in Salem, from 1801 to 1839 indicated that approximately two hundred women announced the opening of their schools and solicited for new pupils on a regular basis. The school advertisements generally appeared more frequently prior to the beginning of each twelve week quarter. Over seventy-five percent of the advertisements were published in the newspapers before 1820.

There were essentially two alternatives for parents who wished to educate their sons and daughters. They could choose to send their children to private academies or to public or common schools. The
major differences between the two kinds of schools were cost and curriculum. Private academies charged tuition, whereas common schools were supported by taxes collected from local residents. Both private and common schools taught most of the practical subjects suggested by Rush. In addition, private academies offered instruction for young ladies in ornamental subjects.

Private girls' academies were the legacies of eighteenth-century finishing schools and catered to the daughters of members of the higher social classes. One source indicates, for example, that only merchants' daughters were admitted to Mrs. Saunders' and Miss Beach's Academy in Dorchester. These academies generally were small, unincorporated, and informally organized. Single, widowed, and married women established schools for day students and boarders in their homes or in a room of another woman's home. A Mrs. Cranch of Milton announced her plans to open a boarding school in the April 17, 1802, edition of the *Columbian Centinel*. Mrs. Cranch advertised she would accept "12 to 14 Misses from 6 to 14 years of age, to instruct in plain needlework, embroidery, working muslin, &c." A year later a Miss Porter of Boston announced she had opened "a SCHOOL, at No. 56 Newbury-Street, and with the assistance of a young lady from Andover Academy, they will instruct in the arts of Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, Geography, use of the Globe, and English Grammar--Also--plain-Sewing, Marking, Working Muslins, Embroidery, Drawing, &c." The advertisements placed by Mrs. Cranch and Miss Porter are typical examples of the kind of instruction offered at early nineteenth-century academies for girls.
Needlework and other accomplishments were the core of the private academy curriculum. Schoolgirls were taught at an early age to display their domestic talents by stitching samplers and later by making pictorial embroideries. The verses sewn on samplers give us a sense of the values which were inculcated into the minds of young schoolgirls. Among them, virtue and piety were the most important of all female qualities. Desire Ellis Daman of Scituate, Massachusetts, embroidered the following couplet about virtue on her sampler in 1804: "Virtue is the chiefest beauty of the mind/The noblest ornament of humankind." Three years later her sister Ruth Tilden Daman used the same verse on a sampler she made. In 1826 Diana Paine of Stockbridge, Massachusetts, chose a more religious verse to adorn her sampler:

Dear Lord protect the female heart
From every vice and treacherous art
And while she labours to improve
O may she feel thy Grace and love
Preserve her soul from sin and shame
And in thy book enroll her name

A sampler or pictorial embroidery was seen as a tangible product of a privileged schoolgirl's education. Fancy needlework was an art or an accomplishment which signified the social status of a girl's family and portrayed her as a cultivated and fashionable young lady.

Two private academies established in the Boston area by Susanna Rowson, and by Judith Saunders and Clementina Beach are known to us today primarily because numerous examples of needlework made at their schools have survived. Mrs. Rowson, a former actress and author who had emigrated from England, was known for her many literary works written in the 1780s and 1790s, most notable a popular novel entitled
Charlotte Temple. The curriculum and tuition at Mrs. Rowson's Academy was comparable to that offered at other local young ladies' academies. In the spring of 1802 Mrs. Rowson advertised her "Terms of Board, Tuition, &c." as follows:

- Board per quarter, 30 dls
- Tuition in Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, English Grammar, Geography, use of the Globes, and useful Needlework, 6 dls
- Embroidery in its various branches, 6 dls
- Painting and Drawing flowers, figures, or landscapes, 6 dls
- Use of Books, Pens, and Ink, 50 cts
- Use of Piano-Forte for practice, 3 dls
- Music, 5 dls entrance, per lesson 75 cts
- Dancing, 5 dls entrance, per quarter, 8 dls
- Washing per dozen, 50 cts
- Writing, Books, Paper, Pencils, &c. at Stationer's prices

The following October Mrs. Rowson's Academy held its first "Public Exhibition of the Writing, Needlework, and other improvements of the Young Ladies" who attended the school. The public exhibition became an annual event where students recited compositions and exhibited examples of their work in embroidery, drawing, and painting.

Mrs. Saunders and Miss Beach advertised in 1803 that they had "opened an ACADEMY FOR YOUNG LADIES, at Dorchester, in a pleasant situation, near the Meeting-House." The courses offered and fees charged by Mrs. Saunders and Miss Beach were itemized in their advertisement as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TERMS</th>
<th>Dls</th>
<th>Cts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Board per Quarter</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading, Writing, English Grammar,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arithmetic, and plain Sewing</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embroidery</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tambour</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All kinds of work done out of a frame</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French language</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography, including use of the Globes</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Painting  6
Hair work on ivory  6  50
A pupil confined to simple Reading, Spelling, and plain Sewing, will be charged no more than  4  50

At the bottom of the advertisement Mrs. Saunders and Miss Beach stated they would engage a "Music and Dancing Master" if there was "sufficient encouragement" from the parents of the students. Two months later a Mr. Turner announced his plans to teach music and dance at Mrs. Saunders' and Miss Beach's Academy. Mr. Turner indicated he would teach both "Masters and Misses" in the afternoon for "five dollars entrance and eight dollars per quarter." 14

Almost every year through 1827 Mrs. Saunders and Miss Beach placed similar advertisements for their academy in the *Columbian Centinel.* 15 Betty Ring has pointed out that these advertisements signal changes in the popularity or importance of certain subjects offered at girls' academies. Prior to 1810 Mrs. Saunders and Miss Beach taught a variety of plain and fancy needlework. The number of silk embroidered pictures which are known to have been made at their school during this period indicate that needlework was indeed their specialty. 16 Mourning pictures made by five of their students between 1803 and 1805 are included in this study. (Cat. nos. 5, 6, 9, 10, and 11; Figs. 6, 7, 8, and 9) After 1810 Mrs. Saunders' and Miss Beach's advertisements increasingly emphasized painting and drawing, although needlework continued to be offered. Advertisements which appeared in 1818 and 1820 also show that the Academy's curriculum had expanded to include "Ancient and Modern Geography, Astronomy, Use of Globes, Use of Maps, History, Rhetoric, Botany,
Composition, English and French Languages, Drawing and Painting in Oils, Crayons, and Watercolours, Painting on Velvet, Drawing and Coloring Maps, Ornamental Paper Work, Embroidery, Tambour, Plain Sewing, etc."17 By 1827 their advertisement highlighted "Drawing and Painting in Oils, Chalks, and WaterColours, Figures, Landscapes, Portraits, Transparencies, Sketching from Nature, etc."18

The academies operated by Mrs. Saunders and Miss Beach and by Mrs. Rowson are representative of many private girls' academies which existed in eastern Massachusetts during the first two decades of the nineteenth century. One notable difference, however, between Mrs. Saunders' and Miss Beach's and Mrs. Rowson's academies and other academies of the period was their longevity. Mrs. Saunders and Miss Beach first opened their academy in Gloucester in 1802, moved to Dorchester a year later, relocated in 1822 to Boston, and, in 1825, returned to Dorchester where the academy continued to operate until about 1834.19 Mrs. Rowson operated her academy for over twenty years at various locations in Boston, Medford, and Newton. In contrast, many of the private girls' academies in Massachusetts existed for only one or two terms, or, at best, for a couple of years. Such schools ordinarily had little in the way of physical facilities or buildings, but mostly consisted of a single teacher who offered her services to anyone willing to pay the tuition. A Miss Dalton of Boston, for instance, advertised in 1817 she had "removed her School to Hamilton St., Fort Hill in the rear of Mr. Quincy's Bakery." There she taught the three R's, geography, use of the globe, plain sewing, embroidery, drawing, and painting.20
Newspaper advertisements and the detailed ledger accounts kept by the guardian of Hannah Maria and Lydia Augusta Allen, two sisters who attended several boarding schools in Boston between 1823 and 1840, suggest that fees for tuition and board were usually paid at the beginning of each twelve week quarter. Most schools charged a flat fee for the "useful branches of Education" and additional fees for needlework, painting, music and dancing instruction. Miss Dalton, the woman whose school was located in the rear of a bakery, charged six dollars per quarter if a student elected to take all the courses offered and only three dollars if she chose reading, writing, grammar, and needlework.

The transient nature of private academies required many girls, like the Allen sisters of Boston, to attend a variety of schools from the time they were about six years old until they reached their mid-teens. Exactly how this affected the quality of a girl's education is difficult to ascertain. Advertisements for private schools published in the *Columbian Centinel* clearly tell us what subjects were being offered to the daughters of Massachusetts' elite, but not how well they were being taught. In addition, letters and journals written by schoolgirls contain few comments on the quality of education. What is apparent in the newspaper advertisements and correspondence between schoolgirls and their families, however, is that a girl's education continued to be seen simply as a short chapter in her life.

Mehitable May Dawes, for example, an orphan from Boston, received numerous letters while at boarding school from her uncle,
Benjamin Goddard, and her aunt, Abigail Prescott. The sentiment expressed in their letters regarding education was indicative of the period. Between the age of six when she began her education and her mid-teens Mehitable attended three schools, Woburn Academy, Jamaica Plain Academy, where she received many awards for outstanding achievement, and the Misses Martin's Academy in Portland, Maine. In a letter dated August 21, 1810, Benjamin Goddard wrote the following to his thirteen year-old niece:

My dear Mehitable,

I am much pleased to hear . . . you are happy and that you make good proficiency in your studies, this is your season for improvement . . . you have now arrived at an age when you can profit by your studies and know how to appreciate the advantage of a good education, it is but a very small proportion of the Female part of the community that have so good an opportunity as you now have, I hope and trust you will not let it pass by without securing all the benefits in your power.

A few months later Mehitable's aunt advised her to "be a good girl and make the utmost use of this very important period of your life, recollect how much of your future happiness depends upon your present behavior." The following year Mehitable received further reminders from her uncle suggesting that she was fortunate to be able to attend school and that her school days were drawing to a close. "Now is the time for you to lay up a treasure which no one can deprive you of," wrote Goddard, "few Children have an opportunity to begin as soon as the dawn of reason appears and without interruption to appropriate the whole of their time at your age to learning." Many enlightened Americans like Benjamin Goddard and Abigail Prescott thought of female education in fixed terms. It was viewed as a brief period of
a girl's life during which she prepared for her future roles of wife and mother. Goddard closed the letter to his niece by stressing that she should study diligently in order to "qualify herself for a useful life."27 Goddard's works are indicative of the rhetoric associated with the female education movement in early nineteenth-century America. Young women were to be educated so that they would be useful to society. An essay entitled "Female Education" written by Caroline Prescott of Boston while she was a student at the Female Academy in Augusta, Maine, illustrates further that schoolgirls fully understood this principle:28

The Education of women is to qualify them for the purposes of life. A lady studies not that she may qualify herself to become an orator or a pleader, not that she may learn to debate, but to act. She is to read the best books, not so much to enable her to talk of them, as to bring the improvement which they furnish, to the rectification of her principles, and the formation of her habits. The great use of study is to enable her to regulate her own mind, and to be useful to others.

Early nineteenth-century private academies in Massachusetts were at best little more than elementary finishing schools. Although the academies offered a variety of courses, it is unlikely that the young ladies who attended the schools were able to develop their intellectual powers to a great extent. Similarly, girls who attended common schools received only a rudimentary education.

Public school education in Massachusetts developed slowly following the Revolutionary War. In 1787 Massachusetts enacted a law which divided the larger regions and towns in the state into school districts. Each district was required to establish one or more grammar schools for teaching reading, writing, and arithmetic to
local boys and girls between the ages of seven and fourteen. Annual public examinations were held in order for local officials to oversee the progress of the pupils. Details of these examinations as well as reports concerning the growth of public schools appeared frequently in the Columbian Centinel and Salem Gazette. Although the common schools accommodated both boys and girls, more attention and instruction was allotted for boys. Boys attended school throughout the year while girls were limited to the summer months between April and October, and to the hours of the day when boys' classes were not in session.

By the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth century educational reformers were criticizing common schools as well as private academies for their inadequate standards of female education. One of the first reformers to advocate better educational opportunities for women was Emma Hart Willard. In 1819 Willard presented a proposal to the New York State legislature outlining "The Defects in the Present Mode of Female Education, and Their Causes" and her plans for improvement. Willard argued that it was the state's responsibility to support and provide public education for women. She firmly believed that problems with the present system of female education existed because "legislatures, undervaluing the importance of women in society, neglect to provide for their education, and suffer it to become the sport of adventurers for fortune, who may be both ignorant and vicious." Willard cited six major "defects" of the female academies: 1) they were temporary institutions without suitable accommodations for the pupils; 2) they
lacked adequate "libraries, and other apparatus, necessary to teach properly the various branches in which they pretend to instruct;" 3) they lacked qualified teachers; 4) they were unregulated in terms of entrance examinations, curriculum, and length of study; 5) the teachers stressed "showy accomplishments, rather than those which are solid and useful;" and 6) there were no existing standards or qualifications to prevent unqualified preceptresses from opening schools.31 Willard's central argument for better female education was reminiscent of the principles championed by Benjamin Rush thirty years earlier. Willard argued that32

> It is the duty of a government, to do all in its power to promote the present and future prosperity of the nation . . . This prosperity will depend on the character of its citizens. The characters of these will be formed by their mothers . . . If this is the case, then it is the duty of our present legislators to begin now, to form the characters of the next generation, by controlling that of the females, who are to be their mothers.

Throughout the 1820s this ideal of republican motherhood was often used to justify expanded educational opportunities for women. Willard and other educational reformers stressed the social usefulness of female education. Willard aimed to establish state-supported female academies and seminaries which would provide a rigorous curriculum of religious and moral, literary, domestic, and ornamental instruction for girls over age fourteen. The emphasis of the instruction would be on reason, science, and the humanities, and on training girls to become qualified teachers. The New York State legislature voted in 1819 not to support financially the founding of the female academy proposed by Willard. Nevertheless, two years
later Willard established the Troy Female Seminary in Troy, New York, based on the guidelines set forth in her proposal.

Troy Seminary, one of the earliest institutions in America dedicated to the higher education of women, served as a prototype for many academies founded in the 1820s and 1830s. In 1823 Catharine Beecher opened the Hartford Academy in Hartford, Connecticut. The Academy, which was incorporated as the Hartford Female Seminary five years later, was similar to Willard's Troy Seminary in both its structure and purpose. During the nineteenth century Beecher became a leading figure in the female education movement. Like Willard, she advocated improving female education by offering a more demanding curriculum which stressed academic as well as domestic training. Beecher also wished to educate women to serve as teachers of the nation's children.33

The Ipswich Female Seminary, incorporated in 1828, had a similar goal. It was one of the earliest seminaries founded in Massachusetts for the higher education of women. Zilpah Grant and Mary Lyon, the Seminary's first teachers, taught their students that the school's purpose was "not to finish, but to commence education; not to furnish all the knowledge they may need, but to show how and where it may be gained."34 The school aimed to "secure the highest condition of spiritual as well as intellectual progress" for all its students by teaching English grammar, reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, history, natural philosophy, rhetoric, and religion.35 Instruction in vocal music and calisthenic exercise was introduced at the Seminary in 1830. Studies in algebra, botany, human physiology, and
the philosophy of history were added to the school's curriculum within its first ten years of operation. Significantly, the Seminary never offered instruction in ornamental subjects like needlework or painting.

By the late 1830s the female education movement had fully adopted the philosophy of social usefulness with regard to education for women. In doing so, woman's primary functions as wife and mother were expanded to include the role of the teacher. The following excerpt taken from a pamphlet circulated by the Ipswich Female Seminary in 1836 best summarizes the accepted rationale:

One of the important duties devolving on woman, is that of moulding the minds within the sphere of her influence. Whether the educated female sustains the relation of mother, sister, teacher, or friend, to the children and youth around her, her usefulness may be greatly promoted, by possessing aptness to teach, skill in influencing mind, and just views of the great science of education.

During the first four decades of the nineteenth century the female education movement made great strides in improving the quality of education available to women. Benjamin Rush's thoughts regarding female education had established the foundation from which the movement subsequently developed. Increasingly more female academies and public schools were established and governed according to a set of standards which required mandatory entrance examinations, a more demanding curriculum, and stricter rules and regulations. Conversely, the number of private girls' academies which emphasized teaching ornamental subjects like needlework, painting, and drawing was on the decline. After about 1817 fewer and fewer advertisements for young ladies' academies appeared in the *Columbian Centinel*. 
Moreover, a 300-page report on Massachusetts' schools issued in 1837 by Horace Mann, Secretary of the State Board of Education, indicated that almost 142,000 students attended close to 3000 public schools in the state, while there were only about 850 private schools and academies with a total enrollment of 27,000. In addition, the report stated there were over 3500 female teachers compared to 2300 male teachers at the public schools. No comparable figures were given for private schools.

As teaching became an accepted occupation for women, especially single women, it served to widen "woman's sphere" or role in society. The popular nineteenth-century concept of a separate woman's sphere stemmed from the division of familial responsibilities. Man's role as head of the household and the breadwinner, and woman's role as the loving wife and affectionate mother, were viewed as separate though complementary functions. Alexis de Tocqueville recognized this division during his trip to the United States in 1835. Tocqueville observed that Americans had divided "the duties of man from those of woman" and that the roles of woman were plainly circumscribed "within the narrow circle of domestic interests and duties" for the benefit and betterment of society.

Barbara Welter defined the "cult of true womanhood" as the prevailing ideology which consecrated the home or domestic realm as woman's separate sphere and prescribed woman's roles according to four virtues: piety, purity, domesticity, and submissiveness. Of these virtues piety or religion was the most important for a woman. Women were expected to be religious and to look after the religious
education of their children because their husbands were too busy working outside the home. "Purity was as essential as piety to a young woman," writes Welter, "its absence as unnatural and unfeminine." Women were told to be strong and to protect their virtue from men until they married. Once married, a woman was expected to be in control of all domestic responsibilities, yet be submissive to her husband. Among woman's domestic duties were cooking, cleaning, sewing, nursing the sick, and imparting religious and moral knowledge to others in the family.

Middle and upper class women who desired to be true women looked to ladies' magazines and related literature for guidance and aid in obtaining these virtues. "By careful manipulation and interpretation" the magazines "sought to convince woman that she had the best of both worlds--power and virtue--and that a stable order of society depended on her maintaining her traditional place in it." In short, the "true woman" ideal defined woman as wife and mother and confined her in her proper sphere--the home. Nancy Cott has asserted in her study of middle and upper class women and the notion of woman's sphere in New England that "most women were willing to accept a sphere they saw as different but equal."

True womanhood was principally an ideal for married women or unmarried upper class women. Economic necessity required most single middle and lower class women to work prior to marriage. Although they were not confined to their homes, these women faced a limited number of occupational choices. There were essentially three respectable or socially acceptable means of employment open to an
unmarried woman. She could work in a mill or factory, as a domestic servant, or as a teacher.\footnote{46} Most middle class women who had attended girls' academies chose the last, while lower class women were usually qualified only to be mill girls or servants. In her study of middle and lower class women in the industrialized Northeast, Gerda Lerner has argued that increased industrialization and prosperity between 1800 and 1840 caused significant changes in the status of and disparity between women of different classes.\footnote{47} In the 1830s poorer women had to leave home to work in the factories while at the same time middle and upper class women aspired to obtain the status of a true woman or lady. The ideology of true womanhood, in which the concept of woman's separate sphere was an integral part, did not take into account the values of lower class mill girls and working women whose place was not in the home.

Most Americans considered teaching a natural extension of a woman's maternal duties. Teaching prepared single women for their future roles. As mothers they would be responsible for educating their own children about moral and religious principles. Teaching was an acceptable occupation for women because it kept women within their sphere. Cott has shown that even though the notion of a separate sphere confined and restrained women, it also served to unite them. Womanhood provided the fundamental basis that enabled women in the 1830s and 1840s to join together in a variety of social reform movements, including the female education movement.\footnote{48}
CHAPTER III

"AN AGREEABLE PASTIME FOR THE LADIES":
Silk Embroidered Mourning Pictures and the Schoolgirls Who Made Them

In July 1804 Bathsheba Whitman, a teacher at the Academy in Sandwich, sent a letter to Mr. and Mrs. Nathaniel Cushing of Pembroke urging them to send their daughter Kitty to the Academy for schooling. Miss Whitman had taught Kitty for two years prior to accepting the position in Sandwich. In her letter she described the Academy to the Cushings and guaranteed them she would help Kitty improve in her studies should they agree to send her. At the end of the letter Miss Whitman wrote, "I wish Mr. Cushing to get Materials for her to work a mourning picture he would get enough for two and I will pay him, she must have green, wood-colored, slate, and black if it can be gotten."\(^1\) Shortly after receiving Miss Whitman's letter the Cushings sent their daughter Kitty to the Sandwich Academy where she commenced her studies and also began a mourning picture under the guidance of Miss Whitman. Miss Whitman frequently corresponded with the Cushings about Kitty's progress at the school and with her needlework. A year later Miss Whitman reported\(^2\)

she has done very well in her studies, I have had but one or two specimens of her indolence and inattentions, and from them she had a speedy recovery and has been very industrious ... she has worked on her piece when in my room steadily. She had a little to take out by my not attending to it,
but she has done so much better that I am glad I made her take it out.

Kitty Cushing, like many girls her age, received instruction in needlework, English, geography, and arithmetic while attending the Academy in Sandwich. As we have seen, the young ladies who attended similar private academies which stressed ornamental subjects were the daughters of Massachusetts' upper classes. We must remember then that what is revealed by an examination of the silk embroidered mourning pictures made at these fashionable schools can only be interpreted in terms of what they represent about a select portion of society.

Throughout the early national period needlework was an essential element in the education of privileged American schoolgirls. After mastering the fundamentals of embroidery by working samplers, advanced students were taught how to make silk embroidered pictures depicting mourning scenes as well as religious, allegorical, and literary subjects. These pictures were embroidered with silk threads on silk fabric. Watercolor was used to highlight small body parts such as faces, hands, and feet, and to fill the background of the picture with blue sky and clouds, rolling hills and mountains, or scenes of distant villages. Mourning pictures, which came into vogue in the early 1800s, were composed of an idyllic garden landscape with a tombstone monument flanked by one or more mourning figures, and a combination of weeping willow, oak, and evergreen trees, flowers, and bushes. The proportion of mourning pictures to all silk embroidered pictures is difficult to calculate because we are able to count only those pictures which have survived almost two hundred years and are
known to us. Judging from extant examples, however, we can surmise that a variety of needlework pictures was made in most girls' academies. The largest identifiable group of needlework pictures embroidered by Massachusetts schoolgirls were made at Mrs. Saunders' and Miss Beach's Academy in Dorchester.  

The discussion which follows is based on the analysis of twenty-four silk embroidered mourning pictures. Twenty-one of these pictures have been documented or attributed to Massachusetts schools by museum curators or needlework experts; the remaining three have been classified simply as American. These three pictures (Cat. nos. 13, 15, and 16) were included in the study because they are stylistically similar to documented Massachusetts examples. All but one of the twenty-four pictures are believed to have been made before 1820. Where possible mourning pictures in museum collections and in possession of antiques dealers were examined firsthand. Photographs of mourning pictures from the Decorative Arts Photographic Collection (DAPC) at the Winterthur Museum and other sources were also studied. The pictures chosen for this study were located by surveying the secondary literature on needlework, by sending inquiries to museums and antique dealers, and by exploring auction sale catalogues for examples which were recently sold at auction. A catalogue of the twenty-four pictures can be found in the Appendix. Each picture cited in the text is designated by its catalogue number and, if it is illustrated, by its illustration number.

The two earliest documented silk embroidered mourning pictures known were made in Massachusetts in 1799 at the Derby Academy (Cat.
nos. 1 and 2; Figs. 1 and 2). These pictures were discovered at an historic house museum in Hingham in 1979. The pictures are unique because they do not depict mourning figures and because they are made entirely of silk embroidery on silk.\(^4\) By way of comparison, most nineteenth-century embroidered mourning pictures depict a mourning figure beside a tomb and were made of silk threads on silk fabric with details painted in watercolor. The composition of each Derby Academy picture consists primarily of a central tomb enclosed by a fence and two weeping willow trees with several evergreen trees placed in the background on either side of the fence. The discovery of these eighteenth-century silk embroidered mourning pictures is significant because they confirm a long-held assumption that mourning pictures were made by schoolgirls prior to 1800.

Mourning jewelry decorated with scenes similar to those in mourning pictures had been fashionable since the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Scholars generally believe that the death of George Washington on December 14, 1799, prompted the popularization of mourning art in the first decades of the nineteenth century.\(^5\) Silk embroidered mourning pictures dedicated to Washington were tangible expressions of the sorrow felt by many Americans. Widely circulated broadsides published in early 1800 also conveyed the nation's grief over the loss of its most famous hero. The following excerpt from a broadside entitled "The Death of Washington: or Columbia in Mourning for Her Son" expresses this sentiment:\(^6\)

    How sad are the tidings that sound in my ears!  
    My heart bleeds with anguish dissolved into tears.  
    The man whom all nations did love and adore,  
    Is taken and I shall behold him no more.
O my son Washington!
O what shall I do for my son!

How dark is my morning, how sable my skies!
Grief burst from my bosom, and pours from my eyes.
A sack cloth of sorrow spread over my son--
I mourn for the loss of the great Washington.
  O my grief, O my grief!
  O where shall I seek for relief?

Ye masons, go visit his tomb once a year,
Bedew his cold grave with a heart melting tear;
Keep sacred his memory to successive years;
Tell this to your children, and they unto theirs--
He was Prime, and Sublime,
  Grand Master of all in his clime.

In honor of America's "Grand Master" President John Adams proclaimed February 22 to be set aside as a day to commemorate Washington's birth and death. Ruth Henshaw Bascom, who is remembered today for the many profiles she rendered in pastel in the early nineteenth century, described her diary entry for that day in 1800 how the town of Leicester celebrated the occasion. Bascom wrote

At ten we went to Town. The Academy and town-schools with their instruction masters at their head, with some of the inhabitants attired in mourning, walked in procession from the Academy to the meetinghouse, where an excellent [speech] adapted to the occasion, was delivered by Mr. F. Fairbanks (the present assistant Preceptor) . . . Mr. Moore rung "Hark from the Tombs" and a Funeral hymn and closed with singing an ode or hymn written by Mr. Fairbanks on the occasion.

The death of George Washington marked the beginning of a nationwide period of mourning. To fill the American peoples' need for tangible expressions of grief Washington mourning memorabilia ranging from prints and engravings to handkerchiefs, jewelry, and ceramics was produced in vast quantities in this country and abroad following the patriot's death. This mass production of a variety of objects for public consumption was the first visible signal of a change in
American attitudes toward death.

Shortly after Washington's death, Samuel Folwell, a Philadelphia artist, painted a mourning picture on silk entitled "Sacred to the Memory of the Illustrious Washington." Folwell's picture served as the prototype for many mourning pictures made by students at his wife's school and at other girls' schools and academies. Professional artists and engravers like Folwell sold paintings and engravings to schoolteachers who used them as patterns for their students to copy. In the January and February 1800, issues of the Philadelphia Gazette and Universal Daily Advertiser, for instance, James Akin and William Harrison, Jr., advertised that their memorial print, "America Lamenting Her Loss at the Tomb of General Washington," was "admirably calculated to ornament the parlour, or hang as a centre-piece between any two other prints, it will also suit to enrich the labours of the needle upon white satin, and will be found an agreeable pastime for the ladies." Not only does the advertisement suggest how the prints were to be used but also by whom.

Schoolgirls adapted the designs found in prints to make memorials for famous patriots as well as family members. Lucinda Storrs of Lebanon, New Hampshire, for example, worked a mourning picture in 1808 based on a design taken from a widely circulated George Washington memorial print published by Pember and Luzarder of Philadelphia in 1800. (Cat. no. 16; Fig. 3) Miss Storrs used the print to commemorate the death of her own brother who died on Long Island four years earlier. It is not known whether she executed the
piece while attending an academy in New Hampshire or elsewhere in New England. Debby Bates may have also used a print as the design source for her mourning picture dedicated "To the MEMORY of the ILLUSTRIOUS GEO. WASHINGTON." (Cat. no. 3) The composition of Miss Bates' picture is strikingly similar to a memorial to Esther Derby of Weymouth worked by an unidentified schoolgirl around 1800. (Cat. no. 4; Fig. 4) In both pictures a female mourner is shown standing to the left of a tomb constructed in the form of a plinth mounted with a tall obelisk. Each oval composition is framed almost entirely by the branches of a large weeping willow tree which extend from the left foreground above the figure and around the tomb to the opposite side.

Like all mourning pictures the memorial to Esther Derby and the memorial by Debby Bates are rich in religious and moral symbolism. Certain stock elements are found in varying degrees in most mourning scenes. Mourning picture iconography has been examined by Anita Schorsch in her article "A Key to the Kingdom." Symbolic motifs in mourning pictures are generally placed in a balanced and orderly manner, typical of the neoclassical period, within a stylized landscape or garden setting. Rolling hills, mountains, and glimpses of villages which are visible on the horizon suggest that the garden is in a distant rural area. Traditionally a Christian symbol of hope and the Resurrection, the garden reflects a pastoral vision of eternity and God's omnipresence in Nature. Either an imposing tomb with a mourner beside it or a large weeping willow tree dominates the foreground of the garden scene. When two mourning figures are depicted they are positioned on either side of the tomb creating a
rather symmetrical composition. A needleworker whose name is unknown to us chose this pattern for her memorial picture dedicated to Captain Mayo Gerrish, a sea captain from Newbury who died in 1809. (Cat. no. 19; Fig. 5)

Oak trees as well as other varieties of trees are depicted in mourning pictures in addition to the more common weeping willows. According to Christian iconography, an oak tree represents the knowledge of death and human or temporal strength, whereas a willow tree, because of its regenerative powers, symbolizes the Resurrection. Moreover, when a willow tree is located near a body of water the two elements represent the Christian belief of life-in-death. In five of the mourning pictures examined for this study a small stream or pond was painted in watercolor in the foreground of the composition. (Cat. nos. 6, 7, 11, 17, and 22) This theme of rebirth and life-in-death is reinforced in mourning picture iconography by miscellaneous trees, bushes, and flowers scattered throughout the garden setting. The ability of plants and trees to give birth and to grow has been interpreted by Schorsch as 'fruitful signs in the midst of death.'

Three variations of tombs were found in the mourning pictures examined. The most common form consists of an urn mounted on a rectangular plinth, such as the one shown in the memorial to Captain Gerrish. (Cat. no. 19; Fig. 5) The urn, which held the ashes or remains of the deceased in ancient times, can be seen as a symbolic 'bed for the departed spirit.' The next most common type of tomb is a plinth mounted with an obelisk. (Fig. 4) Often an urn is
incorporated into this design as well by placing it on top of the plinth in front of the obelisk. (Fig. 3) Two unusual variations of the obelisk and plinth type mourning pictures were made by students at Mrs. Saunders' and Miss Beach's Academy in Dorchester about 1805. Anna Eaton's picture dedicated to her aunt Susanna Robinson depicts an imposing three-part plinth mounted with a central obelisk and flanked by two standing mourning figures. (Cat. no. 5) The obelisk is surmounted by a figure of an angel who appears to be motioning toward heaven. The other example was begun by Isabella Caldwell Dana and completed by her sister Sarah Sumner Dana, because, as the inscription beneath the picture tells us, Isabella "died ere it was finished" at age sixteen. (Cat. no. 11; Fig. 6) The Dana sisters' embroidery depict a cylindrical stepped plinth base surmounted by a pedestal and a mourning figure. Another mourning figure is positioned on the ground to the right of the tomb. Two intertwined trees, possibly oak trees, placed to the left of the tomb serve to balance the composition. There are no weeping willow trees in Miss Eaton's memorial and only a small one is visible in the background of the Dana sisters' picture. A third unique mourning picture design which incorporates a variation of the plinth and obelisk form tomb was used by Lydia Eames and Betsy Howe, who were also students at Mrs. Saunders' and Miss Beach's Academy. (Cat. nos. 7 and 8; Figs. 9 and 10) Their embroideries are unusual because of the subject matter; memorials to Shakespeare are rare in American needlework. In each picture a female mourning figure is depicted in a landscape containing a small weeping willow tree, a variety of other trees, and
a stream with a swan in it. The figure, holding a basket of flowers in one hand and strewing flower petals on the ground near the tomb with the other, is shown standing beside a stylized obelisk and urn tomb.

In four of the mourning pictures examined, the tomb is in the form of a large sarcophagus. (Cat. nos. 6, 7, 14, and 15) The similarity of the overall composition and details of each picture suggest that the design was adapted from a well known print. One of the pictures, the only one with a positively identified place of origin and maker, was wrought by Abigail Humphreys while a student at Mrs. Saunders' and Miss Beach's Academy. (Cat. no. 6; Fig. 9)

Miss Humphreys' memorial like other mourning pictures portrays a female figure, who is clothed in a light-colored neoclassical style dress with a black shawl draped around her head and shoulders, leaning pensively against a tomb. The posture of the figure is derived from the depiction of female mourners who personified grief on Ancient Greek steles and vases. A swan similar to the ones depicted in Lydia Eames' and Betsy Howe's memorial is shown swimming in a pond near the base of the tomb. (Cat. nos. 9 and 10; Figs. 7 and 8)

Dedications inscribed on the tombs in mourning pictures usually begin with the words "Sacred to the Memory of," "In Memory of," or "In Remembrance of" followed by the name, age, and birth and death dates of the deceased person or persons. In addition, a variety of short verses appear on the tombs which either celebrate the virtue of the departed one or comment on the shortness of life and the
imminence of death. The inscription on the tomb of Debby Bates' memorial to George Washington, for example, reads "Unrivalled in MORTAL Glory he Lived, and Greatly Died." (Cat. no. 3) The verse inscribed at the bottom of Abigail Humphreys' mourning picture dedicated to her younger brothers simply states that "As Morning dew, they sparkled, Were exhaled and went to Heaven." (Cat. no. 6; Fig. 9) In his study of New England gravestones historical archaeologist James Deetz found that beginning in the 1790s urn and willow motifs were used as commemorative symbols in combination with "Sacred to the Memory" tomb inscriptions. Similarly the motifs were used in schoolgirl mourning pictures to express a new vision of death which memorialized the deceased person's accomplishments on earth rather than his or her spiritual being. Prior to about 1810 the inscriptions on the tombs were either stitched in embroidery or handwritten in ink. At some point in the 1810s the inscriptions began to be printed with printer's type directly on the silk or on a placard which was then attached to the tomb. Mourning pictures by Clarissa Page Fowler, Mary Frost, and an unidentified needleworker display examples of this type of inscription. (Cat. nos. 22, 20, and 17)

Generally the upper portion of a mourning picture is painted in watercolor to represent blue sky and white clouds and to symbolize heaven. Occasionally, as in Lucinda Storrs' embroidery (Cat. no. 16; Fig. 3) an angel is also depicted in the heavens. The angel, carrying a trumpet and laurel wreath, is thought to be calling the deceased's soul home to heaven after death, an act which reflects the
glory of death. In addition to the sky, details such as the mourner's face, hands, and arms were painted in watercolor to resemble natural fleshtones. Moreover, the colored threads used by the needleworkers were carefully chosen to imitate the natural hues of spring and summer. Various shades of green and gold were selected for grass, leaves, and other foliage, brown was used for tree trunks and limbs, ivory for the mourner's dress, and a combination of ivory, black, and grey were chosen to simulate the marble tomb.

Angels, weeping willow and oak trees, flowers, urns, monumental tombs, and mourning figures are just a few of the iconographic symbols in mourning pictures whose origins are deeply rooted in Christian and classical sources. Anita Schorsch has thoroughly discussed the intrinsic meanings of these motifs yet has failed to consider whether the early nineteenth-century artists and schoolgirls who designed and copied mourning scenes truly understood the symbolic content of the pictures. Did they consciously choose the motifs because of their inherent meanings or did the traditional use and association of the motifs with death and mourning influence the selection of them? None of the schoolgirls' letters and diaries examined for this study contained an answer to this question. Yet evidence indicates that religion played a significant role in the lives of schoolgirls. Many schools taught bible studies and required their students to attend church services regularly. It is not surprising then to find religious symbolism and biblical verses in schoolgirl needlework. Twelve year-old Maria Anderson embroidered the following verse on her sampler in 1817:
Guard me 0 God from every sin
Let heart and tongue and life be clean
Though with ten thousand snares beset
I never would my Lord forget
Fair would I learn to lay aside
Malice and stubbornness and pride
Envy and every evil thought
Nor be my breast with amber hot
Each other passion wild and rude
I long to feel by Grace subdued.

Another more common verse was embroidered on a sampler in 1825 by eleven year-old Lydia Fiske:

Jesus permit thy gracious name to stand
At the first effort of a female hand
And whilst her fingers o'er this canvas move
Incline her youthful heart to seek thy love.

Religious and moral verses stitched on samplers served to reinforce the lessons young girls had learned at home, in church, and at school. Most schoolgirls had received religious training by their early teens and therefore were probably familiar with the Christian symbolism associated with mourning pictures.

Thus far the discussion of mourning pictures has been based on examples made prior to 1820. Only one of the twenty-four mourning pictures examined was made after this date and can be positively identified as a Massachusetts piece. The lack of documented Massachusetts examples dating from 1820 lends additional support to the claim that needlework instruction became a less important element in the curriculum of the state's young ladies' academies and that there was a gradual shift in emphasis at the academies from needlework to painting and drawing in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Outside of New England, however, silk embroidered mourning pictures are known to have been made after 1825.
One such memorial was worked by Elizabeth Terry of Marietta, Pennsylvania, in 1836 to commemorate the death of three young Terry children. The composition of this picture differs from earlier Massachusetts examples because both male and female figures are depicted in contemporary black mourning attire and with real human hair.

The later Massachusetts mourning picture is a family tree memorial which was stitched with black cotton threads on punched paper by Sarah Henshaw in 1862. (Cat. no. 24) The rectangular composition consists of four vertical rows of seven plinth and urn tombs containing the names, ages, and death dates of various members of Sarah Henshaw's family. The basic elements of this picture relate to earlier examples but its composition and materials are markedly different. The picture is included here primarily to illustrate that long after their initial popularity had subsided, mourning pictures were made by some young women in Massachusetts. Indeed the form of the mourning picture had changed, but its purpose, to remember a departed loved one, had not.
While the thought of young schoolgirls embroidering mourning pictures may appear morbid or even somewhat bizarre from a twentieth-century perspective, it is important to remember that customs associated with mourning generally served both social and personal needs. The popularity of silk embroidered mourning pictures in the first decades of the nineteenth century coincided with the emergence of a new attitude toward death, an attitude that was remarkably different from the one expressed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Mourning pictures reflect this new attitude toward death and represent one way in which a portion of society expressed its grief.

In Puritan New England the certainty of death was firmly entrenched in the minds of children and adults. David Stannard has shown in his study, The Puritan Way of Death, that children were taught at an early age to prepare for their own death, "to contemplate the physical act of dying," and to envision the reality of hell and damnation. To the Puritans life was a difficult pilgrimage toward salvation. It was essentially a stage during which one prepared for the finality of death. The ultimate goal of the
journey was heaven, but to reach that goal one had first to encounter death. Death was both feared and embraced. Puritans welcomed death and the prospect of being saved as God's chosen people yet they dreaded the consequences of being damned and sentenced to an eternal life without the presence of God. The duality of the Puritan attitude toward death was expressed as late as the 1740s in the sermons of the Reverend Jonathan Edwards. Like most Puritans, Edwards believed in the "sovereignty of God, and His justice in thus eternally disposing of men, according to His sovereign pleasure," that is, "in showing mercy to whom He will show mercy, and hardening and eternally damning whom He will." Edwards chose strikingly different words to convey his vision of heaven and hell. In his *Personal Narrative* Edwards wrote, "The Heaven I desired was a heaven of holiness; to be with God, and to spend my eternity in divine love, and holy communion with Christ . . . Heaven appeared exceedingly delightful as a world of love." Edwards described hell in a sermon to his congregation entitled "Sinners in the Hands of An Angry God" as "a great furnace of wrath, a wide bottomless pit, full of the fire of wrath, that you are held over in the hand of that God, whose wrath is provoked and incensed as much against you as against many of the damned in hell." Throughout the seventeenth and much of the eighteenth century, death and the struggle for salvation were foremost in the minds of most New Englanders. By living exemplary lives devout Puritans hoped to achieve salvation and to avoid its grim alternative.

In the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century a
more optimistic view of death became apparent. French historian Philippe Aries has suggested that the focus of death had shifted from the concern for one's own death to *la mort de toi*, or thy death. "It means," writes Aries, "that survivors accepted the death of another person with greater difficulty than in the past . . . the death which [was] feared [was] no longer so much the death of the self as the death of another."³

Rather than dwell on its most dreadful consequences Americans began to accept death as a natural occurrence in the life cycle. The new attitude romanticized death as a triumphant event in which the deceased individual was returned to heaven and Mother Nature. This concept of triumphant death is perhaps best exemplified by the death of George Washington. Poetical compositions written to commemorate the occasion not only described the grief felt by Americans, but also conveyed a sense of the glory which surrounded his death. The excerpt quoted in Chapter Three from a broadside published in 1800 concluded with the following description of Washington's resurrection:

A squadron of angels was sent from the sky,  
To convoy his spirit to mansions on high,  
Attended with music on the golden lyre,  
They bore him aloft in a chariot of fire.  
O the wheels--flaming wheels!  
How swiftly they roll'd up the hills.  

Escort by Gabriel from the middle air,  
Whose cavalry shone with unspeakable glare;  
He sounded his trumpet thro' heaven's high arch,  
The cavalcade led, and they quicken'd their march,  
Swiftly they flew, blazing thro'  
The glaring, ethereal blue.  

As quick as the pincon that transport a thought,  
To the highest heavens my hero was brought;
Quite soft was his passage, and easy his tour,
There he was receiv'd as an ambrosial flower,
    God to view, joys ensue
    For ever delightsome and new.

United with seraphim in flowing verse,
The transporting wonders of heaven rehearse,
Their God and their Father, and Grand Master praise,
On high sounding organs in loud lofty lays:
    Like the dove join in love,
    To praise the GRAND MASTER above!

Similarly, mourning pictures visually express the sentiment of glorified death. The angels represented in the mourning pictures embroidered by Lucinda Storrs (Cat. no. 16; Fig. 3) and Anna Eaton (Cat. no. 5), for example, symbolize how the deceased person's soul was escorted to heaven. Just as angels came down to "convoy [Washington's] spirit to mansions on high," the angels were depicted in these embroideries to insure the survivors that their departed loved ones were safely ushered into the other world.

The garden scenes found in all mourning pictures further represent the romantic conception of death as the reunion of God, nature, and humanity. In mourning pictures the tomb is placed within a lush rural landscape or garden. Occasionally a small portion of a town or village may also be discernible at some distance beyond rolling hills, winding streams, and groves of trees. These rural burial plots, however, existed only in the minds of their creators. Most graveyards of the period were actually overcrowded and dirty, and were located within the community, not out in the countryside. In his study of attitudes toward death and burial customs in the 1830s, Stanley French explores the development of the rural cemetery (or garden cemetery) movement. Mount Auburn Cemetery, which later
became the prototype for rural cemeteries in other American cities, was established in 1831 on a large wooded tract of land in Cambridge, Massachusetts. French suggests that the rural cemetery movement initially developed as a reaction against the health hazards posed by the deplorable conditions of the city's graveyards. The effects of increasing population and industrialization had caused the graveyards to become neglected. Moreover, French states that "the creation of Mount Auburn marked a change in prevailing attitudes about death and burial customs" because the rural cemetery came to be seen as both a cultural institution and a "decent place of interment."11

In mourning pictures the idealized garden and the natural imagery associated with it were in essence a symbolic representation of God. During the Romantic period many believed that God, the creator or Nature, was present everywhere in Nature. Thus, the placement of the tomb in a beautiful, imaginary garden setting signified that the spirit of the deceased lived eternally with God and Nature.

The theme of rebirth and life-in-death can also be seen in the poetry of William Cullen Bryant, the celebrated American poet of the Romantic era. In "Thanatopsis," published in 1817, Bryant expresses the meaning of death:12

Earth, that nourished thee, shall claim
Thy growth, to be resolved to earth again,
And, lost each human trace, surrendering up
Thine individual being shalt thou go
To mix forever with the elements.

Further, Bryant portrayed heaven as both a resting place and a universal meeting place:13
Yet not to thine eternal resting-place
Shalt thou retire alone . . .

Thou shalt lie down
With patriarchs of the infant world, with kings
The powerful of the earth, the wise, the good,
Fair forms, and hoary seers of ages past,
All in one mighty sepulchre.

And, at the conclusion of the poem Bryant admonished the reader not
to fear, but to accept death:

. . . sustained and soothed
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave,
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.

Another significant aspect of the new attitude toward death was
the belief that friends and family would be reunited in heaven. This
belief was most clearly expressed in sermons and religious tracts on
death and mourning. The sermons, written by clergymen and other
elloquent writers to mark the occasion of an acquaintance's death,
were often published following the funeral. "The Mourning Husband: A
Discourse at the Funeral of Mrs. Thankful Church" was presented by
Leonard Woods in 1806, James Gurney gave "A Sermon Occasioned by the
Death of Miss Lydia Perry" in New Bedford in 1815, and "The Mourner's
Relief . . . a Sermon at Ipswich with Special View to the Consolation
of the Mourning Relative and Friends of the Rev. Joseph McKean" was
given by Joseph Dana in 1816. Death and the afterlife, moderation
in mourning, and the importance of Christianity were the primary
themes elaborated on in these works and in other consolation
literature.

The Reverend Dr. Edward Harwood wrote, for example, that:

The religion of Jesus opens to the mourner not the
blackness of darkness, and the friendless shades of
despair, but the cheerfulness of hope, and the joyful prospect of immortality. The Gospel of Jesus carries the believer's view beyond the present limited scene of things—draws aside the veil that once intervened between time and eternity, and gives the mourner, in this world, such a glorious triumphant, boundless view of the regions of immortality, as cannot but make him ashamed of indulging in immoderate sorrow for any earthly creature, how near and dear soever when he shall soon meet it in those blessed abodes, and part no more.

In The Mourner, Benjamin Grosvenor also described heaven as a beautiful and peaceful place, a "world of perfection where the souls of just men made perfect; freed from all imperfections, natural and sinful; returned to their native soil." In heaven the dead would "have glorious scenes . . . before them, and pleasing expectations of great and more glorious things," wrote Grosvenor. Grosvenor's tract, which was reprinted numerous times during the first half of the nineteenth century, may have been the most popular work on mourning. Like other clergymen Grosvenor cautioned his readers not "to mourn as without hope," because "at the resurrection you shall meet again in your glorious bodies, as well as perfected spirits . . . You were not always together here; but you shall be always together after that meeting." Hugh Blair, in "A Sermon on Death," expressed similar thoughts:

Let moderation temper the grief of a good man and a Christian. He must not sorrow like those who have no hope . . . They whom we have loved still live, though not present to us. They are only removed into a different mansion in the house of the common Father. The toils of their pilgrimage are finished; and they are gone to the land of rest and peace. They are gone from this dark and troubled world, to join the great assembly of the just; and to dwell in the midst of everlasting light . . . let us cherish the memory of the deceased.
Sermons and religious tracts like these written by Harwood, Grosvenor, and Blair tell us that although Americans mourned the loss of loved ones, their sorrow was marked by hope and the anticipation of a joyful reunion.

The young girls who attended academies in Massachusetts probably heard many similar sermons on death and mourning. Religion, as we have seen, played a significant role in a girl's education. Teachers often required schoolgirls to attend church services and to study the Bible. Some teachers, like Mrs. Benjamin Shaw of Charlestown, assured parents they would "inculcate the principles of religion . . . and moral rectitude" in the minds of their students. While away at school, Mary Wild Pierce reported to her parents that

In our school exercises we have a great deal to do with the bible. Miss Dwight gives us questions to answer with texts, and we are required to write abstracts of both the forenoon and afternoon discourses upon the Sabbath.

It is possible that one of the abstracts written by Mary Pierce could have been on a sermon about death and mourning. A schoolgirl's preoccupation with piety and death or her teacher's desire to instill in her mind an awareness of the transitory nature of life was often reflected in the verse she embroidered on her sampler. Eleven year-old Mary Graves Kimball, for example, stitched the following verse on her sampler in 1808 while a student at E. Plummer's school in Haverhill:

Lord, when I leave this mortal ground  
And thou shalt bid me rise and come  
Send a beloved angel down  
Safe to conduct my spirit home

Like Mary Kimball, other schoolgirls in Massachusetts were also
thinking about death in the early nineteenth century.

The verses inscribed on the tombs in schoolgirl mourning pictures frequently allude to the belief that after a separation caused by death friends and family would be reunited in heaven. The inscription on Clarissa Page Fowler's memorial (Cat. no. 22) to her grandfather, for instance, instructs the reader not to despair because they will meet again in the afterlife:

Weep not for me; 0, let each tear be dry;  
You soon will meet me in the worlds on high.  
Go, trim your lamps, let hope each murmur drown.  
And, win, like me, and everlasting crown.

Similarly, the belief in everlasting life is expressed in the inscription Sally Austin embroidered on her memorial: "Can bounteous Heav'n a greater solace give, Than that which whispers FRIENDS DEPARTED LIVE." Other verses, such as "Not lost, but gone before;" "There is rest in Heaven;" and "As early morning dew they sparkled, were exhaled, and went to Heaven," also conveyed the sense of certainty in the minds of Americans that the spirits of their departed loved ones would be resurrected. (Cat. nos. 7, 5, 16, and 9; Figs. 3 and 6) Whether the needleworkers chose the verses for their mourning pictures or they were chosen by their parents or teachers is uncertain. The diversity of verses found on mourning pictures, however, suggests that the schoolgirls could have been both the composers and the embroiderers of the verses. After all, composition was an important element of a schoolgirl's curriculum. Girls were taught the fine points of writing poetry and prose and were encouraged to keep notebooks with samples of their work. Martha Crosby Page, a student at the Adams Female Academy in Danvers from
1826-1828, filled her commonplace book with sentimental poems and stories about death, love, friendship, the passing of time, and the pains of separation caused by death and distance. The desire to be remembered by family and friends permeates Miss Page's book, but is most apparent in a short composition entitled "Remember Me":

There are not two other works in the language that call back a more fruitful train of past remembrances of friendship, than these. Look through your library, and when you cast your eye upon a volume that contains the name of an old companion, it will say, remember me.

Have you an ancient Album—the repository of the mementos of early affection? Turn over its leaves stained by the finder of time—sit down and ponder upon the names enrolled on them, each says remember me.

Go into the crowded church yard; among the marble tombs—read the simple brief inscriptions that perpetuate the memory of departed ones; they too have a voice that speaks to the hearts of the living and says remember me.

Walk in the hour of evening twilight; amid the scenes of your early rambles, the well known paths, the winding streams, the overspreading trees, the green and gently sloping banks, will recall the scenes of juvenile pleasure and the recollections of youthful companions, they too bear the injunction remember me.

Another composition written by Martha Page also entitled "Remember Me," expresses her awareness of the shortness of life and the inevitability of death as well as her wish to be remembered by others:

Best of blessings of bless thee!
Best of joys caress thee!
Yet still, remember me!
When the hours beguiling, friends around thee smiling,
Oh, then remember me!
Or when light is flying, and thy breast is sighing,
O'er Hope's flowerets dying, that has bloom'd for thee,
When the sign is wringing, and the tear is springing,
Oh, then remember me!
When the knee is bending, and thy prayer ascending,
Oh, then remember me!
When to thee is given, joys that seem of Heaven,
Oh, then remember me!
While that sacred feeling, through thy bosom stealing,
Opens Heaven--revealing things no eye can see,
When thy home seems nearest, and thy Savior dearest,
Oh, then remember me!
While a joy is glowing, while a tear is flowing,
I will remember thee!
Joy will be the sweeter, no, will be the fleeter,
While I remember thee.
Life is quickly passing, dust to dust returning,
In the house of mourning, hidden soon will be,
But when death cold billow, washes o'er my pillow,
Still I'll remember thee!

The need to be remembered was the most pervasive aspect of the new attitude toward death. As we have seen, late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century tombstones in New England graveyards and in mourning pictures were inscribed with phrases like "Sacred to the Memory of" and "In Memory of." These phrases signaled that the tomb was a memorial to a person's life and not merely a marker placed over his or her physical remains. Philippe Aries has argued that "memory conferred upon the dead a sort of immortality which was initially foreign to Christianity." The "cult of memory," to use Aries's words, inspired people to visit a deceased persons's tomb in a graveyard in order to savour the memory of his or her life. A week after her first husband's death in 1805, Ruth Henshaw Bascom described in her diary how she had attended church services in the morning, listened to two sermons, and then "took a melancholy walk and spent an hour or two in the burying-ground." Presumably, she went there to cultivate the memory of her late husband. As commemorative pieces, schoolgirl mourning pictures also served to keep the memory of a departed loved one alive in the minds of those
who were left behind. By hanging a mourning picture in their parlor, survivors could preserve the deceased person's memory and, in a sense, visit his or her tomb without actually leaving home.

Silk embroidered mourning pictures were popular in Massachusetts in the first two decades of the nineteenth century. These pictures were skillfully designed and elaborately embroidered by teenage girls who attended private finishing schools. Among the upper classes schoolgirl mourning pictures were seen as a status symbol as well as a tangible expression of grief in the Federal period. The pictures, after all, were visible products of the educational accomplishments of privileged young ladies.

By about 1820 mourning pictures made by Massachusetts schoolgirls were less frequently embroidered on silk. Instead, as needlework became less important in the school curriculum, the girls began to paint mourning pictures in watercolor on silk, paper, or velvet. A further influence on the changing popularity of mourning pictures came in the 1840s when lithographers and engravers like Currier and Ives began selling both black and white and color mourning prints. (Fig. 10) Each print, which depicted a typical mourning scene, had a blank line in the tombstone inscription on which to write the name of a deceased person. Some scholars have suggested that the widespread appeal of these ready-made fill-in-the-blank memorial prints caused the decline in the popularity of silk embroidered and painted mourning pictures made by schoolgirls. Certainly, it may be true that the lithographs made the handmade
memorials less desirable as symbols of status among the upper classes. Yet, there is a more convincing explanation for the decreasing popularity of schoolgirl mourning pictures. Study of mourning pictures in conjunction with literature of the period has indicated that schoolgirls embroidered and painted memorials at a time when needlework and painting were considered to be important elements of female education. After 1820 the female education movement gained momentum and influenced a shift in popular thought concerning the curriculum of girls' schools. Educational reformers advocated a rigorous curriculum which placed more emphasis on the sciences and the humanities and less emphasis on ornamental subjects. By the late 1830s and 1840s educating and training young women to teach became the central purpose of many girls' academies. The decline in popularity of handmade schoolgirl mourning pictures was influenced more by these changes in the philosophy of female education than by the appearance of fill-in-the-blank memorial prints in the marketplace. Despite changes in medium, however, mourning pictures continued to reflect the early nineteenth-century need to cultivate the memory of the dead.
FIGURE 1

Mourning picture by an unknown needleworker, Derby Academy, Hingham, Massachusetts, 1799. Silk threads on silk fabric. 9 1/8 x 13 1/8. (Catalogue no. 1)
FIGURE 2

Mourning picture by an unknown needleworker, Derby Academy, Hingham, Massachusetts, 1799. Silk threads on silk fabric. 9 1/8 x 13. (Catalogue no. 2)
Mourning picture by Lucinda Storrs, probably New Hampshire or Massachusetts, circa 1808. Silk threads and watercolor on silk fabric. 19 1/2 x 19. (Catalogue no. 16)
FIGURE 4

Mourning picture by an unknown needleworker, Massachusetts, circa 1800. Silk threads and watercolor on silk fabric. 19 1/4 x 15 1/2. (Catalogue no. 4)
FIGURE 5

(Catalogue no. 19)
FIGURE 6

Mourning picture by Isabella Caldwell Dana and Sarah Sumner Dana, Mrs. Saunders' and Miss Beach's Academy, Dorchester, Massachusetts, circa 1805. Silk threads and watercolor on silk fabric. 20 1/2 x 13 1/4. (Catalogue no. 11)
FIGURE 7

Mourning picture by Lydia Eames, Mrs. Saunders' and Miss Beach's Academy, Dorchester, Massachusetts, circa 1805. Silk threads and watercolor on silk fabric. 14 1/2 x 11 1/2. (Catalogue no. 9)
INDULGENT FOUNTAIN, from the fruitful banks of Avon.
Whence thy rosy fingers cool fresh flowers and dew.
To sprinkle on the turf where Shakespeare lies.

Engraved by Isaiah Ennis at the Academy of Mr. Barlow's Academy.
FIGURE 8

Mourning picture by Betsy Howe, Mrs. Saunders' and Miss Beach's Academy, Dorchester, Massachusetts, circa 1803. Silk threads and watercolor on silk fabric. 18 x 12 (Catalogue no. 10)
Indulgent Grace! From the fretted bosom of Aurora.
Whereas thy rose fingers exalt beauty and exalt the smile.
On the purest SHEPHERDESS, I thee,

Hymn to the Fair Hour
An E. A. M. A. M. A. M. M. A. M. A.
FIGURE 9

Mourning picture by Abigail Humphreys, Mrs. Saunders' and Miss Beach's Academy, Dorchester, Massachusetts, circa 1804. Silk threads and watercolor on silk fabric. 14 x 18. (Catalogue no. 6)
FIGURE 10

Mourning lithograph published by N. Currier, 2 Spruce Street, New York, circa 1840.
APPENDIX

CATALOGUE OF MOURNING PICTURES

Some or all of the following information is listed for each of the twenty-four mourning pictures examined for this study: name of the needleworker and her birth and death dates; location where the picture was made; approximate year when the picture was made; name of school or academy; materials; dimensions in inches; type of tombstone depicted; inscriptions; collection where the picture is located; reference or relevant bibliographic information about the picture; illustration number; and a brief description of the picture and its maker. Photographs of several of the pictures were examined at the Decorative Arts Photographic Collection at the Winterthur Museum. The source of these pictures is cited as DAPC followed by the collection's catalogue number. Mourning pictures in the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Center's collection are cited as AARFAC plus an accession number.
1. Needleworker unknown  
Hingham, Massachusetts, 1799  
Derby Academy  
Silk on silk  
9 1/8 x 13 1/8  
Urn and plinth tomb with no figures  
Embroidered on plinth "RL"; inscribed at bottom of picture: "In memory of Mrs. Rachel Lincoln who died July 13th 1797, in the 42nd year of her age. Hingham, Derby Academy/1799."  
Hingham Historical Society, Hingham, Massachusetts  
Antiques (June 1979): 1243.  
Figure 1.

The central tomb monument is flanked by two weeping willow trees and surrounded by a fence. Several trees which are depicted with an unusual horizontal shading of the leaves are placed on both sides of the composition. In 1791 the Derby School was founded with funds willed by Sarah Langlee Hersey Derby of Hingham. During its first year of operation, forty boys and thirty girls attended the school. In 1797 the name of the school was changed to Derby Academy. These two documented examples (see #2 below) made by unidentified Derby Academy students are significant because they confirm the belief that silk embroidered mourning pictures were made in the late eighteenth century.

2. Needleworker unknown  
Hingham, Massachusetts, 1799  
Derby Academy  
Silk on silk  
9 1/8 x 13  
Obelisk and plinth tomb with no figures  
Inscribed on paper inserted beneath picture: "In memory of Mr. T. Loring who obt. August 28th 1795 aged 82 & Mrs. S. Loring, who obt. Oct. 24th 1798, aged 79. Hingham Derby Academy, April 5th, 1799."  
Hingham Historical Society, Hingham, Massachusetts  
Antiques (June 1979): 1243.  
Figure 2.

The composition of this picture is similar to #1 except that the tomb, weeping willow trees, and fence are placed just to the left of the center. On the right side of the tomb, a house and church are depicted in the background, trees with horizontal shading of the leaves are in the middle, and a lake with a small ship are depicted in the right foreground. (See note for #1 above.)
3. **Debby Bates**  
Massachusetts, possibly Hanover, c. 1800  
Silk and watercolor on satin  
14 3/4 x 12 3/4, oval  
Obelisk, urn, and plinth tomb with one figure  
Inscribed in ink on obelisk: "GW"; on plinth: "To the MEMORY of the ILLUSTRIOUS GEO. WASHINGTON/Unrivalled in MORTAL/Glory he Lived, and/Greatly Died Dec. 14, '99 AE 68"; inscribed on glass of frame: EXECUTED BY DEBBY BATES SEPT. 1800."  
Private collection  
DAPC #79.894  

Betty Ring, who examined this picture at DAPC, has suggested that the Debby Bates who made it may have been Deborah Bates of Hanover, Massachusetts. Miss Bates married Jacob Capen of Attleborough on February 5, 1809. The tomb monument in this oval composition stands in the right foreground with a mourning figure leaning to the left of it. A weeping willow tree at the far left arches above the figure and the tomb and thereby balances the composition. A memorial similar to this one is in the collection of the Concord Antiquarian Society in Concord, Massachusetts. The composition of this picture is also similar to #4 below.

4. **Needleworker unknown**  
Massachusetts, c. 1800  
Silk and watercolor on silk  
19 1/4 x 15 1/2, oval  
Obelisk and plinth tomb with one figure  
Inscribed on obelisk: "ED"; on plinth: "To the/MEMORY of/Esther Derby/obt. June 13 1790/AE 14 Months & 14 days"  
Private collection  
Childs Gallery, Boston, Massachusetts  
Figure 4.

In this oval composition a large weeping willow tree at the far left encompasses the mourning figure who is depicted standing to the left of the tomb. According to Child's Gallery, Esther Derby, the baby to whom this memorial is dedicated, was born in Weymouth, Massachusetts. Nothing is known about the needleworker. This picture is stylistically similar to Debby Bates' memorial (#3 above).
5. Anna Eaton (1789-1829)
Dorchester, Massachusetts, c. 1803
Mrs. Saunders' and Miss Beach's Academy
Silk and watercolor on silk
13 1/2 x 16 1/2
Obelisk and plinth tomb with three figures
Inscribed on obelisk: "SACRED/to the MEMORY/of/SUSANNA
ROBINSON/WHO/DIED SEPT. R 18th 1802 AE 40"; on plinth: "SUSANNA
ROBINSON/NOT LOST BUT GONE BEFORE"
Private collection
DAPC #82.973
Antiques (October 1971): 574, Fig. 7.

This picture which is dedicated to the needleworker's aunt, is
unusual because of its composition. The elements of the picture
which are distinctly different than most Massachusetts examples
include the monumental tomb that dominates the scene, the
placement of the two mourning figures and angel on top of the
tomb, and the lack of willow trees and other foliage in the
landscape.

6. Abigail Humphreys (1789-1878)
Dorchester, Massachusetts, c. 1804
Mrs. Saunders' and Miss Beach's Academy
Silk and watercolor on silk
14 x 18
Sarcophagus tomb with one figure
Embroidered on the sarcophagus: "BH/&/HH" and "IN
REMBR(ance)/of BARNARD HUMPHREYS/Who died Octr' 13th 1804/aged 12
yrs and of/ HARRIS HUMPHREYS/who died July 28th/1804 aged 10
yrs"; inscribed on the silk beneath the picture: "AS MORNING
DEW, THEY SPARKLED,/WERE EXHALED AND WENT TO HEAVEN."; inscribed
on glass of frame: "WROUGHT BY ABIGAL [sic] HUMPHREYS/AT MRS.
SAUNDERS & MISS BEACH'S ACADEMY DORCHESTER."
Dorchester Historical Society, Dorchester, Massachusetts
Antiques (August 1976): 306, Plate IV.
Figure 9.

Abigail Humphreys, the daughter of Deacon James and Elizabeth
Capen Humphreys of Dorchester, was about fifteen years old when
she embroidered this picture in memory of her two brothers.
Fifteen years later, in 1819, she married Amos Upham of nearby
Uphams Corner, Massachusetts. This memorial is closely related
to #7, 14, and 15. The tomb is placed in the center of the
composition with a large weeping willow tree behind it and a
mourning figure, who is depicted holding a garland of flowers,
leaning in front of it. A swan is depicted near the base of the
tomb in a pond which is painted bright blue.
7. Sally Austin  
Boston, Massachusetts, c. 1804  
Silk and watercolor on silk  
16 1/2 x 12 1/4  
Sarcophagus tomb with one figure  
Embroidered on the sarcophagus: "LA" and "IN Memory/of Mrs. Lydia Austin/who died April 2nd 1796/aged 32"; embroidered beneath the picture: "Can bounteous Heav'n a greater solace give/Than that which whispers FRIENDS DEPARTED LIVE"; inscribed on glass of frame: "SALLY AUSTIN"  
Private collection  
DAPC #79.863  

Nothing is known about Sally Austin, the schoolgirl who made this memorial. Stylistically the composition of her picture resembles Abigail Humphreys' (#6; see also #14 and 15). All four girls probably used the same print as the source for their design. Moreover, the similar manner in which the verse is embroidered beneath the mourning scene in Abigail Humphreys' and Sally Austin's pictures suggests that it is possible Sally Austin was also a student at Mrs. Saunders' and Miss Beach's Academy. The relationship between Sally Austin and Lydia Austin, the woman to whom the picture is dedicated, has not yet been determined. Lydia Austin (née Bowles) married Joseph Austin of Boston, July 19, 1786. They resided in Boston where Mr. Austin operated a bakery at the corner of Ship and Fleet Streets.

8. Needleworker unknown  
Probably Massachusetts, after 1804  
Silk and watercolor on silk  
Dimensions not available  
Urn and plinth tomb with two figures  
Inscribed in ink on plinth: "Sacred to the Memory of/MARGARET G. NICHOLS/Born Augt. 26th 1789 Died Sept. 17th 1791/also/MARY TOPPAN BORN/Feb 7th 1796, Died Oct. 16th 1804."  
Private collection  
DAPC #65.313  

Susan B. Swan, who examined this picture at DAPC, has attributed it to Massachusetts because the name Toppan, which appears on it, is known to have been a common Massachusetts name. Nothing is known about either the girl who made the picture or the children to whom it is dedicated. Stylistically the memorial is related to a Massachusetts piece by an unidentified needleworker (#19). The urn and plinth tomb is flanked by two mourning figures. The figure depicted on the left is shown holding a book and a bouquet of flowers, while the one on the right is holding a handkerchief and an anchor. A large weeping willow tree extends from the left side to dominate the center of the picture above the tomb.
9. Lydia Eames (1792-1819)
   Dorchester, Massachusetts, c. 1805
   Mrs. Saunders' and Miss Beach's Academy
   Silk and watercolor on silk
   14 1/2 x 11 1/2
   Obelisk and urn tomb with one figure
   Inscribed beneath picture: "Indulgent FANCY! from the fruitful banks of AVON, / Whence thy rosy fingers cull, fresh flowers and dews / To sprinkle on the turf where Shakespeare lies."; inscribed on glass of frame: "Wrought by Lydia Eames at Mrs. Saunders & Miss Beach's Academy."
   Private collection
   DAPC #82.975
   Figure 7.

Lydia Eames was the daughter of Samuel and Lydia Dodge Eames of Boston. Betty Ring has suggested that memorials to Shakespeare are uncommon in American needlework and that the source of inspiration for this picture was Miss Beach, one of the teachers at the Dorchester Academy who had been educated in England. An almost identical memorial to Shakespeare, which bears the same inscription, was made in 1803 by Betsy Howe. Like Lydia Eames, Miss Howe was a student at Mrs. Saunders' and Miss Beach's Academy. (See #10, Fig. 8) In each picture a mourning figure holding a basket of flowers in her left hand stands to the left of the tomb in the central foreground. A swan is depicted in a stream to the left of the tomb.

10. Betsy Howe
    Dorchester, Massachusetts, 1803
    Mrs. Saunders' and Miss Beach's Academy
    Silk and watercolor on silk
    18 x 12
    Obelisk and urn tomb with one figure
    Inscribed beneath picture: "Indulgent FANCY! from the fruitful banks of AVON, / Whence thy rosy fingers cull, fresh flowers and dews / To sprinkle on the turf where Shakespeare lies."; inscribed on glass of frame: "Wrought by Betsy Howe at Mrs. Saunders and Miss Beach's Academy Dorchester 1803."
    Private collection
    Antiques (August 1976): 303, Plate III.
    Figure 8.

(See note for #9 above.)
11. Isabella Caldwell Dana (1789-1805) and Sarah Sumner Dana (1791-1867)

Dorchester, Massachusetts, c. 1805
Mrs. Saunders' and Miss Beach's Academy
Silk and watercolor on silk
20 1/2 x 13 1/4
Obelisk and plinth tomb with two figures
Embroidered on obelisk: "VIRTUE a/alone has ma/jesty in/Death, and/greater still,/the more the/tyrant frowns"; on the plinth: "IN MEMORY/of/Rev'd/JOSIAH DANA obt Ocfr. 1st 1801/AE 49 yrs/of Mrs. Sarah Dana who dies Novr 14th/1805 AE 51 yrs and of/Miss I.C. Dana who died Sepr. 21st/1805 AE 16 yrs"; embroidered beneath the picture: "This device was begun by Isabella Caldwell Dana who died ere it was finished/Early bright transient, chaste as morning dew,/She sparkled, was exhal'd and went to Heav'n."; inscribed on glass of frame: "FINISHED BY SARAH DANA"

Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Center (AARFAC acc. #79.604.1);
DAPC #82.913
Antiques (February 1982): 477, Plate III.
Figure 6.

Isabella and Sarah Dana were the daughters of Sarah Sumner Caldwell and Josiah Dana, a Congregationalist minister in Barre, Massachusetts. According to Betty Ring, there are two other known examples which are similar to this memorial and can be attributed to the Dorchester Academy. One of the memorials is dedicated to Sarah and Timothy Newell (d. 1795 and 1801) and was probably made by Mary Newell, circa 1804. It is in the collection of the Connecticut Historical Society. The other memorial, which is in a private collection, was possibly made by Mary Cooper Richards (1787-1813) and is dedicated to Sarah Tileston Richards (d. 1803). In the Dana memorial two mourning figures are depicted, one standing on top of the tomb and the other to the right of it. A twisted tree with leaves in various shades of green is placed to the left of the tomb. A stream, weeping willow tree, and rolling hills can be seen in the background. The upper portion of the picture is painted light blue to simulate the sky.
12. Polly Marston  
Barnstable, Massachusetts, c. 1806  
Silk and watercolor on silk  
12 x 15, oval  
Ur and plinth tomb with one figure  
Inscribed on plinth: "Inscribed to the mem/ory of Phebe  
Marston/daughter of Mr. Wins/-low & Mrs. Elisabeth/Marston, who  
died Dec./22, 1804. AE 5 yrs 5/mo. & 24 days."; inscribed on  
glass of frame: "WROUGHT BY POLLY MARSTON."  
Private collection  
DAPC #79.876

Polly Marston was probably the sister of Phebe Marston, to whom  
the picture is dedicated, and the daughter of Winslow and  
Elisabeth Marston of Barnstable, Massachusetts. A paper label  
attached to the back of the frame reads: "Cermenati & Mofrino/  
CARVERS, GILDERS, PICTURE FRAME and/Looking Glass Manufacturers/  
No. 2 STATE STREET/Southside of the old State House/Boston" and  
"Ladies needlework fram'd and Glaz'd in the neatest manner."  
According to information found in Boston city directories, the  
firm was located at No. 2 State Street only during 1806. A  
mourning figure is shown standing to the right of the tomb which  
is placed in the center of this oval composition. A large tree  
is located on the left and a church and other buildings are  
depicted on the right.

13. Needleworker unknown  
United States, c. 1806  
Silk and watercolor on silk  
15 1/2 x 18 1/2, oval  
Ur and plinth tomb with two figures  
Inscribed on plinth: "Sacred/to the Memory/of/Nancy Whipple  
... 1806."  
Private collection  
Sotheby's, New York, Fine American Furniture, Folk Art, Silver,  
and Pewter (27-28 June 1985), lot 308.

Nothing is known about either the needleworker or the woman to  
whom this picture is dedicated. Sotheby's noted in its  
catalogue that another mourning picture similar to this example  
was "done in memory of Mehetable Trask of Beverly,  
Massachusetts, dated 1801." That memorial was sold as lot #372  
in Sotheby's Dorothea Scott Adamson Collection of Needleworks,  
New York, 1 February 1985. In this oval composition a central  
tomb is flanked by two mourning figures, a weeping willow tree  
on the right side and another tree on the left.
14. Needleworker unknown  
Massachusetts, c. 1807  
Silk and watercolor on silk  
19 x 17 3/8  
Sarcophagus tomb with one figure  
Embroidered on the sarcophagus: "Sacred to the memory of/Mr. William Putnam, who de-/parted this life June, 1807, aged 76,/ And to his Consort,/Mrs. Elizabeth Putnam, who/died October, 1804."

Private collection  
DAPC #78.575

The composition of this memorial is similar to #6, 7, and 15 in this study. Each example was probably based on the same unidentified print source. Although nothing is known about the needleworker, it is quite possible that she was related to Mr. and Mrs. William Putnam, the couple to whom the picture is dedicated. A mourning figure, holding a garland of flowers, is shown leaning against the tomb in the center of this composition. Two large weeping willow trees dominate the background and upper half of the picture.

15. Needleworker unknown  
United States, early 19th century  
Silk and watercolor on silk  
20 3/4 x 15 3/4  
Sarcophagus tomb with one figure  
Inscribed on the sarcophagus: "J.G. . . . /1799/AE . . ." and "In ME . . . /Mrs. JA . . ."

Private collection  

This memorial worked by an unknown schoolgirl is based on the same print source as #6, 7, and 14. The mourning figure is placed in such a way that her body covers up most of the inscription on the sarcophagus, so it is impossible to determine to whom the memorial is dedicated. A mourning figure holding a garland of flowers is depicted leaning against the tomb which is placed beneath a large weeping willow tree in the center of the picture. Several evergreen trees are shown in the background.
16. Lucinda Storrs (1792-1814)
United States, probably New Hampshire or Massachusetts, c. 1808
Silk and watercolor on silk
19 1/2 x 19
Obelisk, urn, and plinth tomb with three figures
Inscribed on urn: "There/is rest in/Heaven"; on plinth: "In memory of LUTHER STORRS, A.B./Son of Col Constant & Lucinda Storrs-born at Lebanon, N.H. Jan 18, 1784 died at/East-Hampton, L.I. July 19, 1804-AEt. 20years."
AARFAC (acc. #79.604.4)
Antiques (February 1982): 476, Plate I.
Figure 3.

Lucinda Storrs embroidered this picture in memory of her older brother Luther. Their mother, Lucinda Howe Storrs, expressed her thoughts about the early deaths of her two children in her diary. (See Lucinda Howe Storrs Diary, 1812-1838, Connecticut Historical Society.) Miss Storrs used a memorial print to George Washington published by Pember and Luzarder of Philadelphia in 1800 as the design source for her composition. Betty Ring has pointed out that a similar mourning picture was made in 1809 by Sophia Tupper Willis (1791-1825) of Rochester, Massachusetts. It is illustrated in Sotheby Parke Bernet, Fine Americana and Related Decorative Arts, New York, 30 April 1981, lot 692. The tomb in Lucinda Storrs’ memorial is flanked by two mourning figures, the one on the right is holding a book and the one on the left, a handkerchief. A large tree with shaded leaves dominates the left foreground. An angel blowing a trumpet is painted in the upper right corner of the sky.

17. Needleworker unknown
Massachusetts, c. 1810
Silk and watercolor on silk, printed paper
Dimensions not available
Urn and plinth tomb with one figure
Printed on a placard mounted on the plinth: "Sacred/to the Memory of/Mr. ABRAHAM HOLMAN/Obt. May 15th 1805/AE . . . years/Mrs. ABIGAIL HOLMAN/Obt. March 27th 1810/ AE . . . years/Mr. ABRAHAM HOLMAN, JNR./Obt. May 18th 18 . . . /AE 12 years."
Private collection
DAPC #79.877

A mourning figure holding a book is shown leaning against the tomb in the center of the composition. Two weeping willow trees and a stream are placed to the right of the tomb and a church is depicted on the horizon to the left. Although the identity of the needleworker who made this picture remains unknown, it is plausible that she was related to Mr. and Mrs. Holman and their son Abraham Jr., the family to whom the memorial is dedicated.
18. M. Wightman  
Massachusetts, probably Boston, c. 1810  
Silk and ink on silk  
18 1/4 x 14 1/4  
Obelisk, urn, and plinth tomb with two figures  
Inscribed in ink on obelisk: "Sacred to the Memory of Gen. Hamilton who parted this life July 29, 1805." Figure on left holding letter inscribed: "Five years has not elapsed since we buried the Father of our Country/We now with grief attend/his eldest Son/Hamilton!/fare thee well". Obelisk and plinth tomb in background inscribed: "Sacred/to the Memory of/Gen. George Washington/who died/December 2nd, 1799."  
Private collection  
Illustrated in Anita Schorsch, Mourning Becomes America, no. 13/39.  

This mourning picture is unique because it is dedicated to both Hamilton and Washington. The memorial to Hamilton is given primary importance by being placed in the center foreground of the composition. The tomb inscribed for Washington is much smaller and is placed in the background. One of the two mourning figures is shown holding a fifteen-star flag which conveys the patriotic spirit of the memorial. Two angels depicted in the sky symbolize the triumphant death of two of our nation's most hallowed leaders.

19. Needleworker unknown  
Massachusetts, c. 1810  
Silk and watercolor on silk  
20 3/4 x 26 3/4  
Urn and plinth tomb with two figures  
Inscribed on plinth: "Sac. to the Memory of/CAPT. MAYO GERRISH/ Born Novr. 15th 1768. Died March 28th 1809/AE 41."  
Private collection  
Ruth Troiani Antiques, Farmington, Connecticut  
Figure 5.  

While the identity of the girl who embroidered this picture is unknown, we do know that Mayo Gerrish was the son of William and Mary Gerrish and a seacaptain in Newbury, Massachusetts. During the 1790s and early 1800s Captain Gerrish owned and captained several ships in the Newbury area. Stylistically this memorial relates to one made by another Massachusetts schoolgirl about six years earlier (#8). In both examples the central urn and plinth tomb is flanked by two girls, the one on the left holding a handkerchief and a book and the one on the right holding a bouquet of flowers. The distinctive rendering and shading of the trees and foliage on the ground is also quite similar in both memorials.
20. Mary Frost (1794-1835)

Cambridge, Massachusetts, c. 1812
Silk and watercolor on silk
20 1/2 x 18 1/2
Ur and plinth with one figure
Printed with printer's type on plinth: "SACRED/TO THE MEMORY/OF/JOHN FROST/WHO DIED OCT. 7, 1802 AET 18./MRS. SUSANNA FROST,/WHO DIED SEPT. 29, 1804, AET 44./MR. JOHN FROST,/DIED MAY 15, 1812, AET 52./In blooming youth, grim death we see,/Arrest the SON by Heaven's decree;/Still he a dread destroyer proves,/And soon the MOTHER hence removes,/Insatiate Archer! could not this suffice!/Behold! the Orphan's tear a FATHER dies!" Inscribed on glass of frame: "Mary Frost."
Private collection
DAPC #79.870

Mary Frost of Cambridge was about eighteen years old when she embroidered this picture in memory of her parents and brother. The verse printed on the plinth tells us that she was left an orphan following their deaths. In the center of the composition a mourning figure is depicted kneeling to the left of the tomb. A large weeping willow tree stands behind the tomb and another tree is placed at the far left. Rolling hills and a village are painted in the background.

21. Needleworker unknown

Possibly Massachusetts, after 1813
Silk and watercolor on silk
13 x 10 3/4, oval
Ur and plinth tomb with one figure
Inscribed on plinth: "To the MEMORY OF/MRS. Betsey Briggs/Obt. Sep 13, 1813/AE 37."
Private collection
DAPC #78.601

Nothing is known about either the needleworker who made this picture or about the woman to whom it is dedicated. The quality of the embroidery is not as fine as on other examples and suggests that the schoolgirl who made it was not as adept as some of her peers. This oval composition depicts a mourning figure standing to the right of the tomb underneath a weeping willow tree. Several other trees and bushes and a church are seen in the background.
22. Clarissa Page Fowler (b. 1802)
Danvers, Massachusetts, c. 1816
Silk and watercolor on silk
27 3/8 x 23 5/16
Urn and plinth tomb with two figures
Printed on plinth: "In Memory of/SAMUEL PAGE, ESQ./OB. 2nd
SEPT. 1814, AET. 62./Weep not for me; O, let each tear be dry;/
You soon will meet me in the worlds on high./Go, trim your
lamps, let hope each murmur drown./And win, like me, an
everlasting crown." Inscribed on glass of frame: "WROUGHT BY
CLARISSA P. FOWLER, AE 14, 1816."
Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities
DAPC #82.1101

At age fourteen Clarissa Page Fowler worked this elaborate
mourning picture in memory of her grandfather Samuel Page. The
two female mourners have almost identical features and clothing.
The figure on the left of the tomb is holding a handkerchief and
a book, while the other is holding a handkerchief and a small
bouquet of flowers. The foliage and trees, especially the oak
tree at the right of the picture, are finely executed and
represent the work of a skillful embroiderer. A small pond with
three ducks is placed in the left foreground of the composition.

23. Lovice Hill
Massachusetts, c. 1820
Silk and watercolor on silk
24 x 21
Urn and plinth tomb
Embroidered on plinth: "Consecrated to the remains/of/Mr.
DANIEL HILL/who departed this life May 28, 1814/in the 59th year
of his age/And/Mr. DANIEL HILL, Jun./who departed this life Oct.
17, 1814/in the 24th year of his age./May/angels guard/thy/sleeping dust./believe/and look with/triumph/on the tomb."
William Penn Memorial Museum, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum
Commission
Illustrated in Schorsch, Mourning, no. 33/119

Lovice Hill was probably the daughter and sister of the two men
to whom the memorial is dedicated. Miss Hill's memorial is the
only picture in this study which dates from the period 1800 to
1840 and does not depict any mourning figures. The tomb is
located in the center of the picture beneath a weeping willow
tree. Other trees and bushes surround the tomb.
24. Sarah Henshaw  
Massachusetts, c. 1862  
Black cotton sewing thread on punched paper  
16 x 19 1/2  
Four urn and plinth tombs, three plinth tombs, and one figure  
Each plinth bears one of the following inscriptions: "Clarissa dau'/of Tho' & Sara/h Henshaw di/ed May 16 182/2 Aged 19 yrs."; "Mrs. Nancy/Day dau'r of/Thomas &/Sarah Hens/haw died Feb/16 1830 Aged/38 yrs"; "Sarah wife of/Thomas Hen/shaw died Se/pt 30 1834 Ag/ed 67 yrs"; "Thomas Hens/haw died June/7 1848 Aged/87 yrs"; "One son of/Tho & Sar/ah Hensa/w died Dec/15 1798 Ag/ed 1 day"; "One dau' of/Tho' & Sar/ah Hens/haw died/Feb 2 179/6 Aged 2/dys"; "Fanny dau'/of Tho' &/Sarah Hen/shaw died/Sept 18 179/3 Aged 3/months"; Stitched at bottom of picture: "Family Tree" and "Wrought by Sarah Henshaw 1862."

Private collection  
DAPC #78.586

Sarah Henshaw's piece is unlike all of the other memorials in this study because its composition is more like a family register sampler than a pictorial embroidery and because it is not made of silk threads and watercolor on silk. It is included here to illustrate that mourning pictures were still being made over fifty years after their initial popularity. The composition consists of four columns of urn and plinth tombs above three plinth tombs. A profile silhouette of a female mourning figure is depicted on the far left.
NOTES TO THE INTRODUCTION  
[Notes to pages 2-6]  

1Quoted in Mirra Bank, Anonymous Was a Woman, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979), p. 44.  


NOTES TO CHAPTER I
[Notes to pages 7-9]


2Ibid.


[Notes to pages 10-14]


15 Cott, p. 115.

16 Ibid., pp. 116-125.


18 Ibid., pp. 4-6.

19 Philippe Aries, *Western Attitudes Toward Death: From the Middle Ages to the Present,* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974).


21 Aries, *Western Attitudes Toward Death,* p. 61.

22 Ibid., p. 81.


25 Ibid., p. 42.

26 Ibid., pp. 19-42.


32 Ibid., p. 35.

NOTES TO CHAPTER II
[Notes to pages 17-23]


3Undated typescript at the Dorchester Historical Society, Dorchester, Massachusetts. This document appears to be a transcription of former students' reminiscences written in the late nineteenth century.

4Columbian Centinel (Boston) 17 April 1802. Hereafter abbreviated as CC.

5CC 1 January 1803.


7Ibid., p. 44, Fig. 54.

8Ibid., p. 66, Fig. 96.


10CC 28 April 1802.

11CC 9 October 1802 and 12 October 1802.

12Giffen, p. 79.

13CC 12 February 1803.

14CC 2 April 1803.
[Notes to pages 23-28]

15 Mrs. Saunders and Miss Beach did not advertise their academy in the *Columbian Centinel* in 1810, 1811, 1816 or 1817.

16 According to Betty Ring, more documented silk embroidered needlework pictures survive from this school than from any other which existed during the Federal period. See her article "Mrs. Saunders' and Miss Beach's Academy at Dorchester," *Antiques* (August 1976): pp. 302-312.

17 *CC* 18 March 1818 and 15 March 1820.

18 Ring, "Mrs. Saunders' and Miss Beach's Academy at Dorchester," pp. 305-306.


20 *CC* 19 April 1817.

21 Lydia Augusta Allen and Hannah Maria Allen Papers, 1822-1844, Baker Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

22 *CC* 8 April 1812.

23 *CC* 19 April 1817.

24 Benjamin Goddard to Mehitable May Dawes, 21 August 1810, May-Goddard Collection, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

25 Abigail Prescott to Mehitable May Dawes, 7 October, 1810, May-Goddard Collection.

26 Benjamin Goddard to Mehitable May Dawes, 12 January 1811, May-Goddard Collection.


28 Caroline Prescott, "Female Education," Augusta, Maine, Female Academy, 9 October 1817, Frances Merritt Quick Papers, 1850-1864, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Caroline Prescott was not related to Abigail Prescott (see note #25 above).

29 Butler, pp. 270-291.


32 Ibid., p. 220.


34 Ipswich Female Seminary Records, Essex Institute, Salem, Massachusetts.

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid.

37 "Benefits of Female Education," Ipswich Female Seminary Records.

38 Butler, p. 297.


41 Ibid., pp. 152-154.

42 Ibid., p. 154.

43 Ibid., pp. 158-165.

44 Ibid., p. 174.

45 Cott, p. 195.

46 Ibid., pp. 19-62.


48 Cott, pp. 1, 204.
NOTES TO CHAPTER III
[Notes to Pages 35-42]

1Bathsheba Whitman to Mr. and Mrs. Nathaniel Cushing, 4 July 1804, Nathaniel Cushing Papers. Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston.

2Bathsheba Whitman to Mrs. Nathaniel Cushing, 31 October 1805, Nathaniel Cushing Papers. MHS.

3Ring, "Mrs. Saunders' and Miss Beach's Academy at Dorchester," p. 304.


6"The Death of Washington: Or, Columbia in Mourning for Her Son," (n.p., [1800]).


8Schorsch, Mourning Becomes America.


12Ibid., p. 65.

13Ibid.
[Notes to pages 42-48]


15 Schorsch, *Mourning Becomes America.*

16 Schorsch, "A Key to the Kingdom," p. 63.


18 Schorsch, "A Key to the Kingdom," p. 67.

19 Schorsch, *Mourning Becomes America* and "A Key to the Kingdom."


21 Krueger, *New England Samplers to 1840,* (Sturbridge, Massachusetts: Old Sturbridge Village, 1978), Fig. 78.

22 Elizabeth Terry, *Terry Family Memorial,* 1836, silk embroidery and watercolor on silk. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Center, Accession no. 62.604.1.


3 Ibid., p. 327.


5 Aries, Western Attitudes Toward Death, pp. 67-68.

6 Ibid.

7 Farrell, pp. 25-30.

8 "The Death of Washington: Or, Columbia Mourning for Her Son," (n.p. [1800]).

9 Stannard, The Puritan Way of Death, pp. 157-161. Some members of the upper class buried their dead in private family cemeteries located on their country estates. George Washington, for example, was buried at Mt. Vernon.


11 Ibid., p. 70.


13 Ibid., p. 823.

14 Ibid., p. 824.
[Notes to pages 54-61]

15 Leonard Woods, "The Mourning Husband: A Discourse At the Funeral of Mrs. Thankful Church," (Boston, 1806); James Gurney, "A Sermon Occasioned by the Death of Miss Lydia Perry," (New Bedford, 1815); Joseph Dana, "The Mourner's Relief . . . a Sermon at Ipswich with Special View to the Consolation of the Mourning Relatives and Friends of the Rev. Joseph McKean," (1816).


18 Ibid.

19 Ibid., pp. 289-290.


21 CC, 17 November 1802.

22 Mary Wild Pierce to Reverend John and Lucy Pierce, Northampton, 21 May 1836. Poor Family Collectionn, box 6, folder 84, Schleslinger Library, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

23 Krueger, A Gallery of American Samplers, p. 45, Fig. 52.


25 Ibid.

26 Deetz, pp. 69-72.

27 Aries, Western Attitudes Toward Death, p. 72.

28 Ibid., p. 73.


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  Page Family Notebooks, 1823-1864

Baker Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts:
  Lydia Augusta Allen and Hannah Maria Allen Papers, 1822-1844
  Forbes Family Papers, 1753-1920
  Heard Family Papers, 1754-1898

Boston Public Library, Boston, Massachusetts:
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