Primary Maker: Henrietta Schnip
Title: Sampler
Date: ca. 1835
Medium: Linen, silk
Dimensions: Overall: 22 1/4 x 20 5/8 in. ( 56.5 x 52.4 cm )
Credit Line: Purchased from Elie Nadelman
Object Number: 1937.343

Object Name: Sampler
Classification: TEXTILES

Curatorial Remarks:
This object was once part of the folk art collection of Elie Nadelman (1882-1946), the avant-garde sculptor. From 1924 to 1934, Nadelman's collection was displayed in his Museum of Folk Arts, located in the Riverdale section of the Bronx. The Historical Society purchased Nadelman's entire collection in 1937. Samplers have a long history, developing over time from personal reference tools into an important component of women’s formal education. By the seventeenth century, the vocabulary of sampler motifs had become international, due in part to the popularity of pattern books that circulated throughout Europe and made their way to America. Viola Nadelman assembled an international sampling of schoolgirl needlework for the Museum of Folk and Peasant Arts including examples made in the United States, France, Germany, England, and Spain. Henrietta Schnip, the daughter of German immigrants living in New York City, worked this mourning picture at a girl’s school when she was around seven years old. The picture, cross-stitched on a coarse linen ground, memorializes Susan Schnip, possibly a half-sister, who dies in
1828 at age sixteen. Henrietta's composition follows the conventions of early nineteenth-century mourning pictures, which became popular in schoolgirl art following the death of George Washington in 1799. Her picture incorporates standard iconography for the genre: a tombstone topped by a classical urn, symbolic of death, and a weeping willow, suggesting both sorrow and regeneration. Henrietta also stitched eight lines of verse, probably dictated by her teacher, expressing sorrow over Susan's death and hope for her everlasting life. These personal expressions of grief were distinctly American, though needlework mourning pictures like Henrietta's were heavily indebted to classical symbols and European precedents memorializing heroic figures.

Physical Description:
Linen mourning sampler with the deceased's biographical information across the top above lines of verse, and inscription across the center, memorial and willow trees in bottom half, bordered on all sides with geometric floral motif; cross and sating stitches.

Signed: Embroidered across center in brown floss: "Wrought by Miss Henrietta Schnip"
Markings: Embroidered at top center, brown floss: "In memory of Susan Schnip who died march (sic) / The 20 1828 aged 16 years 6 months and 14 days."
Related Objects: