

Saba Cushman & her sampler, 1832



Saba Cushman's sampler is the only known Plymouth sampler that shows genealogical pride. It harkens directly back to the 200th anniversary celebrations of the landing of the Pilgrims held in 1820.



The verse reads :

"From native shores by tempest driven
They sought a purer sky
And found beneath a wilder heaven
the home of liberty
Through toil and travail sore
Their native land forgo
And sought a home and freedom here
Two hundred years ago"

Saba was the daughter of Levi Cushman, a physician of Needham, Massachusetts, and Elizabeth Gray of North Carolina. Saba's father died in North Carolina in 1817 at age 32. It is unlikely that Saba was over 18 when she embroidered this sampler, so she would have been very, very young when her father died. Saba seems to have been raised in Massachusetts. Her father had 2 sisters, Sally who married Thomas Sturtevant of Middleboro and Nancy who married Josiah Robbins of Plymouth. Saba herself married William Ritchie, a clerk in the railroad office of Springfield, Massachusetts. She was still living in 1855.

Saba, who was a descendant of Robert Cushman, Myles Standish and William Bradford, lists her genealogy in three columns, divided by narrow geometric bands. In the lower corners are small urns with stylized flowers and leaves. The sampler, which is worked on 30/32 count linen and measures approximately 17" wide x 24" high, is in poor condition, having been exposed at some time to moisture. (see back below)

