



**A Stitch In Time: Boston Needlework
Leads Choice Sale**

by Rick Russack

BOSTON, MASS. — Fewer than six examples of Seventeenth Century American needlework are known. One, auctioned by Skinner on March 1, was destined to cause excitement. The Massachusetts embroidery descended in the maker's family over the past three centuries before selling to Connecticut dealer David Schorsch for \$903,000, a figure that boosted Skinner's bottom line to \$2,066,526. Sarah Phillips stitched the 17¼-by-24¼-inch picture on a blue-green linen ground around 1670. The picture's central motif is a tree of life. Other elements include a prodigal son, a brick building facade with a mica window, a cloud, a rainbow, a winsome flock of sheep, trees, flowers, insects and a beaver. Bidding on the needlework opened at \$400,000. Schorsch, who was underbid by the phone, told *Antiques and The Arts Weekly* that, while he is not a needlework dealer, "This sampler's folk art sensibilities appealed to me. It made me smile. To me, most early samplers have an English feeling but I see in this one the flowering of something uniquely American." Schorsch said the sampler would be "reconserved to contemporary standards and a period frame

The BLOODY MASSACRE perpetrated in King-Street BOSTON on March 5th 1770 by a party of the 29th REG^t



Unhappy Boston! see thy Sons deplore,
 Thy hollow Walks belmur'd with guileful Gore
 While Faithful P—n and his savage Bands
 With murderous Rancour stretch their bloody Hands
 Like fierc Barbarians grinning o'er their Prey
 Approve the Carnage and enjoy the Day.

If falling drops from Rage from Anguish Writing,
 If speechless Sorrows lab'ring for a Tongue,
 Or if a weeping World can ought appeal
 The plaintive Ghosts of Victims itch as here:
 The Patriot's copious Tears for each are shed,
 A glorious Tribute which embalms the Dead.

But, know Extr'annous to that awful Goal,
 Where Justice strips the Murderer of his Soul,
 Should venal C—ts be the founder of the Land,
 Snatch the reluctant Altar from her hand,
 Keen Execrations on this Plate inscrib'd,
 Shall reach a JUDGE who never came to bribe.

The unhappy Sufferers were Miss^s SAs^s GRAY SAs^s MAVERICK, JAM^s CALDWELL, CRISPUS ATTUCKS & PAT^s CARE
 Killed, Six wounded two of them (CHRIST^s MONK & JOHN CLARK); *Worthall*

will be found for it.” Setting the tone for the sale, Paul Revere’s engraving “The Boston Massacre” made \$135,000. Folk art highlights included two Joseph Davis watercolors. One was a portrait of a young family, in the traditional Davis format with the husband and wife seated at a decorated table. It had a decorated floor cloth, a cat, flowers on the

“The Bloody Massacre perpetrated in King Street, BOSTON, on March 5th 1770, by Party of the 29th REGT.,” ex-collection of Maine governor John Fremont Hill, \$135,000. Engraved by Paul Revere, the original print is only about 11 by 9 inches and shows the clock hands set at 10:20. A later version of the widely reproduced engraving shows the more accurate time of 8:00.

This unsigned Joseph Davis watercolor portrait, \$44,280 (\$8/12,000) of a young family was brought in to one of Skinner's First Tuesday events in Marlborough, Mass. The owner consigned it after learning its value.



table and a banjo-style clock in the wall. The painting surpassed its high estimate to bring \$44,280. Skinner executive vice president Stephen Fletcher told *Antiques and The Arts Weekly* that the watercolor was brought in to one of Skinner's First Tuesday appraisal days in Marlborough, Mass.

For information, www.skinner.com or 617-350-5400.



Painted poplar box attributed to the Compasswork Decorator, Lancaster County, Penn., circa 1800–1840, with original punched tin hasp and lock plate, \$23,370.