



2008  
Schwenkfelder  
Days of Remembrance

needlework from  
the collection of  
Schwenkfelder Library  
&  
Heritage Center

**Just** one year after Martin Luther posted his Ninety-Five Theses on the cathedral door at Wittenberg in Saxony, a Silesian nobleman, Caspar Schwenckfeld von Ossig (1489-1561), experienced what he called a “visitation of God.”

**Schwenckfeld** had begun re-examining his faith and studying the Scriptures in response to the spirit of the Reformation initiated by Luther’s work. Schwenckfeld shared his thoughts and beliefs through writing and often found himself in conflict with both Protestants and Catholics of his day. He taught that genuine spiritual renewal takes place inside an individual, and cannot truly be measured



or assessed by outward ritual or sacraments. These radical ideas led to a split with Luther by 1526, and to Schwenckfeld’s voluntary exile from Silesia in 1529. While Schwenckfeld never sought followers, his beliefs struck a common chord, and a religious fellowship formed based on his work. This group was known as the Schwenckfelders. Lutheranism,

Calvinism, and Catholicism became legally accepted faiths in Europe in 1648, but the Schwenckfelders, excluded from the “recognized” faiths, had to meet in secretive groups. This band of believers, rather small in number, was persecuted for its diversity. Finally, a devoted group of Schwenckfelders, tired of their restricted lives, decided to seek refuge in a place where they could worship openly according to their beliefs, clearly different from those of “mainstream” Europe at the time. They left their homes, land, and possessions, and, with little else than faith, journeyed to spiritual freedom.



Elizabeth Bechtel 1833  
detail

One of the most interesting pairs of samplers in the collection are Elizabeth Bechtel's and Regina Schultz's, dating from 1833 and 1838 respectively. Elizabeth Bechtel was not Schwenkfelder, and hailed from Oley, Berks County, which is approximately 30 minutes' drive from the northwestern reaches of Schwenkfelder settlement in Berks and Montgomery Counties. Elizabeth made her sampler under the tutelage of Sarah Boone in her Oley school.

A few years later she married a young Schwenkfelder man named George Krauss, and must have brought her lovely sampler with her as it was copied (somewhat less skillfully) by her soon-to-be sister-in-law, Regina Schultz. These band samplers are markedly out of step with their Schwenkfelder cousins, as they show the influence of Miss Boone's Quaker/English heritage, with just a dash of Elizabeth's and Regina's Pennsylvania German roots.

# 2008 April

April 2008						
Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

Monday

7

Tuesday

8

Wednesday

9

Thursday

10

Friday

11

Saturday

12

Sunday

13