



ELEANOR EILEEN SCHWALL

CHARTER MEMBER

Eileen Schwall was a Charter Member of Thimble Collectors International and attended the first official TCI convention in 1978. She traveled to almost every convention thereafter until her health declined in the late 1990's. Conventions were a time to connect with old friends and to make new ones.

Eileen was born in Iowa and moved to Ohio as a child where she grew up and was married. The family later moved to Connecticut. After the death of her husband, she spent half the year in Connecticut and the other half in Florida. She was an avid needle worker and taught needlepoint for many years. She was a member of The Embroiderers' Guild of America and of The American Needlepoint Guild. Eileen was an only child and learned her embroidery skills from her grandmother. They embroidered table cloths, pillow cases and other linens, many of which remain in the family. However, she hated to sew or mend.

Her interests were quite varied. She not only collected needlework tools and thimbles but also American Brilliant Cut glass. She had a large collection of antique kitchen implements and also antique perfume bottles. Her home was filled with beautiful antique furniture, lamps and framed photographs of her ancestors. Eileen was an accomplished tournament bridge player and had accumulated many masterpoints.

Sewing clamps, fitted needlework boxes, spool holders, chatelaines, scissors, tape measures, darners and unusual thimble cases were items that could be found in her needlework tool collection. Bone, ivory and vegetable ivory were sought after. She stored many of her needlework collectibles in antique thread cases – those used in haberdashery stores in the early 1900's.

She preferred American thimbles, especially those of gold, as well as all child-sized thimbles. Scenic or landscape thimbles as well as panel thimbles made their way into her collection along with those made by obscure jobbers or wholesalers. She also took delight in finding a plastic or aluminum advertising thimble. This meant she had to attempt to find out if the store was still in business and what exactly they sold.

Her greatest regret was not purchasing an antique Meissen thimble from a reputable dealer in NYC. This gorgeous and rare porcelain thimble was offered to her and a friend for around \$300. In the early 1970's this was a great deal of money for a thimble!

Many an afternoon or weekend was spent scouring antiques fairs and shops. Periodically she would encourage her husband to travel with her, and they would inevitably come home with a new antique pocket watch or clock for his collection and a thimble, needlework tool or cut glass bowl for hers.

Eileen also collected antique hand mirrors and she displayed these on a wall in the powder room of her home. The display elicited many a favorable comment from her guests. She also had a most impressive collection of antique 'jeweled' butterflies some of which are illustrated below.

Eileen passed away in 2009.



Costume jewels



14K w/turquoise & blue topaz



14K w/seed pearls & CZ



Costume jewels



Marcasite, amethyst & citrine



Seed Pearls, Amethyst & Turquoise

Eileen was very fond of thimble holders or cases.



Clam shell boat thimble holder



Treen thimble holder



Amber glass slipper w/beads



Gilded w/ 'stones'



Celluloid



Black Forest bear



Tartan Ware

Her tape measure collection was very diverse and included many unusual tapes. The favorites were the figural ones. These are just a few from her collection.



House, chimney is pull



Sailing ship



Buccaneer



Flower basket



Or's Island, Maine



Exotic birds

And these are a few of her favorite thimbles from her collection.



KMD, Queen Teie



Waite Thresher, 14K scenic



Vegetable ivory



KMD, dog



Royal Worcester



Gold & tortoise shell



Simons, enamel band



Simons 14K - Repoussé border



**Webster Co.
Art Nouveau Swimmer**



Simons, 14K



**Paye & Baker Mfg.
New York Subway**



**Norwegian, enamel
w/moonstone top**



KMD, 2 color gold band



**Waite Thresher,
Birds & foliage**



**American whistle thimbles
Boontown Feed & Supply**



Muhr, Embroidery



English, Bog Oak



Charles Iles, The Cupid



Germany, enamel



KMD, spread-wing eagle