

This Month in Moravian History

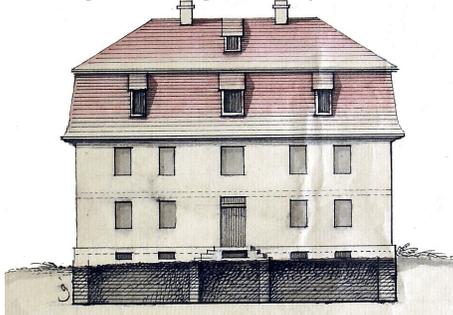
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The Naming of Lititz

“While traveling through Warwick Township in December of 1742 the late Count Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf held a gathering at the home of our neighbor, Jacob Huber. Days later at the Court-House in Lancaster he gave a public sermon, which various people from our area attended, who asked whether he’d like to send them a preacher that preached like he did, and this he promised. Soon after the preachers Jacob Lischy, Heinrich Rauch, Bruce and others from the Brethren were alternately sent here, through which the first awakening in this region took place.”



So begins the “Historical Account of the Brethren in Lititz” written by Johann Andreas Hübner in 1790 on the occasion of the Moravian church’s August 13th festival. This month we celebrate the naming of the Lititz settlement, which occurred 250 years ago in June of 1756, nearly fourteen years after the Moravians began their work in Warwick Township, Pennsylvania.

The naming of the Lititz settlement marks its transformation from a country congregation in Warwick Township to a planned Moravian settlement, similar to those in Europe. Zinzendorf named Lititz after a small village near the Castle of Lititz on the Silesian-Bohemian border where the original Bohemian Brethren found refuge three centuries earlier in 1456, and where the *Unitas Fratrum* was established a year later.

From the Bethlehem and Warwick diaries of 1756 we learn that Zinzendorf sent a letter giving Lititz its name

to August Spangenberg in Bethlehem, the leader of Moravian work in America at the time. The letter, however, arrived in Bethlehem on June 10th after Spangenberg had already departed for a conference to discuss the proposed settlement in Warwick. Bad timing! The letter was rushed to Spangenberg by Br. Waidel, reaching its final destination the evening of June 12th. On June 14th it was announced at the conference that word had arrived from Zinzendorf and his staff that the new settlement “was to be called **Lititz**.” During a lovefeast on June 16th Spangenberg announced the same news to the Warwick congregation.

Like infants which are accepted into the Church through baptism, so Lititz confirmed its place in the world-wide Moravian community by receiving its name. The Moravian Archives wishes to congratulate the Lititz congregation on the anniversary of this special occasion - the christening of the “first awakening” in Warwick Township.

Image: Elevation for a Sisters’ house in Lititz, by Andreas Höger. Sources: “Historische Nachricht vom Anfang und Fortgang der Brüder Gemeine in und um Lititz in Warwick Township, Lancaster County in Pensilvanien zum Gemin-Fest am 13. August 1790” by Johann Andreas Hübner in box, “Historical Treatises and Feasts.” Moravian Archives, Bethlehem PA; *History of the Lititz Moravian Congregation, 1749-1999*; and *Bethlehem Diary, 1756, Vol. XVI (BethCong 16)* and *Warwick Diary, 1753-57 (LitCong 3)* in the Moravian Archives, Bethlehem PA.

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