

Report to the 2006 Synod of the
Moravian Church - Northern Province
from

the Moravian Archives

ISSUE IN THIS REPORT REQUIRING ACTION

Request for increased funding for the Moravian
Archives

The Moravian Archives in Bethlehem is the official repository for archival records for the Northern Province. It is our task and our privilege to collect, preserve and to make available the inspiring history of our Church. We do our work, knowing that our Lord Jesus Christ is the Head of our Church and that in our history we can see Him guiding and leading us. Like the early Moravians we feel that we do not record ordinary history but that we preserve testimonies of experiences our fathers and mothers made with Him. We want to pass this history on to later generations.

In 2002 the search for a successor for Br. Vernon Nelson could be completed. Members of the Archives' Board of Directors traveled to Herrnhut, Germany, and approached Br. Paul Peucker, at that time archivist at the Unity Archives. Br. Peucker accepted the position and agreed to begin his work at the Bethlehem Archives on March 1, 2004. Br. Nelson was willing to serve until his successor arrived.

Br. Nelson retired on February 29, 2004, after serving the Moravian Church for more than 45 years. Most of this time Br. Nelson worked at the Moravian Archives. Under his term the 1977 archives' facility on West Locust Street was planned and built. The fireproof and climate controlled vaults provide secure protection to the records of the Province and the individual Churches.

Another long-term staff member who retired in this period was Dr. Lothar Madeheim. Br. Madeheim worked at the Archives from 1963 until the end of 2003. During these years he arranged many of the documents and provided English translations of inaccessible German texts. A new assistant archivist was found in Sr. Lanie Graf, who started July 1, 2005. The funding for this position became available through increased contributions from the Bethlehem Area Moravians.

The third person on staff (part-time) is Sr. June Lacke, administrative assistant since 2001.

The Moravian Archives serves Northern Province churches by preserving their records in a central repository. These records encompass a variety of material including (but not limited to)

church registers, catalogues, diaries, letters, photographs and financial records. In the past this information remained largely uncataloged and inaccessible to researchers and our church community. The current Archives staff is dedicated to rectifying this situation and reassuring churches their material will be safe, organized and accessible. Our first priority is to serve them and preserve the work of the Lord in our Province for years to come.

In the past two years much progress has been made in different areas. The computer and office systems of the Archives were completely updated. There is professional archival and library software in place and the staff has made it their priority to catalog the Archives' holdings. Some results can already be found on the Archives' website. There is a large number of volunteers willing to help. One of the volunteers is the retired librarian of the Special Collections of Lehigh University, who is setting up an online catalog of our book holdings.

The Archives has continued in providing programs and lectures. The annual German Script Course is still the only one of its kind in the US. The number of researchers has increased during the last few years:

<i>year</i>	<i>no. of researchers</i>	<i>no. of visits¹</i>
2002	78	120
2003 - 03/2004	60	79
04-12/2004	66	141
2005	134	345

The Archives publishes a newsletter under the title *Voices From the Vault* twice a year with information on new developments at the Archives. Every month the Archives sends out an electronic newsletter, *This Month in Moravian History*, to all the ministers and churches in the Northern Province. This e-newsletter commemorates an event from Moravian History. (past issues are available on our website). There are plans for the publication of a semiannual academic journal.

Major improvements were made to the Archives' building. New compact shelving was installed in one of the two vaults in the Fall of 2004. This was made possible by a generous donation of a former member of the Board of Directors. Compact shelving doubles the storage capacity of the vault as compared to ordinary (static) shelving. In the Summer of 2005 the HVAC systems in the vaults and the public spaces of the Archives facility were replaced. The funds for this project came from a private donation and from the United Brethren of Staten Island. Climate control is

¹In our statistics we differentiate between the number of researchers that come to the Archives and the number of visits they make during a year.

an absolute requirement for the professional conservation of documents, books and paintings.

The last two projects, the vault renovation and the installation of a new HVAC system, are the beginning of a long term plan. It is our goal to make the Archives into the resource center for Moravian History in North America. In order to accomplish that we need a facility that can provide researchers with a welcoming environment, where we can give classes and lectures and where we can store our collections under optimal conditions. We will continue to add to our holdings. Much priority will be given to filling gaps in our book collection. All cataloging that we do will be made available online, thus creating easier access to our collections. In addition to preserving records we will provide services to our local churches in the form of online documentation and by offering lectures and workshops. The Archives also plays a public role by promoting Moravian studies within the scholarly world.

In order to maximize the potential of the Archives and to fulfill our mission as the resource center for Moravian history in North America we need to improve our financial basis. Other archives serving the world-wide Moravian church remain solely church-supported. In comparison the Northern Province Archives currently receives 17% of its funding from the Province; the remainder of its budget is supported through its Friends, Bethlehem Area Moravians and the fund-raising efforts of its Board. In the past the Archives' Board of Directors has built a sound endowment for the Archives. Unfortunately, the contributions from the Church lag behind our needs to support staff, the property and preservation efforts. Presently, not even the salary of the archivist is covered by the Church's annual financial contributions. It is our wish that the Northern Province increase its funding of our institution, keeping in mind that we exist solely to preserve the records of the Moravian Church and its related institutions for future generations.

respectfully submitted,

Paul Peucker
Archivist

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For more information about the Archives, visit our information stand during Synod. Please feel free to visit the Archives for a tour of the gallery and the vaults.