

MORAVIAN ARCHIVES

Inventory
of the
Georg Neisser Papers
(1715-1784)
1735-1784

PP NG

Paul Peucker
2011

Georg Neisser Papers, 1735-1784. 6 boxes

PP NG

Biography:

Georg Neisser (1715-1784) was born on April 11, 1715, in Söhle (Czech: Zilina; Moravian church records spell "Sehlen") near Novy Jicin in Moravia. Together with his parents, Georg and Susanna Neisser, he emigrated to Herrnhut in Saxony in 1723. In 1735 he was part of a group of Moravians that settled in Savannah, Georgia. He stayed in America for most of his life. In 1740 he moved north to Pennsylvania where he was involved with the construction of the Whitefield House in Nazareth and the first houses of Bethlehem; he was a secretary to Count Zinzendorf when he visited Pennsylvania in 1742; and when a Moravian school was begun in Germantown in 1742 he became one of the schoolteachers. He soon moved to Bethlehem again with the school and Neisser became the first person to keep the diary of the Moravian congregation in Bethlehem.

In 1743 he traveled to Europe with Zinzendorf's return group to Europe. He visited England and some of the German congregations (Marienborn). He returned to Bethlehem in October 1744. A few months later he married Catherina Theodora Medler (1722-1807). Her parents immigrated from Württemberg to America when she was six years old.

In 1748 Neisser was ordained a deacon of the Moravian Church and in 1755 he became a presbyter. With his wife he served the church in many places: Heidelberg, Pa., in West Jersey, New York City, Maryland, in Nazareth, Lancaster, Lebanon, York and Warwick (all in Pennsylvania), and Philadelphia. In some of these places he served more than once: York, New York and Philadelphia.

Throughout his life he kept the memory of his roots in the Czech lands alive. Neisser started to compile his historical notes in the early 1750s. He began with notes on the hymnody of the Ancient Bohemian Brethren in 1753. The bulk of his notes, however, were collected later in his life when he was pastor of the Moravian church in New York in the 1770s.

Neisser died in Philadelphia on November 1, 1784.

Archival history/ history of record group:

Neisser's notebooks were purchased by the PHC "für unser Archiv und Bibliothek" from his widow a month after his death (PHC minutes, Dec. 27, 1784). Most of the volumes were integrated into the Congregational Library, the remaining materials into the archives. It is likely that Lothar Madeheim, assistant archivist, combined materials related to Georg Neisser into a Georg Neisser collection. He arranged the materials and listed them. In 2009/2010 the materials were re-organized and a new finding aid was compiled by Paul Peucker. Some materials in the collection that had a different provenance were moved to other record groups.

Some of the numbered tune books are missing, but were already missing when LM organized the collection.

Scope and content:

The collection contains notebooks compiled by Neisser on Moravian hymnology and music, history, and geneology, with a strong interest for the Ancient Unity and its connection to the Moravian Church of the 18th century. The collection also contains a draft of the Bethlehem and a few personal items. The notes contain information on the early immigration to Herrnhut, on the music of the Unitas Fratrum and on the history of the Unitas Fratrum. Some of the information, especially the immigration lists, can only be found in the Herrnhut archives. The historical notes are mainly extracts from other printed sources.

Accruals, Appraisal:

No accruals are expected. No appraisal took place.

System of arrangement:

The notebooks are arranged according to the following categories: Moravian history (America), Moravian history (general), history of the "Hidden Seed", hymnology and music, and personal items.

Conditions governing access: unrestricted. *Language:* German and German script.

Physical characteristics: some items too fragile for use.

Reference:

Albert H. Frank, "George Neisser, an Early Moravian Historian," *TMHS* 23/2 (1979): 1-11.

Table of contents

1. Moravian History (America)	4
2. Moravian History (general)	4
3. History of the "Hidden Seed"	7
4. Hymnology and Music	8
5. Personal Items	10

1. Moravian History (America)

- n.d.
- 3 **"Kurzgefaßter Aufsatz der Mährischen und Böhmischen Brüder anfänglicher Ausbreitung in den Nord-Americanischen Colonien und Missionen", History of the beginnings of the work of the Brethren in the American colonies, by [Georg Neisser], 1732-1742.**
CANNOT BE USED, TOO FRAGILE (use reproduction instead). Continued in the Bethlehem Diary, PP NG 4.
1 notebook
extremely fragile, some parts disintegrated in shreds.
German
- n.d.
- 5 **Work sheet with notes on the first Moravian settlement of Nazareth, possibly used by Neisser for his History of the Beginnings of the Work of the Brethren.**
1 item
See PP NG 3.
very fragile, ink corrosion, needs to be restored
German
- 1741 - 1742
- 1 **"Angemerkte Vorkommenheiten bey den Brüdern, in den Forks of Delaware, um die Zeit des Anbaues von Bethlehem, in dem Jahre 1741; ingleichen bey des seligen Jüngers Ludwigs Aufenthalt in Philadelphia und Germantown in dem Jahr 1742"**
Personal diary of Georg Neisser, also contains much information on the beginnings of the Moravians in Pennsylvania.
Contains information about activities of the first Moravians in Pennsylvania and about the construction of the Gemeinhaus.
The title page ("... of the late Disciple...") must have been added after Zinzendorf's death (1760).
1 notebook
fragile, cannot be used (use reproduction [PP NG 2] instead).
German
- June - Dec. 1742
- 4 **Diary of the congregation in Bethlehem, kept by Georg Neisser.**
First draft of the Bethlehem diary. At a later time a neat copy was created (BethCong 1). This is a continuation of Neisser's Kurzgefasster Aufsatz (PP NG 3). Another draft of the diary for the months June-July in Neisser's hand (with additions by Zinzendorf) is in Herrnhut (R.14.A.15.3.a).
1 notebook
draft
fragile
German
- 1745
- 6 **"Extract of the most remarkable circumstances in the year 1745", chronicle of events in Bethlehem, combined with the Daily Texts for each day, compiled by Georg Neisser.**
1 notebook
English
- 1967
- 2 **Transcription and English translation of Georg Neisser's diary, by Lothar Madeheim.**
1 folder
See the original, PP NG 1.
German, English

2. Moravian History (general)

- n.d.
- 19 **"A Short History of the Moravian Brethren", history of the Brethren from the christianization of the Czech lands upto the beginning of Herrnhut.**
Found in PP NG 18.
1 item
English

without date

- 27 **"Auszüge aus Joh. Amos Comenii Didacticis Operibus Omnibus, ab Anno 1627 ad 1657 continuatis"**
Excerpts from Comenius' didactical works and other books.
1 volume
Latin, German
- 14 **"Sammlung verschiedener Nachrichten, die in die böhmische Kirchen- und Reichsgeschichte hineinschlagen"**
Collection of notes regarding the history of the Bohemian Church and the Holy Roman Empire.
1 notebook
Language:
- 18 **Beginning of a history of the Protestant emigration from Bohemia and Moravia.**
It is not clear if Neisser was the author or if he copied from another book.
1 notebook
German
- 16 **Chronological table of emigrants from Bohemia and Moravia who came to Herrnhut, 1722-1753.**
1 page
fragile, torn in middle
German
- 11 **Collectanea regarding Comenius.**
Content:
1. text of the Comenius portrait (copper engraving, 1750).
2. bibliography of Comenius' works.
3. biographical notes taken from Unum Necessarium.
4. 10th chapter of Unum Necessarium.
5. copy of Nutz der Einigkeit und Ordnung (as printed in London 1710).
6. notes on Comenius' Manualnik (manualum biblicum, 1658).
7. letter from Comenius to Charles II of England, 5/16 Sept. 1661.
8. list of the seniors and bishops of the ancient Unity.
1 notebook
German
- 8 **List of place names in Moravia where churches of the Brethren used to exist, with a listing of their ministers.**
Based on Adrianus Regenvolscius, Systema historico-chronologicum ecclesiarum Slavonicarum and J.Th. Elsner, Martyrologium Bohemicum (library Ba.10).
1 notebook
German
- 9 **Ordination book, list of ordinations in the Renewed Moravian Church.**
Contains ordinations of both men and women.
1 notebook
German
- 24 **"Historia derer Böhmischen und Mährischen Brüder, Herrnhut 1738, den 26. Febr."**
History of the Bohemian Brethren until the founding of Herrnhut.
Text begins with: "Die erste Erweckung unter dene Sclavonischen Völckern rühret ohnstreitig von denen Aposteln selbst her ...".
Copied by Georg Neisser.
1 sexto-decimo volume
German
- 39 **"Comenii letzten Bischos der Mährischen und Böhmischen Brüder Uralte Christliche Catholische Religion"**
Manuscript copy of the Uralte Christliche Catholische Religion (1661), by Comenius, copied by Georg Neisser.

n.d.

n.d.

18th cent.

1735 - 1762

1738

[1743 - 1744?]

- Includes:
The only known remaining printed copy of this catechism is in the Unity Archives in Herrnhut (AB.II.R.2.12). Neisser copied this possibly during his visit to Germany in 1743/44.
1 booklet
German
- 13 **"Sammlung verschiedener in die Evangelische Brüderkirchengeschichte hineinschlagender Nachrichten aus der alten und neuen Zeiten"**
Collection of notes regarding the history of the Ancient and Renewed Brethren.
1 notebook
German, English 1760 - 1782
- 7 **List of seniors (bishops), conseniors (coadjutor bishops), and pastors in the Unitas Fratrum, with biographical information on the bishops from the Ancient Unity, especially on Comenius.**
Also contains
a list of notes from the prophecies of Nikolaus Drabicius (1588-1671, published by Comenius in Lux in Tenebris),
a list of notes from Adrianus Regenvolscius, Systema historico-chronologicum ecclesiarum Slavonicarum,
an index of places to Comenius, Lux in Tenebris.
1 volume
German 1779
- MHS **"Personalien einiger aus Mähren und Böhmen emigrirten und selig verschiedenen Geschwistern, Sammlung A"**
Collection of memoirs of brothers and sisters who emigrated from Moravia and Bohemia, (also called Fasciculus A).
Content: Individual memoirs are cataloged in the memoir database.
On title page: "Presented to the Moravian Historical Society by Br. John Oerter of Bethlehem to whom it was left as a legacy by Sister Bienel (Benigna) Froelich". It is part of the collection of the Moravian Historical Society, housed at the Moravian Archives.
1 quart volume
worn
Annotation: The item is property of the MHS. From 1969-2007 the volume was combined with the Georg Neisser papers.
German 1783
- 12 **"Sammlung von allerhand Gemischten, sonderlich aber in die Alte und Neue Brüder-Kirchengeschichte hineinschlagenden Nachrichten",**
Collection of notes regarding the history of the Ancient and Renewed Brethren.
Content:
1. Extract from Zinzendorf's letter to the coptic Patriarch Marcus CVI.
2. Notes on John a Lasco's congregation in Holland and London during the reign of Charles VI of England.
3. Notes on the creeds of the Ancient Brethren.
4. Extract from the introduction to Johannes Hedericus, Examinatio capitum doctrinae fratrum (Frankfurt 1580).
5. Note on various books that appeared against the Brethren, 1474-1502.
6. Note on Martin Micronius ("de cleyne") (1523-1559).
7. Note on bookprinter Georg Melantrichus.
8. Various notes on the history of the Brethren.
9. Chronological table from the death of Able (in the "130th year of the world") until the recognition of the United States by England in 1783.
10. List of important men in church history.
11. Short history of the Brethren.
12. Extract from the minutes of a conference of the Moravians [within the Brethren's Church], Aug. 31, 1755.
13. Notes on various books on the Brethren. [1783]

14. List of important Silesian hymn writers.
 15. Collection of various notes on the history of the Brethren.
 16. Notes on "eminent servants of God" among the theologians of the 17th century.
 17. Text and music of a song "Selig der Tag, den ich muß scheiden", written by "the five servants of God" when they were driven out of Moravia in 1624. This hymn was also sung by the five men of the church (Kirchenmänner) when they left for Herrnhut in 1724 (David Nitschmann (3x), Melchior Zeisberger and Johann Töltschig).
 18. Chronological table of events before and after the birth of Jesus Christ.
 19. Table of English kings.
 20. Miscellaneous notes.
 21. List of places in Silesia, Moravia and Bohemia that are relevant in church history.
 22. Idem, for Upper and Lower Silesia.
 23. List of places in Bohemia and Moravia that are relevant for the history of the Brethren.
- 1 notebook
 Annotation: date found on no. 18.
 German

- | | | |
|----|--|------|
| 21 | <p>Fasciculus [B], or collection of documents and memoirs relating to the beginnings of the Renewed Moravian Church in Herrnhut.
 Content: Individual memoirs are cataloged in the memoir database.
 In front: list of people who returned to Europe with Zinzendorf in January/February of 1743.
 1 quart volume
 German</p> | 1783 |
| 17 | <p>Lists of couples who got married in the Wetterau.
 Content: One lists the names of those who had departed by September 1784, the other lists the names of those still alive.
 2 items
 German</p> | 1784 |

3. History of the "Hidden Seed"

- | | | |
|----|--|-------------|
| 10 | <p>Register of refugees from Moravia and Bohemia who joined the Renewed Moravian Church.
 Lists name, name of husband or wife, birth place, place of death, circumstances of emigration and names of children.
 Alphabetical index after first part. Also includes a map of "Sehlen" (Söhle, Zilina).
 "Aus verschiedenen handschriftlichen und gedruckten Nachrichten gesammelt und in dieses Verzeichniß gebracht und vollendet zu Neu-York, in der ersten Hälfte Junii und Julii des Jahrs des Herrn 1772, völlig abcopirt Jul. 20, 1772".
 1 quart volume
 front board is loose
 German</p> | 1772 |
| 15 | <p>Collection of letters from Johann Böhner, missionary on St. Thomas, regarding the persecution of protestants in Bohemia and their emigration.
 Also contains a map indicating the villages in Moravia from which the families came that went to Herrnhut.
 1 notebook
 one letter very fragile
 German</p> | 1772 - 1774 |

4. Hymnology and Music

- 32 **"B. Der in dem Brüder-Gesang gebräuchlichsten Sing-Weisen zweite Sammlung"**
 Second collection of common Moravian hymn tunes and cantatas
 Includes:
 1 volume
 German, English
without date
- 38 **"Der gebräuchlichsten Sing-Weisen zehnte Sammlung, K"**
 Tenth collection of common Moravian hymn tunes.
 1 oblong volume
 German
without date
- 36 **"Der in dem Brüder-Gesang gebräuchlichen Sing-Weisen siebente Sammlung, G"**
 Seventh collection of common Moravian hymn tunes.
 1 oblong volume
 Language:
without date
- 40 **Collection of anthems and cantatas.**
 Also includes several parts from Handel's Messiah (on loose sheet); aria "Carl will zum Heiland gehn," (Herrnhut 1738) is considered to be oldest surviving Moravian composition.
 The title on one of the first pages, "Lob- und Dank-Psalm," refers to the first composition: the festal doxology by Christian Gregor ("Gelobt seist Du, der da sitzt über Cherubim").
 1 oblong booklet
 German, English
without date
- 46 **Text of a hymn, "Blutge Wunden, Beulen, Schrunden," written by Georg Neisser to a self-composed tune.**
 Note on original folder: "Added to the Georg Neisser Coll. in Aug. 1996 (Found dispersed), LM."
 1 item
 German
(ca. 1742)
- 29 **Alphabetical index to the hymns in the Herrnhut Gesangbuch (1735-1742, incl. Appendix XI), compiled by Georg Neisser for August Gottlieb Spangenberg.**
 The hymns of the Twelfth Appendix and the four supplements are not included.
 German
1750
- 37 **"Der in dem Alten und Neuen Brüdergesang gebräuchlichsten Singweisen, neunte Sammlung, J"**
 Ninth collection of common Moravian hymn tunes, compiled by Andreas Dober in Mönchsroth and Herrnhut and copied and continued [by Georg Neisser ?] in Pennsylvania.
 1 volume
 German
)ca. 1750'
- 33 **"Der in dem Brüder-Gesang gebräuchlichsten Singe-Weisen vierte Sammlung, C"**
 Fourth collection of common Moravian hymn tunes.
 Includes:
 Although the title indicates it is the fourth collection, it is marked with the letter C.
 1 oblong booklet
 German
(ca. 1750)
- 34 **"Der in dem Brüder-Gesang gebräuchlichsten Sing-Weisen fünfte Sammlung, E. Mehrentheils enthaltend Cantaten, etc."**
 Fifth collection of common Moravian hymn tunes, mostly cantatas.
 Includes:
 1 oblong booklet
 German

- 1753 - 1756
- 25 "Allerhand Nachrichtliches die Gesänge der Alten Brüder-Kirche betreffend"
Various notes regarding hymnals, tunes and hymns of the ancient Unity.
1 volume
German
- 1753 - 1767
- 22 "Sammlung einiger die Hymnodie, oder Geistliches Singspiel (Eph. 5,19) der Alten
Brüderkirche betreffenden Nachrichten, aus den verschiedenen Herausgaben ihrer
Gesänge zusammengetragen"
Collection of notes and hymns from the Ancient Unity.
1 quart volume
German
- 1759 - 1760
- 28 "Abschrift einiger Geistlichen Lieder aus dem Dresdnischen Gesangbuch vom Jahr
1735"
Copies of hymns from a hymnbook, published in Dresden in 1735.
1 octavo volume
German
- 1759 - 1778
- 26 "Vollständiges Register über die Reimarten und Singweisen, die in dem Alten und
Neuen Kirchengesang vorkommen"
Metrical index of the tunes in the 1753 London Hymnbook (Londoner Gesangbuch).
1 volume
German
- 1765
- 35 "Der Sing-Weisen des Alt- und Neuen Brüder-Gesangs sechste Sammlung, F"
Sixth collection of hymn tunes: tunes from the 1753 London Hymnal .
1 oblong volume
German
- 1769
- 41 "Sammlung verschiedener Arien und Singweisen des Brüder-Gesangs Anno 1769"
Collection of anthems and hymn tunes.
1 booklet
German, English
- (ca. 1770)
- 42 "Allerhand Melodien, Arien, etc."
Collection of hymn tunes and anthems.
1 booklet
German, English
- 1771 - 1773
- 44 "Alphabetisches Verzeichniss von den Verfaßern in dem Herrnhutischen Gesangbuch
und Anhängen und Zugaben" and
"Anzeige der Verfaßer von den Gesängen und Liedern des Herrnhutischen
Gesangbuchs und deßen Anhängen und Zugaben"
Alphabetic list of hymn authors, as well as numeric index of hymn authors in the
Herrnhut hymn book (1735-1748), compiled by Georg Neisser.
1 volume
pages are loose
German
- 1773
- 30 "Alphabetisches Verzeichniß der aus dem Teutschen ins Englische übersezten Lieder
des Brüder-Gesangbuchs"
Alphabetical index of English translations of German hymns.
Includes: German title, number in English hymnbook (Collection of Hymns), number
in Herrnhuter Gesangbuch and in "new hymnbook" (Londoner Gesangbuch?).
Also includes a (outline?) of a sermon on Psalm 2, 12.
1 volume
German
- 1774

- 31 **"Vergleichung der neu-componirten Singweisen zu den Liedern und Gesängen des Anno 1723 edirten Zürchischen neuen Gesangbuchs, mit den Singweisen (und folglich Reim-Arten des Choralbuchs zum Alten und Neuen Brüdergesang)"**
Table of the tunes in the 1723 Zurich hymnal with corresponding tune numbers in the Moravian chorale book and metrical numbers in the 1753 London hymnal.
1 notebook
German
1775 - 1783
- 23 **"Eine Sammlung zufälliger Gedichte vom Jahr 1775 u.f. nebst andern vorgekommen Psalmen, Gesängen und Liedern, als ein Beytrag zu dem geistlichen lieblichen Singspiel der Kirche Christi, des Volks Gottes in den mancherley verschiedenen Zeiten der Göttlichen Heimsuchung"**
Collection of hymns written for various occasions, sometimes with musical settings. Some of the hymns are written (and composed?) by Neisser.
1 quart volume
German
1783
- 43 **"Das Liebliche Getön des Geistlichen Singspiels der vereinigten Brüder im XV-XVI und XVIIten Seculo, zu fortwährender Anstimmung gegen das Ende des XVIIIten Seculi in durchgängige Tonzeichnung gesetzt, und mit einigen diesen Brüder-Gesang betreffenden Abhandlungen versehen von einem Mährischen Diener der erneuerten dieser Brüderkirche"**
Chorale book of the tunes used by the ancient Unity, as well as an introduction to the singing of the Unity, and various tables.
1 oblong volume
German

5. Personal items

- 47 **Page from an album amicorum, written by Georg Neisser in Marienborn.**
The owner of the album is not known. The page was donated to the Archives by Iva E. Krause in 1952 (see letter in folder)
1 item
German
1743
- 45 **Calendar table for the year 1774, showing various holidays and saints' days, as well as the dates of the drawing of a lottery.**
Probably from a German city lottery.
1 item
printed
German
1774