

# Voices from the Vault

Issue 3      October 2005

## Post-War Moravian Relations

The connections between Moravians in former East Germany and their brothers and sisters in the USA is the topic of a research project by Hedwig Richter. Hedwig, a young historian from Berlin, conducted her research using records at the Moravian Archives in May and June of this year, supported by a grant from the German Historical Institute in Washington, D.C. She found that even before the Second World War ended, American Moravians were thinking of ways to help their fellow Moravians in Germany. Financial and material support was sent to Germany, German refugees were given help and some were offered a new home in the US. The destroyed church in Herrnhut

was rebuilt with financial support from the American Provinces in the 1950's. As late as the 1970's American Moravians assisted financially in starting a home for mentally handicapped in Herrnhut.

Hedwig, who grew up in Baden-Württemberg in former West Germany, knew about Moravians from the Daily Text book (*Losungen*) which was used by her family. But her husband grew up in East Germany. "That is how I got interested in the history of East Germany", she said. She chose to study the Herrnhuters: "Most studies on church life in East Germany are written from the perspective of the church leaders. I found the Moravians to be a small group with widespread in-



ternational connections". To her surprise the connections between East German and American Moravians were much more intensive than expected. The American Moravian leaders knew the leaders in Germany;

*(cont. on page 2)*

## New Assistant Archivist

On July 1, Lanie E. Graf, the new assistant archivist, started her employment at the Archives. Lanie holds a degree in Fine and Decorative Art from the Sotheby's Institute in London and has also studied German in Middlebury, Vermont and in Vienna, Austria. Lanie has

published on 18<sup>th</sup>-century Moravian furniture-making in London. She grew up in Nazareth and is a member of Schoeneck Moravian Church. Lanie's responsibilities include assisting researchers in the reading room and answering written requests for informa-

tion. She will also be working on various collections. Currently she is concluding her work on the Archives' object collection that includes over 400 Moravian-related items. We welcome Lanie to the Archives!

## Special points of interest:

- New Assistant Archivist started at Moravian Archives.
- Who was William Gunn Malin who donated his library to the Moravian Church?
- Memoir collection now available on computer.
- Yard Sale was great success.
- Bethlehem Diary reduced in price.

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## The Malin Library

The Moravian Archives houses a book collection that can truly be described as spectacular. The books were brought together by the 19<sup>th</sup> century librarian, William Gunn Malin. Malin was born in Woodford near Byfield in Northamptonshire, England on November 7, 1801. When he was 22 years old he decided to emigrate to America. His first job was driving a beer wagon in Germantown near Philadelphia. In 1824 he began a long career with the Pennsylvania Hospital in Philadelphia; from 1825 until 1840 he was librarian of the hospital's Medical Library. His main interest was the treatment of the mentally ill. After making several pleas to establish a "separate asylum for the insane" a Department of the Insane of the Pennsylvania Hospital was established in 1840 and Malin was appointed as "Steward". Nine years later Malin became Steward for the Department of the Sick and Injured in Philadelphia, retiring from this position when he was 82 years old.

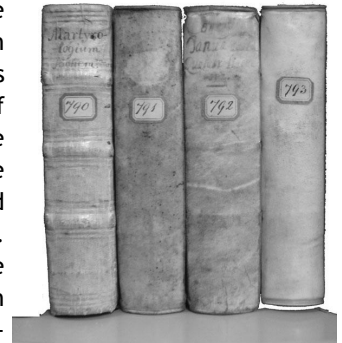
Malin was a devoted book collector. Although he formally did not belong to the Moravian Church in Philadelphia, Malin started collecting

books on the Moravians during the 1840's. In the introduction to the catalog of his collection he had printed in 1881 he writes: "The collection of these volumes was prompted by a sentiment of filial regard for a Church of which my parents were members and in which my earliest religious impressions were received". Over the course of more than 40 years Malin managed to compile a collection of the rarest books on the history of the Ancient Moravian Church. Malin, ordering the titles from antiquarian book dealers in Europe, was also interested in other topics such as the emigration of Protestant Salzburgers in the 1730's, general church history, the alleged female Pope Joan and a variety of travel accounts. The *Moravian* of March 29, 1881 describes the Malin Library: "With the exception of the library of the Archives at Herrnhut, it is the most complete and valuable collection of the kind in existence, comprising many very rare antiquarian books".

Approaching his 80th birthday, Malin began to make arrangements for his library. He had a catalog of his col-

lection printed and he contacted the Provincial Elders' Conference of the Moravian Church in Bethlehem. He wanted to keep his book collection intact and, having no children, decided to donate his books to the Moravian Church. The donation was formalized with a deed of gift in February, 1882. The books came with four large book cases that Malin had made to house his collection. The PEC decided to place the "Malin Library of Moravian Literature" in a room adjacent to the archives' room in Central Moravian Church (now part of the recreated *Kleiner Saal*) and the archivist was to supervise the collection. More than a century later the Malin Library is still in the Moravian Archives. The book cases that Malin had made for his books stand in the reading room while the books are securely kept in the vault.

(Sources: Anna Pirszenok, "William Gunn Malin (1801-1887)" in: *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* XV (1960) 147-153; Minutes of the PEC, Feb. 1887; *The Moravian* XXVII (March 29, 1882) 412.)



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## Post-War Moravian Relations (cont.)

some had gone to school together, others knew each other from Synods or from personal visits.

Hedwig is still at the beginning of her research. After finishing her research

in Bethlehem she has returned to Herrnhut to study the records there. She also intends to include the records of the former East German government and secret service. We are looking for-

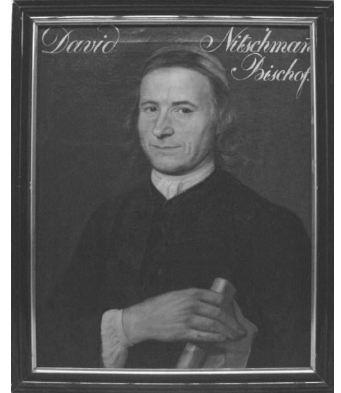
ward to seeing the results of Hedwig Richter's studies that will cast light on an interesting time in our 20<sup>th</sup> century history.

## The David Nitschmann Papers

It is only one box, but every item in this box is very interesting. The papers from the estate of Bishop David Nitschmann (1696-1772) were recently catalogued and the inventory is now available on the Archives' website. Nitschmann, who was born in Zauchtental (now called Suchdol, Moravia), emigrated to Herrnhut in 1724. During his life, he witnessed many crucial events during the history of the Moravian Church: he was one of the

two first missionaries sent by the Church; he was the first bishop of the Renewed Unity; he was involved with starting Moravian settlements in Savannah, Georgia, and in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania; he was involved with both the founding and the dissolution of Herrnhag, Germany; and he played a crucial role in the establishment of the Moravian congregational community of Lititz, PA (to name but a few of his activities). Nitschmann died in

Bethlehem and his grave can be found on God's Acre. The papers he left behind are important for scholars of Moravian history on both sides of the Atlantic. His collection is one of those little treasures that can be found at the Bethlehem Archives.



## Madonna Head Owned by Haidt

In June and July of 1782 Br. Nathanael Seidel donated many items to the Archives, including a Treatise on Art composed by the Moravian painter, Johann Valentin Haidt, and several objects belonging to the painter. One object is a small plaster head of the Madonna, not quite five inches tall, which appears to have once been part of a larger statue. The Archives still has this plaster head in its possession. This object is significant because

it embodies Haidt's idea of a perfectly rendered Madonna, which he describes in his treatise:

*"Maria must have in her all the beauty that can be possibly imagined - a beautiful, not-too-round and not-too-lengthy forehead, a straight, longish nose, large eyes - whose eyelids are large and inclined downward - the mouth small and full of virtue, the chin middle-sized, the cheeks flat, in which chastity can be read.*

*At first sight, one must be filled with amazement at her beauty and, at the same time, with respectable reverence and shame in relation to her true holiness, simplicity and humility. Her holiness must be different from all self-made piety. She must be natural, with nothing affected and, still less, nothing hypocritical."*

[Translation of Haidt's Treatise on Art provided by Vernon Nelson]



## Work in Progress

Since the publication of our last Newsletter, the following cataloging work has been completed:

\* Memoir collection. All the information on the 9,000 filing cards was transferred into our computer system data base by June Lacke. June is now verifying the

information on the cards with the originals and adding additional information.

\* Papers of Bishop David Nitschmann; refer to the article at the top of this page. The inventory can be downloaded from the Archives' website.

\* Bethlehem Steel glass plates, cataloged by Magia Ghetu and Andrew Krause (Lehigh University, Bethlehem); 4,700 items.

\* The inventory of the Records of the Labrador Mission Stations (1770-1939) was added to our website.



Lanie Graf

## Newsletter from the Moravian Archives, Bethlehem PA

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Bethlehem, PA 18018-2757

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[www.moravianchurcharchives.org](http://www.moravianchurcharchives.org)

Support the archives by becoming a Friend of the Moravian Archives. Send your check to the address above.

## Upcoming Events at the Archives

### "Lesser Known Moravian Christmas Hymns"

Lecture by Albert H. Frank, Assistant Director of the Moravian Music Foundation  
November 29, 2005, at the Old Chapel of Central Moravian Church

### Friends' Day

March 12, 2006 at the Archives

### Yard Sale

May 2006 (exact date to be announced)

### German Script Course — June 5-16, 2006

More Information: [www.moravianchurcharchives.org/germanscript.html](http://www.moravianchurcharchives.org/germanscript.html)

## News and Announcements

### Useful Links

The library catalog of the Unity Archives in Herrnhut is now (partially) searchable online: <http://biblio.gbi.de/intranet/bib3/bib3.ein>

An extensive bibliography on Jan Hus and the Hussite Movement: [www.collegium-carolinum.de/doku/lit/hus/bibl-hus-a.htm](http://www.collegium-carolinum.de/doku/lit/hus/bibl-hus-a.htm)

A bibliography on the Ancient Unity (Jednota Bratrská): [www.etf.cuni.cz/kat-cd/biblgr-jb-just.htm](http://www.etf.cuni.cz/kat-cd/biblgr-jb-just.htm)

### New Board Members

Two new members have joined the Archives' Board of Directors: John McKeown

and James A. Gold, both from Bethlehem. We welcome them to our Board and we also thank Margaret M. Peters for her long-standing membership on the Board!

### Yard Sale

The May yard sale at the Archives was a great success. Many people from the area helped us prepare and many more came to buy. A local radio station and a tv station reported on this event. The amazing result was a total of \$ 5,232.58! Half of this money went to our building renovation fund and the other half was used for acquiring equipment that was badly needed but not

affordable, like a new computer, a color printer and a scanner that can digitize our 19<sup>th</sup> century glass plates. The Archives staff is extremely grateful to all the helpers and the buyers. Our next yard sale is scheduled for May of 2006.

### Reduced Price for Bethlehem Diary

The price for the previously-published volumes of the Bethlehem Diary has been reduced. Either volume can now be ordered from the Archives for \$ 20.00 + tax (previously \$ 24.95 for vol. I and \$ 39.95 for vol. II). A set of both volumes now only costs \$ 35.00.

### Progress on Bethlehem Diary

In 1971 and 2001 the Archives published two volumes of the translation of the Bethlehem Diary. Work on a third volume, comprising the months from June 1745 until the end of 1746 is underway! First we need a clear transcription of the German original that is to be used by the translator. This transcription is currently being made at the Unity Archives in Herrnhut, Germany. The transcript will be available before the end of this year so that our translator can accomplish the work during 2006.