

Voices from the Vault

Issue 6 June 2007

Welcome to the Moravian Archives!

A small change can make a big difference! In April of this year a new reception area was created in the Archives, greatly increasing the functionality of our facility.

In the past, visitors to the Moravian Archives were confronted with six (!) doors upon entering the Archives. And when they entered the reading room the confusion grew: a large space, people working in different parts of the room, and nothing to indicate whom to ask for assistance. This confusing situation has now been resolved.

The office of June Lacke, office manager, was moved from an inconspicuous place in the rear of the building, to the front. The wall that used to separate that office from the entrance area was removed and a counter was put in its place. Visitors to the Archives now enter the reception area where they are greeted by



June who handles their registration and directs them to the appropriate staff person. The books for sale, that used to be on a book table in the reading room, have also been moved to the reception area where they can be displayed in a more appealing way.

Besides greater functionality, improved security was also a consideration for this change. Visitors to the reading room

will now be requested to check their bags and other belongings in a locker at the front door. They are only allowed to bring in a notepad and writing materials, a laptop and other items necessary for their research. When leaving researchers must present these materials for inspection to make sure nothing leaves the reading room that should stay there.

Special points of interest:

- Second issue of Journal of Moravian History is now available
- Moravian Archives is saving energy
- Inventory of records of Bethlehem Female Seminary is now completed
- Twelve students from Moravian College finish archival studies program
- Albert Frank retires from Moravian Music Foundation

Friends' Day 2007

Standing room only! More than 80 Friends of the Archives attended this year's Friends' Day on March 18. Lanie Williamson and Paul Peucker showed various treasures from the vault, such as a newly discovered sketch by Gustav Grunewald, a 1753 chair from the Old Chapel in Bethlehem, a diary of a 6-year-old boy who was sent from Labrador



to Germany by his missionary parents, and a letter from Thomas Jefferson to the Moravian Female Seminary in Bethlehem from 1809. After the presentation we cut a special birthday cake to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the Moravian Archives.

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Inventory Female Seminary Completed

It was called “the most fashionable school in the United States” (1817). “With uncommon gladness have we viewed the high renown and fame in which the Seminary now flourishes. The very essence thereof [is] the Scientific and Economic habits infused into the tender minds of their pupils” (from 1834). The obituary of a former pupil and teacher states: “Her joys were most cheerful ... when sacred themes were spoken of and sung” (1873).

The “Female Seminary” Collection of papers, pictures, and objects from 1785 to the 1960s vividly projects the persons who walked, wrote, rejoiced, and sometimes wept during the history of that school. Major categories of eye-opening evidence are correspondence (much in florid and proper Victorian prose), bills and receipts from Bethlehem retailers and Philadelphia businesses, student work such as recitations or dialogues performed at public events, and a variety of evidence of faithful supportive faculty and alumnae.

Here we learn who did what, when and where, and sometimes why. We notice, for example, that Mrs. Catharine Christ, baker, sold not only plain, rice, and sponge pound cakes, but

also ginger, plum, Scotch, Derby, Shrewsbury, Christmas and fruit cakes—and that in 1843 sugar cakes cost 25 cents. We read letters from US presidents, governors, ambassadors, and from parents in the 1860s who wrote in wartime: “Send my children home this day with black dresses.” We smile to see the bills submitted by stage coach drivers itemizing payments made during student excursions, always for the girls’ meals plus a bottle for the driver and hay for the horses.

Here we learn the cost of whalebone used by local dressmakers in the 1850s, see the height and weight of students entering in 1931, read personal letters of ambitious booksellers, and wonder at the quantities of butter and oysters purchased. We find that in the early 1800s medicines were procured from dealers in paint, oil, and varnish from their “chemical” wares. Here we sense well-earned pride in student penmanship, drawings, music programs, and fine needlework.

As might be expected, this Collection chronicles administrative, financial, and academic history. Yet, details of the daily lives of people in the past can impact our understanding of

how to frame the perspective and prioritization of our own lives. The voluminous correspondence may only hint at the eventual influence of women who in civic circles actively practiced the values learned in the Seminary.

Dr. Pauline Fox from East Stroudsburg began processing the records of the Female Seminary in July of 2006 and finished the project in May of 2007. She organized and made detailed descriptions of the records spanning a period from the beginnings of the Seminary in 1785 through the early 20th century. Pauline did a fine and thorough job and the results of her work will be useful to many people!

Funding for this project is part of a larger Library Services and Technology grant from the Commonwealth Libraries of Pennsylvania, awarded to Reeves’ Library and the Bethlehem Area Public Library. With this grant these two institutions will expand the materials available on the Bethlehem Digital History Project website (bdhp.moravian.edu).

The inventory of the Female Seminary will be placed on the Digital History website as well as on the archives’ website.



Benigna von Watterville, née Zinzendorf (1725-1789) is considered the founder of female education in the Moravian Church in America

“Here we learn the cost of whalebone used by local dressmakers in the 1850s”

Moravian Archives Goes Green

A part of the proceeds of this year’s yard sale (see elsewhere in this newsletter) has been assigned to make the Moravian Archives more environmentally friendly. Energy efficient light bulbs replace the old, energy-wasting lights wherever possible. The old coffeemaker that needed electric power to keep the coffee pot warm made room for a new machine that pours the coffee into a vacuum-insulated thermos. The Archives

also started to separate its trash: every desk in the Archives has a special container to collect office paper, and other containers are in place for different recyclables. We welcome anyone who wants to support this initiative by helping us take the materials to the local Bethlehem recycling center once a month. For more information, call: 610-866-3255.



Planters, purchased with proceeds from the Yard Sale, at the entrance of the Archives’ building create a greener and friendlier environment.

National History Day Competition

Rebecca Eisenhower and Rebekah Troutman, 8th graders at C.W. Rice Middle School in Sunbury, PA visited the archives on January 17 to research primary source material related to James Logan, son of Chief Shikellamy of the Oneida Indian tribe, in preparation for the regional National History Day competition held in March. Along with another student, Nathan Savage, the girls represent Shikellamy School District in the junior category of the competition. Their advisor is Dixie Gavason, social studies teacher at the school. Using original diaries kept by Moravian missionaries in the

Shamokin area during the 18th century, the students created an original skit about Logan, accompanied by a research paper and extensive bibliography. The girls won last year's regional competition with their first original skit regarding the life of Chief Shikellamy, set in 1754.

Since use of primary sources is necessary for the competition, the group was pleased to have access to the records of the Indian missions stored at the Archives. Although preparation for the competition is a lot of work, the students find the experience worthwhile and a lot fun.



Microfilms from Herrnhut

The Unity Archives in Herrnhut, Germany, holds a large number of papers relating to the beginnings and development of the Moravian Church in America. Until ca. 1850 the administration of the Moravian Church was highly centralized. The Unity Elders' Conference, the executive board of the worldwide Unity, resided in Berthelsdorf near Herrnhut. For many years reports on Moravian work in America were sent to Germany and important decisions were made by the Unity Elders. A few

years ago the Moravian Archives acquired microfilm copies of the minutes of the Unity Elders. Now we also acquired a set of microfilms of other materials. Especially the materials from the early years of Moravian activity in America are interesting and add to the information stored in the archives in Bethlehem or Winston-Salem.

Thanks to a grant from the US-consulate in Leipzig, Germany, it was possible to begin microfilming the records in the Herrnhut archives pertaining to the Ameri-

can Moravian Church. The consulate in Leipzig wanted to secure these invaluable manuscripts by having them microfilmed. A second copy of the films was made for the Moravian Archives in Bethlehem so that researchers in America have better access to the materials.

The grant was sufficient to microfilm 2,500 pages. However, the Unity Archives holds many more, so this project is only the beginning. We hope to raise additional funds in the future in order to continue this project.

"Thanks to a grant from the US-consulate in Leipzig, Germany, it was possible to begin microfilming the records in the Herrnhut archives pertaining to the American Moravian Church."

Archival Studies at Moravian College

During the Spring semester of 2007 archivist Paul Peucker taught archival studies at Moravian College. A group of 12 students studied basic archival principles and learned how to organize an archival collection. Thanks to the students the following collections have now been inventoried:

- Moravian Church of Rudolph, Wisconsin (by Jonathan Ennis),
- Moravian Church of Ephraim, Wisconsin (Shawn Martell)
- Moravian Church of Harmony, Iowa (Kelly Moore)
- Moravian Church of Uhrichsville, Ohio (Sarah Kepner)
- Alaska Children's Home (Thomas Ruhf)
- New Dawn Moravian Church, Ontario (Beverly Beaver)
- Joseph M. Levering Papers (Michael Tier)
- Beneficial Society of Bethlehem (Michelle Squiccimara)
- Lehigh Zinc Company. (Nolan Gerencser)
- John Schropp Papers (Janelle Pham)
- Moravian Church of Lake Mills, Wisconsin (Brian Wright)
- Conference of the Spiritual Descendants of John Hus (Theresa Zataveski)

Newsletter from the Moravian Archives, Bethlehem PA

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

Upcoming Events at the Archives

German Script Course
June 4-15, 2007

Preaching by Painting: The Role of Art in 18th-Century Moravian Communities
Lecture by Dr. Paul Peucker, August 21, 2007, 7:00 pm at the Archives

Peter Brown and the revival of the Moravian mission in Antigua 1770-80
Lecture by Dr. John Mason, London,
Oct. 9, 2007, 7:00 pm at the Archives

John Frederick Hintz, 18th-Century Moravian Instrument Maker
Lecture by Lanie G. Williamson, Nov. 7, 2007, 7:00 pm at the Archives

German-English Advent Singstunde in the Old Chapel
December 4, 2007 in the Old Chapel
(on the campus of Central Moravian Church, Bethlehem, Pa.)

News and Announcements

250 years of Moravian Archives

250 years ago, on January 31, 1757, Matthäus Hehl was assigned to organize and create an inventory of the records of the Bethlehem congregation. Within a short time Hehl completed this task and presented the elders with a detailed list of the archives' holdings. This event marks the initial organization of the Bethlehem archives. Today the Moravian Archives considers January 31, 1757 as its starting date. You will find the full story in the January 2007 issue of *This Month in Moravian History* (www.moravianchurcharchives.org/thismonth.php)

Yard Sale

Thanks to thirty-one volunteers and even more people who contributed items to our sale, our 2007 yard sale was a great success. The result was more than \$4000! Half of this amount will be put into our renovation fund; the other half will be used for computer upgrades, new office equipment and energy efficient lightbulbs.

Albert Frank retires

For many years Albert Frank has been a familiar face around the Archives! Rev. Dr. Albert Frank served as assistant director and head of the northern office of the Moravian Music Foundation. In this capacity Albert assisted

musical researchers and published two books: *Companion to the 1995 Moravian Book of Worship* (2004) and *Moravian Advent and Christmas Hymns* (2006). From 1996 until 2001 Albert was assistant archivist at the Moravian Archives. In his retirement Albert will move to the Moravian community of Niesky, Germany, where his wife Erdmute will be student-pastor. We will miss Albert, Erdmute and little Mute-Lena!

Journal of Moravian History 2

The second issue of the Journal of Moravian History is now available. It contains the following articles:

- Constructions of the Religious Self. Moravian Conversion and Transatlantic Com-

munication (Gisela Mettele)

- Moravian Music: Introduction, Theme, and Variations (Nola Reed Knouse)
- Distant Garden: Moravian Missions and the Culture Of Slavery in the Danish West Indies, 1732-1848 (Helen Richards)
- A 250-Year-Old Mystery: the Disappearance of J. C. Erhardt in Labrador (David A. Schattschneider)
- Catechism of the Bohemian Brethren, Translated and edited from the 1523 German version (Craig D. Atwood)
- The Memoirs of David Tanenberg (Laurence Libin)

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