

Voices from the Vault

Issue 25

November 2016

Reunited in Bethlehem: A South-African Diary



When Norbert Hartig, a retired educator, librarian, and film producer in British Columbia, found our website, he knew we were the right place to send some 19th-century notebooks he had in his possession for a long time. These handwritten materials were mostly diaries, written around 1850 in Moravian mission stations in Eastern South Africa. The records had come into Hartig's possession when he worked at a media center in Natal, South Africa.

When in October of 2016 a small package arrived at the Moravian Archives, we were delighted with its contents: a medical recipe book of Leopold Richard Baur (1825-1889), trained apothecary and Moravian missionary in South Africa; the official diary of the Moravian mission at Mvenyane (1897-1900); a typewritten autobiography of Theophil Ernst van Calker (1860-1929), president of the Provincial Board of the South Africa Eastern Province; and seven volumes of the personal diary of Sebastian Gysin (1811-1893), a

Swiss-born Moravian who served in Genadendal and Shiloh for many years. Gysin's diaries were neatly numbered (2 through 8) but no. 1 appeared missing and we were wondering if perhaps any later volumes existed.

We are glad that all these records are now in the Bethlehem Archives where they are preserved and available to researchers. One would not immediately expect records from South Africa in the Archives at Bethlehem, but thanks to our online search tools they are easily detectable for anyone who is interested.

While processing the accession, we realized that we already had personal papers from Sebastian Gysin. Ten years ago Ortwin Bourquin had donated these to the Moravian Archives. Bourquin was the descendant of a long line of Moravian ministers who served in Labrador, Germany, and South Africa. After his retirement Bourquin, an ecologist and herpetologist, had emigrated from South Africa to Montana. When he

moved to the US he brought with him a collection of family papers from the Bourquins, many of which he donated to the Moravian Archives. Among these family papers were the diaries of Sebastian Gysin. Gysin's daughter, Marie Caroline (1842-1922) was the wife of Theodor Bourquin (1833-1914), great grandfather of Ortwin.

When Bourquin donated the Gysin diaries to the Moravian Archives he described them as "a broken set of diaries," meaning the series was incomplete. Each volume was numbered with a hand-written label: 1, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14, similar to the labels found on the Gysin diaries received from Canada. It turned out that the diaries once missing from the family papers had made their way from South Africa to Canada, and finally also to Bethlehem. We are glad to reunite all fourteen diaries and combine them again into one series, the way they had once been when their author was still alive.

Special points of interest:

- Michael Long's final term as President of the Board of Directors
- Research grants available beginning 2017
- New historical coloring book available for Bethlehem's 275th anniversary



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A Word from the Archives' President

After prayerful consideration, I wish to announce that I will be stepping down from the position of President of the Board of Directors of the Moravian Archives at the end of the current calendar and fiscal year. As I look back on my time on the board and term as President, I see joy, accomplishment, challenge, enrichment, and satisfaction. It has been seven years of learning, sharing, growing, and developing.

It has been my privilege to fulfill the vision of the late Peter Wolle, previous Board President, to renovate and renew the Moravian Archives facility. Peter and others assessed the future needs of the Archives during a planning retreat early in my time on the board. I am very pleased to be a part of fulfilling

those objectives for a Moravian Archives which will be able to serve the archival needs for the Northern Province and the denomination for the next 35 years.

During my time as Board president, I have witnessed the affiliation of the Moravian Archives and the Moravian Historical Society. The synergy resulting from the coordination of the missions of these two exceptional entities will provide dividends to both organizations and to the greater denomination for years to come.

I have been privileged to be involved in bringing Paul Peucker to the Moravian Archives. As anyone who has come in contact with the Moravian Archives can tell you, we have an exceptional Archives, large-

ly because of our exceptional director. In addition, I have been blessed with the opportunity to recognize the outstanding contributions of his predecessor Rev. Vernon Nelson. We will honor Vernon's memory and service with the first of many Vernon Nelson Scholarship Awards next year. I cherish the people and relationships which have accompanied my tenure in this capacity and I look forward to many years as a Friend of the Archives.

As always, I want to thank the Friends of the Archives, our board members, the Bethlehem Area Moravians, the Unity, and our dedicated staff, who have made my time as Archives' Board President so exceptional and memorable.

Michael Long



The Archives Board will elect a new president at the board meeting in December, 2016.

How to Search our Catalogs: the Archival Collection

In *Voices from the Vault* 23 (Nov. 2015), we gave you tips for searching our library collections. In this issue, we'd like to help you navigate our manuscript collections. Users must first visit our website. At the very top-right of the home page, click "Online Finding Aid" to open our online catalog.

Once in our online catalog, a simple search begins by clicking on the binoculars icon at the top of the webpage. Let's say, for example, that you are searching for the Moravian minister and painter, John Valentine Haidt. After typing Haidt in the search bar, click the binoculars icon next to the search bar to

execute the search. You'll see that there are many results for this search. These results may be viewed by selecting "show all results" at mid-screen, or by selecting the magnifying glass icons at left to see results within individual collections.

The online finding aid is a powerful tool for a systematic search. For example, if you wanted to know what items were preserved in the personal papers of Moravian minister and principal, J. Max Hark, you could do so by locating these records as they are organized on the left-hand side of the webpage. In the navigation tree on the left-hand side, scroll down to section "9.

Personal Papers." Under this heading, you will find PP HJMa – J. Max Hark Papers. Click on the plus sign icon to see how this collection is organized. Select a category and then see the associated records on the right and click on an item for the full description.

Do you want to use something on this list? Perhaps you'd like to view Hark's "Manuscripts on Sociology and History." To do so, you will want to write down the reference number for this item (PP HJMa 1) shown under the category "Ref. No." and request this during your next visit to the Archives.

"Our Online Finding Aid is a powerful tool for a systematic search."

Summer Soirée 2016

We celebrated our annual Summer Soirée on the evening of August 16, 2016. At the well-attended event, guests had a unique opportunity to view a small display of records pertaining to Moravian alumna Florence Foster Jenkins. Achieving fame as an American socialite and ama-

teur soprano, Jenkins (1868-1944) is the subject of a new blockbuster film starring Meryl Streep. She attended the Moravian Seminary for Young Ladies in Bethlehem from 1881-1882. Board President Michael Long thanked the Friends of the Moravian Archives for their support.

Archivist and director Dr. Paul Peucker spoke about our new Moravian Roots project. All the while, guests enjoyed the musical entertainment provided by talented flutist and Moravian College graduate, Krysti Nappi.



Volunteer Spotlights

John Rauhut

Quietly seated next to a box of old church registers is John Rauhut, who is currently indexing the church register of Lake Mills Moravian Church in Wisconsin. As part of the Moravian Roots project, the process involves transferring data recorded in handwritten German into a computer database which is keyed in English. John's skill in reading German stems from corresponding to his grandmother during his Wisconsin childhood. John is an '89 graduate of Moravian Theological Seminary and a retired United Methodist pastor. He is a direct descendent of Bohemian Brethren who emerged from northeast Bohemia in 1742 and founded communities of faith in Poland, including the settlement of Zelow which still exists. John has traveled nine times to the Czech Republic directing teams to reno-

vate Methodist property and to promote women's and children's ministry. He also coordinated seminars at the Church Center for the United Nations and helped develop social ministry in Kiev, Ukraine. Volunteering in the Archives gives John a sense of doing something worthwhile in his retirement.

Sarah Hottenstein

After visiting the Archives with her mother, a member of College Hill Moravian Church, Sarah began volunteering at the Archives. In less than a month, she has cataloged over 2,500 letters that were received by the Provincial Helpers' Conference (PHC) and Provincial Elders' Conference (PEC) in Bethlehem. "I'll put what box it's in, who it's from, who it's sent to, and the language of the letter," explains Sarah. Her diligent work serves to

make the PHC records more accessible to Archives' staff and patrons.

Megan Furchner

Megan graduated last year from Drexel University with an MLIS in the Archival Studies concentration. She started volunteering with us to gain more professional experience and has been working on cataloging our collection of 18th- and 19th-century autograph albums. She loves working with the albums because they are a more personal way to connect with Moravian history. The albums contain messages and autographs from friends, hand-drawings and watercolors, dried plants, and other interesting memorabilia. Pictured is an image from one of the autograph albums showing a previously unknown 18th-century original watercolor of the Single Sisters' House in Herrnhut.



Eighteenth-century miniature drawing of the Single Sisters' House in Herrnhut, recently discovered by Archives' volunteer Megan Furchner

Research Grants Available

Sometimes you need a little extra support to make a trip to Bethlehem in order to do research at the Moravian Archives. Starting 2017, small research grants will be available for the first time.

The Reverend Vernon H. Nelson Fund was established by his family shortly after Vernon Nelson passed

away in 2010. Nelson was archivist from 1961 until 2004. Funding may be given for research projects using records held by the Moravian Archives in Bethlehem. Projects will be assessed on the general significance of the proposed research, the scholarly value, the relevance to Moravian studies, and the likelihood of

timely completion of the proposed research. The full selection criteria are available on our website. We welcome anyone to apply for a grant through our website by February 28, 2017. We also welcome donations to the Vernon Nelson Fund in order to grow this commendable fund.



Diverse Voices: Three Perspectives of Early Bethlehem

In anticipation of the 275th anniversary of the founding of Bethlehem, the Moravian Historical Society sought a way to celebrate the important occasion. The MHS Exhibitions Committee chose to present the stories of three individuals: a single woman, an African slave, and an American Indian woman. The exhibition "Diverse Voices: Three Perspectives of Early Bethlehem" explores these rarely discussed historical viewpoints. Through peri-

od letters we learn why Rachel Post was likely in a panic while staying in the Gemeinhaus with her young child. Through diaries and records we explore the life of Andrew "the Moor" as he labored in Bethlehem and eventually fell in love. By investigating other primary materials, we become fascinated by the tenacity displayed by Anna Rosina Kliet (Gambold).

We are proud that this exhibition is featured in the 2016-2017 "Voices of

Conscience" arts series. An Allentown Public Theatre Program, "Voices of Conscience: Toward Racial Understanding" is a year-long, Lehigh Valley-wide arts series designed to encourage and promote socially-conscious art on issues surrounding race.

"Diverse Voices" is open now at the Whitefield House in Nazareth through December 31, 2017.



exhibit | through June 2017 | Whitefield House Museum | Nazareth

Newsletter from the Moravian Archives, Bethlehem PA

Moravian Archives
41 W. Locust Street
Bethlehem, PA 18018

Phone: 610.866.3255
e-mail: info@moravianchurcharchives.org
www.moravianchurcharchives.org

affiliated with the Moravian Historical Society
www.moravianhistoricalsociety.org | 610.759.5070

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Upcoming Events

Privacy and Confidentiality Issues in Digital Archives
November 9, 2016, 9:00am—5:00pm at the Moravian Archives
Workshop offered by the Society of American Archivists (SAA)

Genealogy Workshop
November 18, 2016, 9:00 am—1:00 pm, at the Moravian Archives
Registration fee \$60.00; register online

German-English Advent Singstunde
November 29, 2016, 7:00 pm
In the Old Chapel on the campus of Central Moravian Church in Bethlehem, PA

Recovering Anna Nitschmann: A Vision for a New Biography
February 7, 2017, 7:00 pm, at the Moravian Archives
Lecture by Katherine Faull

Share the Heritage Dinner & Auction
April 1, 2017, 5:00 pm at Iacocca Hall (Lehigh University)
Moravian Historical Society's annual dinner; see www.moravianhistoricalsociety.org

Happy Birthday, Bethlehem!
April 4, 2017, 7:00 pm, at the Moravian Archives
Lecture by Paul Peucker

Re-Inventing the Wheel: The Incredible Story of S. Morgan Smith
April 25, 2017, 7:00 pm at the Moravian Archives
Lecture by Stephen Nicholas

Recovering Anna Nitschmann: A Vision for a New Biography
May 9, 2017, 7:00 pm, at the Moravian Archives
Lecture by Katherine Faull

German Script Course
June 5-16, 2017

News and Announcements

Moravian Roots

Are you within a short walk or drive to the Moravian Archives, Bethlehem? We are looking for on-site volunteers to assist with our Moravian Roots project. Over 200 church registers are being indexed in a database that will eventually be searchable online. This is a great opportunity to exercise your reading of handwritten English or German, and also to help preserve the history of Moravians for many years to come! If you are interested in helping with data entry and/or indexing, please contact assistant archivist Tom McCullough at (610) 866-3255 or tom@moravianchurcharchives.org.

New Coloring Book

For the 275th anniversary of Bethlehem a new coloring book was

developed with artwork by Shelly Watson. This alphabetical coloring book about the history of Bethlehem includes twenty-six topics relating to life in early Bethlehem, combined with short and accessible texts. Each topic is illustrated with an attractive image that invites you to color. Copies of the coloring book were given by the Moravian Church to each third grader in the Bethlehem School District as an anniversary present. Copies are available at the Moravian Archives and at the Moravian Historical Society.

Journal of Moravian History

Commemorating the 600th anniversary of the martyrdom of Czech priest Jan Hus, the fall issue of the *Journal of Moravian History* focuses on the legacy of Jan Hus. Featuring

articles from historians Thomas A. Fudge and Tom Schwanda, the English-language historiography and Protestant reception of Hus are examined. Also included are book reviews and a bibliography of Moravian publications in English from 2011-2015. Issues will be available at the Moravian Archives.

Saturday Hours

The Moravian Archives will be open from 9:00 am until 4:00 pm on the following upcoming Saturdays: December 17, 2016, and on March 18 and on May 20, 2017. We will remain closed each following Monday (December 19, 2016; March 20, and May 22, 2017)



