

# Voices from the Vault

Issue 27

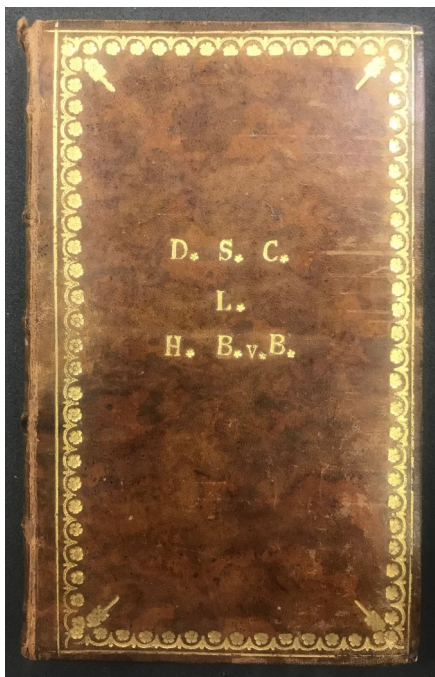
November 2017

## Growing the Collections

Private diaries by eighteenth-century Moravians are rare. So when we were able to acquire a private diary earlier this year, we were very pleased. In July the Archives purchased two handwritten volumes from a private individual in Germany. One volume is beautifully bound and gold embossed with the following initials: "D.S.C. | L. | H. B. v. B." The manuscript contains a collection of texts and hymns, mostly related to the death and burial of Christian Renuus von Zinzendorf and was compiled around 1753.

The other volume is a diary covering the years 1757-1760. Nowhere in the diary was the name of the author mentioned, but it was obvious that he was a student at the Moravian Theological Seminary in Barby, Germany. Another clue for finding his name was the fact that he mentioned celebrating his birthday on September 11. The Archives has a handy tool for finding who had a birthday on a specific day: the collection of Moravian birthday books. Moravians used to own a birthday book, which listed the names of the people who celebrated their birthday according to the days of the year. Usually at breakfast, they would read the Daily Text and see in the birthday book, who was celebrat-

ing a birthday on that day. An eighteenth-century birthday book in our collection revealed the name of our diary writer: Johann Ludwig Oeffingen.



Oeffingen was born in Heilbronn, Germany, in 1734. After attending the Moravian school at Marienborn in 1745 and 1746 and the Paedagogium at Hengersdorf, he went to Moravian Theological Seminary at Barby from 1754 to 1757. He was then called as a teacher of Latin and music at the Grosshengersdorf Paedagogium, where he arrived in November of 1757. In September of 1758 he was called as a scribe for Zinzendorf

and stayed with him in the Netherlands. He appears to have served there as one of the musicians as well (March 13, 1759). He followed Zinzendorf at the end of

1759 back to Herrnhut. The diary ends with an extensive description of Zinzendorf's death and burial in May of 1760. It is unclear what happened to Oeffingen after that.

The diary gives insight into the private thoughts of a young Moravian man at the beginning of his career. Oeffingen writes about his time at the Seminary in Barby; about the books he read; about his inner feelings; he wrote about international political events; about journeys between various Moravian centers and daytrips to local sites near Barby, Herrnhut, and Zeist; and about his time among Zinzendorf's staff (*Jüngerhaus*) in

Heerendijk. Most interestingly, at times he expressed his criticism of the Moravian practice of frequently relocating workers to other places.

This diary and the other volume are significant additions to our holdings. We are glad we are able to continue to grow the collections of the Archives!

## Special points of interest:

- Deadline for Research Grants Approaching
- "Moravian Lives" Project Launched
- New Dates for 2018 Moravian History Tour
- Moravian Archives Selected to Feature on "NEH For All" Website



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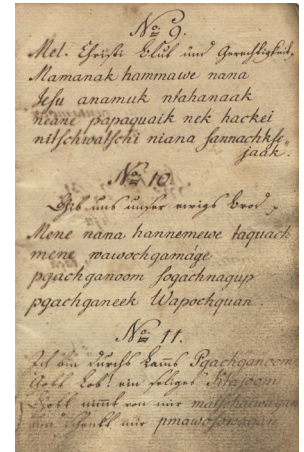
## New Research Projects

Several grants were received over the past several months that will serve to study and share Moravian history. Dr. Sarah Eyerly, a Florida State University musicology professor, won a prestigious fellowship from the American Council of Learned Societies for her efforts to revive some special Native American hymns from the 18th century. Eyerly, who received \$141,000 for the project, is collaborating with Dr. Rachel Wheeler, a religious studies scholar at Indiana University-Purdue University in Indianapolis. The year-long fellowship will support their work on the project, "Songs of the Spirit: The Collaborative Hymnody

of Mohican Moravian Missions." Eyerly and Wheeler are currently studying how members of the Native American Mohican tribe composed hymns with German Moravian missionaries at mission communities in New York, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut in the mid-18th century.

Dr. Mark David Turner of Memorial University of Newfoundland received a grant for a photographic digitization project. Turner, who is working to make media, archives, and heritage more accessible for the Inuit of Northern Labrador, received \$2,096 to fund the digitization of roughly 500 Labrador photographs

preserved at the Moravian Archives. Digitization will be carried out by Archives' staff, and digitized images and metadata will be incorporated into the Nunatsiavut Government's Collections Repository and the Nunatsiavut Cultural Media Network. Users of the digital collection will be encouraged to contribute new information about the photographs and the subjects they capture. This collaborative project stemmed from a research visit to Bethlehem by Turner, who has received a travel grant from the Vernon H. Nelson Memorial Fund (also see page 4).



Page from a Moravian hymn book for Native Americans

## Volunteer Spotlight: Kyle Brett

Kyle Brett is a PhD student and teaching fellow at Lehigh University. He teaches composition in the first-year writing program and teaches the practicum group of new graduate students. He is also editor of *The Lehigh Review* (Lehigh's undergraduate research journal), and serves on the dean's advisory committee. This year he was the recipient of the NEH Next Generation PhD Summer Internship grant. Jenna Lay, chair of English at Lehigh University, encouraged him to partner with a local community organization. "I knew of the Archives after moving here, and I attended a few lectures here," Kyle noted. "I also knew that Dr. Scott Gordon from the English Department at Lehigh does a lot of work at the Moravian Archives."

The call for volunteers on our website for Moravian Roots caught Kyle's attention. The summer internship allowed him to gain a sense of how an archives in a non-academic setting operates. His interest in transcriptions and digital humanities made the Moravian Roots project a perfect fit. The pro-

ject "benefits the Archives and thus benefits public access," says Kyle. By indexing the individual entries of church registers in an electronic database, the summer internship gave Kyle opportunity to gain valuable experience in digital transcription. This indexing allows the data of the registers to be captured in three mediums (original manuscript, reproduction image, Moravian Roots entry), which in turn serves to improve the long-term preservation of the church registers in the Archives collection. While working with church registers from Staten Island, Newport, and Oldman's Creek, Kyle indexed the names of thousands of Moravian church members. In a single register alone from New Dorp Moravian Church, he recorded over 2,540 entries (many of which contain names of several individuals, like parents, sponsors, and witnesses to the official act). In addition, Kyle also transcribed the results of Moravian synods from the 1740s.

Kyle cautions incoming volunteers and interns not to be afraid to ask questions. He describes the Ar-

chives as a "pretty tight ship," and he admires the balance and familiarity between Archives staff and our volunteer community. "It's a team-based effort," he says. "The volunteer base is incredible. Watching the dynamics of everyone working on this project helps me understand a third voice, another personality... the other hand that goes into making this public access [of the Moravian Archives] possible." His conversations with Paul and Tom "helped shape my larger research questions."

Kyle is a scholar of 19th-century America, with an emphasis on print culture. He has fallen in love with teaching. He enjoys urban exploration and snapping candid photographs around Bethlehem. Since finishing his summer internship, Kyle has been back to the Archives to examine the records of the Moravian Book Shop as part of his larger dissertation project.



## Moravian Lives: Launch of New Digital Platform

Over the last three years, teams of scholars at Bucknell University in the US and the University of Gothenburg in Sweden have been collaborating to build an online platform that aims to make available to the scholarly and lay community the vast corpus (in excess of 60,000 from just the German and US archives) of life writings (*Lebensläufe*) of members of the Moravian Church from the mid-18th century to today.

We are proud to announce the launch of "Moravian Lives" ([moravianlives.org](http://moravianlives.org)) which employs cutting-edge technologies and methodologies such as the use of computer-based inquiry and the

analysis of historical materials.

Visitors to the site can search the metadata of the archival memoir databases by name, place, or archive through the "map" interface. They can also transcribe memoirs from Bethlehem, PA, or Stockholm and Gothenburg, Sweden. There are some memoirs from London and Herrnhut in the database, with more being added daily.

The Advisory Board of Moravian Lives includes the archivists from Bethlehem, PA, and Herrnhut, Germany, along with some of the most prominent scholars and practitioners of the genre of the Moravian memoir in the world.

We are asking for your help to

start building up a collection of transcribed documents. Please go to the site and explore the map interface. Then go to the Transcription Desk, create a login for yourself, pick a memoir (German, English, or Swedish) and start transcribing! Through your work we can gain new insights into the lives of Moravian women and men from the past. Become part of a project that has already been hailed as groundbreaking and significant by researchers in both the US and Europe, and leads the way in the ever-growing field of research into Pietistic networks.

## New Members on Editorial Board

The Journal of Moravian History (JMh) is the official scholarly journal, jointly published by the Moravian Historical Society and the Moravian Archives. Two new members recently joined the editorial board: Dr. Jared S. Burkholder and Dr. Christina Petterson.

Jared Burkholder specializes in American religious history and received his PhD from the University of Iowa in 2007. He serves as the chair of the Department of History and Political Science at Grace Col-

lege in Winona Lake, Indiana. Jared writes about Moravians in North America as well as about the intersection of Anabaptism, Pietism, and American evangelicalism. His current book project is tentatively titled *German Pietism and the American Imagination: A Contested Evangelical Legacy*.

Christina Petterson received her PhD from Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia, in 2011. As a Gerda Henkel Research Fellow at Australian National University in

Canberra, she specializes in European history with an emphasis on social changes, colonialism, and missions. Her current research focuses on Zinzendorf's sermons in an effort to trace "changes in social relations, the establishment of gender roles, and individualization" in the 18th-century Moravian Church. Her book *From Tomb to Text: the Body of Jesus in the Book of John* was published this year by Bloomsbury T&T Clark.



## "NEH For All" Features Moravian Archives

The Moravian Archives has been selected to feature on the new "NEH For All" website that was launched in October of this year. During the past years, the Archives has received two prestigious grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH): one for the installation of new shelving in our storage vault and one to assess the records from the Caribbean. These federal grants are an important recognition of the importance of our

collections. In July, we submitted another grant application to the NEH for the preservation and digitization of Caribbean records.

For so many cultural institutions, grants make all the difference. So when news reports came out that the current federal administration is proposing to end foundations such as the NEH and the National Endowment for the Arts, great concern rose among people who care for our cultural heritage.

In response to the disconcerting news, the National Humanities Alliance Foundation designed the "NEH For All" website, showcasing a selection of NEH grants that have made special impact. From thousands of NEH supported projects two or three impactful projects were chosen per state. The Moravian Archives is proud to be selected for the state of Pennsylvania! For more information, go to: [www.nehforall.org](http://www.nehforall.org)



## Newsletter from the Moravian Archives, Bethlehem PA

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## Upcoming Events

### "Snow over Bethlehem"

November 15, 2017, 5:00 pm, at the Moravian Archives  
Special viewing of the 11 original watercolors by Katherine Milhous  
With introduction by Barbara Dietterich

### Saturday Hours

December 2, 2017, 9:00 am—4:00 pm

### German-English Advent Singstunde

December 5, 2017, 7:00 pm

In the Old Chapel on the campus of Central Moravian Church in Bethlehem, PA

### "The Hidden Work of Moravian Wives: A Conversation with Anna Nitschmann, Eva Spangenberg, Martha Spangenberg, and Erdmuth von Zinzendorf"

February 13, 2018, 7:00 pm, at the Moravian Archives  
Lecture by Dr. Katherine Faull, Bucknell University

### German Script Course

June 4-15, 2018

### New: German Script Refresher Course

July 23-27, 2018

### Bethlehem Conference on Moravian History & Music

October 11-13, 2018  
[www.moravianconferences.org](http://www.moravianconferences.org)

For more details, visit [www.moravianchurcharchives.org](http://www.moravianchurcharchives.org)

## News and Announcements

### New Dates for 2018 Moravian History Tour

Central Travelers and the Moravian Archives are glad to announce a trip to Europe to visit Moravian sites in 2018. Moravian archivist and historian, Paul Peucker, will travel with the group to provide historical information and insights. Stops and tours include Prague, the Kalich Rocks, Herrnhut, Berthelsdorf, Gross Hengersdorf, Niesky, Kleinwelka, Herrnhag, Neuwied, Zeist, Comenius's grave at Naarden, and Christiansfeld. This tour will be a unique opportunity to visit Moravian sites in four European countries. Departure date is July 11, 2018; return on July 22, 2018 (new dates).

If you are interested in receiving a flyer with more details (available in the fall of 2017), please contact

Craig Mosebach: 610.625.4576, [cmosebach@rcn.com](mailto:cmosebach@rcn.com), or the Moravian Archives.

### Research Grants

The deadline for research grants from the Rev. Vernon H. Nelson Fund is February 28, 2018. 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, 2018. We also welcome donations to the Vernon Nelson Fund in order to

grow this commendable fund. The fund was established in 2010 by the family of former Moravian Archivist, Rev. Vernon H. Nelson.

### 2018 Bethlehem Conference on Moravian History & Music

The call for papers for this conference will be available on the conference website (see above) in mid-November 2017.

### New exhibit: Moravian Connections

Moravians were well connected. Their communities were far from being the isolated places we sometimes imagine. This is the topic of our current exhibit: Moravian Connections. The exhibit shows how Moravians through the ages have been connected to important men and women: presidents, first ladies,

generals, instrument makers, politicians, and artists. Moravian Connections was curated by Brielle Popolla, a student from Moravian College who came to us for an internship during the first half of 2017. We asked her to put together an exhibit about whatever topic she found interesting. Brielle studied the collections of the Archives and was surprised to find so many links to names that were familiar to her. During the summer months she spent many hours framing images, writing labels, planning the design, and making sure everything was put in the right place.

Moravian Connections is open to the public, free of charge, during our regular operational hours.