

Voices from the Vault

Issue 26 June 2017

Donation of Recently Discovered Letters

At an antiques market last summer a set of twelve letters was discovered that at one point had been part of the records of the Moravian Young Ladies' Seminary in Bethlehem. Most of the letters were dated between 1824 and 1832 and were addressed to Rev. Charles Seidel, who was principal of the school at the time. The letters are mostly from parents of pupils who are attending the school and deal with financial matters. Several letters were received from book publisher Uriah

Hunt in Philadelphia who provided the school with books such as Lindley Murray's English grammar, Louis Chambaud's *Fables Choisies* ("very scarce," Hunt added), Mary Martha Sherwood's *Stories Explanatory of the Church Catechism*, and unnamed children's books. One letter was written by Martin van Buren, the later president of the United States. When van Buren wrote the letter in 1825 he was a US Senator from New York. Van Buren wrote about his niece Sarah Ann Limberger who was a student in the school. Van Buren supported his niece in a generous way: "Should she want anything for the approaching examination in the way of dress, I shall be extremely obliged if your good lady will have it prepared for her. I mention this not knowing whether her Father has attended to this matter."

One of the donated letters is a letter written by Anna Rosina

Kliest to Israel Whelen in Philadelphia in 1794. Technically, the letter was never part of the records of the Young Ladies' Seminary but it was written by one of the teachers and sent to the father of a student. Kliest (1762-1821) was a teacher at the school from 1788 until 1805. She was a talented person and later became known as a botanist. Some of her beautiful watercolors at the Moravian Archives document life in the school around 1800. Kliest wrote the newly found letter to the father of one of her pupils, Jane Israel. Although Jane was a good student who had "not failed in assiduity to her lessons," Kliest called her "a lazy Pen-Woman."

The letters provide wonderful insight into life at the Young Ladies' Seminary around 1800. We thank Dr. Scott Paul Gordon, Bethlehem, who purchased the letters and donated them to the Moravian Archives.

Special points of interest:

- Tom Bross is New President of Archives' Board
- Three Projects Receive Vernon Nelson Research Grants
- Large Bequest Received by Archives
- Moravian History Tour 2018 announced



Research Grants Awarded for First Time

For the first time we were able to award Vernon Nelson Research Grants. This year's awardees are:

- Mark Dixon, Princeton Theological Seminary: "Enslaved African Responses to Moravian Pietism in Colonial South Carolina"
- Mark Turner, Memorial University of Newfoundland: "Hopedale Nunatsiavut: Unlocking the

Chronicle of an Inuit Community"
• Charles Welsko, West Virginia University: "A World Full of Mutations: Loyalty as a Cultural Process in the Civil War Era Mid-Atlantic 1850-1880."

The Rev. Vernon H. Nelson fund was established by relatives of the former archivist in 2011 to encourage research at the Moravian Archives. These grants are a won-

derful way to commemorate Rev. Nelson's legacy as archivist of the Moravian Church. Applications for 2018 grants are due by February 28, 2018.

We welcome additional donations in order to continue growing this fund. Send us a check or go to www.moravianchurcharchives.org/support

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Tom Bross, New President of Archives' Board

Eight years ago, Tom Bross learned about the Moravian Archives, and, as of January 1, 2017, he is serving as president of the Archives Board. Raised in Lebanon, Pennsylvania, Tom Bross knew a number of Moravians growing up. He became interested in the Moravians as a physics teacher and Science Department Chair at Moravian Academy, where he taught for 38 years. At Moravian Academy, Tom learned about Zinzendorf, Benigna, Comenius, and others; eventually, he learned a great deal about the Moravian Archives through conversations with his son, a Moravian College alumnus, who took a Moravian History course taught by archivist Paul Peucker.

Michael Long, past president of the Archives' Board, spent time over the past few years chatting with

Tom about the Archives and the Board. In 2014, Tom was appointed by the Provincial Elders' Conference to serve on the Archives Board. He was confident that his experience with committees at Moravian Academy would help him serve as a board member, and he was excited about the opportunity—in retirement—to serve on a board for the first time.

One of the first things Tom noticed was the variety of expertise on the Board, with members from the Moravian Church, academia, accounting, law, etc. Tom added, "These are good people to have on the Board—a fine and sophisticated and friendly group on which to rely."

Tom has spent time over the past few months as Board president working with different volunteers at the Archives to understand what

they do and how they interact with MAB staff. "I feel like I have to know more about the Archives...to meet with volunteers and see what they do...to effectively represent the Archives," he remarks. Relatively new to the field of historical record preservation, Tom is excited to lead the MAB Board with a fresh perspective. He wants to increase outreach and introduce new faces to the work of the Moravian Archives, noting "This is not a quiet, stagnant institution; there is much activity at the Archives!"

To the Friends and future Friends of the Archives, Tom encourages everyone to "continue reading about the Archives activities, and, when possible, come out to an event in support of the Archives."



Tom Bross, President of the Board of Directors of the Moravian Archives

New Finding Aids

The records of First Moravian Church of Philadelphia (MC Phila I) are now cataloged. The collection spans about 1740-1965 and encompasses approximately 30 linear feet. This collection was arranged and described by assistant archivist Tom McCullough. "These records truly document all of the various ways in which a congregation forms, grows, rebuilds, moves, and, unfortunately in the case of Philadelphia, closes," says Tom. "Moravians in Philadelphia didn't dispose of much, even the everyday receipt or memo, and we are thankful for this today!"

The collection is a great resource for anyone studying the church's administration, networking, or worship practices as developed through their presence and establishment in Philadelphia as the second oldest Moravian congregation in North America. This collection is searchable in our online

finding aid under the category: 4. Congregations.

Archives research and digitization assistant, Kaitlin Trainor, cataloged a small collection of legal documents from Philadelphia (CLDP) that was once found within the aforementioned Records of First Moravian Church of Philadelphia. This small collection contains over 200 copies, drafts, and official documents pertaining to land surveying, legal agreements, and other topics. The provenance of this small collection remains unknown; however, it seems likely that these documents were drafted by Philadelphia native, Nicholas Scull, Jr. (1687-1761), an American surveyor and cartographer who served as the Surveyor General of Pennsylvania from 1748 until 1761. Another possibility is that the documents were deposited at the church by William Parsons, an associate of the Moravians in

southeastern Pennsylvania and predecessor to Nicholas Scull, Jr., as Surveyor General of Pennsylvania. One final possibility is that these documents ended up in the church records through Charles Brockden, deputy master of the rolls "for the province of Pennsylvania" and member of the congregation in Philadelphia. This collection may be accessed in our online finding aid under the category: 10. Collections. Kaitlin recently received a master's degree in Library Science at Rutgers University.



The Moravian Church on Wood Street, 1856

Book Launch at Moravian Archives

On April 6 the Moravian Archives hosted the launch of *Speaking to Body and Soul: Instructions for the Moravian Choir Helpers, 1785-1786*, by Moravian scholar and Archives' board member Katherine Faull. *Speaking to Body and Soul* includes translations of instructions for the choir helpers who were in charge of the spiritual care of church members. The detailed instructions were highly confidential at the time they were written and were only passed on with the permission of the administration of the church. These texts helped the choir helpers provide spiritual guidance on topics as varied as the physical manifestations of puberty, sexual attraction, frequency of intercourse, infant care, and bereavement.



Author Katherine Faull at the book launch

Speaking to Body and Soul

**\$17.95
(paperback)
\$63.75 (cloth)**

**Order now from
our website or
call 610.866.3255**

Moravian History Tour of Europe 2018

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 Hennersdorf, 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 4, 2018; return on July 15, 2018.

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, or the Moravian Archives.



The Moravian Church in Herrnhut, Germany

Richard C. Spear Bequest

The most generous bequest in the history of the Moravian Archives was made by Dr. Richard C. Spear from Louisville, Kentucky. Speechless but grateful was Moravian Archivist Paul Peucker when it became clear that the market value of Spear's bequest was close to \$1.9 million.

Richard Spear was unknown to the members of the current Archives staff and board and his generosity came as a complete surprise. Spear

was born in 1919 at Newcomers-town, Ohio, as the son of Edward C. Spear and Augusta, née Stocker. His mother's brother was F. Paul Stocker, who was the president of the Provincial Elders' Conference of the Moravian Church and served on the Archives' board for many years. According to information provided by the family, Stocker recommended his nephew to leave his estate to the archives in Bethlehem. Spear was a surgeon in Louisville and

served as chief-of-staff at Baptist Health Hospital and at Methodist Evangelical Hospital. When Spear passed away in 2007 his estate was placed in a trust.

The bequest will provide an enormous boost for the work of the Archives. "We cannot even dream of the good things we will be able to do now," said archivist Peucker. "Spear's generosity will certainly benefit the preservation of Moravian history."

For questions regarding leaving a legacy to the Moravian Archives, contact the Moravian Ministries Foundation: www.mmfa.info

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

Free Summer Sundays

Free admission at the Whitefield House Museum in Nazareth, July 2 — August 27, 2017

Summer Soirée

August 22, 2017, 5:00—7:00 pm, at the Moravian Archives
A special event for the Friends of the Moravian Archives

"How to Take Care of Your Family Records"

Workshop with Dee Collins at the Moravian Archives
Date to be announced

German-English Advent Singstunde

December 5, 2017, 7:00 pm
In the Old Chapel on the campus of Central Moravian Church in Bethlehem, PA

German Script Course

June 4-15, 2018
For more details, visit www.moravianchurcharchives.org

Bethlehem Conference on Moravian History & Music

October 11-13, 2018
Sponsored by the Moravian Archives, Moravian College, and the Center for Moravian Studies, in partnership with the Moravian Music Foundation, Moravian Historical Society, Moravian Theological Seminary, and Historic Bethlehem Partnership

News and Announcements

Restroom Renovations

During the spring of 2017 the restrooms at the Moravian Archives were renovated. Old obsolete hardware has been removed, new towel holders have been installed, and everything has been freshly painted. We thank the Moravian Theological Seminary for allowing us to use their restrooms during this period.

Canadian Records

In April of this year archivist Paul Peucker visited Edmonton, Alberta, to meet with the board of the Canadian Moravian Historical Society. Paul was impressed with the well-organized records of the Moravian churches in the Canadian district of the Moravian Church and with the great passion of the board members for their organization. In

the near future, the records from the Canadian District will be transferred to the Moravian Archives in Bethlehem, PA. Here the records will be housed with other records from the Northern Province.

The Archival Spirit

In November 2016, assistant archivist Tom McCullough was appointed editor of *The Archival Spirit*, an archives newsletter published three times per year by the Archivists of Religious Collections Section (ARCS) of the Society of American Archivists. Tom works with fellow archivists and librarians and the officers of ARCS to share news, ideas, and histories as they pertain to religious collections and archives. Electronic issues of *Archival Spirit* can be found on the website of the Society of American

Archivists (www.archivists.org and search for "Archival Spirit").

Journal of Moravian History

A new issue (vol. 17, no. 1) of the *Journal of Moravian History* was released in May 2017. Contents are: (1) Rachel Wheeler and Sarah Eyerly, "Songs of the Spirit: Hymnody in the Moravian Mohican Missions"; (2) Kyle Fisher, "After Gnadenhütten: The Moravian Indian Mission in the Old Northwest, 1782–1812"; and (3) Christina Petterson and Katherine M. Faull, "Speaking about Marriage: Notes from the 1744 Married Choir Conferences."

Caribbean Records

The MAB recently applied for a "Digitizing Hidden Special Collections and Archives" grant, funded by the Council on Library and Infor-

mation Resources (CLIR). It is our goal to digitize our holdings from the Caribbean and to make such records available in the Digital Library of the Caribbean (dLOC). If approved, digitization will commence with records from Antigua, as outlined in a project we have titled: Archiving Antigua.

For regular updates about events at the Moravian Archives:

subscribe to our email newsletter (see website for details)