

# Voices from the Vault

Issue 32 June 2020

## Moravian Archives on Curaçao



Curaçao is a Caribbean island, located forty miles north of Venezuela. The Moravian congregation on the island dates back to 1944 and is located in a quiet neighborhood of Willemstad, not far from the ocean. This winter the church board asked me to come to Curaçao to organize the archives of the congregation so my husband Jeffrey Long and I traveled to the island in January and February to spend two weeks cleaning, sorting,

and arranging the records. Having grown up in the Netherlands, my first language is Dutch. Curaçao is an autonomous country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands so everyone on the island speaks Dutch.

Upon arrival Helena Menzo, chair of the church board, handed me the key to the archives' room and explained she needed my help finding the original deeds for the properties the congregation owns: the church, the parsonage, and a property across the street from the church. These documents were necessary to settle legal questions regarding the ground lease and property boundaries.

First we cleaned all the binders, folders, volumes, and shelves by removing a thin layer of dust and mold that covered everything.

After freeing the archives from unnecessary clutter (including old office supplies, empty boxes, and even an unused toilet seat) we were able to organize the records. Sister Helena was delighted when I texted her that I found the property records she had been looking for. On our last day we presented her with a list of the files kept in the archives' room.

Curaçao is a beautiful island with an interesting but complicated history. The people we met, the food we ate, and even the house we stayed in were all products of centuries of colonialism – something that is part of my own family history as well. For both of us it was a wonderful experience to be able to help a Moravian church in another part of the world, while also enjoying a break from the long Pennsylvania winter.

## Zinzendorf in America

Count Zinzendorf, founder and leader of the renewed Moravian Church, visited America from December 1741 until January 1743. During this time, he visited colonists throughout eastern Pennsylvania, preached wherever he had an opportunity, conducted synods, traveled among the American Indians, and organized Moravian congregations in such places as Bethlehem, Philadelphia, and Nazareth. In January of 1743 he and his travel company sailed back to England.

Zinzendorf hoped to eventually return to America and live in Nazareth where a large residence was built for him. However, he never came back. Zinzendorf died in

Herrnhut on May 9, 1760, less than three weeks before his 60<sup>th</sup> birthday.

This exhibit shows the traces left by Zinzendorf in America: objects that remind us of his visit to Pennsylvania, items passed down within his family, and artifacts acquired by the Moravian Archives. Many of Zinzendorf's descendants live in the United States. Some of the artifacts that were preserved in the family have been given to the Moravian Archives, such as Zinzendorf's personal Bible, their table silver, or—most recently—a portrait of the count. Over the years, the Moravian Archives has been able to purchase items

relating to the Zinzendorfs and add these to the collections. During the 1980s, an oil painting depicting scenes from Zinzendorf's grand tour of Europe (1719-21) was purchased in London. Last September, a portrait of his oldest son, Christian Renatus (1727-54) was bought at an auction in Berlin. This painting (see article on p. 2) will be shown for the first time in this exhibit. Graphic designer Heather Reinert created a spectacular map showing the places in America Zinzendorf visited.

The exhibit is free of charge and open during the regular hours of the Moravian Archives, through the Summer of 2021.

### Special points of interest:

- Moravian Archives & COVID-19
- MAB Looking ahead: Electronic records survey
- MAB receives CLIR grant for *Uncommon Bonds* project



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### Inside this issue:

New Acquisition: Christian Renatus	2
Spotlight: Emma Horning	3
MAB Sidewalks get repaired	4

## New Acquisition: Christian Renatus von Zinzendorf

Sometimes amazing objects come up for auction. Last September we learned a portrait of Zinzendorf's oldest son, Christian Renatus, was being offered at an auction in Berlin, Germany.

Christian Renatus von Zinzendorf was born in Herrnhut on September 19, 1727. Benigna was his older sister (1725-1789). One older brother, Christian Friedrich, was born in

August of 1724 but sadly died only three months later. Christian Renatus became the leader of the single brothers in the Moravian Church. Each choir house of the single brothers had his portrait. Christel died in London, twenty-four years old, on May 28, 1752.

The portrait we were able to purchase in Berlin is rather small and intimate: 6 ¾ in. x 5 ¾ in. Unfortunately,

we do not know anything about its provenance. The small size suggests the portrait was not used in a choir house but was possibly painted to be displayed in private quarters.

In preparation for the exhibit "Zinzendorf in America" the portrait was preserved by Steven Erisoty in Philadelphia who had previously preserved paintings by Gus-

tav Grunewald for us. He consolidated insecure paint, removed grime and old varnish, filled and painted paint losses, and applied a new layer of varnish. The result is truly spectacular. Color and clarity, previously hidden underneath discolored varnish, have been brought back. The preserved portrait is on display in our new exhibit "Zinzendorf in America" (see page 1).

## Archiving Antigua Project Complete



**Council on Library and Information Resources** scripts from Antigua. The digitized manuscripts are now available online in the Digital Library

In April 2020, the MAB completed the *Archiving Antigua* project (2018-2020), a two-year project to digitize 112 historic Moravian manu-

of the Caribbean (dLOC) at [www.dloc.com/archivingantigua](http://www.dloc.com/archivingantigua).

Digitization was carried out by the Conservation for Art and Histor-

ic Artifacts (CCAHA) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, between 2017 and 2019. Additional materials have since been digitized by the Moravian Archives, Bethlehem in a continued effort to improve access to materials from Antigua.

By the time the project concluded on April 1, 2020, statistics made available by the University of Florida indicate that MAB materials on

dLOC had been viewed more than 89,000 times by users.

The *Archiving Antigua* project was supported by a Digitizing Hidden Special Collections & Archives grant from the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR). The grant program is made possible by funding from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

## Acquisition d'un nouveau livre: Arndt's *Of True Christianity*

We are excited to announce that—through the generous support from Friends of the Archives—we were able to purchase a rare French-language edition of Johann Arndt's *Of True Christianity* from a Parisian bookdealer. In 1723, Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf commissioned a French translation of Arndt's text, and this edition was published in Amsterdam by the brothers Joannes and

Henrik Janson van Waesberge. Understanding that the book was valuable for future researchers but that its monetary value exceeded our acquisitions budget, we put out a call-for-help sign in the reading room.

One of the donors that helped us acquire the book said, "I had seen the sign in the Archives regarding the book but never took the time to stop and read it. I know that

Paul [Peucker] would not recommend such a purchase unless it would be an important addition to the Archives' collection and specifically learning more about what Zinzendorf was reading. What a person reads is a reflection of his or her interests, seeking answers to questions, learning from others writings. It is an indicator of what one wants to learn more about which in turn helps to develop and

shape one's own views. I imagine Zinzendorf must have been struggling with his own view of Christianity. He sought to learn more about, and to understand the various movements of earlier times and what could be found in the writings of others before him. This in turn no doubt led to his own developing philosophy of Christianity and the direction of the Protestant movement of his time."

## MAB and Covid-19

March 17, 2020 marked the first day MAB was closed due to the Covid-19 epidemic. During the time the stay-at-home order remained in effect, staff remained hard at work albeit from the comfort of their own homes rather than the reading room.

During this time staff continued

working on normal day-to-day functions such as staff meetings hosted through Zoom, completing this issue of our bi-annual newsletter, and ensuring the day-to-day functions of the archives will resume "normal" once staff returns to their offices. In addition, staff was also able to priori-

tize other endeavors normally left in the category of "when we have time."

We cleaned up our online catalogs, began a new blog series "Digital Collection Spotlight" which can be found on our website, and indexed countless volumes of records as an added bonus of our

*Archiving Antigua* project. We increased our social media presence to connect with our community and many others.

We are happy to return to the archives and to some sense of normalcy. We are excited to get back to the tasks we could not complete while at home.

## Spotlight: Emma Horning



Emma Horning began volunteering at the Moravian Archives in September of 2018 as a way to expand her experience working with archives. She found a strong personal connection with

the collection of MAB being a Bethlehem native herself.

Emma possesses a wealth of knowledge relating to photographs and photographic procedures having completed a bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Photography from Kutztown University, had previously managed the archives of three fine art photographers, and is an accomplished photographer herself. While volunteering at MAB Emma has been processing some of our photograph collection. Emma loves working with photographs and the stories and histo-

ries they tell stating she has "enjoyed cataloguing photographs of Bethlehem made throughout the latter half of the 1800s. It is amazing to "witness" the growth and evolution of various spaces we still live and work in today."

In January of this year Emma was hired as the Moravian Archives Office and Circulation Assistant and has become a wonderful addition to our staff. She has worked on a variety of exciting projects for the Moravian History Store including email marketing campaigns, updating and upkeep of the store's

online components, and in-house photography. Emma also assists our Office Manager, Kelly, with various day-to-day tasks.

When not assisting Kelly, Emma records the use of our collection by the general public and ensures the proper re-shelving of items used by staff, researchers, and volunteers.

Emma is currently a Master of Library and Information Science candidate with a concentration in archival studies at the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee.

## MAB receives CLIR grant for *Uncommon Bonds* Project

On January 9, 2020, we were pleased to learn that we were one of eighteen institutions in North America to receive grant funding (\$168,349) out of more than 100 applications for digitization initiatives from the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR). Our project, *Uncommon Bonds: Labrador Inuit and Moravian Missionaries*, which will result in the digitization of over 56,000 pages

of Moravian records from missions in Labrador, 1764-1944, is a partnership between the MAB, Memorial University of Newfoundland, the Nunatsiavut Government, and the Moravian Church in Newfoundland and Labrador (MCNL). Project support has been graciously provided by the National Heritage Digitization Strategy of Canada.

Just two years ago, we were delighted to learn of our successful

application to CLIR as it relates to the *Archiving Antiqua* project (see page 2). This project, likewise, will span 24 months and will commence with a site visit to the MAB by representatives from project partners in Labrador and Newfoundland. MAB staff will ultimately travel to Labrador at the end of the project to present the results of *Uncommon Bonds* in each of the four Labrador communities with a

Moravian presence.

*Uncommon Bonds* is supported by a Digitizing Hidden Special Collections and Archives grant from CLIR. The grant program is made possible by funding from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. We are grateful for the continued support from CLIR, which has consistently recognized and enhanced the value of MAB collections through grant programming.

## Lecture on the Lititz Collegium Musicum

On February 18 the Moravian Archives had the pleasure of hosting Dr. Jeffrey Gemmel (Lititz Moravian Church and Millersville University) for a lecture titled "The Lititz Collegium Musicum." In his lecture Gemmel discussed his newest endeavor, the revitaliza-

tion of the Lititz Collegium Musicum and its goal to perform newly edited scores from the church's vast music collection to delight a new generation of listeners.

Gemmel spoke of discoveries made in exploring and editing the scores, the challenges of organiz-

ing and performing concerts, and what is next for the newly resurrected Collegium.

This lecture was recorded and is available online through the Moravian Archives YouTube channel along with other select lecture recordings.



## MAB looks ahead to Electronic Records

As an increasing number of records and communications are being created and stored on computers rather than on paper, the Moravian Archives recognizes that our role of preserving the records and history of the Church calls for us to manage these records as

well. In light of this we have begun developing plans on how we can work with other parts of the Moravian Church to achieve this. As an early step in this process we recently sent a survey to the congregations and agencies of the Northern Province with the goal of de-

veloping an understanding of what materials these groups are creating and storing digitally and how we can assist them with maintaining them and eventual transfer to us. While we are still in the early stages of analyzing the results, what we have found so far

is encouraging as it has established that most groups have already started organizing and backing up their digital records. We expect to have a strong start for moving forward with this important work.

## Newsletter from the Moravian Archives, Bethlehem PA

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## Upcoming Events

### Bethlehem Conference on Moravian History and Music

October 8, 2020 - October 10, 2020  
More information please visit;  
[www.moravianconferences.org](http://www.moravianconferences.org)

### Moravian Archives Saturday Hours

Saturday, September 12, 2020, 9:00 am - 4:00 pm  
Saturday December 5, 2020, 9:00 am - 12:00 pm

### German-English Advent Singstunde

December 1, 2020, 7:00 pm  
In the Old Chapel on the campus of Central Moravian Church in Bethlehem, PA

### German Script Course 2021

Summer, 2021  
Registration will open in July 2020 at [www.moravianchurcharchives.org/events](http://www.moravianchurcharchives.org/events)

### MAB will be closed the following dates:

Friday, July 3, 2020 - Fourth of July Holiday  
Monday, September 7, 2020 - Labor Day Holiday  
Wednesday, October 7 - Friday, October 9th, 2020 - Moravian History and Music Conference



# New Items!



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## News and Announcements

### Collections newly cataloged:

- Western District Executive Board (WDEB)
- Edgeboro Moravian Church (MC Edgeboro)
- Pacific Southwest Moravian Board (PSMB)
- Executive Board of the Eastern District (EBED)
- Executive Board of the 1st District (IDEB)
- Executive Board of the 2nd District (IIDEB)
- Executive Board of the 3rd District (IIIDEB)
- Executive Board of the 4th District (IVDEB)
- Hope Conference & Renewal Center (HCRC)
- Personal Papers of Charles B.

### Adams (PPACB)

- Canaan Moravian Church (MC Canaan)

### Sidewalk repair:

In the early spring MAB was able to improve the sidewalk located outside of the front of the building to make it safer for all who walk by. Like many of the sidewalks throughout Bethlehem tree roots over time have caused the sidewalks to become uneven resulting in a safety hazard to all who walk across them. Brightview Tree Service was contracted to remove two large trees and their roots and A.J. Trunzo, Inc. was hired to lay the new concrete. This project took about a week to complete and we are very happy with the results.

### VHN Grants:

The Moravian Archives was able to award four Vernon Nelson Research Grants this spring.

This year's awardees are:

- Kelly Douma, Pennsylvania State University:** "To Be Proposed As Useful: Moravian Women's Marriage and Migration in the 18th Century Atlantic World"
- Jessica Ferguson, Woodbury, NJ:** "Moravian Church at Oldman's Creek - Minotty Update"
- Benjamin Pietrenka, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg:** "Radical Pietist Revisions of the Bible in Early American Protestantism"
- Eileen F. Shanahan, Pitman,**

NJ: "The Early History of the Moravian Church at Oldman's Creek"

See our website for information and the deadline for next year's applications.

### Journal of Moravian History 20.1 Available:

A new issue of JMH is available, featuring articles by Craig D. Atwood, Paul Peucker, and Brent Ranalli, with topics ranging from the General Synod of 1957 to Comenius and pansophy to the original 1727 statutes of Herrnhut. Visit [www.moravianchurcharchives.org/publications](http://www.moravianchurcharchives.org/publications) to learn more about how to get your copy today!