

Voices from the Vault

Issue 35 November 2021

Earliest Sketch of The Power of the Gospel

The Power of the Gospel is one of the prominent paintings at the Moravian Archives. It fills an entire wall of the gallery and it is well known to many people. The painting shows Moravian missionary David Zeisberger preaching to the Seneca in Ohio and was painted by Christian Schussele in Philadelphia. The Moravian Archives also has a watercolor Schussele made for the four men who had commissioned this work. That watercolor, however, is not the earliest design for this painting, as a close inspection of its back recently revealed.

The watercolor was originally owned by John Skirving, a contractor in Philadelphia, who was one of the four men who commissioned the painting. He was also the publisher of the lithograph of *The Power of the Gospel*. After Skirving's death in 1864 the watercolor became the property of his daughter Lizzie, who was married to artist and historian Rufus Grider (1817-1900). Grider originally alerted Skirving to the topic of the painting and – together with Skirving, Sylvester Wolle, and John Jordan – raised the sum of \$1,200 as a honorary for Schussele. In 1894 Grider gave the framed watercolor to the Moravian Archives where it was on display for many years at the former building on the corner of



Watercolor sketch (top) of *The Power of the Gospel* by Christian Schussele, with earlier pencil sketch (bottom) recently discovered on the back of the watercolor (enhanced).

Elizabeth Avenue and Main Street. It did not reveal its secret, however, until it was taken out of its frame and the back became visible.

As we were cataloging the watercolor this summer, faint pencil markings were discovered on its back. After scanning the back and enhancing the contrast of the digital image an early sketch of *The Power of the Gospel*

became visible. We can see the outlines of people gathering around a campfire with a group of women placed at the left side of the composition. One of the women seems to be holding a baby. In the final version the baby was replaced by a toddler standing next to its mother. Just as in the later painting two figures in the center are approaching from the background. A little to

the right of the center two taller figures can be seen, one of whom was the main character, David Zeisberger. It appears the artist Schussele had confused the name Zeisberger with Zinzendorf, as the handwritten name "Zinzerdoff" written to the right of this figure seems to suggest.

After drawing this initial sketch, Schussele turned the paper over and painted the watercolor on the back. According to the information provided by Grider this watercolor was discussed by the four men and changes were requested: "it will be seen that Zeisberger's attitude here is one of command – that was changed to persuasion, otherwise both are alike." The discovery of the early sketch adds to our knowledge about the working methods of Christian Schussele and the origins of *The Power of the Gospel*.

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Volunteer Spotlight: Richard Miller



Folks throughout the Bethlehem Moravian community recognize Richard Miller as an organist at Central Moravian Church and for his volunteer service at various Lehigh Valley institutions over the years, such as the Moravian Music Foundation and Lehigh University Art Galleries. Retired from a successful career as a healthcare activity professional, Richard's path towards becoming an archives' volunteer began several years ago and was shaped by his experiences as a researcher in our reading room, paging through the same church registers he now helps to make more

accessible. In 2016, while studying the family history of his Krause, Liebig and Albright ancestors, Richard participated in a genealogy workshop. Moravian Church records, so he thought, would help tell the full story of his great-grandfather's death.

Since becoming a volunteer for the Moravian Roots project in March of 2018, Richard has—in the course of indexing baptisms, marriages, funerals, and other official acts—come to learn much about his family's extensive connections to the Moravian Church in Bethlehem, especially through his maternal grandmother Nina Lee Krause. Working primarily with the register of Central Moravian Church (Bethlehem, PA) from the late 1800s, Richard regularly comes across names of ancestors, as well as famous Bethlehem residents

(e.g., Hilda Doolittle, Archibald Johnston, James Pfeiffer, and J. F. Wolle). He is also confronted with formal but sometimes unusual names of the times like Hortensia (his great Aunt "Tennie") and Adelaide; however, being an avid reader of Victorian period mysteries, he is quite confident in discerning these names of a bygone era. More than anything else, it is the handwriting that presents the most challenges; he laments that there is no simple shortcut to "[get] used to reading each minister's distinctive style of writing."

For Richard, his personal connection to Bethlehem and the church where he plays organ certainly enhances his volunteer work. Discovering his ancestors' involvement in the Moravian Church, learning more about who they knew, and what daily life was

like in former times has been an extremely gratifying experience.

The photograph at left depicts Richard in October of 2019 as he indexed the baptismal entries of four children of Edward J. and Sarah Coleman Krause, née Lee. One of these entries describes the baptism of Richard's grandmother, Nina Lee Krause, born on October 3, 1887. Richard laid out family portraits from his private collection to coincide with the special occasion of documenting the group baptism in the database. Despite his own Moravian roots, it is completing tasks to benefit *others* researching their families that Richard considers most rewarding as a Moravian Archives volunteer.

Grunewald's View of a River

The Moravian Archives already had an impressive collection of paintings by Bethlehem Moravian painter Gustav Grunewald. Recently we were able to add *View of a River* to our collection. Including this latest acquisition, the Moravian Archives now has eleven oil paintings by Grunewald. *View of a River* shows a river or a creek, possibly the Monocacy Creek near Bethlehem, with

South Mountain in the background. On the water we see a man punting a small boat. The painting, which was acquired from the Bethlehem Area Public Library, is dated 1865 on the back. This is the year his wife Maria Justina died in Bethlehem and Grunewald traveled to Germany, where he married Mathilde Josephine Rieger.



Records of Moravian Congregations in California Processed

This year the records of the Moravian Church in California have been processed. In 1889 the Moravian Church first sent missionaries to the Banning California area where they established Morongo Moravian Church, a congregation that is still active today. Over time, three additional congregations were established in California, all have since closed: The Moravian

congregations of Downey (1949-2017), West Covina (1956-1994), and Good Shepherd (1966-1994).

The records of these congregations were transferred to the archives at various times but remained unprocessed until this year. Although the majority of these records still fall within the Moravian Church's 75-year restriction period for public use, the materials of all four California congregations are

now rehoused for long-term preservation, organized, and described. There are various reasons to process collections that fall within the 75-year restriction period. Firstly, to ensure that the materials are housed in a way that will not damage them over time. Often, materials are transferred to the archives in acidic boxes and folders, contain paper clips which rust over time, or rubber bands which

disintegrate. These issues are addressed during processing. Sometimes materials are transferred to the archives with very little information about what is actually in the boxes. Processing gives the archives staff a good understanding of the content of a collection and the ability to provide research services to members of the church and eventually, the public.

German Script Workshop at Muhlenberg College

Assistant archivist Tom McCullough led a two-part evening workshop series in September and October of 2021 on reading and writing old German script handwriting with students, faculty, and staff of Muhlenberg College.

The workshop series was organized by Julie Shoults, Visiting Professor in German Studies at Muhlenberg College (and former participant in our annual German Script Course!), and Susan Falciani Maldonado, Special Collections & Archives Librarian.

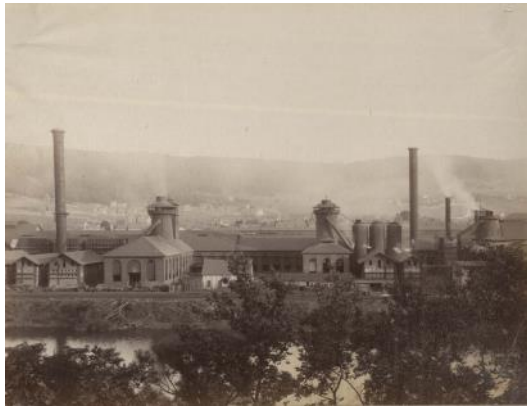
The focus of the workshop was to launch efforts towards a new

transcription of the personal diary of Frederick Augustus Conrad Muhlenberg (1770-1773), who was the first Speaker of the US House of Representatives. Known familiarly as the "Speaker's Journal," there is much to be rediscovered in a new transcription and translation of this German-language text.

We wish the students and the Trexler Transcribes initiative much success in future transcription efforts! Special thanks are owed to Muhlenberg's (1) Digital Learning Team, (2) Languages, Literatures, and Cultures, and (3) Trexler Library for organizing this collaboration with the Moravian Archives.



Digitizing the Photo Collection



One of our projects in recent months has been cataloging a number of photograph albums in the collection and then digitizing them for preservation purposes. These albums feature photographs covering a variety of subjects such as portraits, landscapes, Lehigh Valley history, and travel. As a result of this work, when the National Museum of Industrial History recently approached us looking for

images of the Bethlehem Iron Works (a predecessor to Bethlehem Steel) for an exhibit, the Archives' staff was able to quickly locate the image shown here and supply the museum with a high-quality copy. This is a good example of how our ongoing digitization work not only increases access and enhances preservation but also facilitates cooperation with other institutions.

Upcoming Webinars for Congregations & Agencies

In the June 2020 issue of *Voices from the Vault* readers learned of the Moravian Archives taking steps to preserve electronic records created by Moravian congregations and agencies. Over the last year and a half, staff of the Moravian Archives has spent a significant amount of time researching, drafting, creating, and implementing policies and procedures which follow current standards and best practices for the preservation of electronic records.

The process began with a survey which was sent to our congregations and agencies inquiring what types of electronic records they are producing electronically. Currently, the Moravian Archives is preparing to host a series of webinars in 2022.

In these forthcoming webinars staff will inform the congregations and agencies of the Moravian Church on the progress which has been made in regards to electronic records. The goal of these webinars

is to increase the dialogue between the congregations, agencies, and the archives in regards to electronic records and how we together can continue to preserve the unique history of the Moravian Church as we look to the future of recordkeeping at our institution. Congregations and agencies of the church should keep an eye out for announcements about these webinars which we hope to offer in 2022.

In an effort to continue to preserve Moravian history, the Moravian Archives will soon begin accepting electronic records from our churches and agencies.

Newsletter from the Moravian Archives, Bethlehem PA

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Upcoming Events

Moravian History Store @ Christkindlmarkt

December 2, 2021 - December 5, 2021
Christmascity.org to purchase tickets

2021 German-English Advent Singstunde

Cancelled

Saturday hours Moravian History Store

9:00 am—1:00 pm, December 11, 2021

German Script Course

June 18—29, 2021

8th Bethlehem Conference on Moravian History and Music

August 16, 2023 - August 20, 2023

Moravian Archives Closed

Thursday, November 25, 2021 - Friday, November 26, 2021
Friday, December 24, 2021 - Sunday, January 2, 2022



News and Announcements

MAB AT CHRISTKINDLMARKT

The Moravian History Store is excited to once again be at Christkindlmarkt for the 2021 holiday season! Come find us at the Steel Stacks from Thursday, December 2 until Sunday December 5! Browse our large selection of Moravian gifts produced by local artisans. There is something for everyone! All Christkindlmarkt information can be found on ChristmasCity.org. We can't wait to see you there!

GERMAN STATE MINISTER VISITS ARCHIVES

On October 18, 2021, Michelle Müntefering, minister of state at the German Foreign Office in Berlin, visited the Moravian

Archives. Müntefering has served in Angela Merkel's cabinet since 2018 and came to Bethlehem to submit an official declaration of the German government to cooperate with the US National Park Service to apply for the status of Unesco World Heritage for three Moravian communities: Bethlehem, PA, Herrnhut, Germany, and Gracehill, Northern Ireland. As the Archives houses the written documentation for the worldwide Moravian network, Müntefering expressed great interest in visiting the Moravian Archives. She was accompanied by David Gill, Consul General of Germany, who grew up as a Moravian in Herrnhut.

BOOK ON EARLY HERRNHUT

In preparation for next year's 300th anniversary of the founding of Herrnhut, Moravian archivist Paul Peucker wrote a book on the history of the origins of this town. Herrnhut was founded in the German region of Upper Lusatia in Saxony by Protestant refugees from Moravia in 1722. Herrnhut quickly became the center of a worldwide religious movement. The book will come out with Penn State University Press in April of 2022 under the title: *Herrnhut: the Formation of a Moravian Community, 1722-1732*. Even before the English book is out, a German translation has already been published by Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht in Göttingen, Germany:

Herrnhut, 1722-1732: Entstehung und Entwicklung einer philadelphischen Gemeinschaft. The German edition can be ordered through the Archives' giftshop, the Moravian History Store.

