

Voices from the Vault

Issue 37

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Unity Conference of Archivists



Members of the Unity Conference of Archivists gathered outside of the Unity Archives after signing the conference statement.

Recently the staff of the Moravian Archives, Bethlehem, attended the Unity Conference of Archivists in Herrnhut, Germany. The goal of this event was to bring together representatives from the various provincial archives of the Moravian Church, both established archives and emerging archives, from across the globe.

The Unity Conference of Archivists was first proposed after the 2016 Unity Synod and was originally supposed to be held in the summer of 2021. Unfortunately, due to Covid restrictions this event had to be postponed for more than a year. We were happy to finally meet in Herrnhut between October 10th and 16th.

The attendees of the conference represented eleven provinces of the Unitas Fratrum. These included the following countries: United

States (Northern & Southern provinces), the Moravian Music Foundation, Suriname, Jamaica, Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Germany, Denmark, the Czech Republic, Newfoundland and Labrador, Tanzania (Southern and South West provinces), and Malawi.

Throughout the seven-day conference, representatives from each province of the Moravian Church delivered presentations discussing the state of their archives and their current goals, participated in several workshops on topics such as preservation, digitization, and archival organization, and crafted a conference statement which will be submitted to the 2023 Unity Synod. This statement addresses topics such as the role of archives in the Moravian Church, the importance of

collaboration, and plans to propose the creation of a Unity Archives Committee.

The staff of the Bethlehem Archives very much enjoyed the opportunity to tour the Unity Archives and the town of Herrnhut, and to visit several locations important to the early history of the Moravian Church. It was a wonderful week getting to know fellow archivists and discussing our work and possibilities for future collaboration. We are grateful for having been able to attend this valuable event and look forward to further opportunities stemming from it.

Would you like to see more photos from our trip? Check out our Google photo album filled with staff photographs taken during our time in Germany!



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International Pietism Conference

Pietism scholars from around the world gathered in Halle, Germany, in August for a conference on the history of Pietism, Moravianism, and related movements. This year's theme was travel and religion during the eighteenth century. Many scholars connected to the Moravian Archives were present: Craig Atwood, Director of the Center for Moravian Studies, spoke about Moravian women traveling from Bethlehem, PA, to Bethabara,

NC, in 1766, and Archives' board member Katie Faull from Bucknell University presented her research on cloth produced in Moravian communities in Yorkshire that was shipped to Pennsylvania to be used in the trade with American Indians. Moravian archivist Paul Peucker gave a keynote lecture on the global nature of Moravian activity. From its earliest beginnings, Moravians established connections throughout Europe and they

conducted mission work in many areas around the world. In his lecture, titled "A Theology of Travel," Paul Peucker tried to answer the question why Moravians were so globally active at a time when most other religious groups were reluctant to engage in international missions.

This conference takes place every four or five years in Halle, once the center of German Pietism, and today the home of various research

institutions related to the history of Pietism. Pietism developed at the end of the seventeenth century as a movement to reform the church by stressing the importance of personal faith and living an active Christian life. The Moravian Church also originated in this movement. From 1710 until 1716, Zinzendorf went to school in Halle, in the same spaces where the conference took place this summer.

You Will Find Us Again at Christkindlmarkt

For two years in a row, the Moravian Archives has opened up a vendor booth in Bethlehem's Christkindlmarkt, which draws in tourists and shoppers from around the country and is recognized as one of the best holiday markets in the United States. Kelly Givens, our office & finance manager, leads efforts for the Moravian History Store, a gift shop located in the Archives. The proceeds from our gift shop support the archives' mission to preserve Moravian history. Kelly works with local artisans to provide a fine selection of handcrafted products at Christkindlmarkt. "Beyond the local products we offer, people like that our Moravian stars are the only ones that are made in Herrnhut, Germany," says Kelly. "But most

importantly," she adds, "We're not only selling stuff; we're carrying out the mission of the Archives and fundraising to support our operational costs." Indeed, our participation at Christkindlmarkt is not just commercial, rather there is also an educational component; operating a vendor booth and the presence of the Moravian History Store at Christkindlmarkt often brings us into contact with new crowds and people from outside of town. Consequently, Moravian history questions are regularly posed to whomever is working in our vendor booth, and we usually have a good answer or can at least refer folks to visit us in the Archives!



If you are thinking about attending Christkindlmarkt and checking out the many vendor booths, you'll find us there along with some new products—from Moravian star napkins to

placemats to tree toppers—during the dates December 1-4, 2022. We hope to see you there! You can also visit our store at the Archives or online.

From the Collection: Phonograph Records

Recently we conducted a survey of all audiovisual material in our holdings, identifying a variety of formats including film strips, phonograph records, VHS tapes, and CDs. We plan to improve the cataloging and storage of all of these types and digitize them if possible, we have decided to initially focus on the phonograph discs. Now that we have established how many phonograph discs are in the collection and their locations, we

have moved on to updating their storage and catalog records. The majority of the records was stored in paper sleeves. This is a concern for preservation as the paper is typically acidic and can rub across the disc, potentially damaging its surface. Consequently, we have acquired archival-quality sleeves to house and protect the discs, which can then be returned to the original outer sleeves. In addition, many were cataloged with only minimal

information such as title and artist.

Thus, we want to ensure that all are fully cataloged, including information on content, the production credits, and any additional materials included. This will make the phonograph records far more accessible for discovery by researchers, while our long-term goal of having them digitized will further aid in preservation.



Volunteer Spotlight: Karen Huetter and Marsha Beers

"Check out this funeral entry," Karen says with intrigue to the volunteer across from her, also indexing funeral entries from church registers in the archives. She adds, "this one is for a member of the Bethlehem congregation who was tragically killed in a train wreck in 1900. The pastor wrote that 'fourteen souls were hurled into eternity in the twinkle of an eye!'" Surely, a bit of a morbid thing to get excited about, but for Archives' volunteer Karen Huetter it's these colorful funeral entries that allow one to learn so much about—in her own words—"the dearly departed and their relationship to the living: types of illnesses, burial locations, families, jobs, and the increasing role of hospitals and asylums for the care of the sick, injured, and dying."

Sitting across the table from Karen, fellow volunteer Marsha Beers curiously inquires, "have you heard of a midwife in 1700s Nazareth named Johanna Schaefer?" Thanks to Marsha's tip, Karen has embarked on a personal side research project investigating midwives and



their roles in Moravian communities. Marsha and Karen are no strangers, or, well, they were *before* meeting at the Archives to volunteer on the Moravian Roots project several years ago. Now they carpool to the Archives on Wednesdays and meet for lunch regularly: a bond forged in mutual admiration of interesting life stories told in church registers, and in shared frustration over sloppy handwriting.

"Kannst Du mir mit dieser Schreibschrift helfen?" (can you help me with this handwriting?) Marsha says in German to assistant archivist Tom as he passes by

in the reading room. For more than a decade, Marsha brought her German classes on fieldtrips to the MAB for instruction in German script handwriting, led by assistant archivists Lanie Graf Yaswinski and

Tom McCullough. Over the years, she dabbled herself in trying to learn the old script. Upon her retirement from teaching in 2018, Marsha began volunteering on the Moravian Roots project—and with that—indexing German-language entries from Nazareth Moravian Church's first church register covering the years 1742 to 1861. The variety of difficult hands prompted Marsha to enroll in the Archives' annual German Script Course, a course Karen also completed way back in 1971. Having successfully completed the course twice now, Marsha is a pro of sorts when it comes to deciphering the German-

language baptisms, marriages, and funerals.

Karen's path to volunteering at the Archives is a bit different than Marsha's. Before coming to the Archives, she had worked in social services for most of her life, supporting blind and visually impaired people. Intermittently, she worked for the Red Cross and twice for Historic Bethlehem Partnership (now Historic Bethlehem Museums & Sites). She began working at Historic Bethlehem in 1970 and went on to complete a master's degree in history. "And that is what has given me an interest in the Moravians...and in learning about the Moravian community, I just absorbed it and really loved it, from writing to programming to research," she recalled. Regarding her volunteer work at the Archives, Karen says "It's a nice quiet place to be, and it takes your mind off of other things you might have been doing at home, and you can think about history and what goes on — and the Moravian Archives is a wonderful repository."

Increased Visibility for the Archives' Library

The catalog of the Moravian Archives Library is getting a boost thanks to OCLC's new subscription offerings. In August, OCLC launched a redesigned and reimagined Worldcat.org. WorldCat is a worldwide online catalog that allows the global community to search

book titles in over 70,000 libraries.

This relaunch included new subscription options such as WorldCat Visibility. Thanks to WorldCat Visibility, detailed information about our library collections will now be visible on WorldCat.org, something which was not possible for MAB previously because of

high costs. WorldCat Visibility will also provide direct links to our library catalog from Google Search results and other popular non-library websites.

MAB has been an active user of OCLC services since 2006 and is excited about the possibilities that this new platform provides us.

WorldCat Visibility makes us more accessible to the public and will provide them with better tools for their research needs. Our hope is that people who were previously unaware of our collections and services will find us more easily and make use of them in their work, studies, or personal lives.

A Summer Soirée to Remember

Once again we celebrated a year of generosity from our friends at the Summer Soirée! The annual Soirée is always the most anticipated event of the year. This even allows for the staff and Board of Directors to thank the Friends of the Archives for their continued support that allows the archives to

fulfill its mission.

After such a positive experience last year, we once again returned outside for this year's surf and turf theme event. Food was provided by Surf and Turf Truck and was enjoyed by all. Desserts once again were provided by Warm Sugar Bakery, Northampton, PA. Christmas City Spirits provided us with

their delicious cocktails and use of their outdoor furniture. We are grateful to Moravian University Facilities Department for setting up the tent for this year's event and Hank Naisby's carpentry skills. Campbell, Rappold & Yurasits LLP generously sponsored this year's event.

Staff members Kelly Givens and

Emma Horning exceeded expectations making this year's summer soirée such a wonderful event enjoyed by all.

The continued generous support from the Friends of the Archives allows us to make the history of the Moravian Church available to the public.

Newsletter from the Moravian Archives, Bethlehem PA

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Upcoming Events

Moravian History Store at Christkindlmarkt

December 1 - December 4, 2022
Visit christmascity.org for tickets

German English Advent Singstunde

Tuesday, December 6, 2022, 7:00 pm
Old Chapel, Central Moravian Church

Open House (Gift Shop open!)

Saturday, December 17, 2022, 9:00 am — 1:00 pm

German Script 2023

June 5—June 16, 2023

Moravian Archives Closed

November 24, 2022 - November 25, 2022
December 26, 2022—January 2, 2023

For the most accurate and up to date listing of archives lectures, events, and closures please visit our website www.moravianchurcharchives.org/event



New Items at the History Store!

News and Announcements

BETHLEHEM CONFERENCE ON MUSIC AND HISTORY

The 8th Bethlehem Conference on Moravian History and Music is set to take place August 16-19, 2023. Next year's conference focuses on the theme: "World-Heritage-Site." Paper proposals are welcome until January 1, 2023. More information is available at the conference website: moravianconferences.org.

NEW ARCHIVIST LEADS SOUTHERN PROVINCE ARCHIVES

Please join us in welcoming our new colleague at the Moravian Archives, Southern Province: Meaghan O'Riordan! Meaghan began her work as the new archivist of the Southern Province archives in August of 2022. Most recently,

she had worked as an archivist at Emory University's Rose Library, where she developed and undertook a programmatic approach to collections management and documentation of collections from their point of receipt to access. Originally from Welcome, NC, Meaghan holds bachelor's degrees in English



and Religious Studies, as well as master's degrees in Library Science and Theological Studies.

ROOF REPAIR

Over the years we have learned it is important to keep a close eye on the condition of the roof of the Archives building. Twice a year, our roofers perform a thorough inspection. This summer a large repair was needed: patches from the past needed to be replaced and the areas around the scuppers required extensive work. With these repairs our roof is now in good condition again for the coming years. But we know we cannot let our guard down: the life expectancy of our current roof is five to seven years.

ARCHIVES RECEIVES BEQUEST FROM PETER AND PRISCILLA WOLLE

For many years, Peter and Priscilla Wolle supported the Moravian Archives in various ways. For example, in 1994 Peter Wolle funded the acquisition of a Moravian painting by John Valentine Haidt in London, and in 2014 Priscilla Wolle gave money for new lighting in the exhibition gallery at the Archives. During their lives they also planned ahead to leave the Archives a substantial financial gift after their deaths. Peter died in 2009 and Priscilla in 2019. Their financial bequest was recently received by the Archives, helping us to continue to preserve Moravian history for many years to come.