

Voices from the Vault

Issue 38 June 2023

Prime Minister of Saxony Visits Archives



The first Moravians to settle in Pennsylvania came from the German state of Saxony. On May 7, Michael Kretschmer, Prime Minister of Saxony, included a stop at the Moravian Archives during his day-long visit to Bethlehem.

The reason for his visit was the joint application for UNESCO World Heritage status by the towns of Herrnhut in Saxony, Gracehill in Northern Ireland, and Bethlehem. As the Moravian Archives holds the historic records for the buildings that have now

been officially nominated for World Heritage Status by the government of the United States, we were delighted to inform Prime Minister Kretschmer about our work and show him a few of our treasures.

We showed Kretschmer a volume of David Zeisberger's German-Onandago dictionary that was recently digitized by the State and University Library of Saxony. Other items we had on display were a hymnal from 1606, carried to Herrnhut by Moravian emigrant Paul Münster in 1729, Zinzendorf's personal Bible, and two 1803 watercolor views of Waltersdorf, the small village in the Zittau Mountains in southern Saxony where Kretschmer and his wife live.

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First Fruits Painting on Display in Allentown

In August of 2022, John Valentine Haidt's *First Fruits* painting was loaned to the nearby Allentown Art Museum, where it will be on display in the "Early American Art" section of the New American Galleries until at least August of 2024. The New American Galleries feature over 150 works of American art, many of which were created by African American, Latinx, Latin American, and Indigenous artists, to help investigate how "trade, colonization, and the migration of peoples and ideas" have shaped culture in the US.



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Philadelphia Congregations Early Records Project

In 2022, select records from First Moravian Church of Philadelphia (1742-1965) were digitized by the Moravian Archives Bethlehem and made available in a collaborative digital archives featuring the records of 22 religious groups, known as the Philadelphia Congregations Early Records Project (philadelphiacongregations.org/records/).

Led by Christ Church Preservation Trust, the digital archives is the primary deliverable of several grants awarded to the Trust in recent years; most significantly, the Council on Library and Information Resources awarded a

digitization grant in 2018.

The recent addition of Moravian records to the digital archives was made possible by a Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission HARC Grant. A project is currently underway to transcribe the handwritten texts available in the digital archives; however, more volunteers are needed for transcription! If you would like to lend a hand in deciphering handwritten texts written in English, German, or another language, you can learn more about volunteering at: philadelphiacongregations.org.



Moravian Dictionary

Moravians developed their own vocabulary which is sometimes hard to understand for historians studying Moravian texts. In 2000 Paul Peucker put together a dictionary of the typical Moravian terms found in German that are

not explained in standard German dictionaries. Twenty-three years later a new edition of this German-language dictionary has come out, including 500 additional terms, plus an English translation of many keywords. The dictionary

is written in German and will come in handy for anyone studying Moravian history and working with German texts. In addition, the dictionary also contains a detailed overview of the locations where Zinzendorf

stayed from day to day, typical Moravian abbreviations, and Moravian synods since 1736. The *Herrnhuter Wörterbuch* can be ordered from the Moravian History Store.

Newly Digitized Materials

In July of 2019 we announced that we had completed digitizing the Drawings and Prints collection and made it available throughout our website. Since then more than 450 additional items have been added to this collection and these have now been digitized and made available online as well. These additions include a variety of materials and subjects includ-

ing portraits, landscape views, illustrations, maps, and floor plans.

In addition to the main Drawings and Prints collection, the Archives also has a separate collection of Oversized Drawings and Prints that were recently digitized and added to our online finding aid. This collection of approximately 135 items has to be stored sepa-

rately from the other Drawings and Prints because of their dimensions, which also made scanning them a challenge. The collection consists primarily of maps and blueprints, and we are pleased to make these resources more readily accessible.

Recently we cataloged and digitized a number of glass plate photographs which are now available

online as well. This was done with the assistance of interns from Moravian University. These photographs were intended for use with early projectors and cover a wide range of subjects including the Lehigh Valley, Moravian congregations throughout the USA, and the work of Moravian missionaries in a number of nations.

Moravian Archives Donates Two Books to The Met in New York



Pictured are two copies of August Gottlieb Spangenberg's *Kurzgefaßte historische Nachricht von der gegenwärtigen Verfassung der Evangelischen Brüderunität Augspurgischer Confession* (Barby, 1781).

The MAB holds many copies of this work bound in decorative paste paper. The Metropolitan Museum of Art (The Met), in conjunction with the Grolier Club in New York City, wished to display such samples in the Grolier Club's

exhibition "Pattern and Flow," which explored the art of decorated paper. Therefore, in 2022, the Moravian Archives gifted the pictured copies to The Met's Thomas J. Watson Library.

Deborah Rinderknecht, Perfume Bottles, and Family Papers

When Deborah Rinderknecht died in Johnstown, PA, on October 3, 2021, she left the Moravian Archives a collection of important memorabilia from her family. She had also established a trust fund for the Archives with the Moravian Ministries Foundation. This fund will disburse annual distributions to be used for the operating budget of the Moravian Archives.

Deborah Rinderknecht held a master's degree in library science from Kent State University and a master's degree in economics from Ohio State University. Deborah was the head librarian at the University of Pittsburgh-Johnstown. She had a great interest in Moravian history and in her own family history. She descended from the Ricksecker family that played an important role in

the Moravian Church in Dover, Ohio.

Materials we recently received from her estate include: a Civil War diary kept by Rufus Ricksecker (1842-1864), family photographs, and books. One of the members of the Ricksecker family was Theodore Ricksecker (1846-1919) who established a well-known perfumery on Reade Street in New York City. Deborah Rinderknecht's bequest also included

a series of his perfume bottles, which he designed himself and are still in high demand among collectors.

We are grateful to Deborah Rinderknecht for including the Moravian Archives in her will. Her research files on the Ricksecker family will benefit many future genealogists and her financial bequest will enable the Moravian Archives to care for its collections into the future!

From the Collection: Oversized Photographs

We are excited to announce that our oversized photographic print collection is now fully processed, digitized, and accessible to researchers in our read-

ing room and through our online finding aid. This archivist-assembled collection contains more than three hundred individual images that span nearly 150

years. Within the parameters of our collection, a photographic print is considered oversized if it is larger than 9" x 14". The largest print in the collection is 44 inches in length!

The collection was processed on an item level providing each individual image with its own description and set of unique keywords allowing for granular research and study. All collection materials were reboxed in acid-free folders in order to better preserve them for the future. The contents of the collection include imagery that highlights many aspects of Moravian life and history including important buildings, events, and education. However, the gem of this collection may be its extensive pictorial coverage of Moravian Synods. Group portraits taken at select Unity, Provincial, and District Synods from 1868 to 1950 are a key part of this photographic collection and serve to illuminate the history and evolution of these events.



Delegates of the 1937 Provincial Synod of the Northern Province, outside of Central Church.

Moravian Music Foundation Office Moved

For many years, the Moravian Music Foundation had an office space in the Archives' building on West Locust Street. This arrangement began with Albert Frank and later continued with Gwyneth Michel and most recently, Jan Harke. During these last two decades, we enjoyed

working with the Music Foundation very much. However, when we started this arrangement, the Archives' staff was much smaller: there was one archivist and a part-time secretary. Over the years the Archives' staff has grown and although we were able to add two new office spaces during the 2015

Archives' renovation, we reached the point where we had to tell the Music Foundation that we needed their office space for our own use.

On May 8, the Music Foundation moved their Northern office to the (nearby) Moravian Church Center at 1021 Center Street in Bethlehem. The collection of the Moravian

Music Foundation will remain at 41 W. Locust where researchers can still consult the music collection in the reading room of the Moravian Archives, after a research appointment is scheduled and confirmed with Jan Harke at 610.866.3340.

Newsletter from the Moravian Archives, Bethlehem PA

Moravian Archives
41 W. Locust Street
Bethlehem, PA 18018

610.866.3255
info@moravianchurcharchives.org
www.moravianchurcharchives.org



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Upcoming Events

German Script Course
June 5 – 16, 2023

Bethlehem Conference on Moravian History & Music
August 17 – 19, 2023
Register at www.moravianconferences.org

Moravian Archives Closed
June 5 – 16, 2023
Monday, June 19, 2023
Thursday, June 22 & Friday, June 23, 2023
Tuesday, July 4, 2023
Wednesday, August 16 – Friday, August 18, 2023
Monday, September 4, 2023

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



The Moravian History Store is proud to partner with the Board of World Mission and Calvary Moravian Church to offer Moravian Mission coffee and lovefeast mugs! Both items are available in our shop and can be bought together or separately.

Your purchase supports Moravian causes far and wide including the Board of World Mission's grant funding, Calvary's role in the Lehigh Conference of Churches, and the mission of the Moravian Archives!

News and Announcements

PODCAST ON MORAVIAN HISTORY

One of the most popular history podcasts, *Ben Franklin's World*, recently featured an interview with archivist Paul Peucker about the origins of the Moravian Church, the international network and the migration and settlement of Moravians to North America during the 1740s. Episode 356 of *Ben Franklin's World* can be found on benfranklinworld.com and on most podcast hosting platforms.

BOOK AWARD

Paul Peucker's book on the early years of the Moravian community of Herrnhut, published in 2022 by Penn State Press, won the Dale W. Brown Book Award for Outstand-

ing Scholarship in Anabaptist and Pietist Studies. This award is given annually by the Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies at Elizabethtown College.

NEW EXHIBIT AT MAB

The Moravian Archives is excited to announce our newest exhibition, *The Archival Process: New Acquisitions at the Moravian Archives!*

This exhibition will feature newly acquired archival materials from our collection to highlight the various stages of the archival process: from selecting materials to inclusion into our collection, arrangement, and description to conservation and providing long-term access. Many visitors reap the benefits of having access to our fully

processed and accessible collections. These archival materials are often resources for scholarly research, publication, or genealogy research, but many of our users are unaware of the process our archival collections go through before they are deemed open and accessible for research. Through this exhibition, the Moravian Archives hopes to provide a greater understanding of the archival process by highlighting the work that is completed by our staff on a day-to-day basis.

VERNON NELSON GRANT RECIPIENTS ANNOUNCED

The Moravian Archives was able to award five Vernon Nelson Research Grants this spring:

- Tucker Adkins, "New Birth, New World: Space, Sound, and the Body in the Early Protestant Awakenings."
- Jane Chang, "Intermingling of the Old and New: The Formation of a New German-American Medical Culture in Colonial America."
- Clement D. Fumbo, "Moravian theological teachings in Tanzania and its contribution to the Moravian World and beyond."
- Tim Sharp, "Maria und Johannes by Johann Abraham Peter Schulz: A Musical Treasure from Moravian Archives."
- Ann-Catherine Wilkening, "Radical Pietism, Kinship, and Intimacy in Lenape and Mohican Homelands (1730-1800)."