

THE CHURCH SQUARE JOURNAL

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Beginning of the Little Congregation of the Brethren at Warwik

Excerpted from the History written by Bishop Matthäus Hehl

Translated by Pastor Roy Ledbetter, presbyter Fratrum, St. Louis, MO

The very first beginnings of the preaching of the precious merit and death of Jesus as the only ground of our happiness, which were made through the service of the [Moravian] Brethren in this area here, was when the Disciple of the Lord and Ordinary of the present Renewed Brethren's Church, Lord Nicolas Ludwig, of the ancient House of the Counts von Zinzendorf, in the month of December in the year 1742 held a *Singstunde* and address at the home of Jacob Huber here in Warwik Township.

Soon thereafter Jacob Lischy came by arrangement and request, who at that time was a preacher and servant of the Brethren's Church.... He held a preaching service in the home mentioned of Jacob Huber during which Paul Lesson was convinced of the truth of the Gospel. From that time on Jacob Lischy continued to preach at Muddy Creek as well as here in Warwik....

[In] the year 1744 many ... who liked to hear Laurentius Nyberg (*a Lutheran minister who became Moravian*) preach came together and built a church on George Klein's land.... This church was consecrated by Nyberg on 25 July 1744, the Feast of St. James the Apostle, and so it is called to the present day.

On the 23rd September [1746], in the home of George Klein, the first discussion and consideration was held about building a house for school and for services for those who had been awakened by the Brethren and the souls gathered together in Warwik.... The unanimous resolution was that they wanted with gathered hands to build a Brethren's Congregation House here for a school and for services but not without first getting advice and according to the counsel of the Brethren's Church in Bethlehem, and that George Klein would give as much of his land as was needed for this.... On 29 March, in the year 1747, the cornerstone was laid for this house.

~ continued on page 2

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From the Archives Secretary:

The latter half of 2023 was both eventful and productive for the museum and tours. The museum continued to open its doors by appointment to those wishing a tour of historic Church Square and our museum filled with Moravian artifacts. We hosted a good number of elementary students in early fall with the highlight of their tour, as usual, being the ‘privy’, for obvious reasons. And our annual “Departed Spirits Tour” was again sold out and featured a number of interesting and entertaining ‘characters’ such as David Tannenberg on the organ, and Mamie Schroeder in the privy! The committee

appreciates the support of congregation members who join in to help on this busy fall evening.

In the spring issue it was mentioned that a new window project was about to commence. Now, our circa 1908 building has a complete set of new windows. This helps not only with conserving the aging building, but with aesthetics and energy conservation as well.

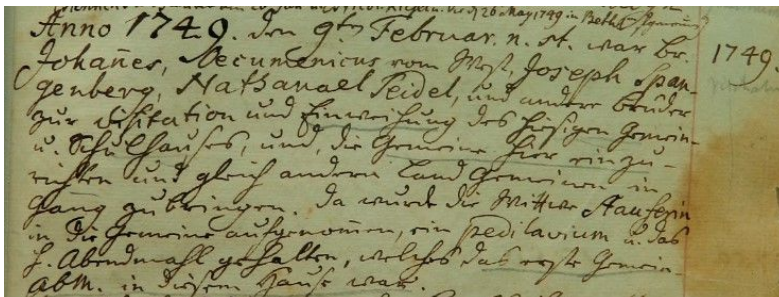
Another big event for Lititz Moravians was the extensive display of the three extant Antes string instruments. The 1759 violin, 1764 viola, and 1763 cello spent the past two years together in a special exhibit. The first year they were displayed here, at Lititz Moravian, and the past year at Whitefield House in Nazareth, PA. The exhibit closed in late fall, and our 1764 viola was returned to its resting place in our second floor display case. We are grateful to those who made this historic exhibit possible.

Now, we enter 2024 and the celebration of our congregation’s 275th anniversary! A steering committee has been meeting regularly for several months, and events are planned that will span the year. The museum and archives plan to play a part in this celebration. Our intent is to celebrate both as a congregation and as a community, so check the church calendar, the Lititz Moravian Congregation website or Facebook page for details.

Respectfully Submitted,
Thomas L. Wentzel
Secretary – Lititz Moravian Museum and Archives

~ continued from page 1

In the year 1748, on the 22nd February, the Leonhard Schnells moved out of their previous dwelling in the home of Jacob Scherzer into the newly built school house. On the 24th May Leonhard Schnell began a school with 4 boys and his wife with 3 little girls.... On the 11th August ... there was the first Lovefeast in the new Congregation House with all the souls in our care in Warwik, and in the evening the visitors present from Bethlehem together with the Laborers who had come together here from their posts held the Holy Communion.



Entry for February 9, 1749, as it appears in Bishop Hehl’s history

In the year 1749 on the 9th February, New Style, Br. Johannes, the *Oeconomicus* [business leader] of the West, Joseph Spangenberg, Nathaniel Seidel and other Brethren were here for a Visitation and for the Consecration of the School and Congregation House here and to set up the Moravian Congregation in this place and at the same time to bring into motion the other Country Congregations.

Rare Instruments Will Be Played Sunday at Museum Dedication

Published Originally in the Lancaster New Era, 22 June 1951, page 14
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Mason Jones, who plays first horn in the Philadelphia Orchestra and teaches horn at Curtis Institute of Music, will be narrator and soloist at the opening of the Archive Museum in the Brothers' House, Moravian Sunday School building, Lititz, on Sunday at 3 p. m.⁽¹⁾ He will play the rare natural valveless French horn, one of the original instruments in the Brethren's orchestra in Lititz, at the dedication service.⁽²⁾ Among the numbers he will play will be three selections from composers of the early local church, Christian Gregor, known as the "Father of Moravian Music"; John C. Beckler's [sic] well known composition, "Sing Hallelujah, Praise the Lord"; Abram R. Beck's "Just As I Am"; and also compositions by J. Fred Wolle, founder of the Bach choir at Bethlehem.



Waldhorn in the Lititz Congregation Archives

~ photo by Carl Shuman

Jones was appointed first horn player in 1940 at the age of twenty-one, the youngest such player in any major orchestra. He was born in Hamilton, N. Y., where his father is professor of Romance Languages at Colgate University. Upon graduating from High School he was accepted at the Curtis Institute of Music under the tutelage of Anton Homer. Two years later he was playing third horn in the Philadelphia Orchestra. He later enlisted in the Marine Band, and upon his return, was appointed to the faculty of the Curtis Institute of Music.⁽³⁾

John Keehn, leader of the Trombone choir, will play the soprano Slide [trombone], another of the old instruments. He will transpose some of the Moravian chorales for the musicale. Invitations have been sent to various musical organizations to see and hear these rare instruments. The program will feature a Moravian Lovefeast, with Dr.

Herbert H. Beck, head of the committee, in charge. The Trombone choir, augmented to 15 members and directed by Keehn, will play several selections on the church lawn.

Among the other articles that will be displayed in the museum are the first communion service for the sick in the Lititz Church; communion trays; wafer tongs for baking communion bread; early baptismal service; replicas of the equipment used in the Use of the Lot; candlesticks used on the pulpit table prior to 1845; old coffee mill made in 1772 by Andrew Albright, gunsmith; early lovefeast mugs; "Baron" Steigel's letter to Mr. Kline, dated Elizabeth Furnace, May 1, 1767; "Zum Anker" Inn Account book, beginning Jan. 1, 1785; General Store Account Book, 1767; and a copy of a letter from General Washington, in regard to the possibility of using Lititz as a general hospital. The public is invited to attend the service and see the museum.

Notes:

⁽¹⁾The Archives Museum occupied two rooms on the second floor of the Brothers' House. Following the transfer of the remaining residents of the Moravian Home for Aged Women to the newly opened Moravian Manor in the late 1970s, the Museum was moved to its current location at 2 Church Square.

⁽²⁾According to congregation records, brass instruments were first played at Lititz on November 13, 1762. This was a pair of Waldhorns, or natural horns, similar to a modern French horn but with no valves. Only one of those early horns exists in the collection today.

⁽³⁾Mason Jones remained as principal horn in the Philadelphia Orchestra until his retirement in 1978. His tenure on the Curtis faculty extended until 1995. After retiring from playing, he continued as Personnel Manager of the orchestra until 1986. He passed away at the age of 89 in 2009. Source: www.hornsociety.org

John Keehn, Bandmaster

For decades the name John Keehn was nearly synonymous with instrumental music at Lititz Moravian. He directed the Trombone Choir, led the Sunday School orchestra from his bench at the piano, and rallied players for any number of events. Not content with the staid chorale tunes in the hymnal, he was constantly experimenting with expanded harmonies and rhythms. So distinctive was his work that, even today, one with a practiced ear might hear something a bit unusual from the Trombone Choir and exclaim “Ah! That’s a John Keehn arrangement!”

John Warren Keehn was born in Kutztown, Berks County, in 1906, the eldest child of George and Mary Ada Stump Keehn. By 1910 the family had moved to Lititz, and here he lived for the rest of his life. His musical leadership talent was evident from a young age. In his senior year of high school he was selected as organist for the Senior Christian Endeavor Society of the Moravian Church, and during 1924 commencement ceremonies he soloed on both cornet and piano. Later that year, for a special youth presentation during Rally Day at Lititz Moravian, he was put in charge of the juvenile orchestra.



John Keehn playing antique soprano trombone which he played at N.Y. World’s fair during “Penna Dutch Days” there, Sept. 1940

~ Title written on back of photo; photographer unidentified

Choosing to make printing his trade, after graduation Keehn found employment in the Lititz Record Printing Office. A decade later he started his own business, becoming proprietor of Keehn Printing Company. That same year he founded “The Progressive Weekly,” which began as a Shopper’s Guide free handout, expanded to a tabloid two years later, and became a seven-column subscription newspaper in 1939. Keehn continued the publication as part of his printing operation until he sold it to Lancaster-based printer Glen C. Abel in 1956.

In response to requests from a number of Lititz musicians, Keehn announced in June 1930 the formation of The Cadet Band of Lititz. Having gained local sponsorship, the band received its formal state charter in November of that year. Within a few months of its organization the band, numbering 30 Lititz players ranging in age from 17 to 55, made its broadcast debut on WGAL radio. Listener response was plentiful and enthusiastic, with encouragement for more broadcasts in the future. An October 1930 news article regarding the showing of a documentary film about U.S. involvement in World War I announced that “a special musical program has been arranged exclusively for this war picture by Prof. John Keehn of Lititz and his exceptionally talented orchestra...”⁽¹⁾ By 1931 Keehn was directing both the Cadet Band and his own orchestra in addition to providing regular music leadership at the Moravian church.

Four years later John Keehn assumed directorship of the Lititz Moravian Trombone Choir, a position he was to hold until his death in 1979. With a core ensemble of twelve to eighteen players, often augmented to thirty or more for special occasions, he had a ready-made group with whom to try out his chorale arrangements. Then with substantial card stock available in his print shop, he created staff paper on which he meticulously notated all the parts in ballpoint pen. Current Trombone Choir members who played under his direction recall how he would arrive with a pack of cards and hand them out ~ “Here, try this. Let’s hear how it sounds.” An existing score showing numerous mark-ups and changes bears witness to Keehn’s immense creativity. The *Intelligencer Journal* reported in August 1952 that for a community worship service in Lititz Springs Park “The Trombone Choir will play the prelude, postlude and offertory. The 18-piece brass choir is under the direction of John W. Keehn, whose arrangements of the Moravian chorales for the prelude and postlude are in 12-part harmony.”⁽²⁾ One wonders what noted 18th century Moravian composer Christian Gregor would have thought!

In May 1960 Keehn announced that he had sold his printing plant to Miles Zimmerman and Gilbert Keen, owners and operators of a Lebanon printing shop. Though he stepped back from business ownership, he did not leave the printing world entirely. Rather, he went to work as a typesetter for Lancaster Press, Inc., finally retiring in 1974. And he still devoted considerable time and energy to his musical and community involvements. An announcement for the 1970 observance of Trombone Choir Sunday at Lititz Moravian noted, “All of the selections played by the choir during the service have been arranged by the director, John W. Keehn.”⁽³⁾

By 1976 Keehn’s health was in decline, and John Yerger, one of the younger members of the Trombone Choir, stepped in to assist. As part of the summer of celebration of the U.S. Bicentennial, Yerger took on the demanding role of director for the Fourth of July mass choir concert. Then later that summer Keehn and a brass choir of 25 musicians, including some who had played with various service bands, presented a special program of music in Lititz Springs Park. And on the Sunday evening of Labor Day weekend the Lititz Bicentennial Choir and the Moravian Trombone Choir, under Keehn’s direction, provided the music for the Lititz Community Religious Heritage Night, also held in the Park.⁽⁴⁾

John Keehn continued through 1978 to direct for the Good Friday YMCA breakfasts and for Trombone Choir Sunday services at the Moravian Church, while enlisting Yerger’s assistance for other engagements when necessary. On Tuesday, January 2, 1979, John Warren Keehn passed into the more immediate presence of his Savior. He left behind his wife of 53 years, Mary Edith Pfautz Keehn; his son John Wellington “Jack” Keehn; many other relatives and friends; and hundreds of brass players whose lives he had touched with his music.



John Keehn, formal photograph from Archives file, undated

Notes:

⁽¹⁾The Lititz Express, 16 Oct 1930, page 1

⁽²⁾*Intelligencer Journal*, 16 Aug 1952, page 7

⁽³⁾*Intelligencer Journal*, 23 May 1970, page 4

⁽⁴⁾Personal memories shared by Elwood “Woody” Hann, John Reidenbaugh, and John Yerger have provided details for this memoir. I thank them for their assistance. -MLS

~ Marian L. Shatto

Abraham Reincke Beck, Respected Lititz Schoolmaster

When Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf, leader of the Moravian Church, left his home in Herrnhut Germany in 1741 to travel to Pennsylvania, he was accompanied by his 16-year-old daughter Benigna. She had the same conviction as her father in that both girls and boys should be educated equally. Soon after, with assistance from two women and three men, she opened a school in Germantown, Pa. with twenty-five girls in attendance. This was the beginning of formal education within the Moravian Church in Pennsylvania.



Audubon Villa as it appeared in the early 20th century

~ postcard from The Express Printing Co.

Abraham Reincke Beck was born in 1833, the seventh child of John Beck and his wife Johanna Augusta Reincke Beck. He was educated in his father's school until the age of eight, then transferred to Nazareth Hall, where he taught for a number of years after his graduation. When his father, John Beck, retired in 1865 from his successful tenure of educating over 2,000 boys, he decided to open his own school, Moravian Family School, later named A. R. Beck's School for Boys. A limited number of boys between the ages of eight and eleven could enroll for \$300 per year including tuition and domestic expenses. A new school was constructed at 125 South Broad Street and named Audubon Villa in honor of John James Audubon, the famous French-American ornithologist. The building is now occupied by Kadima Rehabilitation & Nursing at Lititz.

Abraham married Johanna Salome Huebener in 1860, and in 1861 their first child Martha Johanna was born. She was followed by Helen in 1864, Herbert in 1870, and Paul in 1871. Beck built a home for his family next to Audubon Villa at 127 South Broad Street, now Spacht-Snyder Funeral Home.

Beck's popular methods of teaching were acquired from his father John, and from traditions of Moravian educators dating back to the mid-1700s. A youngster at heart, Beck with his wit and fame as a prankster kept the attention of his students. He demanded respect from his students but also respected each individual's personality and level of achievement.

As early as 1746 plans were discussed for a school to be established in the Warwick Gemeinhaus, to be built on the outskirts of the Moravian settlement of Lititz. As the town grew, so did the need for quality education for the town's youth. A *madchen* (young women) *anstalt* (institution) was established for girls. The school was named Linden Hall in 1844 by Principal Eugene Frueauff's wife because of the many linden trees she had planted on the grounds of the school. In 1815 Lititz apprentice shoemaker John Beck was asked to become the new schoolmaster for boys. He successfully held this position until 1865, when his son Abraham Reincke Beck succeeded his father.

A. R. BECK'S
SCHOOL FOR BOYS,
Lititz, Lancaster Co., Pa.

This Institution is intended for a limited number of boys, between the ages of seven and years. The pupils live in the family of the Principal, where they are under his constant care, and enjoy the comforts of a happy home. The discipline of the School is influenced as much as possible by kindness; the Principal holding, that " 'tis better far to rule by love than fear."

Careful attention is paid to the studies, health, and moral training of the children.

Mr. JOHN BECK, having resigned the charge of his own School, gives to the undersigned, his son, the benefit of his large experience, and takes an active interest in his Scholars.

There are two sessions of twenty weeks each, commencing January 7th and August 1st.

Lititz is a pleasant Moravian Village, eight miles north of Lancaster, and lies on the Reading and Columbia Railroad, which affords facilities of frequent and speedy access.

TERMS:

PER SESSION OF TWENTY WEEKS.

Tuition and Boarding,	\$100-00
Washing and Mending,	5 00
Fuel and Light,	2-00
Optional: { Music—Violin and Piano, each,	15 00
{ Drawing,	8 00

The payment of \$ is required in advance.

The annual vacation takes place during the months of June and July. Apply to

With fees paid in advance, send to **ABRAHAM R. BECK,**
Principal.

Amenities and Charges for the Beck School

In July of 1895, after almost 40 years of working in education, Abraham and his wife Johanna decided to close The Beck School for Boys. In a letter to James Beck, his nephew, Abraham wrote:

“the heavy responsibility of taking entire charge of other people’s children being the only thing we were beginning to tire of.”

After his announcement of retirement, several professional teachers were interested in carrying on the reputation that Beck’s school had gained. However Beck declined all offers, noting the continuance of his teaching methods could never be accomplished unless done by a member of his family.

When Mr. Beck retired, he had no intention of enjoying himself settled on a rocking chair at his beautiful Audubon Villa or on the grounds of his family home. Music was one of his many lifelong interests, so he enjoyed playing his violin to some of his own compositions. For many years he sang in the Lititz Moravian Church choir as well as contributing to their orchestra. He was a Moravian archivist and translated a large number of Moravian papers from German into English. A. R. Beck’s compendium of *The Moravian Graveyards of Lititz – 1744-1905* has become an invaluable source of information for historians and genealogists searching for family ancestors. He was well learned in nature, history, art, and music, which he shared with his school children as well as with his own family. If there was a question regarding Lititz or Moravian history, A. R. Beck was the authority to seek out for answers.



Residence of A. R. Beck, S. Broad and Centre Sts., Lititz, Pa.

Remembered as the “Grand Old Man of Lititz,” Abraham Reincke Beck died at the age of 95 in 1928, leaving behind his legacy as the fifth generation of Beck educators and as a lasting contributor to his church and community.

~ Charlene Van Brookhoven

Editor’s Notes:

- All items imaged for this article are held in the collection of the Lititz Historical Foundation and are used by permission.
- In October 1884 Beck wrote in his Letter Book, “When my obituary comes to be written, in the Moravian, or elsewhere, my name is to be given, not A. R. Beck, nor, Abraham R. Beck, but in full, Abraham Reincke Beck. (The grandfather I was named for spelled it thus, with a C.) An initial is a convenient brevity, perhaps, but it is not a name.” (*Hummel, op. cit. below*) A review of printed obituaries shows that none complied completely with this instruction. Three of four include his middle name at least once, but none spelled it with the C. Current sources are inconsistent in usage. The author of this article chooses to follow Beck’s request.

Sources:

Hummel, Dr. William W., “Abraham Reincke Beck: Portrait of a Schoolmaster.” In *Journal of the Lancaster County Historical Society* Vol. 68, No. 1. 1964

Beck, Herbert H., *A Century and Three-Quarters of Life and Service: Linden Hall Seminary, Lititz, Pennsylvania 1746-1921*. Conestoga Publishing Co., Lancaster, PA. 1921

Haller, Mabel, *Early Moravian Education in Pennsylvania*. Moravian Historical Society, Nazareth, PA. 1953

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<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/34844087/abraham-reincke-beck>

“Abraham R. Beck Honored.” In *Lititz Record*. Lititz, PA. 1918

Eberly, Hiram, “Abraham R. Beck, Outstanding Instructor,” in *Lititz Record Express*. Lititz, PA. 1971

The Bishop and the Lawyer, Part I: Leases on Village Lots in Lititz

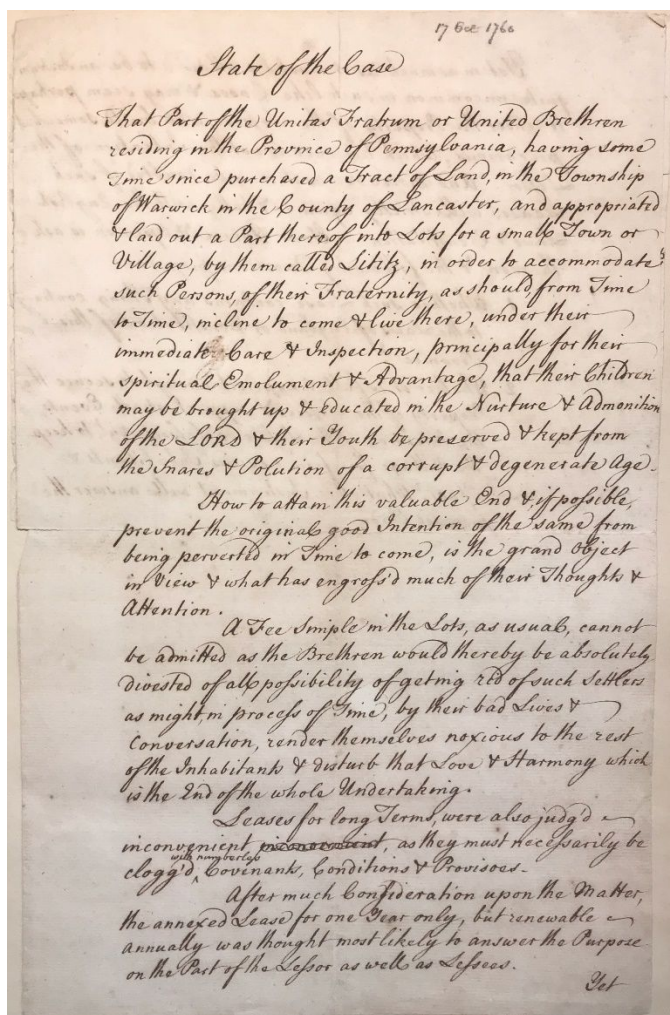
by Scott Paul Gordon, Lehigh University

When Moravian authorities in Pennsylvania had legal questions in the 1750s and 1760s, they consulted Benjamin Chew (1722–1810). Chew was the king's attorney (attorney general) and, as his biographer said, “the leading lawyer in Pennsylvania” (Konkle 90–97). In March 1759 they asked Chew’s advice about a provision of a recent tax bill that they considered inequitable, in June 1760 about how to stop the approval of a new road, and in November 1761 about Pennsylvania’s naturalization laws. In 1766 they hired Chew to represent them before Pennsylvania’s Supreme Court when Johann Musch (1723–1788), an Easton shoemaker who had worked in Bethlehem from 1750 to 1759, sued Moravian authorities for a decade’s worth of unpaid wages (Court Cases: Box 1, MAB; also UVC.X.143.b, UAH). Chew cross examined witnesses and spent nearly two hours summing up the case, offering a history of Moravians in America and explaining that Musch’s labor occurred during the General Economy, when residents did not receive wages, but instead the necessities of life, as compensation for their work. The jury returned after only fifteen minutes and Musch lost his case.

Moravian Bishop Augustus Gottlieb Spangenberg (1704–1792) clearly valued Chew’s advice. In 1760, he asked for Chew’s opinion about the legality of the lease system he hoped to establish in Lititz (Spangenberg to Chew, 17 October 1760, Northampton County Papers, Collection 0456, Bethlehem and Vicinity, 1741–1849, HSP; draft at PP SpAG 6.11, MAB). Spangenberg’s letter

is interesting for other reasons, too, besides the lease system he proposed. The letter offers a rationale for the founding of Lititz that differs from the familiar story. Both H. A. Brickenstein and Mary Augusta Huebener suggest that the purpose of the new settlement was to offer an alternative mode of living for Moravians who did not wish to subject themselves to the rigors of communal living. “Not every one was fitted for the labors, restrictions and self-denials” of “peculiarly constituted” communal villages such as Bethlehem or Nazareth, Brickenstein wrote, and so for people who “might not be suitable and willing” to live at such places Zinzendorf decided to establish a “third Church-settlement” (347). Spangenberg’s letter to Chew, however, places the decision to found Lititz in an unexpected context: the “Indian Wars” (the French and Indian War, which had begun in Pennsylvania in 1755). I shall save this story for part II—and focus here on the overt purpose of Spangenberg’s letter: his proposed lease system for Lititz.

Why didn’t Moravian authorities just apply the system in place in Bethlehem when they organized Lititz? They couldn’t do so because *there was no lease system in place in Bethlehem*, which, in 1760, had no private residences. Residents of Bethlehem did not own real estate, since the church owned all the land; nor did they lease land (town lots) on which they might build a home, an “improvement” that would be considered their property. Individuals in Bethlehem lived communally in large dormitory-like structures (choir houses). Their only property was *moveable* property (including, unfortunately, property in human beings), which remained theirs to keep, spend,



Page one of Spangenberg’s letter to Chew
This was copied from the original by a scribe.

Image used courtesy of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania

bank, sell, or give away while they lived in Bethlehem. These circumstances would change in 1762, when authorities dismantled the communal economy at Bethlehem and began, slowly, to lease lots to individuals. “Every one who wants to be possessed of a House at Bethlehem,” a 4 July 1764 memo states, “receiveth a Lease, in the usual Form, introduced both here & at Lititz” (Box: Transition Period, Collection of Letters, 1762–1771, MAB). It was only when Moravian authorities organized the village of Lititz in the late 1750s, that is, that they had to figure out how *under American law* to construct a lease system that squared the church’s needs (for instance, to expel residents if necessary) with residents’ rights (their property rights in any structure, say, that they had built on the land they leased).

But Moravian authorities did not need to devise a lease system, of course, until they began to *settle individuals on the lots* of a new village—Lititz—in the late 1750s. This occurred more than fifteen years after Moravians began their work in Warwick township. George Klein (1715–1783) heard Count Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf preach in 1742 and over the next few years welcomed Moravian preachers, including Jacob Lischy and Lawrence Nyberg; in 1744 a log church (St. James) was built on Klein’s land and a few years later a multi-purpose *Gemeinhaus* (ministers’ residence, schoolhouse, and meeting house) was erected nearby. The congregation that Moravian authorities formally organized at Warwick in 1749 was, in Moravian terms, a *country congregation* whose members “lived scattered on their farms, not in a close settlement, as was the case at Bethlehem and Nazareth” (Brickenstein 347). These “scattered” individuals or families would gather for meetings and worship but did not live together in a village or town. But in the mid-1750s, Moravian authorities decided that they would build a third settlement community in Pennsylvania. Klein legally transferred his farm to the Moravian church and retired to Bethlehem (where he died in 1783). Matthaues Hehl was assigned to build and guide the new settlement, named Lititz in June 1756. Initial construction focused on community buildings: a new schoolhouse, a grist and saw mill, the brothers’ house and the sisters’ house. The process of surveying streets and lots for the new village began in February 1757.

The first village lot was claimed in April 1757 by the Philadelphian Lewis Cassler, though a home on this lot was not ready to occupy until 4 May 1759. A December 1759 plan of Lititz (DPf.020.4, MAB) shows the Casslers, the Baumgärtners, and the Thomases occupying lots on what is now Main Street, and a December 1760 plan (Bd.13.2, UAH) shows about the same thing. (A plan from the mid-1760s [DPf.035.9, MAB] shows lots occupied by many more families.) These early settlers were the first to sign the “Preliminary Conditions, or Town-Regulations” of Lititz in December 1759. Most of these regulations specified proper behavior (#17: “Nothing shall be taught or preached in Lititz, but what is comfortable to the Gospel of Christ”; #22: “He that borrows shall repay at the appointed time” and “he that Lends to others shall set a Time when it is morally probable he may be paid again”) but a few referred to property matters. Residents who built houses were not permitted to sell or give away these houses or any improvements on their lots without the congregation’s permission (#15). The congregation would pay the annual quit-rent (on the land) but residents were responsible for other taxes (on persons or houses) (#16). These town regulations also required each settler to sign a bond for £500, for which he would be liable if he failed “to perform the Covenants contained” in his “Lease” (#5). But it

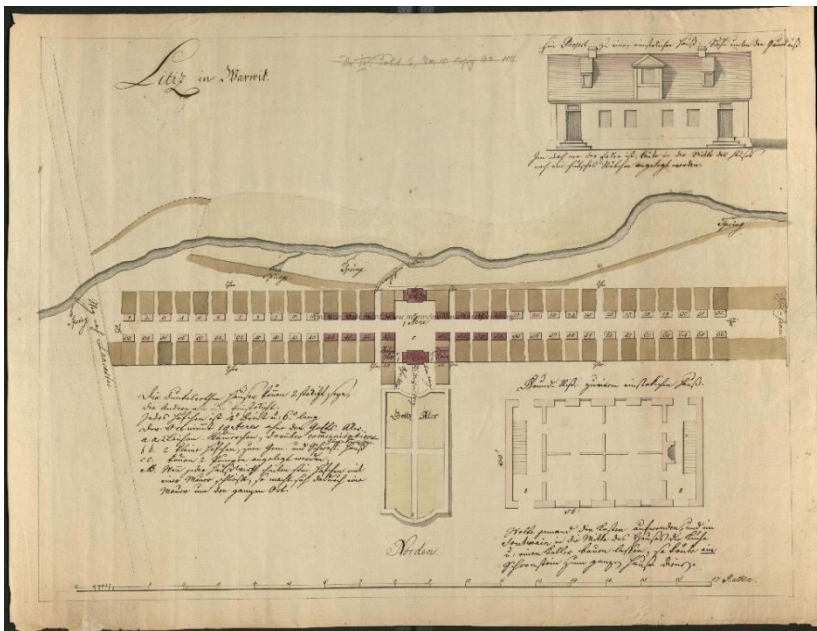


Detail of Lititz Lot Plan

~ provided by the Moravian Archives Bethlehem, used by permission
www.moravianchurcharchives.org

is not clear that any leases were produced in 1759 or 1760: perhaps the stipulations specified in these town regulations were considered enough.

The town regulations provided for the removal of residents who did not live up to the high standards of behavior expected in Lititz. Only residents who prioritized their “spiritual Emolument & Advantage,” as Spangenberg wrote to Chew in 1760, were to live in Lititz. It was not enough, though, to be able to control who *settled* in Lititz. That was easy: the Moravian church owned the land and could determine who relocated to its new village. The problem was what happened *later*—“in process of Time,” as Spangenberg put it. What if “Persons” who had been given permission to move to Lititz turned out to be “hurtful to others”? The 1759 town regulations gave the congregation the right to “insist” on a resident “leaving the Place,” adding that residents who “cannot be permitted to reside any longer in Lititz” would be notified “in Writing” (#30) and would not “lose the Benefit of their improvement” on their lot (#31). The question on which Spangenberg consulted Chew a year later was: what sort of lease would enable such expulsions?



Early Plan of Lititz

~ provided by the Moravian Archives Bethlehem, used by permission
www.moravianchurcharchives.org

Spangenberg makes clear in his letter to Chew that he has considered several alternatives. He writes that “a Fee Simple in the Lots, as usual, cannot be admitted.” Fee simple, the “usual” legal arrangement for the purchase of property, involved an absolute and permanent ownership of land with the freedom to dispose of such property at will. Under such an arrangement, however, Moravian authorities would be prevented from expelling individuals who proved troublesome. As Spangenberg wrote, authorities would be “absolutely divested of all possibility of get[t]ing rid of such Settlers as might, in process of Time, by their bad Lives & Conversation, render themselves noxious to the rest of the Inhabitants & disturb that Love & Harmony which is the End of the whole Undertaking.”

But nor, Spangenberg added, would “Leases for long Terms” work. He “judg’d

[these] inconvenient, as they must necessarily be clogg’d with numberless Covenants, Conditions & Provisoos.” Spangenberg does not elaborate on what he meant. Presumably, however, such “Leases for long Terms” would need to lay out exactly how residents must behave and under what conditions their actions could lead to expulsion. Moravian authorities needed to be able to expel “noxious” individuals swiftly: a ten-year lease, say, which had to be contested to be broken, would not serve their purposes.

Spangenberg’s solution, then, was a year-long lease that would be “renewable Annually” (or, of course, not renewed). Spangenberg recognized that such “an Instrument [would be] quite uncommon in such like Cases” and might not “strictly square & tally with the English Laws & Constitution.” It was because this solution—short term leases—*was* unusual that Spangenberg asked Chew for advice. Among other issues, Spangenberg understood that residents would need some protection for the improvements (“the Property of the Lessee”) that they may have made to the lot, as the earlier town regulations provided.

The query that Spangenberg sent to Chew in October 1760 included a cover letter and a “State of the Case” (from both of which I have quoted above), as well as a “Copie” of his proposal (presumably a draft of the annual lease agreement itself). This last document does not survive with the others. Nor does Chew’s response to Spangenberg’s communication survive. But on 26 October 1760 Spangenberg recorded that he was greatly satisfied with Chew’s answer (Notes by Spangenberg regarding the settlement at Warwick, PP SpAG 16, MAB). That Spangenberg recorded this less than ten days after he sent his letter shows that Chew replied promptly.

The earliest surviving leases on Lititz lots—which date to 1762—show, too, that Chew endorsed Spangenberg’s proposal. These leases match exactly what Spangenberg described in his 1760 letter. One 1762 lease, for instance, gave the lessee the right to the property “during and unto the full End & Term of Twelve Months” and “from year to Year as long as both the said Parties shall please” (Joseph Bullitschek lease, Box: Leases & Counterpart Leases for Original Village Lots, MMAL). The lease declared that Moravian authorities could “oust evict & put out” the lessee and, in that circumstance, “repossess” the “hereby leased Premisses and all & singular the Buildings & Improvements thereon.” But the lease also preserved the rights of the lessee, who “at the Time of the [Termination] of this Lease” would be “paid the real Value ... of all plain & usefull Buildings, Fences, & Improvements in & upon” the lot. The lease noted that wainscoting, paintings, hangings, and ornaments of the houses or gardens would not be included in such “Improvements.” The lease even specified a process by which the value of such improvements would be assessed and a payment schedule for what was due to the lessee.

In the 1760s several men residing in Lititz’s single brothers’ house were expelled (given the *consilium abeundi* or “advice to leave”) from the settlement. But none of the families that settled on and had leases for Lititz’s town lots were similarly “oust[ed].” Spangenberg knew, however, that these settlers might not always “live a peaceable and quiet life in all Godliness and Honesty” (Town Regulations)—and to prepare for such cases, the bishop sought the advice of Pennsylvania’s leading lawyer.

Citations

Abbreviations:

HSP: Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia

MMAL: Moravian Museum and Archives, Lititz

MAB: Moravian Archives, Bethlehem

UAH: Unity Archives, Herrnhut

“Preliminary Conditions, or Town-Regulations” in “The Town Regulations of Lititz, Pa., 1759,” *The Penn Germania* 1, nos. 9-10 (1912): 731–36 [the original document is in MMAL]. See also Herbert H. Beck, “Town Regulations of Lititz, 1759,” *Transactions of the Moravian Historical Society* 11, no. 3 (1936): 158–73.

H. A. Brickenstein, “Sketch of the Early History of Lititz, 1742–75,” *Transactions of the Moravian Historical Society* 2, no. 7/8 (1885): 343–74.

Mary Augusta Huebener, “A Brief History of Lititz” (Lititz, 1947).

Burton Alva Konkle, *Benjamin Chew, 1722-1810: Head of the Pennsylvania Judiciary System Under Colony and Commonwealth* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1932).

~ continued from last page

July 16th, 1777

As a conclusion to the above “speaking,” Bro. Mattheus addressed us, emphatically yet kindly, deploring the fact that two parties exist, not only among the Brethren but also in the congregation; the one party for the king, which they name Tories, and the other the Whigs, which upholds the present government. That neither party has hitherto thought, spoken and acted according to the Saviour’s wish, nor the principles of the church; that some, even, have shamefully slandered the king, against whose government, especially as it concerns us, we have not the slightest cause to complain. On the other hand, it is highly improper to speak and act in opposition to the present government, to which, as far as heart and conscience will permit, we owe obedience. We must wait solely on the will of God! For it is not possible that the Savior will look graciously upon such thought and action as hitherto have prevailed among us. He wished, therefore, that henceforth this characterizing of “Whigs” and “Tories,” which occasions only misunderstanding and loss of love might cease, and we live together again in peace.

July 24th, 1777

Bro. Mattheus made an impressive address to our “youths” and “great boys” in regard to their present irreligious thought and action. Instead of remembering what they are here for, they take too much interest in the war and the state of the country.

~ compiled by Thomas L. Wentzel

From the Collection: Continued from Fall 2023 Issue of the Church Square Journal

“Extracts from the Brethren’s House and Congregational Diaries of the Moravian Church at Lititz, Pa., relating to the Revolutionary War” Translation by A.R. Beck

February 28th, 1777

A party of Marylanders, on their return from the army, arrived and staid (sic) here over night. Being half-starved they went into the house to get something to eat, and were given loaves of bread and a quantity of meat, which they accepted with the heartiest thanks, saying that in all their weary march they had been nowhere treated so well as here.

April 23rd, 1777

After the evening service, in our chapel Bro Mattheus declared to fourteen brethren remaining there, that in regard to the enrollment of all the men between the ages of 18 & 53 years, we positively could not agree to it; that, as it is not only against the dictates of our conscience, but also contrary to the principles of our constitution, it would be better, even if it causes us some suffering, to have nothing to do with it.

May 3rd, 1777

There was held a Township Meeting at Martin Bucher’s. Upon this occasion the constable was to enroll the names of all men between 18 & 53; but no one presented himself for enrollment. The brethren Haller and Pohl protested, in our name, against it.

May 15th, 1777

By order of the Committee, blankets, linen and clothing were collected in our township for the army. We, too, must contribute what we can spare, and future payment is promised.

May 18th, 1777

Brother Mattheus, in the presence of Bro. Dreyspring, spoke with Bro. Leinbach in regard to our trombonists; that in these troublous (sic) times they should be more moderate in the selection of the music they play; that they should not go outside of town with their instruments to “seek an echo;” neither should they play in the saddler’s shop without previously mentioning it to Bro. Dreyspring; it were better to practice in our chapel, or that of the congregation, or in our summer house. Bro. Leinbach must see that the practicing (sic) are conducted in an orderly manner in future.

July 2nd, 1777

At a meeting of the Brethren over 18 years of age, Bro Mattheus spoke concerning the bearing of arms, and, more particularly in regard to the abjuration of the king; saying that we as a congregation could in no wise (sic) have anything to do with it. The Brethren should have an opportunity to give Bro. M. their individual opinions, privately, on the subject.

July 4th, 1777

Brother Mattheus conferred with the Brethren, singly, today, but no one of them was found willing to go to war or forswear allegiance to the king. They would be faithful to those in authority, who have power over us, and not act treasonably.



“Retreat from Brandywine”

Watercolor painting by William Young, depicting ill and wounded soldiers arriving at the field hospital in the Lititz Brothers’ House
~ from the collection of the Lititz Moravian Archives and Museum