THE CHURCH SQUARE JOURNAL

Published Spring and Fall by the Archives Committee of the Lititz Moravian Congregation

Volume 40 **Church Square, Lititz, Pennsylvania** **Fall 2026**

The Church Square Journal Turns Fifty

This Fall 2026 issue marks the fiftieth anniversary of the first issue of The Church Square Journal, which made its appearance in the Autumn of 1976. It, and the others that would follow, were printed in dark brown ink on a single sheet of cream-colored paper, tri-folded to form six pages. Sponsored and funded by the Archives Committee then, as it still is today, this initial Volume 1 featured a number of articles about planned and on-going preservation of congregational treasures. Just a year before, the Archives collections had been moved from the Brothers House to their present location in the Archives Museum. Planning had begun for the restoration of the 1787 Tannenberg organ. There was much to celebrate, and the new journal was set to do it.

Wayne B. LeFevre, church organist and active Archives member, became the first editor, and recently he shared a few memories of the beginnings. When asked what gave him the idea to start the Church Square Journal, he replied that it was in response to Brother William C. "Bill" York's suggestion and advice. Brother Bill had observed that "The committee's amazing accomplishments are unnoticed by the congregation." Wayne took on the task of documenting those accomplishments, including doing layout and formatting of the articles he wrote, and selecting the paper and ink to give it an antique look. With printing complete, copies of the journal were mailed to congregation members.

After that first issue, Wayne enlisted others on the committee to write articles about their areas of knowledge and expertise. The appearance of Volume 1 of the journal had stirred interest in the congregation, and Volume 2 listed the names of nine new members of the Archives committee. The Rev. Dr. Byron K. Horne contributed to the second issue an article remembering the devastating 1957 fire, and guest authors added a variety of insights and perspectives as semi-annual publication continued in the following years. A total of nine volumes of The Church Square Journal were produced under the editorship of Brother Wayne between 1976 and Spring 1981.



THE CHURCH SQUARE JOURNAL

PUBLISHED BY THE ARCHIVES COMMITTEE OF THE LITITZ MORAVIAN CONGREGATION

VOLUME 1 CHURCH SQUARE, LITITZ, PENNSYLVANIA AUTUMN, 1976

The Lititz Moravian Trombone Choir in the church belfry, 1904. Photo from the congregation's collection.

A NEW PUBLICATION

Years ago, members of the trombone choir would climb to the belfry and blow church tunes to announce congregational lovefeasts, choir festival days, the death of a parishioner and special celebrations in the life of the congregation and the community. The early photo, reproduced here, has been chosen to announce a new publication, *The Church Square Journal*, to be issued several times a year by the Archives Committee of the congregation. The Archives Committee, a small, relatively quiet group, is one of the most active committees in our church; yet, its work goes untrumpeted for the most part and, so, is little known to the average congregational member. The committee is charged with a responsibility of the utmost importance and gravity to this congregation: the preservation, restoration, display and interpretation of the congregation's priceless museum collections embracing those of furniture, paintings, musical instruments, books, papers, photographs, iron, glass, china, textiles, vehicles (fire engines!) and the seemingly endless array of fascinating items that are of particular interest and value to the Lititz Moravian Congregation.

During this new season's first meeting on September 13, the Archives Committee unanimously approved the proposal to publish an occasional newsletter so that all Lititz Moravians may remain abreast of the group's activity and accomplishments. Funded by the committee's treasury, the journal will also share with readers the many compliments and observations offered by visitors to Church Square, comments received by committee members because of their responsibility as *Fremden Diener* and *Dienerinnen* (visitors' guides), gratifying and enthusiastic exclamations which really should be shared with all Lititz Moravians but which necessarily become mute by the lack of an effective communicative medium.

The achievements of this committee within the past ten years are little short of phenomenal: the exciting 1965-67 restoration of the lovefeast kitchen in the cellar of the Gemeinhaus-Parsonage; the 1967 painting and refurnishing of the entry, hallways and museum rooms in the Single Brothers House; the initiation of the candlelit lantern tours which have become so popular (we will always remember how, on our first lantern tour of 1968, we dared timidly to hope for a response of 150 people and suddenly found ourselves swamped with 900!); the painstaking restoration of the 18th century John Valentine Haidt paintings along with the 19th century Grosch and Bechler portraits and the decorative panel on the 1793 fire engine; the repair and refinishing of antique furnishings in the parsonage; photography and appraisal of all museum pieces for insurance purposes; the launching of a series of field-trips to places of historic interest; the return of the shutters to the windows of the Gemeinhaus-Parsonage, adding to the pastoral dwelling a warm, homelike appearance, long absent; curtains for the windows of the chapel

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The Church Square Journal

Published Spring and Fall by
The Archives Committee of Lititz Moravian Congregation

Editor: Marian L. Shatto
Church office: 717-626-8515

On-line editions can be found at
lititzmoravian.org/rooted-in-tradition/museumarchivestours/church-square-journal/

From the Archives Secretary

Our historic Church Square continues to be abuzz with activity. With the advent of October's bright blue weather, tours are picking up. Many small group 'call in' tours, as well as a good number of bus tours, come to Lititz Moravian to enjoy its beauty and history. Just last week we hosted a group of sixty-five visitors from Winston-Salem. They were a choral group on tour scheduled to perform at Linden Hall the afternoon of their visit with us. A highlight for this writer was hearing the group break out in song as our 1787 Tannenberg was being demonstrated by their organist!

And, as has been tradition, we hosted the entire class of second graders in the Warwick School District ... always a treat to share our stories with the youngsters! To schedule a tour, large or small, call the church office to request a guide: 717-626-8515

And speaking of tours, we're about to gear up for our annual Departed Spirits Tour. This tour is planned in conjunction with our neighbors across Main Street, the Lititz Historical Foundation. This year's tour will celebrate ***America 250*** and will focus on the military field hospital in Lititz established by command of General George Washington. Several new character sketches were created for this tour, and visitors will meet David Tannenberg, too!

One unexpected project arose when several inches of water was discovered in the basement of the museum building. A contractor was called in and the problem remediated. After several heavy rains, the basement remains dry!

Upcoming events include the above-mentioned Departed Spirits Tour (tickets online only at lititzhistoricalfoundation.com under 'events') and our annual Christmas Carol Sing slated for Thursday, December 10th at 6:30 on Church Square.

Thanks to all the volunteers who make our tours happen and help the committee remain a vibrant part of the Lititz Moravian Congregation! And, if a reader enjoys history and sharing our stories with visitors, please let us know! We are always eager to welcome new members!

Respectfully Submitted,
Thomas L. Wentzel
Lititz Museum & Archives Secretary

~ continued from page 1:

After Wayne's departure from the organist's position in the Fall of 1981, publication of the journal ceased. Copies were filed in the Museum library, and the Archives Committee moved on to other projects. Time passed. Those early issues remained in the Museum, waiting to be rediscovered. Then in 2008 Brother Robert "Bob" Sandercox, who with his wife and daughter had recently joined the congregation, started reading through them and grew excited about the possibility of reviving publication. He teamed up with Brother Wayne, who was still in the area, and the result was Volume 10 of the Church Square Journal, dated Fall 2008.

Under Bob's skilled editorship, eleven more issues appeared between Fall 2008 and Fall 2014. Then declining health forced Bob to suspend his efforts. On December 27, 2015, Brother Bob passed from this life into the more immediate presence of our Savior. This time the Archives Committee was proactive in finding a new editor. Volume 21 made its appearance with the Spring 2017 issue and has continued regular publication ever since. Copies are now available in hard copy at various locations around the church campus and electronically on the Lititz Moravian website. The latter source includes .pdf files of every issue to date. And a successor editor has already been selected and begun training to continue the Church Square Journal well into the next half century.

We are always looking for interesting and informative articles to publish. If you are enjoying this issue and have some knowledge of Lititz Moravian history or are curious about a topic and want to research it farther in the Archives, please contact the editor. We'll welcome your contribution to future issues.

~ Marian L. Shatto

Baptized, yet Bound: The Case of Margaret Christler

by Scott Paul Gordon, Lehigh University

On 3 November 1765, a Sunday, a woman named Margaret was received as a member of the Lititz congregation. She was twenty-two years old, born in 1743 across the Susquehanna in York. She had been accepted into Warwick's "society"—an introductory level of membership in a Moravian congregation—when she was about fourteen, on 16 June 1757. She was schooled with Moravian children. And, later, she would be permitted to take communion, the most important moment in each Moravian's life. In many ways Margaret's experience in Lititz, where she lived for nearly twenty years, resembles the experiences of the many Moravian men and women alongside whom she lived, worked, and worshiped. But in some ways her experience differed. These differences stemmed from the fact that Margaret—identified in Moravian records as biracial (as *Malattin* or "mulatto," a term that is not in favor today)—was enslaved.

People of African descent, such as Margaret, were not always enslaved in early America or in early America's Moravian communities. But Margaret *was* enslaved. In early 1755, John Heckedorn, a prominent Moravian in York, tried to collect a debt of £5 from Peter Huber, a farmer in Warwick. The settlement of Lititz hadn't yet been established, and Warwick was a gathering of farming families. Peter Huber had brought Margaret with him when he moved to a Warwick farm from York in the 1750s. When Huber was unable to pay Heckedorn, he considered selling Margaret to obtain funds with which to satisfy the debt. Moravian authorities offered to provide the payment to Heckedorn "so that the girl is not sold," a remark that confirms her enslavement. Moravian authorities must have arranged some financial deal to prevent Margaret from being removed from the congregation's care. It was often the case that Moravians in the Caribbean and elsewhere were willing to contribute funds to keep promising African-descended converts in the congregation rather than to see them sold and sent away from the congregation.

The congregation's actions signal that they were eager to keep Margaret within the congregation. We might imagine that authorities wanted to keep this enslaved girl in the congregation because of the value of her labor: the connection between enslavement and labor seems obvious to us. But there was more to it than that. Moravians welcomed African-descended people into their congregations, in part, because their presence reassured Moravians that they were succeeding at their mission to preach the gospel to those who had not heard it—to African-descended and Indigenous people—in order to find those few whose hearts had been touched by their Savior. The process of conversion was a perilous one and could be accomplished best within the safety of a Moravian place such as Warwick or Lititz. People such as Margaret thus served a "representative" function: they testified visibly to the Moravians' success at transforming "heathen" into devout Christians.

But they also valued Margaret's labor. After she worked for about a decade on farms—first on Huber's and later on George Friedrich Kiesel's—authorities assigned Margaret (on 30 October 1763) to work at Lititz's tavern, the Zum Anker, which at the time was run by Andreas and Barbara Horn. Authorities relocated Margaret to the single sisters' house to ensure that she lived near her new workplace. This assignment to the tavern tells us something, too, about the differences that African-descended people experienced in Moravian congregations.

Few Moravians wanted to work in taverns, in part because the job required constant interaction with strangers who did not behave well, in part because of the long hours. One man in Bethlehem called labor in the tavern "the hardest work of all." Moravian authorities solved their problem of finding tavern workers by placing enslaved men and women, who could not resist or refuse the assignment, in these establishments. An unusually large percentage of the enslaved men and women in Bethlehem between 1745 and 1780 worked, at some point, in the taverns, and the same uneven distribution of assignments occurred in Salem, North Carolina. Moreover, authorities used different rules when it came to who could work in these taverns. In March 1764 the Zum Anker needed an additional worker. Authorities did not—typically—assign single sisters to taverns because the job would place them in the presence of members of the opposite sex. Nor, they added in this case, would it "be proper to place a Single Brother" at the Zum Anker. But Margaret, a single sister, was already working at the Zum Anker, as authorities noted: "there's an unmarried mulatto woman there at the moment." The racial prejudice seems obvious: Moravian authorities were willing to assign an African-descended single woman to a job from which they rigorously protected white single women (and, in this case, white single men!).

Margaret's difference from her white brothers and sisters in Warwick and Lititz is also visible in her lack of a surname (and, it turns out, a known birthdate). White Moravians were known, of course, by their full names: Andreas Horn, Matthaeus Hehl, Mary Penry. African-descended and Indigenous people, however, were known by a first name and a racial indicator: "Margaret the Mulatto," "Andreas the Negro," "Martha the Indian," etc. These men and women were typically given new names at their baptism (Andreas had been known as "York," for instance), but they were not given surnames. Only later—by the late 1770s in Bethlehem—did Moravian congregations provide surnames for their African-descended brothers and sisters. Margaret seems to have received her surname on that November day in 1765 when the twenty-two-year-old was received into the congregation. And not just a surname: she received a birthday, too, on that Sunday.



Gravestone of Margaret Christler Ahry

~ photo by Scott Paul Gordon

The surnames provided by Moravian congregations typically derived from the name that an enslaved individual had carried before baptism. Titus, baptized as Peter, became known later in life as Peter Titus. Boston, baptized as Joseph, became known later in life as Joseph Boston. Ari, baptized as Jacob, became known later in life as Jacob Ari or Ahry. (He became Margaret's husband.) When choosing a surname for Margaret, however, Moravian authorities could not resort to a pre-baptismal name. Margaret must have been baptized after she arrived in Warwick, since a 1754 catalog of schoolchildren lists her as "not baptized," and she was surely baptized before authorities admitted her to the "society" (1757), to the congregation (1765), and to communion (1767). But she does not seem to have been given a new name when she was baptized: records call her "Margaret" throughout the time she lived in Warwick and Lititz. Moravian authorities, then, had no pre-baptismal name to employ as her surname. So they invented one for her instead: "Christler." This name probably means "belonging to Christ," since the suffix "-ler," attached to a name, can mean "belonging to the matter that is mentioned before." The name *Margaret Christler* captured the Moravians' confidence that the decade that Margaret had spent in Warwick and Lititz had secured her devotion. As consistently as membership catalogs before 1765 had referred to her only as *Margaret*, catalogs after 3 November 1765 refer to her as *Margaret Christler*. These post-1765 catalogs also record a birthday—12 May—that had not appeared in any membership catalog before 1765. That day may have been chosen because 12 May was a festival day in the Moravian church, commemorating the adoption of the Brotherly Agreement in Herrnhut in 1727 and thus the start of Moravian congregational life.

In summer 1771 Lititz's authorities proposed that Margaret Christler marry a man named Jacob, who was also biracial. Born in 1745 in Suriname, Jacob had been given as a gift to Moravian missionaries and brought in 1748 to Bethlehem. (I told part of his story in the spring 2023 issue of *Church Square Journal*.) Tavern work, of course, was one of Jacob's many assignments over the years in Bethlehem. Jacob got in trouble, however, when he left Bethlehem without permission in 1767. Moravian authorities forced him to return him to Bethlehem and discussed whether they should sell him to somebody in New York. Instead, they sent him to Lititz. He worked on a farm and, later, as a cook in the single brothers' house. It is not surprising that authorities matched Margaret Christler with Jacob, since they were the only two congregants of African descent in Lititz. Moravian authorities, who arranged the marriages of all church members, never arranged interracial marriages. The choice of a partner for Margaret, then, was easy. Authorities decided to send the new couple to Northampton County, where they would "care for the cattle"—as they had surely done on different farms in Lititz—at Christiansbrunn, one of the small satellite communities, known as the "Upper Places," that lay some eight or ten miles north of Bethlehem. They arrived there on 5 August 1771, shortly after their marriage in Lititz. Jacob and Margaret Ahry would live in the Upper Places for more than forty years.

Both were still enslaved in 1771, though how this legal status shaped their lives is hard to measure. Moravian authorities seemed to consider them free even though they had not been manumitted. They labored, received wages for their labor, and raised a large family. But authorities did not *legally* free their enslaved "brothers" and "sisters," believing that their spiritual health was safest in Moravian settlements and, if free, they might choose to leave them. Authorities did not trust African-descended people, that is, to make important decisions for themselves. The Ahrys' legal status changed in 1780, however, when Pennsylvania passed a Gradual Abolition Act. That Act held that any enslaved persons whose names were set down in a county register by their enslavers would *remain* enslaved for the rest of their lives. The Moravian congregation, it turns out, did not record any names in that register—so on 2 November 1780 Margaret Ahry, along with her husband Jacob and their children, was freed.

Margaret Ahry lived out most of her life in Moravian settlements. In these communities she experienced, as I've described, racial prejudice. She also found opportunities that were unusual for African-descended people in early America. Moravians wanted African-descended people to become—and to testify repeatedly that they had become—devout Christians. Those who did could establish lives in these communities that did not subject them to the indignities of institutionalized slavery: no physical violence, families were not separated by sale, lives could be organized and planned. Margaret and Jacob Ahry had six children between 1772 and 1784. The large family struggled at times to make ends meet, and it moved over the years from Christiansbrunn to Nazareth to Schoeneck (a bit north of Nazareth). Late in their lives, because Jacob quarreled with the Moravian congregation, the family had to move again, this time outside of the Moravian settlements to a small home about two miles from Schoeneck. But Margaret remained a member of the church at Schoeneck, and when she died on 1 August 1814 authorities interred her in the congregation's God's Acre. Moravian cemeteries—like so many aspects of Moravian settlements—were oddities in early America, with graves of white, Black, and Indigenous men and women side by side. Here, finally, the Moravians' egalitarian ideal, though never achieved in practice, was realized.

Sources:

Note: MAB = Moravian Archives Bethlehem

Lititz Congregational Diary, MAB.

Lititz Single Brothers' Diary, MAB.

Box: Lititz, Early Varia, 1757–1792, MAB

Box: Catalogs & Communicants of Warwick, MAB.

Minutes of the Warwick Gemeinrat, in Box: Warwick Diaries & Varia, MAB

Minutes of the Lititz Elders' Conference, MAB.

Scott Paul Gordon, "Slavery in Bethlehem: Difference and Indifference in Northampton County's Moravian Settlements," *Journal of Moravian History* 23, no. 2 (2023): 77–128.

Scott Paul Gordon, "The Story of Jacob," *Church Square Journal* 33 (2023): 10–13.

From the Collection:

Extract from Dr. Brown's letter to Sister Becky Langley, dated Yellow Springs, August 25th, 1778: (*Editor's note: Dr. William Brown was the Physician General of the Middle Department in the Continental Army and stationed here in Lititz at the time of the field hospital*.)

> "I congratulate you, and all the members of your peaceful Society on the prospect we now have of the termination of war and bloodshed in this country, and that we shall soon be restored again to that tranquility and domestic paradise, which were enjoyed in this country, in its infancy, before it had become considerable and wealthy enough to attract the attention, or excite the avarice or ambition of tyrannical princes and oppressive, luxurious and corrupted ministers of state."

From the same to Sister Maria Penry, same date:

> "I give you joy of having your place restored again to its permissive quietness by the removal of so heterogeneous and disorderly a sett (sic) of guests as our soldiery are to the people of your society and I hope you will never be disturbed in like manner again."

From the Collection: Continued from Spring 2026 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

October 24th, 1778

Bro. Mattheus Krause came from Bethlehem, express, with a memorial which all who had not taken the Oath are to sign. It is to be sent by Bro. Ettwein to the Assembly. It asks protection against the severity of the Law in regard to the Oath, which we cannot take.

November 4th, 1778

Bros. Nathanial and Schweiniz were present at Elders' Conference. It was unanimously agreed to celebrate again, on the 13th November, the Holy Communion; that the past, on both sides, should be forgiven, and all should live as formerly, in peace and love. At the same time, we leave it to each one as to whether he feels free or not to receive the sacrament. This should not be openly discussed, but left to the Saviour who knows what He can and will do with each heart.

November 13th, 1778

At this festival the gracious presence of the dear Saviour was felt by every one; especially during the Holy Communion, which, owing to the past painful circumstances had not been celebrated in five months.

The trombones were played this morning for the first time, after a long silence, to announce the festival.

December 14th, 1778

With joy and thankfulness we learn from the Philadelphia newspapers that the severity of the former Test Act has been mitigated and that our memorial has been granted by the Assembly, namely, that we need not take the Oath, nor pay the penalty of non-conforming; but we are denied the right of suffrage, and cannot hold office or serve on a jury - all of which privileges we never troubled ourselves about.

January 16th, 1779

In the evening the masters (trades) met in Bro. Renatus Keller's (steward) room and enjoyed a happy love feast, with cakes and mulled wine. Bro. Mattheus was one of the company, and entertained us with his interesting conversation.

May 13th, 1779

Dr. Brown and family arrived here to-day from Virginia. He was very friendly and declares himself delighted to meet the brethren again. He wished we had a settlement in Virginia.

June 21st, 1779

Dr. Allison and family, who remained here, by our consent, after the removal of the hospital left for Shamokin, where he will have a similar charge. He was very thankful for all the kindness they received here.

December 8th, 1779

In conference, this evening, Bro Reichel advised the brethren not to engage in partisan discourse on the war; it is not proper for a brother, and invariably leads to unhappiness amongst us.

March 9th, 1780

Fifty light horsemen came here to seek quarters for the night. At the tavern they permitted Bro. Danz to explain that it would not be agreeable to him to take them in, but then they went into the neighborhood where they behaved outrageously, robbing and taking from the people whatever they could lay hands upon. (We understood that these bad men had harbored the infamous design of visiting the Sisters' House at night.)

May 5th, 1780

Bro. Henry Frey must pay a fine of 200 pounds for refusing to accept the office of Collector of Taxes.

January 19th, 1781

In the past few weeks different brethren had to pay, as last year's fine for not drilling, 140 pounds.

May 5th, 1781

In the Elders' Conference was discussed the case of young David Tannenberger who, two weeks ago, let himself be elected a lieutenant of militia and who, therefore, can remain in our care no longer. His father confesses that he has no authority over him, and we for present know not how to get rid of him.

June 27th, 1781

The brethren belonging to the 2nd and 3rd classes of the militia were called upon to mount guard, in Lancaster, for two months; or else pay 11 pounds 5 shillings hard money. They handed in a petition to the Warden's College praying its assistance in bearing this heavy burden. Elders' Conference, June 30th, resolved to help such of the brethren as live in the Choir-House.

June 29th, 1781

That two English prisoners in our town were roughly and – one can say – almost inhumanly handled by some of our people a few days ago was not only a reprehensible action, but something not to be tolerated. The guilty ones must be spoken to about it.

August 14th, 1782

Our county tax being from 3 to 5 pounds for each person, Bro. Honsch went to the Court of Appeal, in Lancaster, to try to obtain some diminution thereof for such brethren who, by reason of age and weakness cannot well pay so much.

October 21st, 1782

Bro. Simon Danz, at the tavern, has English prisoners working for him. As we have reason to fear that their staying here any longer may give rise to evil results, Bro. Danz must be advised to consult with Bro. Wm. Henry, in Lancaster, in regard to them so that they may be dismissed – the sooner the better.

December 11th, 1783

A day of Thanksgiving appointed by the National Government. In the evening, for joy at the return of peace, we illuminated our house, the trombonists playing, meanwhile, much to our delight Bro William Henry, who was here from Lancaster, took dinner with us.

May 2nd, 1786 (*Editor's note: Eligible men in Lancaster were still required to muster at this date post-war.*)

This evening the brethren who last week without permission took part in the drill, were spoken to. It was represented that we scarcely could take it amiss of them, because of the continuous heavy fines laid upon them; and, especially, as they were not obliged to appear with arms; at the same time, because of the evil effect it might have upon the congregation, as well as upon the Brethren's Unity; it could not be permitted.

May 7th, 1786

Notwithstanding the above affectionate representation, two of the brethren went, secretly, last Friday to drill. They were told by the Elder's Conference, that if they persisted in doing as they pleased, to the disadvantage of the Saviour's cause, they could stay with us no longer. They promised, with tears, not to do it again.

Ephraim Alexander: From Nunaugauchak to Lititz

In God's Acre at Lititz Moravian lie the earthly remains of two Indigenous people, congregation members whose ancestors trod the land of the North American continent for centuries before any Moravian arrived. Martha, resident in the Sisters House and teacher at the girls' school (now Linden Hall), is familiar to many. Her story is told to tour groups, and her Memoir with commentary can be found in the Spring 2020 issue of The Church Square Journal. On the other hand, not much is said about Ephraim Alexander.(1) His name is unfamiliar to most, and little of his story has been told in modern times. This article will begin to correct that absence, with recognition that there is still more research to be done.

Ephraim, son of Tall and Anna Alexander, was born in Alaska in August 1883. According to Rev. Ernest S. Hagen, who documented Ephraim's life in Lititz congregation's register of official acts at the time of his death, Ephraim was baptized by a Greek Catholic priest as a child. In 1891 he came to the Moravian Mission School at Carmel, on the Nushagak River, where he was confirmed into the Moravian church by Brother John Herman Schoechert in 1894.



Photo of Ephraim Alexander during his years at the Carlisle School

~ Photo provided by the Cumberland County Historical Society
Used by permission

By 1897 he had begun to serve as an interpreter for the missionaries as they traveled around the area. He was also captain of the Mission scow, a large, flat-bottomed boat. The 1900 Alaska census lists him as a pupil in the school and his occupation as "Fishing and Labour." His obituary notes that "He was the right hand man of the mission for years…. He was also captain of the boys' fishing crew and earned a good deal of money. He was capable, conscientious, industrious and of a lively, jovial disposition."

In 1902 Ephraim accompanied Sister Philippine King, a medical missionary who had been serving at the Carmel School, on her return journey to Pennsylvania.(2) Brother Hagen records that he then "entered the Indian School at Carlisle, Pa., taking up the trade of carpenter. He was a member of the Y.M.C.A. at Carlisle, & was distinguished for his intelligence & piety." The obituary states that he "worked at the carpenter's trade during his vacation." None of this indicates whether he chose the Carlisle Indian School of his own free will or was coerced into going there. A brief history of the school states that the average age at first enrollment was 16 and that the ratio of boys to girls was roughly 2 to 1. Classes stressed English, a language he already knew well enough to be an interpreter. At age 19 it may have seemed to Ephraim not too different from the Moravian Mission School where he had spent much of his life already, but from existing documents found so far, it is impossible to determine what he was thinking and feeling.

Ephraim is said to have visited Lititz at least three times during the following years. Rev. Samuel H. Rock and his wife Emma Huber, a native of Lititz, were resident there on furlough from the Carmel Mission. When in late Spring of 1905 Ephraim fell seriously ill of "hasty consumption" (an old term for fast-moving tuberculosis) and asked to be connected with the Lititz congregation, he was brought to the Rocks' home and put under their care.

The following entry is taken from the congregation diary, recorded by Pastor Ernest S. Hagen for the date of July 26, 1905:

> "At 3.00 P.M. the Lord's Supper was celebrated in the home of Bro. S. H. Rock, especially for the comfort & benefit of Bro. Ephraim Alexander of Carmel, Alaska, who is stricken with consumption. There were present at this gathering the following Brethren & Sisters: Bro. & Sr. E. A. Oerter, Bro. & Sr. S. H. Rock, Sr. Mary Huber, the Brn. Henry Rose, Walter Snyder (natives of Alaska) the Brn. J. S. Romig, A. D. Thaeler, & E. S. Hagen. – Bro. E. A. Oerter presided. Bro. J. S. Romig read Scripture, Bro. A. D. Thaeler offered prayer, & Bro. E. S. Hagen distributed the elements of the Sacrament. The gathering was unique, & the whole service very edifying."

On August 1 Ephraim was received into communicant membership of the congregation. On the morning of August 11 "he fell peacefully asleep in Jesus." He was just twenty-two years old. Funeral services were held at the Rock's home on Saturday morning August 12 and then in the church at 4:00 PM Saturday afternoon. Interment was in the Single Brothers' section of God's Acre, Avenue 3 left, Row 15, Lot 10. His obituary, the information for which was likely supplied by Brother Rock, notes that he was "the last survivor of his family."(3)

~ Marian L. Shatto

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Ephraim Alexander Gravestone

~ photo by Thomas L. Wentzel

Footnotes:

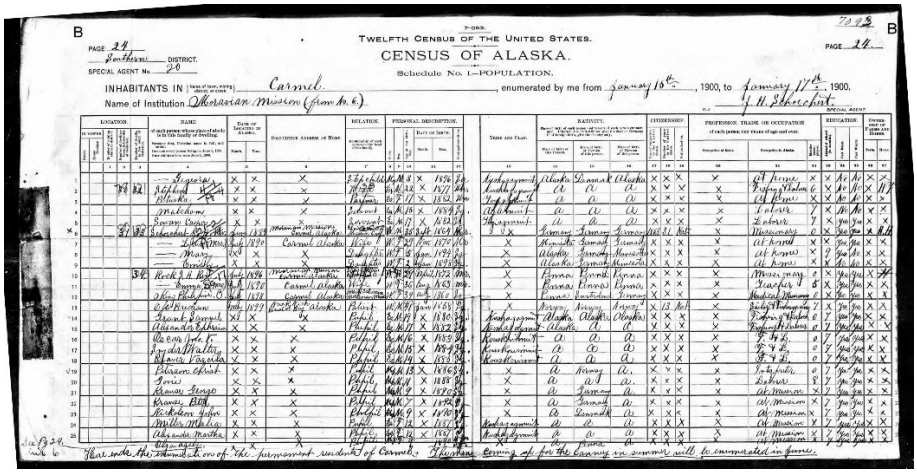
(1) The name "Ephraim" appears misspelled as "Ephriam" in some records. Sadly, it is also misspelled as "Ephrian" on his grave stone.

(2) According to the obituary, Sister Philippine King was visiting in Lititz and present when Ephraim died.

(3) This is what I've found so far, but my research is not done. One potential source that I contacted has not yet replied, and others have been suggested for exploration. Ephraim Alexander deserves to have his story told as completely as possible. Progress toward that goal will be published in future issues of the Church Square Journal.

Sources:

"Death of an Esquimo," The Semi-Weekly New Era (Lancaster, Pennsylvania), Wed. August 16, 1905, Page 2
Find a Grave, Ephraim Alexander, Memorial #82999843
Lititz Moravian Congregation Diary, 1905
Lititz Moravian Congregation Register of Official Acts, 1899-1945
United States Federal Census 1900; Census Place: Carmel, Southern Supervisors District, Alaska; Roll: 1832; Page: 24; Enumeration District: 0020


TWELFTH CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES.
CENSUS OF ALASKA.
Schedule No. 1.—POPULATION.
INHABITANTS IN Carmel. enumerated by me from January 18th, 1900, to January 17th, 1900.
Name of Institution Moravian Mission (from No. 6.)

1900 Alaska Census listing Ephraim Alexander, Rev. and Mrs. Rock, and Philippine King

Keeping History Alive

The Christmas Vigil services at Lititz Moravian have been a standard in the worship schedule of the congregation since the very beginning of the town. Just a few months after the village was named in 1756, the small group of Lititz brothers and sisters living in the Pilgerhaus celebrated Christmas Eve by holding a Lovefeast. From that humble beginning has evolved an elaborate worship service beloved by all who participate and attend. But many who come faithfully each year to sing Hallelujah, enjoy the bun and drink, and lift their candles high in praise of our Savior's birth have never had the opportunity to learn what takes place throughout the year to bring it all together.



The 110-Point Star on Display
(yes, those are pool noodles protecting the lower points)

~ still from video by Jaime Weik

A few weeks ago, for three hours on September 26, folks were invited to a close-up look at what happens behind the scenes both before and during the service itself. The lighted 110-point star that shines brightly high above the pulpit sat at eye level in the Christian Ed Building lobby to greet attendees as they entered. Many were amazed at just how big it is! The candle makers demonstrated the skill and technique needed to turn molten beeswax into slender tapers, using tin molds that have not changed in design for centuries. Then others showed visitors the fine art of trimming those candles with carefully cut tissue paper frills. It was a time of bringing alive the history of the Vigil service, and Oh, what a history it is!

The order of service with hymns, anthems, and scripture readings is termed an "Ode," and more than thirty of them for the Christmas Vigil services can be found in the church archives. The earliest, dated 1765, is an eight-page printed folder detailing portions to be sung by two different choirs, soloists, children, and congregation. The congregation's sections are quite short, with most of the music provided by choirs and soloists. The children are given an increasing role as the years go on, and it is the children who, in 1792, sing for the first time in English.

There are sixteen odes extant from the first thirty years of records, and it is clear that the order of service changed regularly. The complete texts of hymns and anthems are printed in the odes, which show that gradually changes in the service become less frequent. Beginning in 1793, printed odes appear to have been used for three to five years before a new one was prepared. Between 1797 and 1877 there are twenty-two odes extant. Then there is then a gap of fifteen years. The ode of 1892 is the last one that differs significantly from the one in use today.

The next ode in the file is undated, but appears to have been printed in the mid-nineteen-teens and is essentially the service as we know it today. Changes over the succeeding years have been modest. The 1944 ode introduced the Christmas stanza for "Sing Hallelujah," written for the Lititz congregation by the Rev. Louis Huebener, who at the time was an Elder and choir member. It is also noteworthy for the infamous "down down." This is a typographical error repeating the final word of one line in stanza two of the hymn "Hail, Thou Wondrous Infant Stranger." As the story goes, members of the bass section of the choir determined that, if it was in print, it had to be sung. And choir members have persisted to this day in singing the error, much to the delight of some and the annoyance of others over the years.

While some anthems and hymns sung during the service are widely used by multiple congregations, others are unique, or nearly so, to Lititz. The Christmas verse for "Sing Hallelujah," mentioned above, is one example. Another is Karl Gottlieb Reissiger's "Mache dich auf, werde Licht" (Arise, shine, for thy light has come!), which accompanies the entrance and distribution of the lighted beeswax candles near the end of the service. Reissiger (1798 – 1859) was a German Kapellmeister and composer whose works Moravians adopted as favorites. Though many U.S. congregations once sang "Mache dich auf" during the candle service, to the best of my knowledge Lititz is the only one which has preserved the tradition. And verses for the hymns "Go to Bethlehem with longing" and "The new-born Babe whom Mary bore" cannot be found in any other source examined so far.

Then there is "The Children's Te Deum," sung by the Youth Choir near the beginning of the service, which has been substantially rewritten. The original song, with text by Josephine Pollard, was published in 1867 in a book of songs by Henry Tucker. Just three years later someone, presumably from the Lititz congregation, rewrote the stanzas to make them more specific to Jesus' birth and introduced the work into the Vigil service. The children have been singing the altered version, with a recent short hiatus, ever since.

While the ode and anthems remain as they were established nearly a century ago, other aspects of the Vigil Services have changed significantly. The pastor's time for delivering a meditation has lengthened and become more formal in nature. And receiving an offering during the service is a fairly recent innovation. Some elements, such as the music for the prelude and offertory, vary on a yearly basis. These selections are dependent on the preferences of the then-current Director of Music Ministries and in recent decades have moved gradually from a program of solo organ pieces to the present-day mix of organ, instrumental, and choral works.



Earle and Patti Cornelius explain the candle making process to visitors. Note the tin molds and the large spools of wicking.

~ photo by Jaime Weik

All this is history in action, bringing the past into the present to inspire us to look to the future, celebrating the birth of One who leads us into life in the eternal Now. It takes many months of preparation, and willing people – **lots** of people! – to make it happen. The event in September drew attention to some of them. The candle makers begin their labors in early Spring, so that candles are ready for trimming by the time we move into Advent. Choir members practice well-known anthems and learn some new ones. The children's choir begins rehearsals; soloists are chosen and receive extra training. The Trombone Choir prepares for a busy season, not just for Vigils but also for the other events for which they play during the Christmas season.

There are those who process ticket orders and distribute them; ushers to guide people to their seats; fire guards to stand with heavy blankets in watchful care while candles burn throughout the sanctuary; Dieners (servers) to serve the Lovefeast and distribute the candles; and other Dieners in the preparation room loading trays, filling mugs, and cleaning up afterwards. When there are two Vigils in one evening, another whole team prepares the meal provided for all the participants between services.

The Lititz Christmas Vigil services are History that we can see, smell, taste, and hear. Thanks go to Office Manager Jaime Weik and all the helpers that she enlisted to make "Beeswax to Brass: The Story Behind a Moravian Christmas Vigil" a welcoming and enlightening event. We preserve the history of the past so that Lititz Moravian will still be living that story in decades and centuries to come.

~ Marian L. Shatto

The Gnarliest Tree on Church Square

Historic Church Square, that shady oasis in downtown Lititz, offers a wide variety of trees, some native to the area, and some quite foreign. Those with a keen eye for tree identification will notice the many linden trees, planted as a 'favorite' of the wife of a former headmaster, hence the school name *Linden Hall*. There is also a large, mature beech, various ornamental trees and even the unusual ginkgo tree, the oldest living tree species on earth! But on the southwest side of the square in front of the so-called de Perrot House, grows the most twisted and out-of-place looking specimen this writer has seen anywhere in the area, and over the past several decades has remained a puzzle to its identification.



Tamarisk Tree on Church Square

~ photo by Thomas L. Wentzel

After a discussion with Claire de Perrot, in whose front yard the tree grows, I was given an article which not only identified the tree but gave some hints as to why this gnarly oddball specimen was planted there in the first place!

It turns out that the tree is a tamarisk (genus tamarix) tree, also known as the salt cedar, native to Eurasia and Africa and it has quite a Biblical connection.

The Victorian-era house in front of which the tree stands was built in 1882 by Nathanial Shober Wolle, son of Moravian missionary Peter Wolle. The father, Peter, was consecrated a Moravian Bishop and served at Lititz for a time as pastor. As of this writing it has not been determined who planted the tree or when it was planted, but with a strong Moravian connection it's easy enough to connect the dots to the tree's Biblical symbolism and understand why it may have been planted at the de Perrot house in the first place.

The tamarisk is a slow-growing, flowering plant native to the drier areas of Eurasia and Africa and can thrive for many hundreds of years. The tamarisk tree was introduced to the United States in the early 19th century as an ornamental, a wind break and to prevent erosion, especially during the dust bowl of the 1930s. One interesting feature of the tree is that at night it absorbs moisture. Then during the day it emits moisture creating a microclimate of cooler air to those in its shade. Currently, the tamarisk is considered an invasive species, since it competes with many native trees and shrubs.



A Glimpse out the Window of the Tamarisk in Bloom

~photo provided by Claire de Perrot

Historically, the tamarisk is cited in both the Bible and the Quran. In the Bible it appears first in Genesis 21:33 when Abraham, showing a desire to establish roots, plants a tamarisk tree at Beersheba in the Negev desert where he had previously built a well. Some biblical scholars deduce that this was Abraham's way of thanking God for providing blessings in his life and for His divine covenant. Some go on to conclude that it was Abraham trusting in God (and the tree) to provide for his descendants who, 400 years later, fled Egypt for the promised land, with the implication that the hardy tamarisk tree would still be flourishing, providing shade for the exiles.

The tamarisk appears again in Samuel 22 & 31. In Samuel 31:13 Saul's bones are buried under a tamarisk. Because of its size and enduring nature of the tamarisk it was common in ancient times to bury remains under a tamarisk so it would serve as a living and long-lasting monument in the harsh environment.

Given its location on our historic Church Square, with a strong connection to the Moravian Wolle family, the presence of this gnarly relic makes much more sense to the viewer! Hopefully, it flourishes for another hundred years.

~ Thomas L. Wentzel