

## **Report to the Synod of 2022**

### **From: The Moravian Archives, Southern Province**

#### *Mission, Purpose, and Values*

The Archives is the official repository of Provincial office and all Southern Province congregations, fellowships, boards and agency records, which it collects, catalogs and stores in archival conditions for future reference. In addition to providing access within its policies to Provincial entities, pastors and congregations, the Archives also allows access for research by genealogists, academicians, cultural institutions and the general public. Throughout its history, Archives staff have authored publications and presentations about the faith and history of Southern Province Moravians.

#### *Responsibilities*

The Archives receives, catalogs and stores church and agency records following archival standards. It responds to requests for access to the collection, ensuring that staff and researchers adhere to proper handling standards. The Archives also publishes and provides programming to share the Moravian story.

#### *Summary of Activities*

Until COVID restricted access to the Archives in early spring 2020, staff responded to inquiries about family and church history, mostly within the Moravian community. When open, reading room computers provide access to a memoir collection containing biographical accounts of approximately 15,000 Southern Province Moravians beginning in the eighteenth century. The photograph collection contains images of individuals, gatherings, and buildings in early daguerreotypes and tintypes to present-day digital images. As access allowed, staff continued to digitize older images to make them more available for use by the Church and purchase by scholars. With the formation of the Commission for Congregational Development in summer 2021 and subsequent relocation of it and the Provincial Women's Board office from Boys School II into Cedarhyrst, a considerable number of records were sent to the Archives, which when processed will be added resources to explore.

Since the 2018 Synod, the Archives published Volumes Eight, Nine and Ten of the *Records of the Moravians Among the Cherokees*. Work is nearly completed on Volume 11. While early volumes in the series were published in collaboration with the Eastern Band of the Cherokee and the Cherokee Nation in Oklahoma, more recent volumes have been supported by grants from the Cherokee Nation. Volumes recount events and experiences recorded in diaries, reports and correspondence from the beginning of the Moravian mission in 1801 through the 1838 Trail of Tears, the Civil War and post-war.

In February 2020, the Archives Commission held a planning retreat to explore longer-term aspirations, plans and fundraising opportunities, which were disrupted by the advent of COVID. Planned in 2019, the Archives collaborated on the "Reynolda Conference: Becoming American,"

hosted by Wake Forest University under its grant from the Mellon Foundation. Due to COVID, that conference was delayed until September 2020 and held electronically. More than 30 scholars presented papers on four aspects of Moravian history from 1772-1822: African Americans and indigenous relationships with Moravians; arts artisans and architecture; religion, gender and economics; and new findings from Moravian archival holdings. Eric Elliott, archivist, and Nicole Crabbe, assistant archivist, took part in the bi-annual Bethlehem Conference held at Moravian College in Bethlehem, Pa., with Eric presenting in 2018 and Nicole in 2021. Also before COVID closures, the Archives in collaboration with the Moravian Music Foundation offered 19 programs during this quadrennial period as part of its monthly Lunchtime Lecture series, which also featured guest researcher speakers. In addition, staff made presentations to congregations, historical associations and other groups. Pre-COVID, approximately 800 persons a year either visited the Archives or made remote requests for information and assistance, including family historians, academic researchers, student classes, and staff of other cultural institutions.

As expenses rose and Provincial income declined, the Archives Commission and staff redoubled efforts to raise new funding in anticipation of reductions in Provincial and Salem Congregation funding, which it has now experienced. A special initiative to raise funds to upgrade Archives technology was successful in meeting a \$20,000 goal. In 2019, the Province gave permission to the Archives to celebrate an Archives Sunday in all Southern Province churches. Materials were produced for an April 26, 2020, Archives Sunday but COVID closed in-person church services. Materials were created for an April 25, 2021, Sunday, but churches again were closed due to COVID with many worshipping remotely. The Archives Commission is hopeful 2022 will reintroduce us to Moravians across the Province as reductions in Provincial budgets resulted in the difficult decision to eliminate the archivist position effective January 2021. In August 2021, Nicole Crabbe, assistant archivist, resigned. A temporary, part-time employee, Cindy Lamb, who staffs the Provincial Women's Board, has assisted in the Archives' office since September.

### *Future Direction and Opportunities*

In March 2021, the Archives Commission submitted to and received approval from the PEC of a restructuring plan, outlining collection, financial and administrative assessments that will lead to a long-term plan for Archives' sustainability. Paul Peucker, archivist of the Northern Province Moravian Archives, donated his time to assess the collection in June 2021. The PEC then appointed a search committee comprised of four professional archivists, three of whom are Moravians and the fourth is a former head of the State Library of North Carolina and deeply steeped in Moravian history; two members of the Archives Commission; and the PEC president, to whom the archivist reports. The search committee has advertised the position nationally, seeking a degreed archivist fluent in German and able to translate the historic German script of the Archives' oldest documents. The hope is to have that position filled by Synod. In the interim, the Commission redoubled its efforts to raise funds for the Archives, holding other restructuring decisions to be made with the new archivist.

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