

MORAVIAN MUSIC FOUNDATION

Finding aid for Bethlehem Scores Collection

Date range: 1750-1813

Bulk dates: 1771-1810

Finding Aid created by Nola Reed Knouse, February 28, 2019

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Creator: Bethlehem Area Moravians (formerly Bethlehem Congregation), Moravian Church in America, Northern Province, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

Extent: 2 boxes, 2.8 linear feet

Abstract: The Bethlehem Scores Collection contains 52 folders of music, 257 titles, in full scores of instrumentally-accompanied sacred solo and choral pieces. Originally part of the private collection of Johann Friedrich Peter, the collection includes works by 3 non-Moravian European composers, 5 European Moravians, and 3 American Moravians. About 1/3 of the pieces are by American composers.

Call number: BSco – Moravian Archives, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

Language: The material is in German.

Access and Use:

Acquisition Information: These materials are in the custody of the Moravian Music Foundation from the Moravian Archives, Bethlehem, PA.

Access Restrictions: The record group is open to research.

Copyright: Copyright is with the Moravian Music Foundation

Cite as: [item], Bethlehem Scores [number], Moravian Music Foundation.

History: Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, was founded in 1741 by Moravian settlers, including the remnants of a failed settlement in Georgia (begun 1735), and served as a home base for missionaries and traveling preachers whose duties carried them to native Americans and European settlers in New York, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, New Jersey, the Caribbean, and South America.

Worship services structured life in Bethlehem, as in all other Moravian settlement congregations in the eighteenth century. Devotional meetings for small groups or the whole community occurred several times daily. In smaller assemblies hymns might be sung without accompaniment. Three services involved music in special ways. Sunday morning preaching services included liturgies according to the Lutheran liturgical year, usually along with one or two anthems and congregational hymns.

The *Singstunde* was the most characteristically-Moravian order of worship, instituted by their patron Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf within the congregation at Herrnhut, Germany; the worship leader chose from various hymns individual stanzas that combined to craft a unified message. Since the liturgist began singing each stanza without announcement or printed order of worship, the congregation's ability to participate relied upon their familiarity with hundreds of stanzas. The Moravians sang hymns daily and read and memorized hymn texts as a spiritual exercise, using printed hymnals at home for devotion but not during worship. The organist was also expected to identify the tune, and also to play in the same key in which the leader was singing, using his memory and ear. The *Singstunden* were held weekly as well as on special occasions, and could include a choir anthem. A sermon and the reading of the *Gemein Nachrichten* (congregational news from other settlements) might also be a part of the *Singstunde*.

The third type of service using music extensively was the Lovefeast (*Liebesmahl*). Modeled after the early Christian practice of expressing *agape* through sharing a simple meal, the Lovefeast includes the sharing of a beverage and bread during the worship service. Lovefeasts were held (and continue in many Moravian congregations today) to celebrate Christian feast days, Moravian festival anniversaries, and many kinds of special occasions, which could include birthdays, weddings, the arrival or departure of guests and members, funerals, anniversaries, and so on. The musical portion of the Lovefeast often took place at the end of a longer service which included preaching. Most of the sacred vocal music written by Moravian composers was written for a Lovefeast or other special celebration.

Texts and musical selections for a Lovefeast were compiled into an order of worship known variously as a *psalm*, *cantata*, or *ode*, or in German, *Dankgesang* or *Lobgesang*. These odes included biblical texts, often fragments from many different locations in scripture, quoted literally or in paraphrase; hymn texts, often newly-written or adapted for the specific occasion; and solos, duets, or anthems to be sung by the choir. The well-crafted ode develops a unified theme, marked by harmony of language and thought; the music was intended to help carry the meaning of the text, not to stand on its own as an artistic creation.

The anthems, solos and duets were accompanied not only by organ, but by an instrumental ensemble consisting primarily of strings, augmented by some wind instruments (most often flute and horns).

The Bethlehem Scores are from the personal library of Moravian minister-composer Johann Friedrich Peter (1746-1813). Peter was educated at Moravian schools in Haarlem and Niesky, Germany, where he may have received his first musical training from Moravian composer Johann Daniel Grimm. At the age of 19, he entered the Moravian seminary in Barby, also in Germany, and began making copies of musical works by other composers. He was called to service in America in 1770.

In Pennsylvania, his first work was as an instructor at the Moravian boys' school in Nazareth, and it was then that he composed his first-known music for the church. In 1773 he was called to work in Bethlehem, as a teacher and a bookkeeper, and began copying anthems by Moravian composer Christian Gregor. In 1779 he was called to Lititz, Pennsylvania, as record keeper and secretary. He was called to Salem, North Carolina, in 1780, and was ordained a Moravian minister, serving a two-year interim pastorate; he was also supervisor of the boys' school. With the signing of the Peace of Paris in 1783, North Carolina Governor Martin proclaimed July 4 a "Day of solemn thanksgiving". To the best of our knowledge, the Moravians were the only ones who celebrated the occasion. Peter assembled the music for the afternoon service, using selections from the music already on hand – some of which had been used at Moravian peace celebrations at the end of the Seven Years' War in 1763. He served pastorates in Graceham, Maryland (1790); Hope, New Jersey (1791-93); Mountjoy, Pennsylvania (1802-1804), and spent the last seven years of his life in Bethlehem. In 1811 he took part in what may have been the American premiere of Haydn's *Creation*.

Beginning in 1764, and continuing throughout his life, he copied hundreds of instrumental and vocal pieces. Among these are several which are only known surviving copies, including four symphonies by J.C. F. Bach, and the earliest known copy of Haydn's *Symphony #17*. Throughout most of his life Peter served as teacher or supervisor at one of the Moravian schools. He found a great deal of satisfaction in this work; his widespread influence is only beginning to be fully recognized. He was also responsible for giving organ lessons to promising students.

Peter's work raised the level of the church's musical life, by means of his compositions, his teaching, his music direction, and his preparation of service odes or "psalms". Using his own compositions, along with anthems by other composers, and interspersing them with appropriate hymns, he shows the ability to manage larger-scale musical form and harmonic flow, within the boundaries of a well-established tradition of service order. This grasp of large-scale musical flow is also seen in his quintets which he completed in Salem in 1789, the earliest known chamber music written in America.

Scope and Content: The collection consists of approximately 225 pieces in 52 folders, with the majority being in Peter's hand. Eleven composers are represented: 3 non-Moravian Europeans, 5 European Moravians, and 3 American Moravians. Christian Gregor, a

European Moravian who visited Bethlehem 1770-1772, has 150 titles included. Early American composer Jeremias Dencke (1725-1795) has 45 titles, the earliest composed in 1765 and copied by Peter in 1773; this collection is the best single source for Dencke's works. About 1/3 of the pieces are by American Moravian composers. The majority of the works are contained in the Bethlehem, Lititz, and/or Salem Congregation Collections, also held by the Moravian Music Foundation.

Title:

- Bethlehem Scores Collection

Corporate Names:

- Bethlehem Area Moravians (Bethlehem, PA)
- Moravian Music Foundation

Subjects:

- Anniversaries
- Cantatas, Sacred
- Chorales
- Choruses, Sacred (Mixed voices) with orchestra (or chamber orchestra)
- Christmas music
- Duets
- Good Friday music
- Holy Saturday music
- Moravian Daily Text: April 2, 1763 (for example)
- Pentecost Festival music
- Watch night—Songs and music
- Sacred songs (High voice) with chamber orchestra (or orchestra)
- Sacred songs (Low voice) with chamber orchestra
- Watch night--Songs and music
- Little Boys Covenant Day (Moravian Church)—Anniversaries, etc.
- Single Brothers Covenant Day (Moravian Church)—Anniversaries, etc.
- Single Sisters Covenant Day (Moravian Church)--Anniversaries, etc.

Related Materials:

Researchers interested in this archive may also wish to consult the following resources:

GemeinKat, online catalog of the Moravian Music Foundation.

<https://moravianmusic.on.worldcat.org/discovery>

Search for the collection by title: ti=Bethlehem scores collection

The Music of the Moravian Church in America, edited by Nola Reed Knouse. Rochester, New York, The University of Rochester Press, © 2008.

Catalog of the Lititz Congregation Collection, edited by Robert Steelman. Chapel Hill, North Carolina, The University of North Carolina Press, ©1981.

Catalog of the Salem Congregation Collection, edited by Frances Cumnock. Chapel Hill, North Carolina, The University of North Carolina Press, ©1980.

Finding aids, Salem Congregation Collection; Lititz Congregation Collection; Bethlehem Congregation Collection.

Other materials in the Archives and Foundation holdings may relate to the topics in this archive. See the archivist for further research assistance.