

MORAVIAN MUSIC FOUNDATION

Finding aid for Dover Congregation Collection

Inclusive dates:

Bulk dates: 1780 through 1860

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

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Creator: Dover Congregation, Dover, Ohio

Extent: 6 boxes, 8.5 linear feet

Abstract: The Dover Congregation Collection contains 141 sacred vocal works, mostly by Moravian composers, with accompaniment of chamber orchestra, found in the attic of the First Moravian Church, Dover, Ohio. These works were sent to Dover from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, in the early 19th century.

Call number: D – Moravian Archives, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

Language: The material is primarily in German, with some later texts in English.

Acquisition Information: These materials are in the custody of the Moravian Music Foundation from the Moravian Archives, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. They were transferred to the Moravian Archives from the First Moravian Church of Dover, Ohio.

Access Restrictions: The record group is open to research. Use restricted by the terms of the Moravian Music Foundation Research Policies.

Copyright: Copyright is with the Moravian Music Foundation

Cite as: [item], Dover Congregation Collection, Moravian Music Foundation.

History: Moravian work in the Tuscarawas Valley of Ohio began in 1772 at Schoenbrunn, as a mission to the Lenape or Delaware tribes of Native Americans. Over the next decades, other Moravian missions and settlements were founded in the region, including Goshen (1797), Gnadenhütten (1799), Beersheba (1805), and Sharon (1815). With increasing settlement in the area, the Moravians established preaching stations, and from one of these came the congregation of Dover First (1842).

Worship services structured life in the Moravian communities. 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.

Over the years, as printed music became more widely available (and the common language shifted to English), the older music manuscripts lost their importance, were placed in boxes and stored in various locations. During a major renovation at the First Moravian Church of Dover, Ohio, an Akron Baking Company crackerbox was discovered, and a workman noted that it contained old music. This collection comprised 141 pieces, complete or in part.

The majority of the "crackerbox collection", as it came to be known, had originally been part of the music collection of the Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, Moravian congregation. It had long been known that a large body of manuscripts were missing from the Bethlehem

congregation, but their whereabouts had been unknown. The Bethlehem connection was confirmed by the fact that the original call numbers had never been erased from the Dover music.

How and when these manuscripts were transported to Dover remains unclear, nor is it evident that all of the music was brought to Dover at once; nor is it firmly established that the collection was intended for Dover and not in part for the other Ohio Moravian congregations. Lawrence Hartzell, in his book *Ohio Moravian Music*, explores the theory that, rather than a single collection, the “Dover Collection” was a repository for music used at different locations and acquired over a period of years. Performances of pieces that can be found in the crackerbox may be traced over a 27-year period, from 1827 to 1847.

Scope and Content: The collection consists of 141 titles, all sacred vocal music, representing 39 composers: 7 American Moravians, 11 European Moravians, and 21 non-Moravian Europeans. About 1/3 of the pieces are by American composers.

The pieces are not in full score form, but are performance parts.

Title:

- Dover Congregation Collection

Corporate Names:

- Dover Congregation (Dover, Ohio)
- Moravian Music Foundation

Subjects:

- Choruses, Sacred (Mixed voices) with string orchestra
- Chorales -- Musical settings
- Sacred songs with piano

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=dover congregation collection

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

Ohio Moravian Music, by Lawrence Hartzell. Cranbury, New Jersey, Associated University Presses, © 1988.

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