

MORAVIAN MUSIC FOUNDATION

Finding aid for

Nazareth Congregation Collection

Date range: 1741-1810

Bulk dates: 1750-1790

Finding Aid created by Nola Reed Knouse, March 5, 2019

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Creator: Nazareth Congregation, Moravian Church in America, Northern Province, Nazareth, Pennsylvania.

Extent: 21 boxes, 29.75 linear feet

Abstract: The Nazareth Congregation Collection contains sacred vocal music used in worship services in the Moravian community of Nazareth, Pennsylvania. The majority of the pieces are by Moravian composers, but the collection also contains a significant number of works by other composers, including *contrafacta*.

Call number: N – Moravian Archives, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

Language: The material is in German, with some in English and one in Latin.

Access and Use:

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

Access Restrictions: The record group is open to research.

Copyright: Copyright is with the Moravian Music Foundation

Cite as: [item], Nazareth Congregation [number], Moravian Music Foundation.

History:

Mainland North American Moravian settlements began in 1735 in Georgia, a venture that proved unsuccessful, partly because of war between Protestant England and Catholic Spain in Florida. In accepting the invitation of evangelist George Whitefield in 1741 to relocate their colony to Nazareth in Pennsylvania, the Moravians were moving to a colony that offered religious liberty to a degree unknown in most of the other American colonies. Their relationship with Whitefield deteriorated, but they were able to purchase five hundred acres approximately eight miles south of Nazareth. There they established a permanent settlement, named Bethlehem in December of 1742 by their Saxon patron Count Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf. Soon thereafter they were able to purchase the Nazareth property itself from Whitefield.

The following paragraphs are paraphrased from “Music in Moravian Boarding Schools Through the Early Nineteenth Century,” by Pauline M. Fox, in *The Music of the Moravian Church in America*, edited by Nola Reed Knouse (Rochester, New York: The University of Rochester Press, 2008), 215-218.

Nazareth was for many years an important Moravian center especially for education. Moravians sponsored schools for both boys and girls beginning in their earliest years in America; the boys’ school moved from Bethlehem to Nazareth in 1759, and became known as Nazareth Hall. The school was temporarily closed following the American Revolutionary War, but was reopened in 1785, accepting boys aged seven through twelve and offering instruction in reading, writing, arithmetic, history, geography, mathematics, music, and drawing, as well as English, German, Latin, French, and Greek, with daily speech in both English and German. Nazareth Hall retained a reputation for excellence until it closed in 1929. As an outgrowth of Nazareth Hall, Moravian Theological Seminary had been started in 1807 to fill a need for training ministers for the church; it was closed from 1813 to 1820, but was revived and moved to Bethlehem in 1838, where it continues as Moravian College and Theological Seminary.

Music was an essential part of education at Nazareth Hall, as at all Moravian schools. All students were required to attend frequent singing classes, in which both tunes and texts of chorales and hymns were memorized. This was seen as part of the emotional as well as intellectual education of the students. Moreover, copying music was seen as a legitimate and worthwhile method of instruction. Individual lessons on keyboard and other instruments were offered at an additional fee. The students and teachers at Nazareth Hall, as at other Moravian settlements, greatly enriched the musical life of the communities they served.

Worship services structured life in Nazareth, 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.

Scope and Content:

The Nazareth Congregation Collection consists of approximately 809 titles, all sacred vocal works, all in manuscript form. Some of these titles do not represent independent works, but are variant texts or *contrafacta*. The collection is almost exclusively manuscript copies of parts for instrumentally-accompanied sacred solo and choral works composed or arranged for use in Moravian church services. These works were copied for the church by various copyists during the date span of the collection, mostly by American copyists, but probably including some European copies.

More than two dozen composers are represented, with about half being members of the Moravian Church; those most widely represented (in descending order) are Christian Gregor (1723-1801), Johannes Herbst (1735-1812), Johann Christian Geisler (1729-1815), Johann

Christian Bechler (1784-1857), and Johann Ludwig Freydt (1748-1807). Non-Moravian composers most widely represented in the collection (some as *contrafacta*) include Ernst Wilhelm Wolf, Johann Heinrich Rolle, Karl Heinrich Graun, Ludwig van Beethoven, Johann Abraham Peter Schulz, and Franz Joseph Haydn. The composer is identified on the score for most of the pieces in the collection, and researchers have been able to identify the composer for many through other sources. However, more than a third of the works remain without composer attribution.

Very few pieces are in full score format. Rather, these are performance parts, and their condition indicates that they were used, with some having performance notations written in. By far the majority of pieces include accompaniment by instruments other than organ, primarily string orchestra with some parts for winds, notably flute(s) and horns. Most contain organ parts either as *continuo* or as a form of reduced score, indicating that the music director (or composer) was most often at the keyboard.

Title:

- Nazareth Congregation Collection

Personal Names:

- Johann Christian Bechler, 1784-1857
- Ludwig van Beethoven, 1770-1827
- Johann Ludwig Freydt, 1748-1807
- Johann Christian Geisler, 1720-1815
- Karl Heinrich Graun, 1704-1759
- Christian Gregor, 1723-1801
- Joseph Haydn, 1732-1809
- Johannes Herbst, 1735-1812
- Johann Heinrich Rolle, 1716-1785
- J. A. P. (Johann Abraham Peter) Schulz, 1747-1800
- Ernst Wilhelm Wolf, 1735-1792

Corporate Names:

- Nazareth Congregation (Nazareth, PA)
- Moravian Music Foundation

Geographic Names:

- Nazareth, PA

Subjects:

- Advent music
- Anniversaries
- Cantatas, Sacred
- Chorales

- Choruses, Sacred (Children's voices)
- Choruses, Sacred (Mixed voices) with orchestra (or chamber orchestra)
- Christmas music
- Duets
- Easter music
- Good Friday music
- Holy Saturday music
- Holy Week music
- Opera--Excerpts
- Oratorios
- Palm Sunday music
- Pentecost Festival music
- Psalms (Music)
- Responses (Music)
- Sacred dramatic music
- Sacred songs (High voice) with chamber orchestra (or orchestra)
- Sacred songs (Low voice) with chamber orchestra
- Te Deum laudamus (Music)
- Trios (of various kinds)
- Watch night--Songs and music
- Moravian daily text: September 19, 1750 (for example)
- August 13th Festival (Moravian Church)--Anniversaries
- Children's Festival (Moravian Church)--Anniversaries
- Little Boys Covenant Day (Moravian Church)--Anniversaries
- Little Girls Covenant Day (Moravian Church)--Anniversaries
- Older Boys Covenant Day (Moravian Church)--Anniversaries
- Older Girls Covenant Day (Moravian Church)--Anniversaries
- Single Brothers Covenant Day (Moravian Church)--Anniversaries
- Single Sisters Covenant Day (Moravian Church)—Anniversaries
- Widows Covenant Day (Moravian Church)--Anniversaries

Related Materials:

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

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

GemeinKat, online catalog of the Moravian Music Foundation.

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

Search for the collection by title: ti=nazareth congregation collection

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

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