

MORAVIAN MUSIC FOUNDATION

Finding aid for Salem Congregation Collection

Date range: 1771-1853

Bulk dates: 1780-1810

Finding Aid created by Nola Reed Knouse, May 23, 2018

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Creator: Salem Congregation, Moravian Church in America, Southern Province (Salem, now Winston-Salem, NC).

Extent: 39 boxes, 15 linear feet

Abstract: The Salem Congregation Collection contains sacred vocal music used in worship services in the Moravian community of Salem (now Winston-Salem), North Carolina. 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: SCM – Archie Davis Center Vault

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

Access and Use:

Acquisition Information: These materials are in the custody of the Moravian Music Foundation from the Moravian Archives, Winston-Salem, NC.

Access Restrictions: The record group is open to research.

Copyright: Copyright is with the Moravian Music Foundation

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

History: Salem, North Carolina, was founded by Moravian settlers primarily from Germany by way of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. This was the third intentional community established by the Moravians in North Carolina. The first, Bethabara, in the northwestern part of what is now Forsyth County, was founded in 1753; the second, Bethania, farther to the northwest, was established in 1759. The building of Salem was begun in 1766, and the Moravians' central North Carolina administration was moved to Salem in 1771.

Worship services structured life in Salem, 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, *Dankesang* 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). By 1788 Salem is known to have had at least three violins, two viola, three cellos, a flute, two horns, and two clarini, all of which were used in worship.

Johann Friedrich Peter served as music director in Salem from 1780-1790. During those years his hands drew together all aspects of the church music. As minister, copyist, keeper of the manuscripts, composer, and performer, Peter could compile psalm texts in the light of his intimate knowledge of the choral repertoire, compose needed anthems, and oversee performance. Administrative details apparently fell into line. Never again did this happy set of circumstances undergird Salem's music program.

Over the years, the Salem Congregation Music evolved along with community life and worship practices. Multiple copies of vocal parts were added, along with additional instrumental parts. More English texts appeared; even when retaining the German texts, later copyists sometimes used roman script (rather than the old German script characteristic of 18th- and early 19th-century copies. At the same time, the C clefs used for the upper vocal parts gave way to G clefs. In other cases copyists penciled into the old parts the pitches proper for the G clef. As published music in a more contemporary style became more widely available, the number of new manuscript parts added to this collection diminished and ceased altogether around 1875.

It is uncertain when a system of numbering the folios in the Salem Congregation Collection began. A few numbers exist from the first decade of the collection's life, but it is unknown whether those numbers referred to this collection or were "holdovers" from the private collection of the person to whom those pieces had belonged. In the late 1780s Johann Friedrich Peter numbered the convolutes (groups of parts kept together as units), but seemingly ignored chronology in his numbering. His frugality adds further to the confusion: he continually added pieces to new folios as well as to old ones, taking advantage of every inch of blank paper possible. For instance, folio 81 contains music composed by Peter for festivals in 1786 and 1787, along with other pieces performed for the first time over a period of several years.

A general renovation of the Salem Congregation Collection began in 1807. Many of the organ parts, which included title page information and served as folders to contain the other parts, had become excessively worn. Copyist Johannes Reuz began copying these and putting all the parts in wrappers bearing title page information on the outside. He was chosen to create a new catalog of the Congregation Music in October of 1806, but no tangible progress was shown until 1808, after an ulcer in his leg rendered him virtually an invalid for life, unable to work except at copying music and writings of various kinds. He seems to have begun with a systematic review of the collection, making notes on the condition of each folio; he must have had some sort of older catalog at hand, because he knew the contents of folios he noted as "missing". A neat copy of his notes survives in a document entitled *Anmerkungen bey dem Durchsehen der Musicalien der Gemeinde in Salem, March 1808*.

Reuz's two-volume catalog (one volume in numerical or call-number order, one in alphabetical order) survives both in a paper version and a slightly later copy in hardback. As part of this process he changed 137 of the original 200 convolute numbers, allowing him to organize (and list) the manuscripts according to size for more effective storage of the manuscripts on the music cabinet shelves.

Later additions to Reuz's catalog, made over fifty or sixty years, have made it impossible to reconstruct the exact chronology of these additions.

Scope and Content: The collection consists of approximately 1325 titles, all sacred vocal works, all in manuscript form. Some of these titles do not represent independent works, but are variant texts or *contrafacta*. Nearly 100 composers are represented, with the vast majority being members of the Moravian Church; those most widely represented are John Antes (1740-1811), Johann Christian Bechler (1784-1857), Johann Ludwig Freydt (1748-1807), Johann Christian Geisler (1729-1815), Christian Gregor (1723-1801), Johannes Herbst (1735-1812), and Johann Friedrich Peter (1746-1813). Non-Moravian composers with several works in the collection (many as *contrafacta*) include Karl Heinrich Graun, George Frederick Handel, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Johann Heinrich Rolle, Johann Abraham Peter Schulz, and Ernst Wilhelm Wolf. 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, a significant number 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:

- Salem Congregation Collection

Corporate Names:

- Salem Congregation (Winston-Salem, NC)
- Moravian Music Foundation

Subjects:

- Anniversaries
- Cantatas, Sacred

- Chorales
- Choruses, Sacred (Mixed voices) with orchestra (or chamber orchestra)
- Christmas music
- Duets
- Epiphany music
- Opera--Excerpts
- Oratorios
- 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
- Trios (of various kinds)
- Watch night--Songs and music
- Moravian daily text: September 19, 1750 (for example)
- Children's Festival (Moravian Church)--Anniversaries
- Older Girls 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:

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

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