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I certify that I have read this thesis and find that, in scope and quality, it satisfies the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

  
Robert C. Kenzer, Thesis Advisor

  
Eric S. Yellin

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“A CHANGE HAS SWEEPED OVER OUR LAND”: AMERICAN MORAVIANS AND THE CIVIL WAR

By

ADRIENNE E. ROBERTSON

Master of Arts in History

University of Richmond

2009

Dr. Robert C. Kenzer, Thesis Director

When they first came to North America, the Moravians—a pietistic, Germanic Christian sect—settled in isolated communities where only a few people ventured out to do missionary work for the community. They separated themselves from their non-Moravian neighbors, one missionary community serving the North from its seat in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and the other serving the South from Salem, North Carolina, and neither participating in civic or military life. Then, over the course of a few decades, economic and civic circumstances forced the Moravians in North America to adapt their ways to be more like those of their non-Moravian neighbors, adopting styles of living and commerce from them. By the time of the American Civil War, though both communities maintained a separate sense of Moravian identity, they had both come to resemble their neighbors so closely that Moravians in Bethlehem and Salem were some of the first to enlist to fight against fellow Moravians. Though the communities chose opposite sides on the battlefield, it was because they had undergone the same change.

“A CHANGE HAS SWEEPED OVER OUR LAND”: AMERICAN MORAVIANS AND THE CIVIL WAR

By

ADRIENNE E. ROBERTSON

B.A., Furman University, 2008

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

Of the University of Richmond

In Candidacy

For the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

In

History

December, 2009

Richmond, Virginia

To my parents for everything

To my siblings and dear friends for indulging me

To my cats for helping me keep a sense of humor

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## Chapter 1: The Moravian Question

...in the presence of a large concourse of people of 'all ages, sexes and conditions' the Rt. Rev. Geo. F. Bahnson delivered a brief but pertinent address, encouraging the soldiers to the performance of their duty, warning against the temptations of a soldier's life, and commending them to the God of Battles.<sup>1</sup>

Such a commendation might at first glance appear to be the type of send off that any Civil War era community would hope to give its soldiers—a send off with the blessing and good will of a local clergyman. Nor would it seem strange that these troops being sent to war would then sing a benediction. For the most part, mainstream Christianity offered the soldiers comfort and aid. But not every Christian sect condoned violence in the name of the state.

Various groups—the Amish, the Quakers, and branches of the River Brethren—doctrinally advocated pacifism and forbade their members from engaging in violence. Another such sect that historically prohibited its members from fighting was the Renewed Unitas Fratrum, more commonly known as the Moravian Church. What makes this excerpt from a contemporary newspaper especially interesting is the fact that the local clergyman who gave the endorsement to the troops, Rev. George F. Bahnson, was a Moravian bishop, acting with the approval of his church and his community. The

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<sup>1</sup> "Departure of the Soldiers," *People's Press* (Salem, NC), June 21, 1861.

benediction sung by those present was “The Grace of Our Lord Jesus,” a traditional Moravian benediction.<sup>2</sup>

As a scholar, my first encounter with the Moravians did not involve doctrinal pacifism and resistance, but rather was in the form of a set of published letters written by a Moravian Confederate soldier from Salem, North Carolina during the Civil War—Captain Charles Bahnson. It was only upon further investigation that I discovered the complex set of identities to which this individual could relate. He was, at the same time, a Moravian, a soldier, and a Southerner. As my research progressed, I discovered an almost parallel source coming from the Moravian community in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania—the letters and diary of Major John F. Frueauff.

Captain Charles Bahnson of the 2<sup>nd</sup> North Carolina Infantry Battalion and Major John Frueauff of the 153rd Pennsylvania Infantry were both in their twenties when they enlisted to fight in the Civil War.<sup>3</sup> Both grew up in Moravian communities—Bahnson in Salem, North Carolina, and Frueauff in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania—where their fathers participated in the leadership of the Church. Though administratively their churches were independent, both young men and their families shared social and familial connections between the two communities, even to the point of living for periods of time with family and friends on the other side of the Mason Dixon line.

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<sup>2</sup>Sarah Bahnson Chapman, ed., *Bright and Gloomy Days: The Civil War Correspondence of Captain Charles Frederic Bahnson, a Moravian Confederate* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 2003), 10; For an excellent resource on the history of Moravians in America the North Carolina Department of Records and Archives has published a large collection of Moravian documents in a multi-volume collection. For a brief history of the Moravians up to the American Civil War, see Chester Davis, *Hidden Seed and Harvest: A History of the Moravians*. Winston-Salem, NC: Wachovia Historical Society, 1959. For a general review of conscientious objectors in America, see Peter Brock, *Pacifism in the United States: From the Colonial Era to the First World War*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968.

<sup>3</sup> Chapman, ed., *Bright and Gloomy Days*; Daniel R. Gilbert Senior, ed., *Freddy's War: The Civil War Letters of John Frederick Frueauff* (Bethlehem, PA: Moravian College, 2006).



In addition to these two young officers, there exists another set of letters, these from a private in the 46<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Infantry, James A. Peifer, a Moravian from Bethlehem.<sup>4</sup> He knew John Frueauff, and at several points in his correspondence talks about seeing or encountering him. The letters written by Bahnson and Frueauff are interesting because the young men's lives are strikingly similar, and studying these sets of correspondence led me to other excellent sources. These letters reveal not only a perspective of the life of a Civil War soldier, but because of the unique religious identity these young men shared, the effects the Civil War had on not only these young men, but their communities, become apparent.

Much of the historical work on the Moravians has been written by Moravians.<sup>5</sup> The congregations typically kept a "diary," a record of the events in their community and these volumes were then preserved by the Church, automatically generating a wealth of primary sources for the scholar. In the case of the community in North Carolina, those diaries and other historic documents were compiled and published in several volumes by members of the Church.<sup>6</sup> Also, both the Northern and Southern administrative entities of the Church maintain archives to preserve not only the original congregation diaries, but also the weekly newspapers published by both congregations, personal correspondence of notable people, and other related documents.<sup>7</sup> The community in Salem has also

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<sup>4</sup> Carolyn W. Abel and Patricia N. McAndrew, eds., *Bethlehem Boy: The Civil War Letters and Diary of James A. Peifer* (Bethlehem, PA: Moon Trail Books, 2007).

<sup>5</sup> J. Taylor Hamilton and Kenneth G. Hamilton, *History of the Moravian Church: The Renewed Unitas Fratrum 1722-1957* (Bethlehem, PA: Interprovincial Board of Christian Education Moravian Church in America, 1967).

<sup>6</sup> Kenneth G. Hamilton, ed., *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina* (Raleigh, NC: State Department of Archives and History, NC, 1969).

<sup>7</sup> *The People's Press* in Salem and *The Moravian* in Bethlehem.

published two works specifically on its history during the Civil War.<sup>8</sup> Bethlehem, however, has not had any major secondary sources written about it during this time period. There is some work on the founding of Bethlehem, as in the work of Beverly Prior Smaby (of whom more will be noted later), but the community during the Civil War presents an opportunity for original scholarship.

Why study the Moravians? This group, though a minority in this country, represents some of its earliest founders. Not only that, but unlike other religious groups, the Moravians have not faded nor are their views and communities locked away from outsiders. The communities at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and Salem, North Carolina, began as communities closed to outsiders. Their occupants lived communally, disregarded traditional family structures, and adhered to strictly pacifist teachings. Yet these communities underwent a series of changes, so that by the time of the Civil War their members not only self-identified as Moravians within a community, but also identified with secular and state institutions. They were Moravians, but they were also Americans, perhaps Confederates, perhaps Unionists, and soldiers.

The thesis begins by describing the founding and antebellum development of the communities. The Civil War itself does not present a social crisis, but is rather a point when the families in both communities confronted the need to put official wording on their changing beliefs. To examine this change requires an understanding of what went before. The most dramatic point is the start of the war itself—with a focus on the early

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<sup>8</sup> Richard Meyers, "The Moravian Church and the Civil War," *Transactions of the Moravian Historical Society* 20, no. 2 (1965); C. Daniel Crews, *Storm in the Land: Southern Moravians and the Civil War* (Winston-Salem, NC: Moravian Archives, 1997); Colin W. Shepard, "The North Carolina Moravians and the Civil War" (honors thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1993).

years and soldiers' initial enlistments. The later years in the war also provide a chance to examine how Moravians dealt with hardship in their communities, and also how they confronted continued military service in the face of an increasingly costly war. Not only did Moravian young men face the physical hazards of war, but the residents of Salem very clearly documented the occupation of their town by Federal troops, and Indian mission outposts in the West operated by Moravians became sites of battles and, in at least one case, a slaughter of the missionaries occupying it by hostile Native American troops.<sup>9</sup> Another work that will perhaps provide an example of structure to follow is Gillian Lindt Gollin's *Moravians in Two Worlds*.<sup>10</sup> This book follows the development of Bethlehem and compares it to the parallel development of the original settlement, the Herrnhut. Though the author states early on that the approach is sociological, the structure of comparing two different settlements as they change will be a helpful guide, not to mention the relevant content of the work.

Independent of each other, Michael Shirley and Beverly Smaby each wrote a community study documenting the changes that took place in American Moravian towns and how they developed from closed religious communities to being almost indistinguishable from their non-Moravian neighbors.<sup>11</sup> Obviously the Moravian communities in America underwent a lot of structural changes between their founding and the modern day. But no other change seems to be such an apparent reversal of a

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<sup>9</sup> *Salem's Remembrancers: Seven Moravian Historians Who Presented Their Papers before the Wachovia Historical Society of Salem, North Carolina 1898-1910* (Winston-Salem, NC: Wachovia Historical Society, 1976).

<sup>10</sup> Gillian Lindt Gollin, *Moravians in Two Worlds* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967).

<sup>11</sup> Michael Shirley, *From Congregation Town to Industrial City: Culture and Social Change in a Southern Community* (New York: New York University Press, 1994); Beverly Prior Smaby, *The Transformation of Moravian Bethlehem* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988).

previously held position than the Church's stance on military participation. Whereas in the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century they were driven from their settlement because they would not fight to defend the community, a century later they had formed their own militia companies and were some of the first on both sides to enlist when the conflict started.

Then, of course, attention must be paid to the rebuilding of the communities and re-establishment of social connections after the war. Both sets of letters, Captain Bahnsen and Major Frueauff's, cover all of these time periods and also include some background on the families of the individuals and their social connections. Therefore, the theses of Shirley and Smaby, coupled with primary sources in the archives, will provide a sense of the structure of these communities and the changes they underwent in the antebellum period. The four years of the Civil War will be structured around not only these same primary sources (the newspapers and congregation diaries), but also the letters of the Moravian men who chose to fight.

The communities of Salem and Bethlehem developed along very similar lines—both abandoning the communal living structure in the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and adapting to the commercial nature of their neighbors. But if both communities were so similar, why would they develop to support opposite sides of a war? Though both communities supported different sides, each ended up fighting for the cause that their location indicated. Therefore, the surrounding community influenced much of the transition of both Bethlehem and Salem. For the Moravian communities, the Civil War marked the second of two rapid social changes, one following swiftly on the heels of the

other. One was the transition away from the traditional lifestyle and the acceptance of non-Moravian factors in the community. The other, the Civil War, forced them to crystallize and redefine their belief system officially.

The Civil War is often touted as a war of brother against brother, but for the Moravians on both sides of the Mason Dixon line, this moniker proved even more aptly true. Because Bethlehem and Salem were two good sized communities that were so closely connected, the possibility of companies of Moravians facing each other across a battlefield loomed. And what of the common thread that united them—their theology? How did the faith of the Moravians stand up when faced with the secular theology of patriotism and duty to one's country?

Gillian Lindt Gollin's comparative study of Moravian settlements in America and their counterparts in Europe indicates that the seeds of the differences in the communities were sown with their founders.<sup>12</sup> In the Herrnhut, many of the Moravians were aristocrats, used to entitlement and less concerned with labor and providing for the community through their work. Rarely did these people ever choose to leave Europe. The Moravians who settled in America, on the other hand, were missionaries intent on their religious work and willing to undertake the intense labor that was necessary for carving out a settlement in the wilderness. These men and women were more like their new American neighbors—the status they had in society was not granted by birth, but by merit and work.<sup>13</sup> In time, with the difficulty of communicating and the influences of the surrounding non-Moravian communities, the American Moravians and European

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<sup>12</sup> Gollin, *Moravians in Two Worlds*.

<sup>13</sup> Smaby, *The Transformation of Moravian Bethlehem*, 48.

Moravians diverged from each other to find different ways of keeping their faith according to the circumstances.

Though they generally differed from their European brethren, American Moravians showed striking similarities to each other across communities and eventually battle lines. Charles Bahnson and John Frueauff offer excellent examples. Both young men grew up in the Moravian Church. Both were also educated away from their homes, Bahnson traveling to Pennsylvania to study optics and watch making with a jeweler and Frueauff studying law in universities across Europe. Both were in their twenties in 1860, and thus eligible to vote in the presidential election of that year. This commitment to national politics of itself would have been strange to American Moravians scarcely a century before, when Moravian communities did not participate in civic functions beyond their own religious communities. When the election and subsequent events led to the secession of the Southern states, both Charles Bahnson and John Frueauff enlisted in units that were among the first to form in the conflict. Both also served as field officers in their respective units, Bahnson eventually attaining the rank of captain and Frueauff climbing as high as a major, even at one point commanding his whole regiment. Bahnson eventually took a position as a quartermaster, and when Frueauff's original enlistment expired, he re-enlisted, this time in the 153<sup>rd</sup> Pennsylvania Infantry.

Both of these young men also left a distinctive record of their motivation and military service with their own voice. Bahnson's and Frueauff's descendants saved nearly all of their wartime letters to their families, and Frueauff's family even saved a diary he

kept when circumstances rendered him unable to write home. Each set of letters was then published with editorial commentary, both within the past ten years.<sup>14</sup>

Both of these young men created for themselves identities based on their military and political affiliation, but throughout their communication they maintained a definite sense of their identity as Moravians. They were visited often by Moravian friends, sometimes from different communities, and spoke of how Moravian education, holidays, and religious services differed from that of non-Moravians. How did these young men, and others like them, combine two identities—civic and religious—that a generation or two ago would have been mutually exclusive? Their story was distinctive, not just because of the transitional nature of their religion, but also because of its American nature. The Moravian faith in Europe and the faith of American Moravians were evolving separately to suit the needs of different people. The nature of this change lay not just in the beliefs of individuals, but within the roots of the communities themselves, founded in a New World to convert others, yet winding up dependent on them to sustain their communities.

What is most striking about Moravians who fought in the Civil War was the way they created and maintained two separate identities. Though the definition of what a Moravian was had changed, it was still a considerable part of an individual's self definition. While each person could be an American patriot or an ardent secessionist, at the same time their correspondence and publications indicates that many still thought of their Moravian identity as being equal to or even perhaps greater than their civic identity.

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<sup>14</sup> See Abel and Chapman.

For example, the Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, periodical *The Moravian* published prayers and assurances that the side of the Union was the side of the right, but also tried to explain how Moravians in North Carolina chose to fight for the Confederacy. In

November 1863, the readers of *The Moravian* were informed that:

Among the rebel prisoners confined in the Old Capitol at Washington, D.C. are Emanuel Spaugh and Constantine Haga [a misspelling of “Hege”] from North Carolina, who are known to some of our readers. Like the majority of Moravians in the Confederate service, they took up arms under compulsion and are eager to assume the obligation of allegiance to the United States Government. Fortunately a very large proportion of the Moravian conscripts have escaped the severe ordeal of being compelled to fight against their government, by accepting mechanical employments in the workshops of the Confederacy.<sup>15</sup>

A quick reading of the few remaining pages of Constantine Hege’s personal papers indicates no such duress motivated his enlistment.

In fact, much of the correspondence that remains consists of his father’s urgent hopes that God will intervene in politics to end the war so that his son Constantine may come home.<sup>16</sup> A contemporary *New York Times* article seemed to express the same sentiment as *The Moravian*. In giving a briefing about recent events, it describes the capture of a Confederate Moravian under the heading “Unionists in the Rebel Army.”

A young Moravian, who had been impressed into the rebel ranks, recently reached our lines. He was at the Battle of Bull Run, and he states that it being his purpose not to fire upon our troops, he put the first cartridge in his musket ball down. He knows of another case where a musket was found with seven cartridges in the barrel, and which the holder had avoided shooting by not using his percussion.<sup>17</sup>

Confederate surgeon John Francis Shaffner, like his compatriot Alexander Hege, would have taken issue with the Northern publications questioning his loyalty to the Confederacy. In a letter home to his fiancée, Carrie Fries of Salem, he described his

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<sup>15</sup> *The Moravian* (Bethlehem, PA), November 26, 1863.

<sup>16</sup> Undated letter, Father to Constantine Alexander Hege, 05158, The Constantine Alexander Hege Papers, The Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

<sup>17</sup> *The New York Times*, September 20, 1861.



motivation for enlisting: “But a...change has swept over our land, a storm is now brewing, ever raging and we must meet it. For this reason so many of our people now occupy the tented field, foregoing the comfort of home, the society of kindred and friends, for this reason I am now here.”<sup>18</sup> He is driven to defend his home and political views from the furor of the invading Yankee army, with religious considerations becoming secondary. Further, it seems, Shaffner would have been hard pressed to do anything but despise the Federals. When speaking of residents of a neighboring county in North Carolina, he remarked, “It appears some of the good (?) citizens of our adjoining county Davidson have not yet entirely forgotten their once great love for the Union of all the States and have taken to especial devotion to that prince of baboons Abe Lincoln.”<sup>19</sup> But to Moravians in the North, the idea that their brethren would be fighting against a cause that God endorsed was out of the question. Better that they be misled than turn against God’s will.

Yet the young men of Northern Moravian communities expressed sentiments whose patriotism equaled that of their Southern brethren. In writing to his sister, who opposed his enlistment, W.D. Luckenback of Bethlehem described his motivation:

I know you would not like to have your brother branded as a coward. There is no one more willing to lend his feeble assistance to his government than I, and if I must fall I can not do so in a more just cause and though deprived of a brother you would have the consolation to know he had done his duty as an American citizen.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Letter, J. Shaffner to C. Fries, June 30, 1861, 04046, The Fries-Shaffner Family Papers, SCH, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

<sup>19</sup> J.F. Shaffner to Carrie Fries, 31 July 1861, The Fries-Shaffner Family Papers, SHC. Punctuation appears as in original.

<sup>20</sup> Richard Meyers, "The Moravian Church and the Civil War," *Transactions of the Moravian Historical Society* 20, no. 2 (1965): 232.

Though this young man grew up in a Moravian community, his primary identification was with his duty as a citizen of his country rather than as an adherent of his faith, which receives no mention in his motivation to enlist.

Another distinctive characteristic of Moravians that helped them maintain a separate identity was their use of the German language. In his diary J. F. Shaffner does his best while enlisted to acquire German newspapers and books to send home to his father.<sup>21</sup> Moravians in Bethlehem also used the language extensively. Their congregational records were kept in German until after the Civil War. Though they shared a common language, these men and women did not consider themselves members of the larger German speaking population of the country. When writing to her fiancé, Carrie Fries told him of some Federal prisoners being held in Salem. When next he returned home, she informed him, “Father says he expects you will have an opportunity of speaking German with some of those ‘Dutch.’”<sup>22</sup> The immigrant, German-speaking Federals were a separate entity—the “Dutch,”—who the Moravians were distinctive from despite their common language.

The descriptor “Moravian” in America and Europe has historically expanded its own definition. The characteristics of self-described “Moravians” varied across continents and to some extent also varied regionally. The people who founded Moravian communities in America may have shared a similar dogma with those still in the Herrnhut, the original settlement, but their interpretations and actions varied, and thus the communities began to drift. A Moravian in North America would have much more

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<sup>21</sup> J. F. Shaffner, *The Diary of Dr. J.F. Shaffner, Sr.* (n.p.: Self Published, n.d.).

<sup>22</sup> J. Shaffner to Carrie Fries, July 21, 1861, Fries-Shaffner Family Papers, SHC.

interaction with his or her non-Moravian neighbors, and thus their views became more like those of their neighbors. When the American Revolution forced Moravians to choose a side, they could no longer opt out of larger civic interaction, but had to adopt a new, secular identity—American. With this adoption, some of their more distinctive characteristics began slowly to fall by the wayside—the exclusive use of German, their communal lifestyle, and their pacifism. The experience of Moravians during the American Civil War highlights this transition. It meant one thing for Moravian authorities to allow participation in local militia musters, but quite another to offer a blessing for troops armed to march into battle to deal death to the state’s enemies and possibly fellow Moravians.

The story of the Moravian faith in America is one of adaptation. To survive in a new world that was forced to redefine itself multiple times in the crucible of war, the practitioners of that faith had to do the same. Beginning with the American Revolution, this period of transition culminated during the American Civil War when Moravians faced Moravians across battle lines and finally had to define what it meant, not only to be a Moravian, but what it meant to be a Moravian in America.

## Chapter 2: Origins of the Moravian Church in Europe and America

The Moravian Church extant today descended not from the original Unitas Fratrum, but a revival of that faith centuries later. The original Brethren of the Unitas Fratrum were followers of Jan Hus, a heretic martyr from Bohemia whom the Catholic Church executed in 1415.<sup>23</sup> The Unitas Fratrum thrived despite heavy persecution until the seventeenth century, when it was banned in its original Bohemia. Many Brethren fled to Poland and Moravia. Their faith almost died out, but a few Moravians continued to practice their faith in secret, calling themselves the “Hidden Seed.” A secret revival movement began a century later based on the writings of an original Moravian Bishop, John Amos Comenius, and influenced by the rising popularity of other Piestic faiths.<sup>24</sup> Still an outlawed sect, the new Moravians sought the protection of a young German Lutheran nobleman, Nicholas Lewis, Count von Zinzendorf. Intellectually interested in the Moravian’s Piestic faith, though not a believer himself, Zinzendorf allowed the renewed Unitas Fratrum to settle on his estates in Saxony. It is on these estates that the original Moravian settlement, the Herrnhut, emerged, and from them that Moravians departed to found missionary outposts in North America, the American *Pilgergemeinen*.

Coming to America before the Revolutionary War, Zinzendorf negotiated with the trustees of the colony of Georgia to allow the Brethren to settle near Savannah, which

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<sup>23</sup> Adelaide L. Fries, *The Moravian Church Yesterday and Today* (Raleigh, NC: Edwards & Broughton, 1926), 3.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

they did in 1736.<sup>25</sup> The Moravian community never flourished, and in 1740, the Moravians were forced to abandon their mission when, facing imminent attacks by Spanish settlers from Florida, they refused to take up arms to defend their settlement. Though the hostilities forced the Moravians from Georgia, they founded another community of 120 residents in Pennsylvania the following year.<sup>26</sup> The central town was named Bethlehem, to commemorate Zinzendorf's presence for its inaugural Christmas services—and the names of the satellite towns were also appropriately biblical—Nazareth being the largest among them. The original motivation for settling where they did was a contract with the landowner to begin the construction of what he hoped would be a town for poor Englishmen to settle in and a school for blacks.<sup>27</sup>

A decade later in 1753, the Moravians established another settlement, Wachovia, on a 100,000 acre tract of land in North Carolina, with its central town Salem.<sup>28</sup> Both of these outposts, Bethlehem and Salem, kept contact with the original Moravian settlement in Europe, the Herrnhut, considering themselves outposts of it rather than independent settlements. It was more expedient for the Moravians in the South to communicate directly with the Herrnhut out of Charleston harbor than for them to go through the

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<sup>25</sup> J. Taylor Hamilton and Kenneth G. Hamilton, *History of the Moravian Church: The Renewed Unitas Fratrum 1722-1957* (Bethlehem, PA: Interprovincial Board of Christian Education Moravian Church in America, 1967), 66.

<sup>26</sup> J. T. Hamilton, *The American Church History Series*, ed. Phillip Schaff (New York: Christian Literature, 1893), 8:453.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, 441.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, 441, 461.

Bethlehem community as an intermediary. Therefore, North and South, the Moravian communities in North America grew administratively independent.<sup>29</sup>

The Moravians came to North America not with the intention of founding settlements that would be permanent, but instead building *Pilgergemeinen* or communities that existed solely to support missionaries and their work.<sup>30</sup> To that end, they were not allowed the distraction even of living in separate family units, but rather resided in dormitories separated according to their age, gender, and marital status. It was thought that congregants with similar stations in life would reach points on their spiritual journey at about the same time, and thus they could mentor and support each other along their journey.<sup>31</sup> These distinctive groupings were called *choirs* and the transition from one choir to another—single sisters to married sisters choir, little boys to single brethren’s choir—marked an important rite of passage in the life of the individual believer. Children were raised in the nursery by single sisters rather than by their parents and after the age of five were strictly separated along gender lines. More importantly, they did not hold individual property or earn wages, but all possessions were held in common, and anyone who needed a workshop separate from the choir house was granted a lease by the owner of the land—the Church.

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<sup>29</sup> The extent to which they were independent is sometimes vague. Both claim independence as a separate district of the Church, though at times the community at Bethlehem appears dominant. As an example, a Civil War era bishop in the Salem community went to Bethlehem to be consecrated.

<sup>30</sup> See Smaby, 9 and 38. Moravian communities could be divided into various categories. For a chart of the different terms, see Smaby, 25, Figure 1.3. Briefly, there were two types of exclusive Moravian communities, *Pilgergemeinen* and *Ortsgemeinen*. *Pilgergemeinen*, such as Bethlehem and Salem, were further subdivided into groups based on the individual’s task. The collective term for the community of missionaries was also *Pilgergemeine*, while those who worked on domestic tasks to support the community were the *Hausgemeine*. Moravians also did have some non-exclusive communities, known as *Stadtgemeine*, if they were urban, or *Landgemeine* if they were rural.

<sup>31</sup> Smaby, 10.

Within this communal economy, not only was it impossible to establish a social hierarchy based on material possessions, but each person's labor was valued equally as contributing toward the community's spiritual growth. Because of the strict separation of sexes, women also had to perform tasks that might otherwise not have been open to them. Since the women's choirs needed leaders and supervisors who could not be male, women became leaders of their choirs and representatives of those choirs in larger governing bodies. The leadership positions that women occupied were no less important than those of the men. They were just as qualified to provide spiritual guidance and recommend courses of action to congregants. Their opinions on an individual's readiness to advance to the next phase of their spiritual career were not questioned. Also, missionaries and others who ministered to large, gender integrated groups always traveled as married couples—the husband would minister to the men, and his wife to the women.<sup>32</sup>

Outsiders did not factor into this communal economy. Nor, indeed, did they factor into the community life at all, save for their interactions with distant missionaries. Only in cases such as imminent threat of attack by hostile Indians did outsiders mingle freely with Moravian communities.<sup>33</sup> But by the time of the Civil War, not only were Moravians interacting with non-Moravians, but they dwelt in towns together, did business together and even intermarried.

Despite being technically under the leadership of separate districts of the church, the North Carolina and the Pennsylvania Moravians were still deeply connected through ties of acquaintance and family. Even as late as the Civil War, when both communities

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 14.

<sup>33</sup> J. T. Hamilton, *The American Church History Series*, 463.

had undergone so much change, the letters of Charles Bahnson and John Frueauff both frequently mention acquaintances from the other's community and wonder about how Moravians on the other side of the conflict fared. Contemporary obituaries frequently mention individuals being born in one community and moving to the other later in life.

The American Moravians also kept close counsel with the original Moravian settlement in Europe, the Herrnhut, but the cracks in that intercontinental alliance showed early. Theologically, the European Moravians went through a period of transformation, inspired by their leader, the Count von Zinzendorf, on whose estate the European Moravians resided. Lasting from the 1740s to the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and known as "The Sifting Period," it was a time when European Moravians focused in on Christ's physical suffering as a point of worship. As J. Taylor Hamilton described the period:

Zinzendorf [had a] flaw of intellectual method, which inclined him to love paradoxical and mystic expressions and to build systems of thought around metaphors that temporarily fascinated him, [and] had led to an unwarranted sentimentalism in the prevalent conceptions of the atonement set forth especially in hymns and liturgies.<sup>34</sup>

More simply, Zinzendorf tended to focus the rituals of the Moravians worship on more abstract and mystic concepts. Christ's wounds at the Crucifixion lent themselves very well to this type of worship, and for a time, the death of one of the Brethren could also be euphemistically referred to as the "journey into the lovely side-wounds." Though the American Moravians were still communicating regularly with their European brethren, the distance between them and the resulting slow communication meant that by the time the American Moravians heard of some of the changes, their European Brethren had

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 457.



advanced from a study on Christ's suffering to gory discussions of his wounds and blood. Christ's wounds could be described as "worthy, beloved, miraculous, powerful, secret, clear, sparkling, holy, purple, juicy, close, long-suffering, dainty, warm, soft, hot, and eternal."<sup>35</sup>

The divide did not originate entirely because of the European Moravians, however, as the American Moravians often had to make decisions about their own community without the benefit of the immediate counsel of their leaders in Europe. The theological changes that the Sifting Period brought about, coupled with communication difficulties, caused a rift to form between the European and American communities of Moravians.

Not just religious, but economic differences began to appear between the European Moravians and their American brethren. With the coming of the Sifting, Moravians in Europe began a period of almost exclusive theological occupation, neglecting their secular work and running up huge debts to maintain the community. Zinzendorf's exclusive governance of the Unity's funding did not help the situation either. Allowing no one but himself rights to make financial decisions for the Church, he was able to run up Church expenditures without consulting others. Though they might have been well intentioned, the drain on finances left the European brethren in dire financial straits, and yet they believed there was a solution. To them, Salem and Bethlehem were mere outposts of the main European settlement—they did not even own their own land yet--and therefore could be used in ways that would be most beneficial to

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<sup>35</sup> Gillian Lindt Gollin, *Moravians in Two Worlds* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), 12.

the European settlement. As a result, they tried to make Bethlehem and Salem transition from *Pilgergemeinen* to *Ortsgemeinen*, where people would live in family units, shift their focus away from missionary work, and hopefully be able to generate enough revenue to help support their European Brethren.<sup>36</sup>

In 1762, the Moravians in Bethlehem dissolved their communal economy, and became the desired *Ortsgemein*, though individuals still did not officially own the land they lived on until 1817 and the lease system was not abolished until 1843.<sup>37</sup> Thus, in order to fund the European settlement and make a decent living for their own families, American Moravians were increasingly forced to work outside of their communities with non-Moravians. This led to some bitterness on the part of the Americans, as they had chosen to come to America seeking to be missionaries, not breadwinners for their erstwhile European brethren. Further, they found the church's insistence on using German as the liturgical language was not conducive to bringing in new converts in the Americas, as many did not speak German.<sup>38</sup> Nor did it help that, until 1847, the Herrnhut retained the power to appoint men to most major offices within the Church and often used this power to put men in power who had no connection to the American communities.

Moravians first settled in North Carolina in 1753.<sup>39</sup> The leader of the Moravian Church in Europe—Zinzendorf—purchased a tract of land for the purpose of Moravian Settlement. The whole tract became known as “Wachovia,” named after a green valley on

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 93.

<sup>37</sup> Smaby, 105, 43, 44.

<sup>38</sup> Hamilton, *American Church History Series*, 475.

<sup>39</sup> Fries, 28.

Zinzendorf's land that it apparently resembled. The first settlers of the area were brethren recruited from the communities in Pennsylvania to come and tame the wilderness so that Wachovia could become another thriving missionary center. Though the first town in the Wachovia settlement was Bethabara, the central town in Wachovia throughout much of its existence was Salem.

Salem was planned and built intentionally as the central town in the settlement. It sat at the confluence of several important waterways and split the distance between Bethabara and other parts of the settlement. The first inhabitants came to Salem in 1772 and were split off from the original Bethabara Church. Unlike the single brethren who made up the first party of settlers in the Wachovia valley, Salem's initial inhabitants included married couples, single women, and children. The township had already been carved out of the wilderness, and now it was time to set the people to spiritual tasks.<sup>40</sup> The two communities, Bethlehem and Salem, established their connection from the beginning. The first clergy who came to the Wachovia settlement all originated in the Bethlehem community and many thereafter also came from or were ordained in Pennsylvania.

The War of 1812 and various Indian attacks on settlements did little to foster Moravian exclusivism. Missionary camps along the Sandusky River were raided, their inhabitants taken captive or murdered, and often troops advancing on a retreating enemy burned anything that stood in their way. Not only was the local population often beholden to the Moravians for aid, but the trade-off went both ways.

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 67.

Established in the traditional Moravian style of communal living, both Bethlehem and Salem eventually moved to a more traditional community arrangement, both because it became practical and because of the dictates from the Herrnhut. They also began more frequently to interact with their non-Moravian neighbors in commerce and social life. The evolution of these communities from exclusive, theocratic towns to typical county seats and manufacturing districts would undeniably have had an effect on the personal decisions of their members. The transition, as Peter Brock describes it, was somewhat sudden, at least in the Bethlehem community, and was introduced in just a few decades. One of the most notable changes during this transition was the change in the community's attitudes toward militaristic activities. Instead of eschewing any sort of militaristic display altogether, congregants were allowed to attend, and after some time, participate in local militia musters.<sup>41</sup> Rather than only being involved in their theocratic towns and the outlying Moravian settlements, the Moravians now made choices based on a wider view of their community and their responsibilities to it. But these choices were laden with the extra burden of a religious conviction that only recently and somewhat tentatively included allowances for military activities and interfaith interactions.

It is difficult to stress enough the close ties between Moravians in the North and in the South. Newspapers for both communities published obituaries for residents of the other, and many of those indicated that individuals often relocated to other Moravian communities to visit relatives or study a trade. When the American Civil War broke out, many of the Moravian men who enlisted did not just suspect that they might face friends

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<sup>41</sup> Peter Brock, *Pacifism in the United States: From the Colonial Era to the First World War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968).

and relatives across battle lines, they knew they would. It is only because of the transitions that happened within the Moravian community before the Civil War that Moravians were faced with these choices; otherwise they would have sought to be grouped with their fellow religious dissenters as conscientious objectors, as they were during the American Revolution.

Michael Shirley's *From Congregation Town to Industrial City: Culture and Social Change in a Southern Community* explores how the Moravian community in Salem slowly evolved from an exclusively Moravian communal town into a commercialized manufacturing city, inclusive of non-Moravians and also adopting the labor practices of its neighboring towns—slavery. It is an exploration of its transition from a religious colony to a typical American town from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Likewise, Beverly Prior Smaby's *The Transformation of Moravian Bethlehem* follows a similar transition. Next to each other, these works show that, though administratively separate, the decisions these communities made led them on similar paths to acclimation. So despite the distance between them, both Charles Bahnson and John Frueauff probably experienced striking similarities in their upbringings.

For years, both the Northern and Southern branches of the Church were cut off from any contact with Europe and, at the same time, found communication amongst their brethren in America was disrupted. Instead of fostering closer ties with other Moravians, the Moravians in Bethlehem actually found in the Revolutionary War a chance to interact more with their non-Moravian neighbors—and certainly they needed this interaction to prove their loyalty to their new country. As their religion prevented them from bearing

arms, so it also restricted them from swearing an oath of loyalty for the state. Also, the Moravians in Wachovia had to continue to pay rents to British landlords, making their loyalties suspect.<sup>42</sup> Because the conflict so polarized the society in which the Moravians lived, they could no longer choose an identity outside of political alignments and had to redefine themselves as either Revolutionaries or Royalists to maintain the safety of their community.

Other than simply being forced to choose a side, however, the ideas behind the American Revolution may also have inspired the American Moravians. As the colonists complained about the foreign government lording over them without regard to their political voice, it was easy for the Moravians to find a parallel in their own theocratic situation. Was it not also tyranny that they had to accept decisions from the Herrnhut without being allowed their input? Also, since their own was branching away from the gory imagery of the Sifting Period, surely they should be allowed to find their own methods of worshiping and their own path to salvation.

The Revolutionary Army established a hospital in Bethlehem, and many of that community's residents served as impromptu care-givers, some even dying from fevers caught amongst the wounded.<sup>43</sup> Those patients treated at this hospital that eventually recovered remembered all of their lives the kindness of Moravians, giving them bequests of land and money and encouraging them to reopen their schools and allow non-Moravians, their children, to be educated there. Thus, as Gillian Lindt Gollin explains,

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<sup>42</sup> Chester Davis, *Hidden Seed and Harvest: A History of the Moravians* (Winston-Salem, NC: Wachovia Historical Society, 1959), 62.

<sup>43</sup> Smaby, 41.

“the very adherence to their religious goals, to the ethical precepts of brotherly love towards all mankind, and to cooperation, implicit in their dogma, forced them to expose themselves to the values of others.”<sup>44</sup>

Bethlehemites were also faced with the encroachment of outside culture when coal was discovered in Lehigh County at the end of the eighteenth century. Soon, Bethlehem became a mining town at the center of a transportation hub, with easy travel to both Philadelphia and Pittsburgh.<sup>45</sup> The Moravian residents of the town who became involved in the developing commerce created ties that would later greatly affect Bethlehem’s relationship with the Moravian Church at large. In 1837, the entire country underwent a severe economic depression. The effect of this disaster of Bethlehemites was negatively compounded by a flood of the Lehigh River in 1841 so severe it washed away bridges.<sup>46</sup> Facing financial ruin, with no hope of significant aid from European Moravians, the Moravians in Bethlehem decided to end the lease system in 1843 and open the town to occupancy by non-Moravians.<sup>47</sup>

Where, then, did that leave the Moravians’ perception of themselves? For decades, the Moravians of Bethlehem had defined themselves based on their specific mission to minister to others and maintain a model, communal lifestyle dedicated to the service of God. Suddenly, though they still attended religious functions, they had secular concerns outside of their church work and were surrounded by neighbors who worshiped, acted, and lived differently. In this atmosphere, Moravians in Bethlehem faced the

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<sup>44</sup> Gollin, 18.

<sup>45</sup> Smaby, 44.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

challenge of self-redefinition at a time when their young nation was itself still testing its limits.

The Moravians in North Carolina also had to deal with their share of combatants from the American Revolution. Over the course of the war, both the Royalist and American forces in turn occupied Salem. The presence of soldiers apparently became a problem for the community. The younger men were admonished not to associate too closely with the soldiers, while the older men were forbidden to query the soldiers for news of recent battles, rules which were instituted after the prohibited behaviors were fairly commonplace.<sup>48</sup> Clearly, the leaders of Salem wanted their community not to associate too strongly with either side. Thus, the actions of outsiders had a profound effect on Salem's transition as well. The economy of the Piedmont area of North Carolina, which contained the Wachovia settlement, was mainly agricultural. Also, this was an area of the country where slavery flourished.

Originally, the Moravian Church disapproved of slavery, but not because it allowed one human being to own another. Rather, because it held that any man who owned a slave would use that slave to do his honest labor and become lazy. Still, the Church never put forth an official statement of its views. In North Carolina, some members of the congregation began to purchase and hire slaves despite the admonition of the local church officials. It was not until the 1820s that the Aufseher Collegium relented and allowed slavery into Wachovia, but even then the slaves were owned by the Church and the community in North Carolina and not the individual members. Congregants could

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid, 64.



hire out slaves that the Church owned. Eventually the Church relented and allowed individual members to own slaves and the land they lived and worked on in their own names, though this change in policy came only just on the eve of the Civil War.

Bethlehem, unlike Salem, lay in an area where smaller scale agriculture, mining, and manufacturing dominated the economy. Without needing the advantages that slavery brought to large-scale agriculture, it was a much less appealing prospect for Pennsylvanians and northerners in general and simply did not take root in the northern community as a whole, not just among Moravians. Thus when the opportunity arose, the moral arguments against it outweighed the economic necessity, and slavery in Pennsylvania was outlawed.

The largest factor that led to the desirability of slave-owning among Southern Moravians was their adoption of individual finances and capitalism. The Piedmont in North Carolina, with its many sources of moving water, was well adapted to powering textile mills. Francis Fries, a Moravian, opened a textile mill in the Salem area and became quite wealthy. He hired non-Moravian hands to come and work in the mill, and in time began to employ slaves, further cracking the shell of Moravian exclusivism.

In 1851, the American brethren took another step towards dissociation from the European community by officially abolishing the communal agricultural system.<sup>49</sup> This way, all ecclesiastical property was held privately, and not in such a manner as the European church should have undue access to it. The communal economy, once the

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<sup>49</sup> Hamilton, *American Church History Series*, 496.

lifestyle preferred by American Moravians as the maintainer of their missionary lifestyle, had become an undesirable symbol of the past.

Though Moravians in both Bethlehem and Salem had converted to *Ortsgemein* style communities, both still sent missionaries out to Indian Territory in the west and continued to support the children of married missionaries when both parents were dispatched. With the coming of the Civil War, Indians began to take sides, and the sites of the Moravian missions became fields for skirmishes. Indians also perpetrated acts of violence against the missionaries, in several cases leading to murder.<sup>50</sup> Out in the territories, bands of Cherokee mostly sided with the Union and one missionary was killed and another captured by Cherokee who mistook them for Southern sympathizers, despite their Pennsylvania origins. One Moravian mission in the West became the site of a minor skirmish.<sup>51</sup> Though Moravians had continued their mission work in the western regions, they were still concentrated near Salem and Bethlehem, so the story of the Moravian experience during the Civil War is one that largely revolved around the Eastern Theater of the war.

Based on the influences of the non-Moravian communities around them, by the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, Moravians in Bethlehem and Salem began to take stances on social and political issues that had more in common with those of their neighbors than those of their fellow Moravians in other communities. The fact that there were separate administrative departments of the Church in America did not help heal the division. For both, this included whether or not to bear arms in the name of the state and their church's

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<sup>50</sup> Chapman, 21; Hamilton, *American Church History Series*, 500.

<sup>51</sup> *The Official Records of the War of the Rebellion*, Series I, Volume 13, page 335.

perspective on slavery. Yet the communities remained connected through ties of family, marriage, and education.

When the Civil War began, the communities and the individuals in Salem and Bethlehem had to make the decision about which community's values would take precedence—their Moravian congregation, or the larger political entity with which they identified. Though men from Salem chose a different point of view than their brethren in Bethlehem, the fact that their choices were corresponded to their neighbors' choices instead of each others' indicates that these two communities underwent the same kind of change. By opening their doors to the outside world, Moravians in Salem and Bethlehem both acclimated and adapted to the larger communities that they found themselves a part of. Salem became a Southern county seat, and Bethlehem a northern manufacturing center.

### Chapter 3: Moravians, Salem, and the Civil War

By the middle of the 1830s, the pace of economy in Salem was slow. Small shop tradesmen were not doing well in the face of cheap, mass-produced goods and there were few sources of outside cash flowing into the community. Most of the land still belonged to the congregation, represented by the Aufseher Collegium, the Church trustees, and could only be held as a lease from the Church rather than as individually owned plots. With these depressed circumstances, several entrepreneurs in Salem ventured to bring the Industrial Revolution into Salem. John Blum, Edward Belo, and Francis Fries, all Moravians, invested in a small textile mill near the community. Cotton prices had fallen while the price of finished textiles had risen, transportation was expanding, and the Piedmont area of North Carolina was striped with rivers and tributaries that could power a textile mill.<sup>52</sup> A mill would provide jobs and bring in outside sources of income to the community. The plan passed through the Aufseher Collegium, and an appointed committee selected a spot for the mill on the western edge of Salem.

Even more revolutionary than the establishment of the mill was the fact that the owners and investors sought to obtain the land from the Church, not as a lease, but to be held in fee simple. The lease system did not officially end in Salem until 1856, twenty years after the establishment of the mill. The Church granted them the land outside of the lease system, but the deed itself shows that not everyone was so enthusiastic about the new mill and its economic possibilities. Inserted into the deed for the land was a clause “that nothing is to be permitted on the premises of the cotton factory which is counter to

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<sup>52</sup> Shirley, *From Congregation Town to Industrial City*, 61.

the letter and the spirit of the Congregation Regulations of the settlement of Salem.”<sup>53</sup>

This clause was, perhaps, purposefully vague about what was permitted or not, allowing the Aufseher Collegium a certain amount of control to be applied at will. The mill began operations in 1837, with Francis Fries as the superintendent.

The first cotton mill in Salem, however, proved to be too ambitious an undertaking for the men providing the capital. The owners spent enormous sums on equipment and material without waiting to see if their investment would hold up. Seeing this, Francis Fries left the corporation in 1840 and established a woolen mill in partnership with his father. Starting small and growing with its capital, the Fries mill did not suffer as greatly in times of hardship and ultimately avoided the management errors that caused the original cotton mill to fail. In 1854, the stockholders sold the original cotton mill for \$9,100.<sup>54</sup>

The Salem cotton mill and the Fries wool mill in Salem were part of a larger trend in the evolution of agriculture in the North Carolina Piedmont and it was one of the most important factors in bringing about a diverse, non-theocratic Salem. Historian Michael Shirley explains that,

textile manufacturing became an agent of change that demonstrated to many Moravians that the congregational order was not compatible with capitalist enterprise . . . community in Salem was becoming less the product of that sense of shared experience that had united all who belonged to the congregation community than a place or location of residence and work.<sup>55</sup>

As the Industrial Revolution created and improved forms of transportation, farmers in Salem began to shift from subsistence agriculture to growing cash crops for a larger

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<sup>53</sup> Aufseher Collegium, November 1, 1839, in Minnie J. Smith, ed., *Records of the Moravians of North Carolina* (Raleigh, NC: Department of Archives and History, 1964), IX, 4484.

<sup>54</sup> Shirley, 66.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

market—tobacco, wheat, and the products from the mills would ship to consignees in large northern cities.<sup>56</sup> The increase in production and profit, however, was made infinitely more convenient by the use of a cheap and enslaved labor force. Thus the demand for cheap manufactured goods fueled the Southern need for slave labor. Indeed, Fries' mill owned sixteen slaves in its own right out of a workforce of twenty-three in 1847, and by 1860 that number had expanded to seventy-seven total workers, the majority of them still slaves.<sup>57</sup> White mill workers often came from outside of Moravian Wachovia and did not convert to the Moravian faith. Nor did the European insistence that services still be conducted in German and the relatively stoic nature of those services convinced them otherwise. Their presence further diversified Salem's society and bucked the trend of Moravian isolationism.<sup>58</sup>

The official Church records of the Moravians in North Carolina on the eve of the Civil War were diligently kept, covering in detail the goings-on of the community related to the Church. There was, however, a decided lack of information about anything outside of the Moravian community, no matter how much it might affect them. Neither the presidential election of 1860 nor the firing at Fort Sumter was mentioned, though certainly the population of Salem was not unaware of these happenings. The local newspaper endorsed a candidate, John Bell, and frequently reiterated its views on the secession crisis.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> For a fuller discussion of Salem's involvement in the Industrial Revolution, see Shirley, Chpt. 2.

<sup>57</sup> Shirley, 67.

<sup>58</sup> Shirley, 78.

<sup>59</sup> *The People's Press* (Salem, NC), March 2, 1860; November 2, 1860; April 12, 1861.

The first mention that anything might be amiss came nearly two weeks after the incident at Fort Sumter. On April 29, the Wachovia *Provinzial Aeltestan Conferenz* briefly noted that a local brother had volunteered to take charge of the boys' school in the town, the other teacher having returned to his home in Virginia "because of the alarms of war."<sup>60</sup> This fact was disclosed at the same meeting when the *Conferenz* discussed financial arrangements for North Carolina pupils at a school in Pennsylvania and decided that a meeting with the Pennsylvania *Provinzial Aeltestan Conferenz* was necessary. For the most part, parents preferred their children remaining in the North, despite these "alarms."<sup>61</sup> Clearly, they did not believe that any domestic dispute would disrupt their easy communication with their Brethren in Pennsylvania.

After North Carolina seceded, the minutes of the Wachovia *Conferenz* noted almost casually,

Since by resolution of the convention the state of North Carolina has severed its relations with the government of the United States and has joined the southern confederation...the P.A.C. [*Provinzial Aeltestan Conferenz*] holds this to be the time so to amend the prayers in the church litany which refer to the government of our country, and also the prayer in times of war, that they would be consistent with our present circumstances. Br. Bahnson is, therefore, to forward a copy of these amendments to all ministers in Wachovia, directing them to make us of them when they pray the church litany.<sup>62</sup>

The brother Bahnson mentioned is once again Charles Bahnson's father. According to these records, he busied himself traveling through Wachovia to update the church litany, while his son, Charles, was still in Pennsylvania trying to find a way to get back to Salem

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<sup>60</sup> Kenneth G. Hamilton, ed., *Records of the Moravians of North Carolina*, XI, 6061.

<sup>61</sup> C. Daniel Crews, *Storm in the Land: Southern Moravians and the Civil War* (Winston-Salem, NC: Moravian Archives, 1997), 9.

<sup>62</sup> Hamilton, *Records*, 6062.

through what have become increasingly hostile borders.<sup>63</sup> Nor were they the only family so separated. In May of that year, the *Conferenz* decided again to consult individually with families and see how best to deal with the large number of boys who were currently in Pennsylvania receiving their education. Would it be wise, given the current state of affairs, to withdraw them en masse and bring them home?

The records and minutes of the congregation by themselves might not indicate the community's knowledge and involvement in politics, but the local newspaper, *The People's Press*, unabashedly took sides on political issues. Besides endorsing a presidential candidate and stating its views on secession, *The People's Press* frequently published a call for enlistments from the Salem community, encouraging young men to recruit to prove that they would do their duty and fill the ranks.<sup>64</sup> Clearly the idea of Moravian pacifism was a secondary consideration, if considered at all.

Other sources were equally informative on the political opinions of the town. Carrie Fries, a local girl, wrote to friends describing the frantic sewing and knitting that local ladies did for soldiers. They produced flags, uniforms, socks, and other necessities, as well as items to show their own patriotism. Carrie described for her fiancé, Dr. J. F. Shaffner, an apron she and her sister made modeled after the Confederate national flag.<sup>65</sup> Without even seeming to notice the irony, she also mentioned that her father suggested the apron as appropriate church-wear, and then she dismissed it, not because Moravians

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<sup>63</sup> Sarah Bahnson Chapman, *Bright and Gloomy Days*. Charles Bahnson was forced to travel through Nashville, Tennessee to reach home and did not enlist until September 19, 1861. In July, he was still in Philadelphia.

<sup>64</sup> *The People's Press* (Salem, NC), May 17, June 21, 1861, and July 25, 1861.

<sup>65</sup> Carrie Fries to J. F. Shaffner, September 9, 1861. The Fries-Shaffner Family Papers, SHC. Rather than the ubiquitous battle flag, the Confederate first national flag closely resembles the Stars and Stripes, with a blue square containing stars over red and white stripes. It was to this flag that Fries referred.



historically had rejected political involvement and the associated symbols, but because the apron might be too gaudy.

As with any community, however, opinions were mixed. The residents of Salem and the nearby town of Winston organized a home guard unit to round up the large number of deserters that found shelter and aid from the community nearby, and several times later in the war, once in 1862 and 1863, the Confederate government had to draft men from the community to fill quotas in the ranks.

Like *The Moravian* periodical in the North, *The People's Press* of Salem served as a political organ for the still largely Moravian town. The political views expressed in *The People's Press* were generally moderate. In 1860, *The People's Press* urged readers not to vote for any presidential candidate who might lead the nation to disunion, but rather to choose a candidate who would actively seek compromise between the warring national factions, "Freemen to the Polls on next Tuesday, the 6<sup>th</sup> of November! Vote for Bell and Everett and put a quietus to the threats of disunion!"<sup>66</sup> Officially, the Church wished to politically abstain, though the *People's Press* undeniably took political stances. To preserve that neutrality, the trustees ceded to the interests of politics, allowing each political party to hold a rally on Church land and even allowing the same for political parties with little popularity or chance of victory.<sup>67</sup>

Even after Abraham Lincoln's victory in the 1860 presidential election, *People's Press* again urged its readers not to consider secession as a viable political option. Such a move would "plunge us all into the fearful vortex of revolution without even a single

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<sup>66</sup> *The People's Press* (Salem, NC), November 2, 1860.

<sup>67</sup> Crews, 4.

regret for Our Glorious Union!” “Secession has no abiding place in Forsyth!” it trumpeted, referring not just to Salem, but the entire surrounding county.<sup>68</sup> Church records also indicate that the position of many of the leaders of the Wachovia Moravians was pacifistic and against disunion. The diary of one congregation mentioned that “heavy clouds [are] lowering around the destiny of our Beloved Country. May God, our God, in mercy spare us from the fearful results of Disunion and Civil war, and cement us again in peaceful Brotherhood, and Christian Bonds as a nation.”<sup>69</sup> On January 4, 1861, the largest county meeting ever convened at the Salem courthouse. Its purpose was to express the anti-secessionist sentiments of the residents of Forsyth County, and representatives from all walks of life and political parties were present.<sup>70</sup> This show of solidarity was, however, tempered with a measure of suspicion. While they adopted resolutions that declared their opposition to secession, the assembly also stated that “while the Resolutions show the intention of the people to stand by the Union and the Constitution, yet they firmly demand an observance of all its provisions by the North.”<sup>71</sup> Moreover, while declaring secession to be an inappropriate response to one specific grievance, they also recognized the legitimacy of any resistance toward “unauthorized injustice and opposition” that might come from Lincoln and his government.<sup>72</sup> Moravian pacifism, though a consideration, took a back burner when it came to political grievances.

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<sup>68</sup> *The People's Press*, Nov. 1861 as quoted. in Crews, 5. In 1849 Forsyth County was created out of Stokes County. The county seat was Winston, the nearest town to Salem, now combined into Winston-Salem.

<sup>69</sup> Crews, 5.

<sup>70</sup> Shirley, 127.

<sup>71</sup> *The People's Press* (Salem, NC), January 4, 1861.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

Only after Lincoln's call for troops following the firing on Fort Sumter—the same that motivated the secession of North Carolina—did *People's Press* begin to consider rebellion an option. Rather than using the term “rebellion” and invoke negative connotations, however, the editors claimed that Lincoln had betrayed his promises to the people and a righteous resistance was now the only option. “The ‘die is cast,’—war is inevitably upon us, and there is no alternative left.”<sup>73</sup> This sentiment, though common to many Confederate demographics, became a statement for Moravians because of the venue in which it was stated.

The official stance of Moravian church also began to diverge from its former Unionist principles. On June 13, 1861, an official day of prayer declared by the Confederate Government, the congregation in Bethania was treated to a sermon preached on the text of Jeremiah 18:7-10: “At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it.”<sup>74</sup> Still, secession remained unpopular, and Forsyth County voted against having a convention to discuss it. According to *The People's Press*, only the firing on Fort Sumter in April 1861 and Lincoln's call for troops finally turned opinions favorably toward secession.<sup>75</sup>

Just as American Moravians two generations earlier resisted what they considered the unfair rule of their European brethren, so the Southern Moravians rejected the perceived tyranny of Yankee rule. According to the *People's Press*, they were “ready to

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<sup>73</sup> *The People's Press* (Salem, NC), April 26, 1861.

<sup>74</sup> Crews, 9

<sup>75</sup> Shirley, 128.

oppose aggression and defend their homes' firesides to the last."<sup>76</sup> As the textile mills had earlier began the disintegration of collective identity as Moravians, the beginning of the Civil War united the community once again under the enthusiastic banner of the righteous Southern defenders of their rights and homes.<sup>77</sup> "Our birth as a new nation has been accomplished," Dr. J.F. Shaffner wrote to his fiancée, Carries Fries, "and all Christendom is about to admit us."<sup>78</sup> The later generation did not seem to see the connection between their rejection of foreign rule and their ancestors'. The trend of a generational gap between Salemites is evident in J. F. Shaffner's letter to his fiancée regarding a traditional service. He thought her attendance could "do no harm" and that it was simply a nice traditional vestige of the "old order."<sup>79</sup> The original Moravian settlers in America would hardly have recognized their faith as it was practiced by their descendents on the eve of the Civil War.

Moravians in North Carolina's Wachovia settlement were some of the first to enlist. In June of 1861, three companies from Forsyth County, including men from Salem, Bethabara, and Bethania, two other Moravian towns in the settlement, mustered into Confederate service. The Salem town band attached themselves to the 26<sup>th</sup> North Carolina Regiment, and a further two bands and at least one more company would enlist

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<sup>76</sup> *The People's Press* (Salem, NC), May 3, 1861.

<sup>77</sup> Shirley, 132.

<sup>78</sup> J. F. Shaffner to Carrie Fries, May 13 1861, The Fries-Shaffner Family Papers, SHC.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

before a year had passed.<sup>80</sup> Because of the enthusiasm of their young men, the quota of enlistments for the county was filled, and one of the later drafts rendered unnecessary.

Even though it might at first have been “magnificently grand to hear the continued rattle of musketry,” as one enthusiastic young soldier wrote home to his friends, the horrors of war did not escape the notice of Salemites, both soldiers and civilians.<sup>81</sup> In October 1861, Carrie Fries wrote to Frank Shaffner about “this savage war.”<sup>82</sup> After the death of Lewis Augustine Hauser, Moravian Pastor Francis Holland lamented in the Salem congregation diary, “How many men in the prime of life have fallen victims to disease in this abominable war, besides the thousands who have been slain in battle?”<sup>83</sup> Even Shaffner, the eager soldier, lamented the loss of his peaceful life before the end of 1861.<sup>84</sup>

By this time, any Unionism within the county was either stamped out or never again expressed out loud. Several residents wrote of rumors that young men who secretly supported the Union nevertheless drilled with local militia to keep themselves and their families safe in the community. *The People’s Press* engaged in a sparring match with the *Richmond Examiner* after the latter published an editorial calling into question the loyalty of the people in the North Carolina Piedmont. “The town of Salem,” the Richmond editorial claimed, “is a Moravian settlement, and, while the people are honest and worthy

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<sup>80</sup> Crews, 11. Before the Civil War, the quality and frequency of the Moravians use of music in their services was well known. The 26<sup>th</sup> North Carolina band carried on that tradition, and was arguably one of the best known regimental bands of the Civil War.

<sup>81</sup> A. Belo to Carrie Fries, July 21, 1861, Fries-Shaffner Family Papers, SHC.

<sup>82</sup> Carrie Fries to J. F. Shaffner, October 11, 1861, Fries-Shaffner Family Papers, SHC.

<sup>83</sup> Quoted in Crews, 19.

<sup>84</sup> J. F. Shaffner to Carrie Fries, November 24, 1861, Fries-Shaffner Family Papers, SHC.

in ordinary affairs of life, politically they are rotten to the core.”<sup>85</sup> The editors of *People’s Press* quickly responded with a page-long rebuttal, enumerating all of Salem’s enlistments, volunteer efforts, and monetary contributions, finalizing the statement by requesting, “Let the tree be judged by its fruit.”<sup>86</sup>

Yet despite the hostilities that men of the North and the South felt toward one another, Moravians still maintained a connection between their communities over the battle lines. At the end of 1861, the *Memorabilia* of the Salem congregation contained the following hope of reconciliation:

Of those brethren who are separated from us by the line which divides the North and South, we have reason to believe that the bonds of Christian charity and brotherly love toward us are not broken, and that, like us they would rejoice in the restoration of peace and good will between the lands lying so closely side by side.<sup>87</sup>

The people who earnestly agreed with this sentiment would be horrified to know that less than two years later, on the first day of the Battle of Gettysburg, men from Salem would attack up Cemetery Hill, trying to drive off the men from Bethlehem who held the ground. Moravians killed Moravians.<sup>88</sup>

Moreover, this desire to reconcile the Northern and Southern branches of the church was tested severely when, in 1863, Brother Francis Holland, a clergyman in Wachovia, and his family sought and obtained passports to travel north to Bethlehem. Mrs. Holland’s father had recently died there and her mother was said to be in perilous health. When she was well, the whole family would return and bring the ailing matron

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<sup>85</sup> Traveler, "The Demand For Vigilance," editorial, *The Richmond Examiner*, quoted in *The People’s Press* January 17, 1862.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> Quoted in Crews, 16, 17.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

with them. Rumors of Unionist motives plagued the Holland's departure, and it seemed no matter how noble their motives, no one believed them. Charles Bahnson wrote home to his father:

That the people are well pleased at the change effected by the departure of Bro. Holland, I do not wonder at all; I always thought his friends, and for the credit of Salem am happy to say, were few and far between; he will have a terrible tale to tell, and no doubt the Moravian will have voluminous articles on 'The State of Affairs in Rebel-dom' by a very reliable gentleman, who after much persecution effected his escape; we would advise our readers to peruse carefully, as they will find it worthy of their attention &c. &c. Well, I hope he will have a good time while he is discoursing on our troubles; his better half while enjoying a cup of 'Yankee' coffee can give them a list of articles we use instead.<sup>89</sup>

Nor did J. F. Shaffner think that Brother Holland's motives were innocent. He and his fiancée Carrie Fries idly argued back and forth about Holland's motives, Carrie defending and Shaffner accusing. In speaking of Mrs. Holland and the death in her family, Shaffner reflected, "But when we recollect what an immense deal of suffering and death her kith and kindred have brought upon our people, we certainly find very little [sympathy] to bestow."<sup>90</sup> Holland made arrangements that, should he not return to Salem by the autumn of 1864, someone else would assume his position in the Church. Conveniently, the Hollands were forced to remain in Bethlehem for the remainder of the war.

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Though Salem's population at the time of the Civil War numbered 893, about one-third of Bethlehem's, Salem's Moravians subdivided themselves into two different

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<sup>89</sup> Charles Bahnson to George F. Bahnson, November 25, 1863. Chapman, 112.

<sup>90</sup> J. F. Shaffner to Carrie Fries, May 30, 1863, Fries-Shaffner Family Papers, SHC.

congregations—the central church and then St. Phillip’s, the Moravian congregation for blacks, slave and free.<sup>91</sup>

Initially in Salem, there was no separation of congregants by race—since Salemites were not allowed to own slaves, there simply were not enough black members to justify the effort involved in maintaining a separate gathering.<sup>92</sup> In March 1822, the Salem Female Missionary Society decided that blacks in the community would respond more eagerly to their ministrations if they had their own gathering. To this end, they recruited Brother Abraham Gottlieb Steiner to hold monthly services exclusively for blacks. At the end of 1862, Steiner had fourteen regular parishioners, now meeting twice a month at the homes of community members.<sup>93</sup> A year later, the Female Missionary Society underwrote the cost of building a separate church for the little congregation. More radical than simply allowing blacks to gather in large assemblies, the Moravian sisters took it upon themselves to establish a Sunday school for the black parishioners—one in which the students would be taught to read and write. This school was briefly abolished when the North Carolina state legislature made education of blacks illegal, and yet it was quickly started up again despite the law.<sup>94</sup> Even after separate church buildings were constructed, blacks and whites continued to gather together for important occasions, with some whites even deigning to come to the black church for Love feasts.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> For population, see the “Moravian,” September 27, 1860.

<sup>92</sup> Philip Africa, “Slaveholding in the Salem Community, 1771-1851,” *The North Carolina Historical Review* LIV, no. 3 (July 1977): 291.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 292.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 296.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 294.



On the eve of the Civil War, the black church still existed, but the question of who would be responsible for “the maintenance of the negro congregation in temporal affairs” went up for debate several times with the Wachovia *Provinzial Aeltesten Conferenz*.<sup>96</sup> Despite the humane and kind acts of the sisters, the nature of white and black relations came out in the records the Moravians kept.

Hitherto, Br. Steiner has married Negro slaves by the Book of Common Prayer, like white persons. It is not within the power of the Negroes to promise that they will live together as married people, for it often happens that one or the other is sold by the owner.<sup>97</sup>

Using a common euphemism at the time, J. F. Shaffner wrote in his diary of several “servants” who at one time or another accompanied him to war. One in particular was mentioned in January of 1864, when “the boy” is sent to him at the front lines, and then again only a year later. Usually unnamed, these individuals were rarely mentioned except when their existence necessitated expenditure. In January of 1865, Shaffner mentioned spending \$150 for “a pair of Gaiters shoes” for himself and only \$50 for a coarse pair for his servant. This expenditure is clearly reflective of the lowly position of blacks and slaves in Southern Moravian society.

Though the Moravians in Wachovia had to deal with the question of slavery and religion for blacks in their community, the Moravians at Bethlehem seemed untroubled by racial concerns. Part of this difference goes back to the nature of the colonies in which these different congregations settled. The inhabitants of the Wachovia tract moved into the community after slavery had already been introduced. As Philip Africa observes, they

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<sup>96</sup> Hamilton, *Records*, 6057.

<sup>97</sup> Adelaide Fries, ed., *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina* (Raleigh, NC: State Department of Archives and History; 1954), VIII: 3693.

do not seem to have considered that harsh pro-slavery laws would be incompatible with their church's teachings.<sup>98</sup> Indeed, J. F. Shaffner wrote home to his fiancée that “the Bible does not by precept or example, condemn or denounce, but does openly recognize slavery as fully as the relations of husband and wife, or of father and son.”<sup>99</sup> He did not go on to mention specific passages.

Slavery was illegal in Pennsylvania during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the Moravians there did not have a large enough population of blacks to justify large scale decisions that would rule on their inclusion or exclusion. As earlier observed, it seems that any objection to Moravians owning slaves seems to come from the concept of slavery itself, but by the effects the system would have on the white participants. No one in the community, it seemed, was thought capable of handling the over-seeing of slaves without spoiling them.<sup>100</sup> Or perhaps it would not be the slaves, but the master who became lazy and spoiled.

Still, the Church in Wachovia was not immune to the influences of the outside community. The Church hired slaves from local masters to work for the congregation, and in 1769, the Aufseher Collegium purchased Sam, a slave they had been hiring out for some years. Before doing so, they consulted the Lord in the traditional Moravian manner of drawing lots. Between the three possible answers (positive, negative, neutral), the Lord guided the hand of the minister to select the scrap of paper that indicated that purchasing a slave for the community was within his will. In 1771, Sam joined the congregation.

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<sup>98</sup> Africa, 275.

<sup>99</sup> J.F. Shaffner to Carrie Fries, December 20, 1863, Fries-Shaffner Family Papers, SHC.

<sup>100</sup> Adelaide Fries, ed., *Records*, II: 614.

Though the community elders officially did not allow individual congregants to own slaves, the labor involved in establishing a community in the wilderness was intense, and often individual congregants simply ignored the stricture.<sup>101</sup> Still, the Moravians took it upon themselves to care for the spiritual well-being of their property. Of the slaves that chose to become church members, there was no differentiation in the legitimacy of their membership and that of white parishioners.<sup>102</sup> The Church itself seems to have accepted slavery as a necessary evil. Though the ban on individual slave owning was dropped, the Aufseher Collegium limited ownership to slaves who they judged to be of good character and an asset to the community.<sup>103</sup> Also, any member of the church who wished to purchase a slave needed first to pay a bond and then prove the necessity of owning the slave and finally, indicate the provisions he would take to sell the slave should his or her presence in the community become problematic.<sup>104</sup>

Even through the Civil War, the Moravians of Salem continued to care for the spiritual welfare of the African-American residents. In August of 1861, they laid the cornerstone for the new African-American church, replacing the old wooden structure from 1823 with a more modern brick one. This they did despite the financial hardships that war brought to the community, placing a priority on finishing the structure on schedule in September 1862.<sup>105</sup> Ironically, it is the only building in old Salem to bear a corner stone indicating that the President at the time was Jefferson Davis.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Africa, 276.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid, 277.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid, 279.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid, 280.

<sup>105</sup> Crews, 21.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid, 16.

Though Moravians developed a reputation for being kinder masters in general during their first centuries in America, it seems that as the Moravian community adapted to be more like their non-Moravian neighbors, their treatment of slaves also changed. In a letter to his son Charles dated March 6, 1865, Bishop Bahnson mentioned a slave in their community who, with the help of another slave, attempted to poison her mistress, and in so doing ended up killing a white child instead. The situation lent itself to the supposition that life as a Moravian slave may not have been such a genial existence. “You never saw such excitement here,” Bahnson stressed, “They would have lynched her forthwith in a moment, had any body taken decidedly to lead, but thank God it was not done, it would have been an eternal disgrace to a stead & law abiding Moravian community.”<sup>107</sup> The scandal continued through the trial, when the accused slave, “Jane, the nasty negro girl Sr. Grunert owns,” implicated slaves belonging to other masters in the conspiracy. However, the only offense taken at the accusation that seems worth mentioning is that the owners did not want their property to depreciate because of the accusation. The humanity of the slaves and their lives did not even merit an afterthought.

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The deprivation that would color the Confederate home front experience of the war set in quickly in Salem and Forsyth County. As early as January of 1862, the Trustees of the Moravian Church noted that they could no longer afford the traditional Moravian Love feasts.<sup>108</sup> Though the only provisions provided at Love feasts were coffee and a sweet bun or biscuit, the cost of coffee and sugar had already risen exorbitantly.

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<sup>107</sup> Chapman, 168.

<sup>108</sup> Crews, 21.

The only Love feast held in all of 1862 was one funded by voluntary contributions, and the only attendees were the community's children. The Salem Girl's boarding school faced increasing difficulties in providing for the students' basic needs. Though tuition hikes were necessary to keep the students fed and housed, the school quickly filled to capacity and beyond.<sup>109</sup>

Parents across the Confederacy, mostly from states that saw more military action, sent their daughters to North Carolina as a safe haven away from the fighting. Though mostly Moravians, many of the students at the school were non-Moravians. Several times, the Financial Board of the Conference had to intervene and provide aid to keep the school afloat. Even the wartime governor, Zebulon Vance, contributed to the students' well being, once sending them two barrels of sugar.<sup>110</sup> Though it might have been difficult to sustain a good standard of living, one student remembered, "There was always food on their tables, clothing on their backs, warmth in their rooms, and the security of constant living care. And not for one day in the course of those difficult years were classes suspended."<sup>111</sup>

With many of the men gone from Forsyth County, the Court of Pleas established a Board of Sustenance to provide families of soldiers a monthly stipend. With the number of families that included, however, the Board was quickly swamped and had to provide relief on an application basis. The residents of Salem were especially hard pressed in 1863. Crop failures had plagued the Piedmont for two years, and that year, a flood

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<sup>109</sup> Crews, 21.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid, 23.

<sup>111</sup> Frances Griffin. *Less Time For Meddling: A History of Salem Academy and College, 1772-1866*. (Winston-Salem, NC.: John F. Blair, 1979), 264.

washed away the rest of a grain crop that had been all but eliminated by an earlier drought. Though much of the South faced these same conditions, there were as a proportion, fewer slaves in Forsyth and smaller farms.<sup>112</sup>

The losses from the Confederacy's great victories were difficult to accept. "So much sorrow and distress follow in the train of a victory that it is with horror almost, that we wish for it," Carrie Fries wrote to her fiancé.<sup>113</sup> Indeed, after the Battle of Antietam and General Robert E. Lee's unsuccessful invasion of the North, the *People's Press* reported, "We very much doubt the success of an invasion of the Northern States and do not believe that fighting will settle the 'vexed question' shortly, if ever."<sup>114</sup> When casualty lists finally trickled down to Salem after the Battle of Gettysburg, the 21<sup>st</sup> North Carolina Regiment, which contained a number of Salem's parishioners, had taken 112 casualties.<sup>115</sup> Though it seems that many Moravians at home were losing faith in the Confederate cause, even as late as December of 1864, Dr. J. F. Shaffner recorded in his diary, "With an abiding trust in the justness of our cause and a firm reliance upon Providence, I trust we will eventually succeed."<sup>116</sup>

The end of the war brought chaos to Salem and the surrounding areas. The Provincial Aeltestan Conferenz left no records and did not convene from December 19, 1864 until June 12, 1865.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Shirley, 133.

<sup>113</sup> Quoted in Crews, 23.

<sup>114</sup> *The People's Press*, May 22, 1863.

<sup>115</sup> Crews, 27.

<sup>116</sup> J. F. Shaffner, *The Diary of Dr. J.F. Shaffner, Sr.* (N.p.: Self Published, n.d.), December 31, 1864.

<sup>117</sup> Hamilton, Records, 6078.

After General William Tecumseh Sherman's famous March to the Sea through Georgia, his troops marched northward through South Carolina and on to North Carolina. Just after the surrender at Appomattox, on April 10, 1865, Palmer's brigade of Stoneman's division under Sherman marched into Salem in order to burn down the cotton mill and destroy a number of railroad bridges in the process. They were also to obtain any supplies left in the Confederate depot nearby and burn what they could not take. While there, the troops burned 7,000 bales of cotton stored in Salem.<sup>118</sup> Though history has given Sherman's troops a reputation for violence and brutality, the residents of Salem and the Federal troops seem to have been on civil terms. "Had it not been for the noise their swords and horses made," states the Salem Congregation Diary for April 10, "it would have been scarcely noticed that as large a number of troops was passing through the town."<sup>119</sup> In good order and displaying excellent military discipline, the troops took the supplies and "individuals were not called upon to contribute any thing except breads, for which they would ask politely and thank in the same manner."<sup>120</sup> Apparently, General Palmer had educational connections to the Moravian boys' school in Lititz, Pennsylvania, and looked kindly up on their Brethren in the South.

Not all Salemites were assured of the good behavior of the Federal troops. The Moravian Congregational town of Bethania had been sacked just a few days before.<sup>121</sup> Also, the Fries woolens mill was not spared at all. Once Federal troops broke into the

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<sup>118</sup> OR, Series I, Vol. 49, Part I, page 345.

<sup>119</sup> "Salem Congregation Diary 1860-1865," April 10, 1865, The Moravian Archives, Winston-Salem, NC.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Stuart Wright, ed., *Memoirs of Alfred Horatio Belo: Reminiscences of a North Carolina Volunteer*. (Gaithersburg, MD.: Olde Soldier Books), 1992.

mill, an assembled crowd followed in and looted the facility. It did not help that Fries had supported the war long after it had become unpopular in the town. Some of the mill parts were eventually recovered from neighbors who had saved them from the looters, but most of the machinery and equipment had disappeared out the door.<sup>122</sup>

The homecoming of Southern troops was tempered by the privations of war they had experienced. When Charles Bahnson's brother, Henry Bahnson, returned home from a northern prison, his own father didn't recognize him. He had lost almost 40 pounds since leaving home. Nor had the civilians themselves seen the end of Federal occupation. After the Confederate forces surrendered, former Confederate states came under martial law, and as such were occupied by Federal troops. In Salem, the 10<sup>th</sup> Ohio cavalry came, much to the rejoicing of the African-American congregation. As did many newly freed slaves across the South, the African Americans in Salem began traveling en masse to try and gather together scattered families and seek perhaps their own plot of land to work.<sup>123</sup> Though they symbolically brought freedom for the slaves, the soldiers also carried disease, and the scorching summer weather helped spread it among the closely packed thousands. These troops were also not as well behaved as the first who had occupied the town. The townsfolk complained of the soldiers' frequent drunkenness and the congregation diary reported that the single sisters were afraid of going out after dark.<sup>124</sup>

Everybody, or at least a vast majority of the people, rejoiced that the 10<sup>th</sup> Ohio Vol. Cavalry left this morning. In more than one report their presence had been productive of unpleasant results . . . On Monday they had been paid off and since then many had not seen a sober moment. They were as a body most fearfully profane and a poor specimen of the vaunted superiority of

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<sup>122</sup> Adelaide Fries, Stuart Thurman Wright, and J. Edwin Hendricks, *Forsyth: The History of a County on the March*. Revised Edition. (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1976), 141.

<sup>123</sup> Chapman, lvii.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*



Northern morals.<sup>125</sup>

The minority of people who were not sorry to see these men go were perhaps the families of the Salem women who married some of the Federal troops. Moravian Salemites swallowed the bitter pill of defeat with ease, however, and on July 4, 1865, Independence Day was celebrated with cannon and a raising of the American Flag.

One exceptionally telling quotation about the changes experienced by the Wachovia Moravian community in the 19<sup>th</sup> century comes from the document published by the Aufseher Collegium that officially abolished the lease system in 1856. When discussing the old regulations, they noted:

In it [the discussion] the general admission was made that the provisions contained in them had not really been followed to the letter for years. Moreover, if one should try to compel compliance with them by force, that is chiefly by giving warning of the cancellation of the lease, the Gemein Diakonie in its present condition would be totally unable to carry this out, since it lacks the means to do so. It was realized further that for a number of years now the state of affairs in regard to the continued preservation of the congregational settlement of the lease system had become, if not entirely impracticable, yet at least so involved in difficulties and deficiencies that under the present state of affairs one would yield to a delusion if one would consider this still to be a congregational settlement. This development had been brought about by regulations being rescinded due to the force of circumstances at the time; also by the expansion and extension of trade and commerce. . . . And considering further that we already have a considerable population living in our midst, not members of our Congregation, whereby the original idea of a Town-Congregation (Orts-Gemeine) or place where the members of our community, unmixed by others, could build themselves up in their most holy faith, has for a number of years already been lost sight of. <sup>126</sup>

The leaders of the community were savvy enough to know that their community had strayed from the original ideal, and they were able to make fairly astute observations as to why. The leaders of Salem understood that the religious authority in the town no longer had the power to enforce ordinances that would have effects on the secular lives of the

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<sup>125</sup> "Salem Congregation Diary 1860-1865," July 13, 1865, The Moravian Archives, Winston-Salem, NC.

<sup>126</sup> Hamilton, Records, 5982.

congregation. Salem in the 1850s was no longer a congregational settlement. Because their unique living situations forced the Moravians to adapt, the accumulation of changes slowly lead the Salem Moravian community away from its roots as a *Pilgergemein*, to an *Ortsgemein*, and finally to a secular city.

## Chapter 4: Moravians, Bethlehem, and the Civil War

Like Salem and much of the rest of the nation, Bethlehem experienced an economic downturn during the late 1830s. Bethlehem, however, was more directly affected than Salem. Rather than relying on investors to buy their raw material or finished goods, the wealth of Bethlehem was based largely around transportation. Most of this was simply the fate of geography—all around the Moravian settlement, territory ideal for building led to the development of a vast web of railways and canals that crisscrossed the land, providing vital points for the shipments that would travel to warehouses further north. During the depression, as markets began to collapse, investors in Bethlehem's environs were forced to forfeit property, often land or buildings near the town.

The Moravians there, however, were still trying to maintain an exclusivist community. When Moravians had to sell property and other Moravians could not afford to buy it, the *Gemeine* had to step in and purchase the land, or else outsiders would. This system lasted as a stopgap measure until the *Gemeine*'s finances completely collapsed in 1842. To their credit, the inhabitants of Bethlehem reacted much faster than those of Salem. By January of 1844, the *Aufseher Collegium* voted to abolish the land lease system in Bethlehem. On Good Friday, 1845, the Congregation of Bethlehem gathered and elected burgesses. Bethlehem was no longer a theocratic community but a Pennsylvania township.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Smaby, 45.

The fact that a part of their heritage had been lost, however, did not go unnoticed by the Moravians. Indeed, the same year the finances of the Gemeine collapsed was the year that marked the community's centennial. In 1844, the population of Bethlehem consisted of 1,000 people, 850 of whom were Moravians. By 1859, the population of the town had tripled, but half its population was Moravian.<sup>128</sup> They could no longer practice exclusivism but had to accept their new neighbors as part of their community and necessary for their economic livelihood.<sup>129</sup>

As a counterpoint to the Salem Female Academy, Moravians in Lititz, Pennsylvania, maintained a boarding school for boys and also the Linden Hall School for girls. It is to this school that the Salem Moravians referred when they wrote at the beginning of the war of their debate over withdrawing students. Both schools were founded in 1746, and their early founding dates point to the high value Moravian's placed on education. Unlike the Salem school, the boarding schools in Pennsylvania never saw combat near their halls. As with most of the civilians in the North, the students never suffered terrible material want during the course of the war.

The front page of the Pennsylvania weekly periodical *The Moravian* followed the presidential election of 1860 closely, reporting on the controversial issues surrounding this election and the candidacy of Abraham Lincoln. It also astutely predicted, "The Christian patriot may therefore well tremble, in view of the dark abyss of disunion and

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<sup>128</sup> W. Ross Yates, ed., *Bethlehem of Pennsylvania, The Golden Years* (Bethlehem, PA.:Bethlehem Chamber of Commerce, 1976), 7, 43.

<sup>129</sup> Smaby, 45.

civil war, which is yawning before him.”<sup>130</sup> The editors of *The Moravian* could not resist adding some commentary to its report on the secession of the Southern states. They felt they need not mention that of course South Carolina was one of the first to secede, given its “well known character.”<sup>131</sup> Nor did they think it excessive to make the following statement in early 1861: “What unheard of delusions must possess the minds of men who think they have found such intolerable evils in the character and workings of this government as to call for its overthrow by violence, if need be?” Interestingly enough, this statement did not originate in a Moravian, but rather a Presbyterian publication, and was merely passed on to readers of *The Moravian*, indicating that Moravians were becoming more and more like other Christian sects.<sup>132</sup>

One young Moravian who came of age just as these issues were coming to a head was John Frederick Frueauff. Born in Bethlehem in 1838, both of his parents came from prominent Moravian families with a number of bishops and Church leaders in their lineage. In fact, on his mother’s side, Frueauff could even claim noble blood, being distantly related to Count Zinzendorf, the nobleman on whose estates the early European Moravians established their colony. Frueauff himself received a fine education in Lititz, Pennsylvania, at the Moravian boys’ school. Not long after graduation, he moved to Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania, and began to study law under a family acquaintance. While there he became deeply involved in local politics, and flourished under the mentorship of a prominent Republican. However, in 1857, his family moved back to Berlin, to be near

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<sup>130</sup> *The Moravian* (Bethlehem, PA), November 22, 1860.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid*, January 17, 1861.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid*, February 21, 1861.

his mother's ancestral home, and young Frueauff transferred to study law at the University of Berlin.

When the Civil War began, the Frueauffs had already returned to America. John Frederick Frueauff enlisted in Company A of the 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment of Pennsylvania Volunteers as a 1<sup>st</sup> lieutenant as one of the first thousand men to enlist from Pennsylvania. Clearly the historic Moravian dictate against armed combat did not cause much hesitation for Frueauff, despite his Moravian pedigree. Though his father was not as enthusiastic about young Frueauff's enlistment, "Freddy," as his family called him, did not see combat in this unit. They mustered out in July of 1861 after three month's service.

Though thwarted in this attempt to do his duty and defend the Union, Frueauff enlisted a second time, this time in the 153<sup>rd</sup> Pennsylvania Volunteers. Because of his connections in the community and his previous service, Frueauff mustered in as a Major, a rank which, at one point, gave him full command of the regiment with the absence of its colonel.<sup>133</sup> This command officially included the three days that the unit was engaged at the Battle of Gettysburg. *The Moravian* wrote of the young officer's enlistment:

J.F. Frueauff, Esq. one of our enterprising young lawyers has entered the military service of the United States under a sense of duty to his country and left his legal business in the hands of Mr. Beitel—He has been elected Major in his Regiment, and we firmly believe that he will acquit himself with honor and satisfaction to all. He was fast gaining friends because he possessed those qualities that will attract friends. His manners are easy, kind, and urbane, and his education will enable him to take position in any society.<sup>134</sup>

In his letters home, Major Frueauff expressed deep convictions to the Moravian community. He frequently mentioned letters and business interactions with other Moravians, even making time to pay social calls on Moravian family friends living near

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<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> *The Moravian*, October 30, 1862.

where he was stationed. Tied up with his Moravian heritage was his use of the German language. He not only alluded to it, but his speech was peppered with German colloquialisms.

His unit was part of the XI Corps of the Army of the Potomac, a unit famed for the concentration of ethnic Germans within its ranks. They were part of the retreat of the right flank of the Union Army at Chancellorsville which earned the entire Corps the nickname, “the Flying Dutchmen.”

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The division of races within houses of worship did not seem to be necessary for the Moravians in Bethlehem—the only minorities regularly mentioned in their records were the Indians the missionaries tended. Still, Bethlehem had a small, if historically invisible, population of blacks associated with the Moravian community. When a black parishioner from Salem could not find a wife, the Aufseher Collegium sent him north to Nazareth to see if any appropriate candidates could be found there.<sup>135</sup>

Interesting to note, however, is the treatment of a black woman’s testimony toward a congregation in Barbados. In 1860, *The Moravian* published an apparently spontaneous speech made by “a Negro Sister,” at a mission settlement in Barbados.<sup>136</sup> Within the article, some of her words were reproduced for the American reader, and though the woman spoke with a different dialect and accent than central Pennsylvanians were used to, the excerpts were printed in plain English and not belittled by use of dialect

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<sup>135</sup> C. Daniel Crews, *Neither Slave nor Free: Moravians, Slavery, and a Church That Endures*. (Winston-Salem, NC: Moravian Archives, 1998), 12.

<sup>136</sup> *The Moravian*, February 17, 1861.

in print. Though her words are not of particular import, the fact that her testimony was treated as equal, and even in some cases superior to the preaching of white missionaries, shows that within the Moravian church, blacks could hold a position as hearers and interpreters of Christian messages. The article went on to note that the missionaries had had difficulty reaching out to the people there, and that this “aged handmaiden of Christ,” had heard and interpreted their words so that others could understand God’s message.<sup>137</sup>

A decade before the Civil War, the Moravian Church in Bethlehem had issued a statement condemning slavery. At the Provincial Synod in 1864, elders of the Moravian Church reiterated their views on the war and slavery.

That this Synod regards it as clear and unquestionable, that African slavery as it now exists in the Southern States, and as formerly connived at by the nation at large, is the primary cause of this war, not only in having generally led to it, but in connection with other heinous sins such as covetousness, pride, intemperance, profanity, Sabbath breaking, and the cruel and heartless conduct of our people in their treatment of the aborigines of our land, largely prevalent in our Country, God is visiting the nation with His judgments.<sup>138</sup>

A key phrase to note in the statement the Synod issued was when it qualified its objection to slavery by denoting that “African slavery *as it now exists* in the Southern States,” was objectionable. A statement published a year earlier in *The Moravian*, a weekly Moravian periodical, sheds some light on the deep importance of that phrase: “When the *laws* of the South shall place the system [slavery] upon a Christian foundation, she will have done a large part of her duty to this enslaved race.”<sup>139</sup> Though this statement was only a reiteration of a view expressed in a Presbyterian publication, *The Moravian* used it to make a point. The objection of the northern states was not the entire system of slavery,

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<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>138</sup> *The Moravian*, June 30, 1864.

<sup>139</sup> *The Moravian*, “Light in the South,” January 29, 1863.



but the way that it was operating in the Southern states at the time. Clearly, though the black woman in Barbados might have been a recipient of God's word and able to interpret it for her population, she was not the social equivalent of her white Brethren and Sisters.

Still, this phrase in itself represented only a reflection of commonly-held views at the time. President Abraham Lincoln's Republican Party had done badly in the mid-term election of 1862 and at that point, the war was going poorly for the Federals, with few victories and many lost opportunities. When this phrase was published, in January of 1863, the disastrous and costly Union defeat at Fredericksburg was only a month old. Perhaps, with their extensive connections across lines of battle, Moravians and other Christian groups could communicate to each other the popularly-held political sentiment that an immediate compromise was the only way to end a costly and needless war—indeed, even into the later years of the war; *The Moravian* continued to receive regular communications from the Brethren in Salem.

Perhaps, if the South were to change the way the slave system worked, therein would lie the seeds of a compromise. Though the Moravians in the North clearly did not support social equality for blacks, something they held in common with their Southern Brethren, the system of slavery was, to them, a cruel institution. Hence, when the Emancipation Proclamation was announced in 1862, *The Moravian* hailed it as a momentous occasion.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> *The Moravian*, October 2, 1862.

Also, like the Moravians in the South, the northern Moravians sincerely hoped at first, for the sake of the close ties between the two communities, that reconciliation would still be possible after the war.

The feeling of animosity, existing between the North and South, at the present crisis, is certainly one of the most ominous signs of the times. When we remember that a large number of the families in the North have some near and dear relatives, friends, or Christian brethren with whom they are one in the Lord, residing South, this violence becomes still more deplorable. Oh that through the mercy of God our Savior, all ill-feeling and hatred, especially between members of the same house-hold of faith, might be avoided.<sup>141</sup>

Though many of its articles took a political tone, *The Moravian* never abandoned its faith, publishing regular reports on mission work abroad and including transcriptions of religious lectures and articles.<sup>142</sup> Also, the spheres of politics and religion seem to lose definition and overlap, as seen in an article titled “Christ and the Soldier” published by *The Moravian* on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1863:

We love to record instance of the triumphs of Christian faith amid the carnage of the battle-field, where pain and weakness of mortal wounds is assuaged by a greater than an earthly physician. Whether that triumph be of one who fights mistakenly in interests other than those of God and humanity—as we firmly and sadly believe the South is doing—or one who serves these lofty ends—as we feel sure our loyal soldiers are doing—it can but rejoice the Christian heart to hear the glad record.<sup>143</sup>

*The People’s Press* wrote of a “God of Battles” who would protect their soldiers and defend the right. So too, *The Moravian* heavily politicized their version of God, thinking that surely He would intervene for the right cause—which view necessitated that one side or the other be completely in the right.

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<sup>141</sup> *The Moravian*, May 23, 1861.

<sup>142</sup> An excellent example of this can be seen in the issue dated December 6, 1860.

<sup>143</sup> *The Moravian*, “Christ and the Soldier,” January 1, 1863.

Though the Moravian faith, both in Northern and Southern communities clearly had evolved and assimilated, within Moravian rhetoric there remained the seed of their ancestors' convictions, as seen in this quote from the northern *Moravian*.

For war itself the Christian can have almost no other feeling than that of an intense abhorrence. For a mere matter of national pride, for the sake of territorial aggrandizement, for the oppression of a weaker people, he can never be ready to advocate it. For none of these ends has this nation grasped the sword, which the rebellious States were the first to unsheathe. Very unwillingly were we drawn into this contest. It was only when the question became on which would admit of no settlement but a warlike one, and when in it were involved the stability of the government or perpetual anarchy, and when it became manifest there was a preconcerted plan to permit no settlement but that which would suit the slaveholder, and override, in utter contempt, every scruple of the Christian, law-abiding citizens of the North then we took up the gage, and called upon God to help the right.<sup>144</sup>

The rhetoric and idea, it seems, were the only part of the original pacifist conviction that survived assimilation, if the speedy enlistment of Freddy Frueauff and Charlie Bahnson serve as examples.

One of the most jarring reminders of how much the Moravian faith changed during its first century in America is an article, "The Christian Warfare," published in *The Moravian* shortly before North Carolina seceded. This article did not describe the specific circumstances of the war it had in mind, but it made clear the fact that Christ's work on earth must be pursued aggressively: "As long as there remains one fortress in which evil may entrench itself, or one foot of ground upon which it may stand, [the Church] must do vigorous battle for the holy cause of her Lord."<sup>145</sup> Further, the article went on to condemn men who would hold back themselves and others from their

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<sup>144</sup> *The Moravian*, July 2, 1863.

<sup>145</sup> *The Moravian*, "The Christian Warfare," May 16, 1861.

righteous duty, a statement that seems somewhat extreme given that it could have described the writer's grandparents.

Later in the war, *The Moravian* again expressed its view on Christian involvement in the war: "The war, hence, as prosecuted by the loyalty and patriotism of the Free States has, of necessity, enlisted largely and vitally the sympathy—nay, the active support of the best Christian men and women of the land...The war is actually drawing to its vigorous prosecution a great amount of the best Christian element of the whole community. It should be so, and it is so."<sup>146</sup> Frequently also, *The Moravian* published advertisements asking for Moravian clergymen to enlist and serve the units of Moravian men going to fight.<sup>147</sup> Nor did this plea go ignored. Orlando B. Desh, a young Moravian serving in a Pennsylvania regiment, wrote home to report that a local clergyman his family knew had preached sermons to at least three regiments as well as to his own.<sup>148</sup>

These three quotations, drawn from the same publication and printed about the same time, expressed nearly contradictory sentiments. The thought process seemed to say, "It was the slaveholders who dragged us into this wretched war, but at the same time, we as Christians should have gone ahead and stamped out this evil long before the troubles were insurmountable." These inherent conflicts in the statements are not, however, the work of shoddy editing, but an example of how the Moravians were struggling to crystallize their own perspective while balancing the factors of heritage, modern political necessity, and popular sentiment.

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<sup>146</sup> *The Moravian*, March 12, 1863.

<sup>147</sup> *The Moravian*, March 19, 1863.

<sup>148</sup> Orlando Desh to Mother and Father, April 20, 1863, Personal Papers of Orlando Desh, The Moravian Archives, Bethlehem, PA.

Another young recruit from Bethlehem, James A. Peifer, embodied this idea. Caught up in the excitement, he enlisted in the 46<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Volunteers and ended up serving through most of the war. Peifer struggled with his decision for the rest of his life. On November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1862, he wrote home to his sister:

I wish with all my heart our reg't. would be so lucky once, to remain settled for awhile, for the poor boys needs some rest. And the reg't. ought to be recruited-up as it is at present very small in numbers; hardly 300 men, rank and file. It makes me shudder when I think of it; a reg't. of 1,000 men dwindled down to 300 in the course of a year. It is hard to think of it.<sup>149</sup>

His letters documented the loss of several close friends through the war. Also, though he attempted to make light of the problem, Peifer's frequent mentions of drinking, drunkenness and whisky clearly pointed to a struggle with alcoholism—not a traditional Moravian virtue.<sup>150</sup> At the same time, however, Peifer was very closely connected with his Moravian roots. He knew Freddy Frueauff, and mentioned seeing him around camps a few times. Peifer also showed through his letters the undefined nature of the Moravian's attitudes toward slavery. In one incident as his regiment marched through Culpepper, Virginia, he saw contrabands dancing in singing in jubilation and remarked how “they think a great deal of the Yankees, as they labor under the impression we are fighting for their deliverance.”<sup>151</sup> Peifer's motivation for enlisting then was clearly not to fulfill his Christian duty as set out by the *Moravian* and end the evil in the South.

Both Bethlehem and Salem underwent massive restructuring in the decades leading up to the Civil War. Though Bethlehem clung much longer to the idea of

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<sup>149</sup> Carolyn W. Abel and Patricia N. McAndrew, eds., *Bethlehem Boy: The Civil War Letters and Diary of James A. Peifer*. (Bethlehem, PA: Moon Trail Books, 2007), 109.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid*, 109, 107, 130.

<sup>151</sup> Abel, 89.

Moravian exclusivism, when there was no other option, the residents of the Moravian community accepted the change with little protest. They then began to adapt to their new role as secularly-governed entity, seeing that whether or not they excluded others, all were still affected by the same national and economic tides. Further, in this transition, Bethlehem had one fewer issue to deal with than Salem. Bethlehem managed to avoid a large restructuring of its racial interactions because, unlike Salem, it lacked a large African-American population.

By virtue of geography and the differing economies of the region, the communities surrounding Bethlehem did not adopt slavery, as did those surrounding Salem. Pennsylvania's non-reliance on slave labor made it easier for the state to outlaw the system completely, as it did in 1780. The black population in general was small enough to make it a non-issue when residents of Bethlehem sought to redefine the role their religion played in the community. However, the Moravians of Bethlehem did not ignore slavery or refuse to take a stance on issues of race. In the larger sense, they viewed slavery as a system that encouraged white men and women to become lazy and worldly, while treating their black Brethren cruelly.

Of the letters that Bethlehemites wrote during that era, two very complete collections, those of James A. Peifer and J. F. Frueauff, illustrate the changes and inconsistencies that Moravians in Pennsylvania encountered daily when trying to reconcile their faith, their ancestry, and the demands of contemporary political people. Though J. F. Frueauff had an impeccable Moravian pedigree, he enlisted not once, but twice, and achieved a respectable rank through his military career. James Peifer's letters

show how far young people could drift from principles of Moravianism and still identify with the faith. Both are significant in that both young men combined their secular identities and values with their Moravian ideals and illustrate the way that the Moravian faith changed and adapted in Bethlehem as the community was forced to secularize and open its door to others in order to survive as a viable community.





## **Conclusion: Change in the American Moravian Community**

Moravianism today is not a sacred distinction that defines a non-secular lifestyle. Moravians live in homes and communities that are open to all people. Yet a mere two hundred years ago, Moravianism set practitioners completely apart from all people who were not Moravian and bound the life of the believer to the community.

The first Moravians in America came as missionaries, intending to convert people in the New World. Their methodology involved allowing only those specifically bound for missionary work outside the community and required that they be free from any domestic labor so that they might do the work of the *Heiland*, the Lord. Therefore, the majority of Moravians in America did not encounter outsiders in their everyday lives. For the first century in North America, Moravians tried to maintain their exclusive settled communities in Pennsylvania and North Carolina. But in order to survive, the Moravians had to adapt.

The American Revolution, though it allowed Moravians to stay out of combat roles, forced them to become involved politically and to choose sides. Soldiers from both armies marching and fighting through Moravian towns broke the barrier and forced Moravians to begin to interact with their neighbors for mutual care and survival. Soon Moravians in America shared more in common with the non-Moravians they lived near than other Moravians in the original colony in Europe.

Forces outside the control of the Moravian communities continued to affect them and alter the way the communities operated as a whole. In Pennsylvania, the Moravian

community was situated in an area that was geographically perfect for the development of new railroads. In North Carolina, Moravians saw how their neighbors could raise cash crops and—when the Industrial Revolution made it easy to produce goods from the raw materials—how they could profit from selling refined goods to larger markets.

Where Pennsylvanians, Moravian and non-Moravian alike, could make an efficient yield from their own labor by working in transportation and storage of goods, North Carolinians saw that they could make larger profits in agriculture and milling when using the labor of others. Slavery came to the Moravian community in North Carolina but not Pennsylvania. From its establishment, Pennsylvania's rolling hills and mountains did not lend themselves to large scale agriculture; thus, its people were more swayed by the immoral nature of slavery and the system was quickly banned in the state. Economics played a hand not only in changing the lifestyles of the people within the Moravian communities, but it eventually forced them to open their doors and allow outsiders into their fold.

Salem began to introduce African Americans into their community early on as a way to proselytize to them. Slavery was forbidden, not because of the evil of the system, but because it was thought that white men who owned slaves would themselves become lazy. Under pressure from its members, the governing body of the Salem community slowly began to purchase slaves for communal ownership and allowing them to worship in a segregated church. When the Industrial Revolution introduced new and cheap methods of manufacturing, the North Carolina Piedmont, where Salem was situated, proved to be a perfect location for cotton mills with its many rivers. Moravian entrepreneurs opened

mills and brought in non-Moravian workers, opening the Salem community to outsiders.

The Moravians in Bethlehem maintained a separate community until a national financial crisis in the 1840s. Failed Moravian investors had to surrender property in the community as collateral for defaulted loans, and when no other Moravians could afford to buy the property, non-Moravians had to be allowed in.

As both of these communities began to adapt and Americanize, one of the most noticeable changes was their attitudes towards warfare and service and citizenship of the secular state. They were granted conscientious objector status during the American Revolution, but as they assimilated, they slowly began to participate in local militia musters. Eventually, these expanded to include regiments entirely composed of Moravian men and officers. By the time of the Civil War, Moravians on both sides were among the first to enlist in either army.

It is these men who left some of the best records of the Moravian communities and their attitudes toward war, politics, and their role in both. Aside from personal papers and periodicals kept in the Moravians' excellent archives, several authors have published sets of letters and diaries of young Moravians, both enlisted men and officers, and their experiences during the Civil War. What these papers reveal are young men for whom Moravian was no longer a primary identity that had an outward effect on their secular behavior, but provided them an instant community. They spoke of family members and friends, some of whom were on opposite sides, who they encountered or visited. They thought highly of some traditional Moravian virtues, such as a good education, and demonstrated these values through their actions. But at the same time, they confronted

problems that were not exclusive to the Moravian community. They faced alcoholism, combat, and a lack of spiritual care, so that even though these men were clearly part of the Moravian community, at the same time they were Americans and soldiers fighting for a cause.

Even through the Civil War, both communities of Moravians maintained close contact and continued to publish information on specific relatives and ministers from the other community. This information was typically printed in the local periodicals that both communities maintained throughout the war. It is also through these periodicals that opinions of the communities manifested themselves. Through the choice of articles published and the news topics, the editors showed that they were reporting for a community that played a wider role on the national stage, supplying men for war and participating in national politics. No longer were the Moravians communities isolated from their neighbors.

But if both communities of Moravians experienced similar changes, how then did they find themselves on opposite sides of a conflict? It is because the changes were similar that the sides they chose to fight on were different. When Moravians in Pennsylvania acclimated to their surroundings, they found themselves in a setting where slavery was unnecessary for commerce and illegal; thus, the attitudes and practices that they picked up from their neighbors reflected that influence. Likewise, the Moravians in North Carolina were surrounded by a system of agriculture and manufacturing that was fueled by an enslaved labor force.

Thus, when the time came to choose sides for the coming conflict, each community sided with their neighbors. The idea of Moravianism as a primary identity had been slowly hewn away by the economy and necessity, so instead of uniting under one Moravian ideal, each community sided with the people whom it had come to most closely resemble, whether or not that community was Moravian.

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## **Vita**

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