

THE CHURCH SQUARE JOURNAL

Published Spring and Fall by the Archives Committee of the Lititz Moravian Congregation

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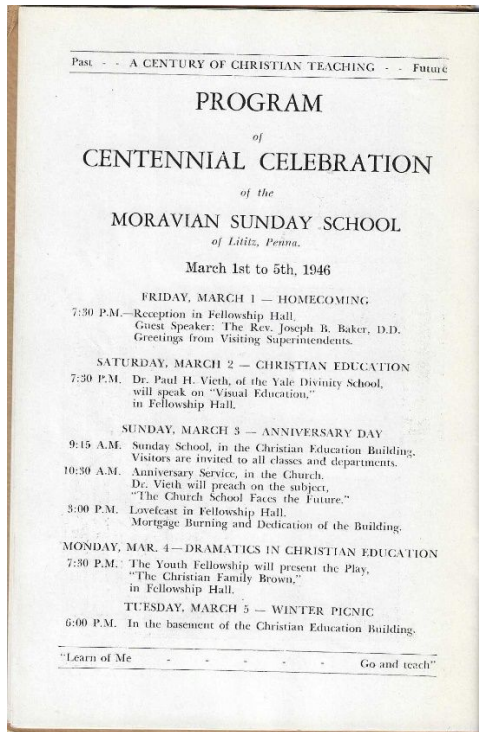
Church Square, Lititz, Pennsylvania

Spring 2021

History of the Sunday School

The First Hundred Years ~ Conclusion

Following the dedication of the greatly expanded Christian Education building, Sunday School leaders wasted no time in making good use of the facility. The adults, who had been meeting together in cramped quarters, divided into Men's and Women's Bible Classes, with about fifty members in each. The old Sunday School library, use of which had dwindled over the years, was replaced by an updated reference library with materials for the use of the teachers. "Winter Picnics" were held in the Sunday School basement. Classes for all ages were thriving. In 1938 the congregation undertook a fundraising campaign to reduce the remaining mortgage debt. All seemed well indeed.



Schedule of Anniversary Events,
From the Commemorative Booklet

Then in September 1939 war broke out in Europe. While the U.S. at first tried to remain neutral, with close allies on one side and Germany on the other, communication with Herrnhut and other Moravian communities became difficult to impossible. By 1943 U.S. troops had joined Allied forces on the ground in Europe.⁽¹⁾ Once again Moravian Brothers and Sisters opposed each other in combat. Lititz Moravian, like thousands of other congregations across the country, saw many of their young men leave to join the military. Those who remained, organized to do whatever they could to support their efforts. Fervent prayers were offered for the safety and well-being of loved ones. And the Sunday School continued on.

Declarations of peace in Europe and in the Pacific in mid-1945 were met with great rejoicing. Discerning the need for special ministry with returning soldiers, the Sunday School restructured several adult classes to accommodate them and welcome them back into community. As war-time restrictions on travel and supplies were lifted, plans were soon under way for a grand celebration of the Hundredth Anniversary of the founding of the Sunday School.

The Centennial Celebration comprised five days in early March 1946, kicking off Friday evening March 1 with a Homecoming Reception in Fellowship Hall. As Mary Augusta Huebener noted in her history, because the Moravian Sunday School served students from a number of neighboring churches, many non-Moravians counted it as their first

Sunday School experience. One hundred seventy-five invitations were sent out to those whose names had been on the rolls decades earlier. Guest speaker for the evening was the Rev. Joseph B. Baker, D.D., a native of Lititz who was then serving as Pastor of St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, in York, PA. Visiting Superintendents brought greetings, and former members of the Sunday School orchestra returned to play.

Events of Saturday evening focused on innovations in Christian Education. Dr. Paul H. Vieth⁽²⁾, a nationally recognized authority from Yale Divinity School in New Haven, Connecticut, on Visual Education and religious work, delivered the evening's lecture. The next morning at the Anniversary Service in the church, Dr. Vieth preached on the topic "The Church School Faces the Future."

~ continued on page 2

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lititzmoravian.org/museum/archives/tours

FROM THE CHAIR

After seven years, my term as archive chairman is complete. It has been extremely enlightening, since I knew very little of what this group did prior to serving as its chair. This committee is dedicated to protect, restore and maintain the incredible collection of materials housed in the Archive Museum and on the grounds of the church property. I was privileged to get to know the members and observe their dedication to this task. They are hardworking, selfless individuals who really have a calling for this ministry.

We have accomplished some major improvements in the last seven years, and as chairman, I was just the facilitator for these projects. Some of

the highlights include the late Bob Sandercox initiating an architectural review and assessment in 2013, translating and digitizing the Hehl diaries, restoring the Reinke painting, and resurrecting the Church Square Journal. I plan on continuing to be part of the committee under the new chairman, Scott Ketterman, a long-time resident of Lititz and a member of the Lititz Moravian Congregation since his childhood.

With deepest gratitude to all archive members,
John Clark

Sunday School, continued:

That afternoon a Lovefeast was held in Fellowship Hall, during which the mortgage on the building was burned and the expanded facility was formally dedicated. Bishop Samuel Henry Gapp, of Bethlehem, presided at the dedication, and messages were brought by the Rev. Frederick Paul Stocker, President of the Eastern District, and the Rev. Dr. Byron K. Horne, a former pastor of the congregation.



Dr. Paul H. Vieth
Yale Divinity School, New Haven, Connecticut. Guest Speaker Saturday, March 2.

Monday evening's theme was Dramatics in Christian Education. The Youth Fellowship presented two plays: "The Christian Family Brown," by Dorothy Clarke Wilson, and "Sweet Sixteen," by an unidentified author. Both were directed by Miss Grace Snively, and in both, among those acting was Dale Shelley, still an active member of Lititz Moravian. The festivities concluded on Tuesday evening with the annual Winter Picnic, held in the basement of the Christian Ed Building. The picnic supper was followed with games for children and youth and a social program for the adults.

For five days Lititz Moravian had celebrated the accomplishments of their Sunday School, calling to memory and honoring the hundreds of teachers and leaders who had dedicated thousands of hours to instruction and encouragement of students young and old. They also had learned about new methods and expanding resources to make their programs even more relevant and inspiring. Teachers returned to their classes with increased vigor and dedication. Within a short time the Sunday School purchased and began to introduce the brand new Moravian Youth Hymnal, a collection of favorite hymns and songs which was to provide the basis for opening exercises in Fellowship Hall for years to come. Thus equipped they moved into their second century, singing their faith as it came alive in the hearts and minds of eager youth.

~ Marian L. Shatto

Primary Sources:

Huebener, Mary Augusta, *History of the Moravian Sunday School 1846-1946*, published by the congregation in connection with the Centennial Celebration, 1946

Lancaster New Era, 1 March 1946, page 13, *Lititz Moravians to Mark Centennial Anniversary*, Lancaster, Pennsylvania

Footnotes:

⁽¹⁾United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, World War II: Key Dates,
<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/world-war-ii-key-dates>

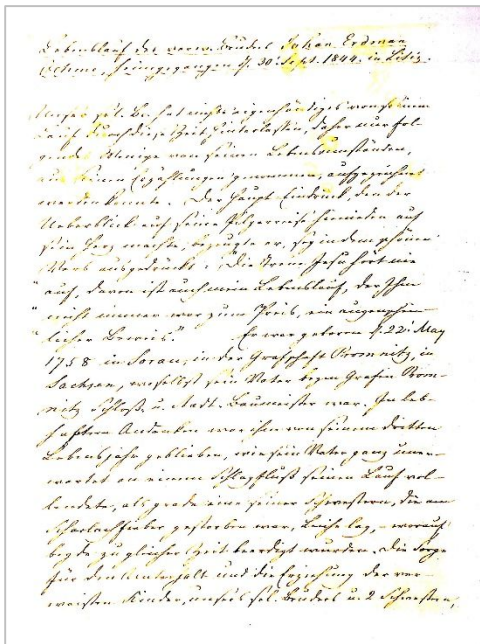
⁽²⁾For several years during the 1980s Dr. Vieth's son, the Rev. Dr. Richard F. Vieth, at the time Professor of Theology at Lancaster Theological Seminary, played violin in the Lititz Moravian orchestra for Christmas Vigils and Holy Week/Easter services.

Editor's Note: Migration to the Americas from Europe was often a difficult, sometimes harrowing, experience. The patriarch of the Oehme family, descendants of whom are still active members of the Lititz community, had a far-too-close encounter with pirates on his way to Pennsylvania. Translations of the Memoirs (Lebensläufe)⁽¹⁾ of Johann Erdmann Oehme and his wife Elisabeth Frevel Oehme are presented here with thanks to J. William Oehme for permission to do so and for the accompanying photographs.

**Memoir of the Widowed Br. Johann Erdmann Oehme,
who went home at Lititz, 30 September 1844**

Our late Brother left nothing behind in his own hand relating to his walk through this world, thus only the following brief report of the circumstances of his life, written down from stories that he himself related. He testified that the chief impression that the overview of his pilgrimage here below made upon his heart is contained in the hymn verse: "The faithfulness of Jesus never ends, this is the story of my life, which was not always to his praise, but this is proof of that." He was born the 22nd May 1758, in Sorau⁽²⁾ in the County of Promnitz, in Saxony, where his father was chief architect to the castle of the Count von Promnitz and to the city.

It remained unforgettable to him how in his 3rd year, his father had died suddenly of a hemorrhage just as his sister, who had died of scarlet fever, lay in a corpse. So they were both buried the same day. The Count graciously took upon himself the care of providing for the support and education of our brother and his two sisters. In his youth he experienced an apparent protection of his life. Once as he was going home from school he had the misfortune to fall into a cistern that lay by the wayside and would most certainly have been drowned there if a soldier who happened to be nearby had not hurried to his aid. As he got older he found work in farming. When he was grown he left Sorau and went to his paternal grandparents in Christianstadt two miles⁽³⁾ from his birthplace.



First page of Lebenslauf of
Johann Erdmann Oehme

There was there a small group of awakened souls who held special service for their edification and encouragement on the path of faith. Driven by curiosity our late brother asked for permission to attend one of these services and this was gladly granted to him. What he heard there made a deep impression upon his heart and awakened in him the earnest desire also to become as pious as these people. Since they were in connection with the Moravian Brethren, the wish became alive in him to belong to these people of the Lord. As a result of this he made a visit to [the Moravian Congregation at] Neusalz, where he experienced much love from the chaplain of the Single Brethren's Choir there as well as later in Herrnhut, to which as Congregation he was admitted on 20th January, 1775.

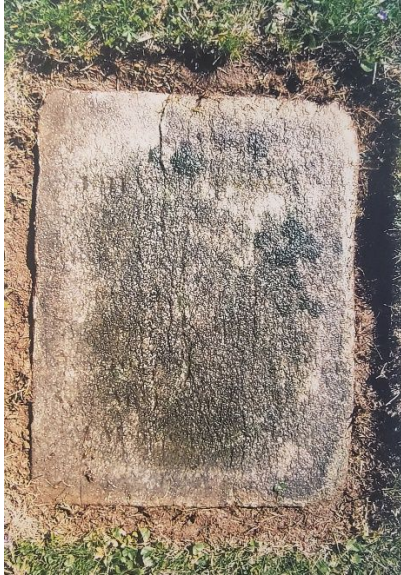
There he learned the trade of hatter and worked at this profession until the year 1786, when he received the call to go to America. He made the journey in company with the late Bishop John Herbst and several other Brethren. While they were at sea, they were once in great danger of being taken prisoner by Algerian pirates and from heart thanked the dear Savior

for the wonderful deliverance they experienced.⁽⁴⁾ The Watchword of the Moravian Brethren's Church on that remarkable day was so important to them all: "Fear not, thou shalt not be put to shame." Isaiah 54:4.

After this company arrived in Bethlehem on 29 September, he moved to Christiansbrunn, where he was entrusted with the office of Choir Servant in the Brethren's House, which office he filled for 2 years. On the 6th November 1788 in Nazareth he was joined in marriage to the Single Sister Elisabeth Frevel and moved to Gnadenthal⁽⁵⁾ where he worked on the farm there that belonged to the [Moravian] Unity. His marriage was blessed by the Lord with 3 sons and 3 daughters. Two sons preceded him into eternity. From the remaining children, all

of whom are married, he experienced 25 grandchildren. From Gnadenthal he came after some time as innkeeper to what was then the Congregation at Hope in New Jersey and later to Bethlehem, to the so-called "Farm."⁽⁶⁾

From here he was called to Lititz to care for the fulling and tobacco Mill of the Congregation, but since that position damaged his health and he suffered often from fever, he came to live in the Settlement (Lititz), where for 15 years he served as gravedigger and served in the neighborhood with his knowledge of bleeding and cupping.⁽⁷⁾ On the 5th May, 1818, he became a Widower with the Home-going of his wife. After this he took



Gravestone of Johann Erdmann
Oehme, not now readable

turns living with one or the other of his children. He spent the last years of his life, since October 1840, with his son Christian in Lexington, 2 miles from here. He gradually became weaker, suffering from a wasting disease that finally developed into dropsy⁽⁸⁾ and he was quite bedfast and helpless since Easter of this year. Under these circumstances he recognized with thanks the care of his only surviving son, who in this regard with his whole family showed faithfulness to their father, for which service may the Lord grant them rich grace.

For a considerable time he had been longing for his final dissolution and submitted patiently to the Will of his Lord, Who – he was convinced – knew the proper hour for his Home going. In his time of waiting he conversed much with his Heavenly Friend and found much rich pasture for his heart in repeating the many lovely hymn verses that he had committed to memory in his youth. As long as his strength allowed, it was important if he could appear in the holy place before the Lord for Holy Communion and other festival occasions with the Congregation and enjoy the Meal of Grace. And when he could no longer do that, he sought silence ever more and by the contemplation of divine truths and of the ways in which the Lord had led him to prepare himself for his End. On the 14th September when he was visited by his preacher, he asked to receive the Blessing of the Lord for his homeward journey, which was then given to him in

the presence of his family and several neighbors. About 1:30 o'clock on the morning of the 30th September, the long-desired moment arrived when his blood-bought soul left its weary tabernacle and he received the Crown of Life from his Lord. His pilgrimage here below lasted 86 years, 4 months and 8 days. The Congregation calls after him: "Now, weary pilgrim, you have overcome...." [a four verse hymn is quoted here]

~ Translated by Pastor Roy Ledbetter, presbyter Fratrum, St. Louis, MO Dec.4, 2012

Translator's and Editor's Notes:

⁽¹⁾The Memoir (in German *Lebenslauf*) is an account of one's life with special emphasis on the writer's spiritual journey. It was customary in the 18th and early 19th centuries for faithful Moravian Sisters and Brothers, as they approached life's end, to write or dictate a Memoir, which would be completed by their pastor and read at their funeral. Though the practice died out by the mid-19th century, the hundreds that have been preserved provide a wealth of information to historians and genealogists. In recent years the writing of a *Lebenslauf* has been adopted as a devotional exercise by some Moravians.

⁽²⁾Sorau was in Lower Lusatia and was lost to Prussia in 1815 and, being on the right bank of the Neisse River, was lost to Poland in 1945. It is now called Zary and is in westernmost Poland, not far from the German border.

⁽³⁾A Saxon Mile was about 5 English miles; this is now Krzystkowice about 10 English Miles from Zary

⁽⁴⁾On the voyage to America, their vessel was chased by an Algerian pirate who had come so close to them that the gleam of his crew's sabers could be seen and their blood thirsty threats heard. When all of a sudden, the pirate's ship was caught and whirled in a sudden squall, its rigging torn, and its progress hindered, leaving the Brethren's vessel to sail away in peace. Some of the fellow voyagers, destined for Lititz were, John Herbst (later Bishop), John Erdman Oehme, Gottlieb Eichler (tobacconist), and John Martin Beck. Source: Transactions of the Moravian Historical Society, page 264

⁽⁵⁾Christiansbrunn=Christian's Spring; Gnadenthal=Gracedale, both in Lower Nazareth Twp.

⁽⁶⁾Site of North Campus of the Moravian College.

⁽⁷⁾Old healing technique of drawing blood from a part of the body by placing a cup over an incision of the skin and creating a partial vacuum to draw blood

⁽⁸⁾Dropsy or Edema, a disease with fluid retention and swelling. Dropsy is a symptom of disease of the heart, liver, kidneys, or brain. The condition involves the accumulation of water fluid in the body cavities or in the limbs.

Lebenslauf of Elisabeth Frevel Oehme

Our late married sister, Elisabeth Oehme, born Frevel, who died May 5, 1818,⁽¹⁾ was born February 22, 1761 in Montgomery County, near Philadelphia, Pa. In her 9th year she was taken from her parents to strangers and experienced many hardships. As her parents were Quakers and she had not yet been baptized, she developed a longing in her 15th year when she was very sickly for this baptism, as she was concerned that if she died she would not be saved. She went to the Lutheran pastor Schmidt in Easton with her request, and he granted her wish in 1776, and baptized her along with her older sister. She never forgot this event: what she felt in her heart and the promises she made in the church in the presence of the assembled congregation. She vowed to be faithful with mind and body to the Lord.

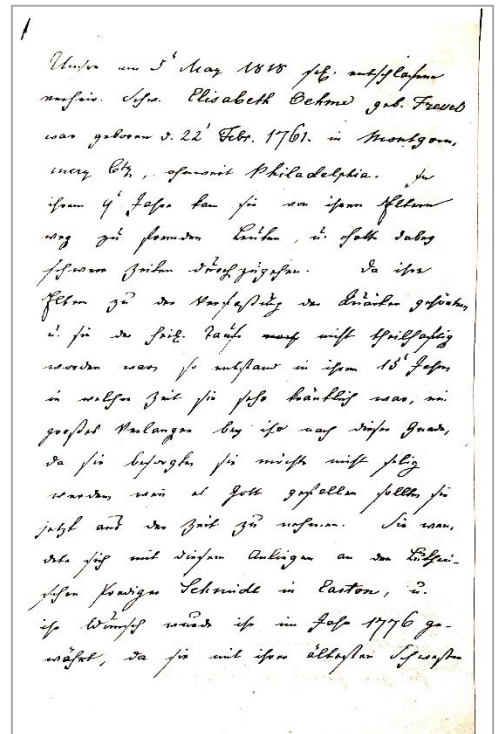
In 1778 she came to Schöneck⁽²⁾ in the service of Brethren and got acquainted for the first time with a Brethren congregation. The testimony of the late Brother Michler, who was then Elder of Schöneck, about the Saviour's great love for sinners, and that only through His sacrifice can sinners receive grace and liberty be they ever so wicked and depraved, penetrated deep into her heart and was the cause of her profound awakening. In 1784 she moved to Nazareth and on April 10 was accepted into the congregation. On November 15 she partook of the Holy Sacraments for the first time.



Gravestone of Elisabeth
Frevel Oehme

In 1788, November 6 she married the single brother Johann Erdmann Oehme in Nazareth. This union was blessed by 6 children, 3 sons and 3 daughters. The first son preceded her into eternity. They moved to Hope, N.J. to manage the inn. After living two years in Bethlehem, they moved in 1800 to Lititz. For some years she was in poor health and had to bear several severe illnesses. Since the beginning of this year, it seemed certain that her time was up; at Easter time she was bedfast. She longed for her home going and put her trust in the grace of Jesus Christ, her Saviour, in whom she found forgiveness of her sins. She received solace and strength through the Holy Sacrament given to her in her bed on her wish. On April 10 she was given the blessing for her home going, and after her suffering was prolonged for a few days, she was delivered of her misery on the 5th and died peacefully and blissfully.

She was 57 years, 2 months and 12 days old.



First page of Lebenslauf of
Elisabeth Frevel Oehme

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~ Translator unidentified; possibly Blanche de Perrot

Notes:

⁽¹⁾This date is incorrectly stated as March 3 in the translation.

⁽²⁾This refers to the village of Schoeneck, about a half mile north of Nazareth in Northampton County, where there is still a Moravian congregation.

Where Did They Go?

From the History:

Edward T. Kluge - 1831- ? - Born at Lititz and educated at Nazareth Hall and Moravian Theological Seminary. Taught at Nazareth Hall and Moravian Theological Seminary. Pastor of the Lititz congregation 1867-1876. Editor of *The Moravian* and Secretary of Publications at Bethlehem from 1876-1879. President of the Northern Provincial Board from 1893-1898. Retired to Nazareth.



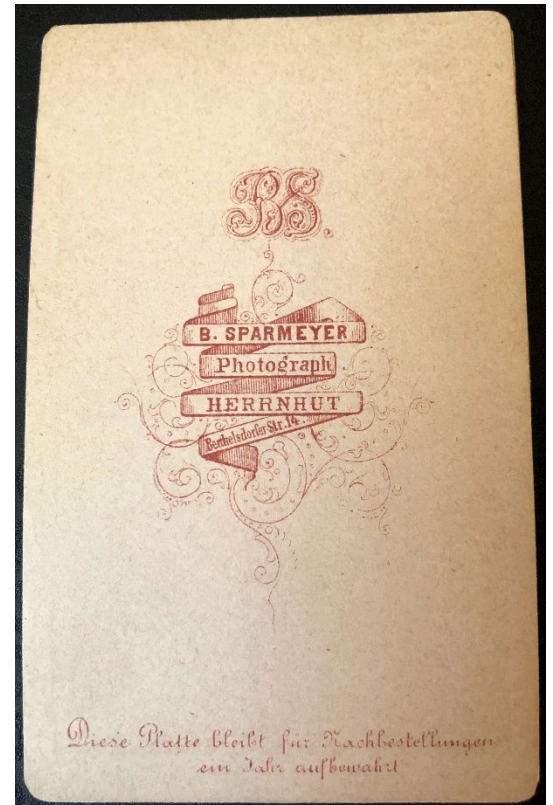
Edward Theodore Kluge,
Age 37

Edward Theodore Kluge was born on 18 November 1831 in Lititz while his father, the Rev. Charles Frederick Kluge, was serving as Headmaster of the Girls' School (now Linden Hall). Charles was himself the son of a Moravian minister, John Peter Kluge, and was born at the Indian Mission Station on White River (now in Indiana), where his parents served as missionaries. Edward's mother was Agnes Maria Von Pannach of Saxony, who had come to the U.S. at the age of eleven. He was educated at Nazareth Hall, in those days a Moravian boys' school, where he is listed in the class of 1846, then continued studies at Moravian College and Theological Seminary, receiving his degree in 1852.

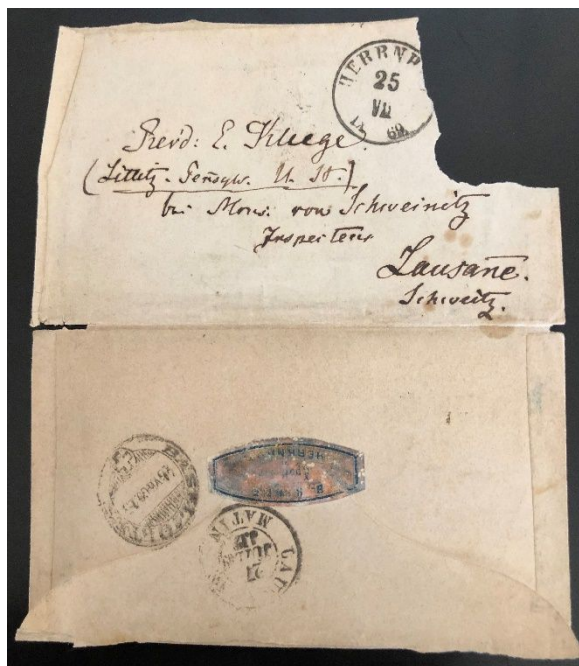
His first position after graduation was as teacher at Nazareth Hall. In 1855 he was put in charge of a class of five preparands (high school age students preparing for theological study). It was a time of turmoil for the schools, and with very limited faculty, Kluge was assigned to teach all subjects to them except mathematics. He remained with this class as professor when they moved into theological study in 1857, assisted by the Rev. John C. Brickenstein, whose daughter Anne Louise was to marry Kluge that same year. Writing in later years, a biographer noted that

Professor Kluge "possess[ed] an intellect clear and capable of profound research, as well as a habit of untiring industry," and "was well fitted for the position to which he was called in the Seminary."

When in 1858 the school was moved from Nazareth to Bethlehem, Kluge declined to relocate and instead entered the ministry. He first served the Moravian church on Jay Street, Brooklyn, then the Emmaus congregation from 1862 to 1864, and came to Lititz in 1867. The photo and documents pictured on these pages indicate that he attended the 1869 Synod held in Herrnhut May 24 through July 8, afterward visiting with Alexander von Schweinitz, who was at the time "Inspector" of the Moravian Boarding School for Boys in Lausanne, Switzerland. After nine years here in Lititz he was called to Bethlehem to serve as editor of *The Moravian* and Secretary of Publications.

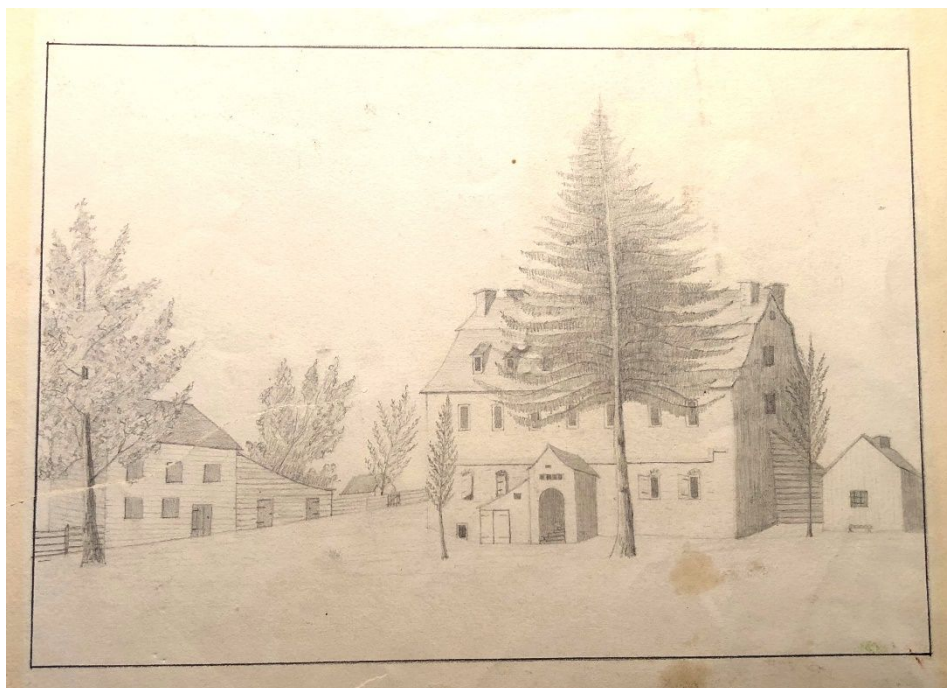


Reverse side of photograph, showing
photographer's name and location



Envelope containing the photograph,
sent from Herrnhut to Lausanne

Rev. Kluge was the featured speaker for the Fiftieth Anniversary celebration of the founding of the Lititz Moravian Sunday School on February 23, 1896. His long years of service to the Moravian church concluded in 1898 when he retired after serving five years as President of the Provincial Elders Board of the Northern Province. He and his wife retired to Nazareth, where he remained active in the Moravian Historical Society until near the end of his life. Edward T. Kluge entered the more immediate presence of his savior on September 21, 1912. His wife followed him seventeen months later. Both are buried in the Nazareth Moravian Cemetery, Northampton County, Pennsylvania. They were parents of three daughters. Ruth, the eldest, married the Rev. Herman A. Gerdson, who at one time served the Lancaster Moravian congregation. The younger two, Agnes and Edith Louise, remained unmarried.



Pencil sketch of Nazareth by Edward Kluge, done while a student at Nazareth Hall, showing the "first house" with outbuildings (demolished in the 1860s) and the Whitefield House, which now serves as the Museum of the Moravian Historical Society.

Acknowledgements:

- 1) All photos provided by Elizabeth Swain Long, 2x great niece of Edward Theodore Kluge, from her private collection. Used by permission
- 2) Email conversation with Paul Peucker, Director of Moravian Archives Bethlehem, and Scott Paul Gordon, Andrew W. Mellon Chair, Professor of English, Lehigh University, for identification of and supporting information about the photographs
- 3) Schwarze, The Rev. William Nathaniel, M.A., *History of the Moravian College and Theological Seminary*, Times Publishing Company, Bethlehem, PA, 1910

Census and personal data from Ancestry.com, Newspapers.com, and Find-a-Grave.com (full citations available upon request)

From the Collection ~ “Fishtail” Door Latch



“Fishtail” latch affixed to door in the Brothers’ House



Detail of latch mechanism

We at Lititz Moravian are fortunate that our forebears wouldn’t throw anything out! This is evidenced by the vast collection of artifacts in our museum and archives. Even ‘found’ objects, dug up during construction or anytime the earth was disturbed, were saved. Witness the collection of wrought iron pieces on display in our museum; you’ll find a wide, if not a bit rusty, selection which includes hinges, door latches, and even bent nails! Of note is this door latch, known as a Moravian ‘fishtail’ latch because its end resembles the tail of a fish. This wrought piece of hardware was made sometime in the late 1750s through the early 1760s, a date determined because a similar latch is still in use on an old door leading to the attic, or 4th floor, of the 1758 Brothers’ House. Given the early date, it’s unlikely the latch was actually made in Lititz, but probably in one of the earlier Moravian settlements in or near Nazareth or Bethlehem.

~ Text and Photos by Thomas L. Wentzel



Standard latch of the same era,
for comparison



An assortment of hardware in the
Museum collection