

THE CHURCH SQUARE JOURNAL

PUBLISHED SPRING AND FALL BY THE ARCHIVES COMMITTEE OF THE LITITZ MORAVIAN CONGREGATION

VOLUME 9

CHURCH SQUARE, LITITZ, PENNSYLVANIA

SPRING, 1981



18th-century log cabin which stood in the area occupied today by the stage of Fellowship Hall (see page 3, column 3). Early residence of John Philip Bachman whom the congregation summoned to Lititz from Herrnhut, Germany to assist David Tannenber in organ-building. Glimpsed in the background, left to right: our sexton's house when it stood next to the Single Brothers House and faced the present dePerrot House across Juniper Alley; the west gable of the Single Brothers House; the peaked gable of the Sunday School Chapel, predecessor of Fellowship Hall; the church belfry.

Moravian Landmarks Vanished From The Lititz Scene



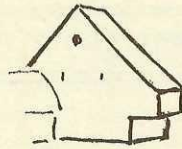
Early house of worship of the Lititz Moravians (see page 2, column 2). The 1792 barn of the Single Brothers farm, later known, in turn, as the Regennas Barn and the Seaber Barn.

RARE WATERCOLOR FLOWN TO LITITZ FROM TEXAS

Shadows of the illustrious Beck family of educators, once so prominent on the Lititz scene, linger throughout Church Square, beneath every tree, beyond each corner, within every building; the Raphael Beck window in the church;¹ Abraham Beck's setting of *Just As I Am*, sung by the men's choir during the rite of confirmation; the display of congregational museum and archival collections begun by Abraham and developed by his son, Dr. Herbert Beck; though long gone, the still-pervading influence of John Beck's Academy which stood on the west side of the Square; Abraham Beck's many treatises on aspects of early Lititz. Even uptown, one finds the manorial Audubon Villa, built and conducted by Abraham as the Moravian Family School for Boys. And at the springs, in a rock outcropping, is a lion's head carved by Abraham's brother, Julius Augustus Beck.²

Julius Augustus Beck has left us another irreplaceable treasure, pictured on the facing pages of this *Journal*. Beck painted this scene of the Lititz Moravian buildings in 1879, choosing to portray the area to their rear because it was here that he and his boyhood chum, Theodore Wolle, spent many happy hours together. Theodore Wolle was a son of Bishop Peter Wolle, who was Beck's pastor when he was a boy. The Wolles lived in the *Gemeinhaus-Parsonage* shown in the painting. While young Beck went on to become an artist in Harrisburg, friend Theodore pursued music, eventually appointed not only professor of music at the Moravian Female Seminary in Bethlehem, but also organist of Central Moravian Church there. One of his organ students was his cousin's son, J. Fred Wolle. Upon Theodore's untimely death, J. Fred ascended the organ bench at Central and proceeded to organize and conduct the celebrated Bethlehem Bach Choir.

In 1910, artist Beck gave this painting to his nephew, Paul Beck, once organist here at Lititz Moravian. Paul later passed it on to his son, John, an airlines pilot. Upon John's recent death at his home in Dallas, Texas, the painting, along with several other articles from the estate, was flown to Lititz by Brother Beck's friends and neighbors, the Gilbert Swift family, and presented to the Archives Committee on the afternoon of The Great Sabbath in April, 1979. This priceless piece, invaluable for its detail of an earlier era, now hangs over the fireplace in the Eschbach Parlor.



Single Brothers Barn

Leading the procession of buildings across the painting from left to right is one of those great stone barns for which Pennsylvania is so well noted. Built in 1792, the barn served the Single Brothers farm and stood just west of today's Christian Education building on the present site of the elementary school's playground, that area where many of us park our cars on Sunday morning.

During the 1830s and 40s, the barn was known as The Regennas Barn for John Jacob Regennas, the congregation farmer. In 1857, the congregation's worship services were held in the barn while the church building was being altered inside and out. By that time, Bishop Peter Wolle, who had been pastor at Lititz Moravian until four years earlier, had retired to Bethlehem. In August of 1857, he returned to Lititz to visit his children. His diary entry of August 17 tells us:

... went with Nat [Nathaniel Wolle, the Bishop's son, who was the village storekeeper] to see the temporary place of worship in the former Regennas barn. The place is sufficiently large and will do in summer; the pigeons and chickens sometimes disturb the congregation. [!!!!]

At the turn of this century, townspeople knew the building as The Seaber Barn for Charles Seaber, farmer, who lived in a small, late 19th-century frame cottage situated between the Brothers House and the barn, a cottage subsequently moved to its present location behind the Christian Education complex where it now houses yet another Seaber: Paul, our sexton.

Unfortunately, the once-magnificent barn was allowed to deteriorate until it was finally demolished in 1907.



Farmhouse

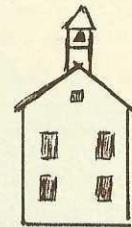
The congregation farmer, who was in charge of this great barn, lived in the long, low building seen next in the painting. Of stone, its construction date unknown, it stood in the area behind the present dePerrot House. An early occupant of the house was John Jacob Regennas, mentioned above. Regennas lived there with his family, including son John, of whom the Wolle diary records:

1844; May 23

In the evening was the marriage [in the church] of John Regennas with Eliza Peterson. There was a coffee lovefeast of which almost the whole congrega-

tion partook. After that, the friends were assembled at the house of Father Regennas, [the house in the painting] and we [the parsonage family] amongst them.

After 1875, the house became the home of the church sexton and also housed the village saddlemaker's shop. The structure was torn down in 1885, after which the present sexton's house, mentioned earlier, was built.



Academy

During much of the 19th century, elegant carriages from Baltimore, Philadelphia and Harrisburg swung into Church Square, pulling up before the trim, belfry-topped building which stood a short distance from the farmhouse. For this was the famous Young Gentlemen's Academy which drew students from across the United States, from Canada, Europe, the West Indies and Hindustan. Schoolmaster John Beck, father of the artist who painted this scene, had opened his school in 1815 in another building which stood on this same site: a low, tile-roofed blacksmith shop run by the Single Brothers Choir. The building seen here was erected in 1822. Note that the earlier Germanic heaviness has now been replaced by the light elegance of the Federal period and that the once-favored building material, native stone, has given way to brick.

Typical of academies of that era (visit the 1837 Academy at the Ephrata Cloister), the Lititz Academy provided a classroom on the first floor while a large meeting room, known as the Concert Hall, occupied the second floor. This upstairs room was the scene of varied activity in early years. Turning again to the Wolle diaries, we read:

1836; November 23

In the evening, I [Bishop Wolle] accompanied him [Rev. Charles F. Kluge] to the concert hall, where a lovefeast was given by the musicians to bid Br. Kluge [the departing headmaster of the Girls Boarding School, now Linden Hall] farewell and me [the newly arrived headmaster and church pastor] welcome among them.

1840; March 26

The Misses Shaw with their father and a Mr. Loomis visited our town; they sang in the Prayerhall of the [Girls] Boarding School at 3 P.M. — and in the evening in the Concert Hall. Their

singing was excellent, but the farces of Mr. Shaw were abominable, and the stamping of the people outrageous.* I wished I was not present.

*[The good Lititz Moravians?!? Remember, only they lived in Lititz at that time.]

1842; January 5

In the evening of the 6th [the day after Wolle's 50th birthday], the musicians wishing to give me and my family a pleasure, held a lovefeast in the Concert Hall, and sang a piece for me, words by Wm. Rauch, set to Hilmer's Hosianna.

1846; March 21

P.M. we [the parsonage family] went to the Concert Hall, where a Mr. Lloyd is engaged for several weeks already in making Daguerreotype likenesses.

1848; January 31

In the evening, after a very long intermission, the musicians once again met in the Concert hall to practice music. We played a Symphony, — and sang the 146th Psalm of Hirmal, and I am sure we did pretty well. Whilst there, it rained and sleeted.

1851; March 10

In the evening a dwarfish man exhibited himself in the Concert Hall.

1853; January 30

In the evening a number of our young folks were engaged in the Concert Hall in singing nigger songs and acting otherwise. I heartily disapproved of such proceedings . . .

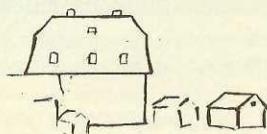
On at least two occasions before 1863, this little building provided the setting for what must have been a noteworthy Christmas putz, for Lancastrians would drive out to Lititz in their carriages or sleighs — as the weather decreed — to view what was to them a great novelty. In the congregation's archives, the writer of this *Journal* recently discovered a letter dated 1896, written by the Moravian artist-musician, Rufus Grider of Canajoharie, New York, to Abraham Reinke Beck in Lititz. In his letter, the Lititz born-and-raised Grider tells Beck that the putz, filling the entire length of the Concert Hall, north and south, featured transparencies constructed of pasteboard frames holding panels of oiled paper on which suitable inscriptions were painted. Concealed behind the transparencies were singers and instrumentalists who performed while visitors moved through the room, admiring the display. Grider remembers John William Rauch⁹ singing, in his "fistula" voice, the noted composition, *Hier schlafes, oh wie süss* [*Oh How Sweetly It* (the Christchild) *Lies Sleeping Here.*]. Grider "helped on the inscriptions" while the congregation's temperamental and con-



troversial organist, William Hall, made the plans and furnished the texts.

Upon his retirement in 1865, two of Professor Beck's assistants, Ferdinand Rickert (an ancestor of our Sister Herma Rickert Losensky) and George Hepp, continued the school as Rickert and Hepp's Academy. Later, the building was used as an apartment or rooming house.

This handsome structure did not escape the purge of 1907 when so many of Church Square's treasures were demolished. It was sold for \$1700, torn down, and in its place rose the present building which served until the 1960s as a home for elderly Moravian women. Today, it houses the congregation's museum and Brother Reinhold Shank. And all that remains of the graceful Academy building are the bell which once hung in the cupola, and a wall-block of white marble bearing the inscription: Concert Hall.



Single Brothers House/Corpse House

The 1759 Single Brothers House and the 1786 Corpse House, easily recognizable here, have been so well documented and described elsewhere that no special note need be made of them in this article.



Regennas House

However, the little one-and-a-half story building with two dormers deserves particular attention. Undated, this 18th-century log structure enjoyed a storied career. Originally a candlemaker's shop, it was the southernmost member of the quadrangle of craftsmen's shops which stretched out behind the Single Brothers House. After later serving as a granary for the Brothers House, the structure was converted into a dwelling. One of its occupants was John Philip Bachman who, in 1793, was called to Lititz from Herrnhut, the mother congregation in Germany, to



assist David Tannenberg in building his highly acclaimed organs. The house received the name The Regennas House after a later inhabitant, William Regennas. In its last years, it sheltered the congregation's pair of horse-drawn, hand-pumped fire engines, now displayed in our museum.

In the early 1930s, the congregation planned to erect the long Christian Education building which now stretches east and west just back of Fellowship Hall. The Regennas House stood in the way. Hopes for saving the little house, by moving it to another site, were dashed when it was found that the structure was in an advanced state of decay. The house was torn down and lost forever.



Church

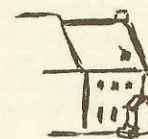
Beck's representation of the church, as seen here, is in marked contrast to Levin Reichel's earlier drawing of the same area (see *The Church Square Journal*, Volume 6, Spring, 1979). While Reichel's drawing is undated, it does precede the year 1857 when the exterior of the original 1787 church was substantially altered. By the time of Beck's 1879 painting, some twenty years had passed since the well-travelled Lititz Moravian, Samuel Lichtenthaeler, a man of considerable wealth and position, had, with his followers, succeeded in overthrowing the Lititz Moravian settlement-congregation's lease-system, opening home-ownership in the town to non-Moravians. Lichtenthaeler's travels had also brought him home to Lititz dissatisfied with (and embarrassed by?) the church building's pure simplicity and, influential and respected as he was, he, with the congregation's blessing, applied to the structure his architectural changes.

Here we see the shallow apse which Lichtenthaeler added behind the pulpit area, destroying the splendid bay of five arched windows which had so distinguished the original south facade of

1787. A similar bay of windows on the north or Church Square facade had also been obliterated by Lichtenthaeler's pedimented entrance pavilion, housing then, as it does today, the entry and the organ-choir loft. The remaining windows seen here are no longer arched, but are square-headed. Even the two south doors, which opened out of the church from beneath the galleries, are gone, supplanted by windows.

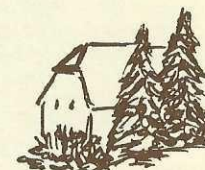
Lichtenthaeler's additions — the apse and the entrance pavilion — are of brick and, upon their construction, were stuccoed over with plaster, allowing the original stone walls of 1787 to remain exposed, as here illustrated. At an unknown later date, the entire church was stuccoed and pargetted (scored with incised lines) to resemble blocks of cut stone or marble.

A pleasing feature, now extinct, is the long shed dormer sweeping down across the roof's slope.



Gemeinhaus

Of the 1763 *Gemeinhaus*-Parsonage, the viewer's attention is drawn to the dormer window on the roof and to the quaint shed-like entrance sheltering the back door, both long-gone.



Single Sisters House

The 1758 Single Sisters House completes the array of distinctive Moravian buildings in the artist's view.

At the extreme right of the painting, the artist provides us a glimpse of not only the white picket fence which once enclosed God's Acre, but also of "The Wilderness" or hemlock grove, often the scene, in that era, of private little birthday vespers or parties.

The alley (a path between two rows of trees) which led from the church to God's Acre is not pictured here, perhaps to better reveal the buildings. One does observe what appears to be an orchard which may have belonged to the farm.

Might the two youngsters romping in the snow be the artist himself and his playmate, Theodore Wolle? Were they to return today, they would find their 20th-

(continued on page 5)

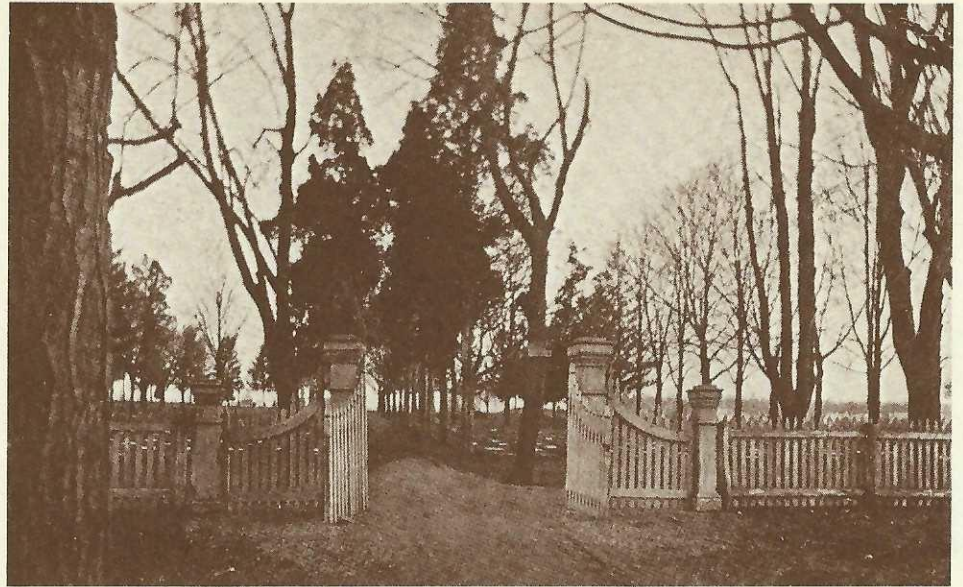
(continued from page 4)

century counterparts still sledding in the same area. But, as to the remainder of the scene, would they be delighted or horrified?

— Wayne B. LeFevre

Notes:

1. The Raphael Beck window in the Lititz Moravian Church depicts Christ with the little children, the infant in His arms suffering the strange affliction of possessing two right feet! Raphael, a Harrisburg artist and a son of Julius Augustus Beck, our painter under discussion here, designed the window, the actual fabrication of which was done by The Decorative Glass Company of Philadelphia.
2. Beck artistry is seen, too, in nearby Lancaster, the county seat. Two stone lions, carved by Julius Augustus Beck, guard the entrance to 126 East Chestnut Street. And in venerable old Trinity Lutheran Church on South Duke, one is constantly confronted by the apse painting of the risen Christ towering above the high pulpit, done directly on the plaster wall in 1892 or 93. Dr. George Heiges, in his two-volume history of Trinity Church published in 1979 by the Lancaster County Historical Society, credits the apse painting to H. K. Beck of Harrisburg, a son of the "eminent educator of the Lititz Moravian community," John Beck. Subsequent research conducted by *this* writer has revealed that H. K. Beck or Harry K. Beck was, in fact, the *grandson* of John Beck, with Julius Augustus (our artist) as his father and Raphael (of the Lititz window) as his brother. Thus, we see that there were at least three Harrisburg Becks active in the art world. The similarity of the Trinity work's style to that of the Lititz window is most striking, almost a family resemblance; both are of the genre in vogue at the turn of the 20th century.
3. A note on John William Rauch, 1790-1863, who sang for the putz visitors in the Concert Hall: Rauch was an early 19th-century Lititz Moravian confectioner and baker and is noted as the first bretzel-baker in Lititz. He was a tenor singer in the church choir, blew the soprano slide in the trombone choir and played first violin in the church music. Abraham Reinke Beck, in *The Moravian Graveyards of Lititz, Pa., 1744-1905*, writes: "Remembrance, yet unfaded, remains to many, of the fine old gentleman, in his drooping cloak, with his handsome ivory-rimmed violin under his arm, on his way to play in lovefeast. A real poet, he touched his [poetical] lyre often to enhance the interest of a festal occasion [see earlier notation on Peter Wolle's birthday, January 5, 1842], to comfort the mourner, and to make happier, by his beautiful lines, the young bridal couple."



Entrance to Lititz Moravian God's Acre, 1908. Picket fence surrounded most, if not all, of God's Acre, replacing earlier low, stone wall. Until 1850, an arch (of wood?) spanned the entrance and displayed appropriate Biblical inscriptions in German and English. The Archives Committee hopes to replace the arch; however, no illustrations, by either artist or photographer, have been found, making it necessary to rely upon extant examples in European Moravian graveyards, as well as those at Old Salem, North Carolina. Note avenue of cedars leading through the burying ground.

The early photographs on pages 1, 5 and 6 are from the picture-postcard album of our late brother, Francis Grosh. The album is now in our Museum collection.

Moravian Single Brothers House in Lititz, as it appeared circa 1890. Note the picket fence which enclosed all of Church Square; post-lantern near doorway; wooden "cucumber" pump at lower left edge of building; Seaber House (our sexton's house), right edge of photo, when it stood on the site of today's west wing of the Christian Education Building.



ANT HEAPS ON THE GRAVEYARD, SHEEP AT THE CHURCH DOOR

For her thesis presented to Cornell University in 1898, Alice Haverstick Bricker prepared a paper entitled *An Examination of the Records of the Aufseher Collegium of the Community at Lititz, Pa. from 1802-1844*. The *Aufseher Collegium* was the early equivalent of our present board of trustees and supervised the financial and material affairs of the congregation-community. A copy of Sister Bricker's thesis is filed in our museum-archives and provides colorful glimpses of life in Lititz 150 years ago.

For her paper, Miss Bricker selected random entries from the *Collegium* diaries, commenting upon them in English while retaining the entries themselves in the original German. Several years ago, at the suggestion of Brother Byron Horne, the Archives Committee commissioned Sister Blanche dePerrot to translate into English the German passages of the Bricker thesis, a task which Sister dePerrot completed in May, 1976.

The following sample entries present the dePerrot translation in italics following the Bricker commentary.

The *Collegium* was given considerable trouble by those members of the *Gemein* [Congregation] who permitted their cattle, sheep, pigs and geese to roam the streets at will. The following is a typical entry on the subject:

1822, June 11. Since our streets and walks are full of sheep and geese and the geese spoil the meadows and the sheep stay especially near the church doors and on the square, which causes much dirt being dragged into the church, soiling the floor

and causing complaints, it was decided to tell the owners of these animals to keep them fenced in; this they must do.

While there are a great many entries which relate to the repairing and keeping in order of church property, the only ones which have any special interest are those which concern the grave-yard [God's Acre]. Here, the members of the church were buried according to choirs, irrespective of family. The graves were arranged in rows* and were cared for by a man employed by the *Gemeine*. He seems to have been lax in the performance of his duties, and numerous complaints were lodged against him. A typical entry is found on July 27, 1812, as follows:

Almost all our brethren are complaining that Brother Oehme does not take care of God's Acre properly and that even many graves are made unequal, some 2 to 3 feet high and covered with lawn † while others, in contrast, are not filled sufficiently, and that especially the children's graves are not uniform and that some look like ant heaps. So it was proposed by the Collegium to replace Brother Oehme by engaging another grave-digger who would keep God's Acre in better condition; but before this is done, Brother Levering [the community warden] took on himself the task to speak once more to Brother Oehme and to give him some advice, as we don't like to take away his salary.

Editor's Notes:

* Some of our older Moravians refer to God's Acre as "the row." For example, in speaking of a departed Sister: "She's buried out on the row."

† In earlier years, the graves in the Lititz God's Acre were mounded (as one finds them yet today in God's Acre in Old Salem, North Carolina) and were planted with mountain pinks so that in May, God's Acre must have been a breathtakingly beautiful garden of blossom.

ARCHIVES COMMITTEE PROJECTS COMPLETED March, 1980 thru March, 1981

- Purchased 300 white china mugs for serving of alternate beverage at love-feasts. These mugs are of a style different from our coffee mugs so that worshipers may easily distinguish between and select their preference of coffee or alternate drink.
- New Music Room in Museum added to security alarm system.
- Heritage Center sign, in front of Single Brothers House, updated and corrected.
- Hosted the biennial Candlelight Lantern Tour of the old buildings on Church Square.
- Presented Dr. Byron K. Horne in a December talk on Moravian Christmas customs, ending with a surprise tribute/celebration of Dr. Horne's 80th birthday.
- Directed approximately \$3,000, balance of Archives Committee funds remaining at the end of 1980, to the General Maintenance Fund, specifically for repair and painting of Single Brothers House exterior.
- Completed restoration of congregation's entire collection of 38 early brass and silver wind instruments.
- Named the Museum's Library Room *The Byron K. Horne Room*.

Older Moravians all look alike. They have a peaceful loveliness about them.

—Rev. Henry Williams of Bethlehem, librarian of Moravian College; President of the Moravian Historical Society of the Northern Province. In a conversation with this *Journal's* writer in Lititz, December 21, 1980.



The 1902 Easter Sunrise Service on God's Acre at the Lititz Moravian Church. Note mounded graves in the foreground, referred to by the late Sister Alice Haverstick Bricker in her Cornell University thesis, excerpts of which appear above. Spaces between the mounds were filled in during the 1920s and 30s, making God's Acre the level ground we know today.

This issue of *The Church Square Journal* has been designed and written by Wayne B. LeFevre and has been reviewed and approved by The Board of Elders of the Lititz Moravian Congregation.