



# *Chapter Four*

~ RELIGIOUS LIFE:  
THE FOUNDATION OF OUR COMMUNITY ~

## MUSIC IN LITITZ by Marion Shatto

### The Early Years

The Moravian missionaries who founded Lititz were, for the most part, a sober lot. Their focus was on preaching the Gospel and establishing a self-sustaining community to support the mission effort. Much of their social and recreational life was circumscribed by strict rules established by the elders of the congregation. Music making was one of the few pleasures permitted to and even encouraged among early Lititz residents.

Like many of their German-speaking neighbors, the Moravians brought with them to America a rich tradition of choral singing. But in contrast to the Plain groups, which sang unaccompanied and for the most part banned instruments from church, the Moravians from the beginning incorporated wind and stringed instruments into their music-making, both within the context of worship and in family and community gatherings.

When the lower floor of the Sisters' House (now "the Castle" at Linden Hall) was outfitted as a worship space in 1761, the congregation purchased its first pipe organ from John Gottlob Klemm of Bethlehem. David Tannenberg, then an assistant to Klemm, traveled to Lititz to install the instrument, which was first used for worship on December 1st, 1761. Less than two years later, the Gemeinehaus was completed and dedicated, and the organ was moved from its temporary home in the Sisters' House to the new Saal, or meeting room.

1765 saw the arrival in Lititz of two major figures in 18th century Moravian music. Born in Saxony, David Tannenberg (sometimes referred to as Tanneberger) emigrated to America in 1749 and settled in Bethlehem, where he worked first as a joiner, or cabinetmaker. By 1758 he was working as an assistant to the organ builder Johann Gottlob Klemm. Klemm died in 1762, and three years later Tannenberg moved to Lititz. There he purchased the Pilgerhaus and set up his shop, where he continued to build organs until his death while

installing an instrument for the Lutheran Church in York on May 18, 1804.

Tannenberg was America's first full-time organ builder. He constructed about forty-five instruments, of which nine survive. Two of these are housed in the Moravian Church buildings in Lititz: the 1787 organ that he built for the Lititz congregation's new sanctuary, now located in the rear gallery of Fellowship Hall, and the 1792 organ built originally for the Graceham, Maryland, congregation, now placed in the Chapel of the Brothers' House.

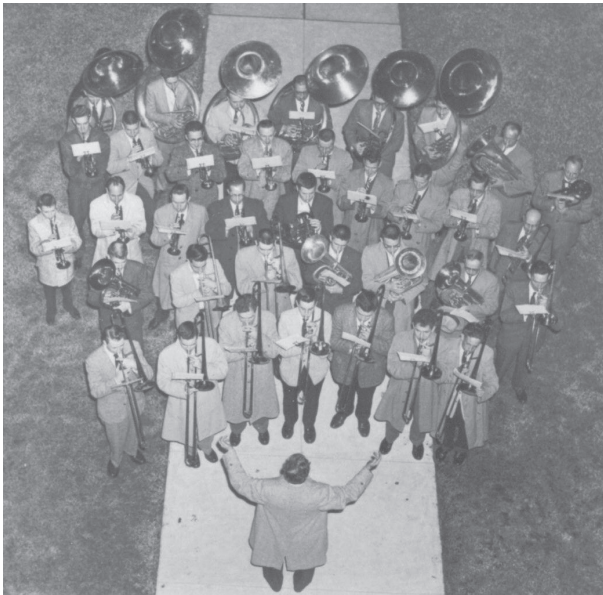
While doing research for the reconstruction of the 1787 Lititz Tannenberg instrument, organ builder James McFarland of Millersville determined that Tannenberg had constructed instruments with two quite distinctive sounds. Those for Lutheran and Reformed churches, with their custom of elaborate organ preludes and postludes, were far more brilliant, with more solo stops than were those for Moravian churches where the primary task of the organist was to accompany congregational singing.

The second major musical figure to arrive on the scene in 1765 was Brother Bernhard Adam Grubé, who took up the position of pastor of the congregation in May of that year, and in November was named musical director. He soon organized a vocal choir and an orchestra, both of which served to enhance the musical leadership during worship.

Grubé was the first in a long line of clergy/musicians to serve the Lititz congregation. Under his leadership, the musical life of the small community was greatly enhanced. The Christmas Eve Vigil ode for 1765 is an eight-page printed folder detailing portions to be sung by two different choirs, soloists, children, and congregation. The congregation's sections are quite short, with most of the music provided by choirs and soloists. Clearly Grubé was skilled both at organizing and training the musicians in his charge.

For outdoor musical leadership the Moravians long

avored the Posaunenchor, or Trombone Choir, the trombone being at that time the only fully chromatic brass instrument and thus most suited for accompanying outdoor singing. There is record as early as Easter of 1766 that “the congregation was awakened early with music.” This may have been the playing of trombones, or of the pair of waldhorns that were the first brass instruments acquired by the congregation.



Lititz Moravian Trombone Choir under the Direction of John W. Keehn – circa late 1950's.  
Photo Courtesy of Ron Reedy.

The Lititz Trombone Choir was formally organized in 1771, and has been a continuously functioning ensemble ever since. Its members still carol through the streets of the town in the pre-dawn hours of Easter Sunday, calling the faithful to worship the risen Christ. It also maintains a full schedule of performance and worship leadership throughout the year, providing pre-service preludes on the lawn of Church Square accompanying hymns during morning worship and representing the congregation at community gatherings on a regular basis.

The Trombone Choir also continues the centuries-old practice of playing death announcements for congregational members. A hymn appropriate to the station in life of the deceased is played, followed by a verse of the Passion Chorale. At a time when most congregational members lived within hearing distance of the church green, these announcements were played outside on the evening of the death. They are now incorporated into the prayer time in

morning worship on the Sunday following the death they announce.

### Johannes Herbst and the Congregational Catalogue

The earliest extant Lititz music manuscripts date from the early 1770's, and efforts to organize the collection began soon after that. It appears that when Georg Gottfried Müller arrived in Lititz in 1788, he set aside the earlier accumulation and began to build a new music library. It was this basic collection that Johannes Herbst, one of the most gifted and prolific of the 18th century Moravian composers, carefully catalogued for the congregation in the mid-1790's.

Born at Kempten and educated at Herrnhut, Herbst served the church as teacher, bookkeeper, minister, and warden. He was called from Europe to America in 1786 and served as minister and administrator in Lancaster for five years; then in Lititz until 1811, when he was consecrated as a bishop and called to Salem, North Carolina.



Johannes Herbst Manuscript – circa 1790's.  
Photo Courtesy of Marion Shatto.

He appears to have studied music from a young age and began composing anthems at about the age of 32. Historian and musicologist Hans David notes that most of his European compositions are rather dull and uninteresting, but his style blossomed after he arrived in America. In 1787 he wrote the anthem “Lobet den Herrn alle Seine Heerscharen” for double choir to be used in the dedication service for the new church sanctuary in Lititz. He was a prolific copyist, and his personal library contained over 1000 anthems and solo songs and about 50 oratorios.

Perhaps it is appropriate at this point to say a word about the role of copyists in distributing music of the time. Professionally published music was expensive and difficult to obtain, especially in America. Absent was our modern copyright laws, and the practice of borrowing and copying out by hand a recently composed score was the common and accepted way of circulating music. Fine copyists abounded in the Moravian communities of the 18th and 19th centuries, and Herbst was one of the best. Based on a number of references to copying fees in correspondence between Herbst and Jacob van Vleck, a fellow minister and headmaster of the girls' school in Bethlehem, it appears that Herbst not only copied manuscripts for his own use, but also on a fee-for-service basis for other musical organizations.

While in Lititz, Herbst was both minister of the congregation and principal of the girls' school now known as Linden Hall. In his function as the latter, he produced a number of part songs on sacred texts for the girls to sing in their leisure hours. Some of these were edited by Monica Schantz and published in 1991 in a volume titled "Hymns to be Sung at the Pianoforte." While the hymnody of congregational worship was at that time based almost exclusively on the German chorale and earlier Bohemian Brethren chorale tunes. These gentle, lilting works bear some resemblance to the German art song of the late eighteenth century.

When he was called to North Carolina, Herbst took with him his substantial library of musical scores. He left behind for the use of the Lititz congregation, however, the parts for many of these same works. After Herbst's departure, a number of distinguished successors added substantially to the congregational collection. Manuscripts included works by some of the best of both European and American composers. For example, eleven of the thirteen vocal works by Handel found in the archives in Bethlehem are indexed as "Lititz Miscellaneous." A copy of the oratorio "Esther" (titled here "Hesther and Ahasuerus") bears a sticker reading "High Class Music used by the Brethren in Lititz, 1790-1840." Researcher Howard Serwer notes, "We can say that Bethlehem's copy of "Hesther and Ahasuerus," though probably not copied by one of Handel's

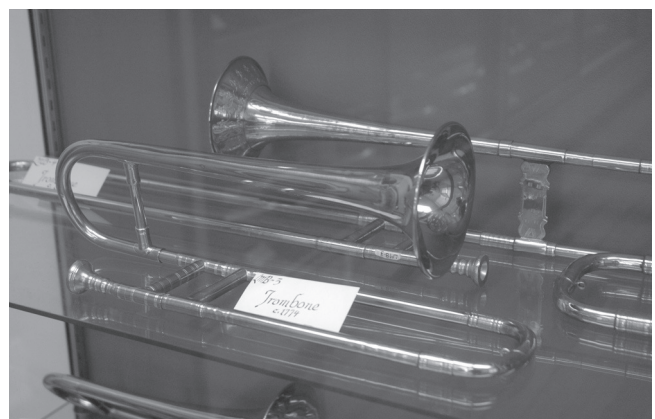
immediate associates, came either from the autograph or from a very early, accurate copy of same."

At the present day the Lititz Collection is maintained in the Moravian Archives in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and the Herbst Collection in the Archives of the Southern Province in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Both are in the care and control of the Moravian Music Foundation, which within the past decade has completed the massive task of recording every manuscript on microfilm. This significant body of work, including the extensive collection of the Lititz congregation, is now available to musicologists and researchers worldwide.

### The Instruments

On the second floor of the Archives Museum are two rooms devoted to the instrument collection of the Lititz Moravian congregation. Some of these instruments were used by church orchestra and trombone choir members over the decades. Others have simply been donated to the church and put on display. Most were serviceable instruments in their day and have been honorably retired. A few are truly significant gems.

The oldest set of slide trombones in the brass room was acquired by the congregation between 1774 and 1803. A second set dates from 1825. Neither set, alas, is now in playable condition. For anyone who thinks of the trombone as an instrument nearly as long as its player is tall, seeing the sopranos and altos is fascinating and instructive. The soprano is about the size of the modern trumpet, but with



1774 Slide Trombone located in the Lititz Moravian Museum. Photo courtesy of Ron Reedy.



a slide instead of valves. It is difficult to resist an initial reaction of, "Oh, isn't it cute!" But this is no toy. I am told by brass players who have tried that it requires considerable skill to achieve a pleasing tone and accurate pitch.

The most unusual of the brass collection are two bass horns, the ophicleide and the serpent. Here is the problem. To produce low pitches on a wind instrument, the column of air vibrating within the bore must be lengthened. At a certain point the instrument becomes too unwieldy to hold, nor can the player's fingers stretch sufficiently to operate the mechanism which changes the pitch from one note to the next. The modern tuba solves this problem by wrapping itself into a multi-coiled oval, easily cradled in the player's arms.

Earlier solutions to the challenge, however, produced a variety of shapes and designs. The ophicleide, a member of the keyed bugle family, doubles back against itself in a manner similar to a bassoon, with a rather narrow bell pointing straight up above the player's shoulder. The example in the Lititz collection was built circa 1830 by an unknown instrument maker and is in reasonably good condition.

Far more peculiar is the serpent horn. Fashioned of a wood frame covered in leather, and ending in a brass tube fitted with a cupped mouthpiece, the serpent is neither quite woodwind nor quite brass. Its undulating design recalls to mind those grainy photos one sees in magazines purporting to prove the existence of the Loch Ness monster. A member of the cornett family (not to be confused with the modern cornet), the serpent enjoyed its greatest popularity in 18th century France, where it was much used as a church instrument. Orchestral scores by Handel, Mendelssohn, and Wagner, among others, also call for its sound.

The serpent horn housed in Lititz is attributed to Heinrich Gottlob Gutter, instrument builder of Bethlehem, where it was probably made circa 1780. When the Archives Committee had the instruments appraised a number of years ago, the curator who examined detailed photographs of the horn declared it to be one of the best preserved of its type in the

United States. Unlike many of the other wind instruments in the collection, it can be and is played on occasion.



Circa 1780 Serpent located in the Lititz Moravian Museum. Photo courtesy of Ron Reedy.

Moving to the string and woodwind room, one finds several early oboes and flutes. Oboes were added very early to the instrumental mix at Lititz, as attested by an entry from the congregational diary dated December 26, 1774. "To-day the organ, lately built by Brother Tanneberger (it has twenty registers) for the Lutheran church at Lancaster, was consecrated. Dr. Adam Kuhn was here several days ago to ask that our trombone players might assist on this occasion. Accordingly five brethren with trombones and hautboys [the oboes – literally "high winds"] started early in the morning and took part in the tunes at two preaching services."

By far the most intriguing of the stringed instruments are the violas built by Andreas Ostler of Breslau in 1745, and by American-born John Antes in 1764. Named a "Viola de Braccio (Viol d'Amour)" in the Music Room Directory, the Ostler instrument appears to consist of the body of a viol d'amour with a modern neck grafted onto it. The body has the sloping shoulders and nearly flat back of the viol family, with sound holes of a serpentine design that appears to be unique to Ostler's instruments. The modern neck and tailpiece, however, permit it to be strung with just four strings (instead of the six standard on a viol d'amour) in the manner of the contemporary orchestral viola. Perhaps some practical-minded Moravian, in need of another viola in the Collegium Musicum, adapted the instrument for modern use.

The label in the Antes viola reads, "Johann Antes, me fecit in Bethlehem 1764." [John Antes, made by me in Bethlehem 1764] Assuming that the label is authentic, and the late James Fegley of Reading, the luthier who in the 1970's returned the instrument to playing condition, believed that it was, this is the oldest extant viola built in America. John Antes was born in 1740 in Fredricktown, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. Trained as a woodworker, he began at the age of nineteen to fashion musical instruments, starting with a violin which is now a featured item in the Whitefield House Museum in Nazareth, Pennsylvania.

According to Bethlehem church records, Antes constructed a viola and a "bass" (most likely a cello rather than a double bass) in 1763, and a complete string quartet for the Bethlehem Collegium Musicum in 1764, before departing for ministerial training in Germany. Rufus Greider, a Bethlehem historian writing in 1873, knew of three Antes instruments, a violin, a viola, which he locates at Nazareth, and a cello, inscribed "Johann Antes, me ficit in Bethlehem, 1764" in Bethlehem. How the viola made its way from Nazareth to Lititz is a mystery yet to be solved. The story of its discovery, as told to this writer by Wayne B. Lefevre, congregational organist in the 1970's, is that Dr. Byron K. Horne found it in the second attic of the Brothers' House when he was exploring one day and placed it in the museum.



Marion Shatto playing the 1764 Johann Antes Viola located in the Lititz Moravian Museum. photo courtesy of Marion Shatto.

In many ways it is a rather crudely made instrument, which in the opinion of some argues for its authenticity. Antes was not, after all, formally

trained as a luthier and had only those instruments which had made their way to the colonies by the early 1760's as pattern for his efforts. The purfling (decorative edging) is drawn on rather than being inlaid, and the neck where it attaches to the body is excessively thick. Fegley warned when he worked on it that the bass bar was not strengthened sufficiently to withstand the high tension required to tune the viola to today's standard A of 440 cycles per second. We know from the pitch of the 1793 Tannenberg organ that the A of that time was approximately three-quarters of a step lower, a tuning that suits the viola's construction.

The other two significant instruments in the congregation's collection are, of course, the two Tannenberg organs. In 1787 Brother Tannenberg built and installed a large organ in the west gallery of the new sanctuary at Lititz. Sanctuary and organ were dedicated simultaneously in a daylong series of services on August 13, 1787. Organist for the occasion was Brother Johannes Herbst, mentioned above. The organ served the Lititz congregation until it was replaced in 1879 by a larger two manual and pedal Hook and Hastings instrument. It was then sent on loan to the Moravian Congregation of South Bethlehem, PA, where it was "modernized" and used until 1910. Because the modernization included a new wind system, the original bellows was left in the attic above the Lititz sanctuary, where it remained until it was destroyed in the devastating fire of 1957.



1787 Tannenberg Organ located in the Lititz Moravian Brother's House. Photo courtesy of Ron Reedy.

Upon its return to Lititz in 1910, the organ was placed in storage, primarily in the Brothers' House attic. Over the next half-century and more, some

of the pipes and much of the cabinetry wandered off, while what remained was joined by stray organ parts not of Tannenberg's making. In 1971 the Archives Committee of the Lititz Congregation set aside funds for the eventual restoration of the organ, and in 1976 contracted with J. R. McFarland & Co. of Millersville to undertake the task. Construction of replacements for the missing parts was carefully researched, and only construction methods utilized by Tannenberg were employed. Based on analysis of existing Tannenberg organs and examination of a few extant photographs of the organ as it appeared in Bethlehem, the reconstruction project moved slowly forward.

McFarland noted in the rededication program that "of the 235 interior metal pipes, 27 are new; of the 156 wood pipes of oak, pine, and walnut from the interior and pedal, 35 are of new construction." The completed organ includes seven stops on the 53-note manual, and two stops on the pedal. At the time of its reconstruction, the Lititz instrument was the only working Tannenberg organ with a pedal board.

From an historical viewpoint, the small Tannenberg organ is even more significant, for this instrument is essentially unchanged from the way that Tannenberg built it in 1792 for the Graceham, Maryland, Moravian congregation. It was first used for a lovefeast service on Saturday, May 4, 1793, and served the congregation until a new organ was purchased in 1936. In 1957 it was purchased by Curtis Hensel in memory of his wife and daughter as a 500th anniversary (of the ancient *Unitas Fratrum*, predecessor of the modern Moravian Church) present to the Lititz congregation, and placed in the Eschbach parlor. A service of rededication took place on May 18, 1958. Since that time, the organ has been moved across the hall to the Chapel of the Brothers' House, where it is played for services and tours.

Completely self-contained within a Chippendale-style cabinet, the organ consists of four ranks comprising five octaves. The wind chamber can be pumped either by means of a foot pedal operated by the organist, or, if the organist has an assistant, by pulling a leather strap at the left side of the organ.

Two other organs in Lititz deserve mention here. The 1904 Hook and Hastings organ, opus 2052, which graces the Mary Dixon Chapel of Linden Hall is a solidly-built stock-model instrument which, as Dr. Karl E. Moyer remarked to this author, should still with reasonable care and maintenance be producing lovely music when Lititz celebrates its 500th anniversary. It was obtained from the Port Washington, Ohio, Moravian Congregation when that church was closed, and restored by Patrick Murphy & Associates in 1998. With just seven stops on two manuals and pedal board, it displays, as noted in a recent Organ Historical Society program, an "amazing tonal variety and sophistication."

The Fitzkee Memorial Organ now installed in the Chapel of the Good Samaritan, Luther Acres, was built by E. and G. G. Hook as Opus 407 and first installed in the First Free Congregational Church of Lockport, New York, in 1867. It should be noted that E. and G. G. Hook was the predecessor of Hook and Hastings, the firm being the foremost organ builder in New England through most of the 19th century and into the 20th. In 1911 the organ was given in trade when the Lockport church purchased a larger instrument from the M. P. Moller Organ Company of Hagerstown, Maryland. Moller resold it that same year to the Second Christian Church of Hagerstown for \$350.00.

By 1965 Second Christian had moved away from using the pipe organ in worship, and the instrument sat idle in the choir loft. Parts were removed and discarded in order to make room for more choir members in the loft. In order to preserve what remained of a fine instrument, Organ Historical Society member Randall Wagner purchased it from Second Christian and stored it in his garage while seeking a suitable owner. Thanks to the mediation of the Organ Clearing House, a non-profit organization that matches orphaned organs with potential new owners, contact was arranged between Wagner and a group of concerned individuals seeking an instrument for the chapel at Luther Acres.

Mr. Wagner had placed several conditions upon the sale of his rescued orphan: "1. That it go to a church or other suitable institution; 2. That a contract for



its proper restoration be a formal part of the bill of sale of the instrument; and 3. That I (Mr. Wagner) have the right of approval of the restorer.” With the selection of James R. McFarland and Company of Millersville to do the required restoration work, all parties agreed and the sale was completed in July 1977. Henry Fitzkee, a resident of Luther Acres at the time, donated the funds for purchase and restoration “to honor the memory of my wife, Perl, and give thanks to God for the care she received at Luther Acres.”

With restoration complete, the organ was dedicated in a recital on May 11, 1980, played by Dr. Karl E. Moyer, then Associate Professor of Music at Millersville State College. With nine stops on a single manual and pedal board, the instrument is eminently suited for leading worship in a chapel setting. After extensive repair and renovation in 2003, the organ was again played by Dr. Moyer in a Service of Thanksgiving for Our 1867 Hook Organ.

### The Lutz Family

Musical dynasties are not uncommon in European history. One thinks immediately of the Bach family in Germany, and the Strausses of Vienna. Lititz can boast of five generations of Lutz family members who were and remain active in the musical life of the community.

A butcher by trade, Benjamin Fry “Benny” Lutz was the patriarch of the assembly. As early as 1913 he formed the Lutz Family Quintette, consisting of himself, daughter Ruth, son Benjamin, and nephew Winfield Wilson on cornet, and son John playing the baritone horn. For several years the group played for church and community gatherings and fairs throughout the county gaining a wide reputation for their entertainment skills. Then tragedy struck; daughter Ruth succumbed in the great influenza pandemic of 1918, dying at the youthful age of 17. Benny’s wife Nora never quite recovered from the loss of her only daughter, but Benny continued for decades to encourage the youth of the community in both musical and athletic endeavors. Reconstituted as The Lutz Family Band, he and his descendants brightened lives in such venues as church picnics,

Conestoga View, area fairs and farm shows, and the county hospital and jail.



The Famous Benjamin Lutz Family Band – 1913.  
Photo Courtesy of the Lititz Record Express.

As founder of the Sunday School orchestra at the Lititz Moravian Church, Benny with his bass fiddle was a familiar figure to many. He was also a prolific hymn tune composer, setting the texts of a number of different writers. Collections of his hymns were published in Lititz in 1942 and 1943. These booklets include “I Love Jesus” with words by Ella Buch, which bears the notation “This song was first sung in the Moravian Church, at Lititz Pa. by the infant class on Christmas 1907.” The song “Closer to Jesus,” to a text of the Rev. H. J. Heydt of the School of the Bible in Lancaster, was included in Tabernacle Hymns No. 4, becoming the first hymn written in Lititz in more than a century to find its way into a nationally distributed hymnal.

Benny’s descendents were gifted both in church music and in the more popular music of the day. Besides being stalwart members of various vocal and brass choirs, sons John, Benjamin S., and Robert all played the musical saw, while Henry held forth on banjo, spoons, goblets, and bones. Benjamin’s daughter Marian tried her hand at the marimba, but soon turned to the much more practical piano, an instrument she learned by ear and still enjoys playing for nursing home residents and for her own enjoyment.

Robert, a French horn player, was drafted into the Army during World War II and assigned to the Army Band stationed in Pensacola, Florida. Near



the very end of hostilities, he was sent to Japan. Feeling a deep concern for the people of that country, he cherished a dream of returning some day as a missionary. Though he trained for the ministry and was ordained in the Church of the Nazarene, he was never to realize the fulfillment of that desire. He inherited his father's gift for hymn writing, and in the 1940's saw publication of "Crucified for Me" and "I Can Always Sing to Him," for both of which he wrote both text and music.

The third generation continued the musical tradition of the family. John's daughter Nancy and Benjamin's daughter Thelma both had lovely voices which graced church choirs and family band concerts alike. When Thelma was graduated from Lititz High School in 1945, grandfather Benny wrote the words for the class song, setting the text to the then-popular tune "Louise."

Thelma for a time directed the children's choir at Lititz Moravian, while Nancy, the wife of a minister, directed youth and adult choirs in Maryland and West Virginia. Nancy's younger sister Patricia taught public school music for a quarter century, including twenty years in Lebanon City. She presently directs the bell choir at Holy Trinity Lutheran and a boy choir at the Episcopal Church, both in Lebanon.

Besides daughters Thelma and Marian, mentioned already, Benjamin also had a son Benjamin V. who, after completing studies at Lebanon Valley College, went to New York City to try his hand at a career in show business. The possessor of a fine tenor voice, he sang for a few years as a member of the vocal group the Mello-Larks. When the heavy touring schedule proved to have a negative impact on his family, however, he abandoned the life of the professional musician and moved to California, where he became an office manager.

In 1953 Patricia and another cousin, Roberta, daughter of Robert, starred in an original comedy, written by Lititz historian Mary Huebner and titled "Ye Olde Singin' Skewl." This local production, directed by Julia Zercher Keehn, also featured Lutz cousins Ben and Thelma, the latter of whom both

sang and gave a recitation. The whole Moravian Senior Choir got into the act in one way or another, combining to provide a memorable musical entertainment.

As interest in preserving and performing Moravian music of the 18th and early 19th centuries increased, Julia Keehn and Thelma Lutz Stauffer, together with Thelma's daughter Marilyn, formed The Moramus Trio. This ensemble was active through the 1960's and '70's, singing at various local churches. Marilyn's brother Bill Stauffer is well known for his stirring solos at Lititz community functions, including Memorial Day services and events in Lititz Springs Park.

Representing the fifth, and thus-far youngest, generation of the Lutz family is Debra Copenhaver, daughter of Marilyn. Like her mother before her, Deb was selected as first chair soprano in State Chorus during her senior year of high school. She then went on to study at Eastman School of Music. An accomplished violist as well as vocalist, she now teaches privately in the State College area, while also finding time to sing in Nightshade, a classic rock band that performs music from the 1970's through the 1990's. And just to maintain connection to her Lutz family heritage, Deb also plays the saw, a skill passed on to her by her great-great-uncle Robert on one of his last visits to Lititz.

Thus, for nearly a century, Lititz has benefited from the musical ministrations of members of this extraordinarily talented family. We are certainly fortunate to be the recipients of their gifts.

### **Homegrown entertainment**

In 1959 Lititz Pharmacist Dale Shelley presented an ambitious idea for a fund-raiser to the board of the local AMBUCS (American Business Clubs) chapter – to produce a minstrel show. With the board's blessing, a small group of imaginative club members, including Dale, Bob Derck, and Bob Hess, set about writing what was to become the first of thirty-four annual AMBUCS musicals. The following year their efforts were staged at the then-new Warwick High School. Titled "Minstrel

Days,” it was performed in the traditional blackface and featured all original texts set to tunes borrowed from a variety of sources.

Two more blackface minstrel shows followed in successive years, “Main Street Minstrels” in 1961 and “Cotton Pickin’ Minstrels” in 1962. Awakening consciousness of the Civil Rights movement brought blackface productions to an end, and for the following two years the shows took on an Amish theme. “Wonderful Good” in ’63 and “Going Buggy” in ’64 played to full houses. These were followed by “Kissel Hill Billies,” a take-off on the popular Li’l Abner comic strip and musical, which is considered by the club members to be the best of their home-written shows.

“How the West Was Lost” was Lititz’ spoof on the Broadway musical “How the West Was Won.” By 1967 the team of Shelley, Derck, and Hess was running out of original ideas. “Arabian Sugar Cake” was the final locally written AMBUCS show, and according to Dale, the most difficult to write. The decision was made to move to productions of Broadway shows.

The club started off on this new tack with the tuneful but challenging-to-mount “Carnival.” Unable to find anyone within their ranks capable of meeting the vocal demands of the role of Lily, the AMBUCS turned to the music teacher at Linden Hall and for the first time cast a non-member in a leading role. Broadway supplied material for the next seven years, but our nation’s bicentennial provided new inspiration to the local writing team, which produced “That’s the Way It Was,” a take-off on the history of Lititz and the Moravian Church, in 1976.

Returning to the winning formula of adding local touches to Broadway shows, the club continued its popular annual productions for another seventeen years. Who among us who were in the audience can ever forget the impact of hearing the entire Warwick High School Marching Band enter the auditorium in the grand finale of “The Music Man,” or the delighted roar of laughter as a 26-point Moravian star was pulled from the bedding in

“Once Upon a Mattress”?

All good things must end at last however, and energy for the annual productions gradually waned as the interests of club members changed. The final production, staged in 1993, was “Plain and Fancy.” Though an era ended, many fond memories remain.

### The Bicentennial Choir

Lititz has long been noted for its Independence Day celebrations in the Lititz Springs Park. In keeping with the religious heritage of the town however, when the 4th falls on a Sunday, the fireworks and candle pageant are moved to another evening. When planners noticed that July 4th, 1976, was a Sunday, they developed the idea of celebrating the bicentennial with a massed choir concert, drawing on the resources of local church choirs.

Julia Z. Keehn, former director of the Lititz Moravian Senior Choir, and Virginia H. Burkey, director of the choir at the Church of the Brethren, were named co-conductors. Accompanists for the occasion were Donna J. Burkholder, then organist at St. Paul’s Lutheran; and Grace Fulwiler, Assistant Organist at Lititz Moravian. Dr. Byron K. Horne, retired headmaster of Linden Hall and walking encyclopedia of the history and lore of Lititz, narrated the evening



Lititz Bicentennial Choir – 1976.  
Photo Courtesy of Ron Reedy.

Each participating church was invited to supply several anthems or hymns representing their tradition. The program was then arranged so that

the story of the founding and expansion of Lititz could be told according to the chronology of the religious denominations that had brought their vitality to the community. Rehearsals began early in the year and were held in the Fellowship Hall of the Moravian Church. More than 150 singers participated in the effort.

The day was breezy, warm, and bright. Liner notes for the recording of the concert indicate that the dull roar heard in the background at times was produced by wind in the microphones. By the time of the concert, an estimated 8 to 10 thousand had filled the benches in front of the park band shell and extended well beyond. The Moravian Trombone Choir, under the direction that day of John Yerger, provided prelude and postlude music. At the end, everyone agreed that Lititz musicians had once again been eminently successful in presenting a moving and significant event.

### Entering the 21st Century

One has only to read the Lititz Record Express on a regular basis to know that music of all kinds is thriving in Lititz. Our numerous churches support youth and adult vocal choirs, brass and hand bell choirs, and praise bands. Several of the churches also sponsor concert series, affording Lititz residents the opportunity to hear fine local and regional performers, as well as the occasional international touring company.

Warwick School District is noted for its music program. Students participate in choirs, orchestra, and bands, delighting parents and community members alike with enthusiastic, high-quality

performances. Warwick musicians regularly attend District, Regional and State music festivals, and are well regarded for their proficiency.

The Community Band and the Moonlighters are two of the musical organizations in town that function independently of church or school, providing still another opportunity for musical expression. Lititz can boast of fine music teachers as well, including those with studios at Lititz Academy of Music and at Ken's Music Store.

All of this holds great hope and promise for the future, so that when the book for the 500th anniversary of Lititz is published, the chapter on music will be at least twice as long as the present one. Indeed, this chapter merely touches on a few of the highlights. There are hundreds of stories to be told. Lititz can be justly proud of the role that music has played and continues to play in the life of our community.



Lititz Community Band Marching down Broad Street in the Lititz 250th Grand Parade – 2006.  
Photo Courtesy of Ron Reedy.

## CHURCHES AND CHURCH BUILDINGS OF LITITZ by Martha J. Xakellis

The early history of the Lititz area parallels that of the Moravian Congregation. In 1742, Count Nicholas Zinzendorf visited the area to preach in the house of Jacob Huber (which still stands today north of Lititz). John George Klein, a landowner near Huber, did not attend the meeting but traveled the next day to Lancaster and heard Zinzendorf preach

in the courthouse. This experience so influenced Klein that in 1744, he gave permission to have a log church built on his property by Lutherans John Bender, Jacob Scherzer, and Hartmann Verdiress. They were supported by a number of followers of the Reformed and Mennonite denominations. The location of this first building erected for religious





Lititz Moravian Church – circa early 1900's.  
Photo from the Robert "Sketch" Mearig Collection.

purposes was described by Abraham R. Beck as being "200 feet back from the king's highway, located in the woods east of the old grave yard that is at the northwestern corner of Center Street and Pine Lane." Consecrated on St. James' Day, July 25, 1744, it was called St. James' Church and dedicated as a "free" or union church. Monthly services were held there by the Reverend Laurentius Nyberg, pastor of the Lutheran Church at Lancaster. After Mr. Nyberg was suspended from the Lancaster church in 1746 because of divergent views, he began to preach weekly at St. James' Church and joined the Moravians.

That year a meeting was held at George Klein's house and the decision was made to build a Gemeinhaus that would serve as a church, parsonage, and school for the Moravians. Again, Klein donated the required land, and in two years the new building stood on a bluff on the south bank of Carter's Run, between the present Locust and Oak Streets in the eastern part of Lititz. The "Warwick Country Congregation" of the Unitas Fratrum, or Moravian Church, was organized on February 9, 1749, with eleven members. In 1755 the Church Settlement, which would be open only to Moravians, was finally established with the transfer of almost 500 acres of land from George Klein to the Moravian Church. In 1756 the town received its name, "Lititz," and in 1757 the area was surveyed and lots were laid out. By 1759 the Lititz Moravian Congregation and the Warwick Country Congregation were united and a new Gemeinhaus (the present parsonage) was built. The little log church was abandoned except

for the occasional funeral service and burial in the adjoining graveyard, and finally, in 1771, it was taken down.

All land in Lititz was owned by the Moravian Church. Church members could own their houses, but leased the lots on which they stood. This lease system ended in 1855 with the lots being sold to the homeowners for \$50 each. The town was then opened to non-Moravian residents. However, it would be sixteen years before another church congregation would appear in Lititz.

John Zook's 1905 publication *Historical and Pictorial Lititz* listed five additional churches in the village of Lititz, Trinity United Evangelical Church; 1871; St. Paul Lutheran Church, 1885; the German Baptist Church, 1887; the United Brethren Church, 1890; and St. James Lutheran Church, 1905.

In 1871, a nearby Evangelical Association preacher began holding prayer meetings in an old stone house in the first block of Pine Alley. Observing the need for larger facilities, a building located on the east side on what is called Liberty Street just north of Front Street was rented. This octagon shaped building, formerly housed a merry-go-round but was thought to be too worldly and closed for lack of financial support. The merry-go-round was removed leaving a building large enough to accommodate an altar and benches to accommodate about 150 people.

Later a movement was made to build a Sanctuary in Lititz. Previously the boundaries of the town of Lititz were closed to organizations other than Moravian. In May of 1874, Julius F. Sturgis, a member of the Moravian Congregation and founder of the first commercial pretzel bakery in America, donated a lot on East Orange Street, and the work of the Church took on new life. Mr. Sturgis later became a member of the church and was a substantial layman. A building committee was formed and plans were drawn for a two-story brick building with a spire of 103 feet. The corner stone was laid July 26, 1874 and the Church was dedicated November 29, 1874. It became known as the Jerusalem Church of the Evangelical Association. In 1896 the Church, becoming part of a new Denomination,

was renamed Trinity United Evangelical Church. In 1923, the Church again became part of a new Denomination and became known as Trinity Evangelical Congregational Church. The present church edifice located at the corner of E. Orange and S. Cedar Streets, was built in 1935.

St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church was formed by a group that came from Salem Lutheran Church of Kissel Hill in 1885. A lot was purchased and a church was built on South Spruce Street. It is now numbered as 112 South Spruce Street and the transom over the door still has "St. Paul's Lutheran Church" etched in the glass insert. In 1911 the cornerstone of a new larger church on the corner of Orange and Broad Streets was laid, and the St. Paul congregation continued to worship in this building until 1968, when they built their present church on West Orange Street at Walnut Street. The red sandstone edifice at Broad and Orange became a home for the Trinity Baptist congregation, and when they moved to Elm, was used for a time as a conservatory for the Pennsylvania Renaissance Faire players of the Mount Hope Estate. After the players left, the building stood empty. Many envisioned a dismal future for this impressive building, but it is now undergoing extensive renovations and will become a very unique private residence.

The building of a small white frame church on Willow Street heralded the beginning of the German Baptist Brethren Church in 1887. Worship services were held there until 1926, when a larger brick church was built on Center Street. The congregation, now known as the Lititz Church of the Brethren, moved to a new site at 300 West Orange Street in 1962, and in 2004 undertook extensive renovations to that building. The Center Street location was bought by the Church of God congregation. They were newly organized and chartered in 1961. Their first meetings were held at the Lititz Recreation Center.

In 1886, the Evangelical United Brethren Church held their first preachings in private homes. A class was organized in 1890 and a rented room in the "old brewery" on Maple Street was used for their services. By the end of 1891 the members were worshipping in their new building on North Cedar Street.

It was known as Erb Memorial Church in honor of Bishop Jacob Erb of Lititz. Eighty years later, when the congregation (now known as the Lititz United Methodist Church) moved to a new location on East Market Street, the building on North Cedar Street was sold and converted into apartments. The "round house" mentioned earlier in this article was located approximately behind this location near Liberty Street.

The St. James Evangelical Lutheran congregation formed when a number of families moved from the Brickerville charge and other congregations into Lititz. A petition was granted by their Conference in the spring of 1903, and by 1905 they had taken steps to erect a building on the corner of Front and Cedar streets. In 1918, with a merger of three large bodies of Lutheran Churches in America, St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church merged with St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church and moved into the St. Paul building, leaving this fine stone church at Front and Cedar empty.

It was sold at public auction in 1919 to the Roman Catholics who had been worshipping in a rented house on the second block of East Main Street. The new St. James' Roman Catholic Church was occupied by this congregation until 1978, when first Mass was celebrated in their new church on Woodcrest Avenue in Warwick Township. Another congregation was not found, and the building at Front and Cedar is now a private residence. The date stone on the building is carved with "St. James" at the top, "Church" at the bottom, and a line across the middle that has been deeply carved as if to erase a previous line that most likely was "Ev. Luth." (Evangelical Lutheran).

The year 1906 marked the beginnings of the Lititz Mennonite Church when a meetinghouse was built on the northwest corner of Front and Water streets. When an annex was added in 1951, a box was found in the masonry of the original building containing the contractor's list of rates for labor and materials. The total cost of the original building, including the lot, was \$6,100. A full century later, the Mennonite congregation still calls this modest church home.

St. Luke's United Church of Christ, originally a reformed church, was formally organized in 1907. After worshipping in Brobst Hall (on the second floor of 25 East Main Street) for several years, the congregation moved to its present site on North Broad Street. The original church building, completed in 1911, was torn down and replaced in 1968.

The Dunkard Brethren Church, formally organized in 1926 and meeting in member's homes, used the Willow Street building from 1930 to 1976 before moving to Clay Road in Warwick Township. The next occupant of the white frame church built by the German Baptist Brethren was the Lititz Assembly of God (now Calvary Temple Assembly of God) from 1976 to 1983, when they moved to West Lincoln Road in Warwick Township. Shiloh Christian Fellowship made use of the building for a time, and now it is being used by the Word of Life Mennonite Fellowship congregation.

An empty room on South Broad Street was the first "house of worship" for the Lititz Community Tabernacle established in 1942. Later, the purchase

of the Kissinger Pretzel Bakery in North Alley east of Cedar Street provided more space, and the building was renovated to include living quarters for the church pastors. The name of this congregation has changed several times. In the "Church Directory" of the January 7, 1965 issue of the Lititz Record Express, it was listed as the Holiness Christian Church on North Alley. In 1975, it was still listed as the Holiness Christian Church, and by 1980 the name was Evangelical Christian Church. By 1990, the congregation had moved to its present location on East Newport Road in Warwick Township. The official name is now the Lititz Wesleyan Church. The North Alley site is currently being used by the Gospel Lighthouse Revival Center, a Pentecostal church.

In 2004, a congregation known as the Lititz Christian Church was meeting at the Lititz Community Center, and Praise Fellowship Christian Church was meeting at 400 North Cedar Street.

Over two and a half centuries, Lititz has provided many different sites where people have had the freedom to gather together and worship according to their beliefs.

## ARISE, SHINE by Liz Curtis Higgs

Long before a hint of daylight touches the sky, the trombone choir moves slowly along the deserted sidewalks of Main Street. An overnight drizzle of rain hangs in the chilly April air, muting the centuries-old hymn pouring from their brass instruments. The musicians—a dozen middle-aged men, a few younger ones, all wearing dark suits and raincoats—walk as one.

Behind shuttered windows, sleeping townsfolk find themselves gently nudged awake by the familiar tune. I am grateful to count myself among them this year, home with my family for a long-overdue visit to Lititz. One story below us, the trombone choir nears our front door, the music bright and brassy until the men shuffle past and the sound fades. Each step draws them closer to the Moravian Church Square, where they'll form a semi-circle, point their

instruments toward the steeple, and herald the dawn of another Resurrection Sunday.

I toss aside my bedcovers, eager to set the morning in motion. "He is risen!" I whisper in my husband's ear.

"He is risen indeed," he mumbles back, his voice like gravel, although I hear the smile behind his words.

Easter is our favorite day of the year.

Spring bonnets and pretty dresses are left in the closet until later; the Moravian sunrise service calls for warm clothes and old sneakers. Our two teenagers manage to find their jeans and sweatshirts, still piled on the floor from the night before, and



appear in the living room minutes later, bleary-eyed and disgruntled.

“This better be worth it, Mom.”

I nod emphatically. “It will be. You’ll see.”

And they would see, precisely as I had seen four decades earlier as a young girl raised in Lititz, a town founded by devout Moravians in the mid-eighteenth century. History, faith, and tradition are worked into the fertile soil as thoroughly as the kernels that sprout into acres of corn across the farmlands of Lancaster County.

“It’ll be an Easter to remember,” I assure my family, whose Kentucky roots do not include trombones in the predawn darkness and going to church before breakfast. “They’ve been doing this since colonial days. Trust me on this one.”

Leaving behind our umbrellas, daring the weather to dampen our spirits, we tiptoe out the door, keeping our voices low. Who knows? One soul in Lititz might still be asleep, ignoring the trumpet’s call—“Jesus Christ Is Ris’n Today”—while we chase the music down the street like dry leaves caught up in the wind.

We pass the brick post office and McElroy’s Pharmacy, their black windows reflecting the street lamps that have stood their ground as far back as I can remember. Across the street, another family travels in a tight knot along the sidewalk, nodding at us. Smiling. Moravians call themselves “Easter people.” We will not be the only ones to gather in the silent sanctuary.

Our steps slow as we approach the assembled worshipers. Many have their hands tucked under their arms for warmth, like robins poking their bills beneath their wings. The musicians, as expected, form a crescent, the sound magnified by the moist air. Another favorite hymn rings out: “Sing Alleluia, Christ Does Live.”

I steal a glance at my husband, whose eyes are awash with tears, and realize my own are leaking, too.

My son elbows me. “When do we go to the cemetery?”

“Soon,” I whisper back, blinking quickly to stem the tide. It is the highlight of the morning, that solemn walk to God’s Acre—the hallowed field where those who have fallen asleep in the Lord are laid to rest, awaiting their own resurrection.

When the last note floats across the square, the hushed assembly turns toward the church. It glows a creamy white, illuminated by hidden spotlights. I shepherd my family through the narrow, wooden doors, and we settle into a pew near the front, the same place where I often sat as a child.

Not a single thing has changed. I knelt there—right there, on that claret-carpeted step—to take my first communion. I sat there—behind the pulpit, in a cozy alcove—with the children’s choir on Christmas Eve. I stood there—to the right of the baptismal—as my sister’s bridesmaid.

And now I sit, with my own family, celebrating the most glorious day in history.

The pastor of the Lititz Moravian Congregation stands behind the pulpit and raises his arms, his expression triumphant. “The Lord is risen!”

Hearts in our throats, we trumpet our response. “The Lord is risen indeed!”

All at once, the organ in the balcony stirs to exuberant life. We sit up straighter as the gospel account of the resurrection is read, the words washing over us like a morning shower, scrubbing us clean. Out of the corner of my eye I watch my teenagers listen more intently than usual. Quite a story, this one. The greatest story ever told. We’ve all heard it before, but we need to hear it again.

My daughter is the one speaking to me now, in a stage whisper. “How much longer until we walk to the cemetery?” Our kids are really taken with the idea of standing in a graveyard, it seems.

Another hymn, more words that urge us to confess our sins, confess our faith, confess our hope in the resurrection, and then we form a single line and leave the stained-glass walls behind, moving out into the damp morning air once more.

“If this is a sunrise service,” my son mutters, “where’s the sun?”

A stickler for details, this son of ours. It’s only a bit lighter outside, and the atmosphere is soggy as ever. Still, our enthusiasm burns bright, as we head toward the stone archway leading to God’s Acre, the oldest part of a very old cemetery.

The trombone choir has divided in two—the first half leading the way, the second half forming the



1902 Easter Sunrise Service at Lititz Moravian Cemetery.  
Photo Courtesy of Ron Reedy.

rear of our straggly procession. The instruments play antiphonally, mimicking one another. A line of music from the front, then a pause, then the line repeats from behind, and we wait again. The footsteps of a hundred worshipers barely make a sound. Only trombones and trumpets and French horns echo across the church parking lot as we make our way to the cemetery.

I find it hard to speak, overcome with emotion. Is it because this is the church of my childhood, and these ceremonies resonate with long-forgotten familiarity? Or is it the thrill of knowing this Savior who conquered death forever?

The graves stretch before us. Flat, plain stones press down upon the spongy sod. Most are so old the lettering has worn smooth. We enclose them in a human square, side by side. The minister faces due west, as we face due east in expectation.

The stillness in the air. The birdsong, come to life at last. The sunlight fighting its way through the clouds, eager to be included. The look of wonder on my daughter’s face.

I squeeze my husband’s hand and realize I am already gripping it so tightly his fingers are cold and stiff. “Sorry,” I whisper

“Happy Easter,” he whispers back, as together we watch the sky above us slowly brighten.

## CEMETERIES OF LITITZ by Martha J. Xakellis

### St. James’ Cemetery

In Abraham Reinke Beck’s article “The Moravian Graveyards at Lititz, Pa., 1744-1905”, the plural in the title refers to the present Moravian Cemetery and to the St. James’ Cemetery which is located at Pine Alley and Center Street. In the introduction he refers to St. James’ Cemetery as the first or “old” graveyard, about a quarter acre in size lying adjacent to the site of the original St. James Church. Though the church was taken down in 1771, the graveyard

continued to be used for some Moravian burials until 1812. Beck notes that “some few friendless persons, or vagrants” were buried there after that date.

In 1889 the Trustees of the Moravian Church gave this graveyard a complete clean up and took up the stones in order to clean out brambles and brush and level the ground. Trees were planted, and the stones were laid back down again in straight rows, but not in exactly the same places. In his 1905 article, Beck stated his belief that the true gravesites had

been hopelessly lost, and remarked “Fortunately, the erring stones are covered to a depth of some inches with vegetable mould and grass.” I guess he felt that it was better not to be able to read the stones than to read the names in the wrong places!

The graveyard is now surrounded by a chain link fence and shaded by tall evergreens trimmed up high. The enclosure is about 100 feet by 100 feet and is kept locked, though a small notice at the corner states that the key to the gate is available at the church office. The stones that can be seen from outside the fence are lying flat as they always were and are almost completely overgrown by the surrounding grass. The whole is kept mowed and maintained. Inside the fence at the corner of Pine Alley and Center Street is a boulder on which is mounted a metal plate. This plaque reads:

“ST. JAMES GRAVEYARD  
BEGUN IN 1744  
BY SETTLERS WHO FOUNDED  
A UNION CHURCH NEARBY  
AND LATER ORGANIZED  
THE WARWICK (NOW LITITZ)  
MORAVIAN CONGREGATION

### **Moravian Cemetery**

Behind Church Square and the Moravian Church buildings, through a parking lot shaded by large trees, is a stone archway spanning a narrow paved driveway. Cedar trees border both sides of this drive, and on each side patches of stone can be seen peeping through the grass. The rows and rows of flat stones are the earliest section of what is called God’s Acre, established in 1758. It was laid out in the manner of most Moravian burial grounds with the tombstones lying flat on top of the graves. There are six categories into which Moravian burials fall: married men, married women, single men, single women, young boys including infants, and young girls including infants. Burials were numbered consecutively with that number corresponding to the burial records of the Moravian Church. The number often was included on the stone. The first person

buried here was the infant, John Baumgaertner, a son of Matthew and Barbara Baumgaertner, who died on November 6, 1758.

“God’s Acre” was enlarged on the north side in 1797, and sections to the east were added in 1851. Members of the Moravian Church are still being buried there. An exception was made for the burial of General John Sutter and his wife, Anna, who were Lutherans. According to an article written for the Lititz Record in early 1898, Sutter’s “kindly ways and open hospitality endeared him to his Moravian neighbors that they regarded him as the foremost citizen of the town.” Sutter admired the Moravian custom of “burying their dead, the bodies of the rich lying side-by-side with the poor and only a simple gravestone laid flat on top to say whose remains were beneath.” Though Sutter was not Moravian he was buried in “God’s Acre”. His wife, who died six months later, was buried beside him in the Sutter vault in the northwest corner of the burial ground. The granite coping that surrounds the grave was placed there by their son Emile on his way from California to Europe on a business trip.

Abraham Reinke Beck’s article “The Moravian Graveyards at Lititz, Pa., 1744-1905” was helpful in verifying the inscriptions on some very hard to read stones as well as stones that simply could not be read. It’s as if they had been turned over. Beck made a diagram of “God’s Acre” and described the numbering system. A number assigned to each burial was included on a cemetery diagram and quite often carved on the gravestone as well. This numbering system is still being used in “God’s Acre”.

Follow the drive through “God’s Acre” and you will find yourself surrounded by the more conventional look of upright stones, large memorial stones, and stones for several family members. Plots here can be purchased by nonmembers of the Moravian Church. Members of the church who wish to have family burial plots are also buried here. These more conventional looking sections of the cemetery were added in 1884, 1910, 1918, and 1933.



## Revolutionary Soldiers Graves Monument

At one time a site on the south side of the 500 block of East Main Street was known as Kahl's Brickyard, and thought to be the burial site of the bodies of Revolutionary War soldiers who had died at the Brethren's House in the Moravian settlement where sick and injured soldiers were quartered from December 19, 1777 to August 28, 1778. According to the article "The Military Hospital at Lititz, 1777-1778" by Abraham R. Beck (The Journal of the Lancaster County Historical Society, Volume XXIII, p. 5, 1919) approximately 110 men were buried in the "corner of our lowermost field." About 1890, workmen excavating for brick clay found several oblong masses of dark colored earth, parallel with each other and a few feet apart, which were thought to be graves, and in 1928 the United States Government erected a monument to the 110 soldiers at this location.

The rest of the story comes from another article published in Journal of the Lancaster County Historical Society, Volume XXXVII, No. 1, 1933 "Graveyard of the Revolutionary Soldiers at Lititz" by Herbert H. Beck. A map in the Lititz Moravian Archives indistinctly showing the site of the graveyard had been overlooked. On John Rickert's map of Lititz drawn in 1843, the words "Graveyard of the Revolution" are almost illegible. It is shown to be about 500 yards directly east of the older portion of the Moravian Cemetery and 300 yards south of Main Street. In October 1932, Morris Frederick was excavating the cellar of a house being built for Jacob Hertzler and began turning up bones. He knew what he had found, and the bones were exactly where Rickert's long overlooked map showed them to be. The house sits above the southwest corner of the graveyard. The remains of about twenty individuals were found as first the cellar, and then a cistern was dug. The bones were gathered by Morris Frederick, placed in a casket that was 24 x 18 x 10-inches, and interred in the memorial grounds 125 feet south of its entrance on East Main Street. Three monuments now mark this site.

The monument to the left of the entrance is inscribed:

IN MEMORY OF  
110 SOLDIERS OF THE  
CONTINENTAL ARMY  
WHO DIED IN LITITZ  
MILITARY HOSPITAL  
BETWEEN  
DECEMBER 19, 1777 AND  
AUGUST 28, 1778  
AND ARE BURIED HERE.  
ERECTED BY  
THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT  
1930

The monument to the right of the entrance is inscribed:

IN GRATEFUL RECOGNITION TO ALL  
VETERANS WHO PRESERVED THE  
FREEDOM WON BY AMERICA'S FIRST  
VETERANS THAT ARE BURIED HERE.  
1776 - 1999



Monument in Memory of the 110 Revolutionary War Soldiers. Located on East Main Street.  
Photo Courtesy of Ron Reedy.

And straight back from the entrance on a large rock is a plate inscribed:

AT THIS SPOT ARE REINTERRED THE REMAINS  
OF A NUMBER OF REVOLUTIONARY SOLDIERS  
WHO DIED IN THE MILITARY HOSPITAL

1777-1778.

THE REMAINS WERE EXHUMED  
DURING BUILDING  
OPERATIONS AT THE ORIGINAL BURIAL SITE  
ON NEARBY SOUTH LOCUST STREET

### **Evangelical Cemetery**

The Trinity Evangelical Congregational Church Cemetery is located on the north side of West Orange Street, across from the St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, on land deeded to the Jerusalem Church of the Evangelical Association in 1874. In 1896, because of a name change, the property was transferred to Trinity United Evangelical Church,

and then in 1923, because of another name change, the property was transferred to the Trinity Evangelical Congregational Church located at E. Orange and S. Cedar Streets. Because burial space is limited in this cemetery, the church has purchased additional land in Elizabeth Township, on Bomberger Road just off Route 501.

### **Macpelah Cemetery**

Located on South Broad Street in Lititz the Macpelah Cemetery dates back to 1886, when land was purchased and a cemetery laid out by St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church. A stone wall fronts the Broad Street side, and the entrance is a driveway passing between stone pillars. The driveway splits to go around a large tree and rejoins as it continues through to South Spruce Street. Once available for the burial of nonmembers, the cemetery is now nearly full, and only church members may buy plots. A Memorial Garden for cremated remains is open to nonmembers.





# *Chapter Five*

~ EDUCATION –  
THE PRIDE OF OUR COMMUNITY ~



## EDUCATION ~ by Dale E. Shelley

Education has always held an important place in the Moravian scheme of life. Long before the days of Comenius, the great Moravian educator, the ancient Church had its schools; it has become almost a proverbial fact that throughout the church's long history, whenever a church has been planted, by its side has sprung up a school.

Lititz was no exception in this respect. In 1748, nine years before the town was surveyed and laid out in lots, a school was opened by Rev. Leonard Schnell with four boys and three girls in the newly built "Gemeinhaus", which was a combination chapel, school house, and parsonage. It was built on 4/12 acres of land about five blocks from the square – on land donated by John George Klein. This was the "Warwick Gemeinhaus."

Before the Declaration of Independence was signed, and Chicago was just a village, the Warwick Moravians had achieved a century of life and service to the children.

The school continued there for 16 years with attendance going from 7 to 77 pupils in 10 years. Then for some reason, the attendance dropped to only five or six children.

For four years the Warwick children had no school or schooling, other than what their parents could supply, until their school was reopened in the settlement of Lititz on November 22, 1768. This was made possible through the decision to move the old schoolhouse.

The Gemeinhaus, being made of logs, was dismantled in three days and built across the street from the present church at the corner of Water and Main Streets.

The girls were moved into the Sisters' House and the boys into the Gemeinhaus after the relocation. The Gemeinhaus was to be used not only as a school, but also as a place where the outlying brethren could stay before and between Sunday services and festive days.

Sisters' Burstetler and Kohn taught the girls.

Different attempts were recommended for retaining the teacher Brother Schweishaupt - like placing collection boxes at the door after services; perhaps collecting tuition for the boy's families who were enrolled; or supplying him with a cow. It is doubtful he ever received a cow, for three months later he had accepted a call to Lancaster.

The teachers of the boys after Schweishaupt left were Brother Roessler and Tobias Hirte.

In 1765, because of the crowded conditions in the Gemeinhaus, and after the girls had gone to the Sisters' House, the boys school moved over to the blacksmith shop in Church Square (where the Archives Building is now located) and continued there. Smaller children stayed in the Gemeinhaus where Roxina Rauch conducted a primary school. The Gemeinhaus was destroyed by fire in 1838.

The girls' school had lost their teachers in 1775, Sister Kohn was dismissed, and Sister Burstetler had married. Martha the Mohican (an Indian Sister) had come to the school from Philadelphia in 1771 to be a mistress and tailoress and later became the teacher – the only teacher.

By the end of May, the number of girls had shrunk to four, and the school was closed entirely until the following October when these four little girls were taken into Brother Roessler's school with the boys. This was apparently a co-educational institution, a fact that is almost unbelievable in view of the usual strict segregation of the sexes.

Until the sudden death of Godfrey Roessler in 1776, Brother Grube took entire charge of the village school, "boys and girls here and outwardly", which at the end of 1778 had nineteen pupils – ten boys and nine girls.

It appears that one school of boys and girls together was the only one in Lititz until 1784. Then, probably due to improved conditions after the war, the schools were again separated. The boys continued in the

schoolhouse; and the girls had their school in the “weaver’s house”, a small building to the rear of the Sisters’ House.

In 1767 several students from Lancaster Moravian families were received into the school.

In 1794 the first student from other than Moravian families, Peggy Marvel from Baltimore, was received into the school and by the end of the century there were eight students.

From 1762 to over 100 years later, they had day keeping responsibilities at Linden Hall.



Linden Hall Campus – 1877.  
Photo Courtesy of Ron Reedy.

Girls lived in ‘Room Companies’ and designated individuals were responsible for the following duties:

1. Get up early.
2. Spread the table.
3. Get the coffee and basket of bread from the basement
4. Maintain the fire all day
5. Sweep and dust the room
6. Light and snuff the candles, and in the wintertime – go outside – maybe in the snow to get the wood for the fireplace.

Pupils were given examinations when their parents came to hear the improvements their daughters had made. They were tested in spelling, reading and writing, both German and English, arithmetic, grammar, geography, music, knitting and embroidery.

### John Beck and Beck School for Boys (Lititz Academy for Boys)

John Beck was born in Graceham, Maryland in 1791 where his father was a member. In his 6th year he moved with his family to Lancaster County near Mt. Joy. Two years later the family moved to Bethel, a Moravian Community in Lebanon County. There were no schools in the area, so his parents sent him to Nazareth Hall where he remained until the age of 15. He was not an exceptional scholar, so his parents sent him to Lititz in 1805 to serve as an apprentice under Gotfried Traeger, the Village Shoemaker. When Beck completed his apprenticeship, Traeger gave him an elegant suit and \$50 as a gift because he said Beck was the fastest, hardest-working, and best apprentice boy he ever had.

On several occasions, John Beck was asked to take charge of the Village School in Lititz. Each time he refused on the grounds that he was not qualified. However, in 1812 he did agree to teach five apprentice boys whose masters were bound by indenture to send them to school. So great was his success as a teacher, that the citizens again asked him to conduct the Village school.



John Beck 1791 – 1873.  
Photo Courtesy of Ron Reedy.

The school was in the blacksmith shop, 30 x 24 feet in size, with low ceilings, rough walls, and poorly lit by four small windows. Then once John Beck, one of the greatest educators of modern times took charge, it soon had to be replaced by more commodious quarters and the teaching staff increased by four assistants; in addition to a primary teacher.

Mr. Beck was a great lover of children, but at the same time had good common sense and a keen knowledge of human nature. He at once set about to win the affection of his pupils, introducing new and original methods to stimulate their interest. One of the first of these, which had an astonishing effect on the boys, was to provide "Badges of Honor" which were given each day to the boy who recited best in the various branches of his class. The boys were allowed to wear badges to their homes, and at the end of the month the boy having the highest number of credits received a prize.

It was through seeing the boys proudly wearing these badges that a visitor from Baltimore was led to recommend the school to one of his friends in that city who wished to place his son in good hands. Mr. Beck had no idea of starting a boarding school, but was finally persuaded to take the child. A few days later, five more boys arrived without previous warning. The townspeople came to Mr. Beck's assistance, opening their homes to the boys and in this way, the famous Academy originated. In which, during the 50 years of its existence, over two-thousand boys from most of the states of the Union; some of the principal countries in Europe; the West Indies; and even Hindostan; were educated, many of them filling responsible positions in the business and professional world in later life.

After he closed his school in 1865, Rickert and Hepp's Academy was carried on for some years, by two of his former assistants.

The school was conducted in the Hepp homestead for a few years, but after lack of discipline and poor leadership the school was closed. These boys lived in private homes.

The school then moved up the street to 101-103 East Main Street for a few years before it closed in 1868.

The dormitory was at 101 and doors went from the second floor of 103, which was the school.

In 1862 Sunnyside College for girls was built and started at 125-128 East Main Street. It had a brief existence from 1862-1878. The Principal, The Rev. Julius Theodore Beckler, erected a three-story brick building which replaced the Pilgerhaus (which was the first house built in Lititz). The school was greatly objected to by the Provincial Elders Conference, because of its possible injury to Linden Hall, but the competition between the two had the opposite effect. He put a widow's walk on top of the building so that it would be taller than Linden Hall. Linden Hall then added a widow's walk.

In 1854 Mr. Beckler had married the Russian orphan niece of Rev. Eugene Fruehauf-Theodora Ely Fruehauf, and in 1855 he became principal of Linden Hall. In 1862, during the Civil War, the enrollment of the school diminished. After his dismissal he started Sunnyside College for girls.

In 1846 Beckler was the warden and the assistant to the pastor of the church.

He borrowed money from relatives and friends in Germany to build the school, but never repaid his debt. They were still trying to collect their money due to them as late as the 1930's.

### **The Beck Family School (Recorded by the son of Abraham A. Beck)**

In 1865 Abraham Reincke Beck (the son of John Beck) started a school for boys 8 to 11 years of age. The school was built on South Broad Street and was called Audubon Villa.

The dormitory was on the third floor with 14 boys, (which was the limit). The boys came from London, Argentina, Minnesota, Washington DC, Louisiana, Virginia, New Jersey, Arkansas, Indiana, Missouri, Michigan, Texas, Philadelphia, New York and Baltimore. In 1895 there were 50 applications. There were coal stoves in all the rooms in the first and second floors. Kerosene lamps lighted the schoolroom and there were student lamps in the library.





Abraham R. Beck built Audubon Villa in 1868 for the "Beck School for Boys." Today it is known as Audubon Villa Nursing Home. Photo from the Robert "Sketch" Mearig Collection.

In the rear of the building, joined by a corridor, was a two-story frame building. This had the necessary tool house, coal bin, and "owl shed" (a pair of horned owls lived there). These were located on the first floor, and a bowling alley was located on the second floor.

The schoolyard was planted with many different varieties of trees. Many of these carried the names of Mr. Beck's library or historical favorites. Among others there was an Emerson, a Bryant and a Longfellow.

The business economy of the school is shown in a four-page folder with the title:

Moravian Family School  
For a  
Limited Number of Boys  
Abraham R. Beck, Principal  
Lititz, Lancaster County, PA.

#### Terms

"For tuition and all domestic expenses \$300 a year – to be paid half-yearly in advance, in September and February.

Music, piano or violin, \$40; drawing, \$20.

No extra charge for vocal music and light gymnastics.

Boys will be received between the ages of 8 & 11 years. The annual vacation takes place during the months of July and August.

No deduction will be made for absence, except in cases of protracted illness or dismissal."

The cook was paid \$10 a month, which was considered

good pay in those days. The second servant, who did the upstairs work, looked after the stoves and lamps and waited on the tables, received \$6 a month.

The boys rose at 7 a.m. after Mrs. Beck had read the morning text and the Birthday Book. Breakfast was served at 7:30 a.m. and dinner at 5:30 p.m.

Classes started at 7 a.m. with a usual morning walk to the station "to see the train come in". Afternoon classes were from 2 to 4. Saturday was given over to "writing letters home" and the weekly bath.

The classes were in reading, writing, composition, geography, history, elocution, and for many years mental, as well as written arithmetic. Natural history, especially ornithology, was automatically part of the curriculum.

The boys were always taught to try to excel. Many pieces of apparatus for illustrating scientific lectures were inherited from the John Beck Academy.

Music was an important part of the school. String and brass instruments were taught by Mr. Beck who was a versatile musician who also served as the Lititz Moravian church organist. He played the first violin in the choir orchestra and soprano slide in its trombone choir. He had a good tenor voice and for years sang the solo part of his own composition "Just As I Am" for male voices on Palm Sunday.

There was usually an orchestra or a six to eight piece brass band in the school. A unique feature of the latter was its performances from the housetop. There was a trap door on the comparatively flat roof of the house, and from this elevation the sound of fanfares and other sprightly melodies carried far beyond the town. Among the music of their serenades were national airs like "Hunter's Farewell" (Mendelssohn) or "Wild Trooper" (Schumann). On Sunday evenings they played religious pieces like "Cast Thy Burdens" (Mendelssohn), "Battle Prayer" (Hummel) and "Just As I Am" (A. R. Beck).

Mr. Beck was a clear and clever writer in prose and poetry. The following skit he handed to a boy in elocution, carrying with it a lesson in geography.

The Quito Boy  
Mother may I go out and play,  
I'm tired of all my toys,  
And even if I wished to play,  
I can't find any boys.  
I've eaten dinner – on my chin  
This still some mashed pertater –  
So now I think I'll go out and skin  
The cat on the Equator.

“Skinning the Cat,” meant doing a body-turning gymnastic act on an iron bar between two posits. A Quito boy could do that on the equator.

Another, of many, showing Mr. Beck's devotion to birds, had as its first verse:

Come and tell me, is it so –  
Modest re-eyed Vireo –  
That your constant note, my sweet,  
Means saying grace before you eat?

Mr. Beck was the first amateur photographer in Lititz. In 1885 he erected a “dark-room” on the back porch of the school building for developing his plates.

Most of the boys at the school came from families of high social and business standing in their home communities. Many were from families of wealth. Notable were the Thaws of Pittsburgh; and this family hangs one of the most curious events in Mr. Beck's life. It is this: In September 1881, Mrs. Thaw, wife of a Pennsylvania railroad magnate, brought her son of ten years, Harry, to the school. As she was about to leave, she confided to the principal “Mr. Beck, I fear insanity in this son of mine, I wish you would make a special study of him.” A few weeks later Mr. Thaw wrote the same thing in a letter, and Mr. Beck saved it. In 1906 when Harry K. Thaw, then a millionaire playboy, shot and killed architect Standford White in New York, it came to the attention of Martin W. Littleton (Thaw's defense attorney), that this letter – for his case highly valuable – was still in existence. Mr. Beck was summoned to the New York court. The case was an outstanding dual of the period between district attorney Jerome K. Jerome and Martin W. Littleton. And when the verdict sent Harry K. Thaw to a sanitarium, it was the consensus of opinion that

the testimony of the humble schoolmaster from Lititz had saved the murderer from the electric chair.

The corollary of this was typical of Mr. Beck. His son Herbert had accompanied his aging father to New York. At the end of the trial, Mr. Beck said, “Bert I want to write a bill to Mr. Littleton including your expenses and mine and not a cent more.” The bill was \$216.20. Ten dollars would have been but a small fee for a man who was legally obligated to leave his home state, and whose testimony saved a life. “I never liked Harry, but I went to New York for the sake of his father whose memory I held in highest regard,” was Mr. Beck's last word.

Most of the boys left Audubon Villa with a deep affection for Mr. & Mrs. Beck. Even crazy Harry Thaw, when he saw Mr. Beck enter the courtroom, pointed to him, and said to Mr. Littleton “There's the only man in the whole damn courtroom who amounts to anything at all.”

### Notable Event of 1846

This event is properly recorded in the history of Lititz because Lititz has the honor of having seen, and of having an accurate account of one of the last great flights of a long extinct bird. Abraham R. Beck (1833-1928), writing in 1907, describes it thusly: “In the Spring of 1846 – the last week in March or the first week in April, a vast migration of wild pigeons, reminding one of those described by Audubon as common in his day, and the only instance of that magnitude I have ever known, passed over Lititz flying from south to north. It was a Saturday afternoon and I had taken up my box of water colors for pastime, when one of my companions, Dick Tshudy, chum of my heart rushed into the room breathlessly announcing the wonderful flight; and then we ran as fast as legs could carry to the road fronting my father's school playground (now the southwest corner of East Orange and South Cedar Streets) which was the best locality affording open observations. The dense mass of pigeons extended from overhead seemingly, beheld in the perspective, to the eastern horizon, and as far north and south as the eye could reach; and was continuous from about 1:30 to 4:30 pm. The day, as I remember it, was blustery and clouded; and had it not been for the latter condition the birds must have cast a

distinct shadow on the landscape, so closely were they massed. Of those who went gunning for them I remember only James Miksch, who bagged ten or twelve.”

The flight of pigeons thus described corresponds exactly with the one Alexander Wilson saw over Kentucky in 1804. Wilson calculated the number in flight thusly “Flock a mile wide, flying at 60 miles an hour for four hours, equals 240 square miles of birds. At three birds the square yard, total number of birds would be 2,000,000,000 plus.”

Treatment of his boys was always a major part of Mr. Beck’s success. This was expressed when he said: “Bert, one cannot help liking one boy more than another but we must never show it!!” The son of a patron, who had to struggle to raise the \$300 tuition fee, looked the same to Mr. Beck as the son of a millionaire.

When in 1895 the sun set over the Beck family school at Audubon Villa, there disappeared from the American scene, a rare element in academic life – a compact unit, the unique efficiency of which was made possible only by two talented, versatile, devoted persons who lived with and for their charges.

### The Lititz Schools

The common school system was not adopted until 1852, at which time Lititz was organized as an independent district. This district included a part of Warwick Township, and in 1889 when Lititz was incorporated as a borough, the independent district was abolished, the part outside the borough limits being then annexed to the Township. Prior to 1866 there was only a primary school, the more advanced pupils being sent (the girls), to Linden Hall, and the boys to the Lititz Academy. Their tuition was paid by the district. This primary school was opened January 5, 1853 two years later; 32 pupils in attendance; and in 1861, the attendance

were 52. In 1870, a new schoolhouse, the high school building, was erected for advanced pupils at a cost of \$8,502.50, on the corner of S. Cedar Street and Juniper Alley. The attendance in both buildings in 1871 was 82; and in 1882 it was 220. The attendance in 1905 was approximately 350. The primary building, which originally consisted of two rooms, one above the other, was enlarged by the addition of two more rooms in 1889. Because this work was not finished at the opening of the 1889-90 session the primary pupils were instructed in the lower part of the building known as the Malt House on West Main Street. In 1903, the high school building was greatly remodeled.



Lititz High School Students – 1901.  
Photo Courtesy of Jerry McDonald.



Lititz Grammar School Students – 1912.  
Photo Courtesy of Ron Reedy.



## LITITZ PUBLIC SCHOOL BUILDINGS ~ by R. Ronald Reedy

### First Public School Building

Because of the excellent private schools of Linden Hall Seminary and John Beck's School for Boys, no public schools were established in Lititz until 1852. It was at this time that Lititz was organized as an independent school district under the common school system of Pennsylvania. The first officers were: Samuel Lichtenthaeler, President; Francis W. Christ, Secretary; Jacob B. Tshudy, Treasurer.

Under the new Lititz School District a primary school was opened January 5, 1853. However, the advanced girls' continued to be sent to Linden Hall Seminary, and the advanced boys' continued to be sent to John Beck's School for Boys. Their tuition was paid to these private schools by the Lititz School District. This system of advancing students from the primary school to the private schools continued until the opening of a public school in 1870.

John Beck's retirement from academic work in 1865 was probably one of the main reasons for the institution of a public high school by the Lititz District School Board. In 1870 a public grammar school was built at the corner of South Cedar Street and Juniper Alley at a cost of \$8,502.50. The first high school classes were held there in 1885. The school building, which originally consisted of two rooms, one above the other, was enlarged by the addition of two more rooms in 1889.



First Lititz Public School Building built in 1870.  
Photo Courtesy of Ron Reedy.

### Second Public School Building

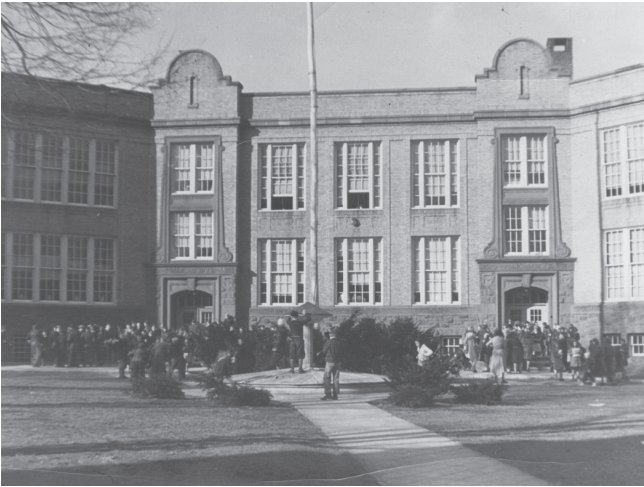
It was referred to as "Temple of Education." Upon completion of the new Lititz Public School in 1918, it was indicated that Lititz will now have, what should be one of the best school buildings in the State of Pennsylvania.

At a public meeting, February 27, 1916, the Lititz School Board discussed the proposed erection of a new school building designed by Architect E. Z. Scholl. At this meeting the citizens of Lititz Borough were asked to vote at a special election to be held Tuesday, March 6, 1916 to grant a loan in the amount of \$95,000 for the construction and purchase of equipment for a new Lititz Public School, which would house grades 1 through 12. The Board of Education consisted of Elmer Eby, President; Henry R. Gibbel, Vice President; E. E. Habecker, Secretary; H. C. Seldomridge, Treasurer; and J. B. Fasnacht

At the special election the citizens authorized the School Board to make a loan by a majority of 170 votes (only men were eligible to vote). There were two voting districts in Lititz in 1916. The first ward supported the loan and the second ward opposed. As a result of the election a number of school boys became most enthusiastic. They secured a large national flag and several drums and paraded about the streets of Lititz giving school yells, serenaded with music, with much gusto. "It was reported that young America should feel grateful, for the men of Lititz have now assured the children a school building where the best educational advantages will be available. It must be inspiring and educational for these young people to be witnesses of the construction of a palace of learning which is up to the times and a credit to the community that was always regarded as a center of scholarly environment."

On June 19, 1916 the School Board opened the bids and awarded the general contract of \$68,292 to Andrew Breslin, of Summit Hill, Pennsylvania. The community was told that when finished the school building will be of brownstone and brick, cement corridors and double flooring throughout. The trimming of the four entrances

will be cut brownstone, thereby enhancing the beauty of the structure considerably. Even though the corner stone had the date of 1916, it was not until 1917 that the cornerstone was placed along with contents. It was reported in the Lititz Express of February 2, 1917, that “contrary to the usual custom in laying a corner stone for a public building, no public attended the laying of the cornerstone of the new public school building now under way on the school grounds.”



Second Lititz Public School Building occupied in 1918.  
Photo Courtesy of Lititz Elementary.

Miss Anna K. Miller, Principal, indicated that “the outstanding feature for the Class of 1918 was that graduation would take place in the new school building which was fast nearing completion and which would stand as one of the finest monuments to the cause of education, a lasting credit to the citizens of Lititz who made it possible and the Board of Directors through whose careful and painstaking efforts it was planned.” No documentation can be found to indicate there was a formal dedication of the new public school.

It wasn't until December 3, 1935 at a special election that the voters of Lititz Borough approved an increase of indebtedness of \$75,000 to build an extension to the present overcrowded school. However it took until May of 1938 that the Lititz School Board took a poll to determine sentiment on the floating of a \$75,000 bond issue. Following several delays in construction and remodeling of the old section, finally on March 26, 1940 the citizens of Lititz were able to view the new high school, which included a gymnasium that was rated the best in Lancaster County. The Class of 1940 was the first graduating class. The last class to graduate from Lititz High School was in the spring of 1956. Thus, in the fall of 1956, under the new consolidated Warwick Union School District, a new high school was built and the Lititz Public School became known as Lititz Elementary.

## BELOVED TEACHER ~ by Kathy Blankenbiller

### An Interview with Vera Hoffman

As she sat by the window, framed in long swaths of ivory lace, her eyes, as blue as the sky she watched, seemed to search for images of long ago. Miss Vera Hoffman, 93, tilted her head to one side as the sun streamed into the room, creating a gentle halo above her hair. A wispy curl delicately played around her brow.

“We'll have to make this fast,” she said, smiling gently. “I get so tired, you know.”

Miss Vera looked forward to this day, however; it was a chance to share memories of her many years as an

elementary school teacher. It was an opportunity to recall her students, whom she almost reverently referred to as, “my children.” Yes, today she would remember.

The days seemed longer back in the early 1900s, and friends helped the hours pass a bit more quickly. Young Vera, Martha, Hazel and Ruth loved to play “school,” each taking turns to play the teacher. Little did they know that not too many years later, each of them would reach her goal.

Vera Hoffman's teaching life began in 1927, after graduating with a teaching degree from Millersville State Normal School. She waited, anxious to learn in

which school she would make her debut. Realizing that schools at that time were scarce to begin with, Hoffman prayed silently and hoped for the best.

“Every school in the county was taken except one that was in the Amish section (Intercourse), so I grabbed it,” Hoffman explained, her elegant fingers, still long and tapered, rising in an emphatic empty air grasp. “Originally, I was going to teach fourth grade, but when I got to the school I found out that I’d be teaching first through eighth grades!”

The young woman found herself face-to-face with 45 children, including 13 first graders, who could not speak English. Miss Vera, who explained with a chuckle that she could not speak Dutch, viewed this simply as a challenge and began adding an English course to her daily schedule. Living with an Amish family during her first year of teaching, she paid \$2 room and board out of her yearly salary of \$1,000.

Three valuable years, “some of the happiest of my life,” Miss Vera noted, were spent at the Amish school, but in 1930 her career took her to the Lititz Public School, where she would teach first grade.

The school, as Hoffman remembers it, had “adequate” rooms and hallways with a simple, logical layout for each grade. Outside the handsome building, two entrances had been placed - one marked “Girls” and one “Boys.” At that time, the Lititz Public School was the envy of educational institutions everywhere, boasting itself as the first to have collapsible bleachers and a state-of-the-art gymnasium floor. But for Miss Vera, the joy of teaching had little to do with bricks and mortar. It was about the children.

“Oh, my, there were a lot of little ones back then,” Hoffman said wistfully, the corners of her mouth arching into a smile. “We had such fun. Well, after the first week, that is.”

Kindergarten, pre-school and organized child care was not in existence at that time. Hoffman explained that the children who attended her first grade classes had never been in school in their young lives, so separation anxiety was extreme.

“I dreaded it,” Hoffman admitted, grimacing. “They’d cry. They wanted their mommies. I was always glad when that first week was over. But now, it’s old stuff to go to first grade.”

Hoffman’s students were treated to a full day of school, beginning promptly at 8 a.m. Her schedule started with a prayer, a salute to the American flag, and a few Bible stories, followed by studies until 11 a.m. Because there was no cafeteria, students, all local, walked home for lunch and returned at 1 p.m. Classes, including reading, math, writing, art and music, a “full day for any six-year-old” according to Hoffman, were dismissed at 3 p.m.



Miss Vera Hoffman with her First Grade Students – 1952.  
Photo from the Robert “Sketch” Mearig Collection.

“I tried to give everyone a good solid reading background. That’s what I stressed mainly,” she explained, tapping a finger on a wooden side table. “School has changed a great deal, which I can understand, of course. Everything, even kindergarten, is on computer now. Still, reading tops everything. If you can read, you can do anything.”

Miss Vera took a moment to rest, then talked of other changes in today’s society that remain a mystery to her.

“You know, back then I could hug my children, give them a good hug when they would leave for the day,” she said, shaking her head sadly. “Today you are not allowed to do that. And yet, the children look for it. I once heard a child say, ‘I wonder if she’s going to give us a squeeze.’ And I thought, ‘they love it.’ I think



they need to be shown that they're loved. It's such a different world today, though."

Indeed, during Vera Hoffman's years of teaching, discipline was the least of her worries. When one of her students had a behavior problem, however, he was directed to sit in a seat designated as the "naughty chair."

"Now you don't do that," she would tell a student who had misbehaved. "We have a naughty chair and you'll have to sit in it." According to Miss Vera, they listened! If one did have to visit the "naughty chair," they were ashamed. "Today," added Hoffman, "that can't be done, either."

One day a mother visited Miss Hoffman's classroom, amazed at her son's behavior.

"I can't believe my son is sitting back there and not carrying on," she told the teacher.

"He never does," Miss Vera told the dumbfounded parent, who, looking the teacher directly in the eye, replied, "Then you're a better mother than I am."

While recounting the story, Miss Vera lays her head back on the soft material of her chair, glancing at the soft pastel green wall of her living room, which holds carefully arranged framed sketches and assorted mementos of decades of memories.

Very quietly she murmurs, "I guess it's all in how you handle them."

Suddenly her face lights up and a lovely smile beams from her.

"Oh, let me tell you about Mother's Day," she said, both hands outstretched.

"Early each spring I would bring my children to my garden here on South Spruce Street," she said, "and I would have each child plant a pansy. Then, on Mother's Day I would have them come back and get their pansy to give to their moms. Back then we had a fishpond out back. Of course, anytime you have water, you have frogs. Well, all around the outside were these

dear little frogs. Oh, the children had a ball here. They just loved it. And so did I."

Past students visit Miss Vera a little less frequently these days, but occasionally she is surprised to find a former first grader stopping by to say hello.

"Last Saturday there was a rap at the door and there was one of my first graders," Hoffman began. "The woman asked me, 'Do you know me?' I wish folks wouldn't do that because people look a little different at age six, and now as an adult! There really is a big difference!"

This time, however, Hoffman remembered her former student, a young girl who had been sick, requiring Hoffman to home school her. Her reward? A handmade, beautiful bedspread.

"Yes, I do have students who come by," said Hoffman, "they remember me, but sometimes I can't remember them anymore."

What Miss Vera does remember, however, are the happy years spent at Lititz Public School. And, although she insists that she certainly believes in "progress," she wishes that the old school, filled with memories for so many in the Lititz area, could have been saved.

"I don't want it to be torn down!" she said emphatically. "It was my place of business and I loved it. All my years of teaching there were happy years. I wish they could have added to it instead; there's enough room available to add on to the school and I'd really prefer that. It's very sad. If it was dilapidated and all that, I'd say, yes, but it looks so sturdy that it makes me sad to see it demolished ... I'm sure, though, that another beautiful school will go up."

Miss Vera Hoffman, not one to pass up a learning experience, began down a new path in her life the day she retired from teaching. Two friends, retiring the same day, had convinced Hoffman to join them in a trip to Hawaii. Fearful of the first airplane ride of her life, the day before her departure she phoned her friends to inform them that she was not going to go.

"I'm not going, I have a headache, a tummy ache, I'm

just not going,' I told them," Hoffman recalled. "But my friends said, 'Oh yes you are!' and I went. We had a ball. That was my very first trip. From then on I was never home."

To send her on her way, her students had combined their efforts and presented her with luggage for her maiden voyage.

"It was a lovely, lovely gift." Raising her hand to her cheek and resting it there briefly, she laughed as she confided, "I still have it!"

"You see? I have many happy memories of my children," Hoffman said, a note of melancholy in her voice. "They've taught me so much..."



Miss Vera Hoffman – 2004.  
Photo Courtesy of Lititz record Express.

*Vera E. Hoffman passed away on March 2, 2007 at the age of 97. She taught first grade at the Lititz Public School (Lititz Elementary) for 30 years, retiring in 1960. This interview was conducted at her home in the spring of 2004. At that time, she was the oldest living teacher from Lititz Elementary School.*

## LITITZ PUBLIC LIBRARY ~ by Glenn H. Landis

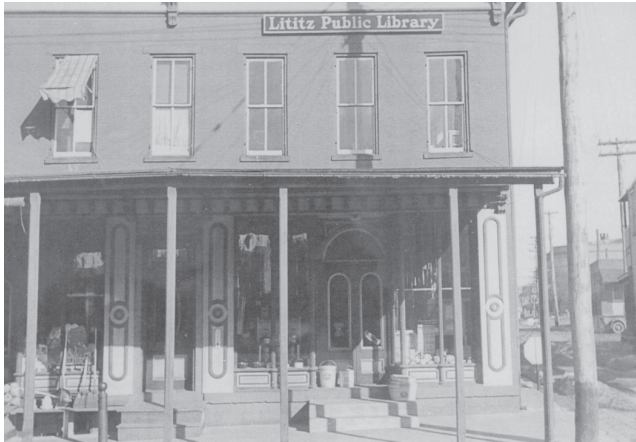
From From the yellowing pages of a black spiral notebook: "August 19, 1935. A meeting of the representatives from the Delphian Chapter, American Legion Auxiliary and Rotary Club was called to discuss the public library project for Lititz in the Hershey Gibbel Bldg." On this August evening, eight citizens of Lititz, soon to be joined by others, began the long task of establishing and maintaining a public library in Lititz. Many of the people who attended these first meetings in 1935 would still be donating time and talents to the library many decades later. Margaret (Peg) Workman, the temporary secretary for that first meeting, would later be recognized for fifty years of volunteer work for the library. Mrs. Richard "Besse" Healy was elected as the first secretary and continued to serve until 1941. Miss Mary Heubner was the president of the group and served in that office until 1941. Alfred "A. L." Douple would serve as the first treasurer of the Library Board and would assist the new treasurer, James C. Gibbel, after that. M. C. Demmy would be elected the second president of the group and would serve in that capacity until he resigned with Mr. Douple in 1976 after forty

years of working for the advancement of the library. John G. Hershey, one of the initial groups of library planners, would remain on the Board of Trustees for 32 years until 1968, having served multiple terms as president and vice president.

There were several public meetings that fall. This was in the middle of the severe economic depression of the 1930's, and there were many difficult questions to be answered. Where would the library be housed, how would a librarian be paid, and where would the book collection come from?

The Board approached the Moravian Church trustees for possible assistance in housing the library, but they had no satisfactory space. The plans for a new wing on the high school presented the most attractive possibility, but that building would not be finished for two or three years. So, with some assurance from the school authorities, the library board began thinking in terms of a temporary site. In late 1935, it was learned that the second floor of the Amer building, 11 South

Broad St. was available at a reasonable rent of \$10 per month (including electricity), and the board decided to accept that offer. There was no central heat, only a small coal stove, and the space needed linoleum for the floor and paint for the walls, but it would do until the school space became available in 1940.



First Lititz Public Library located on the Second Floor of the W. M. Amer Building - 1936.  
Photo Courtesy of the Lititz Public Library.

The Board hoped to solve the funding problem by having a half-mill real-estate tax levied specifically for the library, and that question was put on the ballot in November of 1937. The citizens of Lititz however, did not approve the measure, turning it down by a vote of 880 to 553 even though it had seemed to have wide community support. The library board had been selling memberships at \$1 per year and had some regular support from the Delphian Society and other groups, but the finances of the library remained precarious for many years. Lititz residents were permitted to use the library free, but residents from outside the borough had to be members in order to use the new resources.

There was not enough money to hire a librarian, but fortunately a new federal program had recently been approved that would meet that need. The Works Project Administration (WPA) would pay the salary of a qualified librarian, Mrs. Naomi Miley, who would continue to serve the local patrons until the library moved to the High School in 1940 and the school librarian took over.

The building of a book collection for the library was the third major challenge. The first effort was a community wide drive to collect books in good

condition from the citizens of Lititz; and on Saturday, February 22, 1936, volunteers collected 542 donated books. The county library at Lancaster loaned some books to the new library, and the state system had a program of rotating loans to member libraries. The public continued to donate books to the library, but the purchase of books was the largest expense for the Lititz Public Library for the next fifteen years. A \$50 per year book budget gradually increased to \$200 - \$300 over that time period. By the end of 1936, the library owned 1,500 books and had an annual circulation of 7,500 volumes.

The Library Board signed an agreement with the School Board on November 24, 1939, stipulating that the School Board would furnish the library space and a trained librarian for a combined library in the High School building at Cedar and Orange Streets. The Library Board agreed to furnish the books for the adult collection which would be maintained as a separate division, to purchase some of the other materials necessary for the maintenance and operation of the combined libraries, and to furnish staff for holiday and vacation times when the school librarian would not be available. Miss Critchfield of the county library supervised the move to the new quarters in early 1940 and furnished staffing during the transition period. Combining the public and school libraries more than doubled the number of volumes available to the public and provided a more pleasant environment for the library. Miss Besse Searle would be the librarian for the combined facilities for the next sixteen years. During those years the combined library collection grew from about 5,000 books in 1940 to 11,000 in 1956. The combined library was open to the public during the school day and Tuesday evenings from 6:30 to 8:30 P.M. In the fall of 1956, the new Warwick Union High School opened, and Miss Searle moved to the new facility to supervise the High School Library.

Miss Grace Miller was appointed to be the new Elementary School librarian, and she agreed to take on the added responsibilities of supervising the Public Library collection, which would remain in the Cedar Street building. However, the new arrangement proved to be more difficult when the elementary school was remodeled and facilities were rearranged, and by 1960,



the School Board requested that the Public Library section be moved to another location. Miss Miller resigned as librarian for the Public Library section in May of 1960. The Public Library had to enlist volunteers to take over her duties in the Elementary School for the remainder of the year and was given a deadline of December to remove their books from the elementary school.

This was a rather desperate time for the Lititz Public Library. The Board appealed to the various civic clubs for assistance. The Delphians and other clubs had been giving continued support, and the Lititz United Fund (later to become the Community Chest) was contributing \$200 to \$300 per year, but this income was not adequate for renting a facility and paying a librarian. The newly planned Lititz Community Center seemed to offer possibilities for a library room, but their planning committee decided that they could not spare the space. Finally, in early 1961, the Library Board found suitable space in a room in the front of the General Sutter Hotel and reached out to the community for increased financial support to make this possible. It was hoped that this would be a temporary home for the library. There was a rather loose partnership with the Lititz Historical Commission at this time and the Historical Commission was actively searching for a suitable site for a combined museum and library. The library moved to the Sutter Hotel in the summer of 1961, and the community did respond with increased support for the next several years. Volunteers staffed the library and the hours were more restricted, but there was optimism about the future of the library.

In the spring of 1963 the Library joined with the Lititz Recreation Center and the Lititz Springs Park in a combined fund drive with a goal of \$12,000. This drive produced much-needed income for the library, but the Library Board decided that it was in an untenable situation being partnered with these organizations and also a longstanding informal partnership with the Historical Foundation. The library chose to declare a continued relationship with the Historical Foundation, but further negotiations with the Historical Foundation about combined facilities did not go well and the two groups decided to go their separate ways. This latest break in relationships prompted the Board of the Lititz Public Library to decide in November 1963,

to incorporate the Lititz Library Association. The Articles of Incorporation became the Charter of the Corporation as those papers were filed in the Recorder's Office of Lancaster County April 8, 1964.

The first meeting of the Lititz Public Library, Inc. was held on May 5, 1964 at the Corporation's registered office, Center Square, Lititz, PA. The Articles of Incorporation were discussed, including the announcement that "the Corporation was formed to establish and maintain a free public library for the benefit of the residents of the Borough of Lititz and vicinity and that it does not contemplate pecuniary gain or profit, incidental or otherwise, to its members".

The year 1964 ended with new problems for the Lititz Public Library. The board was notified that the General Sutter Hotel had been sold and that it would have to vacate before the end of the year. With hopes for a permanent home, many new sites were discussed, but none were both affordable and suitable. With no other options in sight, the board looked for a place to store the books until a new site could be found. Mrs. Eugene (Cookie) Steffy, a long-time board member and library supporter, offered to keep the books in her family garage until a new library space could be found. The Library Board continued to search for a new location through the spring of 1965, but finally had to settle for renting another temporary location in order to resume services to the community. The Board agreed to a renewable six month lease for a room at 3 E. Orange Street at the rate of \$75 a month, heat and water provided. It was decided to open Tuesday and Thursday afternoons and evenings and Saturday morning if volunteers were available. Mrs. A. Frederick was hired as the librarian for the Tuesday and Thursday hours.

Meanwhile the Library Board continued to search for a new location. One of the properties surveyed was the long vacant Batdorf home at 302 S. Broad Street. The property had been offered at \$15,000 and the Library Board considered making an offer of \$12,500 in 1964, but the Batdorf family finally decided that it would be generous and advantageous to donate the property to the Library. The Library Board voted to accept the offer at a special meeting in November, 1965. The house had fifteen rooms on three floors and a good sized lot where a parking area could be established. It would need some

renovation and repairs, but the Library Board saw it as a good answer to their needs even though, or because, their cash assets were less than one thousand dollars.

The solution to the cash problem was a Library Fund Drive headed by Wilbur Miller with a goal of \$25,000. By May of 1967, over one hundred individuals, businesses, and organizations had donated and pledged over \$25,000, allowing the Library Board to carry out the necessary repairs and renovations and transform this old house into a very comfortable new home for the Lititz Public Library. The books were moved to the new location from E. Orange Street in May, 1966, and the Lititz Public Library opened to the public on June 2, 1966. This was the fifth location for the library, but certainly the one that would allow the most growth in services provided to the community up to that time. Renovations on the second floor provided the space for two apartments that could be rented out for extra income for the library. The Lititz Woman's Club continued their long tradition of Library support with a book sale in 1967 that produced \$219. The Woman's Club continued to run book sales for the benefit of the library for more than thirty years. In May, 1967, John G. Hershey resigned from the Library Board after more than 30 years of service, and James C. Gibbel took his place on the board. He would serve for more than 30 years.

By September 1968, the Library Board was again looking for increased income to cover the expanded costs of higher salaries and book budgets; and voted to apply for state aid, looking to the Lancaster Library for help in the application. Lititz Borough had increased its aid to \$750 per year, and the American Business Club and the Rotary Club were continuing their generous assistance, but the Library had many needs.

The post of head librarian continued to be filled by volunteers. Mrs. Cookie Steffy was appointed in May 1969 and served until Miss Lori Rosenquist was appointed in 1972. Miss Rosenquist was replaced in 1973 by Mrs. Dale Cartwright, who served until 1979.

In 1979, the Library Board launched a new fund drive, hoping to substantially increase the book collection, improve the shelving, and expand the periodical collection. By August, treasurer James C. Gibbel

announced pledges of \$12,000. Dr. Curvin C. Smith had resigned from the board in 1978 to head the fund drive. He had been a member of the board since 1968. The board had also become aware of some shortcomings in the library building that made it very difficult for physically handicapped patrons to use the library. It was decided to apply for a federal Community Development Grant to pay for some of these changes. By May 1980, the board received word that the Redevelopment Authority would make funds available for an access ramp and bathroom improvements for the handicapped. This project was completed by November, 1981, at a cost of approximately \$11,000.

Mrs. Donna Hammond was hired as head librarian in 1981, beginning a long career of serving the public and improving services to children and other patrons of the Lititz Public Library. She was able to report increased usage of the library and that a sampling of patron addresses showed that 64% were from Lititz; 26% were from Warwick Township; and 10% from Elizabeth Township.

Library Board President Dr. Curvin C. Smith, who had returned to the board after the last fund drive in 1979, led the board to investigate how they might finance, in 1984, an addition to the library to replace the garage in the rear of the building. The library was in great need of more usable space for the collection but did not have the estimated \$30,000 for the project. Mrs. Barbara Busko, who joined the board in 1982, was chosen as chair of the fund drive committee and was joined by James C. Gibbel and Donna Hammond. It was decided that the theme of the fund would be "Growing to Meet Expectations," and the goal would be \$50,000 to fund various improvements. Six thousand letters were sent out, and a luncheon on October 18, 1984, launched the fund drive. By November 30, 1984, the library had received gifts and pledges of \$30,128. By August of 1985 the total had reached \$46,783, and by November of that year the new room was completed. Some repairs and landscaping remained, but the fund drive had been very successful.

At the November 1985 meeting of the Library board, President Dr. Curvin C. Smith "reluctantly accepted the resignation of our long time loyal secretary of the Library Board, Katharine Cook Steffy." Mrs. Cookie

Steffy had been a volunteer and board member for several decades.

The 1980's show a continuing growth in income and activities for the Library. The 1989 budget showed income and disbursements of \$37,000 compared to less than half that amount in the 1980 budget. The 1989 budget also showed a book budget of \$6,000 compared to \$1,700 in 1980. The increasing number of activities and increased collection was now filling all usable space in the library and the board began searching for answers to this problem.

Two new initiatives were undertaken in 1990. The first was that Mrs. Hammond organized a new group of volunteers to be the Friends of the Lititz Library. The organizational meeting was held March 30, 1990 and the group began an ambitious program of fund raising activities. The most financially significant contribution was a mailing solicitation to all property owners in the Warwick School District. All printing and mailing tasks were done by the Friends. This annual fund drive would provide the largest single portion of the Library's income for many years to come.

The new income provided by the Friends group and increases in state and local revenue allowed the Library Board to begin considering seeking new alternatives for expanding the Library. A 1989 survey of patrons showed strong support for expanding the library and increasing the collection. It also showed that shifting patterns of housing expansion had resulted in more patrons living in Warwick Township (48%) than in Lititz Borough (33%). One of the options for expansion was to use the second and third floors of the Batdorf House for Library activities. In 1993 one of the two second floor apartments was turned into a library office, a meeting room and a story time room. This allowed Donna Hammond's story times to move out of the dungeon-like basement environment into a newly decorated second floor room. However, further expansion into the third floor rooms would have required an elevator and an extended fire escape. All in all, the prospects for long-term accommodation at 302 S. Broad did not seem practical, so the Library Board began a long search for an alternate site. If the present building could not be changed to accommodate the expanding needs of the library, the other two options were to renovate an

existing building or erect a new building. Many existing buildings were examined. The first two were properties of the Farmer's First Bank, the former Ice House building, and the ground floor of the Cedar Street building. The estimates for the renovations of these buildings were close to \$300,000 as opposed to approximately \$500,000 required to erect a new building or radically renovate the present building. All plans would yield approximately 5,000 square feet of usable floor space, which really would not meet the anticipated needs of the library. One of the most serious shortcomings of the Farmer's First locations was a lack of adequate parking space, and flooding questions also arose in connection with the Cedar Street building. The Board continued searching for buildings and building sites for quite a few years. In 1992, they undertook a joint study with the Warwick School Board to test whether a combined public and school library would be advantageous. Representatives from the two groups concluded after extensive examination that the disadvantages were too great, and the idea was dropped. The Library Board also looked for advice in attempting a building campaign to construct a new facility. Ephrata Library was in the process of building, and their representatives visited to share thoughts about planning and financing a new library. Jerry McCabe of Clarion University was engaged to determine the size and specific dimensions of an appropriate new building, and he delivered his report in May, 1993. The general outline was for a 15,000 square foot building including 4,300 square feet for the general collection and 1,700 square feet for the children's area. Although the Library Board was not prepared to undertake a project of this magnitude, Mr. McCabe's general plan was close to what would be built in 1999. He predicted that a building of that size would serve the needs of the community for at least twenty years.

The Lititz Public Library community could now look at new horizons and opportunities for community service. Donna Hammond completed the work for the MLS degree from Clarion University, satisfying one state requirement in having a head librarian with an MLS degree, giving the Lititz Library the advantages of a well trained director and allowing access to more state funding. There was enthusiasm from the Friends group, volunteers, and Board. The circulation figures were steadily increasing, and the county organization



was moving toward a computerized automation of circulation and collection data. All of these changes called for expansion of the library facilities.

In 1994 the Library Board investigated a possible cooperative agreement with the Lititz Recreation Center for a building site, and also began making inquiries about land on Kissel Hill Road owned by the Siegrist Family. The Friends initiated a semi-yearly newsletter. The Board was becoming more optimistic about financing an expansion and made plans to set up a formal building fund. The Library had the beginnings of a building fund with seed money saved from gifts and bequests of past decades. The Library also had the equity of the Batdorf House, its current home, which was valued at more than \$150,000. During the next year the Board made inquiries about land adjoining Luther Acres, a parcel on Orange Street owned by the School Board, and a car dealership building on Main Street that was being sold by the Fry family. Continuing efforts were made to inform the community about the need for a new facility, and the building fund was growing as the momentum for a new library steadily increased.

By September of 1996, the Library Board was again examining the site on Kissel Hill Road. This was a corner of a cornfield on the property of Betty and the late Raymond Siegrist that was now being farmed by their son Wayne Siegrist. An agreement was reached in which Betty and Wayne Siegrist would turn over and donate 4.3 acres of land to Warwick Township, which would lease the land to the Lititz Public Library for \$1 for 50 years.

With the site nearly secure, the Library Board began serious preparations for an extensive building campaign. In November 1996, Edward "Ned" Pelger of Pelger Engineering and Construction began his job as advisor and supervisor of construction by organizing a preliminary meeting of interested community leaders to test the waters for community support and gain some guidance about building preferences. A more formal survey was conducted in the spring of 1997 by Holliman Associates of Harrisburg. About 400 residents responded to the Holliman survey, expressing strong support for building a new library and indicating

that a million dollars would be about the limit that the community could be expected to contribute.

However, the preliminary work on the planning and layout of the building indicated that a larger budget would be necessary. To be viable for more than 10 years, the library would need at least 15,000 sq. ft. and parking for fifty vehicles. Ned Pelger provided advice on minimizing construction costs, and the Library Board decided to employ Robert "Bob" Hoffman, affiliated with the architectural firm of Beers and Shillaci, to design a building for the site at the corner of East Sixth Street and Kissel Hill Road, just across the Lititz boundary in Warwick Township. Landscape Architect Bob Kornman of the firm of Derck and Edson would lay out the plans for the grounds and landscaping. Holliman Associates was engaged to plan and supervise the capital campaign, with Tim Smedick as their agent for the project.

By the fall of 1997, the basic organization of the capital campaign was in place with Mark Barabas as campaign chairman and Steve DiNovis as treasurer. Library Board President Maryann C. Richmond and Treasurer Glenn H. Landis, along with Library Director Donna Hammond, completed the leadership group for the campaign. Early donations of \$25,000 each from Lititz VFW Post 1463 and Lititz American Legion Garden Spot Post 56 were very important in lending credibility to the campaign at a time when the community was still unsure of the chances of success. A November "Campaign Breakfast" featuring Michelle Ridge, the wife of Governor Tom Ridge, announced to the community that the effort was underway, and the campaign committee began planning the steps necessary to reach an announced goal of 1.5 million dollars. This amount, added to the initial gifts and assets, would meet the project's total cost of 1.86 million dollars.

More than a hundred Lititz area citizens volunteered to call on hundreds of potential donors. Donna Hammond, Mark Barabas, and Maryann Richmond were the champions of this effort, but its success also depended on dozens of goodwill ambassadors and general volunteers. Bill Bell, the owner of the Lititz Office Supply store on Main Street, allowed the

campaign to set up shop in his showroom, and Sharyn Bellafiore was employed as an administrative assistant to coordinate and record the finances of the campaign.

In January 1998, a giant "Fun Fest" was sponsored by the campaign committee at the John Bonfield School to involve all of the community in the campaign effort. The event also served as the occasion to introduce the commemorative tiles created by Steve DePerrot. These tiles are displayed in the lobby of the library and add beauty to the building as they display the names of friends and sponsors. As the campaign continued, thousands of adults and children made gifts and pledges. Many were substantial, and there were some very large gifts. The most substantial came from William B. Oehme, Lititz Mutual Insurance Company, Dorothy Rutbell, the Lititz Rotary Club, and Betty and Wayne Siegrist. By September 1998 the success of the capital campaign seemed assured, and the Library Board decided to proceed with ground breaking, and the construction of the building. In November, the Friends of the Lititz Public Library was chosen as "Friends Group of the Year" by the Pennsylvania Library Association. The group was honored for its work in strengthening the library's day-to-day operations and the great assistance it had provided to the capital campaign.

Architect Bob Hoffman had delivered the plans for a beautiful building that would go on to win the praise of other professionals as well as a pleased and grateful community. It has a distinctly Moravian flavor, with some touches copied from Church buildings, and a general appearance that nearly all Lititz area citizens enjoy.

The capital campaign continued as the building was constructed, and both were nearly complete by the Spring of 1999. The professional advisors who had surveyed the community two years earlier had concluded that an optimistic estimate of community support would be less than a million dollars. However, by May 1999, gifts and pledges exceeded the 1.5 million goal, and by the end of the campaign, the Library Board was able to establish a substantial trust fund to help maintain the new facility. Many professionals and businesses made "in kind" donations as part of their contribution to the campaign: most notably Ned Pelger, the construction

supervisor; Bob Hoffman, the architect; and Bomberger's Store, carpet specialists.

As the new building neared completion, plans were made to sell the property at 302 S. Broad Street. It was sold later in the year to Tim Hoffman, a computer supplier. Some of the shelves and other furniture were sold at a "porch sale," and a few items were donated to other libraries. In May 1999, the library was closed for two weeks and a human chain of volunteers riding school buses transferred the books to the new building in a single day. Carolyn Freeman's life skills class from Warwick High School did a lot of the packing and carrying for the move.

On June 5, 1999, Mark Barabas, Campaign Chair, and Steve Dinovis, Campaign Treasurer, presided over the opening ceremonies assisted by Library Board President Maryann Richmond and Library Director Donna Hammond. Various state and local officials were present to see the new library presented to the community. More than 800 people took part in the festivities. Although there was still a lot of last-minute work to be done, the construction of the 16,400 square foot building and the landscaping were essentially complete, and they garnered high praise from the public.

The new building attracted many new library patrons. In the next five years, the circulation of library materials would quadruple; and the number of items in the collection would be tripled. Donna Hammond, her dream finally realized after years of planning and hard work, continued to devote her efforts to the success of the library. However, in December 2000, changing family circumstances persuaded her to resign after nearly two decades as director. The Library Board very reluctantly accepted her resignation.

By January 2001, another talented director had been hired. Bonnie Young, formerly the director of the Adamstown Public Library, brought a new perspective to the community. She greatly expanded the programming use of the Community Room and added her touch to the expanding collection of books and other media. She added very capable new staff to manage the extra activity as more and more patrons began making use of the beautiful new facility. However, in 2003, the

Library Board again faced the loss of a Library Director when Bonnie was offered a professional promotion to the State Library System.

Once again, there was a positive outcome from the loss, as the Library Board was able to hire a fine new director, Susan Tennant, in 2004. Susan brings a new set of talents and abilities to the position. Her professional background includes extensive experience

with the York, Pennsylvania library and many years as director of the Cayman Island Library System. In 2005, she continues to work toward improving and enhancing services at the Lititz Library.

The Lititz Public Library celebrated its 70th birthday in 2006. This history is written in celebration of all the citizen volunteers and staff who have worked for so many years to provide excellent library services to the Lititz area.



Present Lititz Public Library, which opened in 1999.  
Photo Courtesy of Ron Reedy.

