Our Mission

The Moravian Historical Society museum and historic site preserves, interprets, and celebrates the rich culture of the Moravians.

Our Vision

The Moravian Historical Society is recognized broadly for its significant collection and historically important eighteenth-century site. Intellectually vibrant, we commit to sharing stories of the Moravians and their remarkable contributions to history that continue to shape our culture.

About Us

Founded in 1857, the Moravian Historical Society is a not-for-profit organization that shares the fascinating contributions of the Moravians to worldwide culture, through public programs, guided tours, and engaging museum exhibits. Located in Nazareth, Pennsylvania, the site includes two eighteenth-century structures: the 1740-1743 Whitefield House and the 1740 Gray Cottage, the oldest surviving Moravian structure in North America. The Museum welcomes visitors seven days a week, year round, and provides outstanding educational opportunities for those interested in history, art, and music. The collection celebrates the rich culture of the Moravians, not only in Nazareth, but all over the world. The collection consists of more than 20,000 objects including paintings, musical instruments, textiles, decorative arts, firearms, scientific instruments, photographs, a rare book library, and archives.
On a warm August evening this summer I was pleased to attend the Share the Heritage event on the grounds of the Whitefield House. This was the first in-person Share the Heritage event since the pandemic began. As I looked at the Gray Cottage and the Whitefield House, I reflected on the breadth of the collection that MHS is responsible for. These buildings are a part of our collection and as important as the civil war military uniform of Brevet Brigadier General William E. Doster, a recent acquisition that we are pleased to interpret.

As a Board member, I am introduced to various items in our collection at Board meetings. Our Executive Director, Susan Ellis, makes it a point to highlight interesting items and the work by our staff to care for artifacts entrusted to the care of MHS. Among pieces highlighted in the September 2022 issue of our newsletter Abundant Heritage are the 23 paintings by John Valentine Haidt. Our Curator and volunteers have recently rehoused the paintings in newly improved shelving. These amazing works of art date back to the mid 1700s.

MHS recently introduced a new digital collection – the Henry Family Collection. There are 450 unique items: letters, lectures, and unpublished research. Contained in the collection is a remarkable description of life in Nazareth from its founding into the early 1800s. Researchers will find the collection to be helpful and insightful.

The musical instrument collection of MHS is also truly remarkable. The eighteenth-century upright piano attributed to John Clemm is perhaps the first piano made in America.

All of this points to an obvious conclusion. Our collection is what makes the Moravian Historical Society a real gem. Spread the word and if possible plan to visit the Whitfield House and see for yourself.

Respectfully submitted,

David M. Roth, President
This year the Moravian Historical Society celebrates its 165th year. Founded in 1857 by a group of citizens who were concerned about preserving Moravian culture, one of the first efforts for the organization was to purchase the original God’s Acre in Nazareth which had been sold by the Moravian Church. Although the society had only a small membership and was almost without means, it managed to reclaim and restore the first graveyard.

As we reflect on this past year, we are proud of the many examples of our continued stewardship. We have remained focused on our mission to preserve, interpret, and celebrate the rich culture of the Moravians. We are committed to providing access to the museum and collection and we are honored to care for the important collection held in public trust.

In March, the Moravian Historical Society was awarded funding from the American Historical Association with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). These funds are making it possible for the Society to digitize its important historical resources and provide access to our archives. This digitization project is essential to the work that we do. Having an online archive will provide access to researchers and allow the general public to engage with our collections in new and exciting ways.

Providing access to our museum exhibitions and educational programs for our in-person visitors has also been a priority this year. Our museum recently joined Museums for All, a nationwide initiative that offers free admission to individuals and families presenting a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) card. In addition, as a Blue Star museum, we offer free admission to members of the military and their families from Memorial Day through Labor Day.

Despite the challenges we faced this past year as we continue to recover from the pandemic, I am deeply encouraged by the work we achieved. We have been inspired by generosity, imagination, and the strength of our partnerships. I invite you to read about this impact on the pages that follow.

It is a privilege to work with our exceptional Board of Directors, our dedicated volunteers, our loyal members, and our talented staff. Without your support, none of this would be possible. Thank you for your commitment to our mission and all you have enabled us to accomplish. Together, we can ensure that the Moravian Historical Society continues to preserve, interpret and celebrate the culture of the Moravians for the next 165 years!

Thank you for your continued partnership,

Susan Ellis
Accession Highlight: Civil War Uniform
The Moravian Historical Society recently received the military uniform of Brevet Brigadier General William E. Doster (1837-1919), a Civil War veteran and native of Bethlehem. Donated by descendant Dorothy Cole Hilshey, the items connect local history to national history. The donation includes a U.S. Army officer’s jacket with brigadier general insignia, an officer’s kepi hat, and a silken officer’s sash. The General represented the co-conspirators in Abraham Lincoln’s assassination trial. Doster’s wife, Ruth Porter Doster, was instrumental in founding the Bach Choir. How fortunate we are to be able to portray Moravian connections to such momentous times in American history! We look forward to sharing this history with school groups and visitors.

Digitized Collections
MHS is proud to introduce a new digitized collection—the Henry Family Collection—and a new online platform that makes it available to the public can be found on our website. The Henry Family Collection contains some 450 unique items, including letters, lectures, and unpublished research. One particularly interesting object—previously unknown—is a substantial manuscript, with nearly fifty chapters, that examines Nazareth from the first settlers’ arrival to the community’s response in 1800 to George Washington’s death and Charles Gotthold Reichel’s retirement in 1802 from Nazareth Hall. A Historical & Archives Records Care (HARC) grant from the Pennsylvania Museum and Historical Commission made this project possible.

This important work continues thanks to a grant from the American Historical Association’s Grants to Sustain and Advance the Work of Historical Organizations Program with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). The Moravian Historical Society will use the grant funds to make its important historical resources more accessible and spark new opportunities for research. This is a transformative step forward for our small museum. Providing digital access is crucial to fulfilling our mission and is a critical next step for our organization. This new project will focus on Nazareth Hall and records related to Moravian education.

450  Documents Digitized, processed, and uploaded to website
2649  Photographs currently being digitized
632   hours scanning documents and preparing metadata
Collections Inventory

In March 2020, volunteers started to inventory the objects on the Whitefield House’s third floor. This small step initiated an ambitious effort to inventory the entire collection of the Moravian Historical Society. Our historical society has been collecting objects related to Moravian history since 1857. Through those 165 years, the collection was cataloged by numerous people using various methods. Our current inventory project aims to bring all of this information into one place. During the process we identified items in need of conservation. One item in need of conservation was the deed between the Penn brothers and Tunda Tatamy, a key historical figure with Moravian connections. The large document was treated and reframed by the Conservation Center in Philadelphia where they also remediated some deterioration issues.

The frame room also received a long-overdue update. New storage shelving was put in place by volunteers and our curator rehoused each framed item so it is now stored safely. During this process, detailed condition reports were completed with the help of Michiko Okaya, retired Director of Galleries at Lafayette College. This work will guide further conservation treatment decisions. The multi-year project is nearing completion. We are indebted to Joel Hoeffner, the lead volunteer on this project, for his time, commitment, and expertise.

Exhibitions

The Special Exhibition, Charting the Unknown: Early Moravian Maps, explores eighteenth-century surveying techniques, the conflicts between Indigenous communities and Europeans, and the Moravian contributions to surveying, cartography, and town planning. Moravians began surveying Pennsylvania in the early 1740s and their contributions offer some of the earliest documentation of land use in Northampton County. Highlights of the exhibition include some of the earliest maps in the Moravian Historical Society’s collection. These treasures include the “Ground Sketch of the Land Around Nazareth” that Georg W. Golkowsky drew on September 30, 1774. The 1783 “Village Near Nazareth,” also by Golkowsky, shows the names of the earliest occupants along what became Main Street in Nazareth. These, along with surveys, sketches, and archival documents, chronicle the changes that Nazareth and the surrounding lands went through during a period of about a hundred years.

The annual putz exhibition took place in the historic 1740 Gray Cottage and featured objects from the 1850s Morris putz and the twentieth-century Sullivan putz, accompanied by lights and narration of the Nativity story. The display also included a festive display of Robert Wendler’s historic Lehigh Valley building models. Painstakingly detailed, these miniature masterpieces were created using only basswood, paint, sharp knives, and tiny drills to create each shingle, window, and post one at a time.
Education

Our educational programs allow young learners to explore everyday life in colonial America. High-quality educational experiences this year included class field trips to the museum, the Colonial Days partnership with the Nazareth Area School District, two weeks of Hands-on History camp, and a month of Free Summer Sunday programs. Our programs connect students with resources not available anywhere else and with the unique opportunity to learn from the primary sources in our museum collection. Students are engaged in learning and build knowledge by doing.

Events

This past year, our guided tours and in-person events attracted approximately 5,000 people to our historic site and museum. From July 2021 - June 2022, we welcomed visitors from across the United States and from Australia, Tanzania, Ecuador, Denmark, Canada, Italy, the Czech Republic, and Taiwan. Events included the 44th Annual Arts & Crafts Festival, Christmas in Nazareth celebration, Music and Lectures in the Saal, Passport to History, Summer Concerts on the Lawn, and Historic Nazareth Walking Tours.
Committees

Executive
David Roth, President
Lyn Trodahl Chynoweth, Vice-President
Anne Reid, Treasurer
Linda Wickmann, Secretary

Buildings and Grounds
• Monitor buildings and site
• Recommend repairs and restoration
David Roth, President
Noah Woodruff, Chair, Board Liaison
John Egerton
John Stocker

Curatorial
• Open new exhibitions
• Digitize and catalog collection
• Accession and deaccession collection items
David Roth, President
Barbara Dietterich
Farrar Lannon, Curator of Collections
Traci Stocker, Chair
Jack Hommer
Linda Wickmann, Board Liaison

Development
• Help plan tours, events, programs, and fundraisers
David Roth, President
Linda Zimmerman, Chair
Stephen Bajan, II
Christopher Crook, Board Liaison
Kaitlin O’Connor

Finance & Investment
• Review Financial Reports
• Monitor endowment performance
• Support the work of the treasurer
David Roth, President
Anne Reid, Chair, Treasurer, Board Liaison
Stephen Bajan, II
Linda Crook
John Stocker

Governance
• Identify, recruit, and recommend candidates for Board and Committee membership.
• Oversee orientation, education, and self assessment programs for directors.
• Review MHS’s bylaws and constitution, conflicts of interest policy, record retention policy, and other governance policies.
David Roth, President
Lyn Trodahl Chynoweth, Chair
Craig Atwood

Publications
• Produce two issues of the Society’s newsletter, Abundant Heritage.
• Select and invite the speaker for the annual meeting
• Write and design second Guidebook
David Roth, President
Craig Atwood
Lyn Trodahl Chynoweth
Barbara Dietterich
Scott Paul Gordon, Chair
Traci Stocker
Riddick Weber, Board Liaison
## Financials

### Income

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<td>Museum &amp; Program</td>
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### Expenses

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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>254,454</strong></td>
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Thank you

Donors
John Beitel
Darrell and Linda Crook
Brian and Jennie Dishong
Brynn and Edward Dunkelberger
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Moravian Development Corporation
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Network for Good

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