EARLY HISTORY OF THE MORAVIANS

The Moravian Church traces its origins to John Hus of Bohemia, who led a movement in the 15th century to reform the Catholic Church. Hus, a teacher at the University of Prague and preacher in one of Prague's largest churches, said that the Church of Rome in his day was corrupt, was of and for the nobility not the masses and was unjust in not attempting to solve grave social and economic problems that existed all around it. His fearless preaching and work for reform brought upon him the condemnation of the Church, and he was declared a heretic and in 1415 was burned at the stake.

The death of Hus led to revolt by his followers, the Hussites, and years of war. In time it became apparent that the reform he had hoped for would not come about. Finally, in 1457 a group of his most earnest supporters organized themselves under the name Unitas Fratrum (Unity of Brethren) and decided to move away from the centers of conflict and lead peaceful lives founded on the preachings of Christ.

For almost two hundred years the Unitas Fratrum played an important role in the life of Bohemia and the adjoining province of Moravia. (Bohemia and Moravia today comprise the Czech Republic.) At the beginning of the Lutheran Reformation it had a membership of 200,000 in 400 congregations. The Bohemian Brethren (as the church was then known) published in 1501 the first protestant hymnal as well as a version of the Bible still used by Czech-speaking people.

The Thirty Years War (1618-1648) ended the organized exis-
tence of the Unitas Fratrum except for a few scattered groups. In Bohemia and Moravia the church “went underground,” and for almost a century existed secretly as what is known as the “hidden seed.”

In 1722 a small group of the Brethren secretly left Moravia and went to the estate of Count Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf in Saxony. Count Zinzendorf, a deeply religious German nobleman, welcomed the refugees and permitted them to found the village of Herrnhut (“the Lord’s Watch”). Soon Herrnhut was attracting not only hundreds of Brethren but other Christians from throughout Europe. Because many of them had emigrated from Moravia, their church came to be known as the Moravian Church.

Within a few years of its founding many of these men and women, and others like them, left Herrnhut. They went largely as missionaries of the gospel to such faraway places as Greenland and Africa. It was a part of this missionary movement that the Moravians came first to America in 1735.

FIRST MORAVIAN SETTLEMENTS IN AMERICA

GEORGIA

Early in April, 1735, a little vessel, THE TWO BROTHERS, entered the Savannah River below the small Georgia town of the same name. On board were ten Moravians who had come, under the leadership of Bishop August Gottlieb Spangenberg, to preach the gospel to the American Indians, produce income for the church and build a refuge for church members. A few years later, however, the experiment came to an end. Savannah was on the frontier between the English colonists and the Spanish in Florida, and wars between those two governing powers continually threatened the Moravians. It was hard for the Moravians to abandon their property which had just been freed from debt; but, rather than prove false to their faith (the Brethren of that day were conscientiously opposed to bearing arms), they left Georgia, reaching Pennsylvania in time to help with the beginning of the settlement there.

PENNSYLVANIA

Count Zinzendorf chose the name “Bethlehem” for the central town of the Moravian settlement in Pennsylvania. It had three characteristics: (1) widespread mission work among the Indians, (2) home mission work among the white settlers of the colony and (3) common labor for the common good that made these enterprises possible. (The social, political and economic structure of Bethlehem and other Moravian settlements were designed after the Herrnhut plan with changes to meet special needs.) This settlement was permanent, and the Brethren won the reputation of being desirable settlers. Later Moravian towns in Pennsylvania included Lititz and Nazareth.

WACHOVIA

The Earl of Granville, owner of a vast Carolina tract, was anxious for his land to be settled and asked his agents to approach the Moravians about buying some of this frontier property because of their reputation as being honest and industrious people. In the fall of 1752, Bishop Spangenberg led a small group to look over the Granville territory. The explorers started the journey on horseback from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, going down the east coast of the Chesapeake Bay. After a boat trip across the

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Moravian Lovefeast in Herrnhut, 1758.
Bay to Norfolk, Virginia, they traveled again on horseback to Edenton, North Carolina. There they were joined by Granville's chief surveyor, William Churton, and the group proceeded westward into the mountains. They were seeking a single tract to contain 100,000 unoccupied acres of land. While surveying territory to the south and west, the party encountered many difficulties. Spangenberg reported the trip was a "hard journey over very high, terrible mountains and cliffs. Part of the way we climbed on hands and knees."

The Moravians decided to purchase a tract of approximately 100,000 acres which they called Wachau. Later the English form Wachovia was used. Wachau comes from the German words "die Wach au" and refers to the area around the Wach River in Austria where the Zinzendorf ancestral home was located. Because the new tract in Carolina reminded Spangenberg of that European territory he suggested a revival of the old name here.

FIRST SETTLEMENTS IN WACHOVIA

BETHABARA

The colonists who came to Wachovia in November, 1753, were selected because of their skills, physical fitness and spiritual strength; therefore, they were well fitted to establish a settlement in the heart of the wilderness and make it a center of service to neighbors for miles around. Twelve men from Bethlehem were chosen to be the first settlers of the new tract. Settling first in an abandoned hunter's cabin, they laid the foundations of their first Wachovia town, Bethabara. The group included a minister, business manager, doctor, shoemaker, baker-miller, carpenter, tailor, gardener and farmers.

When they began to build the town, the Wachovia Tract was sparsely populated. It was served by only one road and there were no navigable rivers. To survive in this setting the Moravians shaped their society around a form of community living which they called the Oeconomie. Each inhabitant produced according to his ability and received from the community according to his needs. Only confirmed members of the church could live at Bethabara during the early years.

BETHANIA

A need was felt for a farming settlement where refugees could become a part of the community and where Moravian families could live as family units. Therefore, in 1759 another town, Bethania, was started three miles west of Bethabara with eight married couples from Bethabara and eight families of refugees making up the early population of this new community.

SALEM

When Frederick William Marshall, newly appointed head of Wachovia, came to establish a central town, Salem, there were general specifications regarding the nature of the site to be selected. When the right location was found—and the search took weeks—Salem (from a Hebrew word meaning "peace") was built according to a detailed plan. On January 6, 1766, a dozen men went from Bethabara and Bethania to the chosen site, and work was begun on the town dedicated to "God and to the service of their fellow man." The houses and public buildings were located
by plan, and even the size and appearance of proposed new houses had to be approved by the town officials.

It was decided that this third settlement in Wachovia should serve a wider geographical area than the two earlier towns, Bethabara and Bethania. Salem was to be a trade and craft center: according to Marshall, July, 1765—"This town is not designed for farmers, but for those with trades."

In Salem the older form of common housekeeping gave way to a more flexible planned economy in which each man owned and operated his own shop for profit under church control. There were three boards to govern the town: the Aeltesten Conference, or Board of Elders, directed the spiritual affairs of the community; the Aufseher Collegium directed the material affairs of Salem, somewhat like our present-day Board of Aldermen; and a third body, the Congregation Council, was made up of all the communicant married and single Brothers in the town. This last group was the most democratic and was usually called upon to make decisions on major civic improvements, such as the installation of Salem's first waterworks, the building of the church or the opening of new streets. The Vorsteher, or city manager as we would call him today, carried out the orders of the various boards.

The Single Brothers House was a particularly important building in the new settlement. Here the single men lived and the young boys learned their trades, each being apprenticed to a single master craftsman for that purpose. Stable qualities of work and conduct characterized the apprentice system of Salem as indicated by the following excerpt from the minutes of the Aufseher Collegium, April 15, 1772:

Incidentally, the wish was expressed that all Brethren, and especially the young people who are being trained to work in our midst, might accompany their work with Industry, Faithfulness, Ability and Good Behaviour, laying aside all desire for convenience or profit which would impair or spoil their work; this would be for the benefit of employers and those who sell finished work, would increase our credit among our neighbors and would draw customers to the town.

The wage scale in Salem, as well as the prices that could be charged in the market and Community Store, were closely regulated. Most of Salem's industries were privately operated, but four major ones—the tavern, pottery, red tannery and store—were run for the community by the Aufseher Collegium.

The governing boards kept a close control over the community during the early years. Although residents could own their own homes, the land on which these were built was leased from the church. This arrangement was continued until 1857, almost a century after the town's founding. Control of the land made it possible to turn out undesirables and also permitted a better regulation of the economy. The Board would not, for example, permit a tailor or a shoemaker to settle in the town if the community were already well served in these trades. Nor would it allow items of poor quality to be made or sold.

When Governor Alexander Martin visited Salem on June 16, 1807, he was evidently very much impressed with the people comprising this congregation town. The Salem diary of that year records that the governor "prized the Brethren for their industry, their religious life, and the good order which distinguished their group, which was a useful example to their fellow citizens; and that we had his best wishes for our settlement here, for our endeavors in the education of youth, and in spreading the Gospel among the heathen."

THE MORAVIAN CHURCH IN SALEM

The church was the center of life in Salem. The town was founded by the church; the church owned all the land and governed the inhabitants. Salem was a church community, a congregation town. The people who lived in Salem lived there by choice and accepted church control; in fact, the very nature of the people who chose to make their homes in a congregation town—devout, peace-loving, industrious and cooperative—contributed to the influence of the church in phases of life in the community.

There are a number of customs of the early church still in use today in Moravian churches.
A lovefeast is a religious service in which Christian fellowship is emphasized. It is primarily a song service during which the congregation partakes of a simple meal; in early Salem this usually consisted of bread and tea or coffee. The twelve settlers who came to Wachovia in 1753 held a lovefeast the day after their arrival.

The Easter Sunrise Service of the Moravians has become an important tradition of the church. Early in the morning worshipers gather at the church on Salem Square to begin the reading of the Easter Litany. The bands play “Hail, All Hail, Victorious Lord and Saviour” with the congregation joining in. At the close of the first part of the Litany, the congregation slowly walks to the graveyard, “God’s Acre,” where the concluding part of the service is held.

Because of the early Moravians’ emphasis on the choir as important divisions in the “church family,” with God the Father of all, there are no family plots in most early Moravian graveyards. This is true of God’s Acre in Salem where married men are buried in a choir with other married men, married women in a plot with other married women, single women with other single women and so on. Burial in this manner stresses the importance of the “church family,” whereas the uniformity of flat gravestones symbolizes the democracy of death.

The system of choirs (from a Greek word meaning “group”) in the early Moravian Church was instituted because of a belief that the church could best meet the needs and interests of its members if they were divided according to age, sex and marital status. In Salem there were choirs of married people, single sisters, single brothers, widows, widowers, older girls, older boys and children; the number of groups, however, varied in different communities. Each choir had its separate lovefeast and meetings for instruction, in addition to the general congregation meetings. Each also had definite community tasks for which it was responsible.

In addition to the religious aspects of the Moravian choirs there was an arrangement in many settlements whereby members of certain choir groups lived together and carried on the usual daily activities jointly. In Salem, for instance, separate choir houses were built on the Square for the Single Brothers and the Single Sisters.

At about the age of fourteen boys and girls entered their respective houses and continued to live there in dormitory fashion if they did not marry and have homes of their own.

When boys entered the Single Brothers House they and their parents usually expressed some choice as to a future occupation for the boy. He would then be formally indentured or apprenticed to the master for a period of up to seven years, normally ending when he reached the age of twenty-one.

It was the master’s responsibility to train the boy in all branches of his trade, as well as to teach him, if necessary, such basic elements as reading, writing and arithmetic. For this purpose the Single Brothers conducted a night school for those who had come into their choir with little formal education. The apprentice, upon completing his term as specified in the indenture, became a journeyman. He frequently continued to work in the same shop for a salary and very often succeeded his master upon the latter’s retirement. The apprentices, single journeymen and single masters had their meals, slept and conducted various choir religious services in the Brothers House.

In the case of girls emphasis of the choir house training was on the acquiring of homemaking skills. The Single Sisters, in addition to giving instruction in weaving, spinning and details of housekeeping common to that era, also were strongly urged by the church to foster a spirit of service between the different choirs which would carry over into other areas of need in this congregation town. Laundry work, for instance, might be done by the Single Sisters for the Single Brothers, and the latter would make shoes for the Sisters. Each group would keep accurate financial records on the services and make settlements accordingly. At harvest time Single Sisters often helped in the fields, and they frequently did housework and nursed for private families. Both men and women were encouraged to follow some remunerative handicraft, with articles being sold for the benefit of the respective choir.
EVERYDAY LIFE IN SALEM

Most families in the earliest days of Salem lived in three-room houses of simple, sturdy design copied after buildings they had known in their native Germany. One room usually combined living and dining areas, another served as a kitchen and the third (plus the attic) provided sleeping space.

The daily routine of a family was timed according to the ringing of the church bell before 7:00 a.m., 11:30 a.m. and at dusk. Four meals were served each day—breakfast, dinner, vesper and supper. Vesper usually came at 3:00 p.m. and consisted of light refreshments such as coffee and cake. Sometimes it took the form of an afternoon social gathering of friends, but usually religious significance was added to the occasion by the singing of a hymn or by prayers for family and friends.

A vegetable garden was planted behind each house, and larger farms were cultivated on the outskirts of town. The majority of vegetables known today were grown in Salem; one exception was the tomato which was thought to be poisonous. Carnations, narcissi and lilacs were mentioned in diaries as being favorite flowers, and almost every homeowner grew herbs. Herbs were used in cooking, but even more importantly they were used for medicines.

Although townspeople owned chicken and pigs, they were not allowed at first to have cows. Milk was bought from dairy farmers who had a contract to supply the entire community. Meats were bought at the markethouse on the square from the marketmaster, who announced the bi-weekly arrival of fresh meat by blowing a pierced conch shell horn.

It was necessary to carry water to the homes from one of the various cisterns located in town. Salem had an elaborate water system with pipes laid to the cisterns from springs north of the town limits.

The procurement of wood for fires was arranged through the town forester who assigned trees for cutting, ones that were not usable timber for building. Wood chopping was a familiar chore to every Salem boy.

Girls had home assignments assisting their mothers in a variety of jobs. Wool and flax were spun into yarn or thread. Fabric was cut and sewn into clothing and household linens. Vegetables were tended in gardens. Cooking was done over the open fire and bread baked in outside ovens. Candlemaking and soapmaking were regular chores.

Simplicity was the keynote of American Moravian clothing in the late eighteenth century. Men wore garments like those of other working men of the period: knee breeches or long trousers, knitted stockings, plain shoes which sometimes had buckles, shirts with full sleeves and gathered backs, hip-length vests, hip-length or knee-length coats, and broad-brimmed hats.

Women's better clothing was unique in America. All women at that time wore shifts, which were knee-length, three-quarter-length sleeves, white linen nightgown-type garments, as underwear. Over that was worn stays, a flat, rigid corset. A woman's outer clothes were a long skirt called a petticoat and a fitted blouse with three-quarter length sleeves called a jacket. This laced up the front with ribbons which matched those on her cap. Around her neck was worn a white scarf called a handkerchief.

The woman's cap was only worn by the Moravians in America. It was close fitting, white linen with a white thin band tied around the head with a bow in back. The cap tied under the chin with colored ribbon which denoted the choir to which the wearer belonged: cherry red for little girls, dark red for older girls thirteen through seventeen, pink for single women eighteen and older, blue for married women, and white for widows.

Children dressed in clothes made like their parents clothing.
An item in the records of the Aufseher Collegium dated February 20, 1794, gives some insight into that governing body's emphasis on simplicity of dress and its opinion about a Moravian's proper attitude toward this subject:

Children and young people should be taught good management, and should not have their wishes granted when they ask for fine clothes and other things not in keeping with the financial standing of their parents. No one must think, as it seems some do, that he must have everything that wealthier Brethren have.

The religious aspect of family life included daily meditation, prayers and the singing of hymns accompanied by musical instruments. A church service also was held almost every day.

A favorite pastime of some families was a walk through nearby woods to gather mineral and botanical specimens which were often used in the schools.

Children had few store-bought toys but they made their own and enjoyed a variety of games. Rules concerning play were strict, however, because the church felt that the early years of life should be devoted to useful pursuits.

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**TRADES IN SALEM**

Salem was in full operation six years after the first construction was begun. It soon became known as an important craft center in the Carolina piedmont where honest, industrious men and women produced quality items from metal, wood, fibres, clay and leather. Here could be found tradesmen who did not restrict themselves to the cruder and simpler "country" crafts; they were gunsmiths, tinsmiths, turners, carriagemakers, bookbinders, organ builders, shoemakers and silversmiths, as well as tailors, dyers and cooperers. Gottfried Aust's pottery shop not only turned out common articles like pipes and bottles but also produced a good quality of queensware. A distillery, grist mill, brewery and tannery processed more materials for settlers outside of Salem than for the local inhabitants. Such intricate trades as papermaking, silversmithing, cabinetmaking and glove making were added as demand would have it.

From the beginning of the Wachovia settlement, the Moravians out of necessity looked to the land for their raw materials: clay for pottery and minerals for glazes; wood for gunstocks, tables, and desks; plants and berries for dyes; tree bark for tanning leather. The materials not available locally—such as tin, iron, glass, copper—were brought in by wagon from distant trading centers such as Cross Creek, Charleston, Petersburg and Philadelphia.

In the February 20, 1793 issue of the NORTH CAROLINA JOURNAL, printed in Halifax, there appeared a letter answering a reader's inquiry about the crafts in Salem. Excerpts are quoted as follows:

Salem in advantageously situated in point of health, in land trade, and manufactures. It enjoys an elevated site upon a ridge, yet the inhabitants command a sufficient quantity of water, not only for the use and safety of the village, but to drive any machinery necessary in their manufactures.

In Salem there are employed: Whitesmiths, 2; Tanners, 4; Saddlers, 2; Blacksmiths, 2; Skin Dressers, 2; Porters, 3; Papermakers, 5; Brickmakers, 3; Silversmith, 1; Shoe-
makers, 6; Coopers, 2; Hatters, 4; Tailors, 3; Carpenters, 3; Tobacconist, 1; Joiner, 1; Gunsmith, 1; Chandler, 1; Weavers, 6; Baker, 1; Distillers and Brewers, 2; Dyer, 1; Apothecary, 1.

These are settled inhabitants, and journeymen are occasionally hired. In addition to these, there are several families whose farms are adjoining the town.

The principal officers of the Moravian Society reside in Salem, and Traugott Bagge, their merchant, keeps perhaps the best assorted country store in the United States. The public buildings are large and convenient and handsomely finished in the Moravian style. The dwelling houses are generally of brick, well designed for comfort and convenience and have a very neat appearance. In the country there are near one hundred looms, exclusive of those in the towns. These amply supply the inhabitants with linen and cotton fabrics of different kinds, so as to diminish greatly the consumption of calicoes and Manchester stuffs, and exclude altogether the imported coarser linens.

Indeed, I have seen fine linen, mixed, striped, and twilled worsted stuffs, jeans, dimity, and even muslin so well manufactured in their domestic way, that if they had the means of finishing them off in the European method, they could only have been distinguished by their superiority in strength and durability.

We have only one fulling mill now at work; several hundred yards of coarse woolen cloth were fulled and dyed here during the last year...

There are also three considerable tanneries beside those in the town and a large quantity of leather is tanned by the farmers themselves; these tanners find a ready sale for their leather in the county and in the adjacent part of Virginia. We have fourteen grist mills running; seven of these are geared manufacturing mills.

Our Paper Mill deserves to be mentioned. This expen-
sive undertaking attracted the attention of the Legisla-
ture and they advanced some money by way of loan to the proprietor. There are only five hands employed in the business at present but are capable of supplying the whole State with that important article. It is necessary to observe that we are entirely indebted to Mr. Gottlieb Shofer for this valuable manufacture, the Moravian Society being in no way connected with him in the business.

TRAVEL AND TRADE IN SALEM

Most residents of Salem traveled often to nearby towns in Wachovia to visit friends and to attend to church and business matters. For a few Moravians, however, travel was not limited only to such short distances. Almost every month people on horseback, in wagons or even on foot would depart from Salem for towns outside Wachovia. These might be students going to Moravian schools in Nazareth or Lititz, missionaries going to serve in a mission field, children traveling to visit aging parents in Bethlehem or churchworkers and their families leaving to assume new duties in other Moravian congregations.

Because travel was not as convenient and fast as today, trips were seriously planned and taken seldom even in the lives of the hearty few. Roads were usually mere dirt paths; there were few bridges and conveyance by horse, wagon or foot was always uncomfortable, expensive and usually dangerous. In 1753 good travel time by wagon was 15 miles per day; by 1831 it had improved to 30 miles per day.

Salem, being a relatively small, isolated commercial center, depended on trade to supply its craftsmen with the raw materials
that could not be produced locally yet were needed for them and their families to live and work. The majority of travel in and out of Salem naturally therefore was associated with trade, and most of this trade was handled through the church-owned Community Store. Sturdy Conestoga wagons left regularly loaded with such local products as deerskins, beeswax candles, dried peaches, grain, butter, tobacco and earthenware. They traveled to numerous towns in North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia and Pennsylvania where these products were in demand and could be exchanged for money or merchandise.

The trade centers favored most by the Community Store were Charles Town (Charleston), South Carolina; Pine Tree Store (later Camden), South Carolina; Petersburg, Virginia and Philadelphia. Products which were in demand in Salem could be obtained most readily there and brought back to Salem for resale. Tea, coffee, sugar, glassware, iron and steel, yard goods, books, tools, hardware and tableware were packed into the returning Conestogas and quickly placed on the store shelves for local residents.

**EDUCATION IN SALEM**

Following the early tradition set by their church leaders in Bohemia, Moravia, Germany and Pennsylvania, wherever the Moravians settled they established schools as the need arose. The first mention of formal education in Salem concerned the apprentices of the various crafts who were being taught in the potter’s house in late 1771. This school was designed to supplement a boy’s trade education with such subjects as arithmetic and writing. It lasted only during the winter months and usually was held at night so as not to interfere with daytime working hours.

As more families moved to Salem, there was a need for schools for the “Little Boys” and “Little Girls.” A day school for several small girls in the town was established in April, 1772. The records indicate that one of the parents, a blacksmith by trade, paid the equivalent of about 13½ cents per week to the Single Sisters as a school fee for his eight-year-old daughter. (This would have been the cost of a pair of gloves at that time.)

At first, classes for Little Girls were held in the Congregation House, but with the beginning of a boarding school for out-of-town girls, the need for more room was soon apparent, and a separate building was completed in 1805. From these early beginnings the modern Salem Academy and College have grown.

A school for Little Boys was begun in 1778 in a house next to the home of Matthew Miksch. When it was felt that an anstalt was needed where some students could board, the present Boys School was built. Completed in 1794, this building had its own cooking, baking, sleeping, living and food storage rooms as well as schoolrooms for several classes of boys, who were divided according to their abilities.

In the meantime, the school for apprentices, or “Older Boys,” was continued in the Brothers House.

In both the boys’ and girls’ anstalts, as first organized, daily routine was basically the same except that the girls all boarded at the school. A set of regulations for the Boys School records the time for rising in the morning as 5:15 in summer and 6:30 in winter. After dressing they ate breakfast and then studied from 7:00 a.m. until 8:00 a.m. At this time the boys had a clean-up period when beds were made and floors swept. School was then started with the reading of the Biblical texts and singing a verse. At 11:00 a.m., if there was no children’s meeting, they were dismissed for dinner. At 12:30 p.m. the students were again to be in class and were dismissed at 3:00 p.m. to go to vespers, returning immediately for a study period or for music school until 4:00 p.m. They then took exercises, usually in the form of long walks. Following supper, they spent the evening preparing for the next day. Bedtime came at 8:30 p.m. in summer and 8:00 p.m. in winter. Before going to bed a verse was sung. On Saturday no classes were held, and after the school had been cleaned, the boys studied from 8:00 a.m. until 10:00 a.m. They apparently were free until 3:00 p.m. when they went for a walk with the teacher. Sunday was spent largely with church meetings and the usual afternoon exercise.

An entry of May 21, 1794, in the Salem Board minutes gave this description of the boy’s curriculum of that time:

The little boys in school have been divided into two classes, and the larger boys will make a third class.
The larger boys shall be taken further in what they have been studying, that is, in writing, reckoning, history, geography, geometry, Latin and especially in English. It possible they should be taught some Greek and French. The drawing of landscapes and flowers would also be useful.

The Girls School differed from the Boys School in that the boys were given more academic emphasis in the subjects taught. Girls were taught—in addition to reading, writing, arithmetic—history and geography and useful household skills such as plain and fancy embroidery. Music was stressed for both girls and boys.

Public examination time developed into an annual celebration in Salem, and parents and friends of the students would come from long distances to attend. Preparation for this required weeks of training. The students were given the questions as well as the answers in advance, and all were assigned parts in the recitation of facts or historical skills to demonstrate their knowledge. These examinations became so popular that it was sometimes necessary to restrict the attendance to only parents of the students.

MUSIC IN SALEM

Music was as much a part of the daily life of the Moravians as was prayer. Children began life listening to the cradle hymns. The final notes of life were of trombones and other brasses—the "last trumpet in the going home" of the Moravians—played from the balcony of the church. In the morning and again at evening families gathered around the table to recite the "Daily Text" and to sing a hymn dedicated to that particular day. Like other joyful people, the Moravians sang as they worked. At harvest time men came into the fields with instruments to play hymns of thanksgiving for the bounty of God, and when the top beam of a new house was put into place, a trumpeter climbed up to give thanks with hymn tunes. There was music from dawn to dusk, and even during the night the watchman made his rounds blowing on his pierced conch-shell and chanting the "song of the hours."

Most Moravian music was religious vocal music which, unlike all other music in America then, called for instrumental accompaniment, especially by an orchestra of violins. The Moravian orchestras were the earliest symphony orchestras in America, and their music included the best compositions of Haydn, Mozart and dozens of other great European composers. It was the Moravians, too, who brought the first trombones to America, and they used these trombones to announce all public, and some private, occasions. The brass instruments have held through the years a prominent place in the Easter Sunrise Service.

Other favorite instruments in Salem and Wachovia were French horns, flutes, trumpets, bassoons and clarinets—some of them among the earliest in America. A German instrument called the zink or cornetto was a medieval trumpet with a mouthpiece of ox horn and six finger-holes. Other instruments used in Salem were the organ, piano, harpsichord (a piano-like instrument in which the strings are plucked by quills), the clavichord (strings hammered with metal nails) and the harp. The viola da gamba, a forerunner of the cello, is the only instrument of its kind known to have been played in America during the 18th century; it was used by Moravians in Bethania.

It is only natural that with so much music around them some
Moravians would be composers. Indeed, they were the first real composers to work on American soil. Foremost among them was John Frederik Peter, a minister of the church, who wrote many compositions, both vocal and instrumental. Peter, who was a music director in Salem (1780-90), is accepted as the first composer of chamber music in America, and his vocal music is considered comparable to the best written in Europe at that time. The music collections of the Moravians here in Salem and in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania are the largest and most important collections of 18th and 19th century music in the Western Hemisphere. Many of the compositions are available in modern editions and are being used by symphonies and choral groups today.