So what does the Archives take as gifts?

The question was asked, What does the Moravian Archives accept in the way of gifts and donations, what material items, dresses, shoes, what?

Over the years we have received many wonderful gifts from individuals. Generally these have been correspondence, papers, mementos — cherished Moravian heirlooms that families wish to have a permanent home.

The correspondence and private diaries of R.P. Leinbach, a Moravian minister in the second half of the 19th century, came to the Archives through private donation. So did the personal diary that George Frederic Bahnsen kept when he was minister at Bethania, 1834-38, as well as a handsome formal portrait of Br. Bahnsen.

We are grateful too for the opportunity to photocopy typescripts of the correspondence of Nathaniel Shober Siewers, which includes his Civil War service and his years in medical school in Philadelphia and Europe. We only wish that the original letters would someday surface.

But what if the family items you want to give aren't paper but are objects, "ephemera," as we call them. Here we must be mindful that we are an archives,

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Assistant Archivist Nicole Blum displays the christening dress worn by Mary Louise Bahnsen for her baptism at Home Church on February 10, 1889.
What items do make up a Moravian Archives?

Continued from page 1

a repository of paper records, and do not have the display or storage capability of a museum. We do, though, occasionally accept items that have special importance or significance to our Moravian heritage.

Prominently displayed in our main floor gallery is a silver bowl, donated last year by Anna Snyder, who with her late husband had done volunteer work at the Archives. Inscribed on a plaque beneath the bowl is: “J. Burton Snyder, Jr., Band Director, Fairview Moravian Church, 50 years continuous service, 1995.”

We like showing off a desk. Not just any old desk, this one is a “lap-desk” for balancing on the lap to write letters. The felt surfaced, oak cased desk was made by one of the Crist family of Salem for his wife. In the pen compartment is the burned-down stub of a Christmas candle.

Our most recent "ephemera" gift was from Mary Louise Davis and her daughter Bonnie Bennett. Along with publications, correspondence (some of it Civil War), and such, were two dresses. Both were worn by Mary Louise Davis's mother, Mary Louise Bahnson Haywood, granddaughter of Bishop George Frederic Bahnson. One was her christening dress, for her baptism on February 10, 1889, "before the morning sermon by Edward Ronthaler, pastor," as Br. Ronthaler recorded in the Salem Register. The second dress — just as flowing and lacy as the first — Mary Louise Bahnson wore as a teenager or young lady. Aside from showing the fashion style among Salem's elite around the turn of the 20th century, both dresses are accompanied by a photograph of Mary Louise Bahnson wearing them.

Mary Louise Bahnson shows off the most elegant style for teens in Salem in the early 1900s.

So primarily we are indeed an archives, dealing in and receiving paper materials and photographs. But we do have and have gratefully welcomed items of Moravian interest into our collections.
Volume 13! in print!! soon!!! (we hope)

We’re all excited at the Moravian Archives. Late last year we received a Christmas present from the State Archives in Raleigh: galley proofs for volume 13 of Records of the Moravians in North Carolina. Since then we have been hard at work proofreading, inserting pictures, paginating, and indexing, indexing, indexing. Then it’s back to Raleigh for final approval, to the printer, and maybe, maybe to the bookstores by next Christmas. We shall keep you posted.

Volume 13 of Records covers the Moravian Church in North Carolina during Reconstruction, 1867-1876. Compared to volume 12, which covered the Civil War, volume 13 is a ripsnorter as the Salem and Winston flourish and Salem Trustees sell land and lay out streets left and right.

As with volume 12, our Friends of the Archives will be called upon to support the publication of volume 13 of Records. Much of the expense is shouldered by the State Archives, but a doubling of the press run and a special treat, a big map in the back, will be paid by our Friends.

Our Friends are a vital part of the workings of the Moravian Archives, from budget support to publications and our web site (www.MoravianArchives.org) to preserving and displaying our unique 18th-century maps and documents. Last year 206 donors contributed $21,452.05. This compares with $18,845 from 194 contributors in 2004. We want to thank all of you for your generous support, and we look forward to many years of Archives work together.

Special Commendations

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See Our Archives Friends, page 4
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Ms. Romaine S. Saylor

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