

**FRIEDENSTHAL AND  
ITS  
STOCKADED MILL**

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Friedensthal and its stockaded mill by William C. Reichel & John W. Jordan

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**WILLIAM C. REICHEL & JOHN W. JORDAN**

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W. B. Reichel

FRIEDENSTHAL

AND ITS

STOCKADED MILL.

A MORAVIAN CHRONICLE,

1749-1767.

BY

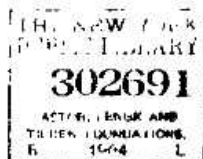
THE REV. WILLIAM C. REICHEL,

AND CONTRIBUTED BY

JOHN W. JORDAN.

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## INTRODUCTION.

The within historical paper was written by the late Professor William C. Reichel, at the instance of one of a company of ladies and gentlemen,—many of them lineal descendants of those whose names occur in the narrative; but all lovers of the olden time, of olden memories, and of "Old Dutch Government Java,"—who proposed to meet in August of 1875, at Friedensthal, in Palmer Township, Northampton County, to pass a day of social pleasure on the site of a Moravian Economy which had its seat there when Pennsylvania was still a Province of the British Crown. Owing, however, to inclement weather and to other causes, the "field-day" was deferred until the autumn of the following year. When that time came the illness of the author and his subsequent death in October 1876, caused its indefinite postponement. The paper is strictly authentic in all its details, and hence may be justly regarded as a valuable contribution to the history of the early Moravian Settlements. Treating of this people, it treats of one portion of the German element of the population of Pennsylvania,—that element, which, though held in low esteem by the Proprietary Governors despite the high regard in which they were held by old Proprietor Penn, has proved itself to have been mighty in rearing the solid structure of our Commonwealth.

JOHN W. JORDAN.

SEPTEMBER, 1877.

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OLIVER  
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## FRIEDENSTHAL AND ITS STOCKADED MILL.

A MORAVIDIAN CHRONICLE.

1740-1767.

For those who are read in the history of the Moravian movement in the Province of Pennsylvania, the spot, on which we are gathered so informally this summer-afternoon, on the greensward and in the shade of trees, has irresistible attractions. It is the site of a primitive Moravian settlement. *One hundred and twenty-six* years ago, the 13th day of January last, the fall of the first tree at the axe-man's hand, as it awoke echoes in these woods, told of the occupation of the white man and of his purpose to build him here a home. It was, however, not for a cabin,—not for a straggling hamlet, nor for a town with dusty streets, that tree after tree was here sent headlong to the ground. The olden time Moravian settlement had its type in none of these. It was fashioned after an old-world type; after a model brought by the Brethren from the fatherland, and which, we have reason to believe, they loved to perpetuate, in the hope that peradventure through its presence, the memories of ancestral homes might be kept green in the hearts of their children and of childrens' children far down the stream of time.

There are those living who well remember "Old Nazareth," Gnadenthal and Christian's Spring, as they were some sixty years ago. Then already, it is true, they were decadent; and yet, despite all that the march of time, new modes of thought and new generations of men were doing to erase it, they bore on the faces of them the birth-mark which unmistakably proclaimed their Moravo-Silesian parentage. Theirs was the type of the olden-time Moravian settlement. A quadrangular area enclosed within solidly built structures



of wood and stone; on one side stabling and stalls for horses, horned cattle, sheep and swine; on the second a spacious barn and shelter for wains and carts; on the third a row of shops,—a shop for the baker, one for the cordwainer and weaver,—a house for the curing and storing of flax, a smithy and a cider-press; and on the fourth the dwellings of the hard-working people who inhabited the forest oasis,—large, lumbering structures of log or of frame and “brick-nogged,”—invariably hip-roofed, and one of them sure to be capped with a turret in which swung a bell, that rang out over hill and dale and down into the deep woods every day, at sunrise and at sunset, its sweet summons to the house of prayer. Verily it needed but a moat and a drawbridge to have transformed these granges into impregnable strongholds.

On the ground on which we are met there stood until the close of the last century a Moravian settlement of this kind, comprising within its limits a plantation and plantation-buildings, a dairy, and a mill for the grinding of bread. Thirty-five years ago its demolition was completed, and, saving the well in the barn-yard, there is no vestige of it left. Great, then, in view of this utter annihilation, is, I ween, the debt of gratitude we are owing to the early annalists of our Church, who, with exemplary providence, committed to writing day by day, or week by week, whatever of moment occurred in their little world; thus enabling us after the lapse of more than one hundred years, to hold pleasant converse to-day with the men and women who once peopled this peaceful vale.

Now the origin, rise and growth of Friedensthal were on this wise.

The expenditure of time and labor incurred annually by the Brethren at Nazareth in transporting the bulk of the harvests of the Barony to the Bethlehem mill for grinding, (the mill that was built at Christian's Spring in 1747 being of very limited capacity<sup>1</sup>) had in 1749 grown to be so grave, as to move their head men to take speedy steps for closing this drain upon their resources. The erection of a mill near at hand, fully appointed for the conversion into bread of all the grain grown on the three plantations, to wit: Nazareth, Gnadenthal and Christian's Spring, or “the upper places,”

<sup>1</sup> The lower story of the structure was a grist, and the upper a saw mill.

as they were called in the days of which we write from a Bethlehem standpoint,—was, very naturally forsooth, suggested as the readiest solution of the problem. Now to this solution the Brethren began to apply themselves on the 28th of October, 1749, as on that day, John Nitschmann<sup>1</sup> (a brother of Anna Nitschmann, the gifted daughter of old Nitschmann the wagonwright) and Henry Antes, both of Bethlehem, repaired to Nazareth to make a survey of the ground with an eye to the erection of a second mill. Failing to find a desirable site on the springs of the Menfkes within the precincts of the Barony, they turned their footsteps eastward, and coming to the banks of this charming stream, which the Van Bogarts from Esopus named the *Bushkill*, and which the Scotch-Irish called *Lefevre's Creek* after Johannes Lefevre, whose meadows, distant a short mile to the south of us, were irrigated by its waters as early as 1745;—coming to this charming stream, Nitschmann and Antes, we read, selected this spot for the site of the projected improvement.

Now their choice involved the purchase of a parcel of 324 acres of land, which was held by William Allen of Philadelphia. It had been conveyed to Allen by Lawrence Growden, Jr., in August of 1740, and was a portion of a great tract of 5,000 acres which old Proprietor Penn granted by indenture bearing date October 25th, 1681, to Lawrence Growden, then of St. Austell in the County of Cornwall, and his heirs forever, under a yearly quit-rent of fifty English shillings,—and which the said Lawrence Growden was pleased to make over to his grandson the above Lawrence Growden, Jr., of the parish of St. Merryn, Cornwall, by indenture bearing date October 26th, 1687.

Negotiations with Mr. Allen for the purchase of this tract were finally concluded, when, on the 3d of January, 1750, he made deed of the 324 acres—"situate," as the instrument recites, "on the branches of Lehietan in the Forks of Delaware in Bucks County," to Henry Antes,—the consideration being £324 lawful money of

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<sup>1</sup> John Nitschmann was born in 1703, at Schönsau, in Moravia. Immigrated to Herrnhut in 1723, where he became the private tutor of Christian Renatus von Zinzendorf, whom he also accompanied to the University at Jena. In 1741 he was consecrated a Bishop, and came to America with a colony of 120 immigrants in 1749. Here he was President of the Directing Board until 1751, when he returned to Europe. Deceased at Zeyst, May 6, 1772.

the Province. In 1752, Mr. Antes conveyed the tract to the then three joint proprietors of the Moravian estates in this country. By these it was transmitted forward in the legitimate channel.

Having thus secured a site for a new plantation and mill, the Brethren, on the tenth day after the execution of Allen's deed, sent up five of their young men from Bethlehem to begin the clearing of the land. And soon the "chopping" bustled and grew warm with the hum of industry, although the mercury at times fell to zero. There was logging, grubbing, burning of grubs and hauling of stones from the quarries with ox-teams; and scarce was the frost out of the ground, when, on the 1st of April, Andrew Schober,<sup>1</sup> master mason in the Moravian Economy, arrived on the scene of action with a corps of "men-at-arms" and began to lay the foundation walls of the mill and farm-house. From the mother settlement there were sent bricks for the fire-places as well as joists for the flooring, which joists had been cut and sawed on the Mahoning. Auxiliaries, whenever needed, were drafted from the brotherhood at Christian's Spring; and thus efficiently seconded, Mr. Antes saw the work which had been entrusted to him, hastening, with reasonable dispatch, towards completion. The mill was of his planning, he being both a millwright and a miller of many years' experience. It was furthermore his last effort, in the capacity of an architect and master-builder, to aid the Moravians, as in the autumn of the year of which we write he severed his connection with that people, returning to his farm and mill on the Manataway, in that beautiful region of country which stretches back from the present borough of Pottsgrove, Montgomery County.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Andrew Schober, from Nenthofensdorf, Moravia. Immigrated to Pennsylvania with the "Second Sea Congregation," 1748. Deceased at Bethlehem, July, 1792. Descendants of the name living in Philadelphia and North Carolina.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Antes materially assisted the Moravians in the founding of Bethlehem, planned and superintended the construction of the first mills, aqueduct and ferry at that place; and built the mill at the Mahoning Mission and at Christian's Spring. In the autumn of 1752 he accompanied Bishop Spangenberg to aid and advise in locating a great tract of land in Western North Carolina for a projected Moravian settlement. Being one of the three proprietors of Moravian real estate in the Province, during the tenure of that estate by joint tenancy, his name is enrolled in the annals of our people alongside of the names of Joseph Spangenberg and David Nitschmann, the wagonwright. Antes died on his farm in July of 1755. Several of his children united with the Moravians. Ann Margaret, a