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Delving into the Moravian Legacy
Historic Bethlehem Museums & Sites to Safely Reopen the Moravian Museum for New Exhibit

BETHLEHEM, PA, June 2021 – Historic Bethlehem Museums & Sites (HBMS) eagerly welcomes visitors back to the oldest building in Bethlehem, the 1741 Gemeinhaus, with a new exhibition titled The Moravian Legacy. Closed since March 2020, the Moravian Museum of Bethlehem, housed inside the 1741 Gemeinhaus, is set to reopen Thursday, June 24 where it will unveil the new exhibition. The reopening follows the restoration of 88 shutters on the exterior of the 1741 Gemeinhaus in April 2021. The refreshed museum space will explore the continued impact of Moravian settlement in Bethlehem and draw connections to Bethlehem today.

Welcoming visitors back to a building steeped in history, The Moravian Legacy connects themes including equal education, innovation, and the arts from the early settlement to today. The exhibit also looks to challenge dominant historical narratives around early Moravian Bethlehem to ask what has been left out and how that informs our understanding of that influence on our community today. The exhibit features over 60 new objects on display including maps, artifacts from missions around the world, and artwork and letters that speak to the influence of Moravians on Bethlehem’s development. An engaging digital component connects the visitor to primary sources and a reading room is offered for continued research and reflection. Installations will change throughout the exhibit, and lectures are to be offered alongside it.

HBMS is proud to welcome M. Rayah Levy as co-curator of The Moravian Legacy. M. Rayah Levy has been working as a librarian for over sixteen years and recently received a grant to bring the voices and the history of Bethlehem’s Black experience alive. Levy spoke to her involvement with the exhibit, “The Moravian Legacy project has taken me into a world filled with unexpected stories. As I plowed through books, articles, and my go-to scholars on Moravian history, I learned and took away many valid lessons. I saw the power of economic empowerment. I saw the meaning of diversity and inclusion. And I saw the ‘beehive’ concept as written by the 19th century Bethlemite, and poet Hilda Doolittle. The early Moravians were the quintessential community of unity.”

Through The Moravian Legacy, visitors will get answers to several questions:

- What did people think when they first encountered the Moravians?
- What drove the Moravians to travel like they did?
- What was Moravian worship like?
- What’s the role of music in daily life?
- How did Moravians gain medical knowledge?
- And more
Have questions of your own that you would like answered? Let HBMS know, you can leave your questions with the admission desk at the Moravian Museum.

An opening reception for *The Moravian Legacy* will take place on June 24 from 5:00-8:00 pm at the Moravian Museum of Bethlehem, 66 W. Church Street, Bethlehem, PA 18018. HBMS members are free, and non-members are $15. Reservations can be made online. The museum will be open to the public on Saturdays and Sundays from 1:00 to 4:00 pm. For more information about the exhibit and how to visit safely please visit the [HBMS website](http://www.hbms.org).

*Historic Bethlehem Museums & Sites* is a not-for-profit institution that brings to life three centuries of American history. Historic Bethlehem tells the story of a small town of great influence, home to some of our nation’s early settlers, to the first pumped municipal water system in the American colonies, and to one of the world’s greatest industrial companies. Historic Bethlehem is located in eastern Pennsylvania, only an hour’s drive north from Philadelphia and 2 hours west of New York City. Historic Bethlehem is an Affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution, part of a National Historic Landmark District, and a designated site on the US Tentative List.

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