"To Learn the Trade of a Potter": Apprenticeship, Emulation, and Deviance in the Wachovian Tradition

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“To Learn the Trade of a Potter:” Apprenticeship, Emulation, and Deviance in the Wachovian Tradition

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Master of Arts

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Approved by the Committee, July 2010

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The eighteenth-century Moravian potters of Bethabara and Salem in North Carolina left behind equal legacies of fine ceramics and interpersonal conflict. The community leadership arbitrated dozens of disagreements between Gottfried Aust, the Salem master and first potter in Bethabara; Rudolf Christ, Aust's apprentice and the next master of Salem; and Philip Jacob Meyer, a young apprentice of both men who left the Moravian community to begin his own pottery in Randolph County, North Carolina. Ample records of arguments and arbitration reveal how the apprenticeship system in Wachovia was created and individually negotiated, hinting at differing expectations for master-apprenticeship and leadership-artisan relationships. By understanding these men through the lens of the European transnational experiment that brought them to North Carolina, a deeper history of the Central European tradition of guilds and family-oriented economy becomes useful in interpreting behavior on the other side of the Atlantic. Aust, a German-born convert from Lutheranism, did not conform as effectively to the new communal, artisan-dominated setting of Wachovia, precipitating tension with his apprentices and the economic leadership. Christ was a more flexible worker, adding to the Moravian repertoire and expanding his consumer base with imitations of English wares, while Meyer continued to reproduce both Moravian marketing strategies and wares produced by both men, introducing some of his own as well. Even outside of Salem Meyer in many ways continued to be Moravian, subject to the same dependent nature of the artisan on his market, the backcountry settler.

Interpreting the Wachovian pottery tradition and the potters themselves on a global scale also brings forth the question of multiple layers of identity. Are these potters and their wares Moravian, German, or backcountry American? This work centers around the hollowwares, stove tiles, and pipe heads of Philip Jacob Meyer, found at the Mount Shepherd Pottery Site in Randolph County. Comparing them to the Wachovian tradition continued by Christ and Aust elicits arguments against "ethnic markers" and "diagnostic artifacts." In particular, Meyer created unique works, such as militaristic stove tiles, that appeared to deviate from both Moravian forms and ideals. However, much like Christ before him, Meyer continued the needed process of deviation and expansion from Central European forms- this time into an Early Republican and post-Creamware Revolution America- that delineated the Moravian potters’ need of outsiders from the beginning of Wachovia’s conception.
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Introduction

In 1776, amid the early rumblings for revolution in North Carolina, Philip Jacob Meyer was just five years old when the ailing surveyor Gottlieb Reuter assumed the temporary role of leader of the Salem Congregation of Wachovia, North Carolina’s Moravian tract. Gottfried Aust, fifty-four years old and master potter of Salem, was in the same Bethabara congregation that for Sunday service heard Reuter sing the hymn:

The chief command is, Love the Lord;
The second, Serve His people here;
What I can do I gladly do,
With thanks to Thee, my Saviour dear.

Summarizing and reinforcing the obligations through action that the Moravians had to one another, Reuter and the congregation no doubt understood the personal nature of this creed. Aust, Meyer, and another potter named Rudolf Christ later entered into multiple master-apprenticeship relationships intended to synchronize with this spiritually-driven interpersonal commitment. They ended as dysfunctional bonds weighed down by intergenerational conflict, challenge to traditional authority, and contact with outsiders that the Moravian community at large could no longer weather. The process by which Meyer, a son of the community, became a “stranger” and non-Moravian potter says much about master-apprentice relationships of second-generation Moravian settlers.

With the name of the potter and the records of the Aufseher Collegium, diarists, church memoirs, we can reconstruct both Meyer’s maturation as a potter and his journey beyond Wachovia through his relationships within the artisan community. Two men dominate this narrative: Gottfried Aust, his first master and the first master potter in Bethabara and Salem, and Rudolph Christ, the second, younger master of the Bethabara

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kilns that allowed Meyer to leave his care and the Moravian community. The conflicts between these three men and the authority of the Collegium delineate the properties of the master-apprentice relationship in Wachovia, the role of the potter in the community, and the ways in which technical innovation progressed in an artisan-dominated community. Through both materiality and interpersonal relationships on the Wachovia tract, I hope to trace the process by which cultural knowledge of “Moravian” lifeways are cultivated, and find what the end product means about and to the artisan. These individuals offer a venue through which to explore how these relationships shifted as the social milieu tied to one’s life work fades beyond Wachovian boundaries.

Germans, Moravians, Artisans

With Philip Jacob Meyer’s story, the issue of identity comes to the forefront as master-apprentice and Moravian-stranger roles are blurred. My goal is to interpret “ethnic” and “religious” influence on artisan work through these interpersonal relationships and the material culture that resulted from these exchanges. The complicated but powerful bond between master and apprentice is crucial in the transfer of knowledge of a trade, but also in negotiating the moral tenets and structure of the
community. Each individual struggled along the “journey of faith” in his own right. As seen in Reuter’s hymn, the central Moravian emphasis on God in individual, everyday action makes the wheel, pipe sagger, and potter “Moravian,” and further relevant to the rest of the community. Thus interpersonal and artistic decisions made inside of the potter’s shop reflect the adaption to the outside market as well as community needs, and are in turn reflective of the flexibility of the Moravian structure itself. This adaptability calls the usefulness of loaded concepts like “declension” and “acculturation” into question. Is a man still Moravian if he leaves Wachovia behind? Is his work still Moravian, even German, if he believes that he is not?

In the broadest sense, studies of religious minorities or other insular groups such as Quakers, Baptists, German Dunkers and the Amish in early American contexts have helped to create a “resistance” model that pits the forces of Anglo-America against the will of cultural survival of European transplants and dissidents. If used out of context (such as when there are no signs of a conscious struggle), this approach can be problematic because it predicts blanket resistance using uniform strategies across ethnic and individual boundaries. Inevitably resistance is followed by the march towards acculturation, often seen as the dilution or blending of a culturally distinct group into the dominant group, all tending towards homogenization. This lends a trajectory history to all that come into contact with the normative course of English-speaking America.²

Moreover, models of resistance and acculturation create two-dimensional portraits of diagnostic practices and quaint folkways, denying groups the ability to legitimately change their own circumstances and values while ascribing existing values to ethnicity.

² The classic work that describes and refutes this approach is Eric Wolf’s Europe and the People Without History. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982.)
This becomes apparent in the fields of archaeology and material culture studies through problematic “diagnostic artifacts,” in which ethnicity or race may ostensibly be determined through key artifacts or structures, i.e., root cellars of African-Americans in slave societies or the stove tiles of Moravians.

In the context of German-Americans, however, works like Edward Chappell’s “Acculturation in the Shenandoah Valley: Rhenish Houses of the Massanutten Settlement” have aided in deconstructing the value-ridden nature of the term “acculturation.” Chappell paints acculturation and culture change (in this case, in the context of the vernacular architecture of German-Americans in Shenandoah) as a conscious decision-making process on the part of the artisan and homeowner, rather than a cataclysmic or negative event characterized by loss. This modification of a “culturalist” understanding of contact solves the “diagnostic problem,” giving agency to entire groups that fail to resist and legitimizing their changes in values and identities.

Providing an economic and social environment in which this change can take place, Johanna Miller Lewis discusses the role of German-American players in the developing western economy in Artisans in the North Carolina Backcountry. Rowan County, used by Lewis here as indicative of larger trends in frontier communities, frequently serves as an ideal case study for the colonial or early Republican backcountry social fabric. Rowan County is extraordinarily well-documented through the Moravian archives and through the trade records that link the town of Salisbury to the rest of the South, and here Lewis draws comparisons between the development of trade in the urban centers of Bethabara and Salem and Salisbury from 1753 to 1770. Lewis posits that “the inhabitants of the North Carolina backwoods patronized…artisan-farmers who supplied
their clientele with basic necessities and even luxury goods that local merchants and their links to the transatlantic economy could not satisfy."³

Inside this artisan-farmer class dwelled the wide range of Moravian craftsmen, Gottfried Aust among the most successful, who competed with other artisans to supply goods to their local community as well as to the trade lines which ran into South Carolina and north to Virginia. Lewis decides ultimately that “Salisbury was supreme by 1759” in comparison to Salem and Bethabara, due to the restrictive nature of non-secular control in the Moravian community.⁴ While I disagree with the idea that the oversight of church leaders was inherently restrictive, Lewis’ down-to-earth and economical approach serves as a supplement to the ideology-based perspectives on Moravian economic choices. The role of the larger trade networks and the market for goods is discussed in the brief chapter on the backwoods economic environment.

Other nuanced and in-depth studies concerning experiences in the Moravian exclusionary milieu draw extensively on the rich resources in the Moravian Archives and Adelaide Fries’ translation of the Records of the Moravians in North Carolina, describe in translated English first-hand perspective on the backcountry and other Moravians. In particular, Daniel Thorp elucidates the early settlement social structure and how it affected insider-outsider relations in The Moravians in Colonial North Carolina: Pluralism on the Southern Frontier. Thorp downplays the conflict that stigmatizes the Carolina backcountry and focuses on “a gradual process by which [religious and ethnic minorities] established links with one another… without obliterating their distinctive

⁴ Lewis, 57.
cultural or religious characteristics.” In his dissertation, “Moravian Colonization of Wachovia, 1753-1772: the Maintenance of Community in Late Colonial North Carolina” Thorp sought to tear down the common presumptuous concept of the early backcountry as entropic and violent, focusing instead on the careful creation and maintenance of both interior community structure in Wachovia and positive relationships with neighbors.

He continued to strike this chord in more recent works, such as “Taverns and Communities: The Case of Rowan County, North Carolina,” which focuses on the relationship between a tavern and its clientele, contending that Germans socialized with other Germans, and Scot-Irish settlers with other Scot-Irish settlers. Despite this concession to a faction-based perspective on the region, Thorp concludes that backcountry settlers “were neither homogenous nor xenophobic” and that, while people grouped themselves by race, class, and gender, “none of the boundaries between these groups was impermeable.” Much like Chappell combated the colonial implications of acculturation as loss, Thorp continues to focus not on the fading of distinct ethnic groups into American homogeneity but on the building of organic, helpful relationships based on like needs (i.e., communication through a common language), backcountry society set apart from the process of homogenization.

Few studies on North Carolina recognize the truly international aspect of the Moravian church, spread wide from Germany to Nicaragua and Pennsylvania. Rather than study collective experiences or social systems in and around Wachovia, Jon Sensbach more recently explored the life of the Moravian slave in A Separate Canaan:

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the Making of an Afro-Moravavian World. Sensbach ties the Middle Passage and Count Zinzendorf’s policies into the African-American experience in Salem, using the detailed biographies of black communicants inside of the church, as well as records of slaves involved in trades, to sensitively portray this experience as individual. This allows for a rare glimpse into the spiritual lives of slaves, some of whom incorporated African folk beliefs into Moravian ideology, and others which rejected Christianity altogether. Likewise, resistance on the part of the individual is well-documented and remarkably varied for such a small community, and Sensbach cites acts from unsuccessful escape attempts to arson. Finally, slaves also created complicated kinship systems which allowed them to create mutual support apart from their masters. This process of creating a slave community inside of the larger Moravian community proves Sensbach’s skill in narrating dual stories of adaptation to the South’s system of slavery, working in tandem with one another.

As for the slaves’ white counterparts, Sensbach delineates the religious ideology that gives way in the first quarter of the eighteenth century, from “fraternialism” (but not equality) felt with blacks to increasing physical, economic and spiritual exclusion. While this time period is often cited as the time that the Moravians became much like their neighbors (culminating in the sale of Salem’s land to outsiders in 1856), A Separate Canaan shows that Moravians could accommodate the system of slavery from the start, seeking to hire blacks from neighbors and (communally) buying slaves from market. During the second and third generations, through gradual acts of exclusivity such as barring blacks from the Kiss of Peace to stopping them from taking part in skilled trades, Moravians fell more in line with their southern neighbors’ consolidation of white power.
Sensbach shows that the nineteenth century brought homogenization not into the larger American fabric, but into the Southern economic system, reinforcing through the uncomfortable subject of slavery that even from the start the Moravian social space was only selectively gated.

Studies that are transnational in scope include Sommer’s *Serving Two Masters: Moravian Brethren in Germany and North Carolina*, which discusses the leadership and ideological ties between the Herrnhut protectorate and Wachovia, while both were in the throes of change and religious declension, the falling away from the original religious standard. Truly comprehensive in the little-studied German side of things, Sommer seeks to understand the religious goals of the Moravians instead of the resulting theocratic structures themselves. While the structure of the Moravian church changes little, and even then through the proper channels of authority in Herrnhut and Salem, the second generation of Moravians in Wachovia defect more often to the outside world, are punished for more serious moral offenses, and speak English day-to-day through interactions with strangers. In using the religious declension model, like Sensbach she paints a picture of generational resistance to acculturation in the American backcountry, old against young, creating a new Moravian-American identity forged in this lasting conflict.

In Sommer’s argument, acculturation is not an external force but an internal combustion reaction set off by individuals that rejected the religious tenets of their fathers. Much as later Puritan generations experienced religious declension that changed their social structure, societies like the Moravian community in which religion and

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government inextricably ran together had difficulty maintaining both unaltered if a generation could not accept one. However, as seen from Thorp's secular perspective, Sommer's narrative cannot explain everything: what makes the first generation so united in ideology in the first place? Could the second generation have rebelled, or in the case of ten boys in the third quarter of the eighteenth century, have actually defected without the promise of the surrounding backcountry environs? While also unable to provide a complete picture of generational culture change, material culture studies and the economic context of the backwoods provide a grounded complement to oft-emphasized study of religious and communal self-identity. Archaeology allows us to uncover the possessions and consumer choices of the backcountry settler as well as artisans' method of supplying their needs.

Old Salem archaeology had its beginning with Stanley South, of the South Carolina Institute of Anthropology and Archaeology. He originally released the seminal work *Historical Archaeology in Wachovia* in 1975 on all of the excavations done in Old Salem and Bethabara during his time as head of archaeology, including the Aust and Christ waster pits and kiln sites. The waster pits, dumps of unfinished or defective pottery, are important in uncovering forms in their various stages of production, such as experimental form or slip designs. However, South prefers to describe the process of excavation, lab analysis and end results, rather than to offer interpretations of the data in any far-reaching "community" or "ethnic" sense. South focuses on material work, and draws minimally on records from the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Art's library card file of Moravian records to provide background. His work is thus discussed in the
second half of this thesis, invaluable for decoration and form comparisons to Meyer’s pottery, the Mt. Shepherd collection in Randolph County.

*Moravian Potters in North Carolina*, by John Bivins, is extensively researched and remains the sole large work to frame the pottery of Bethabara and Salem as the work of individual potters. Refuting Stanley South’s results with his own conclusions, Bivins writes extensively about the web of apprentices and masters and the occasional English journeyman that resulted in new forms and bench techniques.

However, Bivins fails to contextualize beyond the individual potter, stopping short of placing him in the community that formed him. This causes several important misinterpretations, particularly over the delicate concern of character reconstruction. In attempting to reconstruct everyday life in the pottery shop, Bivins characterizes Aust floridly, conjecturing in apprentice relations he contained “no monumental reserve of tact and self-control. He was a strong-willed and creative artisan with an artistic temperament to match.”8 Thinking of apprentice relationships as intuitively father-son, Bivins saw the rejections of Aust’s pleas to keep his son at the pottery shop as dismissive of Aust’s ability to punish apprentices. Bivins failed to acknowledge the broader pattern at work: in Wachovia almost all sons were separated from their fathers for the period of the apprenticeship, as an extension of their education in the larger church family. Either way, Bivins’ images of the character of the “bad boy” apprentices and the angry, tortured Aust are the sources of humor and legend since their dissemination almost four decades ago.9 I hope to put these “characters” back in their environments, and explain their volatile relationships and fascinating personalities in eighteenth-century context.

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9 Ibid., 50.
Further, Bivins separated the pottery designs and forms into three “periods,” defined roughly by the predominance of each master of Salem: Aust, Christ (under the influence of English journeymen), and finally later masters, who threw and molded largely Americanized wares. While he does acknowledge that Aust continued to make traditional wares into the “middle period” at the same time that Christ made English-influenced wares, Bivins implicitly presents one as conspicuously “replaced.” This was not the case. Bivins sees the individual choice in firing and selling English-style wares, but does little to recognize creativity beyond the Collegium-sanctioned “master potters” of Salem, viewing them as the directors of innovation and transition between these periods. Apprentices, potters in other townships in Wachovia, and non-English American influences (besides the occasional throwback to central European techniques when convenient) were obviously ignored in making these typologies. A framework that charts change beyond the individual potter, such as during the potter’s tenure as master or through interactions and competition with other trading communities, may have provided for a less essentialist analysis.

Moravian potters earned a second look as a feature in the 2009 issue of Robert Hunter’s *Ceramics in America*, a large portion of which is devoted to methodologies and meaning of eighteenth-century potting techniques. The Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts’ Johanna Brown detailed Christ’s and Krause’s forays into press-molding and the luxury market in “Tradition and Adaption in Moravian Press-Molded Earthenware.” Also in the same issue, an effort to move beyond the potters’ methodologies and into the symbolism of Moravian motifs was undertaken Johanna Brown and Luke Beckerdite. In the same issues of *Ceramics in America*, the authors

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10 Bivins, 115.
challenge Bivins’ notion of Aust as quintessentially Old World and Christ as an innovator by focusing on the continuation instead of fragmentation of the Moravian earthenware tradition. By tightening and reworking Moravian typologies, they delve into the symbolism of recurring motifs previously taken for granted as European holdovers, including the pomegranate, lily-of-the-valley and, of course, the Moravian star. While Brown and Beckerdite acknowledge that intent in design “will never be fully interpreted,” they conclude ultimately that subtly religious or naturalistic motifs “allowed [Moravians] to express beliefs and values without drawing criticism from outsiders or making their products less marketable.”

Keeping thoughts of deeper meanings in glazes and slips in mind, one wonders about the literal defection of Philip Jacob Meyer to the outside world, his continued use of these designs loaded with meaning, and what they meant to him in a non-Moravian environment.

Archaeologist Alain Outlaw and Randolph County historian L. Mackay Whatley are the primary experts on Meyer’s pottery kiln and workshop, known locally as the Mount Shepherd Pottery Site. Alain Outlaw first excavated the site during the 1974 and 1975 field seasons, and has been responsible for the primary field reports, landmark nominations, and multiple articles in the series Ceramics in America extolling the importance of a non-English site to North Carolina pottery history, a history ironically dominated by Moravian artisans. In “Backcountry Sophistication,” Outlaw briefly provides evidence of the true skill and expertise on Meyer’s part. In “Rediscovered: The Mount Shepherd Pottery Site in Randolph County, North Carolina,” published alongside of Brown’s piece in Ceramics in America, Outlaw shoulders the task of delineating

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Meyer’s repertoire from stove tiles to tea cans, suggesting examples of unbroken ceramic vessels that may have originated in Meyer’s kiln. He draws typological connections between the vessel forms of Christ, Aust, and potter Gottlob Krause and several of those found in the Mount Shepherd collection, recommending future research in “elemental analysis of clay bodies” in order to sort between Meyer’s work and similar Piedmont potters. Like South at Old Salem, Outlaw’s emphasis is on material achievement instead of the potter and his background, and his work accordingly contributes to the second half of this paper.

Whatley provides the historical face and a context to Mount Shepherd lacking from Outlaw’s earlier works. In particular, Whatley’s 1980 Journal of Early Southern Decorative Arts article “The Mount Shepherd Pottery: Correlating Archaeology and History” was the first to tag Meyer as the potter at Mount Shepherd. With years of research, Whatley used documentary sources from the state archives, county register of deeds and the North Carolina court system to rewrite Meyer’s life and put his pottery, particularly stove tiles as Whatley’s specialty, into context. He effectively correlates the occupation dates of the Mount Shepherd site (somewhere between 1790 and 1800) with the exit and reappearance of Meyer from Aust’s and Christ’s shops and in Bethabara and Salem homes. Without this crucial context, this paper and Outlaw’s later work would not have been possible. Combinations of material culture studies and grounded document research like Whatley’s are needed to expand and clarify images of both second-generation Moravians and backcountry artisans like Meyer.

Part I

The Sun Never Sets on Zinzendorf

The history and ideologies of the Moravian Church in Central Europe have deep roots in the Hussite movements of the 14th and 15th centuries. This movement was transformed into the Renewed Unity of the Brethren, the 18th-century church, by one dynamic character, Count Nicolaus Ludwig Zinzendorf. A college-educated Württemburg noble, he was aware of the “sifting” migrations and displacement of peoples around his German estate of Herrnhut. He supplemented his interest in separatist Protestantism and his distaste for high, intellectual theology by welcoming Protestant immigrants from several German states into his protection on conditions. Members of the Unity, either of the faith before migrating to Herrnhut or converts, pledged faith through action and work through “God-prescribed duty”: “no action carried among us is to be looked down upon as in itself mean or despicable.” All actions were instilled with meaning: “human regulations and customs [are perpetuated] in a spirit of meekness, love and obedience, till the Lord himself brings about a change.”

Zinzendorf began to plan missionary efforts in the 1730s, and settlers arrived in Africa, the Caribbean, South American, and the eastern North American seaboard brimming with hopes of preaching to the indigenous peoples of the Atlantic World. The sale of Wachovia, a 100,000 acre tract of land bought from the Earl of Granville, was negotiated by the Count himself in the early 1750s. In his efforts in North Carolina, Zinzendorf worked hardest to “secure the settlement’s economic, social, and religious independence from the world beyond its boundaries,” but left the protectorate

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simultaneously open to traders and non-Brethren farmers. This delicate concept of "self-sufficiency" based on a commercial economy dependent on the needs of outsiders also characterized the Unity's colonization and missionary efforts in other areas.

The North Carolina mission began in October of 1753 with men chosen specifically for their trades, age, and good health: a doctor, a few carpenters, one livestock keeper, and supervisors and a minister to keep order. This small group of fewer than two dozen men was supplemented periodically by those sent down from Bethlehem, the flagship North American settlement in Pennsylvania, and in 1755 the state of construction was pronounced ready to accommodate women and families. Twenty-five couples, some with children, travelled south to join the original party, and the choir organizational system that kept order in Hermhut shortly took root to handle both religious and secular daily life. The Aufseher Collegium was established to direct and support the collective economic system of farmers and artisans, and the Elder's Conference and Congregation Council handled religious affairs. Bethabara was declared the first town in Wachovia, and became the center of settlement life until the incorporation of Salem. These institutions, and the creation of Bethabara under the theocratic government, were structured specifically to provide support and guidance through all commercial and personal or family trials and transitions. As more towns and governing bodies were introduced and changed as the settlement developed, the foundational structures are crucial to the narrative of the pottery's masters and apprentices that deal with the confluence of these problems.

\[14\] Ibid., 57.
Old World Ties

During the mid-eighteenth century, Moravian religious life did not attract nobles, or the relatively immobile peasants for early modern Germany, but rather a class of economically viable and skilled artisans who contributed their products and services to the new Ortsgemeine. Rather than invest in agriculture, the Moravians of Germany prospered under a more urban environment and economy in a “Städtchen,” or little town.

For the males of the Unity of Brethren, the artisan communities both in Germany and America provide systems of support and the conferral of knowledge of a skilled trade from a literal “master” unto an apprentice. Overlapping, complex systems that linked artisans together through guilds, families, or the master-apprentice relationship were clearly not distinctly Moravian, but rather indicative of wider European trends. The unique, strict Moravian structure of the choir system and the responsibility to live a Godly life everyday worked in tandem with ideas about artisanship already in existence.

Guilds, for example, popular in Central Europe until the late eighteenth century, both protected artisans of a given trade and brought them to a standard of performance. Controlling the transfer of knowledge about the trade, guilds often imposed a specific length of apprenticeship and requirements for passage into the realm of ‘master’ that guaranteed quality work. By 1790, the Unity in Herrnhut occasionally utilized the guild systems of the communities around them, while abolishing the system inside of the Gemeine. This selective use of guilds, and control of which members of the Gemeine could join which guild, allowed for the protection of membership in a trade organization

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15 Term for “religious settlement.” The plural is Ortsgemeinen.
16 Sommer, 11.
without the complication of another economic structure inside of the more streamlined Moravian community.\textsuperscript{18}

In Wachovia, the Unity instead relied on the \textit{Oeconomie}, the equivalent of a shared bank account for all community members, and after the Oeconomie's closing a new leadership body, the \textit{Aufseher Collegium}, to function in place of a guild. A combination of secular and religious leadership, often overlapping through individuals involved in both sides, acted for the community as one person in the eyes of North Carolina law. While incorporating all of the trades needed for a self-sufficient community, the elected leaders (who generally were also church elders), placed apprentices, found in Pennsylvania and Herrnhut new workers to replace those who had died or left, put pressure on underperforming laborers, and pooled resources to buy corn and wheat from outside sources. The members of the Aufseher Collegium, all artisans and church leaders in the community, controlled interpersonal conflict and apprentice placement in the settlement and maintained a working knowledge of each artisan's labor and material needs as well as the process of his work. In the records of the Collegium, the members, either respective community or religious leaders or masters of their respective trades, collectively showed an extensive technical knowledge of all trades at Wachovia, and dutifully recorded progress made toward expansion of the individual trades and towards the completion of the town of Salem.\textsuperscript{19} The necessity for this can be explained by the need to report back to missionary leadership in Herrnhut; Zinzendorf himself took a great interest in the economic development, farming activities, and residential planning of the community.

\textsuperscript{18} Sommer, 138.
\textsuperscript{19} In the context of Aust, the Collegium made sure to note his progress from plain earthenwares to multiple glazes and forms (Bivins, Chapter 5).
The moral interests of the artisan community were closely combined with economic concerns: in both Herrnhut and Wachovia, members of the Aufseher Collegium were often artisans, but also often members of church leadership, consistently including the head minister.20 Members of both were chosen because of their outstanding moral conduct and services to the community, and correspondingly masters of each trade were invited to join and lead in the Congregation Council of the church.

Critically, the Collegium reduced tension in the artisan community by reducing competition. If two artisans worked at the same marketable trade, they would divide and specialize, or, as Wachovia developed, one would be sent to a different settlement on the tract to supply and serve the Moravians there.21 In like spirit, apprentice-master relationships were often set up in trial form, or dissolved completely, if leaders predicted or noticed tension.22

The streamlined Moravian system is defined by the well-ordered creation of choir system, which separated community members by gender, age and stage of life for the purposes of daily activity and worship. Children attended a combination of lessons and planned activities, while day laborers attended night classes with their respective choirs. In the context of apprenticeship system, a transition between choirs meant that teenage boys between the ages of eleven and fourteen were separated from their parents and either took up a trade as apprentices or worked full time in the fields and became members of the Single Brothers Choir. Upon consensus of its members the Aufseher

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20 Sommer, 10.
21 This is the case with Rudolph Christ and Gottfried Aust, mentioned later. It is also the earlier, alternative explanation of Philip Jacob Meyer's leave of the community in 1791. See John Bivins, 63.
Collegium decided which life path each child would take. Zinzendorf and other leaders set a precedent by discouraging farm work in Herrnhut. Instead, they advocated that settlers take to trade, which promised geographical mobility, usefulness in new settlements, and a continuation of the “Städtchen” model. Zinzendorf had hope for Wachovia as a semi-Utopian developed community planned alongside the European model, but the reality of poor or unpredictable travel and communication matched other backcountry self-sustaining settlements around them: the backcountry was not and would never be ready for a semi-feudal system. Because of early needs, many children took up farming and manual labor instead of a marketable trade.

Officials in Herrnhut assumed the existence of a similar artisan class in the backcountry, and when they found none made one themselves. Lewis elaborates with a comparative approach between the practices of artisans inside and outside of the Moravian community in Rowan County. Assuming that the behavior of Rowan County artisans is indicative of the backcountry economic climate at large, we learn much about the reality of artisans as a group. For one, non-Moravian artisans in Rowan County were not a “class”: they lacked political cohesion or group consciousness that their eastern, urban counterparts had for so long used to their advantage. This was due to the rural nature of the backcountry and the backgrounds of the artisans and their families. “New” settlers were rarely recent immigrants, but rather came away from the rising land prices and population pressures of Pennsylvania and Virginia, staking claims next to people that they knew already regardless of their neighbor’s occupation.

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23 Ibid., 72.
24 Sommer, Serving Two Masters, 11.
25 Lewis, 22.
In the face of competition, the lack of centralization that dictated this social separateness perpetuated itself. Rather than face another artisan that offered a like trade, rivals in Rowan County often simply moved west, where their services were needed and land was cheaper. For example, besides Aust, there was one other potter in 1759 in Rowan County. By 1770, only two individual potters and one pottery-making couple served Salisbury despite the enormous backlogged demand documented at the Bethabara shop.26

The Aufseher Collegium, of course, ensured cooperation by splitting production of goods per the individual, such as when the Aust-Christ split created the arbitrary separation between the production of washed and unwashed wares, discussed below. The market both inside and outside of Wachovia was the same group of semi-local backcountry farmers, who relied on their neighbors for utilitarian wares and imported some expensive ceramics as the desire for luxury goods expanded during “the Creamware Revolution” in the third quarter of the eighteenth century.27

The Moravian enterprise, able to organize artisans as a body and import new ones on demand from Pennsylvania and Germany, focused their efforts on diversifying their repertoire. Lewis writes that “Moravians were the sole producers of six of the new consumer trades” of luxury goods, from cut gravestones to watches.28 Simultaneously, one could argue that since Aust’s arrival in the 1750s Moravian artisans had been marketing luxury goods, as his and his apprentices’ wares, although made of unrefined clay and usually not sold in sets, were often decorated in detail extraordinary for utilitarian pieces. Either way, this monopoly on the rare arts gave the Moravians an

26 Ibid., 72.
27 Ibid., 58.
28 Ibid., 73.
advantage. While Aust continued to work with unwashed earthenwares and pipes, the expansion and experimentation in Christ’s Bethabara kiln in refined earthenwares that were normally imported, and a dabbling in the arts of stoneware and faience, is testament to diversification over time and the effort to keep in step with imported ceramics. This system also gave wayward apprentices leverage in an understanding of both their trade and their backcountry neighbors. Thorp shows that out of the ten people to leave the community before 1772, six had training as artisans. Meyer left much later, but may have recognized the relative independence in economic and social outsider interaction that the artisan master receives, enough perhaps to glimpse the possibility of autonomy.

Points on a Star

The people that understood trade in the Moravian community, and those that had the clearest understanding of autonomy and the ways of outsiders, were the oft-ignored storekeepers and tavernkeepers that marketed goods made by artisans. In Pluralism on the Southern Frontier, Daniel Thorp argues that a commonality or solidarity between the multiple religious and ethnic minorities in the backcountry created a complex network of mutually helpful neighbors. Whether or not this optimistic analysis is fair, Moravians regarded most settlers collectively as “strangers” and the Unity’s understandings of the surrounding peoples and their needs as “different” largely governed their exclusionary policies towards outsiders and the necessity of designated brethren to serve as contact points.

Contact points were the result of both necessity of outsiders and Moravian entrepreneurial spirit. Lacking the infrastructure to enforce colonial or Anglican laws (such as the requirement that a church be built in Rowan County), the typical

backcountry justice of the peace often allowed religious minority settlements their own infrastructure and policies. New settlers of multiple origins began to latch onto these smaller community centers, and in Wachovia “strangers” incorporated their own towns south of Bethabara and Salem on rented homesteads. In 1774, the Moravian church began to educate children from outside of the Society for a fee, and Quakers and Presbyterians followed suit in their own townships. The Moravians’ first doctor, Hans Martin Kalberlahn, “was soon in great demand all over the neighborhood, to a distance of sixty miles.”

The Moravians in Wachovia solved the obvious dissonance between a commercial economy and an exclusive and isolated religious order by turning to trusted community members as contact points. In Bethabara and later Salem, these men and their families served as shopkeepers, tavern owners, and oftentimes English-speakers that settled outside legal or land disputes on behalf of the primarily German-speaking Congregation. Religious leaders thought settling conflicts with non-Moravian neighbors “unpleasant” and found “conduct...is so ungodly” in the woods outside of Wachovia. As those with the most control over the reputation and business dealings with backcountry neighbors, contact points must be trusted members of the community and attune themselves to the needs of the backcountry. While the artisan made the product, the trader and the tavern keeper were responsible for the upkeep of a commercial economy by interpreting demand. In return, the myriad of lower-class farmers paid for

30 Ibid., 283.
32 Sommer’s brilliant discussion of these men and women as a “buffer zone” between the community and the North Carolina wilderness is found in her chapter, “Order in the Wilderness,” on creating social boundaries with members in the backcountry.
artisan work with the products of their own labor: much-needed corn, barley and wheat were used in place of money or as down payment on larger loans.

Philip Jacob Meyer’s father, Jacob Meyer, Sr., was one such contact point. The tavern, a church-owned enterprise, was located towards the edge of the town to avoid daily interaction between townspeople and the travelers who utilized it. Zinzendorf frowned upon drinking as an action deviating from everyday social good, and the settlers at Wachovia were correspondingly discouraged from partaking in the alcohol they brewed. The structure of the Salem tavern enunciated this separation from non-Moravians with a first floor without windows facing the street, such that townspeople passing would not be privy to the act of drinking. The people inside the tavern, Meyer and his family, were necessarily “exposed” to this deviant behavior. At once, the Collegium and the church officials both trusted Meyer with the monetary concerns and diplomatic relations of their community, while worrying about his moral well-being and the moral inculcation of his children. After the Meyer boys showed signs of straying, it became tradition to separate children from their tavern-keeping parents at an early age and house them with the Single Brothers or an adopted family.

In separating young Meyer from one area of outside contact, they soon placed him in another. Aust’s pottery shop sold wares directly to merchants and other settlers, exposing apprentices to the unseemly but necessary processes of bargaining and conversation with outsiders. In managing the reputation of the community, Aust needed extra management himself. When continental currency inflated during the middle years of the American Revolution, the potter insisted on taking only silver money or “country
goods" for his pottery, even though most yeoman farmers could not provide.\textsuperscript{34} In a tense political climate in which the Unity sought to stay neutral, this unpleasant negotiation was acutely unwanted.

Aust was also chastised for the more serious crime of speaking of internal Moravian affairs to outsiders in his pottery shop at Salem in 1779. Like in many exclusionary groups, secrecy in church practices and internal meetings bonds members to one another through a common, privileged knowledge and mutual pledges of accountability for this knowledge. For this bond to break at a point of outside contact threatens the exclusionary meaning of these bonds. The Elder's Conference reacted severely:

"Brother Aust has asked about a rumor circulating among outsiders, that a man had heard in the potter's shop that the Saviour [the Lot] had not permitted a Petition to go from us to the Assembly. Aust says he knows nothing about it. It will therefore be necessary in today's meeting of communicant members, that an important address of the sainted disciple [Count Zinzendorf] in the year of 1758, on "Theocracy and the Use of the Lot" be read, in order to avoid unnecessary discussion of congregation secrets before strangers."

Whether or not Aust was at fault, this event not only reflects the issue of secrecy and defense of the Moravian traditions (evidenced by Zinzendorf's high-handed theological doctrine), but the deep concern that the church leadership felt about other settlers' views of them. This was an acute worry during the Revolutionary War. The Moravians protested their neutrality, and at militia gatherings and church meetings their "outsider" customers and traders wondered at their neighbors' absence.\textsuperscript{35} Contact points ultimately toed a delicate line, responsible for their trade and the responsibilities of Godly

\textsuperscript{34} Aufseher Collegium, 10 February 1779.
\textsuperscript{35} Thorp. \textit{The Moravian Community in Colonial North Carolina}, 137.
social action, but also for “treat[ing] the strangers in the most polite way possible, so that they do not have any reason to talk about the community in a bad way.”

“Bad Company”
However, despite what Lewis suggests, the artisan community did not fail to expand and diversify in the face of a different cultural environment. Gottfried Aust, one of a handful of the most prolific artisans of the first generation of North Carolina’s Moravian settlers, symbolizes a successful relationship between the artisan and Oeconomie and Aufseher Collegium upon his arrival in North Carolina. Born in Silesia, Germany in 1722 as a Lutheran, he emigrated to Herrnhut and converted to the Moravian faith “by the Savior without intermediary [by choice].” He learned the weaving of linen from his father as his first trade and perfected the art of throwing unwashed earthenwares under Brother Sober of Herrnhut.

In 1754, Aust joined Moravian missionary efforts in the Western hemisphere. He journeyed through continental Europe and boarded an English ship to the Pennsylvania coast, settling in the Unity’s flagship community, Bethlehem. There, he began to throw pottery of his own as a hired journeyman before leaving in 1755 for Wachovia. From 1755 to 1788, he worked as the first master potter of Bethabara and then of Salem, and his wares were bought by Moravians and non-Moravians in Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Virginia, and the surrounding Piedmont settlements.

The fledgling community in Wachovia was astonished by the financial success Aust almost immediately created for the Oeconomie. The potter fired his first batch in 1756 after almost a year of gathering supplies and building his shop on Lot 48 of

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36 Bivins, 29.
37 Bethlehem Diary, Moravian Archives, Bethlehem, 14.
However, after only five or six years of making the necessary crocks, jars, and plates for the Brethren, tradesmen came from Salisbury, Pine Tree, and other key trading points on the Catawba River to purchase wagonloads. As a decade passed, the popularity of his earthenwares became such that in May of 1770:

There was an unusual concours of visitors, some coming from sixty or eighty miles, to buy milk crocks and pans in our pottery. They bought the entire stock, not one piece was left; many could only get half they wanted, and others, who come too late, could find none. They were promised more next week.

This was not the last time that Aust would cause an inundation of strangers in Wachovia’s trading centers. Other backcountry folk were not interested in the Central European artistry of dish and pint cup sets, which Aust also produced, but rather in meeting the more universal needs of the small plantation: milk crocks and pans, contained in cool places, were necessary for sanitation and allowed milk to stay fresh longer. In North Carolina, Aust’s work reflects three marks of influence: that of the distinctly Central European ceramic tradition, the reality of the needs of the backcountry, and the religious symbolism of the Moravian Church. With this new large demand in mind, Aust defined Wachovia’s pottery trade for the rest of the eighteenth-century by not only producing cheap utilitarian wares on a large scale to supply his backcountry neighbors, but also by standardizing prices according to size and type of vessel to be sold in the store and out of his shop (a Roman numeral system marked the bottoms of Aust’s utilitarian earthenware pottery into the nineteenth century). Within a few years past

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38 The pottery, homes, choirs, and other community buildings were organized before they were built onto numbered lots. The pottery at Salem was built on Lot 48.
39 Fries, Records of the Moravians in North Carolina, Volume I, 253, 269.
40 Fries, Records of the Moravians in North Carolina, Volume I, 412.
initial firings, Aust’s pottery shop in Bethabara became of the two highest-grossing enterprises of the Oeconomie.42

Rudolph Christ, one of Aust’s many apprentices, emigrated as a young boy from Laufen, Württemburg and began his apprenticeship training in Wachovia under a gunsmith. He arrived in Bethabara in 1764 at the age of fourteen and was not apprenticed to Aust until much older, in 1772. He proved to be a disagreeable protégé; the Collegium cited his penchant for hunting in the woods during the day rather than aiding Aust in the shop.43

While an apprentice under Aust, Christ was privy to the brief stays of at least two English journeymen, including maker of “Queen’s Ware” and white salt-glazed stoneware, William Ellis, who taught Aust the work of the “potter’s bench” rather than the wheel. Aust helped Ellis set up an experimental kiln next to his own, but made his feelings known that he “tried not to draw [information] from this man.”44 On the other hand, in his enthusiasm Christ was apprehended shortly for “carr[ying] away... out of the pottery several forms [molds] which are used for flowers for the fine pottery.”45 Aust adhered consciously and intentionally to the old forms that he sold, but Christ was apparently sold on the English forms. The molding process, instead of the irregular wheel-throwing technique, offered consistency, standardization, and guaranteed a burgeoning Anglo-American market. The Collegium, after much debate and stalling, recognized the deadly combination of diverging personalities and talents, and acted the part of the guild: Aust would make only pottery made of unwashed clay (i.e., utilitarian

42 Lewis, 40.
44 Bivins, 25.
45 Ibid., 27.
vessels and slip-trailed plates), and Christ would only make pottery in his shop with washed, or refined, clay. Christ was right to be anxious to begin manufacture of English forms; the market for molded creamware during and after the Revolution was enormous. He quickly outstripped Aust’s Salem pottery shop in sales, pulling $650 dollars annually to Aust’s former $400.46 When Aust passed away in Pennsylvania, Christ became the master potter of Salem and continued to experiment with both English molds and vernacular forms. His famous and remarkably diverse animal bottles and ceramic figurines prove creativity in a molding technique used ironically for mass production.47

Last, born in 1771 in Bethabara, Philip Jacob Meyer represents the third generation of potter and second generation of Wachovia resident. Leaving his tavern-keeper parents for the Single Brothers House as a young boy, he did not enter Aust’s service as an apprentice until 1786, at the age of fifteen. The Collegium recorded that, “according to [his] own testimony, [he] had a very bad childhood [and] did not have any supervision.”48 Aust and Meyer fell into conflict by 1788, and after Aust passed away Christ posed an ultimatum “in a friendly and serious tone” to cease make good his role of the apprentice to Christ or leave the community.49

The Collegium voiced Meyer’s own sentiment in their oscillations over the fate of such a young transgressor, writing that “Philip Jacob Meyer...is not yet old enough to leave the community, though it would be well not to keep him because it is better for such people, who do not want to stay in the community, to go before they influence

46 Ibid., 56.
47 “...there was the funeral of the oldest member of the congregation here, the married Br. Rud. Christ, Sr., who fell asleep on the 26th.” Unknown personal memoir, MESDA card file, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.
48 Aufseher Collegium, 9 June 1789.
49 Ibid., 10 March 1789.
In the summer of 1789, he formally took leave to travel North Carolina in search of work with a friend, and came back to Bethabara to visit in November. The members of the Collegium understandably anticipated the tension between an “outsider” who had once been one of them and whose actions were a nonverbal denouncement of the Moravian way of life, and the rest of the community that recognized him simultaneously as family and as “stranger.” They stated simply that, “The Collegium does not think that we can permit Jac. Meyer…who…left the community and returned for a while and lived here in Bethabara, to stay here because his bad company [could] do more harm than real strangers.” This is the last mention of Meyer in the Collegium minutes.

Ties that Bind

How is a child apprentice nurtured into an adult in Moravian North Carolina, and how do we explain three remarkably different outcomes of one strict system? There are multiple influences that compete for and work to control a child’s time, living quarters, and human contact. The relationships between a child and parent, a Brother and the Unity, and an apprentice and master were all carefully regulated by the rules and intervention of the Collegium. While not mutually exclusive, all three ties are responsible for the moral upbringing of the individual, his attachments to his community, and the transfer of knowledge that makes the man both an artisan and a Moravian.

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50 Ibid., 9 June 1789.
51 Aufseher Collegium, 3 November 1789.
The apprenticeship system in Wachovia was a dual function of the state and the Moravian community. Apprenticeship papers were brought before the Rowan County justice of the peace, who laid out for responsible parties the traditional and basic responsibilities of master to apprentice, including food, clothing, and shelter. The Aufseher Collegium laid out their moral counterpart to these expectations of apprentice to master: “Young people who are being trained to work in our midst, might accompany their work with Industry, Faithfulness, Ability, and Good Behavior, laying aside all desire for convenience or profit that would impair or spoil their work.” As Reuter underlined in his hymn, the irreducible tie between moral strength and the quality of work is explained in relief by the “desire” for worldly profit that correspondingly spoils the strength of the product. Further, the separation between the world of “young people” and “our midst,” the sphere of artisans, represents a distinct schism defined by a

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52 See Indenture, unknown apprentice, 19th century, copy in MESDA research library.
53 Aufseher Collegium, 16 April 1772.
difference in two kinds of “quality” that the apprenticeship enterprise bridges. The Moravian ideology that informs this relationship is centered on the self-perpetuating cycle created by “Faithfulness” and “Good Behavior,” both responsibilities of the apprentice for inculcating and maturing the self.

The apprenticeship system created by the colony of North Carolina was similar to the pre-established Moravian system in structure but not in function. In general, like in Wachovia, the North Carolina system bound out a young boy to be cared for and taught a trade by a man who had rights taken from the boy’s parents, cultivating him into an adult until a time that the boy could be a productive member of the artisan or farming community. Like the Aufseher Collegium, the North Carolina county courts guaranteed this relationship with a contract between the master and the court (conspicuously, without the parents’ or child’s involvement in both cases). As the actions of Jacob Meyer, Sr. show below, the Moravians, like the North Carolina superior courts, granted a voice to parents concerned about their child’s welfare and the courts (and the Aufseher Collegium) in turn could redistribute apprentices according to grievances. Inside and outside of the bounds of Wachovia, a delicate balance was struck between control of the governing body, master, and parent over the welfare of the child.

Fundamentally, the functions of the system beyond preserving the welfare of a young apprentice were different. North Carolina’s 1715 Act Concerning Orphans and the 1762 improvement An Act for the Better Care of Orphans, and Security and Management established the apprenticeship system as a funnel with which to catch the poor, much like in urban areas of England. An “orphan” was defined not only as a parentless child but also fatherless child, separating women from their children (from infancy to teenage
years) when no male figure was appointed by will of the father. This law scooped up children born out of wedlock and those with no other male kinship ties to support them, statistically targeting the poorer classes of society. 

However, poorer and middling-classed parents also took action to apprentice their children when they came of age, but in these deliberate cases would have more control over to whom their children were apprenticed and what trade they would learn.

Masters served in loco parentis to these children, by law providing them with their basic needs, training in reading and writing, and freedom dues at the end of their term (eighteen years old for girls, twenty-one for boys). Unlike in the Moravian system, disgruntled apprentices could sue for redress in lower courts, and records of exercise of this right give us a glimpse into transgressions on the part of masters, including ill treatment, lack of basic shelter and food, and the use of apprentice labor past the legal age. 

The use of the younger, poorer classes to provide needed labor exposed them to exploitation by their economic and social betters. This was not the case in the Moravian community, and it is easy to understand why the Aufseher Collegium hoped for no state entanglements. Moravian artisans not only needed labor, but also continual social cohesion and tranquility amongst a community where all (white) Brethren were considered equal in the eyes of the church. The address of all of involved parties—the members of the Collegium, the master, and the parents of the apprentices—as bound to one another spiritually increased their responsibility toward each other through the care of the child.

55 Ibid., 24.
56 Suspect Relations?
Lewis, in her analysis of the Moravian apprenticeship system, views the apprentice as the means through which to fulfill a need for labor. But if so, why not get the boys from outside the community, as the Collegium did with farmhands and slaves? The apprenticeship system here is special and important to the inculcation of future community members, fitting into a larger pattern of close supervision and protection. Relative to North Carolina laws, the Moravian community provided care for boys outside of the apprenticeship system, and thus circumnavigated the need to place unprotected children with artisans in need of labor. In 1761, the Nursery was set up for the two young children of Christina Krause, the first orphans of Bethabara too young to enter the Boys’ or Girls’ choirs. The choir system provided training in reading, writing, and church membership that brought literate and religiously-schooled children into an apprenticeship. In early years, the Oeconomie provided relatively equal resources to families and their apprenticeship charges, ensuring for the artisans that their charges’ needs were met. Finally, the Aufseher Collegium heard complaints of disorder or misconduct on the parts of the master, apprentices, parents, or the outside community.

The only people not involved in reporting issues were the apprentices themselves, who, in the scope of this study, never reported their master in the pottery unfit or irresponsible though involved in actions rebelling against him. It was the responsibility of others to report not mistreatment or misconduct, but the conflict which threatened that other responsibility of the artisan to the apprentice: spiritual responsibility as a working person. While North Carolina law ordered masters to cultivate in teenagers secular

57 Fries, Records of the Moravians in North Carolina, Volume I, 237.
“habits of industry and morality,” it was crucial that Moravian children understand work as a physical representation of their connection to God.  

This is shown in the punishment of apprentices, a process that involved both secular and religious facets of daily life. During the first week of 1769, two Bethabara boys, perhaps apprenticed to the baker, had run away from Wachovia and hired their work out to strangers. Another two apprentices had planned to follow. These boys were brought back and “before a committee of five leading Brethren” denied religious services and attendance of the Boys Festival, and thereafter allowed no free time, remaining under constant supervision in the bakery. Four days later, after “having been very insolent ever since the beginning of the trouble,” one of these boys “fired a gun into a keg of oil.” Corporal punishment was used against an apprentice for the first time in Bethabara when a whipping was administered by two of the adult artisans. The boys offered formal apologies and were readmitted to church functions, although one boy, unhappy in Bethabara, left for Pennsylvania to rejoin his family.  

Unsurprisingly, this tumultuous week in 1769 brought major change to the apprenticeship system in Wachovia. Rather than masters stand an Elternstatt or in loco parentis, legal apprenticeships were drawn up and signed in front of Justice Loesch, starting a new tradition only a few days after the whipping was carried out. The relatively interchangeable use of the church’s community power and secular, physical punishment against transgressions speaks to their connection. Seemingly secular acts like running away and insolence, caused by dissatisfaction with a master, were taken by the

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59 Fries, Records of the Moravians in North Carolina, Volume I, 386.
60 Ibid., 387.
61 Ibid., 387.
Moravian leadership as a rebellion against the community standards and therefore the church. That, rather than whipping, temporary exile from church functions would take precedence indicates that the offending boys primarily violated a moral, religious code. Far from portraying the problem as a result of interpersonal conflict, the Bethlehem Diary does not even mention the name of the master to these boys, his actions to control them, or his reaction to their punishment or improved behavior, as was seen in the records of verbal sparring between Aust and Christ. Resorting to legally binding the apprentices to their masters did not change the emphasis on morality and community codes, but reinforced them by separating the role of the parent (the an Elternstatt status) from the master, childhood from work. According to the Wachovia Diary, both the contract and the an Elternstatt standing were equally binding, but the apprentice rather than the son "was not his own master, but they must yield obedient service until they were of age." This development, born of the guild system but now uniquely Wachovian, created the system and logic that Aust and Christ utilized as master potters.

On the ground, apprenticeship to the potter was a response to the need of labor in the pottery shop. The master would confer this upon the Collegium, which typically would pick a boy in his early teens as needed. Apprentices were ostensibly in the workspace with the master for the entire work day, although, for instance, Aust was accused by Meyer’s father of “lack of supervision in the pottery shop.” During lulls in activity, an apprentice would be hired out to work elsewhere, and some apprentices were assigned other community duties, like chimney-sweeping. Apprentices took part in almost all of the steps in the process; Aust facilitated this with three or four wheels.

62 Ibid., 386.
63 Aufseher Collegium, 30 May 1786.
operating simultaneously in the pottery shop, moving everyone through the steps of pottery formation at the same time.\textsuperscript{64}

Apprentices were moreover trusted members of the household, and took part in sales, interacted with outsiders, and slept in the shop during bouts of theft and highwayman robberies. In one instance, apprentice Daniel Krause “shot towards robbers to frighten them” and was almost shot in the head with return fire.\textsuperscript{65} Additionally, when Aust or Christ left for Pennsylvania on business or were sick with old age, apprentices often completely took over operations until a new master was found to permanently replace the old. “Spoken free” of their apprenticeships, journeymen were paid a wage. However, apprentices were kept by their masters, necessitating the “laying aside all desire” for profit.

Simultaneously, conventions made it clear that a master was not a parent in his behavior towards the teenager. When Aust asked to apprentice his son, Johann Gottfried, his former apprentice Christ and members of the Collegium both had reservations. Christ was concerned that as a father, Aust would treat his child “rather indulgently,” and the Collegium insisted on apprenticing him to the younger Christ so that Johann Gottfried would not become a “spoilt young man who will never amount to anything.” Both Christ and the members of the Collegium created a like assumption that Aust would behave very differently than he had toward his other apprentices. Instead of viewing this peaceful request as a way to allow Aust an apprentice that he would not quarrel with, the opposing parties saw this as an avoidance of the maturing process, one in which the apprentice was

\textsuperscript{64} Bivins, 89.
\textsuperscript{65} Salem Diary, \textit{Moravian Archives}, 15 August 1781.
intended to “learn obedience” as well as how to make pottery.66 Even though Aust won earlier arguments with Collegium members, his place as a father was outranked by Christ’s new place as a master. Clearly, more than learning the trade from a master was at stake.67

In taking the child away from the parents’ residence, the Collegium and the new surrogate parent, the master, sought to control how much time a child spent with his biological mother and father. In what reads like a twenty-first century battle for visitation rights, Jacob Meyer, Sr. acknowledged the problems between Aust and Meyer’s son, bringing to the Aufseher Collegium the fact that there is “so little supervision in the pottery” and stating to the leadership that he “does not like to have him there.”68 The Collegium upheld its decision to leave young Meyer with Aust, and within six months, Jacob Meyer had decided to move into the house next door. Aust protested vehemently “because he has some difficulties with the son...and is afraid that the whole neighborship will be unpleasant.”69 When Meyer framed his argument in terms of the good of the community, he won the support of the Collegium, if not of Aust:

It would be good, nevertheless, to find some kind of work where he could partly earn some money for himself and could spend his time usefully...If we could get Br. Aust to let him have the sale of the pottery ware which is always so mixed up with Br. Aust, this would help Br. Meyer so much, and the young people working for Br. Aust do not suffer any damage.70

Ultimately, Meyer was allowed to stay to watch over the pottery shop in Aust’s absence, including his apprenticed son. The Collegium was silent thereafter on the issue, satisfied with either Meyer’s good behavior or his utility to Aust.

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66 Bivins, 60-61.
67 Ultimately, Aust retrieved his son from Christ, threatening to give up pottery “if he has to give up his son, Gottfried.” The Collegium seriously considered accepting this consequence, before Aust swore to his place as a master: “to be in the shop constantly.” Bivins, 61.
68 Records of the Aufseher Collegium, 30 May, 1786.
69 Ibid., 6 Feb. 1787.
70 Ibid., 14 May 1787.
The Binding that Breaks

As seen in the battle between Aust and Meyer, Sr., when either master or parent failed to provide supervision and care or inculcate morality, the church leaders or the Collegium would attempt to resolve conflict. The relationships between the master, parent, and leadership with and over the well-being of the teenage boy were riddled with tension and competition for authority.

As in most other areas of life, the Moravian Church in Wachovia standardized a clear process for the arbitration of disputes derived directly from orders from Zinzendorf. The congregation council wrote:

Our community rules state firmly that in arising differences the Brethren are to try to arbitrate the matter between them, and if this does not work, impartial Brethren are to be chosen on either side to settle the dispute. Among the Quakers this regulation works well. Also the Methodists have made a point of it in their rules and have decided that anyone not willing to agree to the decision of arbitrators is to be excluded from their community...there has been many a threatening with the law and warrants in the community, which does not agree with our principles at all. Those who show such opinions cannot be regarded as true Brethren...71

In this passage, the commonality that the congregation council feels with the surrounding religious minorities (the Quakers and the Methodists), is immediately noticeable. The process of resolving disputes, so crucial to this narrative, are necessary to these three religious minorities in order to remain exclusionary, and to keep distant the role of the state in their lives. Brethren that threaten other church members with the law of North Carolina undermine the more immediate theocratic authority of their own leaders to not only keep peace, but also define a transgression. For this reason, the Collegium handled all of the disputes, including those between the two masters.

In the home as well as in the shop, strict codes of action and the constant supervision of the choir system lay naked any failures on the part of parents to inculcate proper behavior into their young children. As tavern keeper, Jacob Meyer associated with

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both non-Moravian travelers and alcohol, the latter especially stigmatized inside the Bethabara community. Rumors began to circulate in 1780 that his young sons, Samuel and Philip Jacob (at this time, nine years old) were drinking in the tavern. Meyer responded immediately to these charges and asked for provisions elsewhere for his sons, “because they can not keep them longer without harm to their souls.”72 The next day, the Single Brothers House assumed responsibility for Jacob and his brother, and the Collegium restricted their access to their father without a chaperone at hand.73 This swift action shows the unhesitating power of Unity authorities to place a child under adults that will be a better moral influence. After this instance, the early separation of a tavern keeper with his or her children became a common, accepted practice in Wachovia.74

As a potter, Aust was unquestionably a commercial success, but his relationships with apprentices as a teacher and surrogate parent were consistently strained. His first apprentice, Peter Stolz, took up brickworking, starting anew after five years with Aust. An apprentice at the same time, Ludwig Möller was cyclically “ordered... out of the workshop,” and shunned by Aust before forced by the Collegium to make formal apologies.75 Gottlob Krause, raised as Aust’s child since the age of eleven, was removed from the pottery shop by the Collegium and placed in the Single Brothers while community elders questioned both parties, “looking for a source” for the unhappy relationship. Puportedly, the teenage boy’s tendency to gossip, certainly considered a moral deficiency, was blamed in the inquiry.76

72 Unknown Personal History, MESDA Card File, Winston-Salem, North Carolina. 19 January 1780. 73 Aufseher Collegium, 20 January 1780. 74 Ibid., Research note. 75 Bivins, 55. 76 Ibid., 59.
Aust and Christ, his most successful student, had an absolutely explosive relationship. In one notable outburst, the Collegium asked Aust to address the settlement’s leadership in a standard sort of problem-solving session, in which the members of the conference brought multiple grievances forward to the isolated individual. One particularly mundane request was to send Christ to “investigate the ice” on the New River in January of 1776. Aust “answered that Christ is a stupid ass, like many other children in the Community.” The choice of the term “child” here is intriguing; Christ was twenty-five years old at the time that Aust denounced him to the Collegium. While Christ has graduated to the role of a journeyman, this emphasizes Christ’s role as a child in Aust’s household and workplace (and of all other apprentices). In any case, Aust spoke negatively and strongly to the Aufseher Collegium of another man in the community, a major transgression of which he had accused his own apprentices. It was duly noted:

Since Brother Aust has rejected in such a wicked way all the three points which we had to talk with him, the Collegium came to the conclusion: ...If we try to achieve something, he will subject to it in such a wicked way as we have just now seen. What good, then, is a Collegium at all, if the people in the community do anyway what they want to, and give to those who give them their orders nothing but rejecting answers?

The outrage and indignation that this altercation clearly caused does not change the fact that Aust successfully challenged the authority of the Collegium. Like an odd game of rock-paper-scissors, Gottfried Aust proved that his authority over the boys in his pottery shop trumped efforts to resolve issues on the part of the Collegium, even though that same Collegium had ordered Aust and Christ to formally apologize to one another and reconcile. Aust’s authority as a teacher and director of Christ’s energy was respected,

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77 Aufseher Collegium, 17 January 1776.
78 Ibid.
and Christ did not leave for the New River for another month to find materials for glaze.79

The relationship between the master of the pottery shop and the Collegium became strained at points in the careers of both Aust and Christ. Never accused of immorality, irascibility, or poor choice in action outside of the artisan’s sphere, Aust specifically took issue with the Collegium over money and his apprentices, possibly, as Lewis suggests, using his advanced economic standing to wield more extensive authority. Consistently, the Collegium stepped in because Aust and any given apprentice had parted ways or had verbally violent altercations. Bivins chalks this up to Aust’s lax management of his charges and his “artistic temperament,” but the fact that the Collegium consistently took over as communicative middleman between Aust and his apprentices, without removing them from his charge or removing either party from the community, suggests a deeper but resolvable miscommunication traceable to the German hinterlands.

In Central Europe during Aust’s formative years, there were multiple forms of indenture and apprenticeship operating under the guild system and in private industry simultaneously. Aust’s first trade, linen-weaving, was actually perfected under the family-trade system. Common to pre-Industrial cloth-working laborers from Germany to England, the family system delegated tasks as a gendered working unit, outputting cloth as a family. While he learned the trade of a potter in Hermhut, his initial role as an apprentice was necessarily intertwined with that of a son and family member. It seems natural, then, that Aust would want his son in the shop with him.

When Meyer and the Collegium complained multiple times about the “lack of supervision” that characterized the potter’s shops in Bethabara and Salem (corroborated

79 Records of the Aufseher Collegium, 1 March 1776.
by Christ, who commented that Aust was caught up overwhelmingly in his own work),
Aust may have been unintentionally reflecting the compartmentalization of
complementary roles played in the product-making process, as would happen with a
gendered division of labor in the family. His “stupid ass” apprentices may have had
different ideas about what an apprenticeship should entail than what was shared with the
Collegium: discipline, active teaching, and an adult role model, not a father. Culminating
in his insistence that against Moravian tradition his son stay with him as an apprentice,
Aust’s actions serve as a sort of foil to the “declension” theory: a first-generation
Moravian, brought to the faith and to North Carolina by choice, is unable to successfully
adapt or act upon the role given him by the faith he adhered to.

Aust’s battles with the Collegium over his business practices, particularly pricing
during the Continental currency crisis, reflect a similar miscommunication between the
secular and religious aspects of business. Coming away from a family in which his father
was the patriarch of family and business, Aust, never previously running his own pottery
business before arriving in Wachovia, may have expected more control and individual
choice than what was allowed him. Further, arriving at the Moravian Church from the
more dominant and non-exclusionary sect of Lutheranism, and becoming a point of
contact with the outside for the first time, he may have been unintentionally reckless and
individualistic with outsider relations, considering fair business over the reputation of the
group at large. This may also be why he balked at the idea of allowing Meyer, Sr.,
another contact point for the Brethren, to sell Aust’s own pottery. While Bivins may be
correct in his personality analysis of Aust, it is fair to say that a radically different
background from most of his church leadership and his apprentices may characterize
different relationships and conflicts.

The primary conflict that Christ maintained with the Collegium was the opening
of his new pottery shop in Bethabara. As Aust’s journeyman, he requested his own
pottery shop in Bethabara in 1781 but was not given permission and housing to open a
shop until 1786. This too may have been a cross-generational miscommunication. Acting
again as a guild, the Aufseher Collegium controlled the insular economy through its
secular and moral authority, but informed this leadership position with detailed
knowledge of the trades in the townships. Of the pottery trade, their knowledge was self-
referential and limited to Aust’s work, the work of other potters in Wachovia and
Salisbury, and finally informed by the brief stay of the two Englishman potters. Christ, on
the other hand, fell heavily under the influence of molded, refined earthenwares and
stonewares that William Ellis propounded, and it was these that the Collegium had the
least knowledge about.

Even though the Collegium had already decided to handle these negotiations (it
was they, after all, who would have to support a Queen’s Ware business), Christ
orchestrated the separation between Aust’s “unwashed” and his own “washed” wares,
and it was Aust who handed over the molds voluntarily to Christ, suggesting that the two
potters were the more informed parties. During the negotiations process, however, the
Collegium’s advice to Christ was constantly informed by the commercial success of
Aust’s earthenwares: “we should recommend to Br. Christ, now that he has good income
with the piece work he is already doing...”80 While refined earthenwares and even
porcelain were owned by members of the congregation, the Collegium may have been

80 Aufseher Collegium, 1 November 1782.
unsure of their projected success in the Carolina backcountry. Outside changes in
economic orientation, however, put more value on standardized and refined vessels. By
1793, and with Christ as part of the Collegium, the members had released any suspicions,
mildly and logically noting that “Usually each new line draws new customers, and there
are potters enough around us where they would otherwise go.”

While this may be viewed through the lens of acculturation to English traditions,
this is simply the combination of two decisions: of one master in one township to open a
predominantly English-style pottery shop, and for the Collegium to support it. Largely
the same church leadership that would have relocated Christ to Pennsylvania rather than
fund his shop now backed an openly competitive consumer culture. But this is a reversal
in business logic, not in ideology or folk culture: refined earthenware proved to be a
viable source of income, and other Moravian potters continued to make cheaper
utilitarian earthenwares for settlers with consistent and uniform needs. While concerned
theologically with everyday interaction, the board fully recognized themselves as
representatives of an artisan society dependent on commercial ties. Rather than cause
conflict, innovations used for the good of the community upheld the continuity of
Moravian ideological traditions.

Perhaps the “resistance” instigated by apprentices onto their masters can be
looked at through a similar lens. Overwhelmingly, Bivins’ “bad boy” apprentices were
given many chances to “reform” before being asked to leave because their actions, while
instilled with meaning, did not cause direct moral conflict in the larger community or in
the church. An exception to this rule was Christ’s apprentice Joseph Stockburger, who in
1806 was implicated as a “concealer and receiver” of stolen goods from the Community

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81 Frederick Marshall to the Unity Vorsteher Collegium, 1793.
Store, a serious violation of the trust of Christ as well as to the Congregation that supported his upkeep and the store.\textsuperscript{82} Within a week, he had left the community permanently and legally absolved his indenture to Christ.

More likely, these more common conflicts were caused by actions that intentionally skirted around obedience and devotion to a master, calling the legitimacy of that tie and the authority of the master into question. Philip Jacob Meyer’s hefty list of pranks and chicanery caused trouble but did not backfire immediately into his expulsion. He was first implicated in the “bad pranks” of apprentices against Aust in November of 1788. The Collegium reprimanded him earlier about “one very bad [unknown] utterance,” and assumed his involvement in other pranks played by boys of the same age. They did have evidence for the fact that “he has bought socks so that one does not hear his walk. He also keeps a dog, for which he does not have any use at all.” Instead of blaming the master or even the personal choice of the apprentice, the Collegium blamed the apprentices’ earlier experience with their parents: “it was said that the parents [of Salem] do not have the right seriousness and supervision which would be best for the children.”\textsuperscript{83}

After Aust had passed away in Lititz and Christ took over as master of Salem and Meyer, Meyer made trouble in a more passive manner: “Jacob Meyer has bought new clothing which, for an apprentice, is absolutely unfitting...[the tailor] will have to be reminded that he must not make such showy clothes for Brethren.”\textsuperscript{84} The decision to reprimand the tailor is worth noting; even as another adult he still played a role in enforcing the morality of the younger generation. By this time, Meyer himself had

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{82} Bivins, 66.
\item \textsuperscript{83} Aufseher Collegium, 4 November 1788.
\item \textsuperscript{84} Ibid., 3 March 1789.
\end{itemize}
expressed his desire to leave the church. In June of 1789, the Collegium had decided “that with such a way of life [he] cannot stay with the people of God” and Meyer left shortly thereafter.85

The nature of Meyer’s resistance, what Meyer was resisting, and the Collegium’s response all factored into the consensual decision that Meyer was best off elsewhere. Unlike the apprentice Joseph Stockburger, Meyer never did anything overtly immoral, such as stealing or consorting with women or outsiders. Rather, his “pranks” attacked the nature of the role of the apprentice. If the duty of the apprentice is to “learn Obedience” and to serve with good behavior and industry, this apprentice intentionally failed by making a “very bad utterance,” a form of disrespect to others that had to hear it, intentionally “sneaking” so as to evade the discipline of a master, and by keeping a dog, which was a liability of the his master as householder if the dog was useless.

More serious is the issue of showy dress, which appeared as a symbol of worldliness and undue pride to the Brethren. However, the Collegium specified that the new suit was unwearable “for an apprentice.” Rather than responding to the community or the church with negative and immoral social action, Meyer was instead responding to his role inside of it by acting as if he weren’t an apprentice, better than his station. While actively defying his master, Meyer defied the Collegium passively, simply ignoring their authority to arbitrate the conflict between himself and his masters. Like Aust, he saw the quarrel as between his counterpart in the master-apprentice relationship, and by rendering himself uncontrollable to Aust, he did the same to the Collegium. According to the Collegium, Meyer worked within a system of other apprentices to pull pranks and inside of Moravian enterprise by buying a suit from the Moravian outfitter. While perhaps

85 Ibid., 9 June 1789.
inadvertently, he worked inside of the Moravian commercial system to display his
disrespect for one part of it: his subservient role as an apprentice under an ineffective
master with an alternative idea of apprenticeship. Christ, not deigning to do battle with
Meyer over the suit, was not mentioned in the Collegium minutes about the issue. A more
efficient master, he challenged Meyer to reform or leave, and Meyer made his choice.

**Conclusions**

Ultimately, as a master with the responsibility of transferring knowledge and a
community role onto a younger male, Aust failed as a surrogate role model and teacher.
Most of his apprentices dropped pottery-making altogether, and Christ was the only true
master produced. Others not only did this but took their new trade elsewhere, away from
the Oeconomie that had exerted resources and manpower into making them economically
and morally viable: Stolz migrated to Lititz, Pennsylvania, while Franz Stauber, an
irresponsible apprentice, was asked to leave the community for his misconduct. Aust’s
son Johann Gottfried, whom he apprenticed optimistically to himself, purportedly became
sick from the lead glaze used by Aust and died a year before his father.\(^{86}\)

Christ, himself trained in Wachovia, met with different results and lost few
apprentices, developing John Butner and John Holland into the next masters of Salem and
Bethabara.\(^{87}\) While part of Sommer’s generation of “declension” and defined by Bivins
as a “bad boy” apprentice, Christ had more success as an artisan economically, as a
community member involved in the Collegium, and most importantly, as a master
reproducing his trade in the next generation. While we will never know if Aust was more
“religiously Moravian” than Christ, Christ as a second-generation Moravian was closely

\(^{86}\) Bivins, 61.
\(^{87}\) See Appendix 1.
aligned with the practical and peaceful everyday expectations of the Collegium, the Elders’ Conference, and the artisan community he helped create. Keeping in mind his innovations of English-style wares and his economic expansion of the pottery trade in Wachovia, one would wonder if Christ’s “worldliness” and detachment from Aust’s “folk culture” did not bring him closer to the “Moravian” ideal that had indeed crossed Germanic borders with transnational aspirations.
Part II: Meyer's Walk through New Woods

In an interview conducted about the Mount Shepherd Pottery Site, one excavator explains the conundrum of ethnic "labeling" of the 18th-century potter:

There was a theory that they were probably connected with the early Moravian potters. We were not able to completely prove that... during the excavation... We did find some indications that it probably was not connected with the Moravian potters because we found stove tiles that had military-type figures, or home guard-type figures. Knowing the Moravians... well, they were against almost everything that was military. And it's not likely, we feel, that they would have made stove tiles with that type of figure on it.88

Until L. McKay Whatley proved via land records that this potter was Philip Jacob Meyer, the German-speaking native of the Moravian settlement in North Carolina, a hesitance to assign identity to the potter was characterized by this conflict between material evidence and expectations of cultural adherence to strict, ideological norms as found in the archaeological record.89 One popular article, unsure of how to classify deviation in motif but not in form, stated simply that the potter had "Germanic tendencies."90

Mt. Shepherd's connection to Old World Herrnhut and the traditions at Salem were not limited to the manufacture of stove tiles. As Whatley and Mt. Shepherd archaeologist Alain Outlaw have shown, vessel form and decoration tie Meyer to his masters Christ and Aust. Through the examination of these design similarities, but also the placement and production output of the kiln itself, we can judge the economic success of a wayward apprentice like Meyer and therefore the apprenticeship system that produced him.

Meyer's New Home

Randolph County, pieced from Guilford County in 1779, was similar to Rowan County to the north in both population dynamics and economic development. While the Sandy Creek Baptist Church created the early, major social force in the 1750s, Baptists were soon followed by Quakers, Dunkers, and other English, Scottish and Irish contingents. During the time of the 1800 census Randolph County held 9,234 residents, and would gain a little over a thousand residents per decade until after the Civil War. Unlike Rowan County, Randolph County had no urban or semi-urban centers of trade; the first county seat was the home of Abraham Reece, a former Guilford County official, chosen for accessibility for the other Guilford County officials appointed to start the government (all Anglo-American).

Even without a cosmopolitan area, Meyer settled into a burgeoning and versatile artisan community. Apprenticeship records specific to Randolph County were few, but emphasized the need for a budding backwoods businessman to gain "Education (&

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Instruction) Sufficient for Contracting the Mercantile Business in this County.”

The art lay in not only a material understanding of the trade but also of the surrounding market. Inventory records accordingly often listed tools for multiple trades per household alongside farming accessories. This indicates the use of skilled trades on a part-time basis, in which a full-time farmer gained tools to service his own plantation and his neighbors, a contrast to the full-time potters in Salem that supplied an overwhelming market. Some trades logically go hand in hand, such as a “smith’s tools” and “cooper’s adds” in the 1799 inventory of the estate of Nathan McCollum. The 1803 estate of wealthy David Cobalt, on the other hand, listed farmer’s, carpenter’s and blacksmith’s tools alongside an inventory of adult male slaves, perhaps indicating skilled work on the part of blacks that could lead to outsourcing labor and plantation self-sufficiency.

Cobbler’s tools and weaving equipment producing linen and cotton were found in many homes, and the latter was often bequeathed to daughters and wives who probably engineered this aspect of the household economy. More elaborate operations sprang up at the turn of the century, like lumber mills (1808) and one apple mill (1797).

Overall, while a collection of wills and inventories by no means offers a focused image of an artisan community, the trades of cobbler, blacksmith, carpenter, cooper, weaver, hatter, and tanner were represented in inventories taken from 1790 to 1810. Representing every trade except hatting, at least six of the twenty-one men with recorded trades owned tools specific to more than one craft. William Gatlan, deceased in 1807, was the only Randolph County resident who left behind potter’s tools, and interestingly,

94 Estate of Nathan McCollum, 1799. Randolph County Will Records.
95 Estate of David Cobalt, 1803, Randolph County Will Records.
96 Will of Alexander Patterson, 1797, Randolph County Will Records.
97 Inventory of the Estate of Benjamin Fincher, 1808.
utensils for no other trade except farming and goods that imply livestock raising.\textsuperscript{98} From both Gatlan’s and Moravian examples, it seems that the trade of the potter was time consuming (and probably expensive) enough to demand devotion to solely one trade, and justly few people chose to invest in learning it. As with the lone hatter, Gatlan’s choice to specialize made the trade “Sufficient for Contracting the Mercantile Business in this County” rather than for running the plantation, dependent on the good will and market fluctuations of neighbors.

At least for the trade of the potter, need for this specialization was high. Estate inventories listed the make and material of hollow wares and kitchen utensils, from “Half a Dozen- Delph Plates” to “some earthenwares.”\textsuperscript{99} With the exception of “Delph” or “Delft” plates and “Duch ovens,” serving wares and cooking pots were overwhelmingly classed as either pewter or earthenwares; virtually every inventory mentioned one or both of these materials.\textsuperscript{100} Keeping with patterns established during the creamware revolution, undertones of separation of utilitarian and luxury ceramics were established.\textsuperscript{101} Elucidating vessel make and quality, rather than form, served the purposes of appraising an estate. This is best exemplified by the mention of “Some Moravian Ware” in a 1799 inventory, differentiated from the “earthenware” found in the same inventory.\textsuperscript{102} While only found in one list of goods out of many, for at least one Randolph County man “Moravian Ware,” like “Delft,” was a self-explanatory label that implied quality despite

\textsuperscript{98} Inventory of the Estate of William Gatlan, 1807.
\textsuperscript{99} Will of John Barton, June 11th, 1795. Randolph County Will Records.
\textsuperscript{100} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{102} Inventory of the Estate of John Frazier, 1799.
its earthenware substance. In the context of an estate appraised in 1799, this could refer to Christ's imitation of William Ellis' sought-after creamware or Whieldon-Wedgewood types rather than red earthenwares. It is even possible that, due to Meyer's close stylistic relationship with Aust and Christ, this could refer to Mt. Shepherd pottery. Either way, the writer chose the simple association of the pottery with not a pottery location, the names of Aust, Christ, Meyer, or even simply a German potter, but instead the term "Moravian." The phrase assumes that the reader will understand the link and what it means about the quality of goods.

**On Shepherd Mountain**

The Mt. Shepherd pottery itself was located in an already populated area, less than a mile from the road Moravians used for trade with Fayetteville and immediately adjacent to the North Carolina's east-west Wagon Road. Topographically, the site is situated in between the Uwharrie River and Little Caraway Creek, and Meyer thus had many neighbors on both sides that operated grist mills.\(^{103}\) Beard Mill, established in 1794, operated less than a mile south, while Arnold, Hoover, and Skeen mills, all downriver from one another on the Uwharrie, were built by 1783. The earliest mill nearby was built by Conrad Brules in 1761, a mile and a half from Shepherd Mountain, and several mills

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\(^{103}\) North Carolina law required that mill owners ask permission from the county courts to operate, and these records often clarify our understanding of population density and productivity of surrounding agricultural areas.
to the South went up in the 1780s. The Dunkers, a German-speaking Baptist sect, operated the "Ewarry" meetinghouse about six miles southwest of Meyer's land. A cohesive and populous group in last quarter of the eighteenth century, they had strong leadership under German-born Jacob Stutzman and ample contact with the Moravians through the Brethren's travelling preachers like George Soelle; it is also possible that Meyer's wife may have been a Dunker.  

Quakers also maintained a meeting house about four miles east of Mount Shepherd. Meyer settled neither in rural isolation nor in a semi-urban environment like Salisbury, but instead found a somewhat already-settled area that between the rivers and trading roads, promised much local traffic and connection with the destinations at the end of those roads. Mount Shepherd also had viable clay, and borrow pits were uncovered immediately adjacent to the kiln.

The "stranger" status that Meyer faced in Salem was not an absolute judgment, but rather the impetus for a gradual transition out of the community. Meyer and a friend and fellow defector, Ludwig Blum, used the community as a home harbor by which to embark on travel expeditions to New Bern and then to Pennsylvania, staying in Salem only a day at a time. Only a few months after his trip to Pennsylvania, Meyer was back home "from Virginia and is with his brother-in-law Gottlob Krause." While not confirmed, Whatley posits that Meyer worked as a journeyman for the mason and sometime-potter Krause. If so, he probably had much independence in the shop of an in-

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105 Fred Hughes, Randolph Co., NC (Map), Press Proof, 1974.  
106 Outlaw, 2009, 163.  
107 Bethlehem Diary, 26 June 1789, MESDA Card File.  
108 Ibid., 6 November 1789.
demand brickmaker and this stint may have been one of many that journeymen make.\textsuperscript{109}

Perhaps the trips to New Bern, Virginia, and Pennsylvania were in search of such work; Aust travelled the same roads as a journeyman fifty years before.

Also thanks to Whatley's documentary research, we know that Meyer married another German, Susannah Hilsebeck, in 1791 and set up shop at Mount Shepherd probably by 1793. Meyer's death is recorded in Bethabara in 1801. Ironically, his son fell prey to the North Carolinian apprenticeship system, apprenticed by the courts to an uncle, Isaac Boner, to learn the trade of a hatter.\textsuperscript{110} Because the courts do not recognize the parentage of the mother, particularly if the family was not well-to-do (Meyer went to court for unresolved debts), we do not know what became of Meyer's wife.

**Dump Diving**

In order to search for cultural continuity and breakage, I photographed and measured all decorated ceramic sherds, found originally around the area of Meyer's waster dump and now in the newly rehoused collection at the Mt. Shepherd Retreat Center in Asheboro. I noted provenience, temper, body color, vessel form, glaze, slip, and motif of 159 pieces total, including European ceramic sherds. These pieces were categorized as stove tiles, molded pipe heads, European ceramics, or Meyer's own vessels. I also examined select pieces analyzed by Outlaw and Whatley that are no longer present in the collection. All were compared to motifs, glazes, and vessel forms used by Gottfried Aust and Rudolf Christ as found in the Mint Museum collection, the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts, the Old Salem Archaeology Department, and various private collections.


\textsuperscript{110} Ibid., 46.
The vast majority of the Mt. Shepherd fragments were in the biscuit stage when broken, only containing the outlines of a white or black slip that hint at the intended decoration. These outlines are often uneven or incomplete and needed the added layers of glaze to complete the design. This limits our understanding of color combinations and glazing techniques and varieties.

Further, over 90% of ceramic sherds, and about half of the pipe stems are undecorated, reflecting the utilitarian demand for forms like milk crocks and colanders. Other limitations concern the collection itself: while newly rehoused, several boxes contained unwashed artifacts on which decoration, if present, was not discernable. An earlier excavation, undertaken by British archaeologists JH Kelly and AR Mountford from the Stoke-on-Trent Museum, yielded three exploratory trenches worth of artifacts not found in the rehoused collection.\footnote{Bill Johnson and Randle E. Brim, "The History of the Mount Shepherd Archaeological Site," Randolph County Historical Commission, (http://www.co.randolph.nc.us/hlpc/) Date accessed: 30 June 2010.} Exemplary pieces of the collection have also been separated into exhibits at the Retreat Center, the Randolph County Public Library, various pottery museums and redware exhibits, and have found their way into the homes of private collectors and local residents. Finally, the site itself was not excavated to completion, but was focused in the area of the kiln, a waster pit, a clay pit, and sections of the workshop.

Despite these constraints, a remarkable amount of vessel form and motif diversity graced the documented sherds. Vessel forms made by Aust and Christ show continuity facilitated by necessity, including basic earthenware bowls, cups and plates; milk jugs,
pots, and pans, and finally braziers and colanders, all in multiple sizes. Christ, with his stoneware and molded, refined earthenware production, created a new standard at the Salem potter’s bench with the English standard of Queen’s Ware in sets, tortoiseshell decorations, and sprig moldings on even the most basic of coffee mugs and milk saucers.

While it would be unfair to pronounce that Aust produced utilitarian wares and Christ luxury goods (Aust, as we know, produced Ellis’ creamwares and Christ continued to produce coarse pots and pans after his move to Salem), Christ saw the market for sets of fine ceramics. He expanded his repertoire through new molds for fine earthenwares, his famous decorated animal bottles, and continued experimentation with stoneware and perhaps, as South suggests, “fayance,” or Delft ware.\(^\text{112}\) As we know from the inventories above, the latter especially had a heightened name value which Christ attempted to use to his advantage. An alternate differentiation, then, acknowledges Aust as determinately Old World in an economic rather than artistic sense, brought to Wachovia before the consumer revolution, and labels Christ as a backcountry potter exposed to new marketing strategies while still a learner. Aust admitted through his acceptance of English journeymen’s lessons that he was not the only master of his apprentices, and left room for the experimentation that allowed Christ to broaden the Wachovian vernacular.

\(^{112}\) South, 333.
As their careers overlapped, Aust continued to define what is now known as the Wachovian vernacular, defined by the Mint Museum as, “finely made [earthenwares] with good proportion and careful detailing. Slip-trailed decoration was common, and molded forms with crisp, clear glazes were also part of the repertoire of these early potters.” Even the most basic kitchen ceramics, from pudding pots to flasks, were sometimes decorated with precise slip-trailed bands and wavy lines.113 Though the uses of their pottery varied as little as the backcountry farmer’s needs, the early masters and their apprentices allowed themselves much leeway in slip, glaze color and design of ceramics they chose to decorate. Outside of the practice of marketing molded creamwares in sets, household wares with unique design motifs could be sold individually or together. Beckerdite and Brown suggest that individual plates may have been used as decoration, as evidenced by the remarkable preservation of currently intact pieces from Salem’s shop.114 At Mount Shepherd, Meyer appeared to make both one-of-a-kind pieces and decorated earthenware plate sets found archaeologically in recurring marly patterns, probably put in the kiln together. Exceptions to form-specific sets and specially decorated plates in Wachovia include earthenware cup-and-plate sets

114 Beckerdite and Brown, 60.
with recurring motifs (i.e., a bird in the center of a well in both cup and plate).\textsuperscript{115} With the obvious exceptions of Christ's animal flasks and stove tiles, eighteenth-century redwares were mass-produced in form only.

Aust and Christ's coarse earthenware plates, cups, and bowls serve as the best comparison to Meyer's work, which showed more diversity and experimentation on coarse earthenwares than on creamware imitations. Nevertheless, polychrome tortoiseshell-glazed ware (with yellow, brown, and green mottling created with copper and manganese over a white slip) and thin-walled plain creamware are also worth noting. Five tiny pieces of tortoiseshell-glazed earthenware, on small, glazed (and crazed) fragment of creamware and a large, unglazed sherd of creamware are found in the collection at Mount Shepherd, while in his 1980 article Whatley presented an image of a base and body of a tortoiseshell-glazed teacup.\textsuperscript{116} A plain creamware fragment was part of a small cup or porringer with extremely thin walls (about 2-3 millimeters) and two even, incised lines on the body, identical to the form made by Christ between 1786 and 1789 and during the time that Meyer was around or in his shop (see Figures 8 and 9 for comparison).\textsuperscript{117}

\textsuperscript{115} Bivins, 270.
\textsuperscript{116} Whatley, 29, Figure 6.
\textsuperscript{117} South, 302.
Tortoiseshell-glaze and creamware were rare, perhaps even limited to tea services or cup sets, but nonetheless produced at Meyer’s kiln. Even in small amounts its presence indicates an ambition to cater to both luxury and need-based markets, much like Christ before him.

Coarse earthenware motifs and rim patterns created by Aust and Christ varied depending on the potter but revolved around a few basic and recurring themes. Motifs were often either organic or abstract, often depicting tulips, lily-of-the-valley, anenomes, or daisy-like flowers, toothed leaves, embrocated triangles, and added flourishes and dots representing seeds or stems. Bands and wavy lines were easily added to interior and exterior ledges with slip while the piece was on the potter’s wheel, and symmetrical designs, usually in the form of leaves or abstract flourishes, also graced the marly and interior rim. In steep-sloping pans and bowls, cross-hatching or vertical stripes of polychrome slips terminate in a swirl at the well of the piece.
Exceptions, like the Moravian star or a sunburst, are found on the interior of plates and bowls, as are representations of birds, turtles, and fish. Rarely did potters depict humans, besides Christ’s molded dolls, or script, preferring naturalistic or abstract scenes. While marly and rim designs are generally repeating and symmetrical, rarely ever are geometric (i.e., cornered or angular) forms found: lines are continuously fluid and curved, thinner lines often terminating slightly thicker, rounded poolings of glaze that give flowers an added effect.\footnote{See Stanley South’s typologies of “The Ceramic Forms of Gottfried Aust, 1755-1771,” and “Pottery Forms from the Bethabara Gunsmith Shop Cellar,” as well as the MESDA Photograph File, all found in the MESDA Research Center.}
Basic rim decorations like banding and wavy lines dominate Mount Shepherd sherds, found on forty-six of the eighty-seven decorated hollowware sherds found in the collection. However, they do not necessarily imply a connection with Aust or Christ’s potter’s wheel; Piedmont potters at large relied on this stand-by slip technique into the mid-1800s (See Figure 11). Banding in the biscuit stage was found on extremely course redwares with very thick white slips or a thinner, black slip that resembles tar, to buff-colored earthenwares dripped with a thinner, milky glaze. The presence of thin, clear, and defined polychrome banding in the finished product (See Figure 12) nonetheless shows a steady hand and outstanding skill, the likes of which had been seen before. The color scheme of alternating red-and-green banding on an off-white slip is also found on the rims of Aust’s later works, dated between 1772 and 1788 (refer back to Figure 6).

Similarly, vertical striping, found inside of bowls in green-brown-yellow and red-and-brown color schemes, made by Christ, may have also served as a source of inspiration for both a polychrome striped bowl or plate (in green-brown-yellow) and a brown-and-yellow striped ware represented in the comparison chart, below.  

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119 Perry, 191.
120 Bivins, 220, 221, 264.
Similarities are found through several different leaf patterns. Aust and Christ both
coupled toothed and un-toothed leaves with flourishes, with or without flowers, to present
a colorful well or interior surrounded by the symmetry of the rim designs (Figure 6).
Meyer’s marly and rim decorations, with the exception of the checkerboard, are virtually
indistinguishable from Aust’s, alternating embrocated triangles, flourishes, wavy bands,
and leaves in naturalistic patterns. These
motifs, like lily-of-the-valley and anemone
flowers, are the designs that Beckerdite and
Brown posit are saturated with religious
symbolism and New Testament references that
ostensibly were immediately recognizable to the
Moravians that shared the same teachings.121

Another of Aust’s motifs, the “embrocated triangle,” a cosmopolitan form found
on Chinese porcelain marlys (called the “fish egg motif”) was used but altered in both
Meyer’s and Christ’s work. Aust applied each of the ten teardrops individually to create a
pyramid; oftentimes the teardrops were unevenly spaced or disproportionate to one
another. Both Aust and Meyer added symmetry to the embrocated triangle by drawing
three parallel lines as guides, and then adding the diamonds individually in a
crosshatched style. This leads to an unusual signature in which one side of the triangle is
straight, and the other is rounded like Aust’s (see comparison chart).

Interestingly, the pomegranate motif found on Aust’s early wares is not to my
knowledge found in Meyer’s work; this may mean that, rather than choosing the most
cherished religious symbolism, Meyer chose from images popular to other Moravians

121 Beckerdite and Brown, 53.
while learning at the wheel. However, the quintessential sectarian symbol, the Moravian star, was interpreted by Meyer in the well of a large plate. An adherence to the quintessential spiritual action of using a skilled trade to interpret the Moravian faith, shortly after leaving the community due to failure to act in a Godly way, may seem contradictory. However, as Beckerdtite and Brown acknowledge, the meaning of the imagery, and of the faith, vary from person to person. In general, whether or not Meyer saw the religious symbolism of his designs, they nonetheless serve as a parallel for spiritual work. Even if he did not desire to perpetuate Moravian symbolism, he was unable to divorce it from his skill set and repertoire.

\[122\] Ibid., 59.
Comparisons of Motifs of Meyer with Christ and Aust

Meyer | Aust or Christ

Aust made multiple types of daisy-like designs, often with different numbers of petals. Both flowers feature a unique center, which is oblong instead of circular, and pointed, diamond-shape petals.

The embrocatcd triangle, or fish-egg motif. Meyer and Christ’s version (left) are indistinguishable from one another. Aust’s version, more slip-heavy, is represented on the right.

The Moravian star motif on the right has been associated with Rudolf Christ, but Beckerdite and Brown (2009) have called this into question, suggesting instead a group of German potters in Alamance County as its source. Meyer’s version is far less symmetrical, featuring sunbursts.

Additional Forms by Meyer. From left to right: Wavy rim with leaves, molding found on coarse sherds, leaf motif found on checkerboard sherds, leaf and flourish combination, and checkerboarding with incising.

Figure 13
Comparison Chart
by Jessica Taylor
Success and Failure in Deviation

At the same time that Meyer appears to replicate results from both pottery shops, he also innovated, experimenting with motifs and rim decorations not frequently found in Wachovia. The experimental process can be observed in the somewhat sloppy biscuit stage, and tracked over time as the rough-draft version is revised. For example, the uncommon motif of a white-slip un-toothed leaf bordered on the interior by un-slipped small, equidistant circles (see comparison chart) was found in two sherds that are both part of the checkboard-pattern plate. One leaf, however, was bordered by dots that were simply the buff color underneath, while the other leaf with another set of circles was represented by a lighter color, indicating that perhaps the leaf had been colored with slip and then dots added later by removing the slip from the area with a finger or some other instrument. This process, undergone on the same plate, demonstrates that Aust and Christ not only bestowed upon Meyer an Old World design from which to deviate, but the problem-solving strategies with which to perfect a new technique.

In searching for design altogether unlike the Moravian masters, a non-organic, blocky rim pattern stand out. The most famous of the new motifs on earthenware is the checkerboard pattern, found on four biscuit-stage sherds and possibly one other biscuit piece in the boxes left at Mount Shepherd; Outlaw’s 2009 article offers images of a few more. Outlaw believes this stylistic decision was inspired by a German Westerwald stoneware jug found on the site, a typical fixture in pre-Revolutionary America that was decorated with a combination of sprig moldings, incising, and cobalt-blue and purple glazes. In catering to an Anglo-American market, Meyer may have seen the value of imitating a previously popular design (or merely thought the design was interesting).

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Outlaw, 2009, 163.
Aust, who owned a similarly decorated Westerwald creamer found alongside failed pottery in the Bethabara waster pit, made earthenware honey jugs very similar in form thirty years before Meyer made his checkerboard. Rather than a revolutionary thought on Meyer's part, the process of imitating another's work, as seen by William Ellis' visit and influence, was passed down from master to apprentice along with the skill.

In one biscuit-stage attempt, Meyer first incised the lines lightly (or may have marked them with his slip trailer) then poured the slip over the lines in an uneven manner: the corners overlap and the squares turned into quadrilaterals of various sizes and corner angles despite the incised outline. The scratched pattern was not visible on the three other biscuits, when Meyer made the choice to trail the slip over the outline instead of scratching it in, and then colored in the blocks he made with the slip as he would color in a leaf centerpiece. The partial rim-body sherd that may be part of a checkerboard pattern also registers a smaller geometric achievement: a much thinner slip outline than the other checkered pattern that allowed for a more precise outline that could then be filled in.

Interesting combinations of Aust and Christ's styles also provide an accurate picture of Meyer's willingness to experiment and possibly fail. On eight sherds, a molding similar to those associated with Christ's washed wares was applied to an extremely course redware with several lithic and sand inclusions that one would associate with the early unwashed earthenwares of Aust. A white or brown slip was then applied over the design, enunciating the motif and leaving the rest red. Unsurprisingly, in one case lithics in the body of the sherd broke through the delicate design, and in another the slip applied splotchily, missing crevices and attaching sporadically to the grainy surface.

124 South, 222.
Despite this setback, Meyer achieved a uniform white slip over a molded motif that was placed on a thinner, buffer body as found on another sherd. Meyer knew the value of molded wares, but needed more purified clay to apply the concept.

The small series of technological innovations—and failures—like these serve as a ray of hope to those that would otherwise bemoan Meyer’s “acculturation” and the bastardization of Moravian wares. Only real thought and determination—agency and action—could surpass logistical obstacles to a desired end. Like Christ working on the other side of the county line, Meyer built onto the Moravian tradition, deviating from old forms and inventing new ones to broaden the vernacular with the same tools used to create it.

The Ubiquitous Tobacco Pipe

Figure 14 Coarse earthenware with molding, Mount Shepherd Pottery Site. Photo by Jessica Taylor.

Figure 15 "18th-Century Tobacco Pipes" Typologies, from Stanley South, MESDA Research Center

Figure 16 Examples of Pipe Molds, Early Nineteenth Century, MESDA Photograph File, Winston-Salem, NC.
Press-molded pipe heads and molds provide another angle from which to view the diversity of Meyer's wares in light of the Wachovian masters. Formed from washed clay with brass molds, in Salem they were anthropomorphic (formed to look like a human head), fluted, both, or smooth and plain and fired in large batches together. Aust and Christ made pipes at staggering rates. Aust started small, purchasing only one pipe mold in 1772 valued at sixteen shillings. Almost two decades later, Rudolf Christ's 1789 inventory at Salem lists only three pipe molds but 464 dozen (5,568) finished pipe heads, far overshadowing in number the production of any other ceramics. The investment lay not in the ware itself, which took relatively little time to create, but in the brass mold. The potter was unable to create it himself, instead relying on a gunsmith in either Salem or Pennsylvania for a specially-ordered design. Metal molds were also expensive, Christ’s three worth one pound together in 1789.

![Fluted Pipe Head](image17.png)  
*Figure 17 Fluted Pipe Head, Mount Shepherd Retreat Center Exhibit, Photograph by Richard Taylor.*

![Anthropomorphic Pipe Head](image18.png)  
*Figure 18 Anthropomorphic Pipe Head, Mount Shepherd Retreat Center Exhibit, Photograph by Richard Taylor.*

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125 Inventory, Salem Pottery Shop, signed by Gottfried Aust 1772.
126 Christ ordered his from the local gunsmith Jacob Lash in 1787 (Brown 2009), and there is evidence that Aust ordered his from Pennsylvania. See Brown (2009) for more information.
127 Inventory, Salem Pottery Shop, signed by Rudolf Christ 1789.
Meyer invested in two different molds—one fluted and one anthropomorphic—for his work at Mount Shepherd. He may have ordered them from the same gunsmith that made Christ his set, as they are of almost the exact same detail. Meyer’s anthropomorphic form is even more decadent; whereas Aust’s forms did not, Meyer’s faces contain pupils and the rims had subtle fleur-de-lis pattern detailing. Even the fluted version had the same fleur-de-lis detail, and no plain pipes were found. Authors such as Outlaw and Bivins have thought these pipes to be a marketing ploy for local or passing Indians, anthropomorphic pipes ostensibly mirroring native headdresses. However, recent research shows that the design is actually more common than previously believed, press-molded pipes like Aust’s appearing archaeologically as far away as Ohio. Meyer either left pipes in the buff (bisque-fired) or coated them with bright glazes like green or tortoiseshell. Again recognizing the power of multiple choices, Meyer adapted older forms into luxurious goods while producing fundamentally the same product his master had been for decades.

The Contentious Stove Tile

In contrast to pipe molds, stove tile production and installation was an investment on the part of the potter, requiring the advanced notice of the customer, the creation of dozens of earthenware tiles (glazed, painted, or unglazed) and frame, and then the

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128 One odd pipe head, probably not manufactured at Mt. Shepherd, is a deep-red bisque-fired fluted fragment that appears to be hand-formed and smoothed.

129 James L. Murphy, "A Moravian Clay Pipe from Grape Vine Town, Belmont County, Ohio," Ohio Archaeologist, v. 59, no. 2 (Spring 2009), 22.
installation into the home of the customer, wherever that may be. Easily the most expensive item in the pottery shop, but the most efficient way to heat a home in the eighteenth century, Aust and Christ assembled them primarily for Central European customers, including in several of the choir buildings in Bethabara and Salem. The 1789 inventory listed twelve molds valued at over two pounds, and an additional twenty without listed values. Rudolf Christ produced stoves in Bethabara before coming to Salem, moving forty stove tiles to his new shop in Salem in 1789.

Aust’s and Christ’s stove tile forms varied very little from one another in form and featured symmetrical abstract design, like a diamond, star, or square in the center. This was surrounded by small, naturalistic motifs such as a single flower or acorn in each corner, all inside of a molded frame. Meyer deviated from this design based on his differing needs and the styles of the time. Instead of making multiple molds with different frames, he added only the spiral-flower mold, and exact copy of Aust’s if not the exact same mold itself, to the martial figures. Then, he cut the frame by hand, creating a slightly choppy and crooked appearance, or alternatively applied a more detailed mold to the frame. The same martial figure could feature multiple frames in different tiles, adding variety and simultaneously saving time.

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130 Bivins, 200.
131 Inventory, Salem Pottery Shop, signed by Rudolf Christ 1789.
As seen in the interview with the Mount Shepherd archaeologists, the presence of Revolutionary War figures on Meyer's tiles upset many expectations of a Moravian potter, but he may have simply been reacting to like styles of the time. While Aust and Christ did not feature human subjects on their pottery or on their stove tiles, the singularity of the Wachovian tradition disguises the fact that potters in other areas such as Eastern Pennsylvania not only featured human subjects, but reacted to the imagery of the Revolutionary War in more overt ways (see figure below). From the 1790s into the 1830s, these potters, like Germans David Spinner and Johannes Neesz, featured eagles and other patriotic imagery typical to the Early Republican period, as well as motifs of militiamen and Continentals on horseback fit in next to tulips and flourishes. While Meyer probably did not come into contact with these potters, Lutheran and located in disparate areas of Pennsylvania, he may have discovered similar ceramics in his travels and found them easy enough to recreate, like his checkerboard pattern.

Figure 22: Pie Plate by Johannes Neesz, c. 1800. From Barber, 143.

Figure 23: Pie Plate by David Spinner, c. 1800. From Barber, 153.
While the Moravians were indeed pacifist and aided the Continentals’ war effort and met them regularly in the store and Meyer’s tavern, primarily, as Thorp suggests, to avoid conflict with neighbors (“we run the risk of losing what we have furnished, but dared not refuse, as that would have led to oppression and resentment”), the martial aspects of the Revolutionary War had taken on a different meaning twenty-five years later. Meyer may have been staying with Krause in 1791 when George Washington ate dinner in Salem while on his southern tour, greeted upon his entrance by blaring French horns and legions of Moravian children. The visit was followed by a warm, but not necessarily patriotic, letter to the President that referenced the Revolution in an entirely different light: “…we consider that the same Lord who preserved Your precious Person in so many imminent Dangers, has made You in a conspicuous Manner an Instrument in His Hands to forward that happy Constitution…” When viewed as a means to “the Peace whereof we do find Peace,” the cause of the Revolution as intertwined with the new government’s protection was worth backing after the fact. Meyer may have been simply tapping into a patriotic market and in any case might have harbored few religious scruples about his stove tiles. Nonetheless, it is equally important to avoid essentializing Moravian beliefs in front of the backdrop of a new country.

Concluding Thoughts: “Grown Turbulent”
Through Meyer’s pottery we can understand the education he received from Aust and Christ beyond the conflicts between the three men. Meyer learned how to make the

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133 Fries, Salem Diary, Records of the Moravians of North Carolina, Volume II, 885.
134 Ibid., Volume V, 2325.
135 To the President of the United States, The humble Address of the United Brethren in Wachovia. Ibid., 2402.
basic vessel forms necessary for a backcountry settlement, learned how to decorate them
in the Wachovian tradition, and learned to allow room for the experimentation and
innovation that kept the Salem pottery competitive during and after the Creamware
Revolution. We will never know whether or not he understood the symbolic or spiritual
significance of his motifs—from the traditional to the martial and irreverent—but his
creativity in modifying the traditions of his master says enough.

Apart from his location and what we know of his conflicts with the community,
Meyer's work, even with his experimentation and new forms, is indistinguishable from
that of a fundamentally Moravian artisan. If it were possible to separate the spiritual from
the everyday in the Moravian world, we would say he continued to be Moravian, working
with Aust's and Christ's marketing strategies of simultaneous artistic specialization
(clearly following Aust's path of producing unwashed earthenwares and washed clay
pipes) and subsequent diversification (producing multiple variants on the same form and
technique).

This irony, like Meyer's production of the Moravian star motif at Mount
Shepherd, mirrors the original contradiction created by the Herrnhut leadership of a self-
sufficient, culturally gated community dependent on the economic inclusion of outsiders.
Given the economically-oriented and transnational nature of the Moravian mission,
"German"-ness and "Germanic tendencies" are no longer a part the larger narrative of
"acculturation." From the inclusion of the Swedish doctor in the first wagon to the
acceptance of William Ellis into the pottery shop, Wachovia's connections were truly
global and the community only selectively gated from the outside.
Instead, the identity of Moravian, in the spiritual and community sense, was the most closely guarded. As noted earlier, even while producing the far more lucrative creamware, Christ continued to produce the earthenwares that were socially and spiritually symbolic to the community and that, due to the backgrounds of the majority of the community and Christ himself, happened to be interpreted using some Germanic techniques. Thus first- and second-generation Moravian artisans were producing in two sets, both expected to acknowledge Godliness in their daily lives but keep their economic goals, those which dealt with the needs of outsiders, separate. Two Moravian callings—the spiritual community member and the material vernacular producer—emerged for these potters and together contributed to, or sapped resources and energy from, the shop and the rest of the Brethren.

Buzz words like “declension” and “acculturation” do not apply to first-generation Aust, who adhered to his own pottery traditions while simultaneously allowing Christ and journeymen to experiment on his time and with his kilns. As an extraordinarily skilled artisan and monster producer, Aust was an ideal worker as a major contributor to the Oeconomie. As a community member, Aust was difficult to deal with and spent years in conflict and in the process of arbitration with others, affecting in a very material way the futures of his apprentices who defected to other trades. Spiritually and strongly adapted to the faith—the conflicts were never of a religious nature—he was not adapted to a community of Zinzendorf’s transnational experiment; a Moravian at heart but not a man of the backcountry.

Christ, raised as a young boy in Wachovia, was also skilled and produced much, but was far more flexible than Aust. Rarely before the Aufseher Collegium with anyone
except for Aust, he adapted not only to the community but to his role as a master, producing more protégés. He was also in tune with the broader trends of early America like the Creamware Revolution and the influxes of fremde neighbors, with which a conflict was never recorded. While he worked with English wares, he did not cede the Wachovian earthenware vernacular while working for decades to perfect his tortoiseshell sets. Observing the individual strive for perfection outside of essentialized notions of ethnic typologies and skill sets creates little room for reconciling the assumption of acculturation as a passive, deathlike process. Christ instead helped his Brethren grow by surpassing Aust in sales, and therefore his monetary contribution to the community. He also served as a more stable member of the Aufseher Collegium, aiding in continuing the tranquility of a Godly artisan community. In Christ’s example, the more innovative, perhaps the less German, but the more Moravian.

Meyer seems the most likely candidate for the prescriptive “declension” of the second and third generations as described by Sommer. A rejection of Aust may seem a rejection of the Moravian system of communal artisanship, tied to God and the faith itself. While a liability of the community, his conflicts were not of a spiritual nature but were contentions with the nature of the apprenticeship and, in describing his “very bad childhood,” the failings of the community. Leaving the Brethren did not change his artisanal practice, a Moravian hybrid of Aust’s and Christ’s forms and market strategies with the addition of his own. Whether or not he continued the faith individually, and whether or not he saw himself as a German among Randolph County Englishmen, he is still a success of the Salem apprenticeship system he so hated. Standing next to Aust as a (much larger) failure to his community, Meyer as an economically viable master was
neither prey to acculturation or declension but merely his own shift towards a market that offered a wayward individual autonomy.

During the Revolutionary War, as Alexander Martin’s troops were taking drink from Jacob Meyer’s tavern in Salem, John Adams wrote to Abigail Adams:

“We have been told that our Struggle has loosened the bands of Government every where. That Children and Apprentices were disobedient—that schools and Colledges were grown turbulent—that Indians slighted their Guardians and Negroes grew insolent to their Masters.”

The backcountry explosion and the market explosion at the turn of the eighteenth century certainly “loosened” the ties of those with skills to offer and seeking opportunity. For Philip Jacob Meyer, Jr., this opportunity to “be disobedient” and move towards his own independence took precedence over his lifelong community ties. His presence was missed by some, and at least one man shouldered the responsibility for his loss. On his deathbed, Jacob Meyer, Sr., who had fought Aust so hard to be close to his son, lamented that Philip and his brother Samuel:

“had fallen away from the strict ways in which they had been reared. Their loss seemed greatly to magnify his other griefs. At times he was inconsolable, sobbing convulsively over his failure to keep them faithful to the church, ‘begging and pleading to the Savior that he would have mercy on them…”

In what seems a contradictory fluke, even a mistake, Jacob Meyer Sr. bequeathed to Philip Jacob the family bible, even though other Meyer children thrived in Salem and Philip Jacob had probably died before his father. As oldest son, Philip Jacob would posthumously pass on to his son his family’s history, inextricably tied with the Wachovian community. Even though his place in Jacob Meyer’s life and the community


137 James, “A Tavern in the Town,” 44-45, as found in Whatley, 47.
were an uncomfortable void, it appears that there was still hope for a sense of tradition and a spiritual belonging in the Moravian potter alone in the woods.

Figure 24 Spiral Flower on Stove Tile, Mount Shepherd Pottery Site. Photograph by Jessica Taylor.
Appendix 1: List of Apprentices under Potters in Moravian Wachovia, 1762-1818

Under Gottfried Aust (Master, 1755-1788)

Peter Stolz (1762-1767)
Joseph Müller (1766)
Ludwig Möller (1766-1773, Journeyman 1773-1783)
John Heinrich Beroth (1766-1773)
Rudolph Christ (1766-1773, Journeyman 1773-1781?)
Johann Gottlob Krause (1773-1781, master of Bethabara 1789-1802)
Johann Gottfried Aust (1780-1787)
Franz Stauber (1784-1788, Journeyman 1789-1792)
Philip Jacob Meyer (1786-1789)

Under Rudolph Christ (Master, 1786-1821)

David Baumgarten (1789-1795, Journeyman 1795-1797)
Johann Gottfried Aust (1780)
John Butner (1789-1796, Journeyman 1796-1802, master of Bethabara 1802 - ?)
Philip Jacob Meyer (1789)
John Frederic Holland (1796-1803, Journeyman 1803-1821, master of Salem 1821-1843)
Joseph Stockburger (1797-1806)
Samuel Benjamin Wagemann (1802-1810, Journeyman 1810-1815)
Samuel Schulz (1806-1813, Journeyman 1813-1818)
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