

Count Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf

AN ACCOUNT OF THE EXERCISES INCIDENT TO THE UNVEILING OF THE TABLET IN HIS MEMORY

By M. LUTHER HEISEY

The clear skies and crisp atmosphere of a delightful October day brought together an assembly of several hundred people to the celebration incident to the unveiling of the tablet to the memory of Count Zinzendorf, at the home of D. Paul Hershey, located on the old Newport Road, one mile north of Lititz, Pa., on Sunday, October 11th, 1936.

The actual unveiling was done by Mary Jane Hershey, the ten-year-old daughter of Mrs. Sue Snyder Hershey, whose family has lived in the house for a century.

A pleasant feature of the program was the rendition of a number of Moravian chorales, by the Trombone Choir of the Lititz Moravian Church, under the direction of John W. Keehn. Some of these hymns were written by Count Zinzendorf, and are in popular favor with other Protestant bodies, as well as with the Moravians.

Through serious illness, the chairman of the celebration committee, Samuel H. Ranck, of Grand Rapids, Michigan, was unable to attend, and his greetings were extended to the audience by Dr. Beck:

The following words, wrote Mr. Ranck, are from a lecture on Count Zinzendorf, by the late Rev. Dr. Augustus C. Thompson, which he delivered at the Andover Theological Seminary nearly sixty years ago; and these words are as true today as they were in the 1870's. It was the second lecture in a series of twelve on Moravian Missions. These are the words:

"First-rate men are a formative power in their times; second-rate men are formed by their times. No great movement in so-

ciety or in the church takes place without a superior mind to lead and give it shape. . . . To this category belonged Count Zinzendorf. . . . He was a great man. Abuse did not sour him, nor did difficulties daunt him."

To stand on the ground where great deeds were done, or where noble souls wrought and achieved for the lasting benefit of mankind, is always inspiring. That is why millions of people every year visit literary, patriotic and religious shrines—for the inspiration that comes through our feet from standing on such sacred soil.

Count Zinzendorf had to a marked degree the genius of leadership—the power to inspire in his followers unlimited confidence in his judgment. In no respect is his genius more marked than the manner in which he inspired the missionary movement among the so-called savage nations, not only in his own time but down to this very day, for the success of his followers in this direction surpasses all other missionary triumphs.

Zinzendorf was a great traveler, visiting and living at times in no less than eight different countries, including the Danish West Indies in 1739, and Pennsylvania where he arrived in 1741, after landing in New York. A good part of the two years in America he resided in Philadelphia, from which point he visited or established many, if not all, of the well known Moravian settlements in Pennsylvania; and it was during this period that he preached in this house—the commemorative marking of which has brought us together today.

But Moravian Missions to the Indians under his leadership and inspiration began before Zinzendorf came to America, namely in Georgia in 1735. This colony, however, because of the Spanish attacks from Florida, moved to Pennsylvania in 1739 and 1740. In this State and in New York, as well as along the border line of Connecticut and Massachusetts, his followers were most active in their work of Christianizing the Indian.

The great thrilling story of Indian missions, however, was under the leadership of David Zeisberger in western Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, and that part of Ontario along Lake St. Clair and the Detroit River. For sixty-two of his eighty-eight years Zeisberger labored under most extraordinary difficulties with the In-

dians, especially those west of the Allegheny Mountains in the states referred to. And what his difficulties were, especially in Ohio and Michigan, may readily be imagined when we remember the thirty years of Indian turmoil in this western region during the period of the French and Indian War, the Pontiac Conspiracy, and the American Revolution. We in the Old Northwest who know the history of our section of the country, all know the important part the Moravian missions played in the early history of that region.

Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, on behalf of the committee of arrangements, we greet you and welcome you all to this historic spot on this historic occasion; and we hope that each and every one of you, as well as each of us on the committee, may today take home some of the inspiration that comes from contact with a great soul; and furthermore, may I express the hope that every time we and thousands of other travelers pass this spot and notice this memorial tablet, all will feel some of the inspiration that comes from a knowledge of the life and work of the great man whose memory we are here and now honoring.

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Dr. Herbert H. Beck, as chairman of the meeting, spoke as follows:

The facts that lead up to the erection of this beautiful tablet to Zinzendorf on this old house are these:

Our records show that in 1733 Jacob Hooper settled on this tract of land. The deed, within this house to-day, shows that he got title to the property from the Penn heirs in 1739. This is typical of differences between time of settlement and time of possession that existed hereabouts in the early parts of the eighteenth century. Christian Bomberger, who occupied a tract immediately to the west, settled there in 1722 but acquired title only in 1734.

This house was probably built between 1733 and 1740. It was a well established tavern on the Newport Road in 1742.

Count Zinzendorf was a brilliant religious leader of Saxony, who had revived and reorganized the scattered and persecuted followers of the martyr, John Hus, into the modern Moravian Church.

Temporarily residing in America, on the 2d of December, 1742, he began a tour of visitations to the religious communities which he had founded, his Indian missions and into scattered groups of Moravians, some of whom were in Warwick Township. During the period from December 2d to 12th, it is known that he preached seventeen sermons.

He stopped at Jacob Hooper's Tavern, as the Lititz Moravian records show, and it was spread about locally that he would preach there.

John George Klein, who owned and lived on the tract about the springhead of Carter's run, though a deeply religious man, was prejudiced against Zinzendorf, and did not make the short journey to hear him. It was a time of religious awakening, and Klein spent a night of restless remorse. The next day he followed Zinzendorf to Lancaster to hear him preach in the courthouse there. Klein was now deeply impressed and moved. Zinzendorf's powerful influence upon Klein determined the destiny of this part of Warwick Township. When in 1754 Zinzendorf was prospecting for the site of another of his religious communities, Klein, entirely won over to Zinzendorf's cause, offered his 491 acres for the purpose. This was accepted. Zinzendorf planned and directed the organization of this new community through the agency of Augustus Spangenberg, who was the Vicarius Generalis of his religious enterprises in America.

In 1756 Zinzendorf sent word from Saxony that the town was to be named Lititz. He did this to commemorate the three hundredth anniversary of the year, when in 1457 King Podiebrad of Bohemia had befriended and sheltered the persecuted Hussites at his Barony of Lititz.

The suggestion to honor Zinzendorf and mark this old house came to The Lancaster County Historical Society from one of its members, Samuel H. Ranck, noted librarian of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Doubtless the historical facts and importance of the place were brought to Mr. Ranck's attention by his uncle, the late John R. Bricker, of Lititz.

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To have listened to the Rev. Dr. Paul de Schweinitz, himself a

lineal descendant of the Count (for his great grandmother was Zinzendorf's grand-daughter), giving the principal address of the occasion, was to know the complete story of this devoted and zealous disciple of Jesus Christ—Count Zinzendorf. No detail of his interesting career was omitted. Dr. de Schweinitz displayed to view the sword carried by the Count on court occasions, but assured the audience that, while the sword was used as a matter of custom, it was never used offensively. It is now encased in the form of a walking stick.

Dr. de Schweinitz said, in part, that Count Zinzendorf was born in Dresden, Germany, on May 26th, 1700, the son of George Ludwig, Chamberlain and Minister of Augustus, Elector of Saxony. He devoted himself to religious studies at Halle University; studied law at the University of Wittenberg; had a great imagination, a faculty of eloquence, and great personal beauty and dignity. At Halle, he and three boy friends formed themselves into "The Order of the Grain of Mustard Seed," (Matt. 13: 31, 32), the germ of the missionary enterprises of the Moravian Church. While traveling after his student days, he came to an art gallery at Duesseldorf, and viewed the famous "Ecce Homo" painting, with the inscription "This have I suffered for thee, what hast thou done for Me?" His answer was the rededication of his life.

On attaining the age of twenty-one, he bought the estate of Berthelsdorf, and it was here in 1722 that the persecuted Protestant immigrants arrived and formed the new Moravian village of Herrnhut (that is "The Lord's Watch"). And here on September 7th of the same year, the young Count married Erdmuth Dorothea, Countess Reuss, an able, generous woman, and built for her the manor house of Berthelsdorf, a mile from the Moravian village.

He traveled and preached throughout Holland and France. He published religious periodicals, and was called the "German Socrates." He sent missionaries to America from Herrnhut in 1732, and planted religious colonies over Europe. In 1734 he was ordained a minister of the Lutheran Church. He was banished from Saxony in 1736, and then began to travel over the world. He gained the favor of Frederick William I, of Prussia, who caused him to be consecrated, by his own chaplain, a Bishop, in 1738.

This consecration was by Bishop Daniel Ernst Jablonski, at that time Court-Preacher in Berlin, but at the same time the last surviving Bishop of the Ancient Bohemian-Moravian Brethren (Unitas Fratrum), and by Bishop David Nitschmann, the first Bishop of the Renewed Brethren's Church or Unitas Fratrum (Moravian Church). He came to Pennsylvania in 1741, preached at Germantown for some time, established congregations at Bethlehem, Nazareth and Lititz, promoted Christian communistic settlements, and preached at different points in Lancaster County, Pa. Zinzendorf, with his daughter, Benigna, and several brethren and sisters, visited various tribes of Indians. At Shekomeko he established the first Indian Moravian Congregation in America.

He visited England in 1749, obtained an Act of Parliament authorizing the establishment of Moravian missions in North America. He died at Herrnhut, May 9th, 1760, and his remains were borne to the grave by thirty-two preachers and missionaries whom he had reared, and some of whom had toiled in Holland, England, Ireland, North America and Greenland. What monarch was ever honored by a funeral like this?

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As representatives of Count Zinzendorf's native country, and as guests of the Historical Society, Dr. Hans Luther, the German ambassador to the United States, directed the two German envoys, Dr. J. von Rantzau, vice consul in New York city, and Arno Mowitz, consul in Philadelphia, to attend the exercises. The Society was pleased to have them grace the occasion, and was well impressed with the simple words of greeting and the laudatory remarks regarding Count Zinzendorf, as with the quiet dignity and reserved bearing of the speaker, Dr. Rantzau, who used both the English and German language.

The story of the Newport Road, which passes the Hershey house, written by Henry H. Bomberger, of Lititz, Pa., was told to the audience by Dr. Beck.

The gathering dispersed after the benediction pronounced by Rev. John Bucher, pastor of the Indiantown Mennonite Church.