

Report for Salem Academy and College
A Study of the School's Education of Female Slaves and its Involvement with Slavery
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Research Methods and Materials

I conducted my research by consulting secondary works as well as the primary sources held at both archives. The three secondary works that contributed most to my research are Adelaide Fries' *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, Jon F. Sensbach's *A Separate Canaan*, and Frances Griffin's *Less Time for Meddling: A History of Salem Academy and College 1772-1866*. The primary sources I consulted are housed in the Moravian Archives and these include the Salem diary, the Aeltesten Conferenz minutes, the Helfer fürs Ganze minutes, death notices or memoirs, personal letters, enrollment records for the Boarding School, the Single Sisters' Diary from Salem, the ledgers from the Salem Diakonie and the Boarding School, and Abraham Steiner's report on the Boarding School for the 1818 Synod in Herrnhut, Germany. I also examined all German script documents that the Salem Academy and College Archives had, concentrating on the ledger for the Boarding School. Since considerable and excellent research

had previously been completed by Frances Griffin and Jon F. Sensbach, I focused on texts written in German in the old script (*Kurrent*), which have thus far possibly eluded previous attention. Of these documents the two that produced the most useful information were the Boarding School ledgers and Abraham Steiner's report to the Synod in 1818. The ledgers I examined started in 1804 and I reviewed them up through the year 1861.

Research Objective and Outcomes

The goals of my research were to establish evidence of either free or slave African American enrollment (first at the Little Girls' School and later the Boarding School) from April 30, 1772 through the beginning of the Civil War in 1861 and to determine whether the institution had purchased or leased slaves during that time period. In regard to the former, there is evidence that at least one slave was permitted to attend school and another attended classes, possibly at the school as well. However, following the year 1793 there is no evidence that African Americans, free or slave, attended school. In regard to slave labor, indisputable evidence illustrates that the Boarding School first owned and then later leased slaves beginning around 1810. In the year 1840 this practice appears to have ceased.

The Question of Enrollment

Evidence for enrollment in Moravian schools has been previously researched and is well documented by scholars. In *A Separate Canaan*, Jon F. Sensbach cites evidence that the female African American slave Anna Maria Samuel not only attended classes, but also joined the Sisters' Choir in Salem:

Black children entered the choir system as well. The most prominent example was Anna Maria Samuel....' At ten o'clock was the reception of two children into their choir: Elis. Stockburger and black Anna Maria, both from Bethabara. At two o'clock was their Lovefeast. After that they were seen in classes, then followed the festival homily'. (136)

Anna Maria was the daughter of Johann and Maria Samuel, some of the earliest slave married couples who had become full members of the Moravian congregation in the Wachau area (both were from Bethabara). Despite being slaves they and their children seemed welcomed to participate in almost all aspects of devotional and Choir life that every other Moravian would experience. Anna Maria's death notice tells of her joining the Single Sisters' Choir as if it were a normal event for African Americans: "Im Jahr 1793 den 4. Juny wurde sie in Salem ins gr. Mädgen Chor aufgenommen".¹ The entry in the Single Sister's Diary is equally straightforward: "Um 10 war die Aufnahme von 2 Kindern in ihr Chor Elisabeth Stockburger und der Schwarze Anna Mary beyde von Bethabara. Um 2 Uhr war ihr Liebesmahl. Nachher wurde sie **in Classen** gesehen dann folgte die Fest Homilie" (emphasis mine).² Importantly, the Single Sister's diary clarifies that

¹ "In the year 1793 on the 4th of June she was admitted into the Single Sister's Choir" in Salem (my translation). The full death notice reads: "Anna Maria ein großes Mädgen unsrer Neger Geschw. Johann und Maria Samuels Tochter, war geboren den 24. December 1781 in Bethabara und wurde noch denselben Tag in Jesu Tod getauft. Im Jahr 1793 den 4. Juny wurde sie in Salem ins gr. Mädgen Chor aufgenommen. Die Gelegenheit zu ihrer Krankheit war eine starke Erhizung und darauf erfolgte Erkältung, wodurch eine Auszehrung entstund, die vergangenen Sept. anfang. Sie ließ sich in derselben durch den Geist Gottes zu einer seligen Vollendung prepariren, welche denn auch den 18. Febr. 1798 früh nach 1 Uhr nachdem sie dem I. Heiland zu Gnaden empfohlen und ihr der letzte Segen zu ihrer Heimfahrt enthielt worden, sanft u. selig erfolgte. Ihres Alters 16 Jahre 7 Monat und 3 Wochen" (Bethabara Church Book, February 15, 1798). The full English translation: "Anna Maria a Single Sister and Daughter of our Negro Siblings Johann and Maria Samuel was born on the 24th of December, 1781 in Bethabara and was baptized into the death of Jesus the same day. In the year 1793 on the 4th of June she was admitted into the Single Sister's Choir in Salem. The occasion of her illness was a drastic overheating followed by a cold, through which a consumption developed last September. During this time she made preparations for her blessed departure from this life though the spirit of God and passed away gently and peacefully and on the 18th of February 1798 early in the morning after 1:00 o'clock. Before her passing she had been commended to the grace of the dear Savior and was given her final blessings for her journey home. Her age was 16 year, 7 months, and 3 weeks" (my translation).

² "At 10 o'clock was the admission of 2 children into the choir, Elisabeth Stockburger and the black Anna Mary, both from Bethabara. At 2 o'clock was their love feast. Afterwards they were **seen in classes** and then followed the festival homily" (my translation, emphasis mine). The full citation in German reads: "Den 4. kamen von Bethabara 5 und von Friedland 1 zum Fest der Maedgen hier her. Der Fest Morgensegen war um 9 Uhr. Um 10 war die Aufnahme von 2 Kinder in ihr Chor Elisabeth Stockburger und der Schwarze Anna Mary beyde von Bethabara. Um 2 Uhr war ihr Liebesmahl. Nachher wurde sie in Classen gesehen dann folgte die Fest Homilie. Nach der Germeinstunde worinnen sie von der Gemeine warm gesegnet werden hatten die G. AbMhls Maedgen mit allen Vorgesezten den Lobe und Verbindungs Kelch. Diese Versammlung war mit einem ausgezeugnet seligen Gefühl und mit der Nahen Gegenwart unsers lieben Heiland" (Single Sisters Diary, June 4, 1793). Full English translation: "On the 4th five Single Sisters from Bethabara and one from Friedland came here (to Salem) to the Single Sisters' Festival. The festival morning blessing was held at 9:00 o'clock. At 10 o'clock was the admission of 2

she attended classes. The only ambiguity surrounding this information is the nature of these classes. The texts do not specify whether these classes were indeed part of the Little Girls' School or part of general religious education.

Despite the ambiguity, it is possible Anna Maria attended classes at the school. There is evidence that the Salem governing body (the Aeltesten Conferenz) had in fact permitted such a request. In *A Separate Canaan*, Jon Sensbach refers to Adam Schumacher's request that he be allowed to send one of his slaves to the school: "...the elders gave permission to Adam Schumacher of Salem 'to send his Negro girl, who is about ten years old, to the school' " (135-6). In *Less time for Meddling: A History of Salem Academy and College 1772-1866*, Frances Griffin cites the same passage: "...in 1785, Adam Schumacher, a member of the Salem congregation who lived on a farm a few miles from town, asked that a Negro girl on his place be permitted to attend the school. A request that was granted apparently without question" (27). In *Neither Slave nor Free*, Daniel Crews mentions Adam Schumacher's request as well: "...on 5 January 1785 the Aeltesten Conferenz noted: 'Adam Schumacher asks that his Negro girl, about ten years old, may be received into the school, for which permission is given' (3). In order to verify this research and to discover possible transcription errors or linguistic nuances that could shed more light, I examined the original, which reads: "Adam Schumacher bittet um Erlaubniß, daß er sein Negermädgen von etwa 10 Jahren in die Schule schicken dürfe, welches ihm vergönnt ist" (Aeltesten Conferenz, January 5 1785)³. The script and language are very clear; there is no disputing that Adam Schumacher's slave was given permission to attend the Little Girls' School. This fact represents a remarkable event in the early years of the United States and signifies a

children into the choir, Elisabeth Stockburger and the black Anna Mary, both from Bethabara. At 2:00 o'clock was their love feast. Afterwards they were seen in classes and then followed the festival homily. After the congregational service where they were warmly blessed by the congregation, the Single Sister Communicants along with their supervisors enjoyed the cup of praise and unity. This service took place with an exceptional sense of blessedness and the close proximity of our dear Savior" (my translation).

³ "Adam Schumacher asks for permission, that he be allowed to send his young Negro girl (*Negermädgen*) of roughly 10 years of age to the school, which is granted to him" (my translation).

piece of history that deserves recognition. However, there are still unanswered questions. It is not known how long or often she attended. In fact, until recently the name of this child remained unknown.

Based on documents Rosemary Wheeler obtained from the North Carolina State Archives one can conclude that the child's name was Hanna. According to Adam Schumacher's will (his name is Anglicized for court records as Shoemaker), he gave all his property, including his slave, Hanna, to his wife and children: "[I bequeath] my negro Slave named Hannah to be her property with all her children" (Will of Adam Shoemaker, August 1786). More evidence regarding her name is also found in the Bethania Diary:

Vormittags taufte Br. Pfohl das zum sterben todt kranke Kind der Negerin Hanna, --welche den Schumacher's Kindern gehört-- mit Namen Susanna, in Jesu Tod, im Hause der Geschw. Petrus Hausers, die sowol, als die Negerin selbst, sehr angelegentlich u. dringend darum gebeten hatten. Es hatte sich zu dieser Handlung eine ziemliche Anzahl unsrer Gschw. u. Kinder auch einige Negerinnen eingefunden, zu denen erstlich über die heutige Losung geredet wurde. Abends gegen 7 Uhr nahm der Hld. dieses kleine Neger Kind Susanna, welches am 7 Nov. vorigen Jahres geboren wurden, selig zu sich heim. (Bethania Diary, April 29, 1803)⁴

The diary entry describes the baptism of a deathly sick child born to the "negress Hanna--who belongs to the Schumacher's children." The citation clearly names Hanna and also identifies her as belonging to the Schumacher children, a fact which coincides with the wishes of Adam Schumacher's will: "and after the departure of my said wife the said slave together with all her children shall then be the property of my children." The timeframe of eighteen years also connects

⁴ "Fri., Apr. 29, 1803, was Speaking for the Single Sisters and Older Girls. In the afternoon Br. Pfohl baptized the mortally ill little child of the Negro woman Hanna, who belongs to Schumacher's children. He named her Susanna, baptizing her into the death of Jesus in the house of Br. and Sr. Petrus Hauser, who themselves as well as the Negro woman had urgently requested this [sacrament]. For this act a large number of our Brn. and Srs. and children as well as a few Negro women had gathered. He spoke to them on the Watchword [Ps. 119:130] for today. In the evening about 7 o'clock the Savior took this little Negro child Susanna blessedly home to Himself. She was born Nov. 7 of the previous year" (Bethania Diary, April 29, 1803. translated by Roy Ledbetter, April 2017).

chronologically. It is therefore evident that the name of the oft-cited black slave who received permission to attend the school in Salem is Hanna.

Without question Hanna's permission for enrollment in the school and Anna Marie's time in classes while living in the Sisters' Choir are noteworthy events. They emphasize the more liberal attitudes the early Wachau congregations displayed toward free and slave African Americans. However, by the time the Little Girls' School had been transformed into the more official Boarding School in 1804, attitudes toward integration had changed. Daniel Crews mentions this change, stating: "Such unity of slave and master did not last long. As time went on Moravians more and more mirrored the separatist attitudes of their fellow citizens..." (4). Crews cites an additional passage from the congregation Council of 26 March 1789 that stated blacks should be seated in the back of the church: "As on Easter morning a good many Negroes come and sit among the white people, which does not accord with the customary thought of people in this country, the Saaldiener (ushers) shall hold them at the door and then show them to a back bench if there is room" (4). Jon Sensbach provides a very thorough explanation of this social shift, illustrating how subsequent first and second generation Moravians came to feel more like American, and specifically Southerners, as time went on. He argues this attitude culminated in the congregational decision to no longer publicly display the kiss of peace:

Nothing symbolized the profound changes at hand more vividly than the fate of the kiss of peace. Of all the Moravian rituals, the kiss signified the pinnacle of Christian love and union, the final mystical celebration with which Brethren were inducted into the Unity. But by the early nineteenth century, even the kiss was drowning in the rising tide of white race-consciousness. (201)

The pressure to conform to the prevailing culture and its mores not only influenced increasing segregation in the Wachau among white Moravians and slaves, but most likely influenced the admission policies of the Boarding School as well. In all the documents I examined relating to the Boarding School I could not find any evidence of black enrollment, a possible corollary of the changing racial attitudes in the Salem congregation.

Owning and Leasing Slaves

Although I could not find evidence of slaves attending the Boarding School, I did find clear evidence that the Boarding School both owned and leased slaves. Terry Collins had uncovered evidence of a slave being purchased for the laundry in the ledger for the Boarding School written in English on May 31, 1811: "Negro woman Betsey: brought over 400".⁵ Using his findings as a point of departure, I began with the year 1804 and searched in the Diaries and Ledgers for the Boarding School for any evidence of purchase or renting of slaves⁶. Initially there is no mention of owning or renting any slaves. In the years 1806-08 there is an indication that money was coming in from the laundry (*Wäscherey*), which may suggest the presence of slave labor as a profit-producing asset. Yet there is no mention of the laundry as an active asset (*Activa*) until the years 1810-1811, a date closely aligned with the procurement of the slave Betsey, according to the ledger entry discovered by Terry Collins. Additionally, in the minutes of the Aufseher Collegium from August 20, 1811, it is evident Abraham Steiner had purchased a female slave for work in the Boarding School: "There is danger that the Negro Sam, recently bought by Br. Kreuser to be hired to the Single Sisters diaconie, may make the acquaintance of the Negro girl bought by Br. Steiner for use in the Boarding School" (Records of the Moravians 3151). Abraham Steiner's slave is again a topic of discussion in the minutes of the Congregation Council held in Salem on August 22, 1814:

It was also decided by a majority vote that Br. Steiner might retain the single, unmarried Negress which he bought for service in the Boarding School; but it was recommended that he should not cease endeavoring to find a white person to take her place as soon as possible. Then the existing contract can be made effective, whereby Br. von Schweinitz will buy the Negress for the Unity Administration, remove her from the town, and place her elsewhere (Records of the Moravians 3544).

⁵ Salem Boarding School ledger for Washing, May 31 1811, Salem College Archive.

⁶ Importantly, the term the Moravians used almost exclusively to refer to slaves was *Neger* (male) or *Negerin* (female) the German for negro or negress. I have only encountered two uses of the work *Sklave* (slave) in all of my research, including my own study of the year 1817. If the individual was not a slave the adjective *frei* (free) preceded the noun *Neger*.

The slave Betsey was indeed bought, but not by Br. von Schweinitz. In the minutes of the Aufseher Collegium from April 21, 1817 Elisabeth (Betsey) is sold to Brother Kreuser: “Br. Kreuser wishes to buy the Negress Elisabeth who has been working in the Boarding School, as he wants her as a wife for his Negro Sam. Collegium has no objection if another Negress belonging to Br. von Schweinitz [probably Caty] is rented in her place” (Records of the Moravians 3346). No longer fearing that the two slaves Sam and Betsy might meet, the Aufseher Collegium now sees it preferable that the two marry. Moreover, the Collegium emphasizes that another slave must replace Betsy, most likely Caty, who, instead of being owned, will be rented. Later that year in July, Sam and Betsy are indeed married in a ceremony Abraham Steiner himself officiates: “In the house of the auswärtige Negro Br. Botney, belonging to this congregation, his daughter Betsey was married by Br. Abraham Steiner to the Negro Sam belonging to Br. Kreuser” (Records of the Moravians 3329).⁷ From a reference found in the minutes of the Aeltesten Conferenz from January 5, 1822, one can assume that Caty (Cathy) did take over the housekeeping for the Boarding School once Betsey was purchased by Brother Kreuser: “Br. Reichel reported that he had taken the single Sr. Mary White to help in the housekeeping, as the Negress Cathy had returned to the Quarter because she was sick” (Records of the Moravians 3508). From these references found in the Salem Diary and in the minutes of the governing bodies, it is evident that both inspectors Abraham Steiner and Gotthold Benjamin Reichel made use of slave labor, first owning a slave, Betsey, and then renting one, Caty.

⁷ There seems to be an error in the date for the marriage. In *Records of the Moravians* edited by Adelaide Fries, the date appears under July 12. However, in the actual diary it is found in a marginal note under July 17 and reads: “Br. Abr. Steiner verrichtete in dem Hause der zur Haus-Gem. gehörige ausw. Neger Geschw. Botney die Trauung ihrer Tochter Betsey dem Neger Sam, dem Br. Kreuser gehörig” Salem Diary, July 17 1817, Salem Archive. The translation by Fries given above is a good translation with the exception that in the German Betsey is said to be the daughter of the **Brother and Sister** Botney, indicating the slaves Botney were not only *auswärtige* (external, i.e. not living in Salem) congregational members, but also married.

This fact is also reflected in the Ledgers. In 1812 under “active assets” (*Activa*) it appears a slave was owned, primarily for work in the laundry: “Wäscherey, eine Negerin 200” (Laundry, a Negress 200).⁸ This ledger entry remains the same until the year 1818, during which there is nothing listed regarding owning or renting a slave. Betsey was sold in 1817, resulting in a year without slave labor. Then in 1819 under expenses (*Ausgegeben*) one finds proof that the school began leasing a female slave: “Miethe für eine Negerin” (Rent for a Negress).⁹ As stated above this slave was Caty, who was rented from Brother von Schweinitz, who was absent in the year 1818 due to the fact he was at the Synod in Herrnhut, Germany. This entry is repeated yearly until 1837 at which time a male slave is also rented: “Miethe für einen Neger; Miethe für eine Negerin u. ihre Kleidung 100 und 45” (Rent for a Negro, rent for a Negress and her clothing 100 and 45).¹⁰ This entry repeats until 1840, after which time the ledger only lists either a house servant (*Hausknecht*) or day laborers (*Tagelöhner*). Whether or not these servants or day laborers were black or white or slave is not mentioned.

Additional convincing evidence of slave ownership comes from Abraham Steiner’s report about the school, which he wrote for the Synod in 1818 in Herrnhut, Germany. The report provides an excellent description of the type of education the Moravians supported and offered for outsiders and a few congregational children. The report outlines the ethical and moral nature of the school, the quality of its curriculum and its instructors, its high level of careful nurturing and oversight, as well as the problems the institution faced. These problems ranged from student housing difficulties, the often contentious relationship between the institution and congregation members, and importantly the difficulties in maintaining the building and its housekeeping. A. Steiner mentions that in order to alleviate the problem of housekeeping the institution had relied

⁸ Boarding School ledger, May 31 1812, Salem College Archive.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

on a female slave. However, recent regulations against slave ownership in town had made it near impossible for him to maintain the school's housekeeping needs:

Den Hausdienst hat bisher eine weise Witwe und eine ledige Negerin besorgt, welche letztere **die Anstalt angekauft, und bisher eigenthümlich im Besiz gehabt hat**. Da aber jetzt ihre Bestimmung anderwärts hie ist, und nach den Ortsregeln keine eigenthümliche Sklaven angekauft werden sollen, so wird man sich müssen helfen so gut man kan. Daß zwey Personen bey dem Hausdienst erforderlich sind, hat die Erfahrung gelehrt, wie auch daß man nicht zwey weisse Personen dazu bekommen kan, zumal da solche Arbeit vorkommt, wozu sich hier zu Lande nicht leicht eine weisse Person öffentlich bequemt. **Eine Neger Sklavin muß man haben**; und daß es der Anstalt nicht zugelassen wird, solche eigenthümlich zu besitzen, ist drückend für den Inspector und für die Anstalt, und es zeigt auch nicht die größte Gunst gegen die Anstalt wenn des einem andere erlaubt worden, was ihr nicht vergönnt ist. (emphasis mine, Abraham Steiner's Report to the Synod, 1818)¹¹

A. Steiner's report offers unambiguous proof that a slave had until (*bisher*) now (1818) provided assistance for housekeeping and that the school bought (*die Anstalt angekauft*) and owned the slave (*und bisher eigenthümlich im Besiz gehabt hat*)¹². The significance of A. Steiner's report is his perception that the school cannot do without slave labor. His experience (*Erfahrung*) that no two white people will do the necessary work and his insistence that "one **must** have a black slave" (*Eine Neger Sklavin muß man haben*) should settle any questions about the school's willingness to employ slave labor.

A. Steiner's complaint that other entities in town are allowed exceptions for owning slaves, while the school is not, clarifies the mixed narrative behind the school's ledger. A. Steiner, under

¹¹ "Up until now the housekeeping services have been provided by a white widow and a single negress (slave), the latter of which the school bought and until now held singularly in its own possession. However, now that her assignment is elsewhere and that according to the congregation's rules no personal slaves shall be acquired, one will have to help himself as best one can. Experience has shown that two people are necessary for housekeeping. We also know that we cannot get two white people due to the fact such work arises, which here in this country no white person would willingly perform in public. **One must have a negress slave**. And that the school is not permitted to own one singularly is burdensome for the Inspector and the school. It also shows a lack of favor toward the school when such is permitted to others, which is denied to the school" (my translation and emphasis mine).

¹² "Singularly held in possession" (my translation)

the auspices of the institution (the Boarding School) buys a slave, Betsey, for laundry and other housekeeping duties in the year 1810 or 1811. Her existence as an asset for purposes of accounting is carried over into the Boarding School ledger in May 1811. In 1817 Betsey is sold to Brother Kreuser so that his slave Sam could have a wife. This sale also allows A. Steiner to comply with town regulations and the Congregational Council's wish that he "remove her from the town, and place her elsewhere" (Record of the Moravians 3546). In 1819 the school begins leasing a slave, Caty, in lieu of owning, resulting in the ledger record: "Miethe für eine Negerin." This practice continues and is recorded as such in the ledgers until 1840, during which time unnamed "individuals were paid a daily wage" as exemplified by the expense listed in the May, 1847 ledger: "Tagelohn an versch. Individuen" (day wages to various individuals). Why the practice of leasing a slave ended is unclear. It is also not clear whether Caty continued to work until 1840 or whether a different slave did.

Conclusion

In conclusion the strongest irrefutable fact I found in my review is that the school, through Abraham Steiner's purchase, owned a slave and made use of slave labor from 1810-1840. The evidence for slaves attending the Little Girls' School is strong, but not absolute. One can conclude that Hanna did attend the school. Moreover, it is proper that her name be entered into the record as the slave who was permitted to attend the Salem school. Anna Maria was undoubtedly a member of the Single Sisters' Choir and one may conclude that any classes the single sisters attended Anna Maria also attended. Unfortunately the record is incomplete. The record states she took classes, but it does not state unequivocally that these classes took place in the Little Girl's School. Evidence of slaves being enrolled in the Boarding School has not been found. Moreover, slave enrollment was unlikely, due to the social climate of segregation, which, as Sensbach argues, subsequent generations of Moravians increasingly and eagerly adopted. Lastly, I do not find in any of the documents a single record of moral objection to the practice of slavery. There

are objections to slavery only inasmuch as it provides a poor example to younger members in whom the congregation would like to instill the values of self-reliance and hard work.¹³ This historical attitude should not be overlooked or silenced. The fact the Moravians embraced slavery, as evidenced through their owning and renting of slaves, must be as much a part of the narrative of their early history in North Carolina as is their history of welcoming slaves into their congregation and treating them as equals before God, especially during the early years within the spiritual and devotional church structures and activities. I sincerely hope my report helps provide a piece of historical context that encourages further examination, transparency, truth, and above all humility.

¹³Abraham Steiner provides one example of this attitude toward slavery in his report to the Synod: "...the students are instructed to make use of their own limbs, which in the custom of this country's use of slavery is accomplished easier than one should expect" (my translation). The German reads: "[die Zöglinge werden angeleitet] zum Gebrauch ihrer eigenen Glieder , welches letztere bey der hier zu Lande herrschenden Sklaven-Bedienung leichter geht, als man erwarten sollte" (Abraham Steiner's Report to the Synod, 1818).

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