

## Topographies of Contact:

### Moravians and Native Americans at the Confluence

In his masterful account of one of the more colorful 18<sup>th</sup> century figures on the Susquehanna River, Andrew Montour, acclaimed historian James Merrell provides the following description of the peculiarities of this place on the Pennsylvania frontier.

...from the 1720s to the 1760s, the Susquehanna country was a debatable land, a place marked by confusion and contention. Too few “natives” remained there to serve as a charter group that could determine the character of life in the region, the Susquehannocks having been all but destroyed by their Iroquois neighbors in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1</sup>

What was left then in the Susquehanna Valley of the early 1700s was a certain topography of contact, where the figure of Andrew Montour, described by Count Nicholas von Zinzendorf in 1742 as apparently “decidedly European” with his “broadcloth coat, scarlet damasken lapel waistcoat, breeches, over which his shirt hung, a black Cordovan neckerchief, decked with silver bugles, shoes and stockings, and a hat” but with a face broadly daubed with paint applied with bear’s fat and his ears hung with pendants of brass and other wires plaited... was not considered anything particularly unusual.<sup>2</sup> Montour, a métis, with a French mother and an Oneida father, fitted in well to what Merrell calls the “sense of the Susquehanna Valley,” a sense that I would like to call a confluence of cultures. For Merrell, this confluence is a dark one, this is a place of a “babel of voices, accents, dialects, and languages”, a place where Europeans cannot tell which language to learn when they come to visit, but rather where each person seems to

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**Comment [1]:** Slide 1—confluence map cropped

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**Comment [2]:** Slide 2—Andrew Montour

<sup>1</sup> James Merrell, “Reading Andrew Montour” in *Through a Glass Darkly* (UNC Press, 1999), p. 20

<sup>2</sup> as quoted in Merrell, p. 19.

be speaking a different tongue, sometimes Algonquin, sometimes Iroquois, sometimes German, sometimes English; a place where Europeans happen upon a group of Delaware playing cards; a place where an Indian warrior can tell the German children of settlers at Penn's Creek, "Seid still!" in High German as he plunges an ax into their mother's head, and a place where in the early 1760s British troops from Paxton scalp an Indian called George Allen, a name taken from one of his attackers.

But my reading of the river is not as dark as Merrell's. This same mélange of cultures also produces moments such as those I will discuss today, moments in which German visitors to a Shawnee village on the North Branch are invited to a sweat lodge and go, where afterwards they enjoy an evening concert of European chorales and music for strings played on violins provided by the Indians. It is also a place where food, knowledge, labor, and hopes are shared during a time of enormous political and social upheaval on the Pennsylvania frontier.

My divergent reading of the confluence is informed by the work I have embarked on in the last three years, namely the transcription and translation of the Moravian mission diary of the settlement of Shamokin from 1742-1755. The Shamokin diary differs substantially from the two already translated and published mission diaries of the older David Zeisberger from the Eastern Ohio missions and the later Springplace Mission in Georgia.<sup>3</sup> Shamokin itself was not a mission settlement built by the Moravians but rather pre-existed their advent by several centuries, first as a Susquehannock, then

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<sup>3</sup> See, *The Moravian Mission Diaries of David Zeisberger 1772—1781*, edited by Hermann Wellenreuther and Carola Wessel (College Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004) and *Moravian Springplace Mission to the Cherokees (2-volume set) (Indians of the Southeast)*, ed. Rowena McClinton (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007).

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**Comment [3]:** Slide 3—image of Shamokin diary

Shawnee, and then in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century as a primarily Delaware settlement and trading post, overseen by the Iroquois vice-regent, the Oneida Chief Shikellamy.

The Moravian presence in Shamokin represents an interesting and unique moment of compromise and entrepreneurship in the Moravian mission to the Native Americans. Initial attempts to establish a mission there, undertaken by Christian and Agnes Post in 1743 and Martin and Anna Mack in 1744 were difficult in that the nature of the place, a confluence of trade and cultures, meant that there was no stable population. Repeatedly in the mission diary of those first years there is mention of passing bands of warriors in canoes who disrupt the quieter lives of the Delaware men and women occupied with hunting for furs and meat and growing corn, squash, and beans on the large island at the confluence, Packer's Island. However, the near failure of the mission was averted through the agreement with Chief Shikellamy that the Moravians would establish a blacksmith's shop in Shamokin to service the guns of the Indians. This agreement also quite clearly delineates the sphere of the Moravians' activity at the confluence. They are, for example, allowed to fence in Shikellamy's garden but not permitted to plant anything other than three three sisters (corn, squash and beans) and potatoes for fear that any other European plantings (of fruit trees or bushes) might smack too much of a "Plantage", a European plantation. When we look at other Moravian Indian settlements, such as this one on the Huron, we can clearly see how integral to the mission project is the planting of trees, herbs, crops, down even in some mission settlements, such as the one on the North Branch, Friedenshütten, to the exact measurement of how many feet of land each log house or Indian hut gets to grow which crops.

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**Comment [4]:** Slide 4—picture of the 1747 conference with Shikellamy

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**Comment [5]:** Slide 5—picture of Heckewelder settlement

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**Comment [6]:** Slide 6—picture of the Friedenshütten village

Thus, the diary of the mission in Shamokin details life in a place of commerce (both material and cultural) rather than intentional communal life, as is the case with the diary of Springplace, Georgia or Gnadenhuetten, Ohio.

The dominant view of Shamokin, as we have already seen, is one promoted by historians for at least a century, namely, that it was a place of darkness and magic. However, the Moravian diaries reveal a far more complex picture of political and cultural negotiation, a confluence of cultures, and environmental epistemology.<sup>4</sup> It describes the missionaries' regular visits to the settlements of Delaware women on Packer's Island, regular suppers with Shikellamy in their log home, trips up and down the Susquehanna river to speak with the men of the Delaware who were back from hunting, visits from the envoys of the Six Nations on their way to and from important political meetings with the Colonial administration in Lancaster and Philadelphia, as well as an environmental diary of natural events such as an earthquake, floods, famine, planting, and harvesting.

The Shamokin diary provides not only a wealth of information about the cultural interactions, historical events, and spiritual condition of the settlement in the years 1745-1755, it also offers what eco-philosopher Val Plumwood has termed a "local earth story" about the ecology, climate, and geography of the area in the mid-1700s.<sup>5</sup> Repeatedly, the diarists record high waters of the Susquehanna, the ice jams, the bitter cold of winter that drives the Delaware men back to the settlement from their hunting expeditions, the planting of indigenous crops of corn, squash and beans, and the revival of the peach and

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<sup>4</sup> As recent examples of research drawing on manuscript sources in the Moravian Archives in Bethlehem for a new look at Native America and European contact in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, see Jane Merritt, *At the Crossroads: Indians and Empires on a Mid-Atlantic Frontier 1700-1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003) and Amy C. Schutt, *Peoples of the River Valleys: The Odyssey of the Delaware Indians* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

<sup>5</sup> Val Plumwood, "Androcentrism and Anthropocentrism: Parallels and Politics" in *Ecofeminism: Women, Culture, Nature*, ed. Karen J. Warren (Indiana University Press, 1997), pp. 327-355.

apple orchards planted by earlier European visitors. Frequently, there is much hunger around Shamokin, a dearth of good seed to plant, but also the occasional shared feast of venison or bison meat.

### **Immigration**

The eighteenth century saw a vast emigration of Germans to America, in search of financial wealth, religious and political freedom. By 1727, already over 20,000 Germans had settled in Pennsylvania. And for these settlers clearly the problem of how to interact with the native inhabitants of the area was of paramount importance. In order answer all questions for the future emigrant, in 1702 Daniel Falckner sat down in Halle with August Hermann Francke and answered his 103 questions on subjects as far ranging as where the other Germans lived, to how the Indians might be subdued. The Pietists being persecuted in Saxony called Falckner, having lived in central Pennsylvania, to Halle to report on the condition of the province of Pennsylvania for possible settlement. He described the Indians of Pennsylvania to as simple, vengeful, akin to apes in their upbringing of their children, suspicious of capture, speaking an unsophisticated language consisting of “no more words than things” and adhering to a Manichaeistic religion worshipping a god of both good and evil. Eight years after Falckner’s report to Francke, the future leader of the Moravian Church, Count Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf, entered the Francke’s Pedagogium in Halle. During his six years there he met his first missionaries who had returned from Tranquebar, and most likely read Falckner’s “Curieuse Nachricht von

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**Comment [7]:** Slide 7 –picture of Justus Dancker’s map

Pennsylvania.”<sup>6</sup> In 1732, even before he sent his own missionaries out into the field, Zinzendorf outlined his mission theology in a letter sent to Johann Ernst Geister, a missionary sent to Madras by the Stollberg *Konsistorium*. In this letter, Zinzendorf writes of the appropriate demeanor towards the non-Christian:

Show a happy and lively spirit and in external matters, do not rule over the heathen in the slightest fashion, but rather gain respect among them through the strength of your spirit, and in external matters humble yourself below them as much as possible.<sup>7</sup>

Zinzendorf was well aware of the problems missionaries had already encountered in their contacts with other cultures, problems he attributed to the attitude missionaries had adopted towards the non-Christian. For example, Zinzendorf claimed that the refusal of some missionaries to mix with the non-Christians, or to live at their level of poverty, was contrary to the spirit of Christ. Missionaries and non-Christians alike should both show deference only to the invisible Savior. In another speech to the inhabitants of St. Thomas held in Creole on February 15, 1739 Zinzendorf clearly delineated both his understanding of the natural state of sin into which the heathen have been born and their need for salvation from the inherently sinful characteristics of this state. To convert the non-Christian is both to extend the kingdom of God and also to create another instance, unique and unrepeatable, of Christ. This understanding of mission policy meant that baptisms were individual and not performed *en masse*, that the individual’s path to salvation was charted by means of frequent “speakings” with spiritual Helpers from the

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**Comment [8]:** Slide 8-Zinzendorf—who was he?

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**Comment [9]:** Slide 9 Moravian mission policy

<sup>6</sup>Julius Sachse, *Falckers Curieuse Nachricht von Pennsylvania: the book that stimulated the Great German Emigration to Pennsylvania in the Early Years of the 18th Century*. Edited and translated by Julius Friedrich Sachse, (Philadelphia: printed for the Author, 1905.)

<sup>7</sup> As quoted in [N. L. von Zinzendorf], *Texte zur Mission*, ed. by Helmut Bintz (Hamburg: Friedrich Wittig Verlag, 1979), p. 37.

same national background as the candidate and the missionaries, and that each convert was a member of a small group of people who came together regularly in the evenings to discuss their spiritual growth, exchange confidences about their personal problems, encourage and forgive each other, and help each other toward Christ.

Such an individualistic approach toward conversion had both its benefits and drawbacks. The benefits showed themselves in the success of the missions. The drawback was that only small numbers of converts could enter into the kingdom of God. Zinzendorf, recognizing that each human being has his or her own particular form (trope) of religious life, became convinced that this individuality should be encouraged rather than eradicated and replaced with a foreign form. The individuality of each human being was balanced by the commonality of being born not only into a class, race, culture or gender but also into humanity, and as such, being born into the world spiritually. In terms of our physiognomy, the most significant mark Zinzendorf argued that distinguishes us from all others is not skin color, or gender, but the mark of the thorns on the brow.

However, the fantasy of a universal brotherhood in Christ met with some challenges when faced with the reality of an alien culture. In 1742, Zinzendorf himself travelled to Pennsylvania and met with the Indians and it was on this journey that he met with Andrew Montour, his mother Madame Montour, and Chief Shikellamy among others. Arriving in Shekomeko, NY a Moravian mission settlement, Zinzendorf writes in his diary,

The savages are of the Mohican nation, an inferior caste, so to speak; the Mohawks living about them are, on the contrary, the most important, although at

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**Comment [10]:** Slide 10 mission map

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**Comment [11]:** Slide 11 Zinzendorf and the Iroquois painting

the same time, the most idle of the Six Nations. The Mohicans are a rich, but drunken, god-forsaken, tyrannical and quarrelsome people.

... the three brethren, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, whom we baptized at Oley, we were enabled to appoint, the one an elder, the other a sexton, and the third an exhorter. These ... Indians, incomparable in spirit and disposition, are true men of God among the tribe, and constitute a conference whose meetings we have often attended with astonishment. O how deeply ashamed we feel before these brethren, who must help themselves in the Saviour's work with a language which is hardly better than a goose cackle, while we, possessed of a language like that of the gods, can scarce express our heart's emotions!"<sup>8</sup>

Zinzendorf seems to have listened well to Falckner! Zinzendorf sets out in this diary his intentions to settle among the "savages." He does not wish to go directly to the villages and preach because the Indians have already acquired a great hatred for the settlers' religion. Rather, Zinzendorf tells the Six Nations that he is intimately acquainted with the Great Spirit and asks that he and his followers be permitted to live in their towns as friends until they have got to know each other better.<sup>9</sup>

### **Zinzendorf in America**

I have quoted Zinzendorf's less than complimentary remarks about the Mohicans and Mohawks to demonstrate the complex ambivalence held about the subjects of his **missiology**. Led by Zinzendorf, the Moravians initiated mission activity in Pennsylvania in 1740 after a failed attempt at a settlement in Georgia. In 1741, after spending

<sup>8</sup> Extracts from "Zinzendorf's Diary of his Second, and in part of his third journey among the Indians, the former to Shekomeko, and the other among the Shawnee, on the Susquehanna," trans. Eugene Schaeffer, in *Transactions of the Moravian Historical Society*, no 3, 1869, pp. 81-89, here p. 82-3.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84.

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**Comment [12]:** Slide 12—postage stamp with Zinzendorf



Christmas in a log cabin on a tract of land in Northampton County that had belonged to the famous itinerant preacher of the Great Revival, George Whitefield, the settlers built the first houses a few miles to the south on the banks of the Lehigh River to form the core of their Pilgrim Congregation in North America. This settlement, named Bethlehem, was to serve as the economic and spiritual base for the evangelization of the Native American peoples of Pennsylvania and New York.

The following year, Count Zinzendorf traveled from Bethlehem further west via Tulpehocken (the home of Conrad Weiser), through to Harris' Ferry (today, Harrisburg) and up the Susquehanna. In his travel journal, Zinzendorf describes this journey along the river with Conrad Weiser and his companion, Anna Nitschmann. On the second day of the journey, he writes,

We traveled on, and soon struck the lovely Susquehanna. Riding along its bank, we came to the boundary of Shamokin, a precipitous hill, such as I scarce ever saw. This is so rugged and steep a mountain that I have hardly seen its equal; but we all got safely across. Anna went on before, for she is our greatest heroine. She wore a long riding habit, to the train of which I held fast; Conrad held on to the skirt of my coat, and Boehler had hold of Conrad's. In this way we all felt more compassed and gained additional security.<sup>10</sup>

Zinzendorf goes on to describe his first meeting with Chief Shikellamy in Shamokin, his evening stroll through the village, his chance meeting with an Indian with whom he exchanges his fur hat for a melon. He describes the Susquehanna in the following

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<sup>10</sup> "Count Zinzendorf's Narrative of a Journey from Bethlehem to Shamokin, In September of 1742" in Wilhelm Reichel, ed., *Memorials of the Moravian Church*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1870), p. 85.

passage as the party of Europeans makes its way up the West Branch to meet with Madame Montour near the Great Island.

Sept. 30. (1742) Set out on our journey. The Sachem (Shikellamy) pointed out the ford over the Susquehanna. The river here is much broader than the Delaware, the water beautifully transparent, and were it not for smooth rocks in its bed, it would be easily fordable. In crossing, we had therefore to pull up our horses and keep a tight rein. The high banks of American rivers render their passage on horseback extremely difficult.”<sup>11</sup>

Unlike European waterways, this American river demands other equestrian skills.

As Zinzendorf passes through the forests that border the West Branch of the Susquehanna he experiences his first Pennsylvania fall, a splendor of colors that again demands new a new poetic vocabulary for its description. He writes,

The country, through which we were now riding, although a wilderness, showed indications of extreme fertility. As soon as we left the path we trod on swampy ground, over which traveling on horseback was altogether impracticable. We halted half an hour while Conrad rode along the river in search of a ford. The foliage of the forest at this season of the year, blending all conceivable shades of green, red, and yellow, was truly gorgeous, and lent a richness to the landscape that would have charmed an artist. At times we wound through a continuous growth of diminutive oaks, reaching higher than our horses' girth, in a perfect sea of scarlet, purple, and gold, bounded along the horizon by the gigantic evergreens of the forest.”<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p. 93.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p. 93.

Thus, through journals such as that of Zinzendorf and later of the famous missionary David Zeisberger, the banks of the Susquehanna were described to the inhabitants of communities throughout the Moravian world. But these accounts also play a central role in the development of an American imaginary as they provided writers such as Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and James Fenimore Cooper with primary materials for the creation of an American literature that was quite distinct from that of the European writer.<sup>13</sup>

### The Moravian Mission Diary

10 different missionaries, including the well-known David Zeisberger and Martin Mack, wrote the “diary” of the Shamokin settlement. It contains sections in German and English. Such regular mission reports and “diaries” of the communities were read to all members on Congregation Days in order to show the workings of the Savior in the conversion of the non-Christians and also of course to hear about the activities of the Europeans in this distant land. In addition to details pertaining to the condition of the soul of both converts and missionaries, these reports contained, as we can see from the above quotations, a wealth of information about the landscapes, people, and practices of the Indian nations where the Moravians were active.

To date those sources that have been published and that pertain to the Moravian presence in Shamokin are for the most part the personal papers of the individual missionaries.<sup>14</sup> For example, much use has been made of the *Lebenslauf* or memoir of

<sup>13</sup> See, for example, Edwin L. Stockton, *The Influence of the Moravians upon the Leather-Stocking Tales*. Transactions of the Moravian Historical Society, Vol. XX, Part 1. Nazareth (PA): Whitefield House, 1964.

<sup>14</sup> “Journal of J.M. Mack [Diarium 21.8.-1.9.1753]”, ed. John W. Jordan, in *Historical Journal: a quarterly record of local history and genealogy, devoted principally to northwestern Pennsylvania*, Williamsport, Vol. 1, No. 3 (1887): 92-96; “Lebenslauf des Bruders Johann Martin Mack, Bischofs der Brüder-Kirche und vieljährigen Missionars unter den Indianern in Nord-Amerika und unter den Negern in dänisch West-

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**Comment [14]:** Slide 14—Cole’s painting of the Last of the Mohicans—from the sublime ppt

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**Comment [15]:** Slide 15—front page of Smokin diary--Mack

Martin Mack, published in 1857, in which in his old age as a missionary in the West Indies he famously describes Shamokin as “the very seat of the Prince of Darkness.” In this memoir he also claims that he and Anna had to spend almost every night of the four months they were there in 1745 in the woods for fear of attack by drunken Indians. This printed source, composed much later in his life and reflecting the compositional and rhetorical demands of the genre of the Moravian memoir, contradicts the record found in the manuscripts written by Mack in the Shamokin diary of the same date. Nowhere in the diary of that date is the necessity for Martin and Anna Mack to sleep in the woods mentioned. Rather, the diary of that period describes how they find lodging in the hut of Anderius, an Indian who is acquainted with the Moravians in Bethlehem, and his wife and aging mother. In the evening they hold regular services of prayer and song in English, German and Mohican. “On September 29 [1745] we helped our people to harvest their Indian corn. In the evening we held a blessed service of song with each other in English, German and Mohican. We thanked our dear Lamb with humbled hearts for the fact that He has stayed with us until now and that his Wounds are far better for us in our hearts.”<sup>15</sup> Their contentedness with their lodging is made quite explicit as Anderius apologizes for their cramped quarters as he has to leave for Philadelphia. Anna and Martin (who alternate between speaking of themselves in the first and third person) write: “We thanked him very much for [his hospitality] and said that we were very happy and we felt better in his hut than if we had lived in the finest house in Philadelphia. He

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Indien, heimgegangen am 9. Juni 1784 zu Friedensthal auf St. Crux,” in: *Nachrichten aus der Brüder-Gemeine* 39 (1857): 767-781.

<sup>15</sup> “Diary by Mack: Sept.-Nov. 1745” Box 121, Folder 2 “Missions to the Indians: Shamokin, Pennsylvania”, Moravian Archives Bethlehem, Pa, henceforth “MAB”, translation mine.

was very pleased that we were so happy in his hut. In the evening, Anna and Martin were blessed and content.”<sup>16</sup>

Thus, the description of Shamokin as a place of darkness and the devil appears to be the product of memory, a memory produced approximately 40 years later while on St. Croix. But it is this memory that has so colored the depiction of Shamokin in historical studies.

The diary of the mission station in Shamokin tells a very different story of confluence and cultures. It describes the missionaries’ regular visits to the settlements of Delaware women on Packer Island, daily suppers with Shikellamy in their log home (built on the site of the present day Northumberland Historical Society), trips up and down the Susquehanna and its islands to speak with the men of the Delaware who were back from hunting trips.

In September 1745, Martin and Anna Mack retrace Zinzendorf’s journey on foot as they set out from Bethlehem, through Tulpehocken (Conrad Weiser’s home) to Shamokin. They arrive on September 16, and immediately look for somewhere to sleep. They have been accompanied by Anderius, a Delaware Indian, from whom they ask for lodging. He replies that his hut, which he shares with his mother, is too small and it is too late in the year to build a small hut for the Moravians as there is no more bark. So, although his quarters are cramped, he takes them in to his hut on Packer’s Island, where they are greeted by his old mother, who immediately offers them some meat. The next day, while Anderius is away visiting his wife’s family, the old mother tells the Moravians what she knows from her son of Bethlehem, and asks what how the Delaware are doing there. Anna Mack then takes over the conversation, talking to the old woman about what

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

could almost be understood as the utopian community of Bethlehem, where the spiritual and materials needs of all are met, irrespective of gender, race, or class. The old woman, Madshumonfor, bewails the corrupt state of Shamokin, a place of nothing but drunkenness and dancing. That night, the Macks' first in Shamokin for three years, acts almost as proof of the old woman's words; there is much drinking in the town, inebriated Indians crash into Anderius' hut and scream and yell so much that the inhabitants leave for safety in the bush. The next day, they cross the water to visit with Shikellamy, but again their time is cut short by drunken Indians.

After this less than auspicious beginning to their time in Shamokin, it takes only few days before Anna falls sick. Shaken with fever and chills, Anna is steadfast in her desire to remain in Shamokin. However, after a week, she recovers and within two weeks is helping her neighbors on the island to pick corn and is able to conduct pastoral visits with the Delaware women on the island.

From the diary one can assemble a clear picture of the movement around the confluence. As the island is inhabited by primarily Delaware, and on each side of the island, on the shores of the North Branch there are Indian communities of Delaware and Tutelos, the river becomes almost an "aquatic" travelator, carrying visitors back and forth across the confluence. But when the water is too high, or the canoes are on the opposite shore, then travel becomes more difficult. Shikellamy welcomes the Moravians into his house, offers them bread and meat, and even takes them in to stay, once Anderius has to leave. He tells them "I would not usually allow a Trader or other white people to live with me, but because I know you a little and you have been living here a while I will allow it. My cabin is for me and for you and for your brethren; no-one else." (Shamokin

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**Comment [16]:** Slide 16—cropped map of confluence

Diary Nov. 2, 1745) Anderius is sad that the Macks are leaving and apologizes for having had nothing but corn to eat for the previous 7 weeks. He has never known such times of famine, but Anna and Martin assure him that is not why they are leaving.

The diary breaks off here and resumes two years later as Brother Hagen picks up the narrative in late August 1747, after the written agreement referred to above with Shikellamy has been reached. The Moravians no longer have to worry about being long-term house guests of Shikellamy as they are now permitted to build permanent quarters for themselves. Once their own house has been built, life becomes much easier for them; their smithy is a place of stability, productive work, and calm in the whirlwind that Shamokin can be; Shikellamy is now their frequent dinner guest, especially after hunting trips that are unsuccessful. Brother Powell writes, on February 11, 1748 “Shekelleme and his eldest son returned from hunting, being so excessive cold that they could not hunt. Were obliged in about a week to return without flesh—invited him to dinner, had a hunter’s appetite”. When the noise of the drunken Indians becomes too much for Shikellamy he finds peaceful refuge in the Moravians’ house. He comes there to have read to him the treaty signed in Philadelphia that year,<sup>17</sup>

Shikellamy brought to us to read a treaty held with the Indians of the Six Nations in Philadelphia this year and also a letter of recommendation wrote and given him

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<sup>17</sup> In the fall, ten Iroquois representing the Ohio Indians came to Philadelphia (12 Nov 1747). Logan and Weiser both supported the gifts to the Lake Erie Indians, and they were enthusiastic about this first direct contact with Indians living on the Ohio. Franklin published the Philadelphia treaty of November, 1747, and gave detailed news reports of the Indians in the Gazette, 12 and 19 November, 3 and 15 December, 1747; and 12 January 1747/8. Scarouady had replaced the aging Canasatego as a key Six Nations leader. Scarouady told Weiser that if Pennsylvania encouraged them, the Six Nations would hold “a Council Fire on the Ohio in the spring, to which all the Indians around Lake Erie had already consented to come” (Boyd xlvi). He demanded Pennsylvania help them make war. Pennsylvania agreed to do so and provided a list of goods that would be presented to the Indians with more to come next spring for all the Ohio Indians (16 Nov).

by the Governor, which we read to him. Was much pleased. Breakfasted with us.

(Shamokin Diary Feb. 28 1748)

However, the Moravians prefer not to get involved with politics, either national or domestic. When a neighbor from down the river comes to them to complain that her husband has beaten her, Brother Powell turns to Shikellamy and his eldest son to settle the domestic dispute.

In the fall of 1748 Chief Shikellamy makes a visit with Conrad Weiser to Bethlehem to meet with the leaders of the Moravian congregation. By all accounts he falls ill on his return and by the time David Zeisberger is writing the diary entries for November it is clear that the Swatane (his preferred Oneida name meaning “Lightbringer” was nearing the end of his life. On December 4<sup>th</sup> Zeisberger writes:

On the 4th Brother Anton and David visited the Swatane and found him to be so weak that he could no longer walk by himself and could no longer hear well. In other ways he was very friendly and watched us with love, but could speak very little. We brought him some tea and bread, which he enjoyed greatly. On the 6th, David visited the Swatane early in the morning and brought him something to eat and drink. He said, however, that he could eat and drink nothing, and that he could no longer hear anything, only speak a little. We saw that he would not live much longer. Around midday an Indian woman came and said to us that he was close to going home.<sup>7</sup> David went to him and stayed with him. But there was a terrible wailing of lamentations, for everyone, old and young, wept incredibly about their old father. He spoke no more, and looked at David with friendship and smiled, and finally passed away quite contentedly. We now felt in our hearts that we should plead with the Little Lamb that He should grant a place in his Side Hole for him, and were able to believe that He would do the same. None of his sons were at home, only his daughter and a few women. (Shamokin Diary, December 4-6 1748)

In contrast to the common belief among historians that Shikellamy was given a Christian burial (he was, after all, baptized at least twice) from the subsequent account of his funeral it is clear that he is buried according to his people’s customs. The Moravians, Zeisberger and Mack do make his coffin as requested. Zeisberger writes:



On the 9<sup>th</sup> of December they buried the Swatane. Almost everyone who was in Shamokin was present. They put in his coffin 2 new blankets, a stool, a small loaf of bread, a tobacco pipe, and 3 bags of tobacco and a flint in honor, and other things too. We also went to the burial and helped to bury him. There was no shooting, not at his death nor at his funeral, rather everything passed very quietly. (Shamokin Diary December 9, 1748)

Shikellamy's death brings with it great uncertainty for Shamokin, as the "light bringer" was also clearly a "peace bringer." Very quickly, belts of wampum are brought from Governor Hamilton to Shikellamy's son, James Logon, as signs that he is now to assume the mantle of leadership at the confluence. The Moravians take food to Shikellamy's wife and daughters who are starving. But the clouds of war are gathering.

However, even as the political forces are about to explode at Penn's Creek there are still moments of peaceful cultural contact. For example, in 1754, when, just months before the outbreak of the French-Indian war, Moravian missionaries Grube and Mack write a journal describing their journey along the North Branch of the Susquehanna. They describe the banks of the river as a place not of desolation, famine and disease, but rather of cultivation, plenty and great natural beauty. At the end of July, the Europeans describe how they visit several "plantations along the Susquehanna, where we found the aged Moses and his wife, and several sisters hoeing corn. They came and shook hands and greeted us."<sup>18</sup> This welcome is accompanied by an invitation to a sweat lodge, which the

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<sup>18</sup> Frederick Johnson, *Count Zinzendorf and the Moravian and Indian Occupancy of the Wyoming Valley (PA) 1742-1763* (Proceedings of the Wyoming Historical and Geological Society, 1904), p. 55.

Europeans accept and then follow with a Moravian “Singstunde” a service in song that was sung in Delaware and translated into Minisink.

The next day, the Moravians sing and preach further and then “the youngest son of Paxinosa and another Shawanese came to us with two violins, and desired to hear our melodies. We played a little at which they and our Brethren and Sisters were well pleased.”<sup>19</sup> We might well ask where in 1754 two Shawanese would have got two violins and how they might have been “well pleased” to hear the Moravian chorales of the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. But to pose this question would reveal our ignorance of the extent and nature of European and Native American contact on the Susquehanna in the 1700s.

I began this talk by citing the historian James Merrell because he is one of the generation of historians whose work has challenged the binary simplicity of an oppositional way of thinking, which for so long dominated colonial American studies. Rather than examining identity of persons and places through a lens only of either/or, careful and thorough archival work of historians such as Jane Merritt and textual editors such as Hermann Wellenreuther, the late Carola Wessel, and Rowena McClinton has revealed the complexities of the confluence of cultures, especially here at the forks of the Susquehanna.

The Shamokin diary provides not only a wealth of information about the cultural interactions, historical events, and spiritual condition of the settlement in the years 1745-55 it also could offer what eco-philosopher Val Plumwood has termed a “local earth story” about the ecology, climate, and geography of the area in the mid-1700s.<sup>20</sup> For example, the Shamokin diary of January 1748 records a strong earthquake in the night of

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid. p. 57.

<sup>20</sup> Val Plumwood, “Androcentrism and Anthropocentrism: Parallels and Politics” in *Ecofeminism: Women, Culture, Nature*, ed. Karen J. Warren (Indiana University Press, 1997), pp. 327-355.

January 23. Brother Powell writes, “A little past midnight was a Earth Quake, which so shook our House and Beds that sum [sic] of us awaked.”<sup>21</sup> Repeatedly, the diarists record high waters of the Susquehanna, the ice jams, the bitter cold of winter that drives the Delaware men back to the settlement from their hunting expeditions, the planting of indigenous crops of corn, squash and beans, and the planting by Shikellamy no less of the peach and apple orchards planted by earlier European visitors. There is much hunger around Shamokin, a dearth of good seed to plant, but also the occasional feast of venison, which the Indians always share with the Europeans.

### **The Shamokin Diary**

The manuscripts that comprise the diary are held in the Moravian Archives in Bethlehem, Pa and are also included in the so-called Fliegel index of the Indian materials of the Moravian church, an index that was compiled by the assistant Archivist of the Moravian Church in the 1950s.<sup>22</sup> Although this index is invaluable in its assistance to the researcher, for many who cannot read the original text that it is referring to it has become the primary source of information on which scholarship is based. So, the categories that Fliegel devised for the indexing of the enormous amount of manuscript materials have become the categories that determine the description of Indian missions. For example, Fliegel does not include a category on women, except to index those accounts of Indians beating their wives. Where he does include an entry for “visits,” he does not explain that

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<sup>21</sup> Diary by Powell, Jan. 4-April 18 1748, Box 121 Folder 4, MAB, original in English.

<sup>22</sup> *Moravian Missions among American Indians Records; ca. 1735-1900*. Microfilm. (40 rolls) The present basis for arrangement of these materials is the work of the late Reverend Carl John Fliegel (1886-1961), research Assistant at the Archives of the Moravian Church from 1952 to his death. A native of Germany, Fliegel literally read every word on about twenty-five thousand pages of these manuscripts, preparing a gigantic card index consisting of an estimated thirty thousand cards with 135 thousand entries.

these are pastoral visits that were conducted very frequently by the European women to the Native women and thus constitute a crucial locus of cultural exchange. It was at these visits that the Moravian Brothers and Sisters conducted “spiritual interviews,” according to the guidelines established by Count Zinzendorf.<sup>23</sup> Thus the categories of importance to Fliegel in the 1950s have remained the categories of inquiry over 60 years later. Those scholars, such as Jane Merritt, Amy Schutt, Jon Sensbach and Rowena McClinton, who are able to read the archaic and occasionally corrupt manuscript sources, have produced new and exciting work on the nature of Native and European interactions that challenge the traditional assumptions of earlier scholarship.

The Shamokin diary represents just such a new and exciting source document for scholars and the general public. The diary at present consists of approximately 350 manuscript pages, most of which has been already been transcribed. In addition to the account of the daily affairs of the community, there are approximately 50 pages of letters, documents, messages and addresses to prominent persons such as Chief Shikellamy, Conrad Weiser, Bishop Spangenberg, and the Philadelphia Quaker Charles Brockden, in German, English and Onondago, all of which are of interest to scholars on the process of negotiation and agreement around the settlement of Shamokin in the crucial period prior to the outbreak of the French-Indian War in 1755. There is also a short and vivid account by Brother Roesler of the final days of the settlement in the summer of 1755 that details the attack by the French Indians on Penn’s Creek and also the flight back to Bethlehem of Brothers Roesler, Wesa, and the blacksmith Kiefer. Of particular note is the moment

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<sup>23</sup> The later codification of these initially orally transmitted Instructions formed the basis of my previous NEH Collaborative Research Grant, “Instructions for Body and Soul: Pastoral Care in 18th century Bethlehem, Pa” (2002). This project has produced 3 articles and 6 conference papers; the manuscript of the edition has been invited for submission to the Max Kade German-American Research Institute Series with The Pennsylvania University Press.

when it is decided to bury the blacksmith's tools in the garden of the smithy just before departure with the intent of returning to retrieve them and build the new smithy between Lehigh and Wyoming after the war had quieted down. However, this plan was never carried out, and excavations at the Northumberland Historical Society recently discovered those same tools in the dig that are now displayed in the museum in Hunter House.

### Conclusion

To return to the questions with which I began this talk as to the influence of the imaginary, the topographies of desire that shaped the possibility of cultural encounters at the confluence, how might we, as residents, long or short term of the forks of the river, understand and promote “a sense of the Susquehanna.” For James Merrell, an eminent and meticulous historian, who next month will actually visit this place for the first time, what might that “sense” consist of? What can we, as members of this community do to excavate, explore, record, and bring to the fore what our Focus year panelists in September called a “geo-history”? How can we teach ourselves and our students and our children the importance of “deep mapping” for both a record of our selves and our places? The Shamokin diary provides much of the “history” of the geo-history of this area, with its record of floods, famines, cold, disease. In it we find the flora and fauna, the plantings, and harvests, the lack of seed, the bounty of a good hunt. The landscape of the confluence provides patterns of experience, whether of traversing the river, back and forth from one shore to the other, or into the woods, crossing the boundary from the safe world of the clearing into the unknown world of the forest, a liminal

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moment marked by European and Indian alike in the Iroquois ritual ceremony “At the Edge of the Woods” in which the eyes and ears and mouth of the traveler are cleared of spider’s webs, the feet are cleared of thorns. We still have verbal vestiges of this ceremony as we warn, perhaps in these economic times especially, that we are not out of the woods yet.<sup>24</sup> Through such sources we can ask ourselves to what extent we also witness the “landscape of the divine”, perhaps in the uncanny profile of Chief Shikellamy in the bluff of the Blue Hill or in the petroglyphs of the Lower Susquehanna at Safe Harbor. Through such documents as the Shamokin Diary we, here, can identify what Cynthia Radding has termed the “plateaux of cultural theologies”, overlays of differing world views that constitute our environment, the environment of the Confluence of the Susquehanna River.

Thank you!

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<sup>24</sup> James Merrell *Into the American Woods*: (Norton: New York, 1999), p. 22.