

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Gemeinhaus-Lewis David de Schweinitz Residence

AND/OR COMMON

Moravian Museum

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER West Church Street

\_\_ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Bethlehem

\_\_ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

15th

STATE

Pennsylvania

CODE

42

COUNTY

Northampton

CODE

095

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Moravian Congregation of Bethlehem

STREET &amp; NUMBER

74 West Market Street

CITY, TOWN

Bethlehem

\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE

Pennsylvania

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**COURTHOUSE, Northampton County Courthouse  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Seventh and Walnut Streets

CITY, TOWN

Easton

STATE

Pennsylvania

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE

1963

 FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE  
D.C.

①

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT  
 GOOD  
 FAIR

DETERIORATED  
 RUINS  
 UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Gemeinhaus, a two and a half story log building with white oak boarding, is the oldest structure still standing in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Since its construction in 1733 it has been owned by the Moravian Church. In 1743, when the Gemeinhaus reached its present form, the building measured 94' x 32' and contained a chapel, twelve rooms, and two dormitories. The building is an excellent example of German-Moravian architecture in America. Through the years the Gemeinhaus served many purposes, but it remained first and foremost a residence for Moravian Church officials and their families. Today it functions as a museum.

Lewis David de Schweinitz was born in the Gemeinhaus in 1780. At the time his father, Hans Christian, a Moravian clergyman, lived in the building with five other clergymen and their families. The house was his home until he left Bethlehem to attend school in Nazareth at the age of seven. In 1822 de Schweinitz returned to Bethlehem from Salem, North Carolina. As an official of the Moravian Church, he and his family were lodged in the Gemeinhaus. The house remained his home until his death in 1834. His wife and four children continued to live there after his death.

The integrity of the Gemeinhaus is whole. Both the exterior and the interior are little changed since the 19th century. The only changes of any consequence have been the installation of a new roof and new windows.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1733

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Lewis David de Schweinitz (or von Schweinitz) was born February 13, 1780, in the Gemeinhaus in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. His father was a Moravian clergyman who had come to this country in 1770. At seven de Schweinitz was sent to the church's school in Nazareth where he remained for the next eleven years. It was while at Nazareth Hall that de Schweinitz developed an interest in botany. In 1798 he accompanied his parents to Germany where he entered the Moravian seminary at Niesky in Silesia. de Schweinitz remained in Europe as a student, teacher, and pastor until 1812.

Upon returning to the United States in 1812, he was appointed general agent of the southern province of the Moravian Church in Salem, North Carolina. He remained in Salem until 1822, when he was called back to Bethlehem to become the general proprietor of the church. He lived in Bethlehem until his early death on February 8, 1834.

de Schweinitz's fascination with botany began when he was a young student at Nazareth Hall. When he went to Germany to study, he continued to pursue his botanical interests. In 1805 he published his first paper, "The Fungi of Lusatia." Following the scholarly custom of the time, the paper was written in Latin. Upon returning to the United States in 1812, de Schweinitz was assigned to Salem, North Carolina. Although his church duties consumed most of his energies, de Schweinitz continued to devote as much time as possible to studying botany. In 1818 his The Fungi of North Carolina was published in Leipzig. The work contained descriptions of over 1,000 species. By this time de Schweinitz had acquired a reputation in scientific circles and he was offered the presidency of the University of North Carolina. He declined.

de Schweinitz's return to Bethlehem in 1822 in no way interfered with his scientific output. When Thomas Nuttall was unable to continue the description of plants collected by Thomas Say during Stephen Long's 1820 expedition to the Rocky Mountains, de Schweinitz completed the task. His greatest work, "A Synopsis of North American Fungi," was completed in 1831 and published in 1834 in the Transactions of the American Philosophical Society. The study classified over 3,000 species of 246 genera of which 1,200 species and seven genera were de Schweinitz's own discoveries. By the time of his death in 1834, de Schweinitz had gained a reputation as one of America's finest botanists and its leading mycologist. In his Pioneers of Science in America (1896), William J. Youman claimed that de Schweinitz was second only to Gotthilf H. Mulhensberg.

(Continued)

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

"Lewis David von Schweinitz," Dictionary of American Biography, Vol. 16, (New York, 1935).  
 George H. Daniels. American Science in the Age of Jackson (New York, 1968).  
 Kenneth G. Hamilton, Church Street in Old Bethlehem (Bethlehem, 1942).  
 William J. Youman, Pioneers of Science in America (New York, 1896).

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	18	467760	4496290	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

James Sheire, Historian

March 1975

ORGANIZATION

OAHF-Historic Sites Survey-National Park Service

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

1100 L Street NW.

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C.

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

5

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

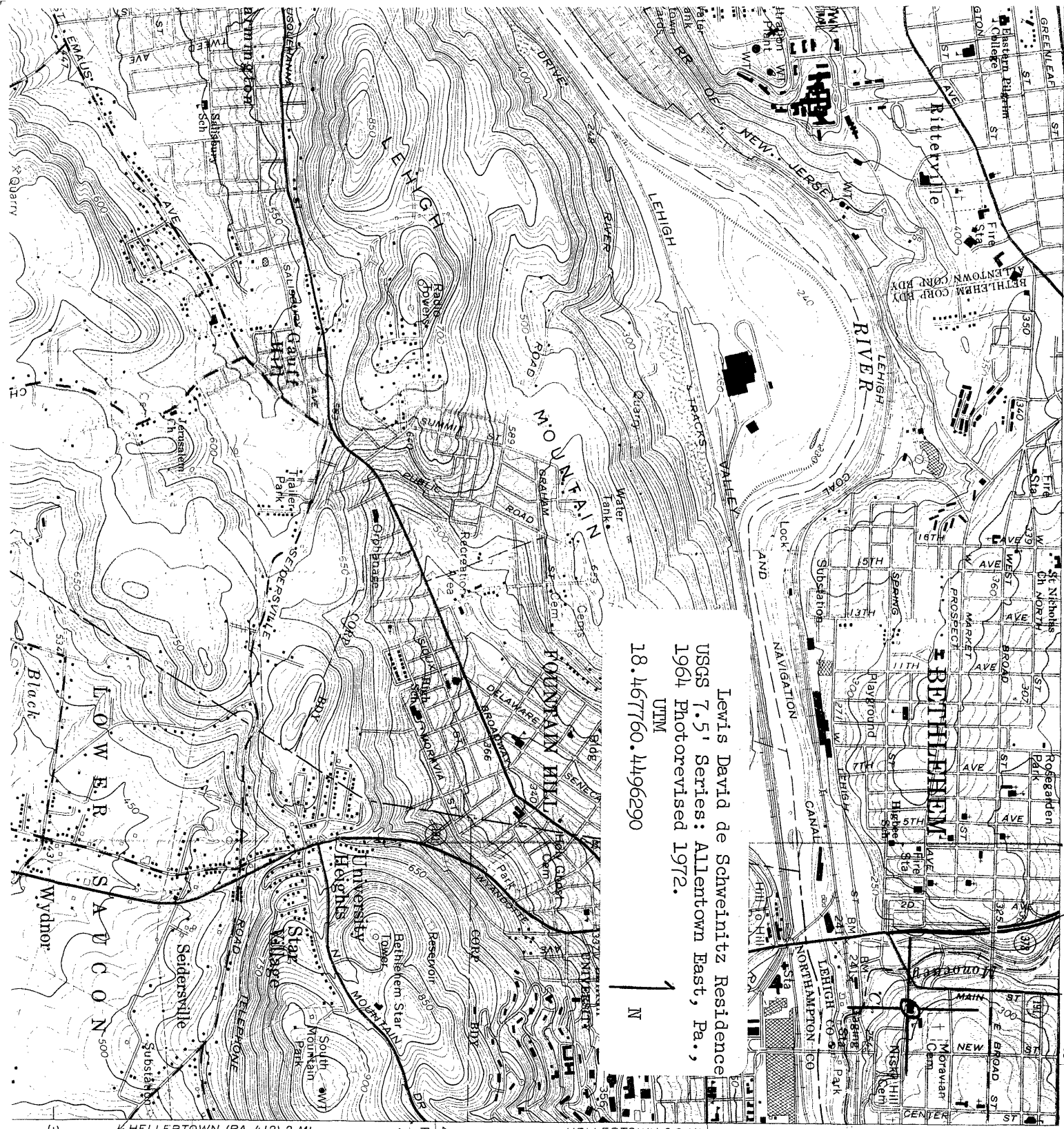
Statement of Significance:

Moravian Museum

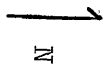
Lewis David de Schweinitz's significance in the history of science in America is that he was one of the leading botanists and the leading mycologist of the period. He was associated with the American Philosophical Society and corresponded widely with European colleagues.

de Schweinitz's work in botany and mycology reflected the state of American science at the turn of the 19th century. American science was essentially a provincial extension of the European disciplines. Americans depended on Europe for training, intellectual approval, and for conceptual tools. de Schweinitz studied in Europe, published there, and corresponded widely with his more professional European counterparts. He also reflected the dominant American scientific interests of the period. Like his fellow naturalists, such men as Muhlenberg, Thomas Say, and Thomas Nuttall, de Schweinitz was only interested in collecting, observing, describing, and classifying the data of natural history. This method of pure empiricism, which guided American science through the Jacksonian era, was a reflection of the influence of Francis Bacon on American science. Finally, de Schweinitz was an archetype of the amateur-gentleman scientist who dominated American science until around 1850. His vocation was that of Moravian clergyman. Only secondarily was he a scientist. At the time the United States did not possess a true professional scientific community. Men who wished to pursue natural history either possessed private means or supported themselves at other professions, medicine being the most common. Lewis David de Schweinitz was a leading American scientist who bore witness to the condition and practice of science in America as the young country moved into the 19th century.

3



Lewis David de Schweinitz Residence  
 USGS 7.5' Series: Allentown East, Pa.,  
 1964 Photorevised 1972.  
 UTM  
 18.467760.4496290



470 000  
 FEET  
 4494

HELLERTOWN 3.8 MI.  
 HARROW (U.S. 611) 17 MI

HELLERTOWN (PA. 412) 2 MI.