
**The Moravian
missions in Ohio**

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THE
MORAVIAN MISSIONS

IN

OHIO.

BY
FRANCIS C. HUEBNER.

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PREFACE.

The early life of the writer of this little volume was spent on the banks of the Tuscarawas River within a stone's throw of the site of the old Indian town of Gnadenhutten, and it was here that an interest in the history of the missions was first awakened. Two old apple trees which had been planted by the Indian converts, and depressions in the earth caused by the "caving in" of the cellars where stood the houses of the inhabitants, outlined what had existed, while two solemn mounds and a tall, grey monument bearing the inscription, "Here triumphed in death ninety Christian Indians, March 8, 1782," told the story of the end. The hiatus was supplied in later years by reading such works as Heckewelder's Narrative; Loskiel's His-

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tory or the Indian Missions; Dodridge's Notes; Taylor's History of Ohio; Zeisberger's Diary (translated by Bliss); Life and Times of David Zeisberger by De Schweinitz, and other works, including the Life of John Heckewelder, by Rondthaler. From the latter-named book was obtained the picture of John Heckewelder, and from the first-named the picture of Zeisberger which are reproduced for the benefit of my readers, and to each of the above works I must give credit for the historical information obtained and narrated herein.

The object of this little volume is to give to those interested in the history of Eastern Ohio a condensed but full story of the Moravian missions in Ohio.

THE AUTHOR.

Washington, D. C.,

September 15, 1898.

THE MORAVIAN MISSIONS IN OHIO.

For over ten years the history of the now great Commonwealth of Ohio was centered principally in two communities in the Tuscarawas valley, named Schoenbrunn and Gnadenhutten. The former stood about one and one-half miles south of the present county seat of Tuscarawas county, while just beside the heaps of ashes of old Gnadenhutten was built the quiet little hamlet of the present day bearing that name.

These two towns were inhabited by Indians, but they were Indians in name only, and did not exercise the savage nature which the word "Indian" im-

plies. Their aim was towards civilization ; they desired to live at peace with all people, and their number was large enough, and their influence potential enough to effect the history of the eastern part of Ohio, if not the history of the United States as a nation.

To properly present the history of these two towns, it will be necessary to give a brief review of the wanderings of the people who formed the nucleus of them. These wanderers were Moravian converts from the Mohican, Delaware, and other Indian nations. Moravian missionaries had been preaching to the Indians in the Eastern States—first in New York and Connecticut, and then in Pennsylvania at various points. A mission would be established, a town regularly laid out, a log church constructed, and

in a very short time the church would be surrounded with log houses. While the missions were prospering, however, white civilization was pushing rapidly to the West, and wherever the whites and Indians met on the borders of civilization there was contention. In case of war, no discrimination was shown by the border-whites generally, whether an Indian was disposed to do evil or not, but every red skin was regarded as an enemy to civilization. In all differences between Indians and whites, "might" was considered "right," and the white race being the superior, the final outcome in each case was the retirement of the Indians to some land less desirable to the whites at that time. For these reasons the Moravian Indians had moved from New York and Connecticut to the eastern

part of Pennsylvania, then to the central part of that State, and next to the still wilder portions. In the year 1770 we find a number of them at Friedenshutzen, in the northern part of Pennsylvania, on the Susquehanna River.

When the Moravian converts wished to build a town they would obtain the permission of the Indian tribe which claimed the land on which they desired to settle. The land upon which Friedenshutzen stood belonged to the Iroquois Nation, and it was from their council the Moravian Indians obtained permission to occupy that land. It was one of the principles of Indian nations to give homes and protection to smaller and weaker tribes with the intention of adopting them in order to strengthen their own, and no doubt this was the incentive