

Spring 2020

Historical Journal



LITITZ HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

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The 1908 Belshazzar Cantata

By Charlene Van Brookhoven

Lititz has become a destination for all things entertaining, exciting and feasting.

Crowds come from all over the east coast and beyond to enjoy whatever Lititz has to offer. There was a time when the oldest July 4th celebration in the U.S. was the busiest day of the year in our sleepy little town. Visitors as well as town's people came to witness the crowning of the Queen of Candles and to enjoy an extravagant fireworks display. July 4th in Lititz was, and still is, a day of sharing our town's Moravian heritage with visitors and family members alike.

Before there were faddish events planned to bring thousands of visitors to the streets of Lititz, both for adult and family entertainment, the town hosted many musical programs related to its religious history. One such program, Belshazzar, A Dramatic Cantata in Three Acts, was performed in the Lititz Springs Park in August of 1908 to a huge crowd of enthusiastic spectators. Belshazzar was a man who ruled Babylon during the years 553-539 BC.

He had a wall built around the city and took on a hedonistic lifestyle acquiring many wives and concubines while drinking and dining incessantly.

Needless to say God took command of this sin-filled city and Belshazzar was killed when the Persians conquered Babylon.



Above: The full cast behind 1908's Belshazzar Cantata. Story continued on page 3 inside.

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We open for the season April 3!

What a tremendous season 2019 was! In fact, it was our busiest season to date!

Last year, we welcomed a total of 7,619 visitors from 49 US states and 37 countries.

This year, we are opening a month earlier than normal. The first day of our 2020 season will be Friday, April 3rd. The next day, on April 4th, we'll be participating in Smithsonian's annual Museum Day. That day, complimentary tours of our 1792 Johannes Mueller House will be available for all visitors. Look for the full story on page 5.

Our 58th Annual Antiques Show is June 26-27

Save the Date!

Lancaster County's oldest show of its kind has always been a perennial favorite! This fundraiser will be staged in the Warwick Middle School (104 Maple Street) in Lititz June 26 and 27th.

It's an "old time country show," with a cast of nearly 50 dealers who will present a wide range of interesting, reasonably priced country wares and dry goods. Shoppers can expect to find farm items, stoneware, kitchen goods, textiles, early lighting, transfer ware, doll items, coin silver, holiday items, Pennsylvania folk art, and more!

Hungry shoppers will have an opportunity onsite to purchase a delicious variety of freshly prepared food. Look for our full ad and insert in our June issue!

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Belshazzar Cantata Con't:

Almost 100 townspeople formed the cast of this open air stage. It measured 33' x 66' and was built over the basin of the Lititz Springs. A canopy of trees was the perfect backdrop for this two hour artistic presentation. The object of the cantata was to raise funds for The Young Men's Christian Association (Y.M.C.A.) in Lititz.

Even though the first evening was rained out, the remaining two nights entertained more than 2,300 people—more than the town's population in 1908.

The idea of bringing this Biblical story to Lititz was the innovation of Calvin S. Loeffler, a barber who lived at 40 N. Broad Street. He spent many months studying the story, the script, the music and the Lititz residents whom he felt were best suited to fit the roles of the 500 BC characters.

The music was conducted by Paul E. Beck, a renowned Lititz musician who conducted The Beck Concert Band. In 1918, Paul Beck became the first State Supervisor of Music in the State Department in the Commonwealth of Pa. - a very respected position.

The band shell in the Lititz Springs Park was built in 1937 to honor Mr. Beck and his musical accomplishments.

In 1908 the Belshazzar Cantata was quite a large undertaking in the small town of Lititz.

An outside visitor, who attended all three performances, was heard to say: "Without question it was the finest musical event ever held in Lititz."



Above and left:

This real photo postcard, which was sent to Mr. Paul Seaber of Lititz, was postmarked August, 1908, the same month that Belshazzar took place in the Lititz Springs Park.

While the gentlemen in the photo are unknown, the card was most likely sent by one of the costumed actors seen above.

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Save the date!

The Lititz Historical Foundation is pleased to announce that the second annual Lititz Spring into History Festival will be held May 30 from 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. at the Lititz Historical Foundation, 145 East Main Street, Lititz.

More than 20 artisans will be on site demonstrating antique crafts, and many will offer their handmade items for sale at this free entry event.

In addition, the 1792 Johannes Mueller House will be open to the public at no charge. Mueller was the town dyer in early Moravian Lititz. This is a rare opportunity to wander through Mueller's fully restored 1790s house and 1740s workshop at your own pace, with tour guides on site to answer questions.

Thanks to the generous support of our main sponsor, Luther Acres, the Lititz Spring into History Festival will be a free event.


Brewster's BBQ will offer lunch items, and regional favorite sweet snacks will be available for purchase in the artisan village.

Please contact the festival committee by email at springintohistory@gmail.com with questions. See you May 30th!

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the 2nd annual

Lititz Spring into History Festival



Free entry! One day only!

Saturday May 30, 2020
10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Lititz Historical Foundation
145 E. Main St., Lititz

- See how early Lititz settlers lived, worked and played!
- Be entertained by 20+ artisans demonstrating centuries-old crafts!
- Buy lunch, enjoy sweet treats, play games, stroll around the gardens, visit the 1792 Mueller House, and purchase authentic, artisan-made items!

This is a rain-or-shine event

Email: springintohistory@gmail.com
Visit springintohistory.blogspot.com for more info

This event made possible thanks to the generous support of our sponsor:

 **Luther Acres**
A Luthercare Community

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Our Annual Plant Exchange is May 3!

The Lititz Historical Foundation in conjunction with the Lititz Garden Club will hold its Annual Plant Exchange on Sunday, May 3rd at 1:30 PM. The event will be held in the Mary Oehme Gardens, behind the museum buildings at 137-145 East Main Street in Lititz. The event is rain or shine.

The plants to exchange must be perennials and must have identification tags for each plant. Each plant must be placed in a container for transportation.

Upon arrival, a ticket will be handed out for each plant.

The plants must be placed in categories including: Sun, Shade, Exotic, Bulbs, Herbs and Ground Cover. These tickets can be redeemed for another plant after all plants are placed in the categories and the attendees have some time to explore the categories.



Join us for Museum Day April 4

We're excited to again partner with the Smithsonian for Free Museum Day!

On Saturday April 4, visitors may take a complimentary tour of our 1792 Johannes Mueller House.

Our friendly and knowledgeable costumed docents will lead visitors through this 1792 home, offering a captivating glimpse at what everyday life was like for an 18th century tradesman and his family in a closed Moravian settlement. The house retains its original architectural character and has been carefully restored with hundreds of traditional items from the late 1700s and early 1800s.

Tours will be available from 10am to 4pm that day. Please enter the Lititz Museum building located at 145 E. Main St. to check in before your tour begins.

Be sure to visit the Lititz Museum located in the 1793 Christian Schropp House and shop our gift shop. Top off your visit with a stroll through our gorgeous Mary Oehme Gardens, located behind our 18th century buildings.

Download your free tour ticket here: <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/museumday/venues/museum/lititz-historical-foundation/>

DID YOU KNOW...?



Seen here is a 1950's view of Lititz Springs Garage, which at the time this photo was taken was operated by John Steffy. The structure still stands to this day at the corner of South Broad and Marion Streets in Lititz.

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