

CHOICES ON THE LAND  
Identity, Influence, Power, and Conflict  
In  
A Historic Place

Michael O. Hartley

A dissertation submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at  
Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Anthropology.

Chapel Hill  
2009

Approved by:

Carole L. Crumley

Robert E. Daniels

Dorothy Holland

John Florin

Leland Ferguson

©2009  
Michael Orion Hartley  
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

## **ABSTRACT**

**MICHAEL O. HARTLEY:** Choices on the Land  
Identity, Influence, Power, and Conflict in a Historic Place  
(Under the Direction of Carole L. Crumley)

There are many activities relating to the maintenance of historical significance in the United States that fall under the label “Preservation,” and the National Register of Historic Places and related programs have formalized much of that activity. This dissertation presents a case study of some of the intended and unintended results of the use of preservation tools in the historic town of Bethania, North Carolina. This study examines the results of the application of the National Register of Historic Places, National Historic Landmark designation, conservation land acquisition, and the use of public money resulting from these programs over a period of approximately two decades in Bethania. This examination treats ethical considerations involved in the application of these tools, based on results of their application, and a particular issue addressed here is the use of the tools of preservation to achieve political authority and power. The listing of 500 acres of Bethania landscape on the National Register of Historic Places altered, in a dramatic way, the town’s visibility, prestige and ability to gain access to the benefits of public money, political autonomy and cultural prestige that would not otherwise be available. This gained increase in political power and access to benefits is in contrast to the inability of another group, contiguous to, but outside the National Register boundaries, to also gain access to these benefits. This occurred even though the excluded group also claims a deep relationship to historically significant

landscape directly related to Bethania. The rigid formula of the National Register plays a role in this exclusion, as does the absence of other tools that might allow recognition and empowerment of the excluded group. These issues immediately emerged after the creation of the municipality of Bethania, purportedly based on the National Register Boundaries. The fact that the included group was largely white and the excluded group black, added racial conflict to the situation. These issues were carried to the Supreme Court of North Carolina as well as in a long and ongoing debate in the public media. The issues are still present and viewed as unresolved by the excluded community.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I must thank the Department of Anthropology, UNC-CH for their gracious and courteous welcome back of a student (myself) who had been away many years, and for guidance in the pathways toward this document and degree. I also thank those who agreed to serve on my committee. They were of great assistance as I worked through past history in this dissertation and learned new things. I appreciate Carole's willingness at the outset to chair my committee. Her initial reading of the paper and encouragement is especially appreciated, as is Leland's valuable editorial advice. Bob, Dottie, and John contributed with their wise criticism. Old Salem Museums & Gardens, my employer, was also helpful in this and in many endeavors through the years.

And as always, my wife Martha has contributed invaluable support, meaningful discussion, critique and final editorial comment. She was and continues to be a fully engaged participant in the work.

Finally, I acknowledge the people who bear a relationship to that historic place that is Bethania, North Carolina, both within and without today's town.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES.....	viii
---------------------	------

LIST OF FIGURES.....	ix
----------------------	----

### Chapter

I.	INTRODUCTION.....	1
II.	THE PROBLEM.....	5
III.	THE CONTEXT.....	17
	Bethabara.....	25
	Bethania.....	26
	Salem and the Country Congregations.....	28
	Slavery and Militarism.....	32
	Industrialization and a New County.....	35
	Secular Salem.....	38
IV.	THE TWENTIETH CENTURY AND PRESERVATION OF IDENTITY.....	43
	Preservation as Reaction to Threats.....	44
	The Wachovia Study.....	55
V.	BETHANIA THREATENED.....	59
	The Bethania Town Lot Study.....	62
	Preservation Tools.....	65

The Preservation Plan.....	66
The National Register of Historic Places.....	68
The National Register Amendment and Boundary Increase.....	70
Loesch Lane.....	72
The Bethania Town Lot Archaeological Study.....	80
Conclusion of the Bethania Town Lot Study.....	90
VI.    IDENTITY, INFLUENCE, POWER, AND CONFLICT.....	92
The 1839 Act of the General Assembly.....	93
A New Bethania.....	94
VII.   ETHNICITY AND BOUNDARIES.....	110
EPILOGUE.....	128
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	140

## **LIST OF TABLES**

Table

1. Selected Chronology.....	138
-----------------------------	-----



## LIST OF FIGURES

### Figure

1. Wachovia in Carolina.....	132
2. Bethania Town Lot.....	133
3. Moravian Resources in Forsyth County.....	134
4. The Bethania Town Lot with National Register boundaries.....	135
5. African American areas within the Bethania Town Lot.....	136
6. Contested Landscape.....	137

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Over the course of several years in the 1980s and 1990s, I was the Director of a study of the Wachovia Tract of North Carolina, 100,000 acres of land sold to *Unitas Fratrum*, or Moravians, a pietistic group of Protestants, by Lord Granville, the last Lord Proprietor of Carolina, in 1753. Called *Der Wachau*, or Wachovia, this tract is now wholly contained in Forsyth County, North Carolina. The focus of the work, initiated under the auspices of Old Salem, Inc., was the identification and recording of historic resources relating to this tract of land for purposes of future scholarship, advocacy and re-emergence of general awareness of this significant body of land. I was joined in this work by Martha Brown Boxley (now Hartley), a trained Preservation Planner, and our combination of skills was productive of meaningful findings.

In the initial phase of the work, called The Wachovia Study, one of the colonial Moravian towns was identified as being seriously threatened, and the Wachovia Study moved to a phase two project, called the Bethania Town Lot Study, again with myself as Director and joined by Martha Boxley. This village, Bethania, was founded in 1759 by the Moravians, as part of their settlement of the much larger tract of 100,000 acres. Much of this work involved identification of the presence of this place and its people as it existed in the 1980s for purposes of advocacy and protection against the threatening dynamics being imposed from outside Bethania by a rapidly expanding urban palace, Winston-Salem. This

work was successful to the extent that the most immediate threat to Bethania, the placement of a beltway corridor through the Bethania land, was prevented.

In the process of selecting and applying tools to accomplish this, however, conflicting issues of identity and ethnicity were found in the community, issues that were reflected in boundaries created on the landscape and within groups of people. Among the issues that emerged during this work were “Moravian” identity and African American inclusion or exclusion in that identity in modern time. That topic involves the use of perceptions of historical boundaries on the landscape to create political entities, and the combination of constructed perception and formally delineated boundaries to achieve certain goals. Integral to this use of historically determined identity is the tension between inclusion and exclusion produced by manipulation of the historical identity of the landscape. The ability to achieve or deny that manipulation is a substantive element of those issues as discussed here. Within these manipulations, the role of “preservation” as formally embodied in the National Register of Historic Places, the National Historic Landmark program, and local preservation mechanisms is called into question. This dissertation is a discussion of those conflicting issues. It is based on a quarter of a century of work I have conducted in Forsyth County, North Carolina, and which I continue (2009).

Chapter 2 is a statement of the problem, a result of conflict over identity, boundaries and place. This conflict is centered in the historic town of Bethania, North Carolina.

In Chapter 3 the context that produced the dynamics that are the subject of this discussion is drawn. Bethania’s composition, both in human and in geographical terms is systemically related to a broader context, and some understanding of this broader bounded

place (Wachovia and Forsyth County) is necessary to understand the factors that produced the Bethania of the 1980s.

Chapter 4 elaborates on recognition of Moravian identity associated with place that emerged in the early twentieth century. This recognition produced a heavy focus on “preservation” that was primarily directed toward the town of Salem, the most prominent feature of the Moravian context of Wachovia, and toward the archaeological site of Bethabara, the first settlement of Wachovia. Significantly, these preservation efforts took no notice of Bethania, but did establish a model of how the Moravian resource should be treated. Beyond this, preservation activities directed toward Salem produced a template for preservation activities that reached far beyond Forsyth County into North Carolina and to the national level. The presence of the resulting entity, Old Salem, provided the foundation from which work in Bethania was launched.

Chapter 5 is a discussion of the work undertaken in Bethania, by Martha Boxley and I that resulted in the amendment and boundary expansion of the National Register Historic District from 50 acres to 500 acres and the subsequent creation of the Bethania National Historic Landmark (NHL). This work greatly increased the visibility and influence of Bethania.

The application of this increased power and influence from within and without Bethania is the subject of Chapter 6. It is this application of influence resulting from the creation of boundaries of identity on the landscape that lies at the crux of this dissertation. Choices made on the landscape reflected cultural attitudes, racial divisions, and the manipulation of identity and landscape for political purposes.

Chapter 7 consists of an examination of the actions that were discussed in Chapter 6 from the perspective of theoretical considerations.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THE PROBLEM**

In 1995 a small and historic Moravian town, Bethania, North Carolina, was incorporated within the North Carolina system of municipalities. Following that action the new town was quickly immersed in conflict between at least three groups who had an interest in the landscape and the municipal boundaries. One of these groups was made up of residents of subdivision neighborhoods that had been formed within the lands that had historically been allocated to Bethania. There were also two other groups, one largely made up of white residents living in the core Main Street residential area of Bethania, and one black, located largely on Bethania-Rural Hall Road to the northeast of the core area. Threads of this conflict ran deeply back through time into the history, ethnicity and culture of the place, brought forward by dynamics that had origins in the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries. While neither group was uniformly in opposition to the other, the conflicting views were widespread enough to result in a deep and lasting confrontation.

The Main Street group, with access to power, put the plans in place for the incorporation of the town through meetings to discuss the proposed incorporation, engaging an influential attorney, Hamilton Horton, to shepherd their proposal through the North Carolina legislature. This was accomplished and boundaries for the town were announced. A Board of Commissioners was then appointed composed of five residents from within the

newly bounded town, S. B. Brown, B. A. Byrd, Willa Lash, Wayne Purgason, and Deborah Thompson.

Immediately other citizens within and in the vicinity of the newly drawn lines called the means of notification about the meeting that determined the dimensions of the boundaries as “devious.” They contended that the notification signs for the meeting had been consciously inadequate for public participation, referring to the typing paper sheets of paper stapled to telephone poles on the Main Street of the little town that had been a means of announcing it. Both white and black residents reacted negatively to the handling of the meeting.

The *Winston-Salem Journal*, a local newspaper, reported one long-time resident saying, “Heretofore we never looked on telephone poles for our information,” and another said, “If it was a Moravian chicken supper, they would have put big signs out. But something so important as the rebirth of the first planned Moravian village and they put up small signs with tiny type.”<sup>1</sup> This perception of failure of a meaningful effort to involve the broader public in the initiative to draw new boundaries for Bethania and to have attorney Hamilton Horton guide the legislation through the General Assembly produced great bitterness by members of the community. Many thought a lack of publicity was an intentionally devised plan to exclude African Americans, and people expressed concern about the absence of notification of the meeting to set new boundaries for the town.

The historical boundaries of Bethania were a central issue in the conflict. Bethania historically consisted of a residential area clustered on Main Street, but which was systemically and formally tied to a broader landscape contained within its “Town Lot.”

---

<sup>1</sup> Frank Tursi, “House Divided: Residents in and around Bethania are split over who is now in and who was left out,” *Winston-Salem Journal*, October 15, 1995, sec. A1.

Bethania's Town Lot had been laid in a 2,000-acre block in 1759, and increased to a rectilinear 2,500 acres by 1771. The exclusion of a substantial portion of that 2500-acre landscape, and of the people it contained, through the 1995 boundaries, was at the heart of the dispute.

Residents of neighboring subdivisions, living within the tract of land historically associated with the village and known as the Bethania Town Lot, wanted to be included in Bethania. While they could not claim an ethnic tie to Bethania, they viewed themselves as living in Bethania and also considered that they had been unfairly excluded. Opponents to the inclusion of these neighborhoods claimed that the subdivisions were simply trying to evade annexation into Winston-Salem. That was true, and in fact so was Bethania's core area. Annexation by a growing Winston-Salem, to increase its tax base and population numbers, was an issue many small neighborhoods and communities faced. Annexation was an action that was roundly resisted because it meant increased taxes, in exchange for urban services that many did not want and did not want to pay for.

The issues were more complex for the other group that felt the exclusion, made up of the African Americans living in enclaves surrounding the core area of town on a landscape that they had historically recognized as Bethania. They were not prepared to be put off by claims that what had been incorporated was the limit of the historic Bethania landscape.

Newly appointed Bethania commissioner B. A. Byrd said that the lines had been drawn tightly to avoid objections and opposition to the charter from the city of Winston-Salem, an explanation that was unsatisfactory to African American residents of the area such as Teresa Henry of Lash Road and others, as recorded by a local weekly newspaper.

"We have concerned people here who were left out" she said, "I live next door to a commissioner in Bethania. And I'm in Winston-Salem. This is crazy."



She also complained that she didn't see public notices about the organizational meetings, saying that she is in the Bethania Post Office daily but never saw signs posted about the effort.

Henry and others who live south of Bethania-Rural Hall Road are scheduled to be annexed by Winston-Salem next year.

Julia Lash of Bethania-Rural Hall Road also said she didn't understand why she and her neighbors were not included. Lash and her neighbors in Bethania's black community have owned much of the land between Main Street and Murray Road since the late 1800s.

"It seems like they got a small portion of Bethania. I thought it would be different than what it is," she said. "I thought they would keep the community informed. I didn't know what happened."<sup>2</sup>

Of the five who had been appointed to the interim first board of commissioners for Bethania, the sole African American member, Willa Lash, offered these comments during the first election held in the new town.

Lash said that she wishes officials had considered the town's boundaries more carefully. "A lot of people who thought they were in Bethania found out they really weren't, especially up Bethania-Rural Hall Road," she said. "I think there are only about 14 families that are included and I don't think anyone is included from Walker Road."

She said that blacks who live near the town feel especially left out. "I don't know what can be done, to be honest with you, but it is something that should have been looked into as far as the boundaries are concerned."

Lash said she doubts there will be a 2,500 acre Bethania. "It is a divisive issue, and the people up in this area are really upset."<sup>3</sup>

Lash, even though she had been one of the original appointed members of Bethania's Board of Commissioners, spoke for a constituency that was among those excluded from the town. As a member of that community she had not only been included, but was also a member of the government that her neighbors were "really upset" about, and she found herself on an unpleasant boundary, one that promised to continue.

---

<sup>2</sup> Wooding, G.I. III, "A bigger Bethania? Not likely, some say," *The Rural Hall Weekly Independent*, August 10, 1995, p.1.

<sup>3</sup> Wooding, G.I. III, "Bethania officials urge unity, healing," *The Rural Hall Weekly Independent*, November 16, 1995, p.1.

The first election held in the new form of the old town was marked by contention and anger within the recently established boundaries, and three of the original five appointees lost their seats to challengers, including the interim mayor. The two members who remained of the originally appointed Bethania Board of Commissioners were Willa Lash and Deborah Thompson. Thompson was a resident of Main Street and descended from an old white Bethania family. Three of the four challengers were elected to the Bethania Board of Commissioners, and with a majority on the Bethania Board determined by the first election held in the new town, this group called for unity. But, their pledge to work for a 2,500-acre Bethania was not uniformly acceptable, as indicated by Thompson's statement after the election.

"It's my desire that we all come together, of course," Thompson said. "The difficulty in that is that we all ran with different ideas, the 2,500 acres versus a small Bethania."

The stage, Thompson acknowledged, is set for a split board. "It's important to Bethania and its residents that we understand our differences and sort through those differences."

Lash agreed, "Hopefully, we can come together as one and have a good community and I think we have the potential," she said. "Everybody got off on the wrong start, I guess. I don't know what happened."<sup>4</sup>

Ellie Collins, who was to soon become the first Mayor of Bethania from an elected board, established the position of the group of challengers.

Collins said that one of her top priorities will be to try to get the state legislature to expand the town's boundaries. She said she hopes that legislators will consider the issue next spring.

Collins said she thinks other residents agree. "I think we did a good job of campaigning door-to-door and I think our message got across to the people," she said. "They agreed with us in our effort to recognize the entire town lot."

Thompson, however, wasn't so sure. She said she didn't hear the desire to make the town larger from many residents.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

At the time, Bethania's Main Street had a distinctive cultural identity, as many of the residents were descended from the Moravian population that had settled the place. However, people, land and boundaries, whether formally known and identified or not, possess a relationship and meaning that persists in memory, and the black community of Bethania, in particular, continued to challenge the arbiters of identity. In 2003 a newspaper article appeared entitled "Rooted in the Land: Blacks in Bethania say they are trying to preserve overlooked heritage."<sup>6</sup> Although these African Americans continued to resist plans for Winston-Salem to annex them, that was not the main thrust of the article, and it said of resident Georgia Byrd of Bethania-Rural Hall Road,

...Byrd and many of her neighbors are in a separate and different battle. They oppose annexation in order to try to preserve a black heritage in Bethania that they feel has often been overlooked.

"We are from Bethania. That is our heritage," Byrd said. "I don't even want to bring the word slavery up, because no one ever wants to think about that term, but that's the only thing that keeps us together. That's our heritage."

Her brother, Ali Shabazz, has a more direct term for their claim: "sweat equity."

"They piggy-backed on my historical position," Shabazz said of Bethania's mostly white population. "If we were good enough to be slaves in Bethania, goddamned, we're good enough to be citizens in Bethania."

..."This used to be Bethania," said Conrad Lash, 85, sitting in a chair on his Walker Road porch last week.<sup>7</sup>

Prior to this situation of conflict, Martha Boxley and I were instrumental in Bethania in archaeological and preservation planning studies and selection of formal programs that touched directly on the establishment of its historic identity. This work involved the creation of a preservation plan for Bethania, the placement of the Bethania Town Lot on the National Register of Historic Places Study List, and the development of that process into a National Register Amendment and Boundary Increase. This step would increase the dimensions of

---

<sup>6</sup> David Ingram, "Rooted in the Land: Blacks in Bethania say they are trying to preserve overlooked heritage," *Winston-Salem Journal*, June 16, 2003, sec. A1.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

Bethania's National Register identity in terms of the amount of landscape recognized as well as a development of the significant cultural content and period of significance for the place. We were directly involved in the development of formal protections that flowed from the establishment of Bethania's identity. A major thrust of developing that protection was the effort to preserve the historic community from major highway construction. This activity involved numbers of presentations to members of government at hearings and meetings, as well as presentations to various citizens groups.

In the years that have passed since the application of the formalizing tools, such as the National Register of Historic Places that brought into view Bethania's historic identity and the authority and power that rests on that identity, I have had the opportunity to observe and reflect on the efficacy and impact of the tools chosen. The passage of time allows observation of results, intended and unintended, which are the product of these choices and to derive certain object lessons from these observations. The lessons have been the legacy of the choices made in the past, when I was directly engaged in the process, as well as choices and dynamics that continued into the present, after I was not engaged. These lessons are a mixed bag of benefits and penalties, and are in part cautionary examples of unintended results.

The story told here concerns landscape in the real sense of that word, the geological landforms and creeks overlain by the activities of people across a period of two hundred and fifty years. It concerns their houses and buildings, roads, paths and trails, fields, forests and yards. It concerns their lives and choices they made on the land. These choices have boundaries, some of them formally drawn across the ground and others, also significant, understood through culture and tradition.

Bethania is also an idea, or more properly a constellation of ideas. More than one ethnic group with deep temporal relationships to Bethania participate in the landscape there. Without the necessity of thoroughly understanding what the content of these differing ideas might be, we can assume a point of departure by recognizing that the perceptions of the place by these groups do not totally mesh. This is true even though all parties may be talking about the same body of land, each recognizing the same name. They are not necessarily talking about the same “place,” however, based on differences of ethnic perceptions, an aspect that has led to conflict about boundaries and identity.

Revisions of the formal dimensions of place occurred in Bethania on the basis of desire to exercise power and influence. The observations contained in this treatise deal with how formal designations provide for power within one group and conversely bring about the withholding of power from another, moving the discussion into the area of ethical considerations in the application of tools such as the National Register of Historic Places. A search of literature about ethical issues in preservation practices has found little discussion of problems of application.

However, a paper from 1993 specifically addressed problems relating to the National Register of Historic Places, the Secretary of the Interior’s “Standards for Rehabilitation,” survey and inventory practices, the Certified Local Government Program, and the Section 106 Process, all at the core of the national preservation program. This paper, one of three presented in a seminar entitled “Ethics in Preservation,” was authored by DeTeel Patterson Tiller, Chief, Preservation Planning Branch, National Park Service, Washington, D.C. When he presented this paper, Tiller was an individual in a position to provide an informed critique, and he provided telling commentary.

Tiller specifically addressed, “the ethical premises behind the policies and practices of our national program as these are delivered through such mechanisms as the National Register,” and said further that there are problems dealing with,

the, “my history is not your history” OR “My preservation is not your Preservation” problem. As I have begun to understand this problem from experiences in different parts of the nation, I have searched largely in vain for thoughtful writings in the preservation community on this idea—in both the published and gray literature. There is not much out there.<sup>8</sup>

Tiller addressed a root problem, in his considerations.

As a profession we have developed highly standardized methodological approaches and public policies for conducting surveys and inventorying the data derived. Research designs and final reports have become highly formalized. The data itself (while variations occur from State to State and locality to locality) are largely based on the elements of the National Register form—what is it, how old is it, where is it, who built it and why is it significant, describe it and give me a bibliography, a picture, an a locator on a map.<sup>9</sup>

A final quote from Tiller’s paper expanded on these critiques, saying,

Simply that ethics of historic preservation are not always necessarily objectively right and true. That our public policy and professional practices are deeply rooted in specific ways of doing business that do not necessarily make sense to others.

Another ethical issue. Standards of documentation and proof. Why is something historically significant? Historic preservation has developed detailed methods of proof, rooted in accepted Western standards of documentation. The completion of National Register nominations is a good case to examine, although the requirements in survey methodology or similar exercises in HABS/HAER work as well.

What does it take to prove something historically significant? It is all clear in our minds. Yet increasingly, we are running afoul of cultures in this country who do not ascribe to the same Western standards of proof. Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiian, rural African American communities, and increasing influxes of immigrant populations are at odds with our ethos or public policy or proof.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> DeTeel Patterson Tiller, “Subjectivity in Ethics,” in *Ethics in Preservation, Lectures Presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Council for Preservation Education* (Indianapolis, Indiana: n.p., 1993), 25, 27.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 28.

These are the words of a senior official in the National Parks Service who was directly responsible for the functioning of the nation's formal preservation program. His commentary is confirmation that extreme formalization of a process that is dependent on formulaic decision-making produces problems for the affected people. His commentary also explicitly calls for critical examination of the ethics of application of these tools, a problem that is a central theme of this discussion.

This concern for the ethics of the application of these tools has not been commonly addressed within the preservation community, a problem that is also explicitly evident in Tiller's paper. With the exception of an article by Catherine Bishir of the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office called "Yuppies, Bubbas, and the Politics of Culture," Tiller was unable to locate such literature. His paper was presented in 1993 and while there has been some addition to this discussion in the intervening years, this theme does not commonly receive much emphasis.

The common view then (1993) and today (2009) is that "heritage preservation" refers to the material objects of history, a view substantiated in the symposium in which Tiller was participating. The other two papers of the symposium emphasized preservation of the material record, one dealing with what architecture should be saved, the other treating "The Secretary of The Interior's Standards For Historic Preservation Projects: Ethics In Action." The latter dealt with the technicalities of saving architecture and related objects.

Part of the problem that is implied but never quite fully addressed in Tiller's paper is the nature of the information that is left out of this process. In Frederik Barth's terms, it involves the recognition of the significance of ethnicity, of the living populations rather than

a substantive focus on material fabric, which Barth would term “culture.”<sup>11</sup> In Timothy Ingold’s terms, it means recognition of an ecological relationship between people and their landscape.<sup>12</sup>

The theoretical writings by Frederik Barth on ethnic groups and boundaries speak to the dynamics that have been operating within the groups that are being addressed in this discussion. While Barth has not placed emphasis on landscape as a meaningful factor in how ethnic groups behave, his thinking from the 1960s retains a useful relevance that moves this discussion to a broader level of generality and explanation. And, although Barth did not emphasize “place” as a necessary element in his treatment of groups and boundaries, landscape and boundaries on the ground can be included in his scheme in a way that assists explanation and understanding.

Barth’s valuable ideas have been critically elaborated on by Sam Lucy.<sup>13</sup> Lucy’s thoughtful observations and expansions on application of Barth’s ideas on ethnic boundaries are applicable to the subject at hand as well. Similarly, recent thought on the complexity of social and cultural activities, as discussed in *Socializing Complexity*,<sup>14</sup> has shed light on these considerations. This volume contains Carole Crumley’s call for a New Paradigm centering

---

<sup>11</sup> Frederik Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1969).

<sup>12</sup> Tim Ingold, *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on livelihood, dwelling and skill* (New York: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, 2000).

<sup>13</sup> Sam Lucy, “Ethics and Cultural Identities,” in *The Archaeology of Identity: Approaches to gender, age, status, ethnicity and religion*, ed. Margarita Díaz-Andreu *et al* (New York: Routledge - Taylor and Francis Group, 2005), 86-109.

<sup>14</sup> Sheila Kohring and Stephanie Wynne-Jones, eds., *Socializing Complexity: Structure, Interaction and Power in Archaeological Discourse* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2007).



on complex behaviors of societies and groups. Her discussion has been helpful.<sup>15</sup> Anthony Giddens' important work on structuration and agency provides an underlying theoretical base for the study and understanding of change from within groups and issues of group identity.<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> Carole Crumley, "Notes on a New Paradigm," in *Socializing Complexity: Structure, Interaction and Power in Archaeological Discourse*, ed. Sheila Kohring and Stephanie Wynne-Jones (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2007), 30-36.

<sup>16</sup> Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **THE CONTEXT**

In 1750 the compact drainage basin of a tributary of the Yadkin River lay, as it had for thousands of years, as an upland geography of ridges, creeks, and creek bottoms, covered largely in mixed hardwoods and populated by scattered wildlife. Bison had been present in the not too distant past, leaving trails and wallows, as they had across the piedmont of North Carolina, and bear, wolves, deer, Eastern elk, and smaller animals could still be found on the land. The Yadkin River paralleled the main channel of the extensive creek drainage some five or so miles to the west. Downstream, the creek and river joined their waters to flow south toward South Carolina, Georgetown, and Winyah Bay on the Atlantic Ocean.

Native Americans had once populated the vicinity and woodland villages existed along the extensive bottomlands of the river for miles. But these had vanished by 1750, under pressures from a steadily encroaching European migration into the Carolinas, and the Cherokee hunted the land from the Appalachian Mountains to the west and were also accustomed to traverse it in their various travels north along the base of the mountains.

By 1748, however, newcomers were in the Yadkin drainage of the North Carolina backcountry. The old Indian path had been widened by settlers who had come south through the Valley of Virginia and across the Yadkin at a shallow ford that was almost always passable. The name Shallowford was affixed to that crossing. These new people were

Quakers lead by Morgan Bryant and they took up lands to the west of the creek basin on either side of the Yadkin in 1748.

With Bryant came others, the Douthits, the Elrods, and other families. And the Boones came, Squire Boone settling on the west side of the Yadkin in the Bryant settlement. His son Daniel married Morgan Bryant's granddaughter Rebecca, and their lives became the material of history and myth.

For reasons that remain obscure, the creek basin then became known as Carguel's Creek. It was not part of the Bryant settlement along the Yadkin, but attracted the attention of Hans Wagner, who tradition says was a trapper. Wagner built a small log cabin on one of the forks of Carguel's Creek, a simple single-pen structure with a dirt floor and no chimney, yet located in a way that was common for house sites of newly arrived Germans on the frontier. He situated his cabin on a south slope just above a creek bottom and near a spring, a pattern that was later repeated numbers of times for early German cabins in the creek basin.<sup>17</sup>

Neither Wagner nor any other individual settler who might think the land of Carguel's Creek was a good place to build a house would stay long on that land. Lord Granville offered the Moravians, Protestant Pietists whose origins were in central Europe, the right to purchase 100,000 acres in his Granville District. The Granville District was the northern half of North Carolina, and the upper Yadkin was a major drainage in that District.

Carguels Creek, formed part of that drainage, and in December of 1752 a party of men rode into the creek basin, including an English surveyor and two hunters and guides who were also his chain pullers. The expedition was led by a robust man who came with a special desire to find the 100,000 acres of land in North Carolina, accompanied by a group of his

---

<sup>17</sup> Michael O. Hartley and Martha B. Hartley, "“There is None Like It’: The South Fork Settlements and the Development of Colonial Wachovia,” (Project Report, Old Salem, Inc., 2003), 69-70.

fellows who shared that vision. This man was the Moravian leader August Spangenberg and the land he chose was the drainage basin of Carguel's Creek. At this time the basin acquired the name "Muddy Creek," and Spangenberg referred to it by that name on January 8, 1753 in his first notations regarding it, "From the camp in the three forks of Muddy Creek, also called Carguels Creek."<sup>18</sup>

The 98,985 acres that the English surveyor, William Churton, laid out under Spangenberg's direction encompassed the entirety of the Muddy Creek basin, known henceforth as the Three Forks of Muddy Creek. Then Spangenberg and his party departed for a short time, and the landscape of the creek basin remained much as it had been for most of its existence. However, choices had been made, lines had been drawn, and nothing in the creek basin would ever really be the same again. The choice of this tract of nearly 100,000 acres of land meant that it was now purchased and subject to Moravian plans and intentions on the frontier.

The tract of land August Spangenberg selected was a focal point in the intersection of intentions, those of English colonialists, joined to the plans of central European Moravians. The land that Spangenberg chose was available to him because it was owned by the English Lord Granville, the last Lord Proprietor of Carolina, and because Granville valued the potential promised by Moravian planning and industry.

In 1663 eight powerful Englishmen were granted a Royal Charter for the colonization of Carolina. The Charter reflected an earlier royal patent granting another English nobleman, Sir Robert Heath, lands on the east coast of North America from 31 degrees north latitude to 36 degrees north latitude (from peninsular Florida to Virginia), extending west for the extent

---

<sup>18</sup> Fries, Adelaide, ed. *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina* (Raleigh, NC: Edwards and Broughton Printing Co., 1922), 1:59.

of the continent. Heath was supposed to create a province and name it Carolina, but this patent was never successfully exercised, and King Charles II revoked it in 1663 and issued a new charter to eight Lords Proprietors who were valuable to him because of their support and efforts for him.<sup>19</sup> By 1670 these eight proprietors had established Charles Town on the Ashley River, establishing a bulwark between the English colonies and the Spanish of Florida to the south. Behind the protective barrier of Charles Town and the South Carolina settlement, the coast of Carolina was settled, and to the south Charles Town also provided a secure anchor for expansion against the Spanish into Georgia.<sup>20</sup>

In the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, Carolina produced substantial movement toward English continental goals, but internal stresses of government and local warfare with Indian groups led to great dissatisfaction within the colony. As a result, the crown purchased South Carolina back from the proprietary government in 1719 and North Carolina in 1729. The Granville family, however, declined to sell their share, and as a result, retained an eighth of the land of Carolina. That share was then concentrated in the ownership of the northern half of North Carolina, which became known as the Granville District, with a land office in Edenton on the coast.

The other group in this equation, the Moravians, were Protestant Pietists who had been active in the English colonies since 1735, when they had been early participants in Oglethorpe's Savannah colony. Their leader at that time was also August Spangenberg, providing him with early exposure to the southeastern colonies of the English.

---

<sup>19</sup> Michael O. Hartley, "Elizabethan Policies and the Charlestown Colony: An Ethnohistorical-Archaeological Analysis," in *Volumes in Historical Archaeology VIII*, ed. Stanley South (Columbia, SC: The South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, The University of South Carolina, 1989), 23-24.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 63-68.

However, the Moravian presence in Savannah did not fare well. Savannah and the colony of Georgia were still in conflict with the Spanish and Spanish Indians, and the English there expected every able-bodied man to bear arms. The pacifist Moravians declined and were told that they were therefore not welcome in the settlement. Spangenberg, perhaps sensing that this internal conflict would come to a head, had traveled to the Quaker colony of Pennsylvania in 1736 to explore conditions there.

Following Spangenberg's lead, the Moravians moved from Savannah to Pennsylvania by 1740 and by 1741 had established Bethlehem, Pennsylvania as headquarters of their activities in North America. Bethlehem, followed by Nazareth in Pennsylvania, were populated by European Moravians whose mission work included not only a dedicated effort toward Native Americans, but also and more permanently the stimulation of Moravian congregations and schools across southeastern Pennsylvania. By 1748 there was a strong Moravian presence in approximately thirty-one Pennsylvania and Maryland communities.<sup>21</sup> These small communities in southeastern Pennsylvania included Lititz, Germantown, Lancaster, Yorktown, Fredericktown, Oley, Heidelberg, and Warwick.<sup>22</sup>

In 1749 the Moravians, led in Europe by well-connected nobility that included Count Nicholas von Zinzendorf of Saxony, petitioned the English Parliament for recognition as an ancient Protestant Episcopal Church. This recognition was granted to the Moravians as the *Unitas Fratrum*, and the 1749 Act of Parliament recognized that members of the church would not be required to take an oath but instead could make a solemn Affirmation or Declaration. Nor would they be required to serve on a jury or participate in criminal trials,

---

<sup>21</sup> Scott Rohrer, "Searching for Land and God: The Pietist Migration to North Carolina in the Late Colonial Period," *The North Carolina Historical Review* 79, No. 4 (October 2002): 421.

<sup>22</sup>Hartley and Hartley, "'There is None Like It,'" 7.

and they would not be required to participate in any military service but instead would pay a fee. Recognition in this manner by the English parliament greatly simplified Moravian activities in the colonies.<sup>23</sup>

During this process in London, the Moravians came to the attention of Lord Granville, and their accomplishments in establishing their towns in Pennsylvania and Maryland were known to him. He offered to sell them 100,000 acres in his huge tract, which the Moravians agreed to purchase. This offer was attractive to the Moravians because they wished to have a concentrated body of land on the scale of a county that would provide them autonomous theocratic control. The towns and villages that they had established in Pennsylvania and Maryland, while individually successful, were spread out across two colonies and suffered because of the lack of centralization and contiguity. Consequently, the prospect of a large body of land that could accommodate concentrated settlement of a number of towns and villages governed according to their principles was something they greatly desired. This possibility was also coupled to the recently acquired English government's acknowledgement that they were entitled to certain privileges and prerogatives of internal government, which no doubt made Granville's offer even more appealing.

In 1749, Granville knew that the coastal area of his District, as well as that of broader North and South Carolina, had been extensively settled, and he and his agents clearly recognized that acreage on the scale of 100,000 acres could only be found in the interior of the Granville District. A successful and active settlement such as might be expected from the Moravians would stimulate land sales in the backcountry. Although it has not been found explicitly stated in primary documentation, it is certain that Granville and his land office in Carolina wanted a strong settlement in the backcountry of the Granville District. Such a

---

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 12.

settlement would serve as a valuable and attractive resource to those seeking an alternative to the rapidly filling colonies to the north and would provide an anchor that would support movement into that area.

August Spangenberg was directed by Moravian leadership in Europe to search the Granville District for the land and was provided a Warrant for 100,000 acres by Lord Granville. He was also given specific instructions about what this Moravian tract was to consist of and how it would function. The tract was to be twelve miles square, and bisected by a navigable river. It was to eventually contain a central town that would administer the rest of the tract and also be the spiritual and economic focal point of the 100,000 acres. This central town was to be encircled by outlying villages that would function in a spiritual, economic and administrative relationship with the central town.<sup>24</sup>

With a small party of Brethren, Spangenberg traveled from Pennsylvania to the Granville land office in Edenton, where certain realities became plain to him. Spangenberg recorded in his diary on September 12, 1752 that Granville's agent, Sir Francis Corbin, advised "that we go to the 'Back of the Colony,' that is west to the Blue Mountains, taking a surveyor, and that perhaps there we can find a suitable tract of land that has not hitherto been surveyed. We will see."<sup>25</sup>

In the course of his search, Spangenberg discarded the requirement that the navigable river bisect the tract. He quickly recognized that North Carolina in its entirety possessed scant navigable waterways, and the Granville tract even less. Further, the land on those existing navigable channels had already been taken up. He realized that he would indeed

---

<sup>24</sup> Fries, Adelaide, ed. *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina* (Raleigh, NC: Edwards and Broughton Printing Co., 1925), 2:515-516.

<sup>25</sup> Fries, *Records of the Moravians*, 1:33.



have to travel west, which he and his party did. A long search through the Catawba, into the mountains and back east into the Yadkin drainage brought him to the drainage basin of Muddy Creek, where he had the English surveyor William Churton run the lines for the 100,000-acre tract. Spangenberg named the tract *Der Wachau* in memory of land he was reminded of along the Danube River in Austria. He was satisfied with the conclusion of his search and wrote on January 8, 1753,

Towards the end of the year we came into this neighborhood, and found a 'body of land' which is probably the best left in North Carolina. If we had had a true account of this in the beginning, perhaps we would not have gone to the Catawba nor beyond the Blue Mountains to the New River,...<sup>26</sup>

And so Spangenberg and his party rode away, he toward Pennsylvania, and Churton back toward the east, leaving the creek drainage basin, which was now encompassed by oddly stepped boundary lines reflecting the geography of the landscape and the perception of men about what that bounded geography might become, might mean. Indeed, Spangenberg had wanted Churton to run diagonal lines along the ridges that separated the Muddy Creek basin from adjacent drainages, to carefully distinguish the land the Moravians wanted from that they did not. Churton refused to run the diagonal lines, saying that the land office only allowed him to run lines either north-south or east-west, and so the two compromised, with Churton creating steps along a ridge crest in the northeastern corner of the tract and to the west of the main channel of Muddy Creek along the western boundary.<sup>27</sup>

Be that as it may, *Der Wachau* had been chosen, soon to become "Wachovia" in the English colony. The landscape of the creek basin, even though for the moment physically

---

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 1:59.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 1:46.

unchanged, had become identifiable, bounded, set aside, and the subject of plans and intentions.

### *Bethabara*

The absence of the Moravians from the Muddy Creek basin did not last long, and on October 7, 1753, fifteen Single Brothers, unmarried members of the Moravians, left Pennsylvania to come to Wachovia. They were charged with beginning the settlement of the new tract and were chosen because of their various skills. After following “Margan Bryant’s” road, they arrived in Wachovia on November 17, 1753, and because of bitter cold and inclement weather, established themselves in the abandoned cabin that had been built by Hans Wagner. There to the sound of wolves howling, they sang hymns, celebrated the meal the Moravians call the “Lovefeast,” and began the enterprise of establishing themselves in North Carolina.<sup>28</sup>

And so they did. Making Wagner’s cabin site their center of activity, they began to clear and plant land, build additional, sounder buildings and create a town, which they named Bethabara, meaning “House of Passage.”<sup>29</sup> Bryant’s road became the Great Wagon Road as newcomers poured down it into the North Carolina frontier, and Bethabara lay only a half-mile off of the main route, which passed through Wachovia. The little town grew, and with a minister, doctor, a mill, and craftsmen such as a potter, it became a source of necessities and protection for the surrounding new settlers on the frontier. Bethabara became a strong point during the Cherokee War to protect the growing numbers of Moravians who came to Bethabara, and also served to protect the many outlying settlers who fled into the town for protection. During 1759, one of the worst years of the Cherokee War, refugees fled into

---

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 1:79-80.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 1:73-118.

Bethabara from isolated homesteads. In the face of that threat and destruction, the Moravians of Wachovia moved forward with their Wachovia enterprise and built their first planned town, Bethania.

### *Bethania*

The Moravians had supplied Wachovia with a trained surveyor, Philip Christian Gottlieb Reuter, who arrived in the tract in 1758, and one of his first tasks was to lay out the new town. Bishop August Spangenberg returned to Wachovia to select the site for Bethania, and the location chosen emphasized 130 acres of the Black Walnut Bottom three miles from Bethabara. The Great Wagon Road also ran between Bethania and Bethabara. The name “Bethania” had been chosen in Europe, and after discussion between Spangenberg, other leaders and Reuter, the form was chosen. The initial occupants of the new town were to be eight families from the Bethabara Congregation, joined by eight refugee families who had fled into Bethabara for protection and had petitioned to be included in the new town.

At that time, a list of general agreements was established with all the inhabitants of Bethania, beginning with the statement, “A. Bethania shall have 2,000 acres of land, which is soon to be staked out.”<sup>30</sup> The General Agreements contain fifteen other stipulations regarding behavior, five of them explicitly referring to what might be done on the 2,000 acres of land comprising Bethania.

Reuter laid out Bethania in a plan incorporating clustered domestic lots and a system of open field agriculture, an ancient form from the dangerous forests of medieval Europe. The final version of the plan for Bethania was selected on June 20, 1759, and a month later

---

<sup>30</sup> C. Daniel Crews, *Bethania: A Fresh Look At Its Birth* (Winston-Salem, NC: Moravian Archives, 1993), 12-13.

on July 18, the first family in Bethania moved into their log house, with others quickly following.

The form chosen for Bethania is of a sort that has been described by John Stilgoe as *landschaft*, a German word with temporal depth. As he put it, a *landschaft* was dwellings and related structures clustered together within surrounding planting fields, meadows and pastures, with the forest lying beyond. He went on to say, “The word meant more than an organization of space; it connoted too the inhabitants of the place and their obligation to one another and to the land. The idea of a *landschaft*, of a traditional landscape, is very old.”<sup>31</sup> This concept of obligation to one another and to the land was central to the Moravian concept of Wachovia and the settlement of the tract in North Carolina. Their communal relations were such that residence in one of the Moravian towns in Wachovia was dependent on membership in good standing in the congregation and maintenance of a Brotherly spirit, an explicitly stated goal.

The “unity” practiced by the *Unitas Fratrum* provided the Moravians of North Carolina with a resilience that stood them in good stead, and Bethabara and Bethania weathered the Cherokee War and the other various vicissitudes of the colonial frontier in North Carolina. Bethabara performed the duties of the administrative center of Wachovia with commitment from its initially unplanned location determined by Wagner’s cabin in the northwestern quadrant of the Moravian Tract. However, the European administration of the *Unitas Fratrum* was not unaware of the growing population and stability of the frontier in North Carolina, nor had they forgotten the plan for Wachovia. In 1763 the administrators of

---

<sup>31</sup> John R. Stilgoe, *Common Landscapes of America, 1580 to 1845* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 12.

Wachovia in Bethabara received directions from the Unity administration in Europe to select a suitable site and build the central administrative town of Wachovia.<sup>32</sup>

### *Salem and the Country Congregations*

After some initial misgivings about removing the crafts and administration from Bethabara where they had been successfully located since 1753, the Moravians of Wachovia dutifully went through the process of selecting a site for Salem, and began the construction of the town in 1766. Salem was formally occupied in 1772, and all crafts and administration were moved from Bethabara to the new town. At the same time the decision for construction of Salem moved forward, the Unity also resolved how lands of Wachovia would be sold to sympathetic purchasers, and three Country Congregations came into being at the southern end of the tract. These were Friedberg, Friedland, and Hope, in which the residents lived on disbursed farms clustered around a church and school rather than in a formal town. At the end of the colonial period, Wachovia and the drainage basin of Muddy Creek held its central town surrounded by five congregation communities. Three of the six were formal towns and three were communities of individual farms, the latter situation now possible on a stable landscape, which was no longer a frontier.

I have argued that Wachovia and the Moravian towns of Bethabara and Bethania were major factors in the interior settlement of colonial North Carolina, providing a third support for movement into the backcountry, with the Chesapeake and Charles Town providing the coastal centers. These three supports of settlement formed a tripod on which the mature settlement of Carolina hung. Granville's intention that the 100,000-acre Moravian tract be located on the western frontier of his holding is implicit in his offer of 1749. It is explicit in his agent's statement in 1753 that such a tract could only be found on

---

<sup>32</sup> Fries, *Records of the Moravians*, 2:551-553.

the western frontier of the Granville Grant. Granville's knowledge of the nature of the Moravian settlements in Pennsylvania, the amount of land involved in his offer, and his agent's advice to Spangenberg, strongly suggest that his intention was the foundation of a center to support the settlement of the Carolina backcountry above the fall line.<sup>33</sup>

Wachovia did in fact play this role, with Bethabara immediately functioning as a service center for an area of at least 100 miles distant from the town. This occurred immediately upon the establishment of Bethabara in 1753.<sup>34</sup> Salisbury came into being in 1755 as the seat of Rowan County, about 35 miles south of Bethabara. Evidence of its early role as an important center, beyond court activities, is scant and inconclusive.<sup>35</sup>

What is clear is that the northwestern frontier of Carolina was anchored in the necessary goods, services, and protection afforded by Wachovia, meaning Bethabara and Bethania. Although pacifists, the settlers of Wachovia successfully and non-violently performed the function of the strong-point on the frontier of North Carolina in the 1750s and early 1760s, supporting colonial expansion into a hostile zone.

In this regard Wachovia performed the same function Charles Town had performed since 1670, as a buffer to support infilling and as a point of frontier expansion.<sup>36</sup> The fact that Wachovia's inhabitants were able to accomplish this without the presence of heavy ordnance or aggressive behaviors renders this feat doubly interesting and remarkable. It is necessary to note that this process was supported from a distance by the presence and activities of British Regulars. This does not alter the fact that when on the hostile frontier

---

<sup>33</sup> Michael O. Hartley, "Wachovia In Forsyth," (Project Report, Old Salem, Inc., 1987), 67.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Harry Roy Merrens, *Colonial North Carolina in the Eighteenth Century*, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1964), 163.

<sup>36</sup> Hartley, "Elizabethan Policies and the Charlestown Colony," 66.

and surrounded by Overhill Cherokee on the warpath, the Moravians staved off imminent attack by blowing a watchman's horn and ringing a church bell. This was reported by one of the Cherokee Chiefs reflecting on their spring of 1759 attacks.<sup>37</sup>

Further, Wachovia was located in an advantageous geographical position, given its placement in the backcountry of Carolina. During his search for the land, Spangenberg constantly informed himself about his location relative to the region's trading ports, and he consciously considered a location on the Yadkin. The placement of Wachovia is therefore not accidental but the product of an informed process.

The selected location of Wachovia placed it at the foot of the Blue Ridge, on a developing roadway running along the western edges of Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, and eventually into South Carolina and Georgia. Additionally, the location of the tract was on or near the headwaters of the major river drainages of Carolina and southern Virginia. These drainages, the Catawba/Santee, the Yadkin/Pee Dee, the Haw/Cape Fear, the Neuse, and the Dan/Roanoke provided avenues of communication along the river valleys. This position on the headwaters of the major drainages placed Wachovia in an advantageous position, at the interior hub of a vast region of trade and commerce and in the center of an area on the verge of rapid population growth.

The Moravians purposefully developed this placement, participating in the establishment of routes of trade and communication in all directions. Through the colonial period, Bethabara and Bethania functioned as the urban centers of Wachovia and for the surrounding region. During that period, Moravian trade in their artisan's goods, agricultural products, and in deerskins brought in from the interior, provided a sound economic base for the settlement.

---

<sup>37</sup> Hartley, "Wachovia in Forsyth," 68; Fries, *Records of the Moravians*, 1:232-233.

Bethania maintained a process of stability during the period prior to the Revolutionary War. Between 1769 and 1771 Bethania expanded the size of its residential lots, absorbing lots that had not yet been built on to expand those that had, in order to provide additional lot space for the construction of more permanent houses, as the first houses had been quickly built log cabins. At the same time, the Moravian surveyor Reuter also adjusted the boundaries of the Bethania Town Lot, resulting in an increase of its acreage from 2000 to 2,500 acres.<sup>38</sup>

The events of the late eighteenth century were to have a substantial impact on the backcountry of Carolina, however, and during the Revolutionary War, the Moravians felt the tensions of being in the path of maneuvering armies and questions of loyalty from both sides. Their attempts to maintain their pacifism put them at odds with the temper of the times, and even within their community these tensions created problems. Bethania in particular was heavily pillaged when Cornwallis brought the English army into town and camped there over night on February 9, 1781. The following day the minister of Bethania recorded the damage in lost cattle, grain, hay, brandy and fences at £1500, “valued in good money.”<sup>39</sup>

Following the Revolutionary War, the Moravians of Wachovia entered a new phase in which they were more and more exposed to the idea of “American Freedom,” and in 1785 the Aeltesten Conferenz, one of the governing boards of Salem, remarked, “This [American Freedom] should be taken up in Congregation Council and thoroughly investigated, so that so

---

<sup>38</sup> Michael O. Hartley, “Bethania: A Colonial Moravian Adaptation,” in *Another’s Country: Archaeological and Historical Perspectives on Cultural Interaction in the Southern Colonies*, ed. J.W. Joseph and Martha Zierden (Tuscaloosa, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 2002), 120-124; P.C.G. Reuter, “Town Lot of Bethany, Oct. 26, 1771,” (Winston-Salem, NC: Moravian Archives).

<sup>39</sup> Fries, Adelaide, ed. *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina* (Raleigh, NC: Edwards and Broughton Printing Co., 1930), 4:1766.



dangerous a thing may be put from us.<sup>40</sup> That was more easily said than done, as generational changes and the dynamics of the new Republic took hold. Throughout the nineteenth century, the Moravians in Wachovia felt the pressures of change within and without their culture.

Bethania operated within the context of Wachovia but with its own particular set of dynamics. Its origins were thoroughly under the control of the governing bodies of the *Unitas Fratrum* but with a population that early on demonstrated certain attitudes of independence. In 1822 the Bethania Congregation was allowed to abandon the lease system and made provisions for private ownership of lots within its 2,500-acre Town Lot. This change was the result of a request to the Wachovia Administration that had been in negotiation since 1771.

In 1839 Bethania was granted an act of incorporation by the North Carolina legislature.<sup>41</sup> The act did not explicitly state the metes and bounds of Bethania, and apparently, the boundaries of the Bethania Town Lot since 1771 were meant. The absence of explicit acknowledgement of the Bethania boundaries in this act of the North Carolina legislature in 1839 was to create problems in the distant future.

### *Slavery and Militarism*

Other dynamics were also at work within Wachovia as well, as some members of later generations of Moravians became more accepting of broader Southern attitudes toward slavery and individual freedom. Slavery and the ownership of slaves became a major source of contention in Wachovia and in Salem in particular. The practice of slavery had taken

---

<sup>40</sup> Fries, Adelaide, ed. *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina* (Raleigh, NC: North Carolina Historical Commission, 1941), 5:2096.

<sup>41</sup> North Carolina General Assembly, "An Act to appoint Commissioners for the Town of Bethania, in the County of Stokes," in *Private Laws of North Carolina—1838-39*. Raleigh, NC, Chapter 65, 178-179.

hold, first with the Wachovia Administration owning a few slaves for particular tasks, such as hostler at the Salem Tavern, then moving to individual ownership of slaves. As the numbers of enslaved people in Salem and Wachovia increased through time, Moravian leadership wrestled increasingly with the problems attendant on Moravian participation in the ownership of slaves.

As the nineteenth century progressed, many families in all the Moravian congregations of Wachovia wanted slave labor in their homes for their personal use. Moravian artisans chaffed at competing with non-Moravian craftsmen outside of Wachovia who used slave labor without compunction. Industrialization began to emerge as an alternative to a craft based economy, bringing about changes in labor and the economic base of the Moravian community.<sup>42</sup>

In the first half of the nineteenth century, African American residents of Salem and Wachovia often found themselves under suspicion of plotting uprisings or poisoning white members of households where they were enslaved.<sup>43</sup> Moravian ministers who were charged with oversight of African American congregations wrote complaints in their journals of overly demonstrative behavior in Church, or worse, groups of blacks on their Sundays off who stood on the corners or went to the muster ground to play ball, and declined to go to church.<sup>44</sup>

---

<sup>42</sup> Michael Shirley, *From Congregation Town to Industrial City: Culture and Social Change in a Southern Community* (New York: New York University Press, 1994).

<sup>43</sup> Emma Lehman, "Houses in Bethania of the Olden Time," unpublished manuscript, 1916; Adelaide L. Fries and Douglas L. Rights, eds. *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina* (Raleigh, NC: State Department of Archives and History, 1954), 8:3956, 3972, 3990, 4006.

<sup>44</sup> Fries and Rights, 8: 4179; Minnie Smith, ed. *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina* (Raleigh, NC: State Department of Archives and History, 1964), 9: 4734, 4954-55; Kenneth Hamilton, ed. *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina* (Raleigh, NC: State Department of Archives and History, 1966), 10: 5270.

The tensions caused by reported slave rebellions, as well as the occurrence of Nat Turner's Rebellion in 1831, resulted in the repeal of the law granting the Moravians freedom from military service in North Carolina. The men of Salem between 18 and 25 years of age formed a "Free Company," which elected its own officers and exercised a certain amount of autonomy within the North Carolina militia system.<sup>45</sup> This was accepted by a number of the young men of Salem with a degree of enthusiasm. They formed the Salem militia company in 1831, ordered uniforms, were issued muskets by the state of North Carolina and spent time mustering and drilling. For these members of the militia, the pacifism of the eighteenth-century Moravians gave way to the attraction of the uniform and drilling. On the Fourth of July, 1831, the Salem Diary recorded the activities of the newly created militia of the town.

On this memorial day of independence of the United States of North America, the whole company appeared in the early morning and again in the afternoon in their uniforms and went through their military drills accompanied by martial music. Everything was conducted in good order, according to the constitution they had drawn up. We wish only that this change will not have any detrimental effect on the congregation.<sup>46</sup>

Not all felt that this was a positive step and some ridiculed this change.<sup>47</sup>

New generations of Moravians were born into Wachovia with the passage of time, and many became accustomed to think of themselves as North Carolinians as well as Moravians. The Moravians themselves were aware of the processes that were at work on them and their effect. There was concern about the diminished industry of individuals that would result from access to slave labor. As early as 1814 there were accounts of harsh treatment of blacks by young Moravian men who conducted patrols at night designed for

---

<sup>45</sup> Fries and Rights, *Records of the Moravians*, 8:3969.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 3999.

control of the black population during the night hours. The reported excesses of these young men also caused concern among the Moravian governing boards.<sup>48</sup>

### *Industrialization and a New County*

Changes were happening across the landscape of Wachovia that were to have long-term implications for Wachovia and for the Muddy Creek drainage basin as well. In 1836 the Salem Congregation moved forward toward the promise of industrialized security by investing in the Salem Manufacturing Company, a textile mill built on the edge of the residential area of the town. This new endeavor struggled to establish itself as a new economic base for Salem and the outcome was uncertain.

Shortly after its creation, Brother Francis Fries, who had been appointed its first superintendent, left the Salem Manufacturing Company and launched his own woolen mill in 1840. Toward the end of 1839, Francis Fries appeared before the Aufseher Collegium to defend his planned use of slaves to operate the machines in his wool factory. Fries said that he did not consider that these slaves would be learning a trade and would therefore not fall under the Salem slave regulations.<sup>49</sup> Fries did in fact operate his mill with slave labor, contributing substantially to the erosion of opposition to use of slave labor in Salem. The years immediately following the establishment of the Fries Woolen Mill, operated with slave labor, were attended with constant complaint about his abilities to employ this labor force while others were not.

This succinct observation about the complex issue of ongoing acculturation and slavery in Salem was made by the Salem Elders' Conference in 1845.

---

<sup>48</sup> Adelaide L. Fries, ed. *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina* (Raleigh, NC: State Department of Archives and History, 1947), 7:3236.

<sup>49</sup> Smith, *Records of the Moravians*, 9:4485-4486.

The situation of the congregational town of Salem at least in one respect is found to be entirely different from that of any other town of a brethren's congregation, in so far as it is found in a State in which slavery was the practice before the settlement of the first brethren in Wachovia but since then has been guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States and is permitted by the laws of the State of North Carolina. Whatever the views of the first brethren who settled here may have been about slavery and however disinclined they were perhaps to engage in it, it was nonetheless natural that their descendants who were born and brought up here, gradually drew away from the views of their fathers, became accustomed to the sight of slavery, as it presented itself all around them to their eyes, and practiced slavery as a civil right, if external advantages seemed to be united with it. This was true so much the more when the brethren's congregation, as such at its general synods to our knowledge once more made a declaration about slavery but laid it down much less as a principle, that the keeping of Negro slaves was irreconcilable with the brotherhood, with Christianity and so forth; but practice seemed rather to show the opposite since in our mission stations in the West Indies and Surinam Negro slaves were kept for the carrying on of trades and for domestic service. It is therefore not strange that the brethren in Wachovia soon in similar activities employed Negroes in congregational services and in the economy of the choir houses. This seems however to have been the case in only a limited degree until about twenty-five years ago when the increase of Negroes in Salem threatened to become harmful to the external as well as the internal welfare of the town and they felt strongly the necessity of limiting the great influx of Negroes and especially of regulating as best they could the holding of the same.<sup>50</sup>

The rules by which this "limiting the great influx" was attempted lasted into the mid 1840s, with ever diminishing effect. Francis Fries' mill was an example of the possibilities of slave ownership, since he employed seven white people and used sixteen "colored" in his woolen factory and his household in 1847.<sup>51</sup> In that year,

the negro rules thus far existing were annulled and the keeping of negroes will be regulated in the future merely by the congregational orders and the lease. It will be necessary for the Collegium and the Elders' Conference to hold a joint meeting to clarify what stand the conference will take in the negro question in the future especially in regard to the use of negro slaves in the trades.<sup>52</sup>

---

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 4820-4821.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 4957.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 4960.

Salem's control over the ownership and use of slaves in the town was disappearing; outside of Salem in the other Moravian settlements of Wachovia, such control was nonexistent.

In the meantime, the movement by the Salem Congregation toward industrialization with the Salem Manufacturing Company had stumbled and faltered. However, Francis Fries was successful in the private enterprise of his woolen mill, laying the foundation for a multifaceted industrial empire that extended into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Fries and other Moravian entrepreneurs were also instrumental in the mid-nineteenth century creation of Forsyth County in 1849, with county boundaries closely formed around the Wachovia Tract.

Salem was the logical choice for the county seat of the newly formed Forsyth County, yet there was resistance on the part of many Moravian residents of the town to have the secular activities of government and justice conducted in their congregation town. Francis Fries therefore arranged for the sale of fifty-one acres out of the Salem Town Lot for the creation of the courthouse town of Winston, which was grafted on to the north end of Salem.

Francis Fries was a leader in the creation of the Fayetteville and Western Plank Road Company, incorporated in 1849, which built the longest plank road ever laid in North Carolina. Called the "Appian Way of North Carolina,"<sup>53</sup> it stretched 129 miles from Fayetteville, at the head of navigation on the Cape Fear River. It passed through Salem and Winston (with a spur past Francis Fries' factories) to Bethania's Main Street where it ended at the Lash Store. The creation of the Plank Road was an effort by Fries and the other members of the corporation to smooth the route of communication and exchange with centers

---

<sup>53</sup> Hugh T. Lefler and Albert Newsom, *North Carolina: The History of a Southern State* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1973), 381.

of trade on the coast. As Fries' manufactories grew, he sought the means to improve linkages with the region. The Plank Road established, for a time, a smooth route to Fayetteville, but what Fries and others in the Moravian towns really wanted in 1850 was railroad transportation linking them to the markets of North Carolina and beyond. That was not to happen for Salem and Wachovia for another quarter century.

Bethania in the nineteenth century, in addition to its agricultural activity, was also a mercantile center with a number of artisans in its own right. There were wagon builders; gunsmiths who made rifles that were sold across the southeast, jewelers, blacksmiths, and other crafts and stores.<sup>54</sup> Bethania, at the western terminus of the Plank Road, drew on a large hinterland, which was a fruitful ground of economic exchange.

### *Secular Salem*

Salem itself took a further step in 1856 and 1857, yielding up its identity as a Moravian Congregation Town under theocratic government and asking to be incorporated as a secular town within the North Carolina municipal system. This request was approved by the state legislature, albeit not without some critical remarks from neighbors who held a traditional suspicion of the Moravians that had existed in the piedmont of North Carolina since prior to the Revolutionary War.

This suspicion can be read in an exchange reported in a Salem newspaper during the debate about Salem's entry into the municipal system of the state.

The engrossed bill from the Senate, incorporating the town of Salem, Forsyth County, was read the second and third times.

Mr. Reeves objected to the bill. He considered the inhabitants of Salem as unworthy of receiving any corporate privileges from the legislature of North Carolina. They were under a Feudal system opposed to the laws and customs of this State. In the Revolutionary war they closed their doors upon Greene and his army, while they welcomed Cornwallis and his troops. Governor Franklin, in passing through Salem

---

<sup>54</sup> Lehman, "Houses in Bethania."

on public business, could only procure refreshments by stealth. Their lands at present were owned in Germany, and their church government would not allow any stranger to settle in their town. He said the inhabitants were notorious for their ill treatment of those who differed from them in politics, and until the inhabitants of Salem became more Americanized, he would oppose any bill giving them corporate privileges.

Mr. Waugh defended the bill. He stated the objectionable customs alluded to by Mr. Reeves were lately abandoned, and the town thrown open. He hoped the House would pass the bill.<sup>55</sup>

While defending them, even Mr. Waugh did not say that the customs were not objectionable, but that they had been abandoned. The foregoing newspaper article illustrates in plain language an ongoing cultural difference perceived in the Moravians of North Carolina by their neighbors and the problems those differences created for them. By the structure of their affairs, their theocratic governance of their towns, and by the boundaries they created, the Moravians had insured that they would remain apart. Their cultural distinctions, attitudes, behaviors and places, in some senses, kept them divided from the broader society of North Carolina. They also created divisions within their own ethnic group about issues of economic change, slavery, and spiritual identity.

As the Moravians of Wachovia had faced the changes inherent in the nineteenth century, they had arguably attempted to minimize their visible differences to non-Moravians while at the same time maintaining their cultural identity.<sup>56</sup> These efforts notwithstanding, there were obvious suspicions about who they were and how they lived.

These tensions had produced external and internal divisions about the identities of Moravian towns that were of concern to both Moravians and non-Moravians. The Civil War found Moravians within Wachovia divided, some favoring the North and opposing slavery, and others dutifully supporting the Southern cause. Some among the once pacifist Moravians

---

<sup>55</sup> *People's Press* (Salem, North Carolina), December 19, 1856.

<sup>56</sup> Michael O. Hartley, "Heinrich Schaffner and the Moravian Ceramic Tradition in Nineteenth Century Pottery in Salem," *Journal of Early Southern Decorative Arts* 31, No.1 (Summer 2005).



formed companies of Confederate soldiers who saw active service throughout the conflict. The ever-musical Moravians formed a regimental band that served in the Confederate Army and provided music throughout the war. However, neither their efforts nor those of any other Confederate could stave off defeat, and so the war came to an end.

Following the defeat of the Confederacy, Salem wrestled with the disrupted economy, as did the rest of the South. Newly freed slaves cast about for the direction in which they should go. Some left entirely, while others continued much as they had before, but now for what wages or other economic help they could get. In Bethania, enclaves of African Americans, former slaves and some who had been free, clustered around the core area of the Town Lot. Many of them continued to work in agriculture, on the same farms that had held them enslaved before the war. Some became entrepreneurs as the century wore on to its end and came into the twentieth century with businesses of their own.

The white Moravian population of Salem pushed ahead, and industrial and banking empires emerged. Wachovia Bank (purchased by Wells Fargo at the close of 2008) had its origins in the resuscitated Bank of the Cape Fear in Salem after the war, which quickly became the Salem National Bank and then the Wachovia National Bank. Tobacco warehouses and factories producing cigars, pipe tobacco and chewing tobacco emerged under various owners. The Fries enterprises became vast holdings of textile mills, railroads, hydroelectric power, and other industrial ventures at the end of the nineteenth century. So too, the Hanes family, and Bahnsons, Heges, Grays, and others moved the communities of Wachovia into intense capitalism. Iron works and machine shops produced machinery that was sold across the nation, and great fortunes were accumulated by a group of Moravians who became members of a wealthy industrial elite.

The agricultural communities of Wachovia surrounding Winston and Salem actively marketed their goods in the growing city and benefited from this ready outlet. Farmers regularly peddled meat products, vegetables, eggs, fruit and milk on regular routes in the city, and tobacco provided a growing and ready source of income at the tobacco warehouses of Winston and Salem.<sup>57</sup>

Richard Joshua Reynolds, generally regarded as the founder of Winston-Salem's great industrial wealth, came to Forsyth County in 1874 because it already had an urban place fitted out with the necessary infrastructure for industrial success. Money was available in banks and from private entrepreneurs, the railroad had been brought into the town, industry was actively growing and flourishing, and most importantly, there was a group of Moravian capitalists who were actively seeking industrial expansion.

To give R.J. Reynolds appropriate credit, he had great skill in consolidating tobacco holdings and in developing and promoting his products. The creation of the cigarette machine brought about the Camel cigarette, which made its debut in 1913, the same year that Winston and Salem formally merged to become the twin, hyphenated city of Winston-Salem, and the tobacco boom was on. By 1915 Winston-Salem was the largest and wealthiest city in North Carolina.<sup>58</sup>

The growth of Winston-Salem in the first half of the twentieth century had little impact on the five colonial Moravian congregations that lay in the Muddy Creek drainage basin beyond the city limits. The city continued to provide a market for the goods and

---

<sup>57</sup> Hartley and Hartley, ““There is None Like It,”” 93.

<sup>58</sup> Michael O. Hartley and Martha B. Hartley, “Town of Salem Survey,” (Project Report, Old Salem, Inc., 1999), 28.

services of the outlying countryside, and peddling coupled to production of tobacco provided economic stability for those in the rural areas.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE TWENTIETH CENTURY AND PRESERVATION OF IDENTITY

The Moravians of Wachovia entered the twentieth century with the structure they had created in Wachovia providing the foundation for continued massive movement into entrepreneurial capitalism. Population grew, with many non-Moravians coming into Forsyth County to join in the economic boom. The African American population of Winston-Salem grew greatly as the tobacco industry actively recruited labor from the agricultural areas across the southeast, and blacks migrated into Winston-Salem in large numbers. Architectural evidence of Winston-Salem's wealthy elite was seen in the mansions built near the turn of the twentieth century, with names like Hylehurst (1884), Cedarhurst (1895), Blair House (1901), and others.<sup>59</sup>

Similarly, architectural statements indicated the power of capital. The Wachovia Bank and Trust Company, formed by the newly merged Wachovia National Bank and Wachovia Loan and Trust Company, which had helped finance local industrial growth, erected a seven-story skyscraper in 1911, and added another story in 1917. The twenty-two story R. J. Reynolds Building was completed in 1929, winning the American Institute of

---

<sup>59</sup> Catherine W. Bishir and Michael T. Southern, *A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Piedmont North Carolina* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2003) 377-380.

Architects Building of the Year Award in 1929, and was the predecessor in design to the Empire State Building in New York.<sup>60</sup>

Outlying estates of the wealthy preceded and followed these towers, led by Reynolda (1915-17) and Graylyn (1929-32). This vast wealth was accompanied by comfortable circumstances for many in Winston-Salem, and trolley-car suburbs reflected this level of security, such as West End, formed in 1890 by R. J. Reynolds, P.H. Hanes, James A. Gray, J. W. Fries, and others. The Buena Vista neighborhoods were created in the second decade of the twentieth century, and “the growing business elite moved to prestigious new suburbs” near Reynolda.<sup>61</sup> These heady times were of course fueled by ever increasing industrial construction of buildings devoted to tobacco, textiles and other manufacturing.

#### *Preservation as a Reaction to Threats*

As Winston-Salem pressed forward with these dramatic developments, the little part of it that was the old town of Salem, once the dynamic center of Wachovia, faded more and more into a murky background. In the face of the glittering energy of Winston, Salem became old, became shabby. This is not to say that the Moravian presence of Wachovia, and its avatar, Forsyth County, disappeared, and in fact this presence grew with new Moravian congregations added to the original six of the colonial period.

There were of course now other religious groups represented in the secularized Wachovia Tract and in Forsyth County. Methodism had begun to take hold in the area even in the eighteenth and through the nineteenth centuries and was prominently present in Forsyth County, as were Baptists, Lutherans, Episcopalians, and others. Joined by these

---

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 381.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 390-391.

other religious groups, the Moravian Church remained strong in Winston-Salem and Home Church in Salem remained an important focus of that population.

The Moravian Churches beyond the city limits of the growing city were much less directly affected by the changes in Winston-Salem. Bethania continued in much the same fashion that had been its way since its origin, maintaining its agricultural interests and supporting several mercantile businesses. It continued to maintain a strong congregation and its residents were almost entirely descended from original families.

Bethabara had continued to exist through the nineteenth century more as a hamlet than a town, even though its congregation continued. The buildings of the colonial period succumbed to the ravages of time, and by the mid-twentieth century, this first town of Wachovia was largely farmland, although a post office remained.

The Country Congregations at the south end of the Wachovia Tract continued much as they had from their origins, also largely populated with descendants of original families. The farmland of Friedberg, Friedland, and Hope continued to feed the city with agricultural products and milk, and each continued as a congregation. Hope actually had two congregations with origins in the colonial period, the second being a 1775 German Baptist Brethren, or “Dunker,” congregation that continued into the twentieth century as Fraternity Church of the Brethren. Members of this congregation also marketed their produce and milk in Winston-Salem.<sup>62</sup>

Early in the twentieth century, there was a growing concern about commercialism that was moving toward the old Salem, and voices were heard resisting the removal of historic buildings. Significantly, one of the first actions was opposition to the demolition of the 1810 Inspectors House on Salem Square, a proposal that did not come from encroaching

---

<sup>62</sup> Hartley and Hartley, ““There is None Like It,”” 93.

business interests. Salem College wanted to make room for an ornate entrance to a newly constructed auditorium, Memorial Hall, which had been erected behind the Inspector's House. That threat came from within the old community, where Salem College had itself been in existence as a girls' school since 1772 and had a number of significant Salem buildings on its campus. Because of public interest in the issue, the Inspector's House was saved. Later, in 1929, Salem resident Miss Ada Allen took steps to protect the old Salem Tavern, working out a lease agreement and using the building as a residence. By 1939 the Wachovia Historical Society joined Miss Allen in her interest in the old tavern, and in 1941 the son of R. J. Reynolds reimbursed the Society for money it spent in purchasing the tavern to protect it.<sup>63</sup>

Efforts such as these kept alive a certain awareness of the significance of Salem. The effect of these efforts was such that as early as 1938, the concept of a "restored Salem" was advanced, also encouraged in part by the Rockefellers' interest in and financial support of Colonial Williamsburg. So inspired, prominent Moravians and financially able newcomers began to seriously consider the idea.<sup>64</sup>

A substantial threat to the substance and fabric of the place was required to provide the final spark for the endeavor. In 1947 a zoning battle over a proposed grocery store near the 1768 Fourth House, the oldest building then standing in Salem, was resolved through land trades that left the proposed grocery store site undeveloped. That lot was zoned local business, and it was the zoning issue that was a crux of the matter. This problem was resolved when the Winston-Salem Aldermen appointed a committee to study the feasibility

---

<sup>63</sup> Frances Griffin, *Old Salem: An Adventure in Historic Preservation* (Winston-Salem, NC: Old Salem Inc., 1985), 5.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

of setting an area of Salem aside as a “historical reservation.” With this action, the government of Winston-Salem entered the restoration movement. This body was named, the “Citizens Committee for the Preservation of Historic Salem.”<sup>65</sup>

This committee studied permissive as well as prohibited uses within the area, sought to identify the area to be included, and studied available ordinances that could be brought to bear. By early 1948, it had begun to work on the wording of a historic zoning section to be incorporated into a new zoning ordinance. This accompanied the creation of a permanent Winston-Salem and Forsyth County Planning Board, which heard at its first meeting the recommendations for a zoning ordinance that included “special architectural controls for the Old Salem area.”<sup>66</sup>

A report prepared by Russell VanNest Black, who was working on the planning study being undertaken, contained specific observations on Salem and its issues. Black included the following perceptive appreciation of the potential of “Old Salem,” a name more and more in use. Black’s overview was also an indicator of future directions regarding Salem. He said:

In old Salem, the community has an important historic and architectural asset meriting protection, maintenance, and where need be, restoration. Old Salem’s principal features are its cluster of fine old ‘Pennsylvania Dutch’ dwellings and community buildings, the old church and burial grounds and Salem College.

The intrusion of the railroad and industrial establishments along the westerly boundary of the old town, the encroachment of the central-city business district from the north and the presence of heavily-traveled Main Street extending its length, have made it difficult to maintain, and have somewhat destroyed the old and valued characteristics of the place.

The question of desirable and feasible restoration of the old village by such means as reconstruction of buildings that have disappeared and remodeling of others to bring them back to their original form is left for later consideration and further study. Our proposals at this time are directed toward promoting a climate calculated to encourage

---

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 9-10.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 10.



the maintenance and improvement of the remaining architectural and historic features and to discourage their further dissolution. Included among these proposals are: (1) relief of traffic congestion on Main Street and reduction of traffic on that street by the southward extension of Marshall Street...to provide an alternate way into and through the central city district; (2) setting up an Architectural Board of Review, in the zoning ordinance, to pass upon all new construction and building alterations in the Old Salem area, as far as is within reason, in a manner to minimize further encroachment of objectionable and destructive industrial and other commercial building and uses.<sup>67</sup>

These recommendations were confirmed in the passage of the new zoning ordinance in December of 1948, containing the significant provision for an Architectural Board of Review, and the legal foundation was begun on which Old Salem was to rest.

This action recognized that the buildings and land outlined by Black in his overview were somehow significant to the community and were in need of protection, primarily in a material sense, but with a still unformed idea of what that might mean exactly. There was recognition that somehow in the ancient place there was meaning and significance, meaning and significance that prompted an untutored but determined initiative to protect Old Salem.

The use of the term “Pennsylvania Dutch” to describe its old buildings is indicative of a groping search for some means of defining what the place was. The established rubric, “Pennsylvania Dutch” used in Black’s discussion can be seen as the application of a recognizable, historically weighted term to identify what otherwise may have seemed indefinable.

The growing perception of Salem as a significant townscape was enhanced by a survey done by Andrew Hepburn and Frank Horton. Horton was a local man whose detailed research on Salem in Moravian Archives was to provide a foundation on which to base a restoration of Salem. Hepburn, a nationally recognized expert in historic architecture, was recommended by Colonial Williamsburg, which had been approached by Salem resident

---

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 11-12.

William Hoyt for such a professional. Charles Babcock, another private citizen, agreed to pay Hepburn's fee if the citizens committee for the restoration so agreed, which was done.

Hepburn made several recommendations that were to set the pattern for the restoration of the town of Salem. Copies of his report were stamped "Restricted" because he made specific recommendations about what to do with each house in Salem's historic area. Most controversial at the time was the recommendation of acquisition and demolition of buildings that did not contribute to the historic identity of the old town. He went on to say that reconstruction should only be undertaken when the original historic structure was thoroughly researched and understood. Hepburn further said that the restoration should be undertaken with,

"...one aim in mind and that is an eventual unanimity of appearance of the old town of Salem, one which will appeal to the historian, the architect, the casual visitor, and above all to the people of Salem who, like everyone else, will travel miles to examine with intense interest the towns of others, and through over-familiarity disregard the wonders of their own," and included the cautionary statement that, "Care should be taken that no wishful thinking be of any part in reconstruction or the whole purpose will be lost sight of."<sup>68</sup>

Andrew Hepburn, Jr., with these heady recommendations and cautions, did reflect an informed outsider's view of the architecture of Salem and its significance, with a bias provided by his relationship with Colonial Williamsburg. In his recommendations for the retrieval of the old forms of the town, both through restoration and through reconstruction, he was in fact proposing a major institutional involvement in the landscape of the place. His recommendations also contained the proposed content of the charter of such an institutional entity. It should be noted that Hepburn's reflections on the inability of people to appreciate their own town should be weighed against the fact that he was brought to Salem by its residents, and was greatly aided in his understanding by members of the community,

---

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 17.

particularly Frank Horton and Adelaide Fries. Fries, a member of that prominent Moravian family, was archivist at the Moravian Archives.

In the meantime, the Architectural Review Board (newly appointed in 1948) was faced with the task of concrete definition, in the approval or denial of material change in the historic area of Old Salem, now formally defined and bounded in a “historic overlay,” which was superimposed on the zoning regulations. Almost immediately following its creation, the Architectural Review Board encountered the issue of what was acceptable and what was not. This came in the form of the intention of a newcomer, a property owner in the historic district who had decided to build a new business building in the heart of Salem, producing the same concerns that had been aroused by the previously proposed grocery store.

The Mayor of Winston-Salem, Marshall C. Kurfees, had some idea of what Salem the place meant, however, as heard in his announcement of a “blue ribbon committee” in December 1949 to determine not whether but how to restore old Salem. He said in part:

In this old neighborhood, we have a great community asset that is, or can be made, very tangible and profitable, in addition to its more intangible and cultural value.

We have here an historic and spiritual heritage. It should not be neglected either in our hearts and minds, nor in the old buildings and area which exemplify and symbolize it.<sup>69</sup>

Mayor Kurfees also directly addressed the means by which Salem might be preserved.

In order to properly develop the asset, it may be necessary to acquire some properties and restore accurately a number of old buildings. This would be an undertaking of considerable size and importance and is worthy of the careful consideration and attention of civic-minded people throughout the city and county. It will also require the understanding and cooperation of those citizens and institutions owning property in the area to be restored.<sup>70</sup>

---

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

At the same time Kurfees appealed to all property owners in the historic area of Salem to postpone any changes to buildings until after the blue ribbon committee made its report, effectively halting the proposed new construction.

The recommendations of the committee set in motion creation of the tools and mechanisms for the restoration of Old Salem. A specific recommendation about the process was that work would proceed deliberately to provide for extensive study and research in each individual restoration. In particular the report stated that, “We recommend establishment of a permanent non-profit corporation to be known as Old Salem, Inc. to be governed by a representative board of trustees.”<sup>71</sup>

The recommendations gained widespread approval and support from important governmental and private agencies of Winston-Salem, and the organization was formalized on May 22, 1950, with James A. Gray, President, and thirty three trustees from across the community. Many of these trustees were descended from the early Moravian settlers of Wachovia. Gray said, “our aims are lofty indeed. We hope eventually to restore the entire town of Old Salem...”<sup>72</sup>

And so Old Salem, Incorporated came into being to preserve and restore the central town of Wachovia. The creation of the historic overlay language in 1948 had also included Bethabara, at that time only a vague possibility of archaeological ruins under farm fields, but with a church and graveyard.

Bethania, the third formal town of colonial Wachovia, was not mentioned in the discussions, and remained a quiet small cluster of ancient buildings and farm fields out beyond the edge of most people’s consciousness. Even more so, Friedberg, Friedland, and

---

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 23.

Hope, invisible as historic resources because of the dispersed form of their farming settlements and only highlighted by the church and graveyard that was the focal point of each, were not mentioned. They were far removed from the critical actions taking place to create Old Salem, Inc.

The name “Old Salem” now came to mean the incorporated non-profit organization, even though it was joined in the endeavor by the other entities that shared Salem: Home Moravian Church, Salem College, the Wachovia Historical Society that owned individual historic buildings in Salem, and there were also private property owners within the town. The offices of the Southern Province of the Moravian Church were also in Salem, and a most important research resource, Moravian Archives of the Southern Province. This last contained and contains the vast repository of primary records relating to Wachovia, its towns, and the Moravian Church locally and internationally. Within this amalgam of interested parties, Old Salem undertook the acquisition and restoration of historic properties, the acquisition and demolition of intrusive buildings, the creation of a museum of buildings and landscape open to the public, and the management of the financial efforts necessary to create and operate the museum.

Old Salem Inc. further undertook the solidification of its legal footing. Based on the local historic district created in 1948, Old Salem obtained legislation from the State of North Carolina in 1965 that authorized municipalities to make provision in their zoning ordinances to create historic districts. The legislation also allowed municipalities to regulate use and appearance of buildings within those districts, based on boundaries approved by the State Department of Archives and History.<sup>73</sup> This legislation, known as the “Old Salem Act,” had

---

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 29.

broadier implications for other municipalities across the state. After this action, Old Salem, Inc. continued to work to clarify the legal identity of itself and other entities.

Old Salem, Inc. began acquiring property, some through lease and some through direct purchase. In 1951 the Board of Trustees of Old Salem, Inc. began negotiation with the Moravian Church for the Boys School and with the Wachovia Historical Society for the lease of the Salem Tavern. As a result of these successful negotiations, the Boys School was restored and opened to the public in 1954 and the Salem Tavern in 1956.<sup>74</sup> With these openings Old Salem, Inc. was in the museum business, with continued success in adding additional exhibit buildings.

“Old Salem,” meaning primarily the museum, became the most widely known identity and face of the Moravians in North Carolina, and although the name remained in use, Wachovia as a bounded landscape had faded from immediate awareness, obscured by the growth of Winston-Salem and blurred by the superimposed Forsyth County.

The efforts of restoration did in fact mean the removal of some one hundred and twenty structures that were deemed intrusive. The conscious restoration of the town to a period no later than set dates in the nineteenth century (the end date has moved from 1832 to 1857 over the period of activity) also changed the nature of the town. Early to mid-twentieth-century fabric was removed (as was some nineteenth-century construction), and eventually this activity included the recreation of gardens in house lots and on what was historically institutional land. All these activities produced a consciously created environment and ambience.

Today, private homeowners in Salem continue to maintain their homes with pride, some being newcomers and some remaining descendants of early settlers. Some of these

---

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 46-47.

houses have passed through Old Salem, Inc.'s hands and have restrictive covenants applied to subsequent ownership. Some do not have these covenants but are still subject to the broader restrictions of the historic district, overseen by the Forsyth County Historic Resources Commission, part of the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County City-County Planning Department.

Within this environment, Home Moravian Church continues with its Sunday services and church activities fully participated in by a large congregation of approximately 1,600 people. Burials are still conducted in the Salem God's Acre accompanied by the ancient traditional brass band playing the old Moravian hymns. Salem College students populate the beautiful campus and are encompassed by the fabric and deep history of that institution as they carry on the day to day routine of college activities and scholarship. Moravian Archives occupy a well-designed new building carefully constructed to maintain the vast collection. It is joined by the Moravian Music Foundation, which maintains a large collection and conducts research in its own right. The offices of the Southern Province of the Moravian Church occupy the old Seiwerts mansion, Cedarhurst, and manage the substantial affairs of sixty-eight Moravian Churches across North and South Carolina, Virginia, Georgia, and Florida, thirty-one of which are located in Forsyth County. Forsyth County contains a population of approximately fifteen thousand communicant Moravians. There is an additional large (uncounted) population of ethnic Moravians, that is people who are descendants of original settlers but who are not members of the Moravian Church. These people are typically completely aware of their ancestry and who they are in the scheme of Moravian history.

### *The Wachovia Study*

It was in this environment, that the Wachovia Study was conceived in 1986, after I had been in Old Salem for three summer field seasons (1983,1984,1985) helping archaeologist Michael Hammond teach a field school that was jointly supported by Old Salem, Inc. and Salem College. After the three seasons of work on three different historic Moravian sites within the historic district of Old Salem, I had become very conscious that there was a broader context of Salem that was rarely explicated in any detailed way in the work that was current at the time.

During this time I also met Martha, who had a graduate degree in Urban Planning from the University of Virginia School of Architecture with a certificate in Historic Preservation, and was employed by the Restoration Division at Old Salem. She has ancestral roots in Wachovia and is directly descended from the first family to move to Bethania. With this background, she was also concerned about the resource beyond Old Salem, and through her, I was introduced to Bethania. With the awareness that there was a broader resource that contained elements such as Bethania, and the city archaeological park that was Bethabara, I began to consider how the resource beyond Old Salem could be understood.

The result of this consideration was the determination that neither Bethania, nor Old Salem could be understood without a developed and rigorous understanding of Wachovia. From the perspective of historical archaeology, grounded in anthropology, I determined that the first step was to be a thorough preliminary understanding of where Wachovia lies on the land, what its historic content had been into the nineteenth century, and to as complete a degree as possible, what processes, historic and modern, operated in that context.



The product of these deliberations was first a 1986 proposal presented to John Larson, then Old Salem's Director of Restoration, for the study and mapping of Wachovia to firmly locate it on the current landscape. I pressed the point with Larson that research in the meaning of Old Salem would necessarily need to incorporate a carefully developed understanding of the context of which it had been the administrative, spiritual and craft center.

Larson immediately grasped the many possibilities inherent in broadening the understanding of Salem through such research and actively entered into the process of assisting me in finding funding. Old Salem's grants person at that time was Whitney Jones, who recommended approaching The Winston-Salem Foundation with a proposal.

Following this advice, a proposal was prepared entitled "Forsyth County: A Study in the Heritage and Tradition of Planning" was submitted to The Winston-Salem Foundation, requesting \$25,740.00 for the project.<sup>75</sup> The Winston-Salem Foundation approved the funding for the project and work began under the overarching name "The Wachovia Study." The proposal stated in part,

The tract was called "Wachovia" and with rigorous attention to planning and execution, it soon assumed an identity all it's own and quite unique in the history of land development in the South.

From the start the tract was carefully planned to integrate the primary elements of the community: urban/rural concerns, transportation, commerce and trade, agriculture, economic development, management of natural resources, and most importantly the general well being of the citizens.

#### The Need to Bring Wachovia Back into Focus

Based on Zinzendorf's Wachovia plan and his challenge to make this place a spiritually, culturally and economically vibrant community, Winston-Salem has enjoyed a successful development. This Wachovia plan, matured through time, is what differentiates Winston-Salem from Charlotte, Greensboro or Raleigh. Through a clearer comprehension of these roots, much of which survive today, we will be

---

<sup>75</sup> Michael O. Hartley, "Wachovia Study Proposal," 1986, 1.

better equipped to make the decisions needed to move Forsyth forward, while preserving the Wachovia Tract history.<sup>76</sup>

The proposal further stated,

Clearly, many of the values which are so visible and prized in Forsyth County today do trace back to Wachovia. So the central question to be answered is “what remains of this significant cultural and geo-political entity know as Wachovia, including the social, religious and economic system that supported it? Is it not the heritage of Wachovia that sets Forsyth County apart and thus, is it not something of unique value to be recognized, used and developed today?”<sup>77</sup>

In practical terms, the project was designed to define the physical development of the Wachovia Tract through the period of theocratic government ending in Salem in 1856, including the accurate mapping of the tract and its historic content onto US Geological Survey maps, including road systems, churches, cemeteries, farms, commercial activities architectural data and archaeological data. These elements of the built environment were to be examined in relation to the natural environment of rivers, creeks, bottomlands and ridge lands. A stated intention was to bring disparate data together that had heretofore not been drawn on a comprehensive map within the context of Wachovia.<sup>78</sup>

As can be seen from the language in the proposal, preliminary study of the tract had already begun before the grant request was submitted. With the grant in hand and grant administration by Old Salem, Inc., I carried out this survey and research project, assisted by Martha Brown Boxley, with two documents as the result. The first was a one hundred and eight page report entitled “Wachovia In Forsyth”<sup>79</sup> that included a topographic map of Forsyth County constructed by photographically reducing and splicing together the sixteen

---

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>79</sup> Michael O. Hartley, “Wachovia in Forsyth,” (Project Report, Old Salem, Inc.), 1987.

1:24000 USGS quadrangles covering Forsyth County. The Wachovia Tract was superimposed on this topographic map by bringing a documentary map produced by the Moravian surveyor P.C.G. Reuter to the same scale. This was accomplished using a discrete segment of the boundary that the Wachovia Tract and Forsyth County have in common and refining the positioning by correlating additional points held in common. This provided the base map on which historic resources within the study were recorded, and which continues to be a basic reference map in the ongoing study of the Wachovia Tract. The process of conducting the study and mapping the tract greatly clarified Wachovia and its processes.

The second document of this initial phase of the research was a twenty-four minute video program entitled “Wachovia, The First Twenty Years,”<sup>80</sup> which was produced during the project, and a copy distributed to each eighth grade history class in Winston-Salem/Forsyth County School System. Some teachers have reported that they continued to use this program, now twenty years old, until recent times.

---

<sup>80</sup> Michael O. Hartley and Martha Brown Boxley, “Wachovia, the First Twenty Years,” video recording, 1987.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **BETHANIA THREATENED**

During the course of this work, and our study of Bethania as part of the project, a particular threat to that community rapidly emerged as a critical issue. The city of Winston-Salem had, in its implacable growth through the twentieth century, moved its city limits further and further out into the Muddy Creek drainage basin. An aspect of this urban expansion was an increasingly difficult traffic load throughout the city, which led to the planning of a beltway around the city, with the western and northwestern legs of the proposed highway following closely the western main channel of the Muddy Creek drainage. The entire length of this proposed beltway corridor aroused great concern and resistance from affected residents. Associations were formed to actively resist potential corridors that would impact particular areas, and there was also substantial objection to the whole concept of the beltway.

Bethania, located in the northwestern corner of Wachovia and in the upper reaches of Muddy Creek near its headwaters, was at a critical crux, where the beltway would turn from a northward path to an easterly path carrying it around the northern side of Winston-Salem. To make this turn, traffic planners proposed three possible corridors, all of which significantly impacted Bethania and its environs. One corridor, in particular, shown on the NCDOT planning map, ran directly against the hill on which Bethania's ancient graveyard,

its God's Acre, occupied. Graveyards are at the very heart of Moravian communities, and Bethania was no exception to this reverence.

Bethania had a substantial problem in making objections to the potential intrusion into its land, because it had no historical credibility in the public forum. The rejection of Bethania as meriting any voice in the considerations carried over into planning staff. During these early stages of planning in 1986, I offered a cautionary comment to a Winston-Salem/Forsyth County traffic planner, Tony Tupponce, that there was significance to Bethania that was not being duly considered. In response, I was told explicitly by Tupponce that Bethania "had nothing to say about the placement of the highway."

This attitude was subsequently displayed during a public hearing held by the City-County Planning Board on the route of the beltway. A particular concern had been raised that the beltway should not come between Bethania and Bethabara, which would sever that historic connection. Planning Board Member DeWayne Anderson belittled any claim Bethania might have to historical significance, saying,

...a point has been made about by the historic commission about something that is called a Bethabara/Bethania historic corridor. I was involved in the bicentennial, I guess it has been ten years ago, and as I understand the way the history of the area developed out there, Bethabara was the purest religious community. Bethania was really a community established by the Moravians for refugees after the Indian wars that had moved into the community for protection. In other words, there was no linkage culturally, religious, or any other reason. The Bethania settlement was established on the great wagon road which went from the northeast across the Shallowford and it was really a road town and the last thing they wanted was any linkage with Bethania. The actual linkage was between Bethabara and Salem was the religious community, you know, the part of their culture, and of course Winston-Salem is built between that linkage. So I the historic commission or whoever is talking about a linkage, a historic corridor needs to find exactly what they mean. If we are going to spend millions of dollars to save, to build a road around a historic corridor, I think the people who are proposing this need to define what they mean by this, what are we protecting? You know, what is it worth to protect? I don't think

that has been adequately defined. So, it can lead me to a decision not to build a road through something that hasn't been defined.<sup>81</sup>

Anderson's casual denial of the actual history of the town was particularly damaging since he was a respected architect whose reputation rested on the rehabilitation of old or historic buildings. Consequently, his statement was particularly harmful to the prospect for Bethania being able to turn aside the threat from the beltway corridor. However, in the course of this statement Anderson asked transportation planner Toni Tupponce,

Is there anything I have left out that is important in your thinking as to why this is the best way for this road to be put?

Tupponce: Of course, some of the statements you made, I would not begin to comment on, particularly with regard to the history of the Moravians. I cannot comment on that one way or the other.<sup>82</sup>

By this time, the work that we had done in the Wachovia Study was beginning to be known, and planners such as Tupponce were not so fully convinced that Bethania would not have anything to say about its own future. The weight that the Wachovia Study was beginning to have was apparent in the response of Planning Board Member Sarah Johnston Hunter to Anderson's comments, saying,

...Mr. Anderson, I would not pretend to be a professional historian, either. But I believe to my small amount of knowledge two things: One, there was a very great connection between Bethabara and Bethania; and secondly, that there is now a study underway studying the entire Wachovia Tract, carried on by some people in the community here which will probably show that link and the importance of that corridor in a better way.<sup>83</sup>

As the significance of Bethania unquestionably emerged in the course of the study of the Wachovia Tract, the value of this historic place was weighed against the proposed

---

<sup>81</sup> Winston-Salem/Forsyth County (NC), City-County Planning Board "Minutes, April 2, 1987," 43-44.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid. 58-59

massive intrusion of a highway corridor on the scale of an interstate. Thus, it became clear that the little town would be the next study area. This realization was confirmed when Rev. John H. Kapp, President of the Bethania Historical Association, came to my office in Old Salem where we were concluding our work on the Wachovia Tract Study and asked if there was not something that could be done to save Bethania.

*The Bethania Town Lot Study*

With the initial study of the Wachovia Tract concluded, the implications of that work became immediate and compelling. While the understanding derived from that project was valuable from a research and scholarly perspective, the knowledge of historical significance had real and crucial meaning for the future of Bethania. History could protect Bethania. Old Salem, Inc. administered the initial study of the Wachovia Tract; however, by the end of that study, in January 1988, the focus of the work became Bethania, and the project was moved to the auspices of the Bethania Historical Association.<sup>84</sup>

The Wachovia Historical Society was approached for a grant of \$2,730.00 to carry out the transition from Old Salem and to begin work on the Bethania research, which was approved.<sup>85</sup> Then through the Bethania Historical Association, The Winston-Salem Foundation was approached for a second grant, this one in the amount of \$15, 240.00, which was approved. In his letter Rev, Kapp stated,

We are pleased to announce that we have been able to enter into an agreement with Michael O. Hartley, who was the Principle Investigator in the Wachovia Study, and Martha Brown Boxley, his assistant, to conduct this work. We feel that they bring a wealth of knowledge from their earlier work which should expedite the project immensely.

We in Bethania feel that now is the time to undertake this concerted effort to increase the understanding of Bethania. Many changes are underway which will

---

<sup>84</sup> Michael O. Hartley, Memorandum to Dr. William T. Alderson, President, Old Salem, Inc., January 13, 1998.

<sup>85</sup> Rev. John H. Kapp, Letter to Jayne Litzenberg, President, Wachovia Historical Society, January 26, 1988.

make their presence felt in our heretofore isolated community. We would like to be equipped with the knowledge that will allow us to make sound decisions about Bethania's future.<sup>86</sup>

With this funding, the work in Bethania began. The primary objective of the project was the development of a coherent and accurate expansion of the understanding of Bethania's history, significance, and the evidence of that history remaining in the landscape. In 1988 Bethania was, as Rev. Kapp had stated in his letter to the Winston-Salem Foundation, a "heretofore isolated community." Its isolation had proved to be its sustaining characteristic, since it had been left to its own devices, and being left alone had continued in its old ways with its old families. This had provided it with a stability that was in many respects unprecedented. More than one visitor compared Bethania to the mythical Scottish town of musical fame, Brigadoon, because of its quiet, insular insistence on its own small identity.

Its relative invisibility also proved to be its great vulnerability. Being unknown and unrecognized, it could also be discounted. The question now was what tools were available that would illuminate the place and its history, and stave off the callous overrunning power of the twentieth-century urban city in its push toward growth and supporting infrastructure.

In many ways the inhabitants of Bethania, in 1988, carried on traditions that had begun with their forebears and were carried through Bethania's two hundred and thirty nine years of existence. The houses were occupied by people who had an awareness of their history, but without being completely absorbed in it. There was too much to do in day-to-day living. For the most part they attended church on Sunday in the brick church building that had been built in 1807 to replace the 1759 *Gemein Haus*. The Bethania band played for

---

<sup>86</sup> Rev. John H. Kapp, Letter to Henry Carter, Executive Director, The Winston-Salem Foundation, January 29, 1988.



funerals in Bethania God's Acre, where the families of the town knew that their dead were buried and knew they would be buried when the time came.

Some pursued old crafts, such as candle making, to supplement their income, while others worked outside of town in various businesses or in industries of Winston-Salem. The Black Walnut Bottom was farmed, and crops of corn, soybeans and hay were regularly harvested from its 130 acres. Cows, pigs and goats were raised and slaughtered for meat. Chickens provided eggs and sometimes the ingredients for the Moravian chicken pies that are ubiquitous fundraising fare in Moravian Churches throughout Wachovia and beyond. Clearly, what would be best for the community would be to be left alone and undisturbed.

A young man in his thirties, who now lived and worked away from Bethania, reflected on the town one day in March 1988. Speaking of his memories of the place, he talked about his granddaddy's store at the south end of Main Street, and the Rook games that went on there. He said that the store was the gathering place for all the farmers. He grew up playing in Bethania and remembered it fondly as a true community made up of old people and young, speaking of the value of the interchange between the generations in Bethania.

The trails, swimming holes and sledding hills that boys and girls used were passed on from generation to generation. Their fathers taught them how to play in the place by showing them the playground that was Bethania, bottoms, uplands and all.

He also spoke of the special times in Bethania-- Christmas, Easter-- and the house to house visiting that was part of those times. He remembered the bands playing hymns in Bethania on Easter morning, a band at either end of Main Street at four o'clock. The mystery of the Easter Sunrise service is permanently a part of his fabric because of his experiences in Bethania.

He recalled a room in his grandparent's old house (1805), with the big table covered with lots of food. His grandmother always had pies on hand and food crocks—he said she taught him how to cook.

He remembered lying in a featherbed in the main section of the house as a boy, hearing the old people talk or hearing a radio off in a distant room. At those times he let the old house play on his imagination. Even after he grew up and moved away, he said that Bethania was always with him when he worked, and that he had learned many valuable lessons there. His regret then was that ten years before there had been many more old people in the community.

This relationship to place was common among those with deep ties to Bethania. It was bound by common history, by kinship ties extending throughout the town, and common memories of shared place, good times and bad.

### *Preservation Tools*

When our 1988 work began, Bethania had already been somewhat recognized on the National Register of Historic Places. In 1976 a 50-acre historic district designation had concentrated on the unusual architecture of Main Street.<sup>87</sup> This district extended from the lower intersection of the original residential lots to the upper intersection at the northern end of the 1759 residential lots. While this district provided a point of departure for our work 1988, it was narrowly conceived and reflected the emphasis given to architecture as the focal point of significance in earlier National Register nominations. However, the 1986-87 study of Wachovia had clearly shown that Bethania's significant presence extended well beyond this narrow Main Street area, and also involved the living population of the town.

---

<sup>87</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior, National Register of Historic Places, "Bethania Historic District," 1976.

At the outset of the 1988 work, a request was put before the State Professional Review Committee of the North Carolina Historical Commission asking that the entire 2,500 acres of the Bethania Town Lot be placed on the Study List for the National Register of Historic Places.<sup>88</sup> This request, if approved, would indicate that the entirety of the Bethania Town Lot was potentially eligible for inclusion in the National Register, and therefore any intrusive activity involving federal funds would be subject to careful scrutiny. The Professional Review Committee approved this request at its meeting in Raleigh on April 14, 1988.<sup>89</sup> With this acknowledgement of the broader context of Bethania in hand, work began to move toward formal recognition that would provide protection to the little town.

### *The Preservation Plan*

The first step taken to address Bethania and its broader landscape was research designed to acquire a much fuller comprehensive and more detailed view of Bethania's history and its current situation. The North Carolina Division of Archives and History was approached for a grant to construct a preservation plan, in which this comprehensive information would be compiled, preservation tools evaluated, and a plan of action developed that would address the issues facing the town. A Survey and Planning Grant in the amount of \$5,000.00 was awarded for this work, with myself identified as "the Consultant." The grant was administered by the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County/Kernersville Historic Properties

---

<sup>88</sup> North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Study List Application, "Bethania Town Lot," April 5, 1988.

<sup>89</sup> William S. Price, Jr., State Historic Preservation Officer, Letter to Michael O. Hartley and Martha B. Boxley, April 25, 1988.

Commission.<sup>90</sup> The required matching funds were provided from The Winston-Salem Foundation grant.

The Bethania Preservation Plan that Martha Brown Boxley and I produced was completed in 1989. It was a substantial overview of Bethania, past and present, totaling 101 pages plus three appendices.<sup>91</sup> Following a substantial discussion of Bethania's origin, history, and the tools available for preservation, we made specific recommendations. The recommendation section began with the following paragraphs,

There are three major goals for Bethania: ensuring the continued cultural stability and continuity of the existing population; preserving the historic resources that are in the form of structures, landscapes, and archaeological sites; and increasing the awareness of the significance of Bethania and promoting its protection.

A continuity of culture exists in the special group of residents who are descendants of original settlers. Recognition of this is appropriate. While this group does not represent the entire population of Bethania, their maintenance of the rich fabric of traditions is an important element of the cultural significance of Bethania.

The objective in any preservation effort here is not to arrest evolution and make Bethania a stagnant manifestation of some ideal, but within the preservation effort, to allow enough flexibility for the community to continue and to survive. At the same time, there is the need to preserve the cultural landscape, which has derived from the population and provides the framework for ongoing traditions. The structure provides support for the culture.

The Bethania community and its traditions have existed for 230 years without the benefit of formal preservation efforts, due to its isolation, a rural location and a devotion to place. Now that Forsyth County is becoming so heavily urbanized, awareness of the significant resource of Bethania is necessary beyond Main Street.<sup>92</sup>

Elsewhere in the text, in a discussion of tourism, this observation was also made,

It would not be desirable to convert Bethania into a museum town, as this action would diminish its character as an expression of the particular culture which gave rise to Forsyth County. However, the presence of Bethania as the first planned town of

---

<sup>90</sup> North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Survey and Planning Branch. Project Description and Contract, Bethania Preservation Plan, September 21, 1988.

<sup>91</sup> Michael O. Hartley and Martha Brown Boxley, "Bethania in Wachovia: A Preservation Plan," Project Report, The Winston-Salem Foundation, 1989).

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 81.

Wachovia, in the form of a German agricultural town, contributes immeasurably to the identity of the broader community.<sup>93</sup>

These words, written in 1989, are an indication that we were aware of the very fine line that exists in preservation efforts between the demonstration of significance and the resulting potential for unwanted changes in the identity of place and people as a result of that “significance.” What we did not address and did not yet understand was the related African American community of Bethania, although the presence of African American neighborhoods relating to Bethania was noted in the Preservation Plan.

#### *The National Register of Historic Places*

The Preservation Plan recommended that the “logical initial step in the preservation of the Bethania resource” would be formal expansion and enhancement of its National Register identity.<sup>94</sup> The inclusion of the Bethania Town Lot on the National Register Study List had been a step in this direction, but for the weight of National Register protection to be in effect, the broader landscape required full formal inclusion of a substantial portion of that landscape in the National Register.

During our initial Bethania research, we discovered there was an effort in the National Register system to move beyond architecture and to include landscape. Characteristically, in this new direction, the National Register model of fitting resources into a certain prescribed framework of identification and justification was in force. In 1988, this initiative was so new that the available guidelines were in the form of a review draft.<sup>95</sup>

---

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 91.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 87.

<sup>95</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior, *National Register Bulletin 30. How to Identify, Evaluate, and Register Rural Historic Landscapes*. Review draft, 1988.

It is a recognized axiom that within the National Register system significance of a historic resource requires a material, physical presence, which has “integrity.” The term “integrity” is further surrounded by formulaic constructions such as “design,” “setting,” “materials,” “workmanship,” “feeling,” and “association,” “contributing,” and “noncontributing.” These terms are joined to others, “characteristics,” “processes,” “components,” and “criteria.”<sup>96</sup>

Properties are also designated as significant by local governments, but most frequently the only recognition of significance that large governmental entities, cities or Departments of Transportation, are bound to respect is that provided by the National Register of Historic Places. Even then, the requirement exists only if there is federal and state money involved in a project.

The unfortunate truth is that in our culture, the simple presence of historic significance is not sufficient to give pause to the plans and intentions of the development. It is not enough to say that a place is of value to a group of people, particularly if those people are few and if the impact of the expansion of the city, the highway, or a reservoir is seen to be of benefit to the many. What may stop the plans of expansion is if a place has the authority of historical importance, and only then through the formalization of significance by documenting the place in the terms set forward in the National Register of Historic Places. Further, the emphasis is most frequently on place rather than people. Recognition by the National Register of Historic *Places* is what the powers of expansion must respect.

The action that would provide the greatest assurance that Bethania would not become a casualty of the Northwest Beltway around Winston-Salem would be to throw the singular

---

<sup>96</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior, *National Register Bulletin, Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Rural Historic Landscapes*, 1989, revised 1999.

protective cloak of the National Register of Historic Places over the village and its land. The initial step in addressing Bethania's sudden emergence as a valuable place in the way of a highway was to further engage the North Carolina Division of Archives and History, and to begin the process of increasing the recognition of Bethania as a place of historic significance and weight.

*The National Register Amendment and Boundary Increase*

Again, we applied to the State Historic Preservation Office, North Carolina Division of Archives and History for a grant in the amount of \$2,500.00 through the local Historic Properties Commission.<sup>97</sup> This grant was also to be matched with The Winston-Salem Foundation dollars and was designed to amend and expand the 1976, Bethania National Register 50-acre Historic District. This work would rest heavily on the research done for the Bethania Preservation Plan, but would still require substantial work. In a telling commentary on the status of determining significance of landscapes we noted in the grant request, “Additionally, in some ways this will be a pioneering effort by looking toward National Park Service *Bulletin 30* and addressing land use problems and historic landscapes as a criterion for redefinition of historic Bethania.”<sup>98</sup>

With this proposal to recognize the significance of Bethania by recording its historic landscape, we entered uncharted waters, and neither the National Register officials nor the North Carolina Preservation Office were sure how this would work, if at all. Still, a contractual agreement was signed on January 29, 1990 to conduct the work, with Martha

---

<sup>97</sup> Winston-Salem/Forsyth County (NC), Historic Properties Commission, Grant request to North Carolina Division of Archives and History, January 30, 1989.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., enclosure: 2.

Brown Boxley and I, as the consultants.<sup>99</sup> The work was done quickly, with the inventory, statement of significance and boundaries completed and submitted in 1990.

We made a conscious decision to conduct the amendment and boundary increase in two stages, first focusing on the elements of the Reuter plan most visible in the core area of the Town Lot. For the second stage, we reserved the remaining landscape of the Town Lot for an intensive archaeological survey that would support a second amendment and boundary increase. With the work of the first stage, the dimensions of the district were expanded from 50 acres to 500 acres to recognize the continued presence of Reuter's 1759 plan on the landscape in 1990, and the nomination was approved by the Keeper of the Register on March 25, 1991.<sup>100</sup>

The period of significance, beginning in 1759, was also expanded to end in 1940, as National Register periods of significance are not generally allowed to come closer to the present than fifty years. We would have brought the period of significance into the present if we had not been prevented from doing so by this limitation that requires a much greater level of justification. The temporal expansion that we did implement emphasized that we believed Bethania's significance rested not only on its eighteenth and early nineteenth-century history but also in the living population and the living town.

With this action, 500 acres of the 2,500-acre Bethania Town Lot were formally entered on the National Register of Historic Places, which acknowledged the historic significance of Bethania and gave pause to those planning the corridor for the Northwest

---

<sup>99</sup> North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Survey and Planning Branch. Project Description and Contract, Bethania National Register District Boundary Expansion, January 29, 1990.

<sup>100</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior, National Register of Historic Places, "Bethania Historic District Amendment and Boundary Increase," 1990.



Beltway around Winston-Salem. The result was that the Northwest Beltway corridor was moved to the west, outside of the Bethania Town Lot, making its turn to the east well to the north of the top of the Town Lot. The 500-acre National Register District, coupled to the remaining 2,000 acres of the Town Lot on the National Register Study List forced the beltway away from the Bethania land.

This resulted in an article in the *Winston-Salem Journal* that reported the elimination of one possible path to the west of Muddy Creek and continued, “Engineers have also dropped a potential path, running just east of Bethania Rural Hall Road from NC 67 to US 52, because it would have crossed the expanded boundaries of the Bethania Historic District.”<sup>101</sup> The article also stated that the 16-mile road had been bitterly and broadly opposed since it was first proposed. It is worth noting that the removal of the potential roadway from Bethania put the corridor onto other people and other land that did not have the benefit of codified historic significance to protect them. At this writing, however, the beltway has yet to be built and remains the subject of heated dispute.

The creation of the 500-acre National Register Historic District was awarded the prestigious Minette C. Duffy Landscape Preservation Award from Preservation North Carolina in 1992, presented to the Bethania Historical Association. Several members of the Association were pleased to attend the annual conference and accept this award.

#### *Loesch Lane*

This action regarding the Northwest Beltway corridor did not end the involvement of the Bethania Town Lot Study with the North Carolina Division of Transportation. Loesch Lane is one of the significant roadways of Bethania and a contributing element of its original

---

<sup>101</sup> Phoebe Zerwick, “Engineers Cut Down Beltway Possibilities to Two Rough Paths,” *Winston-Salem Journal*, December 6, 1990.

plan to its National Register identity, and it emerged in 1990 as another route of controversy. This roadway, which in its 1990 form extended west from the upper intersection of Main Street for approximately a quarter mile to end at Muddy Creek, had never been paved.

In 1990 the “notification” that Loesch Lane, in the heart of the Bethania National Register District, was of interest to NCDOT came in the form of right-of-way stakes on the Bethania Tavern Lot and other properties along the lane. A telephone call to the NCDOT Division Nine/District Two office in Winston-Salem produced the information that the paving of Loesch was on the work cycle of the highway department, and further that residents on the lane had asked for paving to abate dust from the roadway.

This action would change the nature of the roadway, but it was possible to pave the road in a sensitive way within its original dimensions that would minimize the impact of the paving. NCDOT, however, was incapable of recognizing the importance of maintaining the roadway in its original dimensions and form.

NCDOT stated that the paving would require acquisition of a 60-foot right-of-way, increasing the width of the pavement from 16 feet to 30 feet. The work would also require drainage ditches on either side of the road, substantial cutting of landforms, and road markings including double yellow lines down the center. At the east end of the project a realignment of the Loesch Lane intersection with Main Street would be required, and improvement of sight distance on Main Street.<sup>102</sup> Rigid adherence to a formulaic approach by NCDOT led to a protracted conflict about this project.

Although NCDOT had just altered, at an expenditure of some millions of dollars, its plans for running the Northwest Beltway corridor through Bethania, it almost immediately

---

<sup>102</sup> Michael O. Hartley, Bethania Town Lot Study field notes, 1990.

came into the heart of the historic resource with an unacceptably designed project. Beyond the impact that these massively inappropriate alterations would produce on the 1759 Loesch Lane roadway, the right-of-way acquisition would put NCDOT in possession of a substantial proportion of the Bethania Tavern ruin, which abutted the lane. Other buried archaeological remains that would be affected were the Loesch Store ruin directly across the lane from the tavern, and the Loesch Woolen Mill grounds and features.

In the summer of 1991, NCDOT's persistent insistence on its rules for paving the road resulted in a letter from the Bethania Historical Association to Thomas J. Harrelson, Secretary of Transportation, NCDOT. This letter, signed by Bethania Historical Association President Rev. John Kapp, stressed that the issue was not the paving, but the widening and the acquisition of right-of way. Copies were sent to the Division Engineer.<sup>103</sup> There was no response from NCDOT to this letter.

This letter was followed shortly by a petition, signed by forty-four people, owners and family members of owners of property along Loesch Lane, that was sent to the NCDOT District Engineer and copied to Secretary Harrelson. It stated in part,

We, the undersigned property owners and residents of Loesch Lane, considering the historical significance of the resource including the archaeological sites of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century Bethania Tavern abutting Loesch Lane on the north, and the ca. 1825 Loesch Store, abutting Loesch Lane on the south; the standing late 19<sup>th</sup> century Thomas B. Loesch Woolen Mill; and the colonial lot system, hereby and most respectfully, *petition that Loesch Lane be paved within the existing right-of-way*, and maintained by the North Carolina Department of Transportation, thus leaving the historic resource undisturbed (italics and underlining in original).<sup>104</sup>

There was no response from NCDOT to this letter and petition.

---

<sup>103</sup> Rev. John H. Kapp, Letter to Thomas Harrelson, Secretary of Transportation, NCDOT, July 15, 1991.

<sup>104</sup> Loesch Lane Residents, Petition, sent under Bethania Historical Association cover letter signed by Rev. John H. Kapp to Douglas B. Waters, NCDOT Traffic Engineer, July 22, 1991.

These attempts to increase NCDOT awareness of the issues involved were followed by numerous meetings between the Bethania Historical Association and the Bethania Town Lot Study on the one hand, and the NCDOT Division Office in Winston-Salem on the other, from 1990 through 1992, without any movement by the state agency. Barbara Church, a representative of the NCDOT Planning and Environmental Unit, visited us while passing through on other business and was shown Loesch Lane and the issues made clear. She suggested that we might be able to make a case using a scenic roadway category, but did not provide any formal response.

Most telling of the rigidity of NCDOT and their inability to address the particular requirements of Loesch Lane and Bethania was their attitude toward the Bethania Tavern. The southern wall foundation of the 1764 structure was visible as heavy stones protruding from ground cover lying along a bank directly against Loesch Lane in the northwest quadrant of the intersection with Main Street. The land on which the tavern ruin lay was in private hands, and the owner refused to sell the right-of-way because of the potential damage to the archaeological remains.

On the opposite side of the lane was the archaeological site of the Loesch Store, and these two locations firmly constricted the roadway. NCDOT insisted on acquisition of right-of-way that would include portions of both of these ruins, saying that the drainages would not have a great effect on them. Meetings with the project engineers produced no motion toward recognition of the inappropriate character of these actions

Recognizing the need to clearly and firmly demonstrate the presence of the Bethania Tavern ruin, I began excavation of the site in early 1992 to explore the ruin. These excavations, carried into the summer of 1992, exposed stone footing walls, including the

south wall against Loesch Lane and the cellar hole of the tavern ruin.<sup>105</sup> The excavation diverted time and money from other planned research but strengthened local support for preservation of the lane in its historic form.

This support was greatly disrupted in the summer of 1992 by circulating information that NCDOT was not going to pave the roadway because of opposition from the Bethania Historical Association and the Bethania Town Lot Study. Additional discussions were undertaken with the Raleigh office of NCDOT. John Kapp, President of the Bethania Historical Association, and I, from the Bethania Town Lot Study, met with Hudnall Christopher, the Winston-Salem member of the North Carolina Board of Transportation, to seek assistance in resolving the Loesch Lane issues.

Fortunately, we were able to show the lane and related properties in June 1992 to two NCDOT archaeologists, Joseph Herbert and Deborah Joy; their visit began the process toward some resolution of the issues. In an in-house NCDOT memorandum to Barbara Church, NCDOT Planning and Environmental Unit, they recorded,

On June 4, 1992, while working on another project in the vicinity of Bethania, we visited the 1525-foot paving project on Loesch's Lane within the Bethania National Register Historic District,

and they particularly noted that one significant location,

is the Bethania Tavern archaeological site and is currently being excavated by Michael Hartley for the Bethania Historical Association. A 100-foot section of the stone foundation is presently exposed along the north side of the lane. Any disturbance of this foundation wall will greatly compromise research efforts and will potentially destroy the integrity of this significant cultural resource.<sup>106</sup>

---

<sup>105</sup> Michael O. Hartley, "Bethania Tavern Excavation," (Report, Bethania Historical Association, 1992).

<sup>106</sup> Joseph M. Herbert and Deborah Joy, Memorandum to Barbara Church, June 10, 1992.

The Herbert and Joy Memorandum also itemized the significance of the Loesch Store across the lane from the tavern as well as the Loesch Woolen mill site. The visit by these archaeologists and their observations of the significance of these sites stimulated movement within the NCDOT Planning and Environmental Branch.<sup>107</sup>

Immediately following the site visit by Deborah Joy and Joe Herbert, Edward T. Davis, Architectural Historian, NCDOT Planning and Environmental Unit, was assigned the project in July of 1992, and noted in an August 1992 report that the project was subject to review by North Carolina Statute to ensure that

if a state action will have an adverse effect upon a property listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the North Carolina Historical Commission will be given an opportunity to comment,

and continued,

Because of the significance of the Bethania Historical District, the Department of Transportation has taken special care to ensure that it will not have an adverse effect upon the district. This report has been prepared to describe the proposed actions and to identify the potential impact areas in order to present sufficient documentation to the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Officer to request a concurrence with our opinion of no effect upon the Bethania Historic District and completion of the Departments requirements pursuant to GS 121-12(a).<sup>108</sup>

This report also stated that NCDOT plans called for paving a 16-foot section on a 30-foot right-of-way. It stipulated that the easement at the Tavern lot would not be acquired.<sup>109</sup> The text, five pages, incorporated a page of “Architectural and Historical Overview” and a little more than a half page on “Potential Impacts.” The most substantial portion of the report was

---

<sup>107</sup> Jack L. Ward, P.E. Planning and Environmental Branch Manager, NCDOT, Letter to Renee Gledhill-Early, Environmental Coordinator, NC Department of Cultural Resources, July 9, 1993.

<sup>108</sup> Barbara Church and Edward Davis, “Architectural Report: Paving Loesch’s Lane,” Environmental Unit, Planning and Environmental Branch, NC Department of Transportation, August 1992.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

a ten page appendix discussing the technicalities of the application of paving surface treatment to achieve a historic appearance.

Loesch Lane was paved in September 1992, monitored by Deborah Joy of NCDOT, assisted by me. Two years later, Boxley and I gave a talk on the Wachovia Tract at Preservation North Carolina's annual conference, held that year in Winston-Salem. The talk was on preservation issues relating to our work in the Wachovia Tract, and during the presentation we touched on our difficulty in dealing with NCDOT on the Loesch Lane issue. We concluded our remarks on the Loesch Lane experience saying that there had ultimately been a relatively positive outcome and that "we even got pea gravel," referring to the paving surface that had been applied to the lane.

The NCDOT official who had prepared the final plans for Loesch Lane was in the audience and subsequently wrote me a letter saying that our statements concerning the paving of Loesch Lane were "entirely misfounded" and "erroneous." He was upset that we appeared to be taking credit for the application of pea gravel, and we regretted our omission of that credit. However, he followed that complaint with additional statements that did not accurately reflect the difficulties we had had with the Loesch Lane project.

As the architectural historian directly responsible for the research and specifications for this important project, I feel it appropriate to submit the following chronology for your future use. I hope you will agree that it is important to present the facts accurately.

In July 1992, I was assigned the project of determining the appropriate right-of-way and alignment for paving a sixteen foot section of the length of SR 1628 in Bethania. During the month of July I made three trips to the site and arranged two research sessions at the Moravian Archives in Old Salem. The report which I submitted to the district engineer, dated August, 1992, and attached hereinafter, carefully outlines the history of this important settlement and very specifically indicates the width and method of resurfacing the road.<sup>110</sup>

---

<sup>110</sup> Edward Davis, Architectural Historian, NCDOT, Letter to Michael Hartley, October 20, 1994.

There followed some discussion about the application of a “chip-seal” paving surface and the fact that NCDOT archaeologist Deborah Joy monitored the paving, and the letter continued,

I hope that you will understand my dismay when I heard from both you and Ms. Brown [sic] that convincing the North Carolina Department of Transportation to pay close attention to the project was ‘extremely difficult’. May I respectfully remind you that both the Historic Architectural Resources and the Archaeology Sections of the North Carolina Department of Transportation took particular care to ensure that Bethania (and all historic properties in North Carolina) be carefully researched and that the appropriate actions be implemented. This is a responsibility which we take seriously. Contrary to what was erroneously reported in your lecture, the resulting resurfacing was not instigated by either you or Ms. Brown [sic], rather it was the result of our research and recommendations.

If you have the occasion to give this lecture again, I trust that you will amend the text to accurately reflect the facts. Finally, I am certain that I speak for all preservationists in North Carolina in thanking you for your continued good work and diligence in Bethania.<sup>111</sup>

This uninformed complaint from an NCDOT official, who was apparently unaware of the actual behavior of NCDOT over a period of two years prior to his assignment to the project, had been copied to other state agencies and required a reply. The letter drafted by Boxley and I clarifying the “chronology” began:

In response to your letter dated October 20, 1994, we are in agreement that the facts and chronology relating to the Loesch Lane paving project should be clearly understood. This understanding requires amendment of your chronology and the addition of facts relating to the project prior to your participation.<sup>112</sup>

This response then itemized in detail the difficulties encountered with NCDOT in the matter of Loesch Lane prior to the belated entry of the entry of the Planning and Environmental Unit in the project. The reply required an application of time and energy, as had the entire Loesch Lane project. This concluding statement provided both a summary of the great difficulty in dealing with NCDOT in the matter of Loesch Lane as well as an indication of the lack of

---

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Michael O. Hartley and Martha B. Boxley, Letter to Edward T. Davis, Planning and Environmental Unit, NCDOT, November 3, 1994.



internal communication and action within that agency at the time. The situation was moved off dead center by the timely visit of two NCDOT archaeologists, Deborah Joy and Joe Herbert, who recognized the issues and acted in behalf of the resource.

Our letter of response concluded:

There was nothing erroneously presented nor misfounded in our discussion of the paving of Loesch Lane during our lecture at the PNC Conference. We simply adhered to the facts of the matter. We will not withdraw our statement that convincing NCDOT to pay close attention to the project was extremely difficult. We hope this letter clarifies this statement and its meaning for you.<sup>113</sup>

The distraction and the disturbance to the community by NCDOT drew off attention and focus that would have been better placed elsewhere, had that agency recognized the problems involved at the outset. The final resolution of this nagging and unpleasant issue with the paving of Loesch Lane in an appropriate dimension and material allowed us to move more actively into consideration of broader elements of Bethania's identity on the landscape.

#### *The Bethania Town Lot Archaeological Survey*

Within the Bethania Town Lot Study, the Town Lot was viewed as a whole resource, divided only because we needed to establish the significance of Bethania quickly. Additionally, the outlying area in the Town Lot reflected a different but important aspect of the *Landschaft* that was Bethania. The term describes the ancient form that had been chosen for Bethania in 1759, made up of intimate relationships between residential lots, fields and forest, including less visible areas beyond the residential lots, orchard lots, and Black Walnut Bottom of the core area. Lands of Bethania that extended beyond the 500-acre National Register Amendment and Boundary Increase were an integral part of the place and its historic significance.

---

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

Consequently, the next step following the completion of the 500-acre National Register District approval was to include that remaining Town Lot land on the National Register through the planned second stage of the work. A request was made to the Archeology and Historic Preservation Section, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, through the Forsyth County Properties Commission, for a grant totaling \$9,500.00 to fund a ground survey of the remaining 2,000 acres of the Bethania Town Lot. The contract, with myself as the Principle Investigator, was signed on December 1, 1992. The project involved a pedestrian survey of the entire outlying 2,000 acres of the Bethania Town Lot still in fields and woodlots, coupled to interviews with residents as they were encountered in the work to gain additional information about the resource. In addition, five areas of suburban (subdivision) neighborhood were examined through a combination of pedestrian and windshield survey.

A summary of the landscape history of this bounded tract will be helpful in understanding the area that was examined in the 1993 archaeological survey. The 500 acres of the National Register District approved in 1991, including Loesch Lane, was the most readily identifiable part of the 1759 Bethania plan within the Town Lot, but 2,000 acres of the Town Lot remained outside this area.

Bethania was originally been laid out in 1759 by the Moravian surveyor Reuter, and the “General Agreements Established with All the Inhabitants of Bethania” of July 8, 1759 began, “A. Bethania shall have 2,000 acres of Land, which is soon to be staked out,” and, “H. the Unity [Moravian Church] will at all times pay the quitrents on the 2,000 acres, whether

they be cleared land or Wilderness.”<sup>114</sup> This statement was accompanied by Reuter’s numerous maps and plats of Bethania.

In 1771 the Wachovia administrator Frederic W. Marshall formally revised Bethania’s land holding to 2,500 acres, and Reuter resurveyed the boundaries. The dimension of the Bethania Town Lot had remained at its original 2,000 acres until requests beginning in 1768 resulted in the increase of its acreage. In April of that year residents of Bethania asked Marshall to widen the dimensions of their residential lots, using vacant residential lots for the expansion. This request originated in the Upper Village, that is the residential lots above the square, and soon the residents of the lots below the square followed suit. Marshall approved the request for these internal adjustments, also recommending that the square be eliminated as unnecessary.<sup>115</sup>

As surveyor, Reuter was directed to adjust the various lines, and in the course of these considerations he proposed that the boundaries and dimensions of the Town Lot be also adjusted. A Reuter Plan dated 26 October 1771 documents the expansion, saying, “This Plan represents a Tract or Parcel of Land called the Town Lot of Bethany being Part of the big Tract of Wachovia,” accompanied by a detailed plat and stating, “Containing 2500 Acres surveyed the 26<sup>th</sup> of October 1771 (underlining in original).”<sup>116</sup>

At the time that this adjustment was made, the inhabitants of Bethania also requested an end the lease agreement on the Town Lot land, desiring to purchase the Town Lot outright. Marshall agreed to this, and the Wachovia Memorabilia records at the end of 1771

---

<sup>114</sup> Crews, *Bethania: A Fresh Look At Its Birth*, 12-13.

<sup>115</sup> Hartley and Boxley, “Bethania: A Preservation Plan,” 31-32; Hartley, “Bethania: A Colonial Moravian Adaptation,” 120-122.

<sup>116</sup> P.C.G. Reuter, “Town Lot of Bethany, October 26, 1771.”

recorded that, “Of the Unity land in Wachovia this year 2500 acres have been set apart for Bethania...” They went on to further say, “The congregation has bought the land hitherto held on lease, and has taken over the management of it; has also enlarged its boundaries to the north by buying an additional piece of land.”<sup>117</sup>

There were apparently problems with the congregation’s purchase of the Town Lot, however, and on February 23, 1780 the governing board of Wachovia recorded that in regard to the rules involving Bethania they found, “It necessary to give further consideration to the part concerning town affairs, especially regarding the purchase of their land, and arrangements to be made for their common ownership and use of the same.”<sup>118</sup>

In 1782 the records stated, “The long-standing matter of the Bethania land has been settled amicably and a perpetual lease has been given.”<sup>119</sup> On October 1, 1782 Marshall recorded further that Bethania was, “To pay 6% yearly on the agreed value of £800, together with the Quitrents, and are to receive from me a Lease for fifty years, renewable forever.”<sup>120</sup> The rent to be paid “in corn, at four shillings a bushel.”<sup>121</sup> On November 25, 1782, the Bethania Diary recorded that the land included in this agreement was carefully recognized, saying, “Soon after eight o’clock most of the Brethren and young men from here went to the pile of stones on the Bethabara road, where they were met by four Brethren from Bethabara. From that point the line was run and renewed around the Bethania Lot.”<sup>122</sup> These boundaries

---

<sup>117</sup> Fries, *Records of the Moravians*, 1:433, 435.

<sup>118</sup> Fries, *Records of the Moravians*, 4:1526.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 1786.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 1917.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 1611.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 1917.

and the 2,500 acre Bethania Town Lot were of such importance to the Brethren and young men of the congregation that they turned out to witness the running and the renewal of the lines of that body of land on the Wachovia landscape.

The residents of Bethania were not able to purchase it at that time, as they had wished, perhaps because of the disruption and confusion of the times and the Revolutionary War. They had, however, secured the 2500 acres with a perpetual lease, through negotiation with Frederick William Marshall, and they did not abandon the idea of owning the Town Lot outright.

This lease arrangement stood until 1822. Then the congregation in Bethania reopened negotiations with the administration of Wachovia for a change in the arrangements under which they held the Town. On October 22 of 1822, the “house-fathers” of the Bethania congregation agreed on a purchase price for their land with a representative of the governing board of Wachovia.

Brn. Friedrich Meinung and Theodor Schulz resurveyed the 2,500-acre Bethania Town Lot between November 18 and December 6 of 1822,<sup>123</sup> and on December 14, 1822 the Bethania Diary recorded,

Today most of the house-fathers in the town bought the land which they have hitherto held under lease, each taking twenty or more acres of woodland in addition. They gave bonds for the purchase price to Br. Theodor Schulz, who had come from Salem with Br. Meinung for the purpose.<sup>124</sup>

These metes and bounds of the Bethania Town Lot were the ongoing geographical substance of the Bethania identity through the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth

---

<sup>123</sup> Fries, *Records of the Moravians*, 7:3524.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 3525.

century. From the outset there were rules and regulations regarding the rights and privileges associated with the Bethania Town Lot, stating who could hunt there, who could cut wood there, and who could use additional land within its boundaries.

It was the outlying 2,000-acre portion of this Town Lot that had not been addressed in the first phase of the National Register Amendment and Boundary Increase that was the subject of the new archaeological survey. This survey, which had been part of the Bethania Town Lot Study plan from the outset, was conducted through the months of January, February, and two weeks into March of 1993.<sup>125</sup>

The result of the study was the identification of historic features in the Bethania Town Lot. Boundaries of the original 2,500 acres were still visible as tree lines, one extending for more than a mile, on the eastern side of the tract. We found archaeological features of historic roadways radiating out from the core residential area that provided access to the outlying Town Lot and linked to roads and places beyond the Town Lot Boundaries. Within the Town Lot, these roads provided access to upland resources important to the community. Among the resources made available by this network were extraction sites for firewood and timber. We found construction stone still stacked in cairns along sledge trails, ready to be brought in for further building. These extraction sites corresponded to Reuter's notations of where in the Town Lot such materials would be available. We also located industrial sites that pertained to the use of waterpower by the Moravians of Bethania through time.<sup>126</sup>

Because of the form established for Bethania in 1759, we did not expect the outlying area of the Bethania Town Lot to contain archaeological evidence of domestic activity from

---

<sup>125</sup> Michael O. Hartley, "The Bethania Town Lot Archaeological Survey," (Project Report, Bethania Historical Association, 1993.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 42.

the colonial period, and this was what was observed. Toward the end of the eighteenth and in the early nineteenth centuries, several families secured large holdings, which led to agricultural production on the scale of plantations. The farmers began to acquire slaves, and the African American population grew substantially, clustering on these large agricultural holdings. Other African American slaves were housed and worked in the core domestic area of Bethania.

A root of present day problems in Bethania lay in these two distinct groups of people -- white and black -- who came to inhabit the Bethania Town Lot. By the turn of the nineteenth century, Bethania had reported a population of 36 slaves, at that time the largest group of enslaved people in Wachovia. Bethania was followed by Hope and Friedberg, those two closely related congregations reporting a combined total of 32 slaves.<sup>127</sup> Historian Jon Sensbach illuminates the dynamics regarding acquisition of land and slaves in Wachovia with these observations from Bethania:

During the early nineteenth century a handful of Brethren consolidated relatively large land and slaveholdings outside the town limits of Salem, where few restrictions governed the purchase of slaves. George Bahnson, the Bethania minister, noted the enthusiasm with which many whites there sought to expand their holdings. After dining with a fellow Bethanian, he complained of shoddy dinnerware and silverware: "You do not see any silver anywhere in town. Land and slaves are the principal things, wherein they invest money." Most Moravian slaveholders owned from one to five slaves. But Christian Loesch (sometimes anglicized to Lash) owned 3,098 acres and thirty slaves; Jacob Conrad, 2,127 acres and twenty-six slaves; and Abraham Conrad 1,125 acres and fifteen slaves. Other large slaveholders were John Conrad with twenty-one and Frederick Schumann with thirteen. The first four lived in Bethania, and together with Schumann they owned more than a quarter of all slaves owned by the Brethren.<sup>128</sup>

---

<sup>127</sup> Jon Sensbach, *A Separate Canaan* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 471-72.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 611-612.

These numbers of enslaved people from the 1830 Federal Census, coupled with George Bahnson's personal comments from 1834, shed light on the concentration of large land holdings and a corresponding acquisition of slaves in Bethania. Based on these figures, there was a population of ninety-two slaves held by Bethania slaveholders as of 1830. The acreage involved indicates that land within and beyond the Bethania Town Lot was the subject of acquisition by these men, and that they were moving toward plantation-scale agriculture. The dominant crop was corn, which was a commodity that allowed more complete utilization of slave labor through the year.<sup>129</sup>

The details of slaveholding in Wachovia and Bethania are addressed thoroughly by Sensbach, as well as Scott Rohrer in his book on the Hope congregation.<sup>130</sup> These notations are cited here to demonstrate the early presence of a substantial number of enslaved African Americans in Bethania and beyond, in Wachovia. The status of these people was forced relationship to place, through generations and across gender lines. That forced relationship produced an identity related to Bethania that held for many of their descendents. In the second and third decades of the nineteenth century, blacks, many of whom had once been welcomed in the predominantly white Moravian Churches, were segregated into separate church buildings and separate burial grounds in both Salem and Bethania. The Bethania A.M.E. Zion Church and Graveyard is the legacy of the black Moravian church, built by Bethania Moravian Church and dedicated October 6, 1850.<sup>131</sup>

---

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., 613-614.

<sup>130</sup> S. Scott Rohrer, *Hope's Promise: Religion and Acculturation in the Southern Backcountry* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2005).

<sup>131</sup> Hamilton, *Records of the Moravians*, 5529.



By the end of the first half of the nineteenth century, large farms, now owned by their occupants rather than leased from the Wachovia Administration, were in full operation in Bethania. Beyond these plantation-style landholdings, the foremost being the Conrad-Jones plantation, we did not expect other domestic sites related to white Moravians in the outlying town lot. What we did expect was post-1865 occupation by African Americans, made up of former slaves as well as free blacks.

The Archaeological Survey conducted in 1993 revealed that there were, and are, clustered settlements of African Americans living in an encircling pattern surrounding the core area of Bethania. One of these settlements, known as Washington Town, was occupied as early as 1822 by free blacks, and is so shown on W. S. Pfohl's 1918 copy of the November 1822 map produced by Friedrich Meinung.<sup>132</sup>

Other African Americans encountered during the survey have origins in newly freed people who acquired land after the end of the Civil War. These were people previously housed on Bethania farms and at the rear of white residences on Main Street. African American enclaves are found on Bethania-Rural Hall Road, extending from Bethania A.M.E. Zion Church, northeast to the intersection of Turfwood Drive, on both sides of the road. The families who have historically occupied this neighborhood descended from enslaved people who lived on the Jones Plantation, which once held the land where they now live. A second African American neighborhood is on Bethania Road to the west of the lower intersection of Main Street. The third neighborhood is Washington Town, an extant enclave to the south, located on the old Bethabara-Bethania road, now partially an archaeological roadbed.

---

<sup>132</sup> W. S. Pfohl, "Bethania 1822," 1918 copy of November 1822 map produced by Friedrich Meinung, Moravian Archives, Winston-Salem.

In addition to these enclaves, the study found a ring of archaeologically observed domestic ruins on the ridges surrounding the core residential area that are no longer occupied. These ruins are found in various forms, from stone footings with cellar holes, indicating probable nineteenth century dates of origin, to more recent forms of construction from the twentieth century. Local informants, many of whom were descended from the occupants of these houses, reported that these ruins once housed African American families.

A particularly interesting house ruin was found on the crest of the bluff overlooking the northwestern portion of the Black Walnut Bottom, well isolated from the white residential area of Bethania by topography of the creek and agricultural fields of the bottom. Although only approximately 3,000 feet from Main Street, this ruin was in a very private location. It was noteworthy because of extensive plantings of herbs, flowering plants, shrubs and non-native trees that surrounded it. Sources in Bethania's African American communities reported that the site had been the home of a well-known dealer, mail order and otherwise, in herbal cures and potions, a "root doctor." It was said that he had learned his skills from an old woman in the community who had been his mother-in-law.<sup>133</sup> The daughter of the herbalist, who lives in Atlanta, Georgia, now owns the property. Attempts to contact her for permission to do a seasonal horticultural study of the site have been unsuccessful.

An important conclusion of the survey related to the African American presence in the outlying Town Lot included the following:

As was predicted, evidence of 18th century domestic activity in the outer Town Lot was absent. Archaeologically, the domestic evidence found related to late 19<sup>th</sup> and early to mid 20<sup>th</sup> century African American settlement surrounding the core area of Bethania. This appears to reflect a service community surrounding and oriented to

---

<sup>133</sup> Ali Shabazz, aka Eugene Byers, communication with author, April 2008.

the core community or to Town Lot agriculture. These no doubt derive in part from antebellum slaves held in Bethania in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The African American population of Bethania and its dynamics are a little understood but extremely significant part of the history of the community which merits further study.<sup>134</sup>

Since the end date for the National Register significance of Bethania had been brought to 1940, living members of the African American population were direct participants in Bethania's period of significance. The final recommendation of the 1993 survey was that,

The Bethania Town Lot is a significant and identifiable resource with origins within Wachovia and the North Carolina colonial frontier. As an entity, this resource requires as complete a recognition as can be provided by the National Register of Historic Places.<sup>135</sup>

#### *Conclusion of the Bethania Town Lot Study*

These recommendations were straightforward and could be accomplished by placing the pertinent information on a National Register of Historic Places nomination form and shepherding it through the approval process. At this point, however, necessary local support wavered, and then faltered. The minutes of the April 1993 Bethania Historical Association Board of Directors Meeting included a report from me, indicating, "Survey is concluded and report is being prepared for Raleigh"<sup>136</sup>

The minutes of the following meeting in June 1993 recorded,

Archaeology: The Board agreed to place more emphasis on the restoration of the school house rather than archaeological projects at the present time.<sup>137</sup>

This termination of the Association's interest in the activities of the Bethania Town Lot Study effectively brought our work to a close. Without the participation of this body in the

---

<sup>134</sup> Hartley, "The Bethania Town Lot Archaeological Survey," 42.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Bethania Historical Association, "Minutes, Board of Directors Meeting," April 15, 1993.

<sup>137</sup> Bethania Historical Association, "Minutes, Board of Directors Meeting," June 17, 1993.

work, little could be accomplished. The Bethania Historical Association Board of Directors was formally notified in September that we were closing the Bethania Town Lot Study, and were moving to other research within Wachovia.<sup>138</sup>

---

<sup>138</sup> Michael O. Hartley and Martha Brown Boxley, Letter to Rev. John H. Kapp, President, Bethania Historical Association, September 14, 1993.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **IDENTITY, INFLUENCE, POWER, AND CONFLICT**

The boundaries of the 500-acre National Register Amendment and Boundary Increase had already begun to define and shape how the people of Bethania in the core area thought of themselves and how they identified themselves. The codification of Bethania within the rules and strictures of National Register approval and recognition had also begun to diminish the flexibility of its identity.

The residents of the core area now had an identified boundary, an identity specifically and formally stated to be significant, and were relieved of the threat of the Northwest Beltway. The issue of Loesch Lane had been resolved. The fact that the National Park Service had requested the text and data of the National Register Amendment and Boundary Increase from us (Hartley and Boxley), to use as the foundation for recognizing Bethania as a National Historic Landmark, only served to solidify this identity.

The stated intention of the Bethania Historical Association to withdraw emphasis on archaeological projects in June 1993 signaled the absence of support by the Association for a further expansion of the Bethania National Register District. This ended the possibility in the foreseeable future of recognizing any of the outlying area of Bethania as part of a historically significant Bethania. In many respects, the authority of historical recognition had served its purpose for residents of Bethania's core area, and for many in the town this was sufficient.

However, the Bethania Archaeological Survey and its findings were now a matter of record. The result of the attitude that the work was concluded was the emergence of a conflict between the two studies: National Register Amendment and Boundary Increase and Bethania Archaeological Survey. This conflict was no doubt unexpected and unintended by the Bethania Historical Association Board and others in Bethania, and placed the Archaeological Survey in opposition to the 500-acre National Register District. On the one hand, the argument was that the 500-acre National Register District was all that was significant, and on the other hand was the argument that the Archaeological Survey revealed National Register potential within the remaining 2,000 acres of the 2,500-acre Town Lot. This dialectic emerged in conflicting views about the identity of the town, the land, and the identity of people within those constructs. Predictably, these issues were played out in the political arena.

#### *The 1839 Act of the General Assembly*

The catalyst for this activity was an ambiguous and frustrating 1839 act of the General Assembly of North Carolina, “An Act to appoint Commissioners for the Town of Bethania, in the County of Stokes,”<sup>139</sup> in effect, authorizing the creation of the town in the North Carolina municipal system. In 1985, the Bethania Historical Association requested a copy of this document with hope that they could reactivate Bethania’s charter and retrieve local jurisdiction and authority over the town. The Bethania Historical Association was at the time (1980s) acting as the de facto government of Bethania, and took the following stance in 1987:

---

<sup>139</sup> North Carolina General Assembly, “An Act to appoint Commissioners for the Town of Bethania, in the County of Stokes.”

The Bethania Historical Association would like for the 1839 Town Charter to be kept, but reactivating it will be a matter for the people living in the area to decide. The association is responsible for disseminating the information to the residents therein.<sup>140</sup>

There were several problems involved in this idea. The first was that the 1839 document did not specify what the boundaries were for the Town of Bethania that a Board of Commissioners was being appointed for. Secondly, there was no evidence that the Town of Bethania ever conducted any business under the authority of the 1839 act, understood to be a necessary requirement if the incorporation was to be reactivated. Thirdly, because of the absence of any clearly stated metes and bounds for incorporation in the 1839 act, the dimensions of the town were debatable.

Through the late 1980s, while the focus was the National Register identity of Bethania, the possibility of reactivating the Bethania incorporation was periodically raised, but no action taken. In these discussions, I took the position that the entire Bethania Town Lot should be included. Based on the historical authority of Bethania over that land, I felt that Winston-Salem would not be able to oppose that stance if the argument was carefully and firmly made, as it had been in the beltway issue. Further I proposed that within the Bethania Town Lot, control and stability of the core area by the residents could be achieved through the application of a historic zoning overlay. But, as of 1993, the Bethania Town Lot Study had come to a halt, and its principle investigators were not participants in the decision making process. Another approach was chosen.

#### *A New Bethania*

With the successful demonstration of the significance of Bethania across a broad landscape of 500 acres, the re-incorporation of Bethania was vigorously pursued by residents

---

<sup>140</sup> Bethania Historical Association, "Historical Notes," 2, No.1 (January 1987).

of the town, and the issue of boundaries very quickly leaped to the fore. On April 10, 1995, a group of residents revealed boundaries that they were proposing for approval by the General Assembly to incorporate Bethania, in a dimension reportedly be based on the 500-acre National Register District.

These boundaries were amended slightly in the process at the request of residents of a small neighborhood of the core area that was initially not included. The boundaries were then incorporated in Senate Bill 264, “An Act to Revive the Charter of the Town of Bethania,” and ratified May 10, 1995.<sup>141</sup> Among the provisions of the act was an agreement with Winston-Salem that Bethania could not annex additional land unless this action was agreed to by Winston-Salem.

Fourteen people from Bethania had each contributed \$100 to hire attorney Hamilton C. Horton, who had deep Moravian roots himself, to revive Bethania’s incorporation; none of his clients, according to Horton, wanted the town to be large. Horton said, “the name of the game was to preserve the community as a little community...The idea was to preserve the concept of Bethania village and the visual watershed.”<sup>142</sup> Horton and others also stated that when the group drew the boundaries, they were closely fitted to the 500-acre National Register District boundaries.<sup>143</sup>

In the article cited above, Horton commented further on a meeting held at Bethania Moravian Church at which the boundaries of the new approximately 400-acre incorporation were set.

---

<sup>141</sup> North Carolina General Assembly, Ratified Bill, Chapter 74, Senate Bill 264 (Raleigh, NC, 1995).

<sup>142</sup> Tursi, “House Divided.”

<sup>143</sup> Laura Knight, “Neighbors continue to push to join Bethania: They look to history for help,” *The Rural Hall Weekly Independent*, August 10, 1995.



Those who saw the signs gathered in a church meeting room and casually drew the lines on a map, he said.

“It was done by a sort of consensus,” Horton said. “The lines went along natural boundaries. The idea was to set the area apart so as not to be encroached. There was no attempt to exclude anyone, and no one objected to anybody.”<sup>144</sup>

In the course of the initial controversy surrounding the methods used to reestablish Bethania as a town recognized by North Carolina, those who felt they had been left out of decision-making about the boundaries brought the Archaeological Survey report into play. Advocates for broader boundaries of Bethania immediately and copiously cited the report for the support of the historical dimensions of the place. Numerous copies of the survey were made and distributed by those citizens.

As the principles in the Bethania Town Lot Study, Martha Boxley and I were repeatedly asked to present talks to various groups on the history of Bethania and the Bethania Town Lot. Such requests came primarily from those who favored a 2,500 acre town, and we found ourselves in the position of having two pieces of our own work placed in opposition to each other.

On the one hand, those who favored a “small” Bethania represented the first stage of the work (National Register Amendment and Boundary Increase) as the complete and final statement of what was significant in Bethania. This group discounted the second stage Archaeological Survey as only a meaningless demonstration of the presence of subdivisions. Those who had selected the new boundaries and pressed forward the incorporation repeatedly rejected the concept that there had ever been a Bethania Town Lot.

The creators of the 1995 form of Bethania basically ignored the Archaeological Survey of the outlying town lot. If this group mentioned the findings from the archaeological survey at all, it was to say that no eighteenth-century house sites had been found in the

---

<sup>144</sup> Tursi, “House Divided.”

outlying area, implying that this would have been the criterion for significance. The presence and significance of the African American enclaves surrounding Bethania's core area, a main finding of the survey, was never acknowledged or mentioned by the creators of the 1995 town boundaries.

The appointed commissioners of the newly created town of Bethania argued for the small dimensions, variously reported to be "370 acres," or "approximately 400 acres," or "437 acres," with "400 acres" being the generally used figure. The Board of Commissioners was made up of five appointees, one of whom was elected interim mayor by the appointees until elections could be held. An election was scheduled for November 7, 1995, and immediately residents within the town began to look toward the first election of town commissioners by voters from the newly created area. A slate of four challengers was formed from within the "400-acre" boundaries, and they ran on a platform of enlarging Bethania to 2,500 acres, the historical Town Lot.

As stated in Chapter 2, this first election held in Bethania was angry and querulous, and three of the original five appointees lost their seats, including the interim mayor. Three of the four challengers, who had run on a platform of expanding Bethania to 2,500 acres, were elected, and these three challengers found themselves in opposition to the two remaining original members. As the majority on the body, the newly elected challengers voted in one of their number, Ellie Collins, as the first mayor of Bethania chosen by an elected board. The conflicting ideas about Bethania were to remain at the fore within the divided board and among the divided residents of the town and the potentially affected surrounding area.

Collins said that she did not intend to be in a hurry about anything except expanding the town's boundaries, and said, "We can go slowly on most things."<sup>145</sup> That assumed that "most things" would proceed slowly of themselves. That assumption did not anticipate the interest of a developer who saw opportunity in the little town.

The Town of Bethania indicated in August 1996 that it was in receipt of a request from Kenabeck Builders to rezone two of the northern orchard lots of the 1759 plan of Bethania from RS 20 to RS 15, and to approve site plans for a planned residential development on those lots. The developer also proposed to sewer the project by extending a line from the trunk line on Muddy Creek up the right of way of Seidel Lane, the west lane along the rear of the western Main Street residential lots.

Since a number of residents on those lots were having major problems with their septic systems there was, for that reason, substantial support for this project. Bethania had made no move to provide a local historic district or preservation overlay for the land within its corporate boundaries, and consequently there was minimal formal protection of the historic resource from such a project.

Although not formally engaged by Bethania at that time, I was asked to comment on the project and stated in a letter to the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County City-County Planning Board that the rezoning, the increase in density, and the setting of a trend in motion that would encourage further development would destabilize the integrity of the National Register District.<sup>146</sup> The arguments I presented were supported and supplemented by Planning Board staff planner Andrea Armstrong and resulted in conditions being applied on approval of the

---

<sup>145</sup> Wooding, "Bethania officials urge unity, healing."

<sup>146</sup> Michael O. Hartley, Letter to Winston-Salem/Forsyth County City-County Planning Board, July 10, 1996.

request. Among these were the requirements that, “A preliminary archaeological survey of the entire site shall be performed by an experienced archaeologist and shall be approved by the Planning Staff prior to issuance of grading permits,” a commons area would be established, there were restrictions on signage and utilities would be buried.<sup>147</sup>

The required archaeology was done on the site and a report duly written.<sup>148</sup> Following this work, I forwarded the materials I had on the project to Claudia Brown, Survey and Planning Branch, N. C. Division of Archives and History, with a letter that said, in part,

The requirements for consideration of the historic resource, archaeology, etc. put on the developer in the absence of a local district are a new step in Forsyth County. We notice that planning staff quoted and cited the Bethania Preservation Plan and Nat. Reg. Amendment as support for these requirements; so they are aware of these tools and make some use of them. Also present in staff’s report is a citation of NCDOT’s archaeological report on Loesch Lane (a result of constant pressure on DOT).

In spite of these requirements, the impact of this project on Bethania, if carried out as approved, will be very great, both from the presence of this development and from the transition it accelerates in the core of Bethania.<sup>149</sup>

The subdivision was then built. The developer, who prided himself on building “Moravian architecture,” constructed a collection of architecturally eclectic houses in two of the northern orchard lots of Bethania, since there was nothing to prevent him from doing so, and that action greatly altered the original fabric. Also, the residents of the western residential lots on Main Street were pleased to be able to hook onto the sewer line.

---

<sup>147</sup> James A. Yarbrough, Jr. AICP, Director of Planning, Letter to Dan Dockery and Kenabeck Builders, September 25, 1996.

<sup>148</sup> J. Ned Woodall, et al, “A Cultural Resources Survey of the Proposed Bethany Square Development Area in Bethania: A Historic District in Forsyth County North Carolina,”(Project Report, Wake Forest Archeology Laboratories, Winston-Salem, October 1996).

<sup>149</sup> Michael O. Hartley, Letter to Claudia Brown, Survey and Planning Branch, NC Department of Cultural Resources, November 13, 1996.

In the meantime, Bethania's government was hobbled by a constant litany of quarreling on the Board of Commissioners between the "small Bethania" members and the members who supported the 2,500-acre dimension.<sup>150</sup>

Hamilton Horton, who had pushed the town boundaries through the General Assembly, had by this time been elected to the State Senate and responded on Senate letterhead to an inquiry from a resident about the issue of Bethania's boundaries and size. First, Horton wrote, the meetings to create the town were not secret and were substantially publicized. Second, he emphasized that black residents were not purposely left out, but that Bethania AME Church, its nearby graveyard, and a number of nearby dwellings were purposely included. Additionally, he said, one of the five originally appointed commissioners was black. He continued,

If you will trace the lines chosen, you will find they largely encompass the 500 acre National Register District, and as much as feasible, follow lines to protect the visual integrity of the village itself. The idea was not to include modern residential subdivisions, but to include a historic village and the open and rural surroundings. Remember, Winston-Salem, at the time, was planning to annex the entire area, and as a practical matter, we would have been unable to incorporate any of Bethania without Winston-Salem's concurrence. Even had we wished to include major residential subdivisions, we could not. Those who are claiming otherwise are not being honest with you.

The so-called 'town lot' came about around 1766 when Christian Reuter, the surveyor for Wachovia in its entirety, assigned 2500-3/4 acres to the Village of Bethania for use as pasture, woodland, cropland and orchards. No houses, etc. were expected to be built on these 2500-3/4 acres. The houses were in the village – eighteen of them. This all changed in 1822 when the church permitted the land surrounding Bethania to be broken up and sold off as separate farmsteads instead of keeping them in the former German linear agricultural village model.

In 1839, by the time the village was incorporated, the 2500-3/4 acre earlier 'town lot' had largely been broken up. In fact, the 1839 charter does not even define town

---

<sup>150</sup> G. I. Wooding, III, "Bethania moves town office to mayor's house," *The Rural Hall (NC) Weekly Independent*, January 4, 1996; *The Rural Hall (NC) Weekly Independent*, "Bethania Commission Put Patches On Document Dispute," "Pushing for a Larger Town," "Reward! Walter Hunter Hunting for Sign Stealing Culprits," January 25, 1996; *The Rural Hall (NC) Weekly Independent*, "Bethania Seeking Land Donation," February 2, 1996; *The Rural Hall (NC) Weekly Independent*, "Thompson-Collins Feud Is Getting Nasty," "Bethania Budget Discussion Scheduled At Bethania A.M.E.," February 15, 1996; *The Rural Hall (NC) Weekly Independent*, "I'll Have To Ask You To Leave," May 23, 1996.

boundaries at all! Whoever has been feeding you this ‘town lot’ hooey should be ashamed.

Fourth and finally, no one is more dedicated to historic preservation than I. The historic fabric of the Village of Bethania is what we sought to preserve in the 1995 session, and I think we succeeded. If, however, in the residential subdivisions of Mallard Lakes, Wedgewood, Lake Hills, Brookcliff, Queens Grant, and Grandview there exists a historic structure or landmark, I’ll be the first to seek to preserve it.<sup>151</sup>

Several points are in order regarding Hamilton Horton’s letter, which he had asked the recipient to share with neighbors. Horton was a respected preservationist, and was a past chairman of the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Historical Properties Commission. His casual dismissal as a person in his position of what he termed “the so-called ‘town lot,’” and deriding it as “hooey,” served to suppress any dialogue about that significant landscape.

Further, as a result of Horton’s letter, any claim by African Americans living in the town lot to participation in Bethania’s history, from a location on historically significant land, was greatly diminished. That claim became a more easily dismissed cultural argument rather than being firmly grounded in the history of place through time.

In regard to Horton’s argument about holding closely to the 500-acre National Register District and not being able to include subdivisions, “Even had we wished” is seen to be inaccurate when compared to the 1995 lines of the town. The subdivision of Queens Grant, included in Horton’s list, was in fact taken into 1995 Bethania, explicitly departing from the National Register boundaries to do so. Additionally, although the Black Walnut Bottom is arguably the most dramatic and significant landform feature of the National Register District, the northern portion of it was left out, as was the landscape including and surrounding the 1784 Bethania mill site.

Political attempts to incorporate additional land for Bethania gained little headway. While there was scant movement and a great deal of disruption within Bethania’s

---

<sup>151</sup> Hamilton Horton, Letter to Mrs. Walter Hunter, Bethania resident, March 14, 1996.

government, however, the issue was being pressed in another arena. The judicial system was also pondering the issues of history, landscape, and who is in and who is out. Although the proponents of “small Bethania” disavowed any racial motives in their desire for a tightly drawn Bethania, those issues were constantly at the fore, pressed mainly by the African American residents along Bethania-Rural Hall Road and vicinity. Those voices, raised at the outset, would not be silent and had appealed to the law and the halls of justice for support.

A suit was filed in the Forsyth County General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division in May 1996 that formally challenged the actions producing the 1995 dimensions of the Town of Bethania. This complaint was filed by a body known as the Bethania Town Lot Committee and listed group of individuals as plaintiffs vs. the City of Winston-Salem and the five individuals who were appointed commissioners of the Town of Bethania by the 1995 Act of the General Assembly. The complaint contained two causes of action.

The first cause of action in the complaint stated that Bethania contained 2,500 acres rather than the 400 acres negotiated with Winston-Salem. It also stated that since the persons from Bethania (co-Defendant in this case), who had orally negotiated these provisions,

“were private citizens and not elected officials of Bethania in February 1995, they had no authority to negotiate the future of the Town of Bethania on behalf of residents of Bethania with the Defendant, City of Winston-Salem. Their actions in this regard were wrongful, unauthorized, illegal, and in violation of Article 1, Section 2 of the Constitution of North Carolina in the Defendant’s actions were for the own benefit and not solely for the good of the whole of Bethania,” and further that the City of Winston-Salem did not have the authority to enter into an agreement with these private citizens.<sup>152</sup>

The second cause of action touched directly on the issue of racial discrimination, speaking to the intention of the Defendants in their actions.

---

<sup>152</sup> Forsyth County Superior Court, “Complaint,” 96 CVS 3104, Annie Brown Kennedy, et al, Attorneys, May 27, 1996, VII-XI.

“The intent of these Defendants was to exclude the overwhelming majority of African-American residents of historic Bethania from being residents in the present Bethania. The effect of this oral agreement was also the exclusion of the overwhelming majority of African-Americans from being residents in the present Bethania. The acts of these Defendants, including their oral agreement, and the resultant passage of ‘An Act to Revive the Charter of the Town of Bethania’, Chapter 74 of the North Carolina General Statutes subjected those Plaintiffs and numerous other African-American residents of historic Bethania to discrimination because of their race in violation of Article I, Section 19 of the Constitution of North Carolina.” The cause of action further stated, “The scheme of the Defendants was employed as part of a contrivance to segregate, to minimize or cancel out the voting strength of African-American residents of historic Bethania and to impair the opportunity of African-American persons to participate in the political process in Bethania.”<sup>153</sup>

The cause was heard before Judge L. Todd Burke on June 10, 1996, and on June 11 Judge Burke ruled that,

after hearing argument from counsel for both the Plaintiffs and the Defendants, and reviewing the Court file and the briefs, the Court considers as a matter of law that Chapter 74 of the 1995 Session Laws (First Session, 1995) entitled an ‘Act to Revive the Charter of the Town of Bethania’ is unconstitutional on its face in that it violates the Constitution of North Carolina; and the Court is of the opinion that the Plaintiffs are entitled to a Permanent Injunction, permanently enjoining the City of Winston-Salem from annexing any part of the 2,500 acre tract in Forsyth County known as the Town of Bethania.<sup>154</sup>

While the issue moved through the courts, the contest continued on the political front. In December of 1997 Deborah Thompson reiterated the position that the argument for a town on the scale of the town lot was fallacious, and that there were those,

clamoring for inclusion in the town of Bethania but based on an entirely incorrect premise: the town of Bethania (originally composed of about 50 acres) and the Bethania Town Lot, which was created much later (composed of 2,500 acres), originally were one and the same. They were not. But that’s when the confusion started.

In 1771, according to records maintained by the Moravian church, the town of Bethania contained approximately 20 houses. Gottlieb Reuter, surveyor for all Wachovia, assigned 2,500 acres to these residents of the Town of Bethania for

---

<sup>153</sup> Forsyth County Superior Court, “Complaint,” 96 CVS 3104, Annie Brown Kennedy, et al, Attorneys, May 27, 1996, VIV-XV.

<sup>154</sup> Forsyth County Superior Court, “Order,” 96 CVS 3104, Judge L. Todd Burke, June 11, 1996.



pasture, woodland, cropland and orchards. Thus the ‘Bethania Town Lot’ was created years after the original town of Bethania for the use of townspeople, but not for home sites. Later, in 1822, the lands surrounding the town of Bethania—that acreage which composed the ‘Town Lot’—were sold by the church for homesteads. By the time Bethania was chartered by the General Assembly in 1839, the ‘Bethania Town Lot’ no longer existed. To the contrary, the Town of Bethania did still exist in its present location.

Where there are conflicting interests and objectives, as in the Bethania controversy, I cannot blame parties involved for using the facts to their greatest advantage. However, the fact is that ‘Town of Bethania’ and ‘Bethania Town Lot’ are not and never have been synonymous. Proponents of expanding the current boundaries would have all the world believe they are because it’s crucial to their argument for inclusion.<sup>155</sup>

In April 1997 the divided Bethania Board of Commissioners adopted resolutions to recognize the 2,500-acre Bethania Town Lot as forming the boundaries of the newly incorporated town and to determine how to hold elections within those expanded boundaries. The newly elected challengers, who formed a majority on the board, passed the resolutions four weeks before the North Carolina Court of Appeals was scheduled to hear oral arguments on the boundaries that had been debated for two years. Ellie Collins, the Mayor at that time, was quoted as saying, “We did this so if the court asks the board of commissioners what we recognize as the borders of the Bethania, we will have it formally stated.”<sup>156</sup>

However, these actions by the Bethania Board of Commissioners proved to be of questionable value in furthering their case. The North Carolina Court of Appeals ruled in July 1997 that the 1995 “Act to Revive the Charter of the Town of Bethania” in which the 400-acre dimension had been created was constitutional, and that the City of Winston-Salem

---

<sup>155</sup> *The Bethania Reporter*, “1997: ‘Peace on Earth, Good Will to All’ in Historic Bethania,” 2, No. 1, (January 1997).

<sup>156</sup> Susan E. White, “Bethania may have jumped the gun on ruling on borders: Board adopts resolutions on 2,500-acre size and elections,” *Winston-Salem Journal*, April 18, 1997, sec. A1.

could not be enjoined from annexing land in the remaining 2,000 acres of the Bethania Town lot.<sup>157</sup>

This ruling went to the North Carolina Supreme Court, filed in July 1998, and the result was the same. Those who wanted legal support for Bethania to contain the entire 2,500 acres of the Town Lot reached the final arbiter and lost.

There were, however, interesting dissenting opinions from Justice Orr. He argued that the annexation agreement made with Winston-Salem unconstitutionally diminished Bethania's authority to annex and increased Winston-Salem's.

Another issue that the court ruled on was that of voting rights and race:

After the adoption by the General Assembly of the 1995 Act, the City of Winston-Salem adopted an annexation ordinance in which it proposed to annex land close to the town limits of Bethania. The plaintiffs brought this action to block the annexation. They alleged that they were residents of the true Bethania, a town of 2,500 acres which preceded the town which was purportedly created by the 1995 Act and that they resided on land which the City of Winston-Salem proposed to annex. They also alleged that they were African-Americans, as were most of the residents of the area which the City of Winston-Salem proposed to annex, and that they were deprived of the right to vote in municipal elections in the revived Town of Bethania in violation of Article II, Section 24 and Article XIV, Section 3 of the Constitution of North Carolina as well as the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States.<sup>158</sup>

The court denied this argument, saying,

Plaintiffs were not deprived of their right to vote in elections in the new Town of Bethania where their property was included in the alleged Town of Bethania created in 1839, but not in the smaller town created by the General Assembly in 1995. Plaintiffs have never voted in Bethania and have not been denied a right which they previously possessed. The North Carolina Supreme Court does not believe that the Fifteenth Amendment to the U. S. Constitution requires that any particular area must be included in a newly created town in order that residents of that area may vote in municipal elections.<sup>159</sup>

---

<sup>157</sup> North Carolina Court of Appeals. 126 NC App. 783 (96-1083), Judge Mark D. Martin, July 15, 1997.

<sup>158</sup> North Carolina Supreme Court. No. 402PA97. July 30, 1998.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

The issue of the legal identity of the present town of Bethania and the relationship of anyone living outside Bethania's municipal boundaries but within the Town Lot boundaries was thus disposed. But the question of the identity of Bethania as "place" was not so easily set aside, and it was not a matter that could be suppressed by a court decision. Deborah Thompson, who was on the first appointed board of Bethania, was mayor of Bethania when she was quoted in a 2003 article, responding to the African Americans who were continuing their attempts to be included in Bethania.

The 1995 incorporation kept the AME Zion Church and many black families in the Bethania town limits, said Bethania mayor Deborah Stolz Thompson. She acknowledged the "strong historical association" between nearby blacks and Bethania, but she said that including all descendants of slaves would make the town too big.

"As an original descendant myself, I feel like any descendant has a legitimate right to be in the town of Bethania, but as time moves forward it becomes more difficult," Thompson said. "If I lived in Clemmons, it would be hard for me to claim to be part of Bethania."

She said that Bethania-Rural Hall Road is closer to Main Street than Clemmons is, but the town had to draw the lines somewhere.

"It's your definition of what was considered Bethania. Bethania has only been a town since 1995."<sup>160</sup>

Clemmons is some twelve or thirteen miles southwest of Bethania, while the portion of Bethania-Rural Hall Road being discussed is directly contiguous to and partially within the 1995 boundaries of Bethania. The people of Clemmons had no idea of appealing to Bethania for anything, while in the article cited above, Thompson was responding to a direct appeal for recognition by blacks of Bethania.

Thompson said that she and the Board of Commissioners wanted to take in the historic black area of Bethania-Rural Hall Road, but that City Manager Bill Stuart of

---

<sup>160</sup> David Ingram, "Rooted in the Land: Blacks in Bethania say they are trying to preserve overlooked heritage, *Winston-Salem Journal*, June 16, 2003, sec. A1.

Winston-Salem would not consider it. Stuart's comment about the matter was strikingly unsympathetic toward any claim of historical significance from anyone:

“Who you're descended from has no impact on where we draw boundaries,” Stuart said. “If you can make the case for Bethania, then why isn't Salem Incorporated separately? Maybe it's because history is not all that important. Who you're descended from is not all that important.”<sup>161</sup>

City manager Stewart conveniently ignored the many special protections that girded Old Salem. The Salem Historic District was formed out of substantial governmental and community interest in exactly the subject he discounted -- history. Perhaps the argument was actually the converse, that “who you're descended from” is critical.

Bethania entered the twenty-first century with a number of benefits derived from its National Register identity. In 2002 Bethania was designated a National Historic Landmark (NHL) by the National Park Service and the Keeper of the National Register. This designation was founded on the 500-acre National Register Amendment and Boundary Increase we had prepared in 1990 and that was approved in 1991, with some notable exceptions. The NHL only carried its period of significance to 1822, the date of the ending of the lease system in Bethania, and it focused on the Reuter Plan.

The North Carolina Department of Transportation was prevailed upon to provide monies that funded the moving of historic buildings not originally in the Bethania Town Lot, from the countryside north of Bethania into the lower intersection of Main Street. The old Alpha Chapel and the Wolf-Moser House were brought into Bethania, refurbished to an original configuration, and made into the Bethania Visitor Center. This was funded by monies from the federal enhancement program in the form of four separate grants funneled

---

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

through NCDOT totaling \$475,689.00 with a twenty percent match from the Town of Bethania.<sup>162</sup>

State money has also been substantially invested in the purchase of land within the Bethania Historic District and within or contiguous to the municipal boundaries of Bethania. Since 1997, the Piedmont Land Conservancy, in an arrangement by which it applied State of North Carolina Natural Heritage Trust funds, has purchased a substantial number of parcels of the Black Walnut Bottom and land within the Bethania core area.

In its Spring 2009 newsletter, the Piedmont Land Conservancy reported that in partnership with the NC Department of Cultural Resources, it had facilitated the purchase of a 70-acre tract in the Black Walnut Bottom. This was done with a grant from the NC Natural Heritage Fund, bringing the total state ownership of land in the Bethania Historic District to over 150 acres.<sup>163</sup> This latest purchase is outside the boundaries of the municipality of Bethania, but adjacent to the town line.

The Forsyth County GIS site (Sept. 16, 2008) recorded that 83 acres of the 150 acres held by the state in the Bethania Historic District is within the Bethania municipal boundaries. Assuming that the present municipality of Bethania is 400 acres, then the State of North Carolina owns approximately one-fifth of the town, plus an additional 70 acres of the Black Walnut Bottom directly against the town limits.

This largess stands in contrast to the efforts of the African American residents just outside the boundaries of today's Bethania and just outside the Bethania Historic District. From their perspective they, their land and their heritage are in Bethania as well, but they

---

<sup>162</sup> Lisa R. Boone, "Village Anew: Bethania realizes longtime goal of restoration for visitor's center," *Winston-Salem Journal*, February 13, 2007.

<sup>163</sup> Piedmont Land Conservancy, "Eighth Project Completed in Historic Bethania," *Landlines*, 19, No. 1 (Spring 2009), 5.

watch the history of their place, symbolized in the houses, buildings, roadways, fields and woods of their ancestors, decay and fall away. For many of them, that boundary is just across the road or just next door, and their question can be summarized, “I am from Bethania. Why do those boundaries not acknowledge my land, my heritage, and me?”

## CHAPTER 7

### ETHNICITY AND BOUNDARIES

The discussion about the Moravians in North Carolina is certainly focused on boundaries and ethnicity. These discussions of Moravians in North Carolina involve issues of boundaries and ethnicity in a modern and urban context, and they pose a number of complications. Frederik Barth, in his seminal evaluation of the criteria for ethnic identity and boundaries involving the traditional subjects of anthropological study, is less certain about how to address modern ethnicity and the quest for political power in industrial societies. He said that people who are political innovators are concerned, to a great extent, with the selection of signals of identity with the assertion of the value of these signals, and with the suppression of contrary signals. Barth contends that we must give substantial attention to what signals or select traditions people revive to justify identity. He has argued that signals chosen both within and between groups are important sources for the distribution of influence.<sup>164</sup> I would add that the signals chosen are also an important source of power, to the extent that “power” is distinct from “influence.”

Barth was prescient in identifying the issues that would be faced by ethnic communities such as those formed by the Moravians, and his comments above speak directly to the conditions produced by selections in Bethania. His concepts have provided a useful

---

<sup>164</sup> Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, 35.

framework for considering the processes that have operated in Bethania from 1987 to the present.

Barth proposes a distinction between cultural content and socially relevant factors such as membership in an ethnic group and the establishment of the boundaries pertinent to that membership. In his view, ascription, both by members within the ethnic group and by outsiders, is the critical feature of that group. He says,

The cultural features that signal the boundary may change, and the cultural characteristics of the members may likewise be transformed, indeed, even the organizational form of the group may change – yet the fact of continuing dichotomization between members and outsiders allows us to specify the nature of continuity, and investigate the changing cultural form and content.<sup>165</sup>

While agreeing with this argument in principle, I think, additionally, that the ethnic boundary, as proposed by Barth, can be reified by the presence of a coterminous material landscape saturated with cultural content. Further, the effect of a definable landscape and its cultural content is greatly heightened if it has been present across successive generations and there is significant ethnic symbolism in what was put in place by progenitors of the ethnic group.

Barth does state that while the boundaries that are of importance in the study of an ethnic group are social boundaries, they “may have territorial counterparts.”<sup>166</sup> I argue that if these “counterparts” are present and have been present through successive generations of the ethnic group then the “territorial counterpart” becomes greatly informative of the system in which the ethnic group operates and has operated. “Place” becomes one of the overt symbols used by the ethnic group to establish identity. This identification on the basis of relationship to a culturally and ethnically identifiable place can operate even though the carrier of that

---

<sup>165</sup> Ibid., 14-15.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid.



identity is not present in that bounded landscape. “I am from Bethania,” or “I am a Bethanian” may hold as an identifier even though the individual making that statement does not physically live there. In this instance the key factor is self-ascription, acknowledged by fellow Bethanians, but also dependent on relationship to bounded place on the landscape.

This maintenance of a stable and ethnically identifiable set of material touchstones through successive generations sustains one of the basic tenets of ethnic identity. The effectiveness of material reification of ethnic identity as a political tool is dependant on having boundaries formally recognized in the political arena, particularly with material evidence of that cultural or ethnic identity recognized on a political level. The issue then becomes one of the selection or suppression and denial of cultural signals for achieving goals of politically authoritative ethnicity.

As is clearly seen in the case of Bethania, the drawing of cultural boundaries on the ground entered the realm of conflicting views of the nature of that cultural content and the resulting political authority gained or lost by people within that context. In Bethania, determining the correlation between ethnic identity and cultural content became a matter of access to formal politically recognized identity, access that took a number of different forms and was brought to bear in selective ways. The succession of activities in Bethania over the past twenty years, including the designation of Bethania as a National Historic Landmark, the creation of the municipality of Bethania, and the acquisition of the Black Walnut Bottom by the State of North Carolina, can be analyzed in terms of their efficacy, and beyond that of their longer-term effects.

The initial conflict in the mid-1980s centered on the position of an ethnic minority, the Moravians, and the relatively undefined Moravian town of Bethania, in opposition to the

expanding city of Winston-Salem. Further, because the central threat was a major highway project, the city of Winston-Salem was allied to the power and wealth of the North Carolina Department of Transportation, producing a major imbalance in political weight and authority. Without some form of intervention, a massive intrusion of an interstate-scale highway corridor and attendant secondary development generated by the presence of the highway would severely impact the town, its Moravians, and other residents of the town and area.

A careful study conducted by Martha Boxley and I confirmed the significance of Bethania's origins within Wachovia and beyond that within the context of frontier expansion in North Carolina, the region and the broader country. It further confirmed the relative stability of the "cultural content," that is the fabric of the town including its natural landforms, its church, architecture (domestic, business, and otherwise), lot system, road system and agricultural fields. The study also demonstrated the significance of Bethania through time, and confirmed the presence of generational descendants of the original settlers of Bethania and Wachovia, a frequently emphasized determinant of an ethnic group. The study demonstrated the ongoing continuity of place and people, a community of people with access to the authority of particular historic processes, viewed in the present day as having significance on the local, regional and national levels.

Based on that information and the pressing need to defend the little community from the massive intrusion of a highway planned by the City of Winston-Salem, tools were rapidly sought. The National Register of Historic Places was selected as the primary tool because of its demonstrated ability to elevate perception and awareness of cultural significance and on the formal ability of inclusion in that program to forestall intrusion on a resource that would damage its significant cultural content. Presentations were also made to various decision-

making bodies stating the historic significance of Bethania, but these were found to carry little weight without the foundation of formal recognition.

In terms of Barth's scheme, the National Register forced an emphasis on the cultural content of Bethania, meaning material content, rather than on ethnic content, meaning the extant culture-bearing group (or groups). This is a common position on the part of the formulaic approach of the National Register, which emphasizes "integrity," typically meaning historically significant material content, which has had physical stability through time. Alteration, rot and decay, relocation, incompatible intrusions, etc. are all factors that can destroy "integrity" and prevent inclusion on the National Register. Consequently, with this material focus, the National Register is ill prepared to address the more subtle issues of ethnic durability and presence.

Beyond this focus on material content, however, the presence of the significant ethnic group within Bethania was one of our foremost considerations in the Town Lot Study. We recognized that one of the most meaningful aspects of the community was the longevity of the interrelationship between the ethnic group and material content of their place. The present day inhabitants were informed of their identity not only by information transmitted orally, from generation to generation, but also by surviving material structure, in its broadest sense, that their ancestors had set upon the landscape.

Material structure, informative of identity through time, was found in the architectural forms chosen for the houses, in the deep traditional order in which the lots and the fields, roads and yards were placed on the landscape, and in the integration of this informed plan with forests, creeks and ridges. Bethania, in its unique form and structure, was historically distinct from any other place in the region, and continued so into the 1980s. This was true

whether this distinction was consciously realized or not by the inhabitants, and it provided the grounding for “being from Bethania.” This integration of place and people was voiced by the individual in Chapter 5 who spoke so tellingly of the nexus between ethnicity and the stuff of culture that existed as he lived and grew up in Bethania.

Because of the continuity of this ethnic and cultural interrelationship, the period of significance for the National Register Amendment and Boundary Increase was brought to 1940, the fifty year limit allowed by the Register. We felt this half-century period was an unnecessary limitation on the period of significance, but within the National Register formula it is very difficult to bring a period of significance closer than fifty years in the past. This stricture limits recognition of a contemporary ethnic population as a component of significance.

That being said, the immediate task was to prevent the intrusion of a beltway corridor through the town and that could be accomplished by applying the narrow scope of a National Register statement of historical significance and integrity over a broad expanse of landscape. Because the formation of a National Register nomination is an intricate, detailed and time-consuming process, we initially chose to demonstrate the most readily visible features of the resource after insuring that the entirety of the Bethania Town Lot was on the National Register Study List.

The initial phase was accomplished by correlating the historic maps of the 1759 plan for Bethania to the current landscape and documenting the active presence of that plan on the present-day landscape, resulting in the 500-acre National Register District. That action, coupled to the remainder of the land remaining on the Study List, moved the potential beltway corridors outside the Town Lot.

The emphasis on historical “integrity” of the material content of the place produced a particular bounded area on the landscape that reflected this formulaic method of addressing historical significance. This method, while it provides a specific kind of recognition and formal protection, should not be viewed as the definitive statement of why a place is historically and currently important in our society.

This approach is problematic in that it forces “recognition” of “significance” into an extremely limited schematic, and results in the kind of behavior Barth observed in his discussion of manipulating selection of ethnic signals in order to gain political advantage. Codification in this manner will automatically establish ethnic exclusivity, and can, in that process, bring about the elimination of significant features through selective presentation of vital elements of ethnic identity and cultural content.

In order to establish political significance for an ethnic identity, important parts may be pared off and denied. Moravian Bishop August Spangenberg warned in the eighteenth century about the danger of “cutting the foot to fit the shoe,” and that simile, while gruesome, illustrates the potential results of such choices.

While the application of the National Register removed the threat of the highway and elevated awareness of Bethania as a historical resource it did not address certain root problems. One of these was a careful determination and recognition of the content of the ethnic population or populations. The limitation of the National Register process to formally address factors outside its formulaic approach requires some examination. Particularly problematic is the inability of an instrument that is heavily weighted toward significant material objects to meaningfully deal with the complex issues of the significance of existing

populations. There is no governmental counterpart to the National Register to address such issues.

Most people in North Carolina think of Moravians as descended from German-speaking central Europeans, a result of the origins of the denomination in fourteenth century Bohemia and Moravia. In practice, however, the Moravian Church has drawn from people across many nationalities and ethnic groups. In the New World, black Moravians have been participants in Moravian society from the outset. Further, it can be argued that slavery in Wachovia placed the enslaved members of the community in the position of enforced participation in Moravian ethnicity.

Many of these enslaved individuals were required to become German speakers in order to perform required tasks and duties, and their forced involvement in Moravian homes and institutions also increased acculturation. The direct participation of a number of enslaved African Americans in Moravian religion arguably deepened their own identification with Moravian culture and place. Add to this a succession of generations participating in these signals of Moravian ethnicity, and the question of black entitlement to these signals as a source of local black ethnicity arises. This is not to say that black ethnicity within the historic Moravian context is coterminous with white Moravian ethnicity. Each group arguably had differing perceptions of what various objects or places might be and might mean.

Leland Ferguson has argued that the cultural use of material by enslaved African Americans in rural South Carolina, specifically the African-American production of pottery, speaks to an ethnicity derived from African origins and not from the influences of white

ethnicity and culture. He has argued that their ethnicity emphasized a corporate resistance to their enslaved condition in a system of reciprocal support of one another.<sup>167</sup>

Although the colono ware that Ferguson used in his analysis is apparently absent in the piedmont of North Carolina, the dynamics of black corporate ethnic identity and corporate resistance Ferguson read in that ware might be expected in the Moravian towns, farms and plantations where Moravians held slaves. These historic dynamics certainly affect present-day black ethnicity in Bethania. Likewise, present-day white ethnicity must be affected by the historically rooted values of white slaveholders.

In Tim Ingold's concepts of ecological relationships, inspired by Gregory Bateson's earlier thoughts on ecology, people are enmeshed in their environment through "dwelling," in which "Both the land and the living beings who inhabit it are caught up in the same, ongoing historical process".<sup>168</sup> Following Ingold, it could be said that each group in Bethania was and has been dwelling on the same land but in different landscapes.

The two landscapes, however, are derived from the historically shared relationships between these groups, with one another and with the land. These commonly shared relationships with the place by living members of both groups can be expected to continue. This argument can certainly be supported for two ethnic groups commonly sharing an interrelated history and commonly shared aspects of landscape.

Even if a level of separation is assumed that has produced two contemporary ethnic groups, there is still the shared commonality of symbolic "Bethania" by each group -- a symbol central to the cultural content of the identity and ethnicity of each. The content and

---

<sup>167</sup> Leland Ferguson, "Struggling with Pots in South Carolina," in *Images of the Recent Past: Readings in Historical Archaeology*, ed. Charles Orser (Walnut Creek, CA: Altimira Press, 1996).

<sup>168</sup> Ingold, *The Perception of the Environment*, 139.

identity of that landscape and its operation as a cultural signal for Bethania became an issue when entitlement to that signal was challenged.

The ability to successfully claim the political authority of that ethnic/cultural nexus is problematic. In the case of Bethania, identity and landscape rapidly devolved into internal ascription issues based on location on the cultural landscape. In these terms the application of a National Register Amendment and Boundary Increase in Bethania, to be staged over two successive projects, went awry, foundering on the shoals of ethnic identity, position on the landscape, the selection of relevant signals of ethnicity and political intentions.

As Sam Lucy has cautioned, old lessons of the misuse of identity to justify political claims continue to be applicable today.<sup>169</sup> Lucy also points out, however, that ethnicity is only partially self-defined, it also derives from a dialectic relationship with another group. Further, ethnicity may be flexible, but it is not infinitely malleable. To be effective, it must make contact with the actual experience of the people involved, and the symbols of ethnicity “have to resonate with people’s usual practices and experiences.”<sup>170</sup> While the compilation of National Register Boundaries in Bethania was based on rigorous observation of historical presence and use of the landscape, these demonstrable symbols were subsequently manipulated to justify inclusion and exclusion.

The key factor in Bethania was access to ethnic political power by a group, largely white, based on historic relationship to the landscape compared to the inability of the other group, largely black, to access corresponding power from the same landscape. Denial of participation occurred because the group holding political authority, based on formally recognized ethnic identity, drew municipal boundaries on a portion of the historic landscape

---

<sup>169</sup> Lucy, “Ethnic and Cultural Identities,” 87.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., 96-97.



on the basis of the authority of the National Register. This group accompanied this action with strident denial that the parsed out area had ever had any historic significance.

The choice of the National Register Amendment and Boundary Increase dimensions as being coterminous with the political dimensions of the proposed municipality raises a number of concerns about that use of the National Register identity. First, the process by which a National Register identity is determined calls into question its applicability and use by those who intended to incorporate Bethania as an indicator of appropriate political boundaries and the political content of those boundaries.

The National Register was selected as a tool to demonstrate significance according to the criteria for recognition, and the dimensions of the resulting 500-acre National Register District met those criteria and demonstrated the cultural significance of the district. The documentation of these criteria of significance ended the plans for a damaging intrusion of that cultural content by the North Carolina Department of Transportation and the City of Winston-Salem. It does not necessarily follow, however, that the National Register District formed appropriate boundaries for a municipality.

The political dimension of a National Register District is not universally applicable to every political situation or activity. A National Register process that has been truncated for political reasons and not carried to full completion is particularly suspect. When influence of the National Register is elevated beyond its capacity to identify rights of participation, in matters that have meaning beyond its narrow formulation, the use of its limited formality to determine inclusion or exclusion is inappropriate.

Applying an incomplete National Register study or an incomplete application of results of study for political denial of historically significant features raises ethical questions

about use of the National Register for political exclusion. Further, even if the additional landscape, cultural content, and ethnic group related to that landscape were not able to meet the narrow formulaic criteria of the National Register, the inappropriate use of those criteria to deny political membership still stands as an ethical consideration. Although the political environment may not assign importance to such ethical considerations, the process of determining historical significance should be examined by preservation policy makers with these ethical questions in mind.

These problems of ethics and participation are inherent in the National Register process. Our selection of this tool at the outset was based on the need to interrupt the actions of two political entities, the City of Winston-Salem, and the North Carolina Department of Transportation. My view was that the rigorous demonstration of significant historical features on the landscape would answer that need, putting in operation procedural barriers to the proposed beltway. This functioned as planned. However, the political ramifications of this action were inherently implicit in using the National Register, whether these ramifications were explicated or not.

The political power contained in the National Register might be compared to the Genie in the bottle, which upon release is found to have a different character than expected. A statement of historical significance and the authority that results from that significance have ethical implications that extend beyond responsibilities to architecture and objects, to impacts on the living community.

In Bethania's 1995 incorporation, those residents of the town who were involved in determining the dimensions to be approved by the legislature assumed the position of a minority in opposition to the City of Winston-Salem. And as a minority, they acquiesced in

restrictions which Winston-Salem placed on the rights of Bethania to further annex land. Yet these Bethanians were in fact using the authority of the National Register recognition to establish their entitlement to act in their own behalf as a town. This action limited the geographical dimensions of the town, while also limiting consideration of broader National Register significance.

This use of that authority meshes with Mark Leone's concept of "ideology" as making social relations appear inevitable because they are contained in nature or history. If the social relations are historical then "precedent" is established. His argument is that a "society which looks to history as a guide for actions taken in the present, a continuum with the past may be made to appear inevitable when it is actually arbitrary. Thus, the class or interest group which controls the use of precedent does so to insure its own interests."<sup>171</sup>

In our discussion about Bethania, we can follow Leone's scheme regarding the precedence of history, and not only because of the authority of the historical plan that is seen to be on the landscape. It gains additional authority of "precedence" because the plan is formally assigned significance within the powerful identity of a National Register/National Historic Landmark landscape. The identity greatly heightens historical "precedence" as the currency with which ethnic identity and ideology are merged to justify inclusion of the empowered and exclusion of those lacking power.

In Bethania's case, in order for this process of inclusion versus exclusion to operate, a portion of the arguably significant landscape must be abandoned and the systemic relationship of the excluded portion to the whole denied. Concomitant with the denial of the

---

<sup>171</sup> Mark Leone, "Interpreting Ideology in Historical Archaeology: Using the Rules of Perspective in the William Paca Garden in Annapolis, Maryland," in *Images of the Recent Past: Readings in Historical Archaeology*, ed. Charles Orser (Walnut Creek, CA: Altimira Press, 1996), 372-373.

existence of a portion of the historic plan on the landscape is a denial of the presence of a portion of the historic population.

The denial of Bethania's historic African American population began when they were removed from residence within Bethania's core area in post-bellum times to residences encircling the core area. Following Leone's argument (and Barth's), the arbitrary determination of boundaries was made to appear to be inevitable and properly based on the "precedence" of history.

Those outside the existing National Register District, who were also entitled to that historical authority but did not have formal recognition, were denied inclusion in the town. The absence of the formal recognition of the National Register prevented their entitlement based on their history, their "precedence," as an ethnic group located within the historic cultural boundaries of Bethania. Formal recognition was the operational term and its weight prevented the excluded group from prevailing in their attempt to be included in Bethania or in their attempt to resist annexation by Winston-Salem.

These circumstances led to substantial conflict between the two groups as well as those who supported or opposed either side. The identification of the excluded group with the 2,500-acre Town Lot was carried into the courts of North Carolina in an attempt to establish their historical relationship to Bethania through judicial rulings. Although this challenge was carried to the North Carolina Supreme Court, those outside the newly established boundaries were ultimately ruled against.

There have been long-lasting implications for the excluded group, who continue to press to identify their ethnicity with Bethania. They, however, cannot effectively use any historically determined political authority, for in fact they have relatively little. As a result,

these excluded Bethanians see substantial governmental resources applied on the basis of historical significance to the core area in the form of grants and other services, while they receive none.

Members of this outside community are not unaware of the moving and placement of a rural farmhouse from outside the Bethania Town Lot into core Bethania as a visitor center. While this farmhouse was legitimately a historically significant building, its original location was not in the Bethania Town Lot, and it required major restoration before it was usable. Similarly a Moravian Chapel was moved to Bethania and also became part of the visitor center complex. These acquisitions were done at the expenditure of approximately one half million dollars in public money, and were accomplished because of the National Register identity of Bethania and its subsequent listing as a National Historic Landmark.

At the same time, the African American community of Bethania-Rural Hall Road saw their houses associated with their historic relationship to Bethania posted with demolition notices. Their personal resources are not sufficient to maintain many of these older structures, they are under pressure from an expanding Winston-Salem, and they have no National Register identity or significance to prompt providing their ethnic group with assistance.

The thrust of this discussion is the misuse of the National Register process, and beyond that the inability of the National Register to move very far from a focus on material content, and the “integrity” of that content. Architecture in particular is a dominant focal point. Viewing the initial application of the National Register to expand Bethania’s identity for its protection from a beltway twenty years in the past allows evaluation of the long-term effects of the use of this tool. The results for those excluded are not beneficial.

In 2008 Martha Hartley and I participated with Ali Shabazz in the preparation of a local historical marker, erected by the city of Winston-Salem and dedicated in October of that year. The sign, with the title “Bethania Freedmen’s Community,” acknowledges the presence of a post-Civil War Bethania Freedman’s Community on Bethania-Rural Hall Road. This recognition has partially altered the visibility of this community and prompted a news article on the community,<sup>172</sup> as well as an editorial in the *Winston-Salem Journal* entitled “Recognition Time,” that began with the comment, “A community of freed slaves that sprang up in the Bethania area after the Civil War is finally getting the recognition it deserves.”<sup>173</sup> This recognition, however, has not yet resulted in recognizable political capital.

The town of Bethania has also erected a sign on the site of a schoolhouse for black children within its town limits. Shortly after the erection of this sign, Bethania celebrated its 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary on June 12, 2009, but the sign was not dedicated during that observance as had been expected, according to Shabazz.

These actions reflect issues on a broader scale, as there have been efforts within archaeology in the United States to address issues of existing populations and their access to the authority of history. Such efforts have come notably from archaeologists in the Annapolis, Maryland area, from a group led by Mark Leone, Parker Potter, and others. These critiques speak to the implications of archaeological research, whose story is involved, and how the story is applied. Just as the National Register process is open to criticism, so is our responsibility as archaeologists. As an English archaeologist, also wrestling with these issues, Barbara Bender has said,

---

<sup>172</sup> Mary Giunca, “Freedmen’s Plots: Former slaves settled into a community near Bethania after the Civil War, started new lives,” *Winston-Salem Journal*, October 28, 2008, sec. B1.

<sup>173</sup> Editorial, “Recognition Time,” *Winston-Salem Journal*, November 2, 2008, A 22.

[A]rchaeologists are, whether they like it or not, dragged into contemporary politics. They can shrug and say that their role is simply to provide the information, that what is done with it is not their concern, or they can take some responsibility--which may mean getting involved in complicated, and sometimes contradictory, activities.<sup>174</sup>

It may seem from the previous discussion of the problems of the Bethania African American community, that the core area of Bethania and the 500-acre National Register District has greatly benefited over the past twenty years, but the long-term effects within the town have been mixed. Gentrification is taking hold in Bethania as older residents pass away and houses are sold. The town is now attractive to people who desire a prestigious address within the Moravian context, much the same way that houses in Salem are desirable. These are not necessarily people of Moravian ancestry, but people who enjoy the aura and atmosphere of a historic house in a historic community. Their care of the historic architecture and appreciation of the town is laudable, but it should also be recognized as distinct cultural change within the community.

The town is also moving toward becoming a museum rather than a living community in the sense that elements are set aside for purposes of preservation rather than use. The movement of major portions of the Black Walnut Bottom out of active farming into the hands of the State of North Carolina is an aspect of this museum mentality. Where a decade ago there was active planting and cultivation, now “farming” is reserved for the demonstration of horse and plow agriculture on a rare day, maybe once a year, and on a very small portion of the bottom. In 2007 the town of Bethania was reported to have approached the State of North Carolina for a ‘memorandum of understanding’ which would allow the town to use and maintain the land owned by the state.<sup>175</sup> The request was an indication of

---

<sup>174</sup> Barbara Bender, *Stonehenge: Making Space* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1998), 9-10.

<sup>175</sup> Lisa R. Boone, “Bethania Wants OK to maintain land,” *Winston-Salem Journal*, May 29, 2007.

concern about the state-owned lands by the town at that time, and as of July, 2009, the Black Walnut Bottom lands owned by the state continue to lie fallow, with much of it now overgrown. Similarly, the 1899 Bethania roller mill, which was in continuous operation for over 100 years, passed out of the last miller's hand in 2007, and the building purchased for "adaptive reuse." In this case it has been converted to "Shoppes at Bethania Mill."

The question for preservationists becomes one of what is being saved and what is being lost, and for whom?



## EPILOGUE

As “Choices on the Land” was nearing completion, another example of the limitations of the National Register surfaced. The African American community of Bethania continued to seek recognition of its history into 2009, and Mr. Ali Shabazz from that community appealed to the Forsyth County and Winston-Salem City-County planning staff for assistance. A. Paul Norby, Director of Planning replied that his staff would enquire to the North Carolina State Preservation Office for an opinion on the potential of Shabazz’s neighborhood for listing in the National Register. Norby illustrated the restrictive authority of the National Register in his comment,

As for local landmark designation it is the practice of the Forsyth County Historical Resources Commission to only recommend properties and districts for local designation *that are first listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Once that occurs, applications for local designation can be prepared and submitted by the property owner* [emphasis added].<sup>176</sup>

This Forsyth County Historical Resources Commission policy reduced Shabazz’s options for recognition of his neighborhood as a historic district to the criteria of the National Register.

Shabazz’s appeal resulted in Michelle M. McCullough, Historic Resources Coordinator, Forsyth County Historic Resources Commission sending a letter to Ann V. Swallow, National Register Coordinator, North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office. McCullough stated, in part,

---

<sup>176</sup> A. Paul Norby, FAICP, Director of Planning, City/County Planning , Letter to Mr. Ali Shabazz, January 27, 2009.

As you know, Mr. Ali Shabazz, a local resident, and his family have long been concerned about the gradual loss of their neighborhood's historic integrity. They would especially like to see substantial recognition and remediation for six of its oldest homes, built between 1895 and 1930, that were those of freed black persons; they would also like to see the area recognized as a historic district.

Mr. Shabazz has tried before to achieve some type of historic district status for his neighborhood. In 2002, Mr. Shabazz centered his request for a historic district on the Bethania-Rural Hall Road itself, and was advised he should focus his attention on the history and people associated with the older buildings along the road rather than on the road itself. He is still interested in the creation of a local historic district, intending to preserve the heritage, and hoping that this will lead to assistance for reconstruction and repairs.<sup>177</sup>

National Register Coordinator Swallow replied,

In my review of the buildings that still stand along the road, I found very few that pre-date 1920. Of those buildings, most are in poor or ruinous condition having lost historic building materials through severe deterioration, demolition, and physical damage. This loss of historic integrity impairs our ability today to see or understand what the area looked like during the 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Also, these houses are scattered along the road with more modern development interspersed among them. Based on the limited number of resources and their current integrity, I do not see the possibility of listing the resources along the road for their association with the 19<sup>th</sup> century or very early 20<sup>th</sup> century African American community

Another approach to evaluating the road is to look at the remaining buildings that are more than fifty years old-the historic time period according to the National Register. Toward the eastern end of the road from 1500 to 1700 Bethania-Rural Hall Road, the houses fairly consistently date to the 1930s through the 1950s, with very few modern houses within the area. Also, I noted that the short introduction to the series of building photographs states that the descendants of the same families continue to own property along the road. Unfortunately, no overview of the possible cultural or historical significance associated with the African American community during this time period is offered in the materials. If there is a historically *important* [emphasis in original] story to be told about the lives of the later generations of the first settlers prior to 1960, then the National Register listing of this portion of the road may have potential. Historic designation would be a possibility only if further study provides a clear perspective into the historical significance of the community and its families. Also, please keep in mind that this guidance is based on the road's current level of

---

<sup>177</sup> Michelle McCullough, Historic Resources Coordinator, Forsyth County Historic Resources Commission, Letter to Ann V. Swallow, National Register Coordinator, North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, Office of Archives and History, Division of Historical Resources, March 30, 2009.

historic integrity. New construction along the eastern end of the road, or the loss of the 1930s-1950s houses, would detract from that integrity.<sup>178</sup>

This narrow review neglects several important factors involved in evaluating the request. Swallow does not address the context of Bethania and particularly the 500-acre National Register District in her discussion, with no indication of what bearing that existing designation might have on a location so closely related. She does not mention any possible relationship between the African American community and the Bethania National Register District.

Nor does she propose the archaeological potential of the land of the African American community as a means of developing National Register recognition, and there appears to be no awareness of the Archaeological Survey of the Bethania Town Lot. This is particularly pertinent since the area surveyed includes the community that is under review. Swallow's agency has complete files on Bethania's National Register identity, its National Historic Landmark Identity, and as well as files of studies funded by that office through Certified Local Government grants. A Certified Local Government grant awarded through the State Historic Preservation Office funded the 1993 Archaeological Survey and should have been referenced in response to a request for guidance. In addition, there is no mention in her letter of recognition that the Bethania Town Lot, in its 2,500-acre entirety, was placed on the National Register Study List in 1988.

Further, the profound limitations of the National Register process are in full view in Swallow's response. She emphasizes architectural integrity rigidly applied as the primary determinant of significance of place, people and community. At this point, the significance

---

<sup>178</sup> Ann V. Swallow, National Register Coordinator, North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, Office of Archives and History, Division of Historical Resources, Letter to Michelle McCullough, Historic Resources Coordinator, Forsyth County Historic Resources Commission, May 11, 2009.

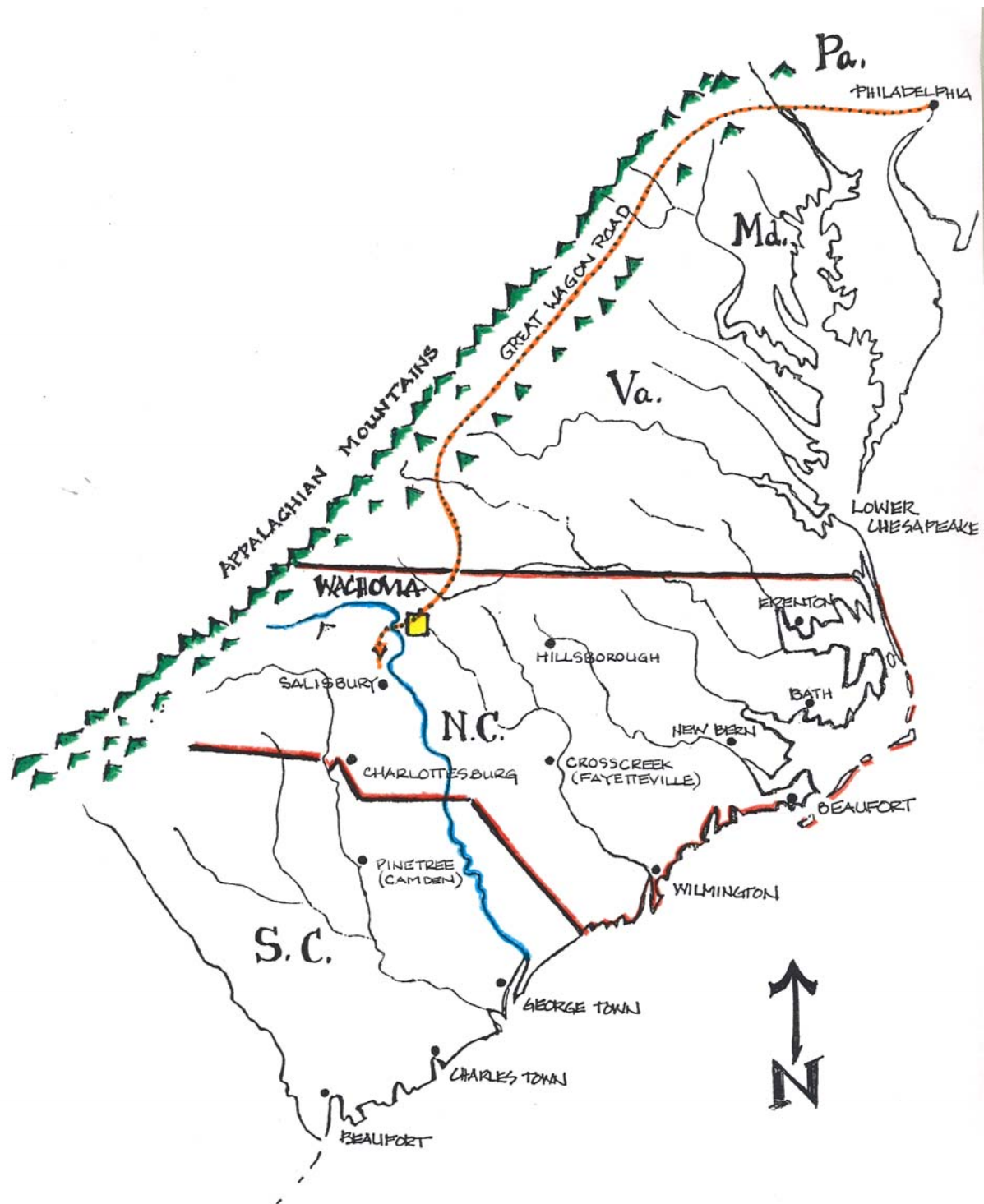
of that African American community may be seen most clearly in its perseverance in demanding recognition, in the face of the condescending statements such as “If there is a historically *important* [emphasis original] story to be told about the lives of later generations...then the National Register listing of this portion of the road might have potential.”<sup>179</sup>

Here we see the substance of the concerns voiced by DeTeel Patterson Tiller, Chief, Preservation Planning Branch, National Parks Service, in 1993, that formalized determination of “significance” overwhelms the process. To repeat Tiller, his argument was, “Simply that ethics of historic preservation are not always necessarily objectively right and true. That our public policy and professional practices are deeply rooted in specific ways of doing business that do not necessarily make sense to others.”<sup>180</sup>

---

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

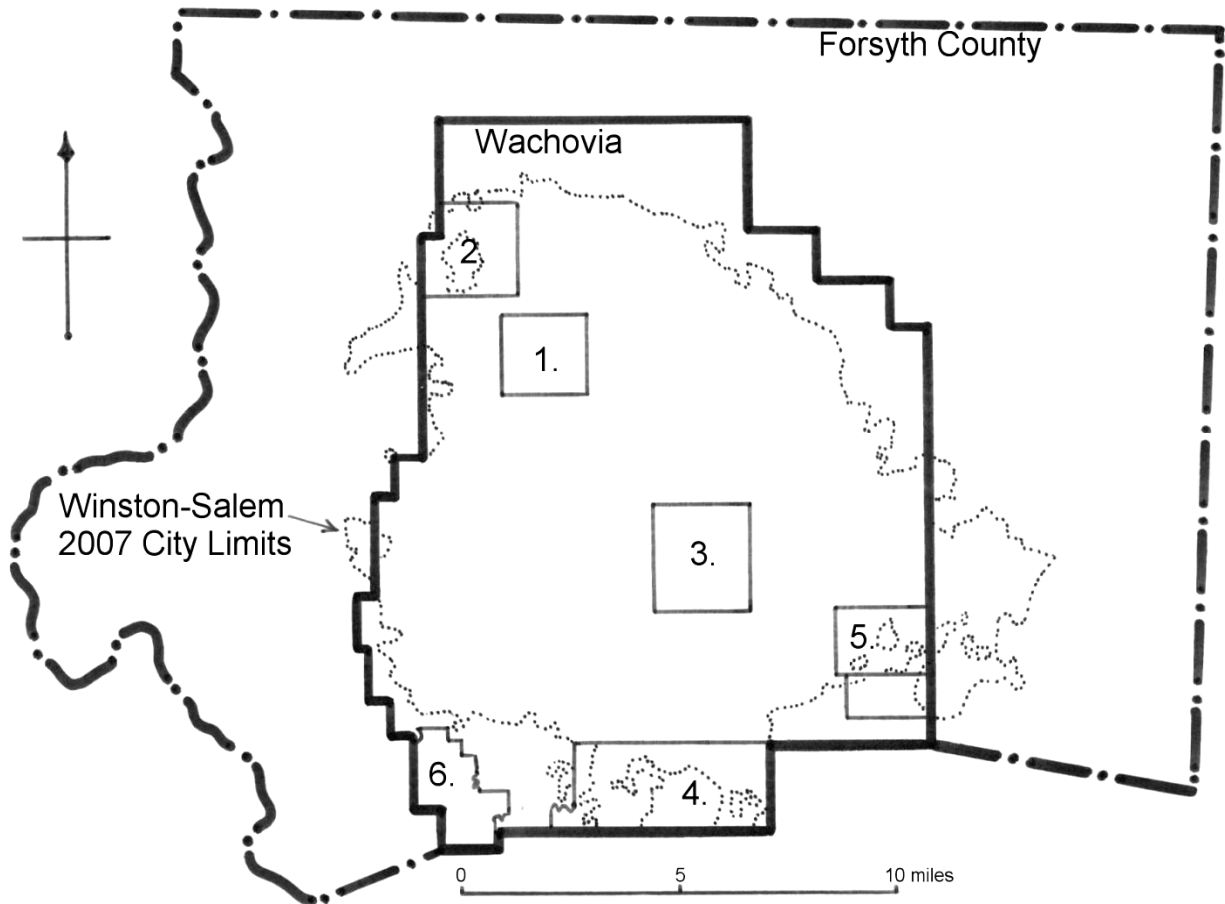
<sup>180</sup> Tiller, “Subjectivity in Ethics,” 30.



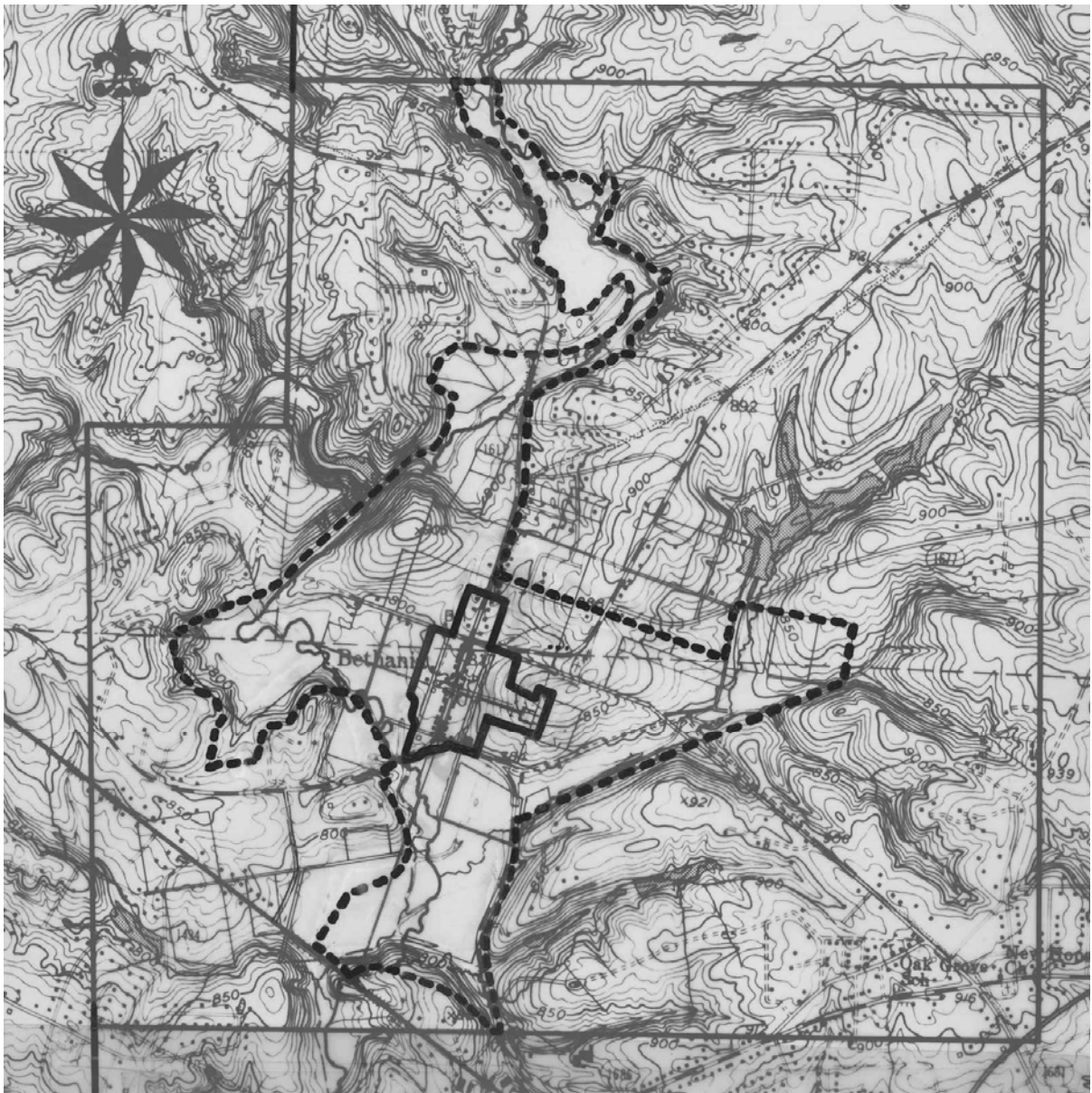
**Figure 1. Wachovia in Carolina.** Established in 1753, Wachovia became an anchor on the colonial frontier of North Carolina. August Spangenberg's choice ensured accessibility to points of trade on the coast, and for the English, the Moravian settlement provided a stable anchor in the backcountry of Carolina. Wachovia shown in yellow, the Yadkin River in blue, the Great Wagon Road in orange and North Carolina in red (Michael O. Hartley and Martha B. Hartley, 2005).



**Figure 2. Bethania Town Lot.** The 2,500-acre Town Lot of Bethania as delineated in 1771 with Muddy Creek flowing from north to south. The core residential area is shown to the right of the creek with houses dotted along either side of the main street. Martha B. Boxley and Michael O. Hartley, *Bethania Town Lot Study*, 1988, derived from P.C.G. Reuter's *Great Map of Wachovia*, begun 1758. *Great Map* in the collection of Moravian Archives, Winston-Salem, NC.

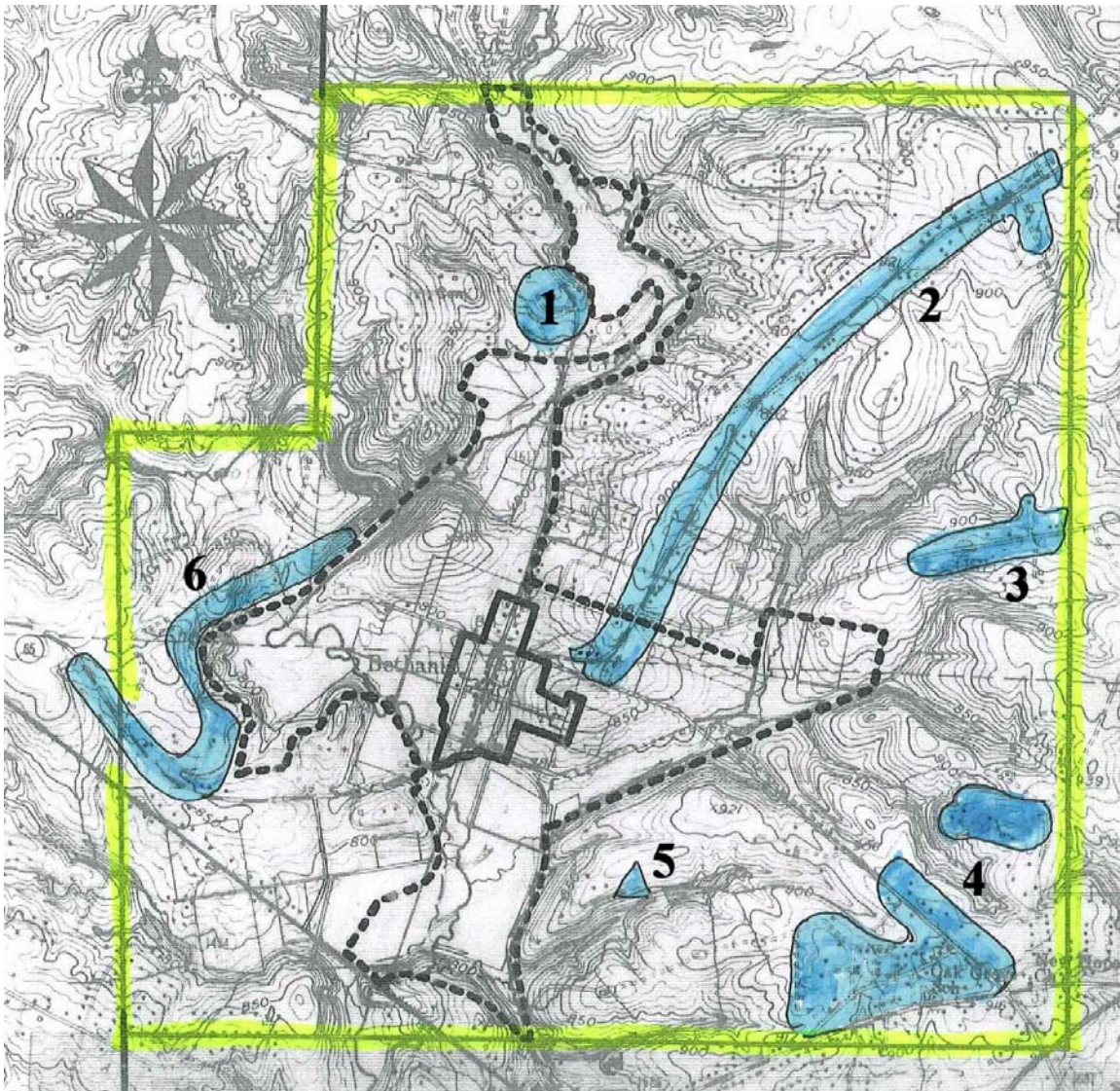


**Figure 3. Moravian Resources in Forsyth County.** This compilation of map features shows present-day Forsyth County outlined with the dash-dot line, the 1753 Wachovia with the heavy solid line, and the 2007 Winston-Salem city limits with the dotted line. The colonial Moravian congregations of Wachovia are identified by number: 1. Bethabara, 2. Bethania, 3. Salem, 4. Friedberg, 5. Friedland, and 6. Hope. The dotted line contained within the Bethania Town Lot is the municipal boundary of the town of Bethania created in 1995 (Martha B. Hartley, 2007).



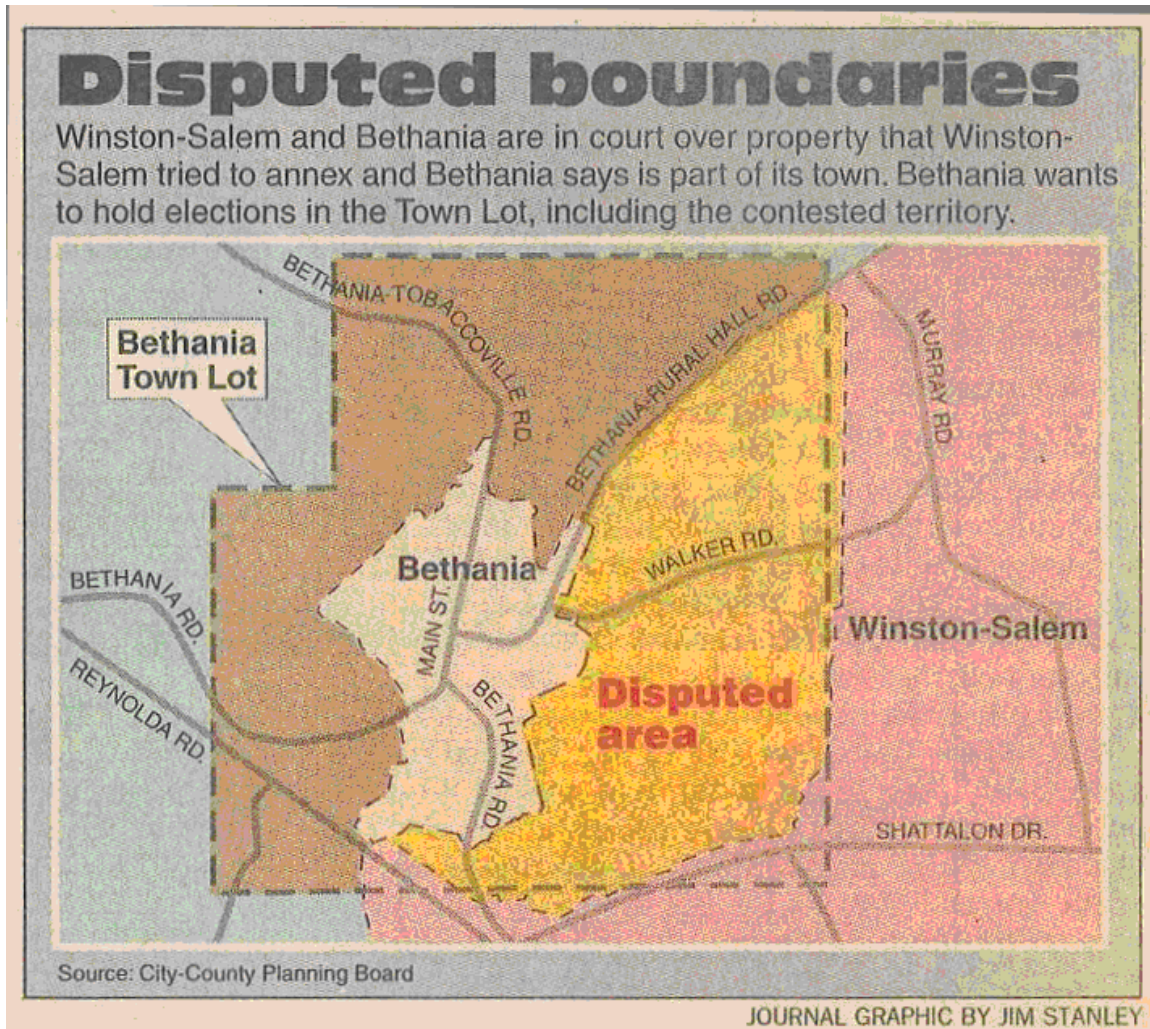
**Figure 4. The Bethania Town Lot with National Register boundaries.** The dashed line within the Town Lot shows the 500-acre boundaries of the 1991 National Register Historic District and the 2001 National Historic Landmark. The 1976 National Register District (50 acres) focused on Main Street and is outlined in the solid line within the 1991 boundaries (Martha B. Boxley and Michael O. Hartley, *Bethania Town Lot Study*, 1993; base map is Rural Hall Quad. (1971) USGS).





**Figure 5. African American areas within the Bethania Town Lot.** The African American areas within the Bethania Town Lot, but almost entirely outside the National Register boundaries, are: 1. Jones Plantation, 2. “Bethania Freedmen’s Community” along Bethania-Rural Hall Road, 3. Walker Road, 4. Washington Town, also known as Oak Grove, 5. an archaeologically located African American house ruin, and 6. enclave characterized by late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>-century African American house ruins along the bluff above the Black Walnut Bottom, joined to an extant African American neighborhood along Bethania Road (Michael O. Hartley, Bethania Archaeological Survey, 1993; color overlay on Bethania Town Lot Study map, 1990; base map is Rural Hall Quad. (1971) USGS).





**Figure 6. Contested Landscape.** A *Winston-Salem Journal* graphic accompanying a 1997 article in that paper. The Bethania Commissioners in office at that time passed a resolution formally recognizing the town's borders as the 2,500-acre Bethania Town Lot. The Bethania boundaries as specified in the 1995 incorporation are shown in light pink, and the area of dispute with the city of Winston-Salem is shown in yellow (Susan E. White, *Winston-Salem Journal*, "Bethania may have jumped the gun on ruling on borders. Board adopts resolutions on 2,500 acre size and elections," April 18, 1997; used with permission of the *Winston-Salem Journal*).

### **Table 1. Selected Chronology**

1986-1988
Wachovia Study conducted.
1988
Bethania Town Lot Study begun.
1988
The Bethania Town Lot entered on the National Register of Historic Places Study List.
1989
The Bethania Preservation Plan completed.
1991
The Bethania 500-acre National Register Amendment and Boundary Increase entered on the Register.
1990-1994
The Loesch Lane project addressed and the Bethania Tavern excavation conducted.
1993
Archaeological survey of the remaining 2000 acres of the Bethania Town Lot outside the 500 acre Amendment and Boundary Increase completed.
1993
Bethania Town Lot Study ended.
1995
Municipality of Bethania created by the North Carolina Legislature.
1995
First election held in Bethania.
1996
Boundaries of the newly created municipality of Bethania challenged in court by citizens arguing for inclusion of the entire 2,500 acre Town Lot in the town.
1996
A developer builds the “Bethany Square” development in the historic orchard lots of Bethania.
1996
Contentious argument on the proper size of Bethania continues.

1997

Through the auspices of the Piedmont Land Conservancy, the State of North Carolina begins to acquire land in Bethania.

1997-1998

Court case continues through North Carolina Court of Appeals to the North Carolina Supreme Court. Supporters of the 2,500-acre size for Bethania are ruled against.

2001

Bethania is formally designated a National Historic Landmark.

2007

Grand Opening of the Bethania Visitor Center funded largely by public money.

2008

Bethania Freedmen's Community Historic Marker dedicated.

2009

Bethania celebrated its 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on June 12.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Barth, Frederik. *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference*. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1969.
- Bender, Barbara. *Stonehenge: Making Space*. Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1998.
- Bethania Historical Association. "Historical Notes," 2, No. 1. Bethania, N. C., January 1987.
- , "Minutes, Board of Directors Meeting." Bethania, N.C., April 15, 1993.
- , "Minutes, Board of Directors Meeting." Bethania, N.C., June 17, 1993.
- The Bethania Reporter*, "1997: 'Peace on Earth, Good Will to All' in Historic Bethania," 2, No. 1, Bethania, NC, January 1997.
- Bishir, Catherine W. and Michael T. Southern. *A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Piedmont North Carolina*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2003.
- Boone, Lisa R. "Village Anew: Bethania realizes longtime goal of restoration for visitor's center." *Winston-Salem Journal*, February 13, 2007.
- , "Bethania Wants OK to maintain land." *Winston-Salem Journal*, May 29, 2007.
- Church, Barbara and Edward Davis, "Architectural Report: Paving Loesch's Lane," Environmental Unit, Planning and Environmental Branch, NC Department of Transportation, August 1992.
- Crews, C. Daniel. *Bethania: A Fresh Look At Its Birth*. Moravian Archives, Winston-Salem, NC, 1993.
- Crumley, Carole. "Notes on a New Paradigm." In *Socializing Complexity: Structure, Interaction and Power in Archaeological Discourse*, edited by Sheila Kohring and Stephanie Wynne-Jones, 30-36. Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2007.
- Davis, Edward T. Architectural Historian, NCDOT, Letter to Michael Hartley, October 20, 1994
- Diaz-Andreu, Margarita, Sam Lucy, Stasa Babic, and David N. Edwards. *The Archaeology of Identity: Approaches to gender, age, status, ethnicity and religion*. Routledge -- Taylor and Francis Group, London and New York. 2005.

- Ferguson, Leland. "Struggling with Pots in South Carolina." In *Images of the Recent Past: Readings in Historical Archaeology*, edited by Charles Orser, 260-271. Walnut Creek, CA: Altimira Press, 1996.
- Forsyth County Superior Court. "Complaint," 96 CVS 3104. Annie Brown Kennedy, et al, Attorneys. May 27, 1996.
- , "Order," 96 CVS 3104. Judge L. Todd Burke, June 11, 1996.
- Fries, Adelaide L. (translator and editor) *et al. Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, vol. 1-4, Raleigh, N.C.: Edwards and Broughton Printing Co., 1922, 1925, 1926 and 1930, respectively; vol. 5,6, Raleigh, NC: North Carolina Historical Commission, 1941 and 1943, respectively; vol.7, Raleigh, NC: State Department of Archives and History, 1947; vol. 8 by Fries and Douglas L. Rights, 1954; vol. 9 by Minnie Smith, 1964; vol. 10, 11 by Kenneth Hamilton, 1966 and 1969 respectively; vol. 12, 13 by C. Daniel Crews and Lisa D. Bailey, Raleigh, NC: North Carolina Division of Archives and History, 2000 and 2006, respectively.
- General Assembly of North Carolina. Ratified Bill, Chapter 74, Senate Bill 264, 1995 Session.
- Giddens, Anthony. *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*. Berkley: University of California Press, 1986.
- Griffin, Frances. *Old Salem: An Adventure in Historic Preservation*. Winston-Salem, NC: Old Salem, Inc., 1985.
- Giunca, Mary. "Freedmen's Plots: Former slaves settled into a community near Bethania after the Civil War, started new lives." *Winston-Salem Journal*, October 28, 2008, sec. B1.
- Hartley, Michael O. "Bethania: A Colonial Moravian Adaptation," in *Another's Country: Archaeological and Historical Perspectives on Cultural Interaction in the Southern Colonies*, edited by J.W. Joseph and Martha Zierden, 111-132. Tuscaloosa, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 2002.
- , "Bethania Tavern Excavation," Project Report, Bethania Historical Association, Bethania, NC, 1992.
- , "The Bethania Town Lot Archaeological Survey." Project Report, Bethania Historical Association, State Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh, NC, and the Forsyth County Joint Historic Properties Commission, Winston-Salem, NC, 1993.
- , Bethania Town Lot Study field notes, 1990.
- , "Elizabethan Policies and the Charlestown Colony: An Ethnohistorical-Archaeological

- Analysis". In *Volumes in Historical Archaeology VIII*, edited by Stanley South. Columbia, SC: The South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, The University of South Carolina, 1989.
- . "Heinrich Schaffner and the Moravian Ceramic Tradition in Nineteenth Century Pottery in Salem." *Journal of Early Southern Decorative Arts* 31, No.1 (Summer 2005): 1-44.
- . Letter to Claudia Brown, Survey and Planning Branch, NC Department of Cultural Resources, November 13, 1996.
- . Letter to Winston-Salem/Forsyth County City-County Planning Board, July 10, 1996.
- . Memorandum to Dr. William T. Alderson, President, Old Salem, Inc., January 13, 1998.
- . "Wachovia In Forsyth." Project Report, Old Salem, Inc., The Winston-Salem Foundation, Winston-Salem, NC, 1987.
- . "Wachovia Study Proposal" August 28, 1986.
- Hartley, Michael O. and Martha Brown Boxley. "Bethania in Wachovia: A Preservation Plan." Project Report, The Winston-Salem Foundation, Wachovia Historical Society, Moravian Archives, and North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Survey and Planning Branch, Winston-Salem, NC, 1989.
- . Letter to Edward T. Davis, Planning and Environmental Unit, NCDOT, November 3, 1994.
- . Letter to Rev. John H. Kapp, President, Bethania Historical Association, September 14, 1993.
- . "Wachovia, the First Twenty Years," video recording, Old Salem, Inc., Winston-Salem, 1987.
- Hartley, Michael O. and Martha B. Hartley. "'There is None Like It': The South Fork Settlements and the Development of Colonial Wachovia." Project Report, Old Salem, Inc., NC Dept. of Cultural Resources, and the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Historic Properties Commission, Winston-Salem, NC, 2003.
- . "Town of Salem Survey." Project Report, Old Salem, Inc., NC Division of Archives and History, Survey and Planning Branch, Winston-Salem, NC, 1999.
- Herbert, Joseph M. and Deborah Joy. NCDOT Memorandum to Barbara Church, June 10, 1992.

- Horton, Hamilton. Letter to Mrs. Walter Hunter, Bethania resident, March 14, 1996.
- Ingold, Tim. *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on livelihood, dwelling and skill*. New York: Routledge -- Taylor and Francis Group, 2000.
- Ingram, David. "Rooted in the Land: Blacks in Bethania say they are trying to preserve overlooked heritage." *Winston-Salem Journal*, June 16, 2003, sec. A1.
- Kapp, Rev. John H. Letter to Henry Carter, Executive Director, The Winston-Salem Foundation, January 29, 1988.
- . Letter to Jayne Litzenberg, President, Wachovia Historical Society, January 26, 1988.
- . Letter to Thomas Harrelson, Secretary of Transportation, NCDOT, July 15, 1991.
- Kohring, Sheila and Stephanie Wynne-Jones, eds. *Socializing Complexity: Structure, Interaction and Power in Archaeological Discourse*. Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2007.
- Knight, Laura. "Neighbors continue to push to join Bethania: They look to history for help," *The Rural Hall Weekly Independent*, August 10, 1995.
- Lefler, Hugh T. and Albert Newsom. *North Carolina: The History of a Southern State*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1973.
- Lehman, Emma. "Houses in Bethania of the Olden Time." Unpublished manuscript, 1916.
- Leone, Mark P. "Interpreting Ideology in Historical Archaeology: Using the Rules of Perspective in the William Paca Garden in Annapolis, Maryland." In *Images of the Recent Past: Readings in Historical Archaeology*, edited by Charles Orser, 371-391. Walnut Creek, CA: Altimira Press, 1996.
- Loesch Lane Residents. Petition, sent under Bethania Historical Association cover letter signed by Rev. John H. Kapp to Douglas B. Waters, NCDOT Traffic Engineer, July 22, 1991.
- Lucy, Sam. "Ethnic and Cultural Identities." In *The Archaeology of Identity: Approaches to gender, age, status, ethnicity and religion*, edited by Margarita Díaz-Andreu *et al*, 86-109. New York: Routledge - Taylor and Francis Group, 2005.
- McCullough, Michelle. Historic Resources Coordinator, Forsyth County Historic Resources Commission. Letter to Ann V. Swallow, National Register Coordinator, North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, Office of Archives and History, Division of Historical Resources. March 30, 2009.
- Merrens, Harry Roy. *Colonial North Carolina in the Eighteenth Century*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1964.



- Norby, A. Paul, FAICP, Director of Planning. Letter to Mr. Ali Shabazz. January 27, 2009.
- North Carolina Court of Appeals. 126 NC App. 783 (96-1083). Judge Mark D. Martin, July 15, 1997.
- North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Study List Application, "Bethania Town Lot," April 5, 1988 (approved April 14, 1988).
- North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Survey and Planning Branch. Project Description and Contract. Bethania Preservation Plan, September 21, 1988.
- . Project Description and Contract, Bethania National Register District Boundary Expansion, January 29, 1990.
- North Carolina General Assembly. "An Act to appoint Commissioners for the Town of Bethania, in the County of Stokes." In *Private Laws of North Carolina—1838-39*. Chapter 65, 178-179 Raleigh, NC.
- . Ratified Bill, Chapter 74, Senate Bill 264. Raleigh, NC, 1995.
- North Carolina Supreme Court. No. 402PA97. July 30, 1998.
- People's Press*. Salem, North Carolina. December 19, 1856.
- Pfohl, W.S. "Bethania 1822." 1918 copy of November 1822 map produced by Friedrich Meinung. Moravian Archives, Winston-Salem.
- Piedmont Land Conservancy. "Eighth Project Completed in Historic Bethania." *Landlines*, 19, No. 1 (Spring 2009).
- Price, William S., Jr., State Historic Preservation Officer. Letter, to Michael O. Hartley and Martha B. Boxley, April 25, 1988.
- Reuter, P.C.G. "Town Lot of Bethany, Oct. 26, 1771," Winston-Salem, NC: Moravian Archives.
- Rohrer, S. Scott. "Searching for Land and God: The Pietist Migration to North Carolina in The Late Colonial Period." *The North Carolina Historical Review* 79, no.4 (October 2002): 409-439.
- . *Hope's Promise: Religion and Acculturation in the Backcountry*. Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2005.
- Sensbach, Jon F. *A Separate Canaan: The Making of an Afro-American World in North Carolina, 1763-1840*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992.

Shabazz, Ali, aka Eugene Byers, communication with author, April 2008.

Shirley, Michael. *From Congregation Town to Industrial City: Culture and Social Change in a Southern Community*. New York: New York University Press, 1994.

Stilgoe, John R. *Common Landscapes of America, 1580 to 1845*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982.

Swallow, Ann V. National Register Coordinator, North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, Office of Archives and History, Division of Historical Resources. Letter to Michelle McCullough, Historic Resources Coordinator, Forsyth County Historic Resources Commission, May 11, 2009.

Tiller, DeTeel Patterson. "Subjectivity in Ethics." In *Ethics in Preservation, Lectures Presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Council for Preservation Education*. Indianapolis, Indiana: n.p., 1993.

Tursi, Frank. "A Look to the Past: Bethania Man Works to Save History." *Winston-Salem Journal*, Feb. 19, 1989.

-----, "House Divided: Residents in and around Bethania are split over who is now in and who was left out." *Winston-Salem Journal*, October 15, 1995, sec. A1.

U.S. Department of the Interior, *National Register Bulletin 30. How to Identify, Evaluate, and Register Rural Historic Landscapes*. Review draft, 1988.

-----, *National Register Bulletin, Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Rural Historic Landscapes*, 1989, revised 1999.

U.S. Department of the Interior, National Register of Historic Places, "Bethania Historic District," 1976.

-----, "Bethania Historic District Amendment and Boundary Increase," 1990 (approved March 25, 1991).

Ward, L. Jack, P.E., Planning and Environmental Branch Manager, NCDOT. Letter to Renee Gledhill-Early, Environmental Coordinator, N.C. Department of Cultural Resources, July 9, 1993.

*The Rural Hall (NC) Weekly Independent*. "Bethania Commission Puts Patches On Document Dispute," "Pushing For A Larger Town," "Reward! Walter Hunter Hunting For Sign Stealing Culprits," January 25, 1996.

-----, "Bethania Seeking Building Land Donation," February 2, 1996.

-----, "'Ill Have To Ask You To Leave,'" May 23, 1996.

-----, "Thompson-Collins Feud Is Getting Nasty," "Bethania Budget Discussion Scheduled At Bethania A.M.E.," February 15, 1996.

White, Susan E. "Bethania may have jumped the gun on ruling on borders: Board adopts resolutions on 2,500-acre size and elections." *Winston-Salem Journal*, April 18, 1997, sec. A1.

Winston-Salem/Forsyth County, City-County Planning Board "Minutes, April 2, 1987."

Winston-Salem/Forsyth County, Historic Properties Commission. Grant Request to North Carolina Division of Archives and History. January 30, 1989.

*Winston-Salem Journal*. Editorial, "Recognition Time," November 2, 2008, A22.

Woodall, J. Ned Woodall, et al. "A Cultural Resources Survey of the Proposed Bethany Square Development Area in Bethania: A Historic District in Forsyth County North Carolina." Project report, Wake Forest Archeology Laboratories, Winston-Salem, NC, October 1996.

Wooding, G.I. III. "A bigger Bethania? Not likely, some say." *The Rural Hall (NC) Weekly Independent*, August 10, 1995.

-----, "Bethania officials urge unity, healing," *The Rural Hall (NC) Weekly Independent*, November 16, 1995.

-----, "Bethania moves town office to mayor's house," *The Rural Hall (NC) Weekly Independent*, January 4, 1996.

Yarbrough, James A. Jr, AICP, Director of Planning, Winston-Salem/Forsyth County. Letter, to Dan Dockery and Kenabeck Builders. September 25, 1996

Zerwick, Phoebe. "Engineers Cut Down Beltway Possibilities To Two Rough Paths." *Winston-Salem Journal*, December 6, 1990.