

**UNCOMMON BONDS: LABRADOR INUIT AND MORAVIAN MISSIONARIES  
PROJECT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING BRIEF**

**MEETING #1: SEPTEMBER 8<sup>TH</sup>, 2020**

**PART I: REPORT**

1. WELCOMES

1.A INTRODUCTIONS

Mark David Turner, Manager of Audio-Visual Archives & Media Literacy, OKâlaKatiget Society and Nunatsiavut Government (Co-Principal Investigator)

Paul Peucker, Archivist, Moravian Archives Bethlehem (Co-Principal Investigator)

Tom McCullough, Assistant Archivist, Moravian Archives Bethlehem

Lena Onalik, Heritage Program Coordinator, Nunatsiavut Government

Janet Bangma, Associate University Librarian, Memorial University

Anita Kora, Librarian-Archivist, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami

Caitlin Horall, Secretary for National Heritage Digitization Strategy (NHDS) and employee of Library & Archives Canada (observing member)

Sarah Jensen, Chair, Moravian Church in Newfoundland & Labrador (not in attendance)

1.B – PROJECT OVERVIEW AND REFRESHER

24-month project with six key deliverables:

- i. To digitize approximately 56,119 pages of manuscript records, 1,072 pages of printed materials in the Inuttitut language and 24 maps in the MAB collection. These materials were removed from Northern Labrador in 1959 at the apparent request of the Moravian Mission with microfilm copies at Memorial and Library & Archives Canada
- ii. Digital surrogates and related metadata created during the project will be made available on (i) the MAB online finding aid, (ii) MUN's DAI website alongside related collections, and (iii) in the NG archives Collections Repository, once it is available.
- iii. References to the original catalogue record (MAB online finding aid) will be included with the digital surrogates hosted on the DAI website, promoting access and use of related collections

- iv. The bulk of the Labrador Missions collection is currently described with file-level metadata. New metadata for maps and printed materials will be created. The MAB resolves to improve descriptive metadata where possible during the process of digitization. A DACS-compliant finding aid will be generated in PDF format and hosted on the MAB website to facilitate access to the descriptions and to further understanding of the collection, its history, and context.
- v. MUN will collaborate with project partners to create a print Collections Guide for Moravian Archives pertaining to Labrador communities, including information on the collections nominated for this project as well as related collections held at other institutions. The intent of this guide is primarily to help contextualize the collections for the source communities, in Nunatsiavut, Labrador, as part of building a foundation of knowledge about archival records relevant to their history. The guide will also help alleviate access issues caused by source documents being primarily in German, as it will provide basic information about the materials.
- vi. Conference materials for proposed event to publicize and celebrate this project, particularly the repatriation of archival materials to the community of origin.

#### 1.C – COMMITTEE METHODOLOGY

Modified circle structure rather than parliamentary procedure.

#### 1.D – TERMS OF REFERENCE

See website.

#### DISCUSSION

Discussion focussed on the relevance of ITK's National Inuit Strategy on Research to the project generally with the key considerations being:

- i. What protections can be afforded to Inuit to express sovereignty over records?
- ii. How do we have Inuit managing these records?

Agreement that we should share updates on our work with ITK's National Inuit Data Management Committee.

Suggestion to read the National Inuit Strategy on Research and the supplementary Implementation Plan.

Discussion on the potential disconnect between CLIR's object for open, online access, some of the grant reviewers' comments about observing local data management protocols and the absence of local organizations implementing protocols for these types of records.

Discussion of using committee to develop protocols and governance models for these types of records in the region.

## 2. COVID-19 IMPACT

### 2.A – REVISED PROJECT TIMELINE

CLIR has indicated that reasonable requests for project extensions will be granted. We will be requesting an extension of the project by at least five months (i.e. the time between the stated beginning of the project and our first meeting): 1 October 2022.

We do not require the extension to see through the digitization but the other deliverables, specifically the (i) Collection Guide, and (ii) regional conference.

### 2.B – NEW MEETING DATE IN BETHLEHEM

The next possible window in which to do that is during the bi-annual Conference on Moravian History and Music, which has been postponed until spring 2021, TBD.

### 2.C – EFFECTS ON DELIVERABLES

We do not yet have a clear sense about how the delay will affect the full range of our deliverables.

## DISCUSSION

Discussion about using the standing Nunatsiavut Government history posts as a way to publicize the project.

Discussion of having a consolidated web space where all public outreach information could go. This ties into a separate idea for a project blog. We will review the budget to see if we can register something like uncommonbonds.com

## 3. Digitization Report, presented by Thomas McCullough

### 3.A – REPORT FROM JONATHAN ENNIS, DIGITAL ARCHIVIST, MORAVIAN ARCHIVES, BETHLEHEM

- a. As of September 8<sup>th</sup>, we have scanned and processed more than 37,000 pages and have seen a wide range of fascinating documents. A few of the especially interesting items that have been scanned include a list of books that had been translated into Inuttitut, letters from the Hudson Bay company dealing with questions of land ownership, a floor plan for part of a hospital the missionaries started as well as documentation of what materials

were ordered for equipping said hospital, a handwritten account of a 1770 trip intended to scout a location for a missionary station amongst the Inuit, and a shipping manifest listing supplies shipped from London to Labrador.

- b. Thomas McCullough, assistant archivist, Moravian Archives, Bethlehem, PA, reviews samples of digitized content with the Advisory Committee. Featured images were those as described above by Jonathan Ennis.

### 3.B – THOMAS MCCULLOUGH, ASSISTANT ARCHIVIST, MORAVIAN ARCHIVES, BETHLEHEM, PA, BRIEFLY REVIEWS PILOT TRANSCRIPTION WORK

- a. Assistance from a volunteer in transcribing a travel diary to Labrador, 1700s
- b. Pilot HTR transcription work with first 5,000 pages of collection, using Transkribus

### DISCUSSION

Idea of considering different genres of materials as a committee and building that into our committee meeting. To support that we will send out content in advance to give people an opportunity to look at content before we discuss. We can also use this content to profile on the website.

Discussion of Transkribus, which is able to read handwritten German script used from middle ages through to 20<sup>th</sup> century. It can do OCR on pdfs in the script at about 80-90% accuracy.

The MAB has a volunteer who is interested in transcribing Labrador related docs coming out of the project. She knows enough to be able to compare OCR generated text and handwritten script to make necessary corrections.

Neither OCR nor transcriptions are things we promised in the deliverables for project, but OCR would be a good goal to ensure texts are searchable.

Discussion of whether or not Transkribus attempts to own data.

Discussion about support for any volunteers associated with project as well as the idea of creating a program for Labrador Inuit to learn German and take an active stewardship role in these records.

Discussion of best way to begin transferring materials to the Digital Archives Initiative and agreement that a first batch of 5,000 - 10,000 images is the best way forward. The MAB will be responsible for taking care of the embedded metadata for all digitized files.

Discussion about the possible involvement of MUN's metadata librarian in future meetings.

## **PART II: ACTION ITEMS**

1. Mark Turner has registered uncommonbonds.org (uncommonbonds.com was taken)
2. Mark Turner will begin populating the site but would like suggestions for content and organization from our committee. This this will not be made public until our committee has reviewed and signed off.
3. Since our meeting, the Moravian Archives has unfortunately taken the decision to cancel in-person events for the [Bethlehem Conference on Moravian History and Music](#) and move events into a virtual format. As a result, we will need to go back to the drawing board for our in-person meeting.