

## H.D.'s "sifted" Moravians (7)

The Bethlehem Gadfly Arts, the, Fun Stuff, Gadfly's posts, H.D. (Hilda Doolittle) March 3, 2019  
(7th in a series of posts on H.D.)

### Finding H.D.: A Community Exploration of the Life and Work of Hilda Doolittle

*The next event in this year-long series is "Challenging Limited Understandings of Gender and Sexuality" by Lehigh University's Mary Foltz, next Wednesday, March 6, 6:30-8 at the Bethlehem Area Public Library.*

Here again is the full recording of Prof. Craig Atwood's lecture on "H.D.'s Moravian Roots in Bethlehem" last Tuesday.

After a general introduction, Lehigh University Seth Moglen's introduction to Craig's lecture begins at min. 4:25, Craig's lecture itself begins at min. 6:27, and the Q 'n A session begins at min. 1:05:00.

### AUDIO RECORDINGS UNAVAILABLE IN THIS ARCHIVE

Gadfly is revisiting Craig's lecture in slices. In the 2nd slice (approx. mins 20 – 40), Craig reviews Moravian history and brings it up to the point of its influence on H.D.

Gadfly is a bit ashamed to say that he doesn't know as much about the Moravians as he should. But he bets he is not alone. Some of what Craig covered in this 2nd slice of his lecture, we probably know. But for Gadfly key things are new: a radical religion, a controversial religion, the "Sifting Time" in which controversial elements are suppressed, H.D.'s attraction to those original "bad" elements, an island in the Monocacy named "*Wunden Eiland*," a suppressed liturgy called "the Litany of the Wounds."

Fire up the audio, and listen along!

Here are Gadfly's "class notes" on mins. 20-40:

- claims to be the oldest Protestant church — 1457
- originally named the Brotherhood, Unitas Fratrum, destroyed by religious persecution, kept alive by some in exile

- resurrected at the time of Zinzendorf, first Protestant church that was not an ethnic church
- founded Herrnhut, founded a community
- missionary thrust
- one of the most controversial movements of the time
- the first Protestant missionaries to Africans and Native Americans
- socially egalitarian, gender inclusive, multi-lingual, multi-racial, multi-cultural
- answered William Penn's call of possibility of religious toleration
- in Bethlehem created the Moravian ideal community: religious commune
- members taken care of from the womb to the tomb
- challenged many of the norms of Western society
- Aristocrats slept alongside of commoners
- loved art and music
- one of the most elevated musical cultures in colonial America



- elaborate worship and rituals, candles, singing (crypto-Catholic)
- H.D. saw all of this
- settled down into typical Protestant sect by H.D.'s time but had radical heritage

- period in 1740s called the “Sifting Time,” period of crisis
- become conservative evangelicals, anti-Zinzendorf
- destroyed many of the documents of the time
- what was sifted naturally intrigued H.D.
- took things normal for Moravians world-wide and make them unacceptable
- lot of founding vision is buried: Motherhood of the Holy Spirit, the feminine nature of the human souls, the bloody wounds of Christ, etc.
- H.D. sees echoes in her current Moravian practice lost on others
- H.D. rejected thinking of others that certain original beliefs were pathological
- H.D. believed Moravian spirituality symbolized by the lamb was the heart of Moravianism and true religion, the pacifist Lamb who triumphs despite being killed
- the other great Moravian symbol is the chalice, the sacred cup, a feminine image
- H.D. felt that Moravians united masculine and feminine aspects of divinity and humanity and when this was done war would come to an end
- the war she knew of was toxic masculinity, and it would only be when men and women discovered their masculine and feminine natures together that war would end
- all of the repulsive imagery of the bleeding side of Christ was for H.D. the prayer that reaches Heaven because it’s the wounded Christ who restores the balance between masculine and feminine
- “Island of Wounds” the *Wunden Eiland*, in the Monocacy creek, believed it was shaped like the side wound of Christ
- Single Brothers would gather there after dark for singing and other rituals
- in her autobiographical narrative *The Gift*, England, where she was living in the early 1940s during the war, becomes the *Wunden Eiland*
- *The Gift* ends with sharing a ritual from 200 years earlier: “The Litany of the Wounds”