

# SLAVES IN BETHLEHEM?

## THE MORAVIAN SLAVE ARCHIVE AND THE PRACTICAL PAST

**Seth Moglen**

Lehigh University - Drown Hall, Room 210  
**Wednesday April 20 at 4:10pm**



In the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Bethlehem was one of the most egalitarian places in colonial America. It was also a slave-holding community. In this lecture, Seth Moglen will describe the lives of enslaved Africans who helped to found the city of Bethlehem and he will explore the remarkable archive of memoirs they left behind. Moravian slave memoirs, including those composed by survivors of the Middle Passage, are among the earliest writings by African Americans and they are foundational works of African American literature. But they are also enigmatic. Moglen will explore the methodological challenges presented by these documents in the context of contemporary debates about the slave archive – and about the difficulty of practicing the discipline of history at all when the archive itself has been constructed through violence and terror. The lecture will include excerpts from Moglen’s experimental book-in-progress, “Bethlehem: American Utopia, American Tragedy.”

Co-sponsored by the Lehigh English Department, Africana Studies Program (William Scott work-in-progress series), and the South Side Initiative. *Event is free and open to the public.*