

Lash (or Loesch), Jacob ^[1]

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by [William S. Powell](#) ^[2], 1991

13 June 1760–8 Oct. 1821

Jacob Lash (or Loesch), craftsman, was born in [Bethabara](#) ^[3], the son of Johann Jacob and Anna Loesch. His father, who had moved from Pennsylvania, was justice of the peace for Wachovia from 1758 to 1768, but was recalled to Pennsylvania in 1769 and apparently took his family with him. In 1781 young Lash returned to [Wachovia](#) ^[4] to learn the trade of locksmith; he already was a gunsmith, but in his new home he was discouraged from engaging in the repair of guns for fear that too many soldiers would be drawn to the town, perhaps even quartered there. In the spring of 1783, however, at the end of the American Revolution, he was permitted to resume work as a gunsmith. A shooting range was authorized nearby, but instructions were issued that there should be no betting on shots. In 1794 Lash was a justice of the peace and at various times conducted a school, teaching English particularly. He repaired clocks and made the town clock for Bethania. He also played the flute and organ, sang for [Moravian](#) ^[5] services, and taught singing to boys and girls. In addition, he tuned organs and actually built several, one of which he sold to the [Lutheran](#) ^[6] pastor [Carl Storch](#) ^[7] near Salisbury in 1809. It was noted in 1804 that he smelted gold ore.

In the spring of 1816, with his wife and two children, Susanna Elisabeth and Joseph, Lash moved to [Raleigh](#) ^[8], bought a house, and announced his intention to live there, though in 1819 he expressed a wish to return to [Salem](#) ^[9]. He was engaged to build a system to supply Raleigh with water from nearby springs. This water served the residents of the town and filled reservoirs, where it was held in reserve to fight fires. A reservoir survives under the sidewalk on Fayetteville Street in front of the [Briggs Hardware building](#) ^[10].

By the spring of 1820, Lash was again living in Bethabara and was asked to tune the organ in Salem. In the fall he was engaged in building waterworks in [Fayetteville](#) ^[11] when he suddenly became ill and died. Hearing of his illness, his wife was on the way to join him when word reached her of his death. He was buried in Fayetteville. An obituary in the [Raleigh Register](#) ^[12] described him as a musician of great skill who not only could play several instruments but also could make and repair them. Among his creations were "two or three pianos and other instruments."

On 28 Feb. 1790 Lash married Susannah Leinbach (1771–1832), and they became the parents of a son, Heinrich Jacob (who died shortly after returning home from having helped his father deliver the organ to Salisbury), as well as the daughter and son who moved with them to Raleigh.

References:

Adelaide L. Fries, ed., *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, vols. 4–7 (1930–47).

Raleigh Register, 10 Oct. 1821, 29 Mar. 1822.

Additional Resources:

Diary of a journey of Moravians, LearnNC:<http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/moravian-diary/1898> ^[13]

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[Dictionary of North Carolina Biography](#), University of North Carolina Press. ^[19]

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