Reuter, Philip Christian Gottlieb [1]

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by William Hinman, 1994

5 Sept. 1717–30 Dec. 1777

Philip Christian Gottlieb Reuter, Moravian surveyor, architect, and forester, was born in Steinbach, Germany, and lived a difficult childhood as the son of Dr. Johann Marsilius Reuter—a once-wealthy surgeon who fell to the level of a poor itinerant worker after a dream convinced him that wealth was a barrier to God's true mercy. After learning mathematics from his father and completing an unusually long apprenticeship (of five years) in surveying and mapping, P. C. G. Reuter served for a time as a royal surveyor in Germany.

Reuter joined the Lutheran church at age fourteen but seven years later (1738) became an active member of the *Unitas Fratrum* [Unity of the Brethren, or Moravian church]. He was sent by the church to America in 1756 and worked for two years doing survey and architectural tasks for the Moravians [2] in Pennsylvania. On 21 July 1758 he entered the Moravian village of Bethabara [3], N.C., where he performed extensive map and survey work in a region almost uncharted prior to his arrival. Much of his work is still extant.

He divided the Moravians' *Wachau* [Wachovia] holdings into smaller tracts to be assigned to those who had financed the Moravian North Carolina colonies. Reuter completed his *Grosse Reise* [Great Map] in 1762—a leviathan document measuring seven by nine feet and depicting in astonishing detail the Piedmont region in the early 1760s. The towns of Bethania and Salem were surveyed and laid out by Reuter, who also compiled a valuable record of the flora and fauna of the region in 1764. His many other duties in Bethabara included community leadership, teaching, and church responsibilities.

In 1772 Reuter and his wife moved into their new home in Salem [4], a building that still stands although it is known by his wife's name. After two years of declining health, he died at age sixty and was buried in God's Acre, Salem.

Reuter married Anna Catherina Antes Kalberlahn; he was her second of four husbands as she outlived each successive one. They were wed on 18 July 1762, along with six other couples in the first Moravian marriage performed in North Carolina. The Reuters had no children but cared for a small orphaned girl for two years.

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