Lives of some Brethren, who departed in Bethlehem in the months of September and October 1785.

1. Life our late Br. Rudolph [Christian Rudolph] Strehle, He writes himself: I was born June 29th 1712 at Endingen a Market Town in the Duchy of Württemberg. In my tenderest infancy I had already a feeling of our Savr. And liked to learn hymns of my mother which trusted of him. From my 7th year I went to school, and learned with pleasure. In my 11th year my mother fell deadly sick, and my father being also sickly, it came very impressively into my mind, that I soon might be a poor orphan and come among strange people. I went into the field and prayed God with tears on my knees, to save my soul in other things he might do with me as he pleased., some days after my mother departed. Being 16 years of age, my father brought me to Tübingen to learn the mason trade, and 6 weeks after he also departed this time. I still retained a concern about my salvation, however by seduction I fell
into sin, and became more senseless and lightminded, yet not without uneasiness. In 1733 a great change taking place in the Duchy of Wurtemberg and the war commencing, I was measured with a view to become a soldier. I came into great concern and a serious consideration whether I should run away or what turn it would take, and I prayed to God to put it into my mind and thoughts, what steps to take. It became clear in my heart, to be still, and to let it go as it would, and I got the assurance that it would take a glorious event, if I even should come among the soldiers. I thought: God is allmighty, omnipresent and all knowing, I will rely on him! In 1734 I went sometime into preachings of the Revd. Mr. Preiblad Breitenholz, in which my heart often was powerfully laid hold of, so that I could not refrain from shedding tears, tho’ I was much ashamed to be seen weeping. 1735 in March I was obliged to become a soldier, and came into the Imperial Service at Freyburg in Brigau. I many time went into the field, because we were quartered at first in the villages, wept and prayed to God not to withdraw his gracious hand from me, otherwise I should be lost. I was much influenced by the
spirit of war, and learned also to play cards. In January 1736 standing centinel in the night from 1 till 3 o’clock on the fortifications I kept a band with God; for our Savr. I did not know; my lost situation, presented itself before my eyes. I promised him, that if I should come again into the Duchy of Württemberg, so that I would hear the Word of God and go again to the H. Communion : for we were in a Roman Catholic place, and had no preacher in the army : I would begin a new from that Communion to be obedient, as it is expressed in a Lutheran Prayer Book, and be converted. This our Savr. took notice of and kept it in mind, tho’ I forgot it again. I came still the same year among several of the regiments, and on other places. I grew also so confused in my mind, that I fair would have become an atheist, if I could have effected it. But it was now always clear in my heart, that the Word of God is and abideth truth, and thou art an unfortunate man, if thou continuest so. Once I intended to desert to France, but divine providence directed it so, that I came again into the Würtemberg country to Ludwigsburg. There I went
into the church on new year's day 1737, and intended to partake again the first time of the H. Comm. At the entrance into the church, it came all at once into my mind: What hast thou promised to God in Freyburg on the fortification wall. What, if thou now gavest him thy heart? My heart melted, I begun to weep and said yes. Mean while they begun to sing: With Jesus I begin, with Jesus I’ll be speaking and this made a deep impression upon me; I was very attentive in the preaching, but at the H. Communion I felt so heavy, that I could not help thinking, I had partook of it for my condemnation. After divine service my companions persuaded me to go with them to the Orphan House Church, where a good minister was at that time. I did it, and heard the loving heart of Jesus to sinners described in so sweet a manner, that I got a confidence to Him, and resolved to keep and give myself entirely up to him. I then frequented diligently the preachings and meetings of this minister, whose name was Beckhen, till in 1738 when in his house I learned to know the first Brn. from the congrn. and among the rest our
late Br. Samuel Krause. Nov. 5th this year standing sentinel our Savr. Manifested himself to my heart in his meritorious life, suffering and death, and how he still intercedes for all poor sinners, on account of which my heart grew at once clear and easy, and was delivered from all its fetters. In 1734 I got in Tübingen a printed pamphlet into my hands entitled: The Right and Straight Way to Life and which proved a great blessing to my heart. In 1740 working in Studtgard among the many wild natural people, and being ignorant of the sinner point, having also nobody to whom I could discover my heart, I became dry and came into new perspective; which excited in me a desire to come into fellowship with the Brs. Congrn. I resolved thereto and prayed our Savr. to prepare himself the way for it. What I asked for was granted. I got leave to go on a visit to Herrnhaag. I was received heartily by the Brn. and it being just Communion Day I was admitted to the love feast, and had leave to be a spectator at the Lords Supper. I had a thorough conversation with the late Polyearpus Müller, and came again into the right track. I was all the month of July 1742 in Herrnhaag and in August I returned to Studtgard. I made the
covenant with some awakened, to remain by the Doctrine of the Merit of the Blood and Death of Jesus, and this was the beginning of the united flock in Studtgard, where to in December came still 7 Brn. After a repeated visit in the Congrn. I obtained my discharge from military service in Apr. 1744 and arrived with the Congrn. in Hernhaag with the W. [watch] Word: What is amounted foolish by the world God has chosen and Jan. 7th [1745] I was received into the Congrn. at which the verse: happy congregation whose robes the Lambs blood keeps from all defilements and was so impressed on my mind, that I always rejoiced as often as it was sung in the Congregation. In 1746 November 13th 1746 I was admitted to the H. Comm. Which proved a particular strengthening to my heart. 1749 I got a call to go to Pensilvania set out in February with the company of Brn. by way of Holland and England and May 12th we arrived safe and well in New York and on the 21st in Bethlehem. My course here is known to the Brn. and Srs. therefore I will conclude. Thus far be himself.

He served in Bethlehem by his mason trade
and in various services of the Economy here faith-ful & usefully. He was particularly a faithful & edifying watchman in the night for many years, and in his advanced age he often testified how blessed this service had been for his heart, what happy hour he had often had in conversation with our Savr. and what proofs of his gracious protection and preservation he had experienced in the night particularly in the Indian War. He had a good deal of scriptural knowledge, and loved to read edifying books, but had at the same time a faithful heart towards our Savr. and his Congrn. and was always full of faith and courage and of a witness spirit. 1749 he was married with his late wife Dorothea Sophia Nurnberger, with whom he lived 34 years in the married state, and had in which he had 3 sons of whom one son Frederic is here and 2 are in Wachovia. Sept. 5th 1783 he became widower and his increasing age weakness and sickliness obliged him to live in quietness and rest. On his last Choir Festival this year he was obliged to stay in his room, but believed, that our Savr. would also bless him there. His
share of the Choir Communion being brought to him, he testified to have had an extraordinary blessed day, and was sure, that this would be his last festival and communion hee below. The visit of several Brn. & Srs. and particularly of our dr. Br. Johannaes proved a special day to him. He looked with patience and faith to meet his departure, and received for it the blessing of the Lord and the Congrn. Whereupon he departed softly and happily on the 11\textsuperscript{th} of Sept. in the 74\textsuperscript{th} year of his age.