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*To See Ourselves as Others See Us: 18th-19th Century Travellers' Accounts of the Moravian Settlement of Gracehill*

This paper proposes an in-depth review of the writings, journals, and published observations of 18th- and 19th-century travellers who visited the Moravian settlement of Gracehill, today recognised as part of a transnational UNESCO World Heritage Site. Established in 1759 as the first—and only—Moravian Settlement in Ireland, Gracehill attracted visitors ranging from curious local gentry to international observers interested in the educational, religious, and social distinctiveness of Moravian communal life. Their accounts form a valuable external lens through which to understand both the daily realities and the perceived peculiarities of the settlement.

The paper will examine how these travellers interpreted Gracehill's architectural planning, economic organisation, devotional practices, and social structure, often contrasting them with contemporary Irish norms. Early visitors frequently remarked on the village's orderly layout, the emphasis on communal discipline, and the distinctive customs of the Moravian Brethren. Later 19th-century travellers, writing in an era of shifting religious sensibilities and growing interest in social reform, tended to frame Gracehill within broader debates about education, industry, and moral improvement.

By analysing these accounts, the paper aims to show how external reflections contributed to the shaping of the historical reputation and identity of the settlement. Travellers' writings reveal moments of admiration, misunderstanding and critique, illustrating the complexities of cultural understanding. They also provide insight into the evolving reputation of the Moravian community within the wider Irish and British contexts.

Ultimately, the study argues that these historical narratives offer more than colourful commentary: they illuminate the ways in which Gracehill has long been interpreted as a social and architectural curiosity, a model of religious discipline, or a moral alternative to mainstream society.

Understanding these perspectives enriches our appreciation of Gracehill's heritage value today and highlights the importance of examining both internal traditions and external interpretations in the preservation of World Heritage sites.