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Milford C. Brelje

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, ir_breljem@csl.edu

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THE RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA
DURING THE COLONIAL PERIOD

A thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Historical Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Divinity

by .

Milford C. Brelje

June 1950

Approved by:

Aug. P. Swellman
Advisor

W. W. White
Reader

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The thesis proposes to give a survey of the religious history of eastern Pennsylvania during the colonial period. The scope of the subject presents a difficulty in its very broadness. Extended perusal of the vast material relating to the subject has shown the writer that he must be satisfied to present at best only an overview.

The writer's interest in this particular subject was aroused by the variety and number of religious groups which settled in this area during that period.

An attempt has been made to give the background for this religious diversity by treating the liberal religious policy of the colony in the second chapter. The remaining five chapters in themselves illustrate that same policy by the history of the existence of these groups in the colony.

Since the Swedish Lutherans arrived first in the area which was later to be included in William Penn's colony, their story makes up the body of the third chapter. The history of the German Lutherans has been taken up in the fourth chapter to continue the Lutheran narrative. The

other German groups are included in the fifth chapter to keep the continuity with the Lutheran Germans. The Quakers, Presbyterians and Anglicans have been placed together in the sixth chapter, since their background and influence in general is similar. Since the numerical influence of the Baptists was somewhat less than the foregoing denominations, excepting the smaller German groups, they have been gathered together with the Roman Catholics and the Methodists to complete the religious picture in the seventh chapter.

The historical period covered by the thesis is the time approximately between the first settlements in the 17th Century until the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776, and is referred to as the colonial period. The geographical area, referred to as eastern Pennsylvania, stretches roughly from the Delaware River in the east to the Susquehanna River in the west, and from the vicinity of Allentown and Sunbury in the north to and including the Lower Counties in the south.

The outline and narrative of the thesis evince an emphasis on Lutheranism in which the writer, in view of his Lutheran background, has special interest.

CHAPTER II

PENN'S COLONY AND ITS RELATION TO RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

King Charles signed the Pennsylvania charter on March 4, 1681. By a stroke of the pen an empire was created and passed into the control of one man, an empire of over forty thousand square miles, England's largest territorial grant in the New World to a private citizen. The cancellation of Admiral Penn's [William Penn's father] claim for sixteen thousand pounds was part of the price paid for this empire. To this was added an annual contribution of two beaver skins to be delivered to the King in his royal Palace of Windsor, besides one-fifth of all the gold and silver that Pennsylvania might produce.¹

To William Penn this was like a dream come true. The Quaker courtier had become interested in colonization in America through an earlier joint purchase of West Jersey in 1674. However, this colonizing venture had not materialized. Now in 1681, as the sole proprietor, he received a large grant of land from King Charles II to which the Duke of York, a personal friend, added the Lower Counties of the Delaware from his own possessions.

The new proprietor was doubly qualified to play the

¹Clifford Smyth, "William Penn, Quaker Courtier and Founder of Colonies," Builders of America (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, c.1931), VII, 86.

role of founder in the type of colony which he envisioned. He was a Quaker and as such deeply devoted to the cause of religious liberty.² He was also a statesman and therefore set about the task of organizing and guiding a provincial government with valuable experience from which to draw upon.³ But Penn was not left alone to draft his own ideas. When word got around that he intended to establish a "Utopian" colony, theorists, political scientists, business men, in addition to a number of quacks sought an audience in order to communicate to him their pet ideas on government. But in the final formulation of his ideas he limited his counsel to a few friends.⁴

Penn's Colonial Idea of Religious Liberty

Penn liked to refer to his colonizing venture as "an holy experiment." He devoted himself to the cause of freedom of conscience, and having already experienced persecution for his cause, became willing to stake everything he had on seeing it through. S. H. Cobb quotes a few lines from one

²The Quakers were in close affiliation with the Baptists in England. Both were sharply opposed to religious persecution and the tieup between church and state. See Henry C. Vedder, A History of the Baptists in the Middle States (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1898), p. 56.

³S. H. Cobb, The Rise of Religious Liberty in America (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1902), p. 440.

⁴Smyth, op. cit., pp. 88-89.

of his letters to a friend, showing the strength of his conviction:

I abhor two principles in religion and pity them that own them; the first is obedience to authority without conviction; and the other is destroying them that differ from me for God's sake. Such a religion is without judgment, though not without teeth.⁵

The charter which Charles II gave to Penn made little or no provision either for or against religious liberty. Charles seems to have left that completely up to Penn's own discretion, thereby suggesting that he may have been aware of Penn's desire to establish religious freedom in the colony. The only reference in the charter to the Church is the stipulation that,

if any of the inhabitants to the number of Twenty signify in writing to the bishop of London their desire for a preacher, such preacher or preachers as may be sent by him shall be allowed to reside and exercise their function in the colony without any deniall or molestacon whatsoever.⁶

A restriction to be noted because it later had a bearing on religious liberty in Pennsylvania was the right of the King and Privy Council to examine and view any law passed in the colony.⁷

⁵Cobb, op. cit., p. 441.

⁶Pennsylvania Charter and Laws, p. 89, as quoted in Cobb, op. cit., p. 441.

⁷Francis H. Taylor, "William Penn, Constitution Maker," Children of Light, edited by Howard H. Brinton (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1938), p. 36.

Penn termed his suggestions for ruling the new colony a "Frame of Government." In his "Frame" he takes it for granted that everyone living in the province would hold belief in God, and believes that public offices should be occupied only by Christians, thus endeavoring to put a check on any Jewish or atheistic inhabitants. He emphasizes, however, there should be no persecution of any person for religious beliefs. Two of the sections of his "Frame of Government" are devoted to these limitations:

34. That all Treasurers, Judges, Masters of Rolls, Sheriffs, Justices of the Peace, and other officers and persons whatsoever, relating to courts or trials of causes, or any other service in the government; and all that have right to elect such Members, shall be such as profess faith in Jesus Christ.

35. That all persons living in the province, who confess and acknowledge the one Almighty and Eternal God to be the Creator, Upholder, and Ruler of the world; and that hold themselves obliged in conscience to live peaceably and justly in civil society shall in no way be molested or prejudiced for their religious profession or practice in matters of faith and worship; nor shall they be compelled, at any time, to frequent or maintain any religious worship, place or ministry whatever.⁸

From the foregoing quotation it can be seen that Penn's idea of religious liberty was not as broad as one might imagine. Whether intentional or not there is some discrimination against Jews and atheists. Nevertheless, Penn's experiment was a tremendous stride forward in religious toleration. Now

⁸Charter and Laws, p. 102, as quoted in Cobb, op. cit., p.442.

it is our purpose to see how his idea on religious liberty was worked out in practice in the colony.

Penn's Idea Modified and Worked Out in Practice

In 1682 the first Pennsylvania assembly met at Chester and passed a body of laws for the purpose of governing the colony. Among these laws the first two dealt with religion. The legislation was similar to the ideas which Penn had included in his "Frame of Government." No one was to be disturbed on account of his religious persuasion as long as he believed in God. There was to be no compulsion in attending specific religious services. Any infraction of this law was punishable.⁹

There were, however, some restrictions which were designed to combat atheism and indifference toward religion. Every first day of the week was set aside for worship and the people were expected to read the bible at home or attend some form of public service. All of the officials of the province were required to be professed Christians. This stipulation prevented Jews and non-Christians who held some belief in God from holding office.¹⁰

⁹Cobb, op. cit., p. 443.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 444.

From this early body of laws it may be seen that there was no discrimination against Roman Catholics. They were allowed both to vote and hold public office. However, since Penn's colony depended largely on the favor of the king of England,¹¹ this policy toward Catholics did not last long, because change of government came soon to the mother country. In 1693 and again in 1701 the home government required that the same "test oath" which discriminated against Roman Catholics, Jews, and Unitarians in England should be used also in Pennsylvania.¹²

The "test oath" made it impossible for any non-Christian or Roman Catholic to hold office, and especially condemned Roman Catholic doctrines. Penn and his associates were decidedly opposed to it. While from their own laws they showed a slightly intolerant attitude toward Jews and atheists, they seem to have had a more benevolent disposition toward Catholics against whose doctrines the "test oath" was expressly directed. But the pressure from the English authorities was strong. While Penn was in England urging tolerance for Quakers in that country and serving a prison sentence for these actions, the entire assembly of Pennsylvania adopted the "test oath" which remained till the end of the colonial

¹¹Taylor, op. cit., p. 36.

¹²Cobb, op. cit., p. 445.

period and resulted in limiting public office and citizenship to those of the Protestant faith.¹³

The religious tests did not prohibit the Roman Catholics from worshipping according to the dictates of their own conscience, privately or publicly. The only rights actually denied the Catholics were civil, since the assembly, made up of Quakers and Protestants urged by royal pressure, thought the privileges of citizenship and holding office could be carried out responsibly only by individuals of the Protestant faith.¹⁴ In spite of these restrictions the Catholics enjoyed more progress and freedom in Pennsylvania than in any other colony.¹⁵

Pennsylvania, like Rhode Island, did not have an established church. The situation in Pennsylvania, however, was somewhat different from that in the colony founded by Roger Williams. In spite of the fact that there was no established church, the turn of events in Pennsylvania quite uniquely resulted in certain religious limitations.¹⁶ The difference between religious limitations in Pennsylvania and those in

¹³Ibid., pp. 445-448.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 452.

¹⁵William Warren Sweet, Religion in Colonial America (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947), p. 326.

¹⁶Roland H. Bainton, "The Struggle for Religious Liberty," Church History, X (June, 1941), 116.

other colonies lay in the institution which those restrictions sought to protect. Most of the colonies wished to establish a state church. The religious "test oaths" in Pennsylvania were not intended to establish a state-churchism, but, in a sense, Protestantism.¹⁷

Penn's colonial idea in reference to religious liberty in his "Frame of Government" left something to be desired according to our present day viewpoint. But he did advocate toleration of religious beliefs to an extent quite generally unheard of in Europe and other colonies, excepting Rhode Island. Penn's ideas were taken over into the constitution of Pennsylvania and modified by the provincial assembly. While in theory these regulations pertaining to religious liberty had certain restrictions, in practice there were absolutely no instances of hardships and persecution against persons because of their religious persuasion. The beginnings of religious history in Eastern Pennsylvania illustrate this practical tolerance convincingly by the number and variety of religious groups which settled in the colony.

¹⁷Gobb, op. cit., p. 449.

CHAPTER III

THE SWEDISH LUTHERANS

Almost a generation before Penn had received the charter for his colony there were Lutheran settlers along the west bank of the Delaware, living in an area which was included in Penn's domain by the Duke of York. Since the majority of these Lutherans came from Sweden, the settlement was named New Sweden. There were also a considerable number of Finnish Lutherans living among the Swedes.

The German Lutherans, who played a larger role in the religious history of Eastern Pennsylvania later in the colonial period, did not begin arriving till nearly a half-century after the Swedes and Finns had been established.

It is our purpose here to include the Swedish Lutherans in the religious history of Eastern Pennsylvania even though their settlements stretched along the Delaware River from the site of Philadelphia into the lower counties which now make up the present state of Delaware. This procedure might be justified by the history of these lower counties. Shortly after Penn had received them from the Duke of York they were annexed to Pennsylvania by the Act of Union. Even though

they withdrew from the assembly of the province in 1704 and established their own assembly, they continued to be governed by the provincial governor of Pennsylvania along with their own governing body till the end of the colonial period when the constitution of the Delawares was adopted.¹

Sweden's interest in colonization began with Gustavus Adolphus, famous soldier-king of Sweden. In 1624 Gustavus commissioned William Usselinx, founder of the Dutch West India trading company to draw up a large-scale plan for colonizing. After the charter was prepared and signed by Gustavus in 1626, and amended later, Usselinx traveled about Europe soliciting interest and aid in the new colonizing venture. He was just at the point of achieving success when important military events on the continent deferred his plans. In the meantime Gustavus Adolphus had died on the battlefield of the Thirty Years War, and the colonizing plan had been rejected by the Dutch West India Company.²

After a few years had gone by a number of influential men formed a Swedish-Dutch Company in order to colonize a portion of the North American coast which had not yet been taken up by the English or Dutch. One of the men, Peter Minuit,

¹Leon DeValinger, Jr., "The Lower Counties -on-Delaware," Dictionary of American History, edited by James Truslow Adams and R. V. Coleman (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1940), III, 311.

²Lars P. Qualben, The Lutheran Church in Colonial America (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1940), pp. 136-137.

who later led the expedition, favored the establishment on the west bank of the Delaware River. This plan was eventually agreed upon by the Company and also approved by the Swedish Chancellor of State, Axel Oxentierna.³

Arrival and Establishment of the Swedes

The first expedition left Sweden in November, 1637, in two ships, the "Key of Calmar" and the "Bird Griffin." It was commanded by the former Director-General of New Amsterdam, Peter Minuit. The voyage took from three to four months, and in March, 1638, the ships were landing along the banks of the Delaware River. They named the landing place "Paradise Point."⁴ Incidentally, the major part of this expedition was made up of Dutch colonists. Perhaps this first expedition was an experiment to see if Swedish colonists would be barred because of Dutch and English rights on the lands.⁵

Upon arrival, Peter Minuit negotiated a land purchase with the Indian chiefs. The land acquired lay along the west bank of the Delaware, stretching about seventy miles north to

³Ibid., p. 137.

⁴Henry Eyster Jacobs, "The History of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States," The American Church History Series (New York: The Christian Literature Company, 1893), IV, p. 80.

⁵Qualben, op. cit., p. 138.

the site of Philadelphia. A western boundary was not fixed.⁶ A fort was probably the first building erected on the land. It was called Fort Christina and stood on ground where the present city of Wilmington, Delaware, is situated.

Before two years had passed another expedition arrived on the shores of the Delaware. This time the majority of the colonists were Swedish. The second expedition brought the first Swedish Lutheran pastor to the colony, Perus Torkillius, who was also the first regular Lutheran minister in America.⁷ At first services were held in a home at Christina. But when accommodations proved to be inadequate, a chapel was erected within the walls of the fort.

Early in 1643 a new governor arrived on the scene. There had been a change in the ownership of the colony which put control into the hands of Swedish stockholders. The new company sent John Printz, a fellow countryman, to take charge of New Sweden as the second governor. With him came two Lutheran pastors, John Campanius, former government chaplain, and Israel Holg Fluvlander. Their arrival was very timely, since Torkillius died in the fall of the same year. There

⁶At a later date the Swedes purchased more land to the north of their original tract and more on the other side of the Delaware. Karl Kretzmann, "Early Lutherans and Lutheran Churches in America," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, IV. (July, 1931), pp. 44-45.

⁷Qualben, op. cit., p. 138.

were three ships in the expedition which they led.

Printz's arrival brought also a number of instructions from the Swedish government, two of which are especially significant for the religious policies of the new colony. One pertained to the Dutch and is claimed to be the first proclamation of religious tolerance in America. It read:

So far as relates to the Holland colonists that live and settle under the government of her Royal Majesty and the Swedish crown, the governor shall not disturb them in the indulgence granted them as to the exercise of the Reformed religion. ✓

The other urged Governor Printz to see to it that the Indians were treated "with all humanity and respect." Christian mission work was to be done among the "wild people," and attempts to civilize and govern them were to be made. In order to win the favor of the Indians, it was suggested that they undersell the Hollanders at Fort Naussau.⁸

Shortly after John Printz arrived in New Sweden, the first church of the colony was erected on Tinicum Island in 1643.⁹

⁸Edmund Jacob Wolf, The Lutherans in America (New York: J. A. Hill and Company, 1889), pp. 138-140.

⁹The house and chapel at Fort Christina are not considered to be the first "church." The building on Tinicum Island was the first Lutheran Church in the area that is now Pennsylvania and the first in America. It was burned down in 1645 and rebuilt the next year. See William J. Finck, Lutheran Landmarks and Pioneers in America (Philadelphia: General Council Publication House, 1913), p. 32, and Qualben, op. cit., p. 41.

The Island also became the headquarters for the colony. Both Printz and Campanius centered their work there.

The colony was very fortunate to have the leadership of these three men: Printz, Campanius, and Fluviander. Campanius worked zealously among the Indians and translated Luther's Small Catechism into the Delaware language. This was the first Protestant book translated into a heathen language, even though because of delay, it appeared in print after 1661, the year in which Eliot's Indian translation of the New Testament came out.¹⁰ After Torkillus' death, Fluviander "seems to have served" Fort Christina until 1647 when he returned to Sweden.¹¹ During John Printz's rule, the colony flourished. The governor erected a strong fort on the island, and also built a beautiful mansion with pale, yellow bricks shipped from Stockholm.¹²

The colony soon enjoyed a high degree of prosperity. The banks of the Delaware were dotted with pleasant hamlets. The people were happy, intelligent and virtuous. They were animated by the spirit of their holy religion, not by the spirit of adventure or the lust for gain.¹³

¹⁰Wolf, op. cit., p. 141.

¹¹Kretzmann, op. cit., p. 47.

¹²Ira Oliver Rothstein, Lutheran Makers of America (Philadelphia: The United Lutheran Publication House, c.1930), pp. 37-38.

¹³Wolf, op. cit., p. 137.

Trouble with the Dutch

The peaceful and prosperous character of the colony was not to last forever. The Dutch West India Company in 1652 ordered Governor Stuyvesant of New Amsterdam to build the Dutch Fort Casimir on ground that belonged to Sweden. Apparently, the Dutch feared the invasion of Swedes into the Delaware area and wanted to establish a trading post to hold the upper hand in Delaware trade. Of course, the Swedes resented the Dutch invasion of Swedish soil, and in 1654, when a new governor in the person of Johan Claudius Rising arrived, a company of Swedes under his leadership captured the fort. But they did not hold the fortress long. For in the next year, Stuyvesant struck back, recaptured the fort and brought the entire Swedish colony under Dutch control.

At the time when the Dutch first took control, there were about 500 inhabitants in New Sweden, including three Lutheran ministers. During the preceding years, a total of eight ships had arrived from the mothercountry. However, when the Dutch took over New Sweden in 1655, many of the settlers, who refused to take the Dutch oath of allegiance, sold their possessions and returned to their homes in Europe. Some moved to other American settlements. The Dutch did allow the settlers to worship according to the Lutheran faith, and since a considerable number of the colonists were comfort-

ably settled, they decided to stay on.¹⁴

At first the Dutch had intended to expel the three Lutheran pastors. But along with the measure of religious tolerance, only two of the pastors were required to return, the one being allowed to stay and instruct the Lutherans. Rev. Lars Carlson Lock, a native of Finland, was chosen to stay, probably because the majority of those who remained were Finns.¹⁵

The Dutch rule continued for almost ten years. In 1664, the English captured New Amsterdam with a squadron of 300 men, thereby taking control of the Swedish colony automatically. From that time on until the end of the colonial period, the territory was under the direct or indirect rule of the English, except during a short-lived Dutch attempt to gain control in 1673.¹⁶

Years of Struggle

Now that control of the settlement on the Delaware had been wrested from the Swedish government, the King of Sweden was no longer the political head. However, he still remained the ecclesiastical leader of the Lutheran colony. But during

¹⁴Finck, op. cit., p. 34.

¹⁵Qualben, op. cit., p. 144.

¹⁶Wolf, op. cit., pp. 146-147.

the time between the political loss of the colony and a few years before the close of the century, about forty years in all, this arrangement almost entirely was broken off. A government-supported Church at a remote distance from the source of support provided little impetus for a vigorous spiritual program in the colony. The Church in New Sweden began to show signs of weakness after the political ties with the home country were severed.¹⁷

It seems that the work was carried on ably for a time by the Rev. Lars Lock. He first served two churches: one at Fort Christina; the other on Minicum Island. Soon, another church was erected at New Castle. A preaching station was added at Tranhook, two miles southeast of Fort Christina and about four miles north of New Castle on the land where the Delaware and Christina rivers met. Beginning in 1669, Lock held services in a block church at Wicaco (the site of Philadelphia) in order to serve the Swedish Lutherans who had settled in the area around the Delaware and Schuylkill rivers.¹⁸

Jacob Fabritius, a Lutheran pastor who had earned a rather poor reputation in New York, came to New Castle to take up residence in 1672. In 1675, the New Sweden area was divided into two parishes. Lock served the lower parish at Tranhook

¹⁷Jacobs, op. cit., pp. 103-104.

¹⁸Finck, op. cit., pp. 35-36.

and New Caslte; and Fabritius, the upper parish at Tinicum Island and Wicaco.

The last group of Swedish immigrants came in 1656 under the protest of the Dutch. A certain Pastor Matthias accompanied this expedition. It is not known how many of this group stayed, but Matthias returned almost immediately to Sweden. From this time until the last decade of the century, there was actually no communication between the colonists and their mother country. The Dutch rule was not friendly.¹⁹ In 1682, the Swedish-Finnish Lutherans witnessed the arrival of hundreds of immigrants who wished to settle in Penn's colony. With the coming of the new settlers, the New Sweden area went directly under the control of Pennsylvania.

It was becoming increasingly evident that the job of serving two large parishes was too much for the aging pastors. Fabritius was struck with blindness in 1683 and Lock died in 1688, after a full forty-year ministry. The latter was the only one of the four pastors succeeding Reorus Torkillus who stayed in the New World until his death.²⁰

After Lock's death, Fabritius carried on the work of both parishes as ably as he could under his cross of blindness. Of course, his effectiveness was greatly limited. During the

¹⁹Wolf, op. cit., p. 143.

²⁰Ibid., p. 142.

last years of Fabritius' life, the people of the colony sought ministerial help from the Lutheran consistory in New Amsterdam without results. Even William Penn sought to help them obtain a Swedish Lutheran pastor through the Swedish ambassador at London. But his efforts, too, did not prove successful.²¹ In the meantime, Jacob Fabritius, the blind old Lutheran who had atoned for his former reputation in New York by his faithful efforts among the Swedes and Finns, died in 1696. But the pastoral work begun did not die. Two laymen, Anders Bengtson and Charles Springer, attempted to keep religious interest alive until ministerial help could be procured.²²

The Reawakening

In 1690, Anders Printz, a nephew of former Governor John Printz, visited the colony along the Delaware. On his return to Sweden, he mentioned the spiritual weakness of the colony to a Pastor John Thelin of Gotheborg. Through correspondence with the colony in 1693, Thelin learned that the colonists needed "two ministers, twelve Bibles, three sermon books, forty-two books of worship, one hundred hymnals, two hundred catechisms, and two hundred A B C books." The letter also mentioned that the colony had a population of

²¹Ibid., p. 153.

²²Finck, op. cit., pp. 39-41.

188 families and 942 souls.²³

Charles XI, King of Sweden, was notified of the spiritual state of emergency in the colony, but he did not attend to the call for assistance immediately. One of the delaying circumstances was the death of his wife. But he did not lay the matter completely aside. He conferred with Dr. Jasper Svedberg, then provost of the cathedral and professor of theology at Upsala. Svedberg suggested a possible source for funds and selected from his students two of the missionaries that were to go to America. One was Andrew Rudman, candidate for the Ph. D. degree; the other was Eric Bjork, who lived in Svedberg's home and was tutor to his nephews.²⁴ The king added a third missionary in the person of Jonas Auren, who was to study the needs of the colony and report back to him.

The three new pastors in addition to a number of books arrived on the colonial scene in 1697 and were to begin a new period of activity in the churches. They found the spiritual condition of the people poor. There was irregularity in church attendance, neglect of the sacraments, and neglect of the proper training of the youth. The pastors at once set themselves to the task of reviving spiritual inter-

²³J. L. Neve and Willard D. Allbeck, History of the Lutheran Church in America (Burlington, Iowa: The Lutheran Literary Board, 1934), p. 26.

²⁴Jacobs, op. cit., pp. 89-90.

est. Rudman took charge of the Wicaco congregation; Bjork, the congregation at Tranhook. Auren stayed with Rudman for a time.

The efforts of Rudman, Bjork, and Auren were crowned with success. "Under the ministry of these new pastors, the Swedish settlements took a new lease on life."²⁵ Eric Bjork was instrumental in building a new church edifice at Christina to replace the Tranhook church. The cornerstone was laid on May 28, 1698, and the building was dedicated on Trinity Sunday, 1699. It was built of granite, sixty feet long, thirty feet wide and twenty feet high. Rudman championed the cause of building a new church at Wicaco. It was of the same dimensions as the Christina church and consisted of a stone foundation and brick walls. Both churches were admired throughout the colonies during the colonial period. The structure at Christina was known as Holy Trinity Church (now Old Swede's Church); the Wicaco church had the name, Gloria Dei. The ordination of Justus Falckner, German Lutheran pastor, in which Rudman and Bjork participated, took place in Gloria Dei Church on November 24, 1703.²⁶

Rudman was probably the most brilliant of the three

²⁵Abdel Ross Wentz, The Lutheran Church in American History (Second Edition; Philadelphia: The United Lutheran Publication House, c.1933), p. 45.

²⁶Jacobs, op. cit., p. 96.

pastors who came over in 1697. He preached in three languages: Swedish, English and Dutch. For a period of eighteen months, he served Lutherans in New York. In 1703, he returned to his Wicaco parish, and died in 1708, after having been afflicted with poor health throughout his life.²⁷

Bjork was an able pastor, serving the congregation at Christina for 17 years. He was instrumental in smoothing over the disagreement which threatened to split Rudman's congregation in connection with the building of the new church at Wicaco. His pastorate was longer than either of his two companions.²⁸

Jonas Auren, the last of the triumvirate, did not return to Sweden as he had planned since the king, who had given him instructions to report back, died a year after his arrival. Much of his time was spent in missionary activity among the Indians in Lancaster and Chester counties. In the course of time, he developed Sabbatarian tendencies but did not force his views on the Lutherans. After 1706, he left the area and served Swedish Lutherans in New Jersey.²⁹

²⁷Finck, op. cit., pp. 46-47.

²⁸Ibid., p. 55.

²⁹Ibid., pp. 47-48.

Gradual Decline

Those Lutheran ministers who succeeded Rudman, Bjork, and Auren were some of the most influential pastors the Swedish church sent to America. The activity which was begun in 1697 continued and even increased for a time. During the first half of the century, a number of new preaching stations were added. Congregations were organized and new churches were built.

Probably the three most highly gifted pastors during this time were John Dylander, Israel Acrelius, and Charles Magnus Wrangel. Dylander was pastor at Wicaco from 1737 to 1741. He was considered an eloquent preacher, and ministered to English and Germans as well as Swedes. Acrelius was pastor at Christina (now Wilmington) and became well known for his valuable History of New Sweden.³⁰ Undoubtedly, the greatest of the three was Wrangel. He worked among the Swedes and Finns in America between the years 1759 and 1768. During his period of service, there existed a close friendship between the Swedish-Finnish Lutherans and German Lutherans, due particularly to his noble efforts.³¹

Following Wrangel's recall to Sweden, which the people bitterly resented, the Lutheran congregations began their

³⁰Wentz, op. cit., p. 46.

³¹Schaeffer, op. cit., p. 47.

decline. They began to demand more consideration from the home church, and asked for more English speaking pastors. Eventually, the Swedish authorities refused to send any more pastors at all.³² Since pastors who could conduct English services were not to be had, the congregations amended their constitutions to the effect that the pulpits of their churches might be occupied by either Lutheran or Episcopalian clergymen.³³

From this time on, the congregations began to lose their distinct Lutheran character. One by one, they began to unite with the Episcopalians. Edel Ross Wentz lays the blame for the disappearance of Swedish Lutheranism largely on the authorities in Sweden:

That the Lutherans of New Sweden failed to endure is to be explained by the short-sighted policy of the Swedish authorities. The American settlement was treated as a perpetual missionary outpost of the State-Church of Sweden. No effort was made to cultivate a sense of responsibility and self support on the part of the Americans. The pastors sent were taught to regard themselves as temporary missionaries in waiting for better positions at home. Laymen rarely assumed any responsibility. The pastorates were mostly brief and there was no thought of providing for a native American ministry or of securing the future independent development of the Swedish Lutheran Church in America; in a word, State-Churchism.³⁴

³²Neve and Allbeck, op. cit., p. 27.

³³Wentz, op. cit., p. 47.

³⁴Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

THE GERMAN LUTHERANS

The German Lutherans in Pennsylvania came at least a generation after the Swedish Lutherans had been established. Penn's colony, during the early years of the 18th Century, served as a haven for a number of persecuted or dissatisfied German religious groups from Europe. The Lutherans played a significant role in this German movement, and consequently the Lutheran history at times becomes rather involved with that of other groups from their homeland. An attempt is made here to confine the narrative as much as possible to the Lutheran movement itself apart from its relation to other groups.

Early Men and Movements

The main German Lutheran beginnings in Pennsylvania did not come until the start of the 18th Century, but there were a few traces of activity around Philadelphia during the last decade of the century before. * In 1694, a group of

forty German Rosicrucians¹ came to settle near Philadelphia on the Wissahickon. The founder of this secret society was a Lutheran court preacher, Johann Andrae. Its purpose was to delve into mystical speculations and oppose Catholicism and alchemy. Johannis Kelpius was the leader of this particular group. Among its members were Henry Bernhard Koester, Daniel Falckner, and later, Justus Falckner, all prominent in American Lutheran history.²

Koester became the chaplain of the group on board ship. When the brotherhood arrived in Pennsylvania, they began to conduct Lutheran meetings in the Wissahickon settlement. Koester preached the first German Lutheran service in Germantown in 1694.³

¹The name Rosicrucian signifies the union of science and Christianity, as symbolized by the rose and the cross (rosa: rose + crux: cross.)" Lars P. Qvalben, The Lutheran Church in Colonial America (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1940), p. 153. At present in America, there are four Rosicrucian movements, the chief one being known as AMORC (Ancient Mystic Order Rosae Crucis), with headquarters at San Jose, California.

²Ibid., pp. 153-154.

It is interesting to note that in spite of their enthusiastic tendencies, these German Rosicrucians were said to have adhered to the Unaltered Augsburg Confession. Koester conducted orthodox Lutheran services in both the English and German Languages. See E. M. Biegner, "Heinrich Bernhard Koester," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, XXII (January, 1950), pp. 158-159.

However, no Lutheran congregation was established at this time.⁴

The meetings of the Rosicrucians attracted many English settlers who desired services in their own language. Arrangements were made for English services in a private home in Philadelphia, and in 1696, the English speaking groups built Christ Church, the first Episcopal Church in the colony. Thomas Clayton, an Episcopalian minister, took charge of the congregation and was assisted by Koester until 1700 when the latter returned to Germany. Both Clayton and Koester gathered anti-Quaker members.

The Rosicrucian brotherhood later moved from Philadelphia and became part of the Ephrata colony. They did not set up a congregation of their own, perhaps because some of their leaders parted company. Koester went back to Germany; Daniel Falckner and Justus Falckner stayed in the New World, but became Lutheran ministers.⁵

Francis Daniel Pastorius, a Lutheran Pietist, came to America in 1683 as the agent of the Frankfort Land Company. He and a group of Mennonites and Quakers laid out Germantown, a settlement a little north of Philadelphia. Pastorius has

⁴Abdel Ross Wentz, The Lutheran Church in American History (Second Edition; Philadelphia: The United Lutheran Publication House, c.1933), p. 55.

⁵Qualben, op. cit., p. 155.

little significance in later Lutheran history in Pennsylvania, for he soon drifted away to the Quakers.⁶

In 1700, Daniel Falckner, who had gone to Germany under the sponsorship of the Rosicrucian brotherhood to procure ministerial help, returned to replace Pastorius as agent for the Frankfort Land Company. Accompanying him were his younger brother, Justus Falckner, and several theological students. Justus was ordained in 1703 at the Gloria Dei Church in Philadelphia and took up a pastorate in New York.⁷

Daniel Falckner remained in Pennsylvania and became the pioneer Lutheran pastor there. It is not known just when he was ordained, but he performed the ministerial acts as one who possessed the credentials of the office.⁸ The first German Lutheran congregation in Pennsylvania was organized by Daniel Falckner in Montgomery County at New Hanover in 1703. The settlement was known as Falckner's Swamp, and was

⁶Ira Oliver Rothstein, Lutheran Makers of America (Philadelphia: The United Lutheran Publication House, c.1930), pp. 101-102.

⁷Justus Falckner's ordination was the first Lutheran ordination in America. The Swedish pastors, Rudman, Bjork, and Sandel officiated. Qualben, op. cit., p. 164.

⁸Qualben believes he was ordained in Germany, either before 1694 or during his visit in 1698-1700. Qualben, op. cit., p. 165. Finck is of the opinion that he was not ordained until after he began his work in New Jersey in 1703. William J. Finck, Lutheran Landmarks and Pioneers in America (Philadelphia: General Council Publication House, 1931), p. 94.

inhabited by Lutherans who had accompanied Falckner to America in 1700. Falckner served them until 1708 when he left for New Jersey.⁹ In 1719, at Falckner's Swamp, fifty acres of land were donated as a site for a new church and school.¹⁰

Other congregations which came into existence were those at Germantown and Philadelphia. Anthony Jacob Menkel, German Lutheran pastor, arrived in America in 1717 as an exile. He began preaching to the Germans in both of these places as well as in the congregation already established at Falckner's Swamp. It is probable that he founded and organized the congregations in Germantown and Philadelphia. Menkel died in 1728.¹¹

The majority of German Lutheran immigrants in the early years of the 18th Century hailed from the Palatinate, where a number of wars had scarred and ravaged their lands and homes.

⁹Wentz, op. cit., pp. 57-58.

¹⁰Edmund Jacob Wolf, The Lutherans in America (New York: J. A. Hill and Company, 1889), p. 173.

¹¹Wentz, op. cit., p. 58. Neve and Allbeck state that John Caspar Stoeber, Sr., is "supposed to have organized" the first congregation in Philadelphia. See J. L. Neve and Willard D. Allbeck, History of the Lutheran Church in America (Burlington, Iowa: The Lutheran Literary Board, 1934), p. 49. Graebner is silent on the subject. He does mention that the first known pastor at Philadelphia was Johann Christian Schulz, who came in 1732. See A. L. Graebner, Geschichte der Lutherischen Kirche in America (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1892), Erster Theil, pp. 242-243.

At first, these Palatine emigrants found their way to New York. However, the New York colony soon gained an unwholesome reputation for ill-treating the Germans, and the tide of immigration turned toward Pennsylvania.¹²

John Caspar Stoeber, Sr. and John Caspar Stoeber, Jr. arrived in Philadelphia in 1728. The father soon went to Virginia, but the young Stoeber remained in Pennsylvania. He traveled up and down the colony for a number of years doing mission work.¹³

The church at Tulpehocken was formed by Palatine Lutherans who had for a time settled in New York. When they were harshly treated by New York authorities, many decided to make their way to Pennsylvania, and in 1723 settled at Tulpehocken in the Lebanon Valley. For a time, the younger Stoeber was pastor there. It is probable that Henkel visited the congregation. Sometime later, a split was caused in the congregation in connection with Count Zinzendorf's unionistic activities there. The friction resulted in the erection of separate church buildings.¹⁴ Colonel John Conrad Weiser

¹²Wentz, op. cit., p. 56.

¹³ibid., pp. 58-59.

¹⁴Neve and Allbeck, op. cit., p. 47. Count Ludwig von Zinzendorf straddled the fence between Lutheranism and Moravianism, actually leaning closer to Moravianism. His goal was to unite all the German groups into one church, over which he would have authority.

moved to Tulpehocken in 1729, and in 1732 became the official interpreter of Indian affairs for Pennsylvania.¹⁵

Other congregations appeared at Providence (the Trappe) and Lancaster. The latter congregation was the "largest and strongest" of these early Pennsylvania German Lutheran churches. It was organized by John Caspar Stoever, Jr. in 1729.¹⁶

"Soon the counties of York, Lebanon, Lancaster, Berks, Lehigh, Bucks, Adams and Montgomery were dotted by Lutheran preaching places and congregations."¹⁷ The difficulty was to get pastors to man these stations. John Christian Schulz arrived in Pennsylvania in 1732, but stayed in America hardly a year. While he was in the colony, he ordained Stoever into the ministry,¹⁸ and succeeded in uniting the congregations at Philadelphia, Providence and New Hanover into one parish. He then persuaded the parish to send him to Germany to obtain more pastors and funds for the erection of churches

¹⁵Nothstein, op. cit., p. 89.

¹⁶Neve and Allbeck, op. cit., p. 47.

¹⁷Qualben, op. cit., p. 133.

¹⁸Stoever had been refused ordination when he requested it of Daniel Falckner in 1731. He had been performing the acts of the ministerial office simply because of the scarcity of pastors. His ordination in 1733 was the second Lutheran ordination in America. Justus Falckner's was the first. Neve and Allbeck, op. cit., p. 49.

and schools. Schulz never returned and the congregations had to wait for nine years for their next regular pastor.

During this period when German Lutheran ministers were scarce, the Swedish Lutheran pastors offered their services to the spiritually starving German congregations. They preached to congregations in and about Philadelphia and at Lancaster, Germantown and York.¹⁹

From 1700 to 1720, there was a steady stream of German immigrants flowing into the colony. Between 1720 and 1740, the number increased and reached its peak during the fourth decade.

Many of them sought and found a home in Philadelphia and its vicinity, and, although unable in their poverty either to build church or school-house, or even to secure the ground for such an object, they nevertheless maintained the unity of the faith, and hopefully awaited a more prosperous day.²⁰

That day came with the arrival of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg.

Henry Melchior Muhlenberg

German Lutheran history in Pennsylvania after 1740 and during the remainder of the colonial period centers around the influential person of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg. For

¹⁹Wolf is of the opinion that Swedish pastors founded the congregations at Lancaster, Germantown, and York. See Wolf, op. cit., p. 218.

²⁰C. W. Schaeffer, Early History of the Lutheran Church in America (Philadelphia: Lutheran Board of Publication, 1857), p. 27.

the tremendously important position which he was to occupy in American Lutheranism, Muhlenberg was exceedingly well qualified.

He was strong in body and richly endowed in heart and mind. Dignified and magnetic in his personal appearance, endowed with unusual tact and adaptability, pleasant and cordial in his relations with men, capable of speaking Latin, Dutch and English fluently besides his native German, trained in the German School of Pietism in its best days, a scholarly theologian and a firm Lutheran, and possessed with remarkable powers of organization and administration -- these characteristics made Muhlenberg the Patriarch of the Lutheran Church in America.²¹

Muhlenberg was educated at the universities of Goettingen and Jena. It was intended that he should go to India as a missionary, but in 1739, he received an urgent call to Grosshennersdorf in Eastern Saxony. Muhlenberg accepted the call and was ordained at Leipzig in 1739. After serving two years at this place, he made a visit to his childhood home and on his way stopped at Halle in September, 1741. Gotthelf August Francke, head of the mission school there, urged Muhlenberg to accept a challenging call to "the dispersed Lutherans in Pennsylvania." After brief but serious consideration, Muhlenberg accepted.²²

On his way to America, Muhlenberg stayed nine weeks with

²¹Quelben, op. cit., p. 204.

²²William J. Mann, Life and Times of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg (Philadelphia: G. W. Frederick, 1888), p. 21.

Dr. Frederick Ziegenhagen, Lutheran court preacher in London. Ziegenhagen extended him a warm reception and showed a genuine interest in the German Lutheran work in America.²³

Here, Muhlenberg received the official written call from the congregations at Philadelphia, New Providence and New Hanover.²⁴ On his way again, Muhlenberg first landed in Georgia, visited with the Salzburg Lutherans there, and finally arrived in Philadelphia, November 25, 1742.

Muhlenberg was entering upon a confused state of affairs when he arrived among Lutherans in Philadelphia. In the interim of nine years between Schulz and Muhlenberg, the congregation of Philadelphia and vicinity had no pastor with the exception of Valentine Kraft,²⁵ an aged man without credentials who came six years after Schulz had left in 1739. But he was hardly a match for the magnetic Count Zinzendorf, who arrived among Lutherans in Pennsylvania posing as a Lutheran pastor. Zinzendorf had been appointed Bishop of the Moravians in 1737 and had come to America under an assumed name in 1741. Through his activities, he succeeded in gaining a considerable Lutheran following. The result was a split in the congrega-

²³Schaeffer, op. cit., p. 206.

²⁴Mann, op. cit., p. 39.

²⁵Graebner describes Kraft as a questionable character who pushed his way into the church at Philadelphia. Graebner, op. cit., p. 257.

tions at Philadelphia, New Hanover and New Providence.²⁶

Into this confusion, Muhlenberg stepped entirely unannounced since there had been no correspondence between the Pennsylvania congregations and the authorities in Europe since 1739. Through tact and patience, he gradually managed to establish himself as the pastor of his congregations at New Hanover, New Providence, and Philadelphia. He replaced N. Schmidt, a quack doctor posing as a preacher at New Hanover, and Valentine Kraft at New Providence and Philadelphia. At Philadelphia, the people met with him in a carpenter or butcher shop; in New Providence, a barn; in New Hanover, a half-finished log building.²⁷ (The credentials received from Ziegenhagen in London proved very valuable to Muhlenberg. After a period of four weeks, he was able to clear up the trouble.) Zinzendorf returned to Germany after a public conversation, (it was hardly a debate) in which Muhlenberg asserted his right to be the pastor of the Lutheran congregations.²⁸ There remained, however, an active remnant of Zinzendorf's followers in the colony.

When the three united congregations took Muhlenberg as

²⁶Qualben, op. cit., pp. 202-203; and Wentz, op. cit., pp. 68-69.

²⁷Neve and Allbeck, op. cit., p. 56.

²⁸An interesting report of the conversation recorded by Muhlenberg is given in appendix II of Qualben, op. cit., pp. 235-289.

their pastor, he was installed in Gloria Dei Church in Philadelphia by the Swedish pastor from Wilmington, Rev. Peter Tranberg. Muhlenberg's work was cut out for him, and he immediately set himself to the task of building and rebuilding congregations. The motto of his activity was Ecclesia Plantanda -- the Church must be planted.²⁹

It was not long before Muhlenberg added a fourth congregation, Germantown, to the three he was already serving. He also undertook the establishment of schools for the instruction of children. Since teachers were difficult to get, he himself undertook the instruction of the children in his four congregations, spending a week at each place in succession.³⁰ Calls for help were continually coming to him and he would spend much of his time traveling and preaching to other congregations than his own.

In spite of all this responsibility and work, Muhlenberg's salary was very meager. This is easily understood when one considers the poor financial status of his parishioners. "The first year one congregation contributed a horse, another nothing, and a third barely enough to pay rent."³¹

²⁹Neve and Allbeck, op. cit., p. 56.

³⁰William Warren Sweet, Religion in Colonial America (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947), p. 241.

³¹Neve and Allbeck, op. cit., p. 56.

During his second year, Muhlenberg already found himself in debt and his clothes were almost worn out, but he registered no complaints. Through his marriage to Anna Marie Weiser, daughter of the famous government Indian agent, Muhlenberg intimated that his place to serve was in Pennsylvania, and that he accepted the challenge to plant the church there.³² From this marriage proceeded one of the most distinguished families in the early history of the United States.

The challenge which lay before Muhlenberg was overwhelming. He was continually looking for co-laborers in his work. Shortly after his arrival, a certain Rev. Tobias Wagner came into the area and ministered to "some half dozen congregations in Pennsylvania." But Muhlenberg found it difficult to work with him.³³ Minute reports were sent regularly by Muhlenberg to the authorities of the mission school at Halle. The reports continually requested reinforcements in men and money. In the meantime in 1743, J. F. Viger, a layman, came from the Ebenezer colony in Georgia to take charge of one of the schools begun by Muhlenberg. J. J. Loeser, another teacher, arrived about the same time.³⁴

³²Qualben, op. cit., p. 208.

³³Mann, op. cit., p. 148.

³⁴Wentz, op. cit., p. 70.

In 1745, three men arrived from Halle, one pastor and two catechists. The pastor, Rev. Peter Brunholtz, took charge of the congregations in Philadelphia and Germantown, while Muhlenberg retained the country churches. The catechists, John Nicholas Kurtz and John Helfrich Schaum, were employed in the schools. After Muhlenberg had made preliminary visits to Lancaster, Pastor John Frederick Henschuh was placed there in 1748. Now that Muhlenberg had received help from Brunholtz, he was able to devote more time to the outlying churches:

Calls for help began to reach him from various quarters and wherever possible he responded, giving himself unreservedly to the work of catechizing, confirming, teaching, reconciling, establishing, building, preaching, and administering the sacraments.³⁵

The Synod at Philadelphia

At the middle mark of the 18th Century, it has been estimated that there were at least forty thousand nominal Lutherans in Pennsylvania.³⁶ With this tremendous influx of Lutherans in such a comparatively short space of time, it was felt that there should be some organization to tie the scattered congregations together.

Already in 1744, the first suggestion for a synod came from two laymen, Peter Kock and Henry Schleydorn of the Wicaco

³⁵Ibid., pp. 69-71.

³⁶Ibid., p. 57.

Church. The suggestion was bypassed when a Swedish pastor urged that the Synod include also the followers of Zinzendorf. Muhlenberg was decidedly opposed to the inclusion of Zinzendorf's followers for obvious reasons.³⁷

Later in 1748, there was a more receptive attitude toward the idea of a synod. Several reasons were responsible for the change. ¹ There was a feeling that the congregations should have a uniform order of service. ² Each succeeding year of increased immigration impressed upon the people the immenseness of the missionary task which the people faced alone. ³ There was a desire among the congregations to protect themselves from the Zinzendorf unionistic influence,³⁸ and they looked for some authority to release unqualified pastors who forced themselves on congregations.

In April of 1748, Muhlenberg, Brunholtz, and Handschuh agreed upon a common liturgy for the churches. About the same time, there was a request from the Tulpehocken congregation for the ordination of John Nicholas Kurtz, catechist, whom they wanted as their pastor. The congregation at Philadelphia had planned to dedicate the new St. Michael's Church sometime in August of the same year.

All of these developments favored the organization of the

³⁷Qualben, op. cit., p. 309.

³⁸Neve and Allbeck, op. cit., p. 57.

Synod. Muhlenberg recognized the opportunity afforded, and called the ministers and lay representatives together in Philadelphia. St. Michael's Church was dedicated on August 25, 1743. On the same day, Kurtz was ordained there as pastor of the Tulpehocken congregation.³⁹

On the next day, August 26, 1743, at St. Michael's, the Synod was formed. It was the second Lutheran synod in America.⁴⁰ Six pastors were present: Muhlenberg, Brunholtz, Handschuh, and Kurtz were regular members; Johann Christoff Hartwig of New York and Johan Sandin, the Swedish provost, were advisory members.⁴¹ There were twenty-four lay delegates who represented ten congregations.

The Synod was first known as the "United Pastors;"⁴² the parishes were called the "United Congregations." Muhlenberg, as might be expected, was accorded by common consent the chairmanship.

³⁹Wentz, op. cit., p. 72.

⁴⁰The first Lutheran synod in America consisted of New York and New Jersey churches and was held in 1735 at the Rariton Church in New Jersey. See Qualben, op. cit., pp. 195-196.

⁴¹Other Lutheran pastors like John Caspar Stoeber, Jr. and Tobias Wagner were not invited to the first meeting of the Synod because, according to the record, they called the synod's pastors pietists, declined the new common liturgy, and were improperly called. Neve and Allbeck, op. cit., p. 53.

⁴²At present, it is called the Ministerium of Pennsylvania.

The chief business matter on the agenda at the first meeting of the Synod was the examination of the proposed common liturgy, agreed upon earlier by Muhlenberg, Brunholtz, and Handschuh. The common liturgy was based chiefly on the liturgy of the Savoy Church in London. The liturgy was adopted at the Synod; but, instead of being printed, was copied by each pastor for himself. In 1754, it was sent to Halle for approval. Even though this was the only chief matter of business attended to, the ratification of the liturgy was quite significant. Qualben says:

This common liturgy was important because it promoted the proper character of the public services, the administration of the sacrament, and the unification of the congregations.⁴³

At first there was no formal constitution of the Synod. It gradually developed in unwritten form and was formally adopted after the colonial period had ended. The meetings of the Synod went on regularly up to 1754, then ceased for several years.⁴⁴ During these years, immigrants swarmed into the Lutheran areas and overwhelmed the pastors with work. Then too, some of the new pastors and laymen objected to the Synod, especially those who had no connection with Halle.⁴⁵ But in 1760, the Synod was revived again chiefly through the

⁴³Qualben, op. cit., p. 211.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Wentz, op. cit., pp. 74-75.

encouragement and instigation of Charles Magnus Wrangel, the Swedish provost, whose friendship and direction was greatly appreciated by Muhlenberg and the other German Lutheran pastors.

Later Developments

Muhlenberg and his associates were deeply concerned with the problem of gaining and holding a well-trained clergy. A year after the Synod was organized at Philadelphia, Muhlenberg negotiated the purchase of the 49-acre tract of land in Philadelphia upon which he intended to build a seminary, a school, and a home for the aged. Lack of funds, particularly, and other matters which pressed Muhlenberg for time delayed action on the plan. During his lifetime, Muhlenberg's plan was not realized. However, training of a native ministry went on in spite of the fact that they had no seminary. Many of the theological candidates were trained in the parsonages of the pastors. Muhlenberg trained several himself.

St. Michael's congregation in Philadelphia soon became one of the largest Lutheran congregations in the colony due to the steady stream of German immigration. The congregation was composed of a considerable variety of Germans,⁴⁶ each one of whom, it seemed, had different ideas on the matter of church government. As a result, friction developed in the

⁴⁶See Qualpen, op. cit. p. 212, for the varieties of Germans.

congregation to such an extent that Pastor Handschuh, who was serving Philadelphia at this time, was unable to cope with the situation. A call for help was issued to Muhlenberg and he returned to Philadelphia in 1761 to take charge of the congregation and restore order. Shortly thereafter, at Muhlenberg's instigation, the congregation decided unanimously on the framing of a congregational constitution.

Because of his rich background and experience, Muhlenberg was elected to write the document. He was given valuable assistance and advice by the able Swedish Lutheran pastor, Wrangel. In its final form, the document represented the result of years of experience among the German, Swedish, and Dutch Lutherans in America. On October 18, 1762, the constitution, bearing the name "Fundamental Articles," was adopted by the St. Michael's congregation. It was the first constitution for a congregation in the Lutheran Church in America,⁴⁷ and it became the model for many others to follow.

Qualben gives a summary of the four principles outlined in the document:

- (1) The pastor was pledged to "declare the Word of God publicly, in a pure, plain, solid and edifying manner, according to the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, and the unaltered Augsburg Confession."
- (2) The local congregation was invested with the perpetual right to elect its own pastor and officers.
- (3) The government of the local congregation was not

⁴⁷Neve and Allbeck, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

direct, but through the council, which consisted of the elected pastor and officers. (4) Synodical advice was provided for in case a pastor was to be called or deposed.⁴⁸

The early history of German Lutheranism in eastern Pennsylvania can justly be written around the life of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg. The beginnings made before his coming seemed to be the preparation for his arrival. And from 1742 until his death in 1787, a significant epoch in American Lutheran history was in progress. The early contributions of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg to American Lutheranism have made him the Patriarch of the Lutheran Church in America.

⁴⁸Quelben, op. cit., pp. 213-214.

CHAPTER V

OTHER GERMAN GROUPS

In addition to the Lutherans, there were six other German religious bodies which found their way into eastern Pennsylvania during the colonial period. They were the Mennonites, Dunkers, Ephratites, Moravians, Schwenkfelders, and Reformed.

The Mennonites

The American Mennonites sprang from the followers of Menno Simon, a peace-loving leader who gathered anti-radical people from the radical Anabaptist movement during the general period of the Reformation. They were particularly known for their refusal to bear arms, anti-revolutionary tendencies, rejection of state control over church, and strict way of life.

To the Mennonites and Quakers together belongs the distinction of beginning the great German migration into Pennsylvania.

Between 1655 and 1680, Quakers from England toured the European continent and gained a number of converts in the Mennonite settlements along the Rhine. William Penn's first

appeal to take up residence in his new colony in America was made to these newly converted Quakers and their Mennonite friends.¹

The first to accept Penn's offer was a group of German people of Dutch descent living in the city of Crefeld along the Rhine near the Dutch border. The group consisted of thirteen families, mostly Quakers of Mennonite background. In their city, they had only a measure of toleration, and so the promises of religious freedom held out by the prospect of settling in Penn's new colony appealed to them a great deal.

About the year 1682, a group of German pietists from Frankfort on the Main purchased a tract of land north and west of Philadelphia, formed the Frankfort Land Company, and appointed Francis Daniel Pastorius as their agent. Pastorius arrived in Philadelphia in August of 1683, about two months before the Crefeld settlers, and laid out the settlement of Germantown.²

¹Henry C. Smith, The Story of the Mennonites (Berne, Indiana: Mennonite Book Concern, c.1941), pp. 536-537.

²Smith, a Mennonite, believes Pastorius' role as founder of Germantown has been overemphasized. He prefers to call him the historian of the settlement, implying that the Crefeld "Mennonites" were really the founders. Ibid., pp. 537-538.

On October 6, 1683, the thirteen Grefeld families³ arrived in Philadelphia. They proceeded directly to Germantown and there established the first permanent Mennonite colony in America which was also the first German colony.⁴

In the early years of Germantown, the Quakers and Mennonites held a majority in the settlement. In 1686, a community meeting house was built in which the Quakers and Mennonites worshipped together. By 1690, the Mennonites were worshipping apart from the Quakers in a private home. This was probably due to the instigation of William Rittenhouse, who had arrived in Pennsylvania in 1688; and in 1690, was chosen to be the Mennonite minister. By 1705, the Quakers had built their own meeting house and had withdrawn from the community building. In 1708, the Mennonites erected a log house for their meetings.

Later, Mennonite immigrants turned to other areas. In 1702, a second Mennonite colony was established about thirty miles north of Germantown on the Skippack Creek. This area became, for a time, the center of a group of Mennonites from the Palatinate. By 1712, the Mennonite membership in

³Daniel Cassel states that the thirteen families were mostly Mennonite. Daniel K. Cassel, Geschichte der Mennoniten (Philadelphia: I. Kohler, 1890), p. 63. Smith is probably more correct in saying there were twelve newly converted Quaker families and one Mennonite. Smith op. cit., p. 537.

⁴Ibid.

the two congregations at Germantown and the Skippack numbered ninety-nine persons out of an estimated Mennonite population of two hundred.⁵ By 1750, the Mennonite settlement along the Skippack had expanded into a large community, ten miles long on both sides of the creek.

Most of the later Mennonites from the Palatinate, bypassed Germantown and the surrounding territory, and headed farther west toward the rich farm lands in Bucks and Lancaster counties. The most important Palatinate colony was established by Swiss Palatine Mennonites at Pequea Creek which flows through Lancaster County into the Susquehanna River. This settlement was established in 1710 by ten men who acquired ten thousand acres of land in that area. During the next half-century, persecuted and poverty-stricken Palatine Mennonites poured into this area. By 1750, the Mennonites occupied almost all of the rural part of Lancaster County, which soon was considered the Mennonite center in the colonies.⁶

In 1756, Martin Boehm, a farmer in Lancaster County, was chosen by lot to be a Mennonite minister. He was appointed a Mennonite Bishop in 1759. Gradually, he broke away from the conventional preaching and orthodox practice of the Mennonites. In the years 1766 to 1768, he met Philip Otterbein,

⁵Ibid., p. 539.

⁶Ibid., pp. 548-560.

Reformed minister. The two developed a friendship which led to the organization of the United Brethren Church. Boehm was also connected with the Methodists toward the end of the colonial period. Because of his association with other denominations, the Mennonites excluded him from their church.⁷

The Mennonite immigrants were mostly farmers and consequently avoided the towns and cities which were established after their arrival. This isolation probably affected their church life. There was little if any organization among the churches. Each group or congregation attended to its own affairs with joint action only when necessary. In 1727, a joint meeting of all the Pennsylvania congregations was held to discuss an English translation of their confession of faith.⁸

By the end of the colonial period, there were a number of Mennonite congregations in Montgomery, Bucks, Berks, Lehigh, Northampton, Chester and Lancaster Counties.⁹ In spite of their many scattered congregations in eastern Pennsylvania, their total membership was not great. It has been estimated

⁷Dora Mae Clark, "Martin Boehm," Dictionary of American Biography, edited by Allen Johnson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943), II, 405-406.

⁸Smith, op. cit., p. 552.

⁹Cassel gives a detailed history of Mennonite activity in each of these counties. Cassel, op. cit., pp. 93-147.

that the number of Mennonites who came to Pennsylvania during the 18th Century "was certainly not over twenty-five hundred."¹⁰

The importance of the Mennonite history in eastern Pennsylvania does not consist in numbers. Their significance lies in the fact that they opened a path to America which many other German groups were to follow.

The Dunkers

The Dunkers are known by several different names:

German Baptist Brethren, Dunkards, Taufers, Tunkers, Tunkards, and Dippers. As one might expect from such a variety of names, the group owes its distinction to a form of baptism. The Dunkers specialize in trine immersion, the act of dipping the candidate for baptism three times face forward in a flowing stream.

The first group of German Baptists from which the Dunkers sprang can be traced to Schwarzenau in Hesse Cassel. Here, in 1708, the first group of German Baptist Brethren were gathered together by Alexander Mack, formerly of the Reformed Church. He was assisted by Christopher Hochmann, who had become a pietist under Francke's influence at Halle. Hochmann did not favor organization, but Mack saw no other way to maintain the work. Hence, the first Church of German Baptist

¹⁰Smith, op. cit., p. 548.

Brothren was formed when Mack had himself baptized and then baptized a group of seven according to the unique rite.¹¹

The movement soon spread and other congregations were formed throughout Germany. One group was organized at Mariborn and later moved to Crefeld. In 1719, the congregation at Crefeld, led by Peter Becker, began the migration to America. In the fall of 1719, about twenty families arrived in Philadelphia. From there, they split up: some going to Germantown, some to Skippack, some to Oley, and some to Conestoga and other places.¹²

At first, the German Baptists were rather lax in observing their religious ceremonies probably because they had been widely scattered after their arrival in America. But in 1723, Peter Becker gathered 17 Dunkers in his home at Germantown for the purpose of organizing a congregation. This group formed the first Dunker Church in America, choosing Becker as their elder. William Warren Sweet gives a description of the ceremonies:

During the day, six new converts were baptized in

¹¹William Warren Sweet, Religion in Colonial America (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947), pp. 217-218.

¹²Morgan Edwards, Materials Towards a History of the Baptists in Pennsylvania, as cited by David Benedict, A History of the Baptists in the Middle States (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1898), p. 599.

Wissahickon Creek, after which they gathered around a long table in the home of another member, the women on one side and the men on the other, where, after a service of song, prayer and scripture reading, they washed one another's feet. Then they partook of a meal, followed by Communion, passed the "holy kiss of charity," gave "the right hand of fellowship," and brought the meeting to a close with prayer and hymn.¹³

The organization of this first congregation seemed to encourage activity among Dunkers in other areas. A congregation was formed at Conestoga in Lancaster County in 1724, where Conrad Beissel was chosen elder. In 1729, Alexander Mack, the founder of the German Baptist Brethren at Schwarzenau, arrived with about thirty families and took charge of the rapidly-developing Dunker movement in Pennsylvania. By 1770, fourteen congregations had been formed in Pennsylvania.¹⁴

Most of the Dunkers formerly had been Lutherans and Presbyterians, and they had no connection whatsoever with other Baptist groups. In fact, "they did not know that there was in the world such a people as the Baptists."¹⁵

Like the Quakers, the Dunkers were plain in their language and dress, and they refused to take oaths or engage in fighting. The men usually wore beards. The people observed Sunday as the day of worship, and their religious observances

¹³Sweet, op. cit., p. 218.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Henry C. Vedder, A History of the Baptists in the Middle States (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1898), p. 70.

included the Lord's Supper, love-feasts, the washing of feet, the kiss of charity, the right hand of fellowship, the anointing of the sick with oil. They were congregational in their form of church government and had no ministers; anyone in the congregation was allowed to speak.¹⁶ The distinctive feature of the Dunkers, as mentioned before, was their insistence on trine immersion.

The Ephrata Society

The Ephrata Society came into existence as a result of a division among the Dunkers. While there is a close relationship between the two groups, the two must not be confused since the Ephrata group arose a number of years later and made a decisive break with the Dunkers. The Society was organized about the year 1730 by Conrad Beissel in a flourishing settlement near Lancaster.¹⁷

Conrad Beissel was a journeyman baker from Eberbach in the Palatinate. In 1715, in the course of his journeys, he became acquainted with a group of pietists who converted him to their views. He was twenty-seven years old at the time of his conversion. He took to the pietistic life quite well,

¹⁶Morgan Edwards, Materials Towards a History of the Baptists in Pennsylvania, as cited in Sweet, op. cit., p. 219.

¹⁷Benedict, op. cit., p. 914.

even insisting that celibacy was a primary requirement for one who consecrated his life to the service of God.¹⁸

After a few years, he came to Schwarzenau and Crefeld where he associated with the German Baptist Brethren. With two companions who shared his religious views, Stuntz and Stiefel, Beissel struck out for America and arrived in Boston in 1720. From Boston, he went immediately to Germantown. Finding it impossible to practice his trade there, he served as a weaver's apprentice in the home of Peter Becker, the Dunker elder.¹⁹

In 1721, Beissel and Stuntz established a solitary residence in Muehlbach, Lebanon County. Stiefel, the other companion of Beissel, eventually came to the establishment. However, since Stiefel felt that Beissel was too much of an ascetic, he withdrew to Bethlehem after a brief stay. His departure seems to have started a general exodus. One after another, Beissel's followers left him, including Stuntz, who sold the residence to get back the money which he had loaned to Beissel.²⁰

The disappointed Beissel now returned to Germantown and

¹⁸Paul S. Leinbach, "Johann Conrad Beissel," Dictionary of American Biography, edited by Allen Johnson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943), II, 142-143.

¹⁹Sweet, op. cit., p. 211

²⁰Leinbach, op. cit., p. 142.

was baptized by Peter Becker. After his baptism, he assumed the name "Friedsam Gottrecht," and for a time, he served as an elder in the Conestoga Dunker congregation.

In 1732, seven years after his baptism, Beissel established the Ephrata colony in Lancaster County. The Ephrata community was established on two main ideas: Beissel's aversion to marriage, and the observance of Saturday as the day of rest. The community was made up of Solitary Brethren (unmarried men), Sisters (unmarried women), and married couples who pledged continence. Outside of these differences, their religious customs were quite similar to those of the Dunkers.

The Ephrata colony was a "semi-monastic, communistic community."²¹ Communal dwellings were built for men and women separately. There were cells for those who preferred solitude. The colony had the largest chapel in Pennsylvania, and it was erected without the use of iron. Large halls were built for holding love-feasts. The colony was also in possession of a printing press.²²

Beissel, an accomplished propagandist, succeeded in gaining a number of important colonial people for his community. Among these were: John Peter Miller, a prominent German Reformed pastor in Philadelphia, graduate of Heidelberg and a

²¹Sweet, op. cit., p. 222.

²²Vedder, op. cit., p. 72.

scholarly theologian; Conrad Weiser, famous government Indian agent; Mrs. Christopher Saur, Sr., whose husband was the well-known printer of Germantown. Weiser²³ and Mrs. Saur eventually withdrew from the society, but Miller remained and became the leader following Beissel's death.

The community spent much of its time in singing. Beissel himself composed most of the hymns, both words and tunes. It is said that he had printed 441 out of 1000 hymns which he had written.

Although he had no sense of meter or of rhythm, he evolved a distinctive system of harmony, a unique musical notation, and a series of quaint melodies which exerted considerable influence on American hymnology.²⁴

After Beissel's death in 1768, the community was headed by John Peter Miller. Although a learned theologian and a scholar, Miller must have lacked the leadership qualities of Beissel. For shortly after he took charge of the colony, it began to decline rapidly. The Ephrata Society, with its emphasis on seclusion, hardly made its religious influence felt in Pennsylvania; while during the height of its activity it was considered one of the two chief cultural centers among

²³Weiser severed his connection with the Ephrata Society in 1743 and became a Lutheran. Carl Bridenbaugh, "Johann Conrad Weiser," Dictionary of American Biography, edited by Dumas Malone (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943), XIX, 614-616.

²⁴Leinbach, op. cit., p. 143.

the Germans in the colonies.

The Moravians

The first Moravian settlement in American was begun in Georgia in the year 1735. On May 30, 1740, a group of eleven Moravians from this Georgia settlement arrived in Pennsylvania and established the town of Nazareth on the Forks of the Delaware.²⁵

In December of 1741, Count Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf arrived in Pennsylvania to remain for a little over a year. Zinzendorf had studied at Halle and had identified himself with pietistic Lutheranism. After a time, he permitted some Moravian exiles to settle on his estate in Germany, where in 1732 the community of Herrnhut was established. Here the Moravian Church (Unity of the Brethren) was reorganized by the Moravian and Bohemian Protestants who had been driven from their homes by the Counter Reformation. Augustus Spangenberg and Peter Bohler, both prominent later on in the American Moravian movement, were attracted to Herrnhut at this time. (It was Zinzendorf's intention to unite Lutherans and Moravians into one Church.) However, it soon became evident that this plan was not workable, and from this time on

²⁵J. Taylor Hamilton, "A History of the Unitas Fratrum, or Moravian Church, in the United States of America," The American Church History Series (New York: The Christian Literature Company, c.1894), VIII, 441.

Zinzendorf swung back and forth between Lutheranism and Moravianism, inclining more toward the latter.²⁶

Now, Zinzendorf directed his attention toward the management of the Moravian missionary activity. Because of his unionistic and sectarian tendencies, the Count was exiled for ten years in 1738. It was during this period of exile that he came to America in 1741, and arrived in time to consecrate on Christmas Eve a new settlement in Pennsylvania which he named Bethlehem, in celebration of the birth of Christ.²⁷

Zinzendorf had the ambition of uniting all the German Protestant elements in Pennsylvania into one "Church of God in the Spirit." In order to do this, he temporarily resigned his Moravian episcopate in 1741,²⁸ and posed as a Lutheran pastor with the assumed name, Louis Tuerstein. Within the space of half a year, he called seven synods to promote unity among the Protestant groups.²⁹ [Zinzendorf's activities caused considerable confusion among Lutheran and Reformed groups, and instead of promoting unity only intensified differences. He

²⁶Sweet, op. cit., pp. 211-212.

²⁷Hamilton, op. cit., p. 442.

²⁸Ibid., p. 446.

²⁹Hamilton says it is incorrect to call these conferences "Zinzendorf's Synods," since a Reformed layman called for the first conference. Ibid. However, it is certainly true that the synods were instigated directly and indirectly through Zinzendorf's activities. Cf. Sweet, op. cit., p. 224.

was suspected of promoting the Moravian faith under the guise of church union.)

For a time Zinzendorf served both Lutherans and Reformed in Philadelphia. For those who followed him, he built a chapel out of which grew the first Moravian Church in Philadelphia.³⁰ When the final organization of the Lutheran and Reformed churches took place in Pennsylvania, Zinzendorf's idea of a "Church of God in the Spirit" was dropped entirely.³¹

On June 7, 1742, a group of Moravians from Europe known as the "First Sea Congregation," arrived in Philadelphia. The fifty-seven people in the group organized into a congregation on board ship on their way over, and began to hold regular services. Peter Bohler, the leader, brought them to Nazareth and Bethlehem. At the latter place, a Moravian congregation had been organized during the same month by Zinzendorf.³²

During the second half of 1742, Zinzendorf worked chiefly as a missionary among the Indians. His other activity during his stay in Pennsylvania included the founding directly or indirectly of Moravian congregations at Bethlehem, Nazareth, Philadelphia, Hebron, Heidelberg, Lancaster and York.³³

³¹John Jacob Sessler, Communal Pietism Among Early American Moravians (New York: Henry Holt and Company, c.1933), p. 71.

³²Hamilton, op. cit., p. 450.

³³Ibid., p. 451.

Toward the end of the year, Zinzendorf returned to Europe. Before he left, he put in motion the first form of government for the Moravian Church in America. Bishop David Nitschmann was put in charge of missions among the Indians, and Peter Bohler was to supervise the missionary trips.³⁴

Augustus Spangenberg arrived in Pennsylvania in December of 1744 and proceeded to superintend the activity of the Moravian missions among the Indians. After Spangenberg's arrival in America, a new type of living came into being at Bethlehem and Nazareth. It was called the "Economy,"³⁵ a system of living in which time and labor were held in common. It differed from other types of religious communism in that personal property was not divided:

Those who had means of their own did not necessarily surrender them. In return for the time and labor placed at the disposal of the church, they received the necessities of life. No private business was transacted, but the manufactures and trades of every sort were carried on for the benefit of the church organization under responsible committees. In addition to a number of farms, thirty-two different industries were in operation by the year 1747.³⁶

At the end of the colonial period, there were about 2500 Moravians in Pennsylvania.³⁷ The communities at Bethlehem and

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵For a detailed presentation of the "Economy," see Sessler, op. cit., pp. 72-92.

³⁶Plitt, Geschichte der erneuerten Brueder-Unitaet, cited by Hamilton, op. cit., p. 454.

³⁷Sweet, op. cit., p. 226.

Nazareth continued to be the center of Moravianism. Their influence among the colonists was only rather small, since they tended toward exclusiveness. A considerable degree of influence, however, was exercised among the Indians through the widespread missions of the Moravians.

The Schwenkfelders

The Schwenkfelders in eastern Pennsylvania were religious descendants of Caspar Schwenckfeld von Ossig, who lived during the time of the Reformation. Schwenckfeld had some contact with Luther but soon developed views that were out of harmony with Lutheran teaching in regard to the Scriptures and the Sacraments. On account of his heretical teachings, he moved from place to place to escape persecution. After his death, his followers, particularly in Silesia and southern Germany, continued to hold his views. In 1720, a considerable number of them moved to Count Zinzendorf's estate to escape the persecution of the Jesuits.³⁸

Zinzendorf ran into trouble with the Saxon government for allowing these Schwenkfelders to settle on his estate and practice their peculiar religious views. Eventually, in 1734, the group began the first Schwenkfelder emigration to

³⁸Sweet, op. cit., pp. 228.

Pennsylvania.³⁹

After the Schwenkfelders had arrived in Philadelphia, they chose George Weiss as their minister. Then they began to settle in Bucks, Montgomery, and Berks counties. During Weiss' term of office, services were conducted in the homes of the settlers. Upon Weiss' death in 1741, Balzer Hoffman was appointed leader. In 1742, the Schwenkfelders disowned Zingendorf because he accused them of error and of being "led by the nose."⁴⁰ Hoffman served until 1749 when he resigned because his leadership proved to be ineffective. There was no leader after him during the colonial period.

In 1753, heads of families agreed to hold regular services in their homes in rotation. And then in 1762, a general conference was called to develop a greater religious responsibility among the settlers. From this meeting, there resulted a new religious interest and the publication of a catechism and hymnbook. A twenty-year plan was adopted which provided for regular services and instruction.⁴¹

³⁹Augustus Spangenberg was to have accompanied the group to Georgia, but at the last moment they changed their mind and sailed to Pennsylvania instead. Spangenberg went alone to Georgia and established a Moravian colony. There appears to have been a "falling out" between Spangenberg and the Schwenkfelders. Sessler, op. cit., p. 22.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 34.

⁴¹Sweet, op. cit., p. 229.

There was no effort to establish either a ministry or an organization of congregations. The religious activity remained under the control of the heads of the families. The Schwenkfelders did not establish a church organization until after the end of the colonial period.

The Reformed

The Reformed Church had its rise at the time of the Reformation in Switzerland under Huldreich Zwingli, contemporary of Martin Luther. However, it has no connection with the Lutheran Church in doctrine and polity. The Reformed faith entered the Palatine under the rule of Frederick III. It was here that the German Reformed Church came into being and from there spread northward as far as Bremen.⁴²

By the end of the first decade of the 18th Century, there were some German Reformed families scattered in several counties of eastern Pennsylvania. The first German Reformed pastor to arrive in America was Samuel Guldin, who came to Philadelphia in 1710. However, he came not as a pastor but a farmer, and settled at Oley in Berks county. He never accepted a pastoral charge, but preached frequently to scattered groups in homes and any other buildings available.⁴³

⁴²E. T. Corwin, "History of the Reformed Church, Dutch," The American Church History Series (New York: The Christian Literature Company, c.1894), VIII, 4.

⁴³Sweet, op. cit., p. 231.

Probably the first organization of a German Reformed Church in Pennsylvania took place in Germantown. There is evidence that a German Reformed Church existed there in 1719. The Swedish Lutheran pastor, John Dylander, laid the cornerstone for it.⁴⁴

John Philip Boehm considered to be the founder of the German Reformed Church in America, arrived in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, in the year 1720. He was not an ordained minister, but he was persuaded by the people to serve them nevertheless. In 1725, he began his work as pastor, preaching and baptizing in the congregations at Falckner Swamp, Skippack and Whitemarsh.⁴⁵

On September 21, 1727, George Michael Weiss, an ordained pastor from Germany, arrived in Pennsylvania. Weiss organized a church in Philadelphia and also began to preach at Skippack.

Friction developed now between Boehm and Weiss and their respective followers. It was felt that Boehm should now relinquish his charges to Weiss who was a regularly ordained

⁴⁴The Halle Reports, cited by Joseph Henry Dubbs, "History of the Reformed Church, German," The American Church History Series (New York: The Christian Literature Company, c.1894), VIII, 245. A Reformed church had been organized in Pennsylvania in the year 1710, but it was Dutch, not German. It was situated in the southern part of Bucks County in the Neabaminy area. The congregation was organized by the Rev. Paulus Van Vleeck. Later this congregation played an important part in the organization of German Reformed churches. Ibid., p. 246.

⁴⁵Sweet, op. cit., p. 251.

pastor. Boehm and his friends submitted the case to the Dutch ministers in New York who in turn asked for the advice of the Classis of Amsterdam, the home authorities. The Dutch Reformed authorities ruled that Boehm's acts were valid, but stated that he should now be ordained.⁴⁶

Boehm gladly submitted to this decision. He was ordained in New York on November 23, 1729, by the Dutch Reformed pastors Henriens Boel and Guadaltherus Du Bois. This ordination marked the beginning of Dutch interest in and support of the German Reformed Church in Pennsylvania throughout the colonial period. The ordination also removed the strained relationship between Weiss and Boehm.⁴⁷ Weiss took care of the Philadelphia and Germantown congregations, while Boehm served the congregations at Falckner's Swamp, Skippack and Whitemarsh.

John Henry Goetschius arrived in Pennsylvania about the year 1728, as a theological candidate. The records he left, show that in 1731 he was serving congregations in Skippack, Old Gossenhoppen, New Gossenhoppen, Swamp, Saucon, Egypt, Macedonia, Misillem, Oley, Bern, and Tulpehocken -- communities spread over five different counties. After a ten-year

⁴⁶Dubbs, op. cit., pp. 248-249.

⁴⁷George H. Genzmer, "John Philip Boehm," Dictionary of American Biography, edited by Allen Johnson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943), II, 404-405.

period of service, he withdrew from Pennsylvania.⁴⁸

In 1729, Weiss and an influential layman by the name of Jacob Reiff, went to Germany to secure funds for the German Reformed churches. They were successful in getting both money and Bibles, but Reiff was guilty of mismanaging the funds entrusted to him. The matter was eventually straightened out after much bickering.⁴⁹ Weiss, who was not involved in the scandal, returned to America in 1731, and settled for a time in New York. In 1746, he came back to Pennsylvania and took care of the congregations at Old and New Goshenhoppen and Great Swamp until 1761.

The third decade of the 18th Century saw the coming of two of Weiss' fellow students to Pennsylvania. One of them, John Bartholomew Rieger, took charge of the German Reformed Church in Lancaster and the surrounding country churches for a few years after 1731. The other, John Peter Miller, arrived in Pennsylvania in 1730. He accepted the pastorate of the church in Tulpehocken which Goetschius had founded. However, after a few years, he was influenced by Conrad Beissel to take up a solitary life at the Ephrata community, where he later became the leader. The loss of Miller was a severe blow to

⁴⁸Dubbs, op. cit., p. 250.

⁴⁹Sweet, op. cit., p. 252.

the struggling German Reformed Church in Pennsylvania.⁵⁰

German Reformed churches were seriously threatened by Count Zinzendorf's movement for church union. Afraid that the German Reformed Church might completely go over to Zinzendorf's "Church of God in the Spirit," Boehm strenuously resisted Zinzendorf's activities and even published counter-propaganda against him.⁵¹

The arrival of Michael Schlatter in 1746 marked the beginning of a new period of activity for the German Reformed Church in Pennsylvania. Schlatter was sent by the Synods of Holland for the purpose of organizing the German Reformed congregations in Pennsylvania. In October of 1746, he met with Pastors Boehm, Weiss and Rieger to discuss the proposal for an organization. The discussions were successful and the group decided to form a Coetus, or Synod, the next year. Accordingly, the first Coetus was held in Philadelphia on September 29, 1747, and was attended by 31 ministers and elders.⁵²

The efforts of Schlatter were quite successful in behalf of the German Reformed. In 1751, he went to Europe and returned with six young ministers and seven hundred Bibles. He eventually succeeded Boehm as pastor of the churches in Phil-

⁵⁰Dubbs, op. cit., p. 263.

⁵¹Genzmer, op. cit., p. 404.

⁵²Dubbs, op. cit., pp. 281-282.

adelphia and Germantown. While he was in Philadelphia, a spirit of friendship and cooperation existed between him and Muhlenberg, the well-known Lutheran pastor. Schlatter's later efforts were spent in supporting charity schools for Germans.

It was his promotion of the charity school endeavor that led to his eventual separation from the united German Reformed Churches. He first resigned his pastorate in order to give more of his time to the schools. In the meantime, the schools which were supported by British money, were suspected by the Germans of being a British propaganda agency. Disagreement followed, and in the heat of the trouble, Michael Schlatter resigned his position and took up a chaplaincy in the British army.⁵³

The German Reformed were served by two outstanding leaders during the colonial period in eastern Pennsylvania. John Philip Boehm was the founder, and Michael Schlatter, the organizer. Although Schlatter returned to Philadelphia in 1759 to serve independent Reformed churches,⁵⁴ his leadership was sorely lacking during the remainder of the colonial

⁵³Ibid., pp. 285-287.

⁵⁴William J. Hinke, "Michael Schlatter," Dictionary of American Biography, edited by Dumas Malone (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943), XVI, 436.

period in the Coetus which he had organized.

The groups discussed in this chapter were tied together by a common bond of language. Another unifying factor was the German pietistic movement which permeated all of the groups and laid more stress on life than on creed. Count Zinzendorf's attempt to unite all German Protestants into one church was almost effected. In spite of the fact that the German bodies were first to organize in the colonies, there were individuals and small groups among them who crossed denominational lines with no apparent regard for differences. Throughout the colonial period, there was a definite inter-relationship between the groups.

The Quakers

The first Quakers in America were not those who settled in Pennsylvania during the eighth decade of the 17th century, as is often popularly believed. The first Quaker settlement was in New Jersey. While Quakerism was already established in many other colonies before 1681, the Quaker migration to Pennsylvania is important because of its mission in establishing a new society and government.

After William Penn had received the charter for his colony in 1681, a large Quaker migration immediately began. Two Quaker ships arrived in Pennsylvania already in the same year. During the next year, twenty-three shiploads arrived from the British Isles with nearly two thousand people who settled in

CHAPTER VI

THE QUAKERS, PRESBYTERIANS, AND EPISCOPALIANS

The Quakers, Presbyterians, and Episcopalians are three prominent religious groups which began to settle in eastern Pennsylvania towards the close of the 17th Century. They have been included together here because the influence of each group approximately paralleled that of the others, and because they had in general a common English background.

The Quakers

The first Quakers in America were not those who settled in Pennsylvania during the eighth decade of the 17th Century, as is often popularly believed. The first Quaker establishment was in New Jersey. While Quakerism was already established in many other colonies before 1681, the Quaker migration to Pennsylvania is important because of its mission in establishing a unique society and government.

After William Penn had received the charter for his colony in 1681, a large Quaker migration immediately began. Two Quaker ships arrived in Pennsylvania already in the same year. During the next year, twenty-three shiploads arrived from the British Isles with nearly two-thousand people who settled in

Philadelphia and vicinity. It is not likely that all of these immigrants were Quakers, but it is safe to say that the majority were.¹

The Quakers, or Friends, never at a loss for ministers since any one in their group was allowed to preach, began their religious meetings very early on a broadscale. During his stay of ten months in 1682 and 1683, William Penn preached constantly at these Quaker meetings.² At first the meetings were held in private homes, but in Philadelphia and neighboring townships meeting houses were established very early. In 1683, Quaker schools were opened. In 1784, Philadelphia already had a printing press which was used for Quaker publications.³

In 1683, a group of Quakers and Mennonites⁴ from the city of Crefeld on the Rhine arrived in Philadelphia and settled in Germantown. This was the first German Quaker immigration.

Quaker organization in America had been perfected by

¹William Warren Sweet, Religion in Colonial America (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947), pp. 161-162.

²Ibid., p. 162.

³Elbert Russell, The History of Quakerism (New York: The Macmillan Company, c.1942), p. 118.

⁴This is the same group referred to in connection with the Mennonites in Chapter V. Supra, p. 48.

George Fox, founder of Quakerism, when he visited the colonies in the years 1671 to 1673. William Warren Sweet gives a concise word picture of it:

Quaker organization as finally perfected consisted of First Day Meetings, which were purely for worship; Monthly Meetings, which were business meetings of a local congregation; Quarterly Meetings, which combined worship and business of a group of congregations, and the Yearly Meeting. It was the Monthly Meeting which exercised power over the individual members, received new members and disowned those who had departed from the "truth." Its officers were the Elders and the Overseers; the former looked after the spiritual concerns of the Meeting, the latter after the business matters. The Quarterly Meeting, made up of a group of Monthly Meetings exercised supervision and received appeals from the Monthly Meeting or from individual members. The Yearly Meeting was made up of all the Monthly Meetings within its bounds and was the unit of Quaker authority.⁵

Monthly and Quarterly meetings were organized in eastern Pennsylvania in 1682. In 1683, the Yearly meeting was established. The settlers living in Pennsylvania, at first attended the yearly meetings in Burlington, New Jersey. From 1683 to 1685, there were Yearly meetings in both Burlington and Philadelphia. In 1686, the two Yearly meetings were combined and held alternately at Philadelphia and Burlington for the next seventy-five years.⁶

During the last decade of the 17th Century, George Keith, a Scotch Quaker, created a disturbance among the Quakers in

⁵Sweet, op. cit., p. 164.

⁶Russell, op. cit., pp. 118-119.

Pennsylvania. Beginning in 1689, he taught in the Quaker school in Philadelphia, but did not remain in that position long. He disagreed with the Pennsylvania Quakers on some of their teachings. The controversy became bitter and in 1693, he was put out of the Quaker organization at the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting chiefly because of "his violent temper and divisive spirit." He succeeded, however, in gathering a considerable group of followers who became known as Keithian Quakers. He returned to London, joined the Church of England, and came back later as a missionary to the Quakers in America.⁷

The Quaker population of Pennsylvania grew by leaps and bounds in a comparatively short space of time. By 1700, it is estimated that there were about 15,000 Quakers in Pennsylvania. Most of the Quaker immigrants had settled around Philadelphia and vicinity during the first fifty years of the colony's existence. In the 1730's, there was a Quaker movement westward from the vicinity of Reading toward Lancaster.⁸

Many of the Friends in Pennsylvania devoted themselves to missionary work among the Indians and also made efforts to protect and care for them. About 8,366 pounds were spent for helping Indians between 1733 and 1751. Some of the more

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 120-121; and Sweet, *op. cit.*, p. 59, note 53.

⁸ Russell, *op. cit.*, p. 202.

prominent missionaries to the Indians were: Thomas Turner, Thomas Story, John Richardson, Thomas Chalkley, and John Woolman. The Quaker missionaries were generally received with respect, but they had little success in converting the Indians.⁹

The Quakers contributed much toward building up ethical and social relations in the colony. They devoted themselves to the religious training of the young in the homes as well as in the schools which they erected. Their influence was felt in the Pennsylvania legislature, which they controlled until 1756. The control they exercised was partly due to the large German population which was in sympathy with Quaker pacifism and tolerance. The Friends were the first to express opposition against slavery in a Yearly Meeting in Philadelphia in 1758. John Woolman, prominent Quaker, was the leader in this reform. Probably the greatest contribution of the Quakers was their insistence on freedom of opinion.¹⁰

The Quakers were noted for their honesty and integrity, and the colonists liked to do business with them. Consequently, the generation of Quakers following the settlers had become a prosperous class of people. But with this prosperity

⁹Ibid., p. 208.

¹⁰Charles Lemuel Thompson, The Religious Foundations of America (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, c.1917), p. 215.

came a life of compromise and caution, different from the daring, pioneering life of the previous generation. As a result, Quakerism began to be a religion of class instead of conviction, and the Quaker movement toward the end of the colonial period showed signs of losing the vitality which gave it such an auspicious beginning.¹¹

The Presbyterians

The early Presbyterians in eastern Pennsylvania came in small groups and sometimes only as individuals, and were absorbed in other religious groups.¹²

Francis Makemie, born of Scottish parentage in Ireland, and considered to be the Father of American Presbyterianism, in the course of his missionary journeys through the colonies came to Philadelphia in 1692. He is credited with the planting of Presbyterianism there when he gathered Protestants together for worship services.¹³

¹¹Sweet, op. cit., pp. 165-166.

¹²It was not until the first-half of the 18th Century that Scotch-Irish Presbyterians came by great numbers into Pennsylvania. It was fortunate that by this time the Presbyterians had enough organization to handle the swarming immigrants. Charles Hodge, The Constitutional History of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath-School Work, 1851), Part I, p. 19.

¹³Guy S. Klett, Presbyterianism in Colonial Pennsylvania (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1937), p. 39.

The first Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia was begun about 1695. A number of Presbyterians worshipped with Baptists in a storehouse. A Rev. John Watts agreed to preach for them every other Sunday.¹⁴ In the summer of 1698, Jedediah Andrews, graduate of Puritan sponsored Harvard College, arrived in Philadelphia and took charge of the Presbyterian group. He first arranged to conduct services apart from the Baptist group. This move resulted in the actual organization of the First Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia. Andrews stayed on in Philadelphia and served there for about fifty years.¹⁵

The Philadelphia Presbyterians expanded rapidly. In 1704, they moved from the storehouse into a new building. In 1709, the meeting-house was enlarged. In 1733, Jedediah Andrews was forced to ask for an assistant in order to keep pace with the expanding work. In 1743, a second Presbyterian church was organized by about one hundred forty persons who chose Gilbert Tennent, son of educator William Tennent, as their first pastor. A third building was put to use in 1767 on the south side of Philadelphia. A year later Samuel Eakin was called to be the minister of the third Presbyterian Church. At the end of the colonial period, the Presbyterians had four

¹⁴Hodge, op. cit., p. 69.

¹⁵Klett, op. cit., pp. 41-42.

churches in Philadelphia.¹⁶

A significant development in the history of Presbyterianism during the colonial period in eastern Pennsylvania was the forming of a Presbytery. The impetus for an organization did not come from any authority of the Presbyterian Church at large. It was a voluntary association.¹⁷ The organizational meeting of the Presbytery was held in 1705 in Philadelphia, not because it was a Presbyterian stronghold but because of its central location. Those who were instrumental in forming the Presbytery were: Francis Makemie, John Hampton, George Macnish, Samuel Davis, Nathaniel Taylor, John Wilson, and Jedediah Andrews. All except Andrews had come to America from either Scotland or Ireland.¹⁸

The first meeting of the Presbytery adopted a three-fold program:

First. That every minister in their respective congregations read and comment on a chapter of the Bible every Lord's Day, as discretion and circumstances of time and place will admit. Second. That it be recommended to every minister of the Presbytery to set on foot and encourage private Christian societies. Third. That every minister of the Presbytery supply neighboring desolate places where a minister is wanting and opportunity of

¹⁶ibid., pp. 43-45.

¹⁷Charles Augustus Briggs, American Presbyterianism: Its Origin and Early History (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons c.1885), p. 140.

¹⁸ibid., pp. 45-46.

doing good is offered.¹⁹

After Makemie died in 1708, Jedediah Andrews chiefly guided the Presbytery. "The four leading figures in the early Presbytery, and three of them afterward in the Synod were Makemie, Andrews, Hampton and Macnish."²⁰ A report in connection with the Presbytery in 1710 mentions there were five congregations at this time in the Pennsylvania colony and the three lower counties.²¹

The Synod of Philadelphia was established in 1717. Four "subordinate" presbyteries were established at Philadelphia, New Castle (in the Lower Counties), Long Island (New York), and Snow Hill (Maryland). In 1729, the Philadelphia Synod passed the Adopting Act, which gave to American Presbyterianism its first definite constitution.²² It was instrumental in keeping the Presbyterians united for a time, although some ministers strenuously objected to it, since it required them to subscribe to the Westminster Confessions and Catechism.²³

¹⁹George P. Hays, Presbyterians (New York: J. A. Hill and Company, 1892), p. 70.

²⁰Ibid., p. 76.

²¹Klett, op. cit., p. 48.

²²Sweet, op. cit., p. 263.

²³Robert Ellis Thomson, "A History of the Presbyterian Churches in the United States," The American Church History Series (New York: The Christian Literature Company, c.1898), VI, 28.

From 1710 on, there had been a stream of Scotch-Irish immigrants from North Ireland flowing into the colonies. Because they received a cold reception in New England, the Scotch-Irish turned toward the colony of Pennsylvania. During the 1720's, the immigration was particularly heavy.

In 1726, Rev. William Tennent, originally from Ireland, came to Bucks County, Pennsylvania, from New York and settled at Neshaminy. Here he established his famous "Log College" to help supply a native ministry. This was the first Presbyterian school established for the training of a native ministry.²⁴

Two groups emerged in the Synod of Philadelphia in the third decade of the 18th Century. The one group favored a conservative evangelism; the other group, influenced by the great revival movement spreading through the colonies at this time, favored a progressive evangelism. The former party was referred to as the "Old Lights," while the latter bore the name "New Lights." The appearance of these two groups resulted in a division of the Philadelphia Synod in 1741. In 1745, the New York Synod was formed. The Synod of Philadelphia remained conservative, while the Synod of New York favored a progressive evangelistic approach.²⁵

²⁴Sweet, op. cit., p. 268-269.

²⁵Andrew C. Zenos, Presbyterianism in America: Past, Present, and Prospective (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, c.1937), p. 58.

By 1752, all three counties which bordered on the Delaware River had Presbyterian settlements within their limits. Scotch-Irish Presbyterians swarmed into the upper parts of Bucks County, which became Northampton County in 1752. By the end of the colonial period, it is estimated that there were about 100,000 Presbyterians in Pennsylvania.²⁶

The Scotch-Irish backbone of Presbyterianism gave a certain virility to the religious groups of eastern Pennsylvania. The contribution of Presbyterianism in Pennsylvania lies chiefly in its insistence upon freedom from foreign domination. The suffering of Scotch-Irish Presbyterians under English rule in both Scotland and Ireland, taught them to guard independence jealously. They also exerted considerable influence upon education in Pennsylvania.

The Episcopalians

Although Pennsylvania was a proprietary colony and under the authority of the English crown, the Church of England in comparison with other religious groups was not early in establishing Episcopalianism in the colony.

It is probable that there were Anglicans in the territory which later became Pennsylvania ever since 1664. There is also the possibility that a certain John Yeo held irregular services for a time around the year 1678 in settlements

²⁶Klett, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

along the Delaware.²⁷

But the first real attempt to introduce Anglican worship into Pennsylvania came in the years 1694-1695. About this time, George Keith was withdrawing from the Quakers, and while the Anglican Church was in the process of being built, the members were using the meeting-house occupied by Keith. It is not known who the first minister of the Anglican Church in Philadelphia was. The people were kept together at the very first probably by I. Arrowsmith, a schoolmaster who worked among them.²⁸

In 1697, after the church building was completed, the group asked the Archbishop of Canterbury for a regular minister. The request was granted, and Thomas Clayton answered the call to the new parish. Clayton served them only a short time, but before his death at the end of the century, he reported that the Anglicans in and about Philadelphia numbered about 500 souls.²⁹

Rev. Evan Evans, a Welshman, followed Clayton in 1700 as the second minister of Christ Church, and served the congre-

²⁷William Manross is indebted to Charles P. Keith, historian of Pennsylvania, for the information. William Wilson Manross, A History of the American Episcopal Church (New York: Morehouse Publishing Company, 1935), p. 126.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Sweet, op. cit., p. 52.

gation for about seventeen years. In addition to his charge at Philadelphia, he served many of the surrounding communities on preaching tours. For his outstanding efforts, he received only 50 pounds as a royal bounty in addition to whatever few contributions the church members would make. His preaching ability was a factor in retaining and winning people for the Episcopalian Church:

He preached so persuasively in his native tongue that he kept many Welsh communities from turning non-conformist, and under his influence large numbers of Quakers forsook their own faith and joined the Anglican Church.³⁰

The second Anglican Church in Pennsylvania was built at Chester. It was erected in an old Swedish burial ground by the family of James Sandelands. In 1703, the church was completed and George Keith, now an Episcopalian, held services in it. Shortly thereafter, a missionary was sent who served Chester and neighboring communities.³¹ By 1707, churches had been established at Chester, Oxford and Newcastle.³² The two Swedish Lutheran churches, Trinity at Wilmington (Christina) and Gloria Dei at Philadelphia had close relations with the Anglicans after 1700, and eventually became Episcopalian.

³⁰Dora Mae Clark, "Evan Evans," Dictionary of American Biography, edited by Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943), VI, 108.

³¹Manross, op. cit., pp. 127-128.

³²Sweet, op. cit., p. 52.

There was a temporary schism in Christ Church in Philadelphia in the years 1715-1716, when Evans went to England and appointed Robert Jenney temporary minister in his absence. Jenney became involved in a scandal and left upon Evan's return in 1716, when the matter was cleared up and the breach closed. After Evans left for Maryland in 1718, the congregation was served during the remainder of the colonial period by John vicary, William Harrison, John Urmiston, Richard Welton, Archibald Cummings, Richard Peters, and again by Robert Jenney. In 1761, St. Peter's Church, a new congregation in Philadelphia was organized. St. Paul's Church, a third congregation, originated as a result of a split in Christ Church caused by William McClennachan, who served for a while as assistant minister at Christ Church. He stayed only two years with the new group, but after his departure, the congregation still continued.³³

One of the most outstanding missionary agencies during colonial times was sponsored by the Church of England. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (S.P.G.) was chartered in 1701, chiefly at the instigation of Thomas Bray. The Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (S.P.C.K.) was formed shortly thereafter to enlarge the tremendous mission project. George Keith, the

³³Manross, op. cit., pp. 128-130.

ex-Quaker, was commissioned by the S.P.C.K. as a missionary among the Quakers in the colonies. Traveling and preaching up and down the colonies, Keith spent some of his time also in Pennsylvania. His efforts seemed to be quite successful.

In 1704, the Rev. N. Nichols arrived in Pennsylvania as the first S.P.G. missionary to the colony. An assistant of Keith, John Talbot, centered his efforts chiefly in Pennsylvania and New Jersey and later worked in New Jersey exclusively. From 1702 until the end of the colonial period, over forty S.P.G. missionaries worked in Pennsylvania.³⁴ In 1754, the Society for Propagating Knowledge among the Germans of Pennsylvania was organized largely through the insistence of William Smith, missionary. The Society existed for a few years and was quite successful, but eventually died from lack of support.³⁵

One of the main contributions of Episcopalianism to colonial society was the establishment of good schools. The Academy of Philadelphia was organized in 1749 with the Rev. David Martin as rector. Martin died in 1751, and was followed by William Smith in 1754 after he had served as instructor for a few years. In 1755, the Academy was rechartered as a college, and eventually developed into the University of

³⁴Sweet, op. cit., pp. 60-61.

³⁵Manross, op. cit., p. 132.

Pennsylvania. Smith was one of the most gifted and influential Episcopalian leaders in the colonies. He designed a "Plan of Education" which eventually formed the basis for the American college system.³⁶

The Episcopalian church was hampered in eastern Pennsylvania as elsewhere because of its dependence on the English Church and Crown. The Episcopalian ministers who were educated in America had to go to London for ordination by the Bishop since there was no American bishop. Then too, Episcopalianism was generally unpopular, for in the minds of many it was linked with monarchy and tyranny.³⁷ In spite of these handicaps, the Episcopalians made a significant religious contribution to eastern Pennsylvania through their missionary and educational efforts.

During the colonial period, there was friction between Quakers and Episcopalians, while Presbyterians had disagreement in their own ranks. All three groups enjoyed the advantage of carrying on their work in general through the medium of the English tongue, the universal language of the colonies.

³⁶Robert Ellis Thomson, "A History of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America," The American Church History Series (New York: The Christian Literature Company, c.1895), VII, 215-216.

³⁷Frederick C. Grant, "The Episcopal Church: Its Contribution to the Religious Life of America," Anglican Theological Review, XIX (January, 1937), p. 6.

For this reason, they appealed not only to people of their own language, but later on also to the younger generation of "foreign" language groups.

CHAPTER VII

OTHER GROUPS

The remaining religious groups which were active in eastern Pennsylvania during the colonial period were the Baptists, Roman Catholics, and Methodists. Although the Baptist beginnings were early, only two years after the colony had been founded, their numerical influence was less than that of the other denominations, excepting the separate non-British German groups, and for that reason they have been included at this point in the study. The activity of the Roman Catholics did not actually appear until the fourth decade of the 18th Century. The Methodists were just beginning their organizational work several years before the end of the period.

The Baptists

The first Baptists in eastern Pennsylvania came from Rhode Island. In 1720, James Osgood, a Baptist preacher, led a group of Rhode Island Baptists to Cold Springs in Bucks County. Here he gathered the Baptist families about him and

¹David Beardsley, *A General History of the Baptist Denomination in America and the Other Parts of the World* (New York: Lewis and Clark, 1847), p. 280.

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The Baptists

The first Baptists in eastern Pennsylvania came from Rhode Island.¹ In 1684, Thomas Dungan, a Baptist preacher, led a group of Rhode Island Baptists to Cold Springs in Bucks County. Here he gathered the Baptist families about him and

¹David Benedict, A General History of the Baptist Denomination in America and the other Parts of the World (New York: Lewis Colby and Company, 1849), p. 595.

established the first Baptist congregation in Pennsylvania. Dungan was already well along in age at this time and served the group only four years. He died in 1688, and the congregation disbanded in 1702.²

Elias Keach was the second Baptist minister in the colony. He came to Philadelphia in 1686 as a "very wild youth," nineteen years of age. Posing as a minister, he wore the traditional preacher's garb and prepared to deliver a sermon to a crowd of people upon a request which he delightfully accepted. However, after he had proceeded half-way through the sermon, he stopped short, broke down, and made a confession of his little trick. From that moment, he dated his conversion and soon sought out Thomas Dungan from whom he received instruction and baptism.³

About the same time that Keach arrived in Philadelphia, a group of Welsh Baptists arrived in Pennsylvania and settled at Pennepek, or Lower Dublin, now a part of Philadelphia. They proceeded to form a church and in January of 1688, accepted Keach as their pastor. The young preacher not only served the Pennepek congregation, but worked in many neighboring

²A. H. Newman, "A History of the Baptist Churches in the United States," The American Church History Series (New York: The Christian Literature Company, c.1894), II 201.

³Henry C. Vedder, A History of the Baptists in the Middle States (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1898), p. 59.

communities as well. All of his preaching stations surrounding Philadelphia were connected with the main church, and did not become individual established churches until later on.⁴ Keach returned to England in 1692 and turned his work over to John Watts, a member of the Pennepek congregation.⁵

Several of the churches in the general area of Philadelphia were organized at the turn of the century. At Ridley Creek, a church was formed on October 12, 1697, with Thomas Martin chosen as minister by lot. This congregation broke up in 1700 as the result of a controversy regarding the Sabbath. The majority formed a Seventh-Day Baptist Church while the minority, brought together by Abel Morgan, organized a new church at Brandywine in 1715. On September 8, 1701, sixteen Welsh Baptists landed at Philadelphia and first settled at Pennepek. They soon ran into disagreement and separated with the Pennepek congregation on the question of the "laying on of hands" after baptism. They eventually settled in the northern part of the Lower Counties where they bought a large tract of land, commonly known as the Welsh tract.⁶

The Baptists, like other denominations, absorbed a con-

⁴Ibid.

⁵Benedict, op. cit., p. 597.

⁶Vedder, op. cit., pp. 65-66.

siderable number of Quakers in their congregations as a result of the Keithian controversy. When Keith forsook Quakerism, some of his followers stuck with him and joined the Episcopal Church, some went along with the Baptist movement.⁷ For a time, some of the former followers of Keith, who espoused Baptist teachings and became known as Keithian Baptists, set up societies in Upper Providence, Philadelphia, Southhampton and Lower Dublin. Eventually their societies disbanded and they became absorbed in established Baptist congregations.⁸

Other churches organized in the Philadelphia region were those at Great Valley, Montgomery, New Britain and Southhampton. The Great Valley Church was founded by sixteen people from Wales on April 22, 1711. Rev. Hugh Davis became the first pastor. The Montgomery Church was organized on June 30, 1719, through the efforts of Abel Morgan, prominent Baptist who was instrumental in the founding of a number of churches. In 1754, a group split off from the Montgomery Church because of a controversy over the doctrine of the person of Christ and formed the New Britain Church. The Southhampton Church was established in 1746, and was composed of remnants of the

⁷William Warren Sweet, Religion in Colonial America (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947), p. 140.

⁸Morgan Edwards, Materials Towards a History of the Baptists in Pennsylvania, cited by Benedict, op. cit., pp. 597-598.

"Keithian Baptists" and some members of the Pennepek Church.⁹

The group of Baptists in Philadelphia had always been considered as part of the Pennepek congregation and was served by Pennepek pastors, Elias Keach, John Watts and others.¹⁰ The first Baptist to have settled in Philadelphia was John Holmes, a man of wealth and learning, who arrived in 1686.¹¹ The group was made up largely of English Baptists. Even though the Philadelphia congregation had grown considerably, it was not until May 15, 1746, that it was organized as an independent church. At this time, Jenkins Jones was chosen to be the pastor.¹²

The Philadelphia area was rapidly becoming the Baptist center in the colonies. On July 27, 1707, the "Philadelphia Association" was formed and became the parent of many other Baptist associations.¹³ It was an outgrowth of yearly meetings begun as early as 1688. The "Association" strongly guided and influenced the Baptist movement in all of the

⁹Vedder, op. cit., pp. 68-69.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 63.

¹¹Benedict, op. cit., p. 601.

¹²Vedder, op. cit., p. 63.

¹³F. A. Cox, and J. Hoby, The Baptists in America: A Narrative of the Deputation from the Baptist Union in England, to the United States and Canada (New York: Leavitt, Lord and Company, 1836), pp. 23-24.

colonies throughout the remainder of the colonial period.

Several of the outstanding leaders of the Baptist Church in eastern Pennsylvania during the colonial period were John Watts, Evan Morgan, Samuel Jones and Morgan Edwards. In general, the Baptists had an able and conscientious ministry in the colony.

The Roman Catholics

"Except for Pennsylvania . . . there was no colony in which Catholics could live in comfort -- not until after the American Revolution."¹⁴ In spite of the freedom offered to the Roman Catholics in Pennsylvania in comparison with that of other colonies, it was not until the end of the first half of the 18th Century that the Catholic movement began to spread.

It is true, however, that there were traces of Catholicism before this time in Philadelphia. In 1708, it was reported that mass was being held in the city. According to tradition, there was a Catholic chapel in Philadelphia in 1729. In 1733, it is assumed that Father Joseph Greateon, a Jesuit, arrived in Philadelphia and purchased a lot upon which a house was erected for use as a chapel. This was the beginning of the old St. Joseph's Catholic Church. Here Father Greateon ministered to a small group of Catholics, which, by

¹⁴Theodore Maynard, The Story of American Catholicism (New York: The Macmillan Company, c.1941), p. 91.

1750 had grown into a sizeable congregation.¹⁵ Around 1750, Father Greston was succeeded by Father Harding, who later built Philadelphia's second Catholic Church, St. Mary's.

Since 1700, a considerable number of German Catholics had been migrating to eastern Pennsylvania.¹⁶ In contrast to many other religious groups, they were not accompanied by religious leaders. It was not until 1741 that two German Jesuits, Father Theodore Schneider from Bavaria and Father William Wapeler from the lower Rhine, came to eastern Pennsylvania to serve them.

When Father Schneider arrived in 1741, he was temporarily assigned to St. Joseph's Church in Philadelphia. In 1743, he moved to Goshenhoppen in Bucks County, where he built a house and chapel with the assistance of Catholics and friendly Mennonites.¹⁷

¹⁵Undoubtedly, this congregation was made up of English-speaking peoples. Father Greston, according to accounts, was born in London. Father Ferdinand Farmer, the first full-time German priest in Philadelphia, did not come until 1760 "or rather later." Shea cites from the memoirs of Archbishop Carroll, which, according to Carroll's own admission, are not very accurate. John Gilmary Shea, The Catholic Church in Colonial Days (New York: John G. Shea, 1886), pp. 386, 387, 390.

¹⁶Sweet, op. cit., p. 183.

¹⁷Richard J. Purcell, "Theodore Schneider," Dictionary of American Biography, edited by Dumas Malone (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943), XVI, 447.

Father Wapeler, arriving in Pennsylvania also in 1741, founded the Sacred Heart mission in Conewago, where he erected a log house. A church was organized and a building erected in Lancaster through his efforts in 1743. He had to return to Europe in 1748 because of ill health.¹⁸

Father Theodore Schneider was the outstanding leader of the Roman Catholics in eastern Pennsylvania during this period. His work was confined only to Germans, who made up the majority of the Catholic group at this time. He was instrumental in the founding of a number of congregations and an outstanding school for German Catholics at Goshenhoppen. Theodore Schneider, a well educated man, also possessed medical skill. He devoted twenty-three years of his life to the service of German Catholics in eastern Pennsylvania.

The Methodists

The Methodists did not begin any organized work in eastern Pennsylvania until shortly before the end of the colonial period. While George Whitefield, the great evangelist, had also passed through Philadelphia on his preaching tours through the colonies, he did nothing in the way of establishing Methodism in Pennsylvania. Rather than establish new groups, he preferred to cooperate with religious organiza-

¹⁸Shea, op. cit., p. 391.

tions already in existence.¹⁹

Captain Thomas Webb, a retired army officer, was the founder of Methodism in Philadelphia, where in 1768, he instructed and preached to a group of about seven people. In 1770, he helped considerably in the purchase of St. George's Church, the first Methodist Church in Philadelphia.²⁰

In 1769, John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, sent the first missionaries to Philadelphia and New York.²¹ On October 21, 1769, the two missionaries, Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor landed at Gloucester point on the Delaware, six miles south of Philadelphia. Pilmoor began to preach in the open air almost immediately. The two missionaries alternated between New York and Philadelphia; three times a year, they would exchange their charges: spring, summer and winter. George Whitefield arrived in Philadelphia on the last day of November in 1769, and was well satisfied with the work Boardman and Pilmoor were doing. He gave them his blessing and

¹⁹Sweet, op. cit., p. 277.

²⁰Abel Stevens, A Compendious History of American Methodism (New York: Carlton and Porter, 1857), p. 40.

²¹Wesley was urged to send missionaries by Charles Magnus Wrangel, Swedish Lutheran minister who visited Wesley on his way home from America. Wrangel even urged two of his own converts to become Methodists. See A. B. Hyde, The Story of Methodism (Chicago: Johns Publishing House, 1889), p. 361.

went on. A year later he died in Newbury, Massachusetts.²²

Another missionary arrived at Philadelphia on October 27, 1771, in the person of Francis Asbury.²³ He preached several times there and then hastened on to New York, where he spent much time serving Methodists in that area. In the course of many preaching tours, he would sometimes return to exchange pulpits with the Philadelphia minister. During these years, there was a frequent exchange of pulpits among the Methodist preachers in the colonies.

The first American Methodist Conference was held in Philadelphia for three days in July of 1773. It was the official beginning of Methodism in the colonies.²⁴ By the end of the colonial period, it seemed that eastern Pennsylvania was the center also for a new, rapidly expanding Methodist movement.

²²J. M. Buckley, "A History of Methodists in the United States," The American Church History Series (New York: The Christian Literature Company, 1895), V, 123.

²³Ibid., p. 123.

²⁴Jacob S. Payton, "Methodism's Spread in America," Methodism, edited by William K. Anderson (Chicago: The Methodist Publication House, 1947), p. 65.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

In order to round out the religious history of eastern Pennsylvania during the colonial period, it would be well to mention the attitudes of the main groups toward the American Revolution. Lutherans, as a whole, gave support to the colonial cause, even though during the preceding years they were rather quiet because of their obedient attitude toward government. The Presbyterians, composed largely of the fiery Scotch-Irish, were very influential in the struggle for independence. The Baptists favored strongly the colonial cause, since they felt that the loss of this cause would mean loss of religious freedom and the introduction of state-churchism. The majority of Roman Catholics sided with the colonists.

The German Reformed were inclined to be slightly pro-British. Although the Episcopalian Church was hampered by its close connection with the English church and government, the Episcopalian lay people were divided in their sentiments. It seems that the Methodists, because of their connection with the Church of England, sympathized with the British; but in general throughout the war, they tried to remain neu-

tral. Mennonites, Moravians, and Quakers, because of their peace-loving principles, were conscientious objectors.

In none of the other colonies at the end of the colonial period was there as great a variety of religious groups as in Eastern Pennsylvania. By 1776, there were Lutherans, Mennonites, Dunkers, Ephratites, Moravians, Schwenkfelders, Reformed, Quakers, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Baptists, Roman Catholics, and Methodists in the colony.

From such a variety of groups, there was bound to come a degree of fraternization. It is possible to trace a few instances of this inter-relationship. Both Swedish and German Lutherans worshipped with Episcopalians and Reformed; the Swedish Lutherans eventually disappeared into the Episcopalian fold. Throughout all of the German groups, there was a considerable measure of joint worship due both to the common language background and the church union movement of Count Zinzendorf. In the early years, there was a mixing of Presbyterian and Baptist elements at Philadelphia, and combined worship among Quakers and Mennonites in Germantown. Methodists and Presbyterians often had the same preachers, and cooperated in their church work and worship. Among all of the groups, there were individuals who crossed denominational lines at will and fraternized with groups beside their own. This was undoubtedly due to the generally unorganized character of the frontier religious movement and its lack of

confessional standards.

There was, however, some degree of friction among the many religious groups. The most prominent example was the controversy between the Quakers and the Anglicans, spearheaded by George Keith, ex-Quaker, who turned Episcopalian and became quite successful in winning Quakers for the Episcopalian Church. The early German Lutherans in Philadelphia joined the Episcopalians in their anti-Quaker sentiment. There were sharp protestations in general against Count Zinzendorf and his followers, particularly by Lutherans and Reformed. Some groups simply withdrew when controversy developed and established their own organization or set up their own congregation within a loosely organized denomination.

The variety of religious groups in Pennsylvania gives evidence to the claim that there was a large measure of religious freedom in the colony. William Penn's colonial idea had worked out in practice. The very fact, too, that there were a large number of different groups in the colony continued to insure it against any further threat of state-churchism or religious intolerance. It has always been the minority groups throughout history who have advocated freedom of conscience.

Furthermore, the variety of religious groups presents a preview of later religious history in the United States. Although the theory of religious liberty in Rhode Island was

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