



French Huguenot woman
South Carolina

Child of Dutch emigrants
New York

Congregationalist minister
Rhode Island

Moravian woman
Pennsylvania

Quaker lay preacher
Pennsylvania

“MINGLED LIKE FISH AT SEA”

On the Ethnic and Religious Diversity of the European Inhabitants of the British Atlantic Colonies: Commentary, 1698-1769

“We are mingled like fish at sea, but peaceably,” wrote a Pennsylvania immigrant in 1769 to a friend back home in central Europe, as he marvelled at the religious diversity he observed. The days of hanging Quaker dissidents, banishing women preachers, and executing “witches” were over by the mid 1700s as the colonists accepted (but not always welcomed) religious diversity as the norm. So, too, did the colonies’ ethnic diversity expand at this time, as thousands of continental Europeans fled hardship and persecution in their home countries. By 1770,” notes historian Jon Butler, “Britain’s mainland settlements contained a polyglot population of English, Scots, Germans, Dutch, Swiss, French and Africans, although in 1680 most European settlers were English.”¹ This swift transformation, often noted by visitors to the colonies, was a critical factor in the emerging identity of the British mainland colonies. How did colonists and visitors describe this diversity? Did they applaud or disparage diversity? From journals, memoirs, essays, letters, and reports come these nineteen observations on the diversity of the colonies’ white inhabitants. What might explain the preponderance of commentary on *religious* diversity rather than *ethnic* and *national* diversity?

“*live Friendly and Well together*” _____ Gabriel Thomas, Pennsylvania, 1698²
 Quaker immigrant from England

. . . the Place is free for all Persuasions [religious sects], in a Sober and Civil way; for the Church of England and the Quakers bear equal Share in the Government. They live Friendly and Well together; there is no Persecution for Religion, nor ever like to be; . . .

“*Hollanders, Swedes, Finns, Germans*” _____ Francis Louis Michel, Pennsylvania, 1704³
 Swiss visitor

What else can be the intention of Hollanders, Swedes, Finns, Germans and other nations, which send people to this country [Pennsylvania] than to make use of such places in case of necessity [i.e., land purchased in advance as havens for refugees fleeing Europe]. I have already had opportunity to remark sufficiently how willingly the English government would consent to this. Who has more reason to look for expansion and places of retreat than our country [Switzerland]? . . . But it is necessary that people should not be deceived by some who came to this country, not knowing why they came and who had empty and lazy hands. Such people are an injury and obstacle to many others.

National Humanities Center, 2003: nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/. Some spelling and punctuation modernized by NHC for clarity. Portraits on this page: see page 8, bottom. Complete image credits at nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/becomingamer/imagecredits.htm.

¹ Jon Butler, *Becoming America: The Revolution before 1776* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), p. 2.

² Gabriel Thomas, *An Historical and Geographical Account of Pensilvania and of West-New-Jersey, 1698*; in Albert Cook Myers, ed., *Narratives of Early Pennsylvania, West New Jersey, and Delaware, 1630-1707* (New York: Scribner’s, 1912), p. 329.

³ Francis Louis Michel, Maryland, Letter to Mr. Ochs. Bern, Switzerland, 20th May 1704; in “Letters Regarding the Second Journey of Michel to America . . .,” ed., trans., William J. Hinke, *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 24:1-2 (January/April 1916), p. 296.

“Naked and Hungry in a strange Land”

Robert Beverley, Virginia, 1705⁴
Virginia planter and government official

Christians of all Nations have equal freedom there, and upon their Arrival become Ipso facto entitled to all the Liberties and Privileges of the Country, provided they take the Oaths of Obedience to the Crown and Government. . . All the French Refugees sent in thither by the Charitable Exhibition of his late Majesty King William are Naturalized.

In the year 1699, there went over in about three hundred of these, and the year following about two hundred more, and so on, till there arrived in all between seven and eight hundred Men, Women, and Children, who had fled from France on account of their Religion. . . .

I must not here omit doing Justice to the Goodness and Generosity of Colonel [William] Byrd towards these distressed Huguenots [French Protestants]. Upon their first Arrival in that Country [Virginia], he receiv'd them with all the tenderness of a Father, and ever since has constantly given them the utmost Assistance. . . His Mills have been at their Service to grind their Corn Toll-free, and his People are order'd upon all occasions to assist them. How kind has he been in procuring them Contributions from other People? With what Zeal did he represent their Cause to the Assembly? And with what earnestness did he press all his Friends in their favour, who otherwise told him they could not have believ'd their Case to be as he related it? For even Poverty in all its Distress cou'd not guard them from ill Reports, which wou'd have had a severe effect upon them had they not been protected by the Interest and Credit of this Honourable Gentleman. . . When several hundred Families of Men, Women, and Children are set ashore Naked and Hungry in a strange Land, they have not only necessity to struggle with, but likewise with the Envy of Ill-natur'd People who fancy they come to eat the Bread out of their Mouths. All these Difficulties befell these poor Refugees at their first Arrival there, but God Almighty rais'd up this Gentleman not only to Succour them with his own Charity but to solicit the Liberalities of other People. By these Helps they have hitherto Subsisted and been put into some Condition to shift for themselves.

“enjoy a free Toleration”

John Lawson, South Carolina, 1709⁵
English naturalist and explorer

There is likewise a *French Church* in Town [Charleston] of the Reform'd Religion [French Protestants] and several Meeting-houses for dissenting Congregations who all enjoy at this Day an entire Liberty of their Worship, the Constitution of this Government allowing all Parties of well-meaning Christians to enjoy a free Toleration and possess the same Privileges, so long as they appear to behave themselves peaceably and well — It being the Lords Proprietors' Intent that the Inhabitants of *Carolina* should be as free from Oppression as any in the Universe, which doubtless they will if their own Differences amongst themselves do not occasion the contrary.

“the happy Retreat of true Britons”

Rev. Hugh Jones, Virginia, 1724⁶

Visiting Anglican clergyman; professor at William and Mary College

If New England be called a Receptacle of Dissenters and an Amsterdam of Religion, Pennsylvania the Nursery of Quakers, Maryland the Retirement of Roman Catholics, North Carolina the Refuge of Run-aways, and South Carolina the Delight of Buccaneers and Pirates, Virginia may justly be esteemed the happy Retreat of true Britons and true Churchmen for the most Part; neither soaring too high nor dropping too low, consequently should merit the greater Esteem and Encouragement.

⁴ Robert Beverley, Jr., *The History and Present State of Virginia*, 1705, Pt. II, Ch. XVIII. Full text of 1722 edition online from the Library of Congress at hdl.loc.gov/loc.gdc/lhbcb.06557.

⁵ John Lawson, *A New Voyage to Carolina; Containing the Exact Description and Natural History of That Country: Together with the Present State Thereof. And a Journal of a Thousand Miles, Travel'd Thro' Several Nations of Indians. Giving a Particular Account of Their Customs, Manners, &c.*, 1709; full text online in Documenting the American South (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Library) at docsouth.unc.edu/nc/lawson/menu.html.

⁶ Rev. Hugh Jones, *The Present State of Virginia*, 1724; reprint by Joseph Sabin, New York, 1865.

“a mungrell brood”

Lewis Morris, Middle Colonies, ca. 1730⁷
Official and later governor of New Jersey

from Dane, from Hollander, and Swede,
from Wales, and from the north of Tweed
our first Supply’s came o’er,
from france a band of refugees,
and from fair Ireland rapparees,
came crowding to this Shore
a mungrell brood of canting Saints,
that filled all Europe with complaints
came here to fix their stakes.

“I was Exceedingly prejudiced”

Elizabeth Ashbridge, Pennsylvania, 1730s⁸
English immigrant and indentured servant

Hence I came to Trenton [New Jersey] Ferry, where I met with no small Mortification upon hearing that my Relations were all Quakers, & what was worst of all my Aunt a Preacher. I was Sorry to hear it, for I was Exceedingly prejudiced against these People & have often wondered with what face they Could Call them Selves Christians. I repented my Coming and had a mind to have turned back. . . .

In a few weeks there was an afternoon’s [religious] Meeting at my Uncle’s to came that Servant of the Lord [minister] named Wm. Hammans who was made then Instrumental to the Convincing me of the truth more Perfectly, & helping me over Some great Doubts: . . .

. . . my husband came, & then began the Tryal of my Faith. Before he reached me he heard I was turned Quaker, at which he stampt, saying, “I’d rather heard She had been dead as well as I Love her, for if so, all my comfort is gone.”

“these Jews show a great Love for us”

Rev. J. M. Bolzius, Georgia, 1734⁹
German Lutheran clergyman; co-founder of Ebenezer settlement

Thursday, *March* 14. Last Night we Prayed on shore for the first time, in the *English* Chapel, made of Boards, and used for divine Worship, till a Church can be built; the Use of which is allowed us, during our Stay here. The Inhabitants join with us, and show much Devotion. The *Jews* likewise, of which there are 12 Families here, come to Church, and seem to be very devout. They understand the *German* Tongue. Though the Chapel is but of Boards, it is very convenient, and pleases the *Saltzburgers*. . . .

Thursday, *March* 20. *The Jew* and his Wife, who were before mention’d, are so very willing to serve us and the *Saltzburgers*, that it surprises us; and are so honest and faithful, that the like is hardly to be found, . . . *Because* these *Jews* show a great Love for us, and have promised to see us at our Settlement, we hope we shall preach the Gospel of *Jesus Christ* to them with good Success. They were both born in *Germany*, and talk good *German*. . . .

Wednesday, *April* 3. *The Jew*, of whom mention hath been made above, hath shown us and the *Saltzburgers* so much Goodness, that we could desire no more; and though we offered him a Sum of Money for his Labour and Pains, yet he refused to accept of it: . . .

⁷ Jon Butler, *Becoming America: The Revolution Before 1776* (Harvard University Press, 2000), p. 50; citing Richard Cook, “Lewis Morris—New Jersey’s Colonial Poet-Governor,” *Rutgers University Library Journal* 24 (1960), p. 107.

⁸ Elizabeth Ashbridge, *Some Account of the Fore Part of the Life of Elizabeth Ashbridge, who died in Truth’s service at the house of Robert Lecky at Kilnock in the County of Carlow Ireland; the 16th of 5th mo. 1755. Written by her own Hand many years ago. 1774*; edited and introduction by Daniel B. Shea, in William L. Andrews, gen. ed., *Journeys in New Worlds: Early American Women’s Narratives* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), pp. 158, 160; permission pending.

⁹ Rev. Johann Martin Bolzius, Journal entry, 1734, as published in *An Extract of the Journals of Mr. Commissary Von Reck, Who Conducted the First Transport of Saltzburgers to Georgia: and of the Reverend Mr. Bolzius, One of their Ministers. Giving an Account of their Voyage to, and Happy Settlement in that Province, published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge*, London, 1734; accessed through Early American Imprints online digital collection, American Antiquarian Society; permission pending.

“natives of the Province of Ulster [Ireland]” _____ Francis Cample, Pennsylvania, 1737¹⁰
Irish immigrant merchant

September 14th, 1737. I came here ten days ago, not as a matter of necessity, but as a matter of choice, and I find the country all that my friend, Mr. Shippen, represented it to be. . . . It is not the grandeur of rocks, cascades and romantic glens, but it is the beautiful panorama of forest and plain spread out in all their beauty which meets you everywhere, and which will, at no very far distant day, become the happy home of intelligent, God-fearing people, when the savage shall have passed forever from its borders. This is the kind of grandeur which surrounds me, and this is what attracted me hither. New settlers are arriving here weekly, most of them have scattered out and settled along the streams and in the woodlands. They are generally a hardy, industrious, intelligent and pious people, who are well fitted to endure the privations and overcome the difficulties that must ever be encountered in the formation of a new settlement. The entire people of this settlement is of Irish origin and Presbyterian in faith. I have been told by some of the first sttlers that there is not a single family here who are not natives of the Province of Ulster.

April 10th, 1738. We have a little hamlet here of a few houses, in one of which I live and keep a little stock of goods for sale. Some of my time, however, is occupied in surveying, and in other duties. If my employments are not very lucrative, they are healthful; with this, and the blessings of God, I shall be happy.

“if ye have Love one to another” _____ Rev. John Callender, Rhode Island, 1739¹¹
Baptist clergyman and historian

Liberty of Conscience was never more fully enjoyed in any Place than here; and this *Colony*, with some since formed on the same Model, have proved that the terrible Fears that Barbarity would break in, where no particular Forms of Worship or Discipline are established by the civil Power, are really vain and groundless; and that Christianity can subsist without a National Church or visible Head, and without being incorporated into the State. . . .

Here in a particular Manner, let us be exhorted,

1. To prevent our *religious Differences from being ever carried into our civil Affairs*——Let them never make Factions in Government. ——
2. Let us study for *Peace* and to *promote mutual Love among Christians of every Denomination*. We should love all of CHRIST we see in them, and as far as possible speak the same Things. . . .

. . . It is a Grief to a Christian, as 'tis a Scandal to the whole World, to see Christians (so called) full of Envy and Malice, hating and reviling one another, and smiting with the Fist of Wickedness. This, when all is said and done, is a more full and just Argument that such have no Part in Christ than any supposed orthodoxy of Opinion can be of their Interest in Him. *For by this* (says he) *shall all Men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye have Love one to another*. It is a glorious Sight to see the Disciples of Jesus live in Love & Peace, and “sweetly bear with one another in their lesser Differences:” . . .

“very mixed company of different nations and religions” _____ Dr. Alexander Hamilton, 1744¹²
Maryland physician travelling in Pennsylvania

Friday, June 8th [1744; Pennsylvania]. . . . I dined at a tavern with a very mixed company of different nations and religions. There were Scots, English, Dutch, Germans, and Irish; there were Roman Catholics, Churchmen, Presbyterians, Quakers, Newlightmen, Methodists, Seventhdaymen, Moravians, Anabaptists,

¹⁰ Kerby A. Miller, et al., eds., *Irish Immigrants in the Land of Canaan: Letters and Memoirs from Colonial and Revolutionary America, 1675-1815* (Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 319-322; permission pending.

¹¹ Rev. John Callender, *An Historical Discourse on the Civil and Religious Affairs of the Colony of Rhode-Island and Providence Plantations in New-England in America*, Boston, 1739; accessed through Early American Imprints online digital collection, American Antiquarian Society; permission pending.

¹² Alexander Hamilton [not the later Founding Father], *Hamilton's Itinerarium: being a narrative of a journey from Annapolis, Maryland, through Delaware, Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts and New Hampshire, from May to September, 1744*, ed. Albert Bushnell Hart (St. Louis, Missouri: printed by W. K. Bixby for private distribution, 1907); full text online as text and digital images in American Memory (Library of Congress) at hdl.loc.gov/loc.gdc/lhbntn.02374.

and one Jew. The whole company consisted of twenty-five, planted round an oblong table, in a great hall well stocked with flies.

The company divided into committees in conversation. The prevailing topic was politics, and conjectures of a French war. A knot of Quakers there talked only about selling of flour and the low price it bore. They touched a little upon religion, and high words arose among some of the sectaries [members of different religious sects], but their blood was not hot enough to quarrel, or, to speak in the canting phrase, their zeal wanted fervency.

“God is served in various ways in this country” _____ Peter Kalm, Middle Colonies, 1748¹³
Visiting Swedish botanist

Among the public buildings [Philadelphia] I shall first mention churches, of which there are several, for God is served in various ways in this country.

1. The *English established church* [Anglican] stands in the northern part of the town, at some distance from the market, and is the finest of all. . . .
2. The *Swedish church*, which is otherwise called the Church of Wicaco, is in the southern part of the town, almost outside of it on the riverside, and its location is therefore more agreeable than that of any other. . . .
3. The *German Lutheran church* is on the northwest side of the town. . . They have only one minister, who also preaches at another Lutheran church in Germantown. . . .
4. The *Old Presbyterian church* is not far from the market and on the south side of Market Street. . . .
5. The *New Presbyterian church* was built in the year 1750 by the “New-lights” in the northwestern part of the town. By the name of New-lights are understood the people who have, from different religions, become proselytes of the well-known Whitefield, who in the years 1739, 1740, and likewise in 1744 and 1745, traveled through almost all the English colonies in North America.
6. The *Old German Reformed (Calvinistic) church* is built in the west-northwest part of the town and looks like the church in Ladugardsgardet near Stockholm. It is not yet finished, though for several years the congregation has kept up divine service in it. . . .
7. The *New Reformed church* was built at a little distance from the old one by the party of the clergyman who had lost his cause. . . .
8. & 9. The *Quakers* have two meeting-houses, one in the market and the other in the northern part of the town. . . .
10. The *Anabaptists* have their service in the northern part of the town.
11. The *Roman Catholics* have in the southwest part of the town a large building which is well adorned within and has an organ.
12. The *Moravian or Zinzendorfian Brethren* have hired a large house in the northern part of the town, in which they perform service both in German and English, . . .

Freedom. Everyone who acknowledges God to be the Creator, preserver and ruler of all things, and teaches or undertakes nothing against the state or against the common peace, is at liberty to settle, stay and carry on his trade here, be his religious principles ever so strange. No one is here molested [harassed] because of misleading principles of doctrine which he may follow, if he does not exceed the above-mentioned bounds. And he is so well secured by the laws, both as to person and property, and enjoys such liberties that a citizen here may, in a manner, be said to live in his house like a king. It would be difficult to find anyone who could wish for and obtain greater freedom. . . .

The Jews. Besides the different sects of Christians, many Jews have settled in New York, who possess great privileges. They have a synagogue, own their dwelling-houses, possess large country-seats [homes]

¹³ Peter Kalm, *Travels into North America* [1748-1750]. . . , 1753; 1st Eng. ed., 1770 [*The America of 1750: Peter Kalm's Travels in North America*]; copyright 1937, 1964, Hannah N. Bensen; facsimile reprint: New York: Dover Publications, 1966; permission pending.

and are allowed to keep shops in town.¹⁴ They have likewise several ships, which they load and send out with their own goods. In fine [sum], they enjoy all the privileges common to the other inhabitants of this town and province.

“all religious sects are tolerated there” _____ **Gottlieb Mittelberger, Pennsylvania, 1750**¹⁵
German immigrant

Coming to speak of Pennsylvania again, that colony possesses great liberties above all other English colonies, inasmuch as all religious sects are tolerated there. We find there Lutherans, Reformed, Catholics, Quakers, Mennonists or Anabaptists, Herrnhuters or Moravian Brethren, Pietists, Seventh Day Baptists, Dunkers, Presbyterians, Newborn, Freemasons, Separatists, Freethinkers, Jews, Mohammedans, Pagans, Negroes and Indians. The Evangelicals and Reformed, however, are in the majority. But there are many hundred unbaptized souls there that do not even wish to be baptized. Many pray neither in the morning nor in the evening, neither before nor after meals. No devotional book, not to speak of a Bible, will be found with such people. In one house and one family, 4, 5, and even 6 sects, may be found.

“a Protestant stranger . . . may hold public office” _____ **Rev. J. M. Bolzius, Georgia, 1750**¹⁶
German Lutheran; author of Q&A guide for potential immigrants

19th Question. How is the situation regarding the white servants?

Answer. Poor people from Europe who cannot pay their passage to the ships' captains are sold for 3 or 4 years, and must serve. In Carolina some are treated hardly better than Negroes. In our colony they are treated better. However, they rarely do well, but become lazy and run away if they can. They consider it unjust to serve [even] so few years for their passage money. Boys under 14 years must serve up to the 21st year of their age, and girls up to the 18th year. After that the boys receive 50 acres free.

65th Question. Whether a Protestant stranger, from whatever nation he may be, may hold public office in the government, or whether that kind of prerogative is enjoyed preferably by the citizens.

Answer. I have never yet noticed that a discrimination was made against nationals who had sworn allegiance to the King of England; indeed I know that there is in the secret council at Charlestown a Frenchman and a Dutchman. And our surgeon, Mr. Mayer, is a judge in Ebenezer [settlement co-founded by Bolzius], constituted and sworn by the Trustees, and thus there are several in Carolina from other nations. The deputies to Parliament in Charlestown and in Georgia are not only Englishmen, but also Frenchmen and Germans, provided they know the English language. The English minister in Savannah is a native Swiss.

“Methods of great tenderness” _____ **Benjamin Franklin, Pennsylvania, 1751, 1753**¹⁷
Boston-born Philadelphia writer, printer, and civic activist

1751: The Observation concerning the Importation of Germans in too great Numbers into Pennsylvania, is, I believe, a very just one. This will in a few Years become a German Colony. Instead of their Learning our Language, we must learn theirs, or live as in a foreign Country. Already the English

¹⁴ Privileges restricted or forbidden to many Jews in Europe.

¹⁵ Gottlieb Mittelberger, *Journey to Pennsylvania in the Year 1750, and Return to Germany in the Year 1754, Containing Not Only a Description of the Country According to Its Present Condition, but Also a Detailed Account of the Sad and Unfortunate Circumstances of Most of the Germans That have Emigrated or Are Emigrating to That Country*, 1756 (trans. Carl Theo. Eben; Philadelphia: John Jos. McVey, 1898).

¹⁶ Rev. Johann Martin Bolzius, *Reliable Answer to Some Submitted Questions Concerning the Land Carolina, In Which Answer, However, Regard Is Also Paid at the Same Time to the Condition of the Colony of Georgia*, published in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, 14:2 (April 1957), pp. 218-261; translated and edited by Klaus G. Loewald, Beverly Starika, and Paul S. Taylor. Reproduced by permission of *The William and Mary Quarterly*.

¹⁷ Benjamin Franklin, Letter to Archibald Kennedy, 20 March 1751; Letter to Peter Collinson, 1753?. Leonard W. Larrabee et al., eds., *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* (Yale University Press, 1959-); permission pending.

begin to quit [leave] particular Neighbourhoods surrounded by Dutch, being made uneasy by the Disagreeableness of dissonant Manners; and in Time, Numbers will probably quit the Province for the same Reason. Besides, the Dutch under-live, and are thereby enabled to under-work and under-sell the English, who are thereby extremely incommoded and consequently disgusted, so that there can be no cordial Affection or Unity between the two Nations. How good Subjects [of the king] they may make, and how faithful to the British Interest, is a Question worth considering.

1753: With regard to the Germans [in Pennsylvania], I think Methods of great tenderness should be used, and nothing that looks like a hardship be imposed. Their fondness for their own Language and Manners is natural: It is not a Crime. When People are induced to settle a new Country by a promise of Privileges, that Promise should be *bonâ fide* [in good faith] performed, and the Privileges never infringed. If they are, how shall we be believed another time, when we want to People another Colony? Your first Proposal of establishing English Schools among them is an excellent one; provided they are free Schools, and can be supported.

“they are left still foreigners” _____ **Edmund Burke, [on] Pennsylvania, 1758**¹⁸
British statesman

. . . It was certainly a very right policy to encourage the importation of foreigners into Pennsylvania, as well as into our other colonies. By this we [Great Britain] are great gainers without any diminution of the inhabitants of Great Britain. But it has been frequently observed, and as it should seem, very justly complained of, that they are left still foreigners, and likely to continue so for many generations; as they have schools taught, books printed, and even the common news paper in their own language, by which means . . . there is no appearance of their blending and becoming one people with us. This certainly is a great irregularity, and the greater, as these foreigners by their industry, frugality, and a hard way of living, in which they great exceed our people, have in a manner thrust them out in several places, so as to threaten the colony with the danger of being wholly foreign in language, manners, and perhaps even inclinations. In the year 1750 were imported into Pennsylvania and its dependencies four thousand three hundred and seventeen Germans, whereas of British and Irish but one thousand arrived — a considerable number, if it was not so vastly overbalanced by that of the foreigners.

I do by no means think that this sort of transplantations ought to be discouraged. I only observe along with others that the manner of their settlement ought to be regulated, and means sought to have them naturalized in reality.

“there would soon be a civil war” _____ **Rev. Andrew Burnaby, 1760**¹⁹
English Anglican clergyman visiting the colonies

The northern colonies . . . are composed of people of different nations, different manners, different religious, and different languages. They have a mutual jealousy of each other, fomented by considerations of interest, power, and ascendancy. Religious zeal too, like a smothered fire, is secretly burning in the hearts of the different sectaries [sects] that inhabit them, and were it not restrained by laws and superior authority, would soon burst out into a flame of universal persecution. Even the peaceable Quakers struggle hard for pre-eminence, and evince in a very striking manner that the passions of mankind are much stronger than any principles of religion.

The colonies, therefore, separately considered, are internally weak; but it may be supposed that by an union or coalition they would become strong and formidable: but an union seems almost impossible . . . Indeed, it appears to me a very doubtful point, even supposing all the colonies of America to be united under one head, whether it would be possible to keep in due order and government so wide and extended

¹⁸ Edmund Burke, *An Account of the European Settlements in America*, 1758, pp. 200-201; facsimile reprint: New York: Research Reprints, Inc., 1970; permission pending.

¹⁹ Rev. Andrew Burnaby, *Travels through the Middle Settlements in North-America. In the Years 1759 and 1760. With Observations upon the State of the Colonies*. London: 1775; reprinted from 3d. ed., 1798 (New York: A. Wessels Co., 1904); facsimile reprint by Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, New York: 1970; permission pending.

an empire — the difficulties of communication, of intercourse, of correspondence, and all other circumstances considered.

A voluntary association or coalition, at least a permanent one, is almost as difficult to be supposed, for fire and water are not more heterogeneous than the different colonies in North-America. Nothing can exceed the jealousy and emulation which they possess in regard to each other. The inhabitants of Pennsylvania and New York have an inexhaustible source of animosity, in their jealousy for the trade of the Jerseys. Massachusetts-Bay and Rhode Island are not less interested in that of Connecticut. The West Indies are a common subject of emulation to them all. Even the limits and boundaries of each colony, are a constant source of litigation. In short, such is the difference of character, of manners, of religion, of interest, of the different colonies, that I think, if I am not wholly ignorant of the human mind, were they left to themselves, there would soon be a civil war from one end of the continent to the other, while the Indians and Negroes would, with better reason, impatiently watch the opportunity of exterminating them all together.

“friendly cohabitation of all” _____ **Rev. Ezra Stiles, Connecticut, 1760²⁰**
Congregationalist clergyman

Providence has planted the British America with a variety of sects, which will unavoidably become a mutual balance upon one another. Their temporary collisions, like the action of acids and alcalies after a short ebullition, will subside in harmony and union, not by the destruction of either, but in the friendly cohabitation of all. . . The sects cannot destroy one another: all attempts this way will be fruitless — they may affect a temporary disturbance, but cannot produce a dissolution — each one subserves the mutual security of all.

“mingled like fish at sea” _____ **Christopher Schultz, Pennsylvania, 1769²¹**
German immigrant of Schwenkfelder sect

Here we mingled like fish at sea, but peaceably. He who would let it be noticed that he was inimical to another because of religion, would be regarded as a fool, although one frankly tells another his mind. A Mennonite preacher is my real neighbor; I do not wish for a better. On the other side stands a large stone Catholic church. The present Jesuit father here is a native of Vienna . . . he confides more in me than in any of the bosom-children. When he encounters a difficulty he comes to me. These men have learned to adjust themselves perfectly to the time. Furthermore, the Lutherans and Reformed have their churches here. . . On Sundays we meet each other crisscross.

Portraits, p. 1 (permission pending):

- (1) Lawrence Sully, Portrait of a Lady from S. Carolina Huguenot Family, ca. 1795. Smithsonian American Art Museum.
- (2) Unknown creator, Portrait of Catherina Elmendorf, 1752, detail. Metropolitan Museum of Art.
- (3) Samuel King, Portrait of Ezra Stiles, 1771, detail. Yale University Art Gallery.
- (4) John Valentine Haidt, Portrait of a Young Moravian Girl, ca. 1755-1760, detail. Smithsonian American Art Museum.
- (5) William Williams, Portrait of Benjamin Lay, 1750, detail. National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution.

²⁰ Rev. Ezra Stiles, *A Discourse on the Christian Union*, 1760; accessed through Early American Imprints online digital collection, American Antiquarian Society; permission pending.

²¹ Christopher Schultz, Letter to Carl Ehrenfried Heintze, 6 March 1769 (Schwenkfelder Library and Heritage Center); quoted in Sally Schwartz, “A Mixed Multitude”: *The Struggle for Toleration in Colonial Pennsylvania* (New York University Press, 1987), p. 266.