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A Charitable Scheme: William Smith, Michael Schlatter, and the German Free Schools

by

Daniel Crown

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
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Introduction: A Charitable Scheme

Origin stories are by their very nature mythological. Most fall into one of two camps. The first is an act of celebration: a commemorative tale intended to remind an already happy and productive society of the shared legacy that binds it together. The second is an act of defense: someone or something has questioned the motives or the ethics of a group of people, necessitating a corrective myth to simultaneously silence critics, reestablish pride within a group's own ranks, and resuscitate trust among the unfaithful. As William Smith sat down in September 1754 to record his history of the Society for the Education of Germans in Pennsylvania, he seems to have understood this. At the age of twenty-seven, the young Scot and nascent Anglican priest was already a master of persuasion. He knew how to make one type of origin myth look very much like the other.

Ostensibly a celebratory paean to an organization with "a true *Christian* Concern," Smith wrote his history unquestionably from a position of defense.[1] For months, Christopher Sauer, a powerful German-language printer from nearby Germantown, had been openly questioning the motives of the Society for Germans in his widely-read *Pennsylvanische Berichte*.[2] Arguably the most powerful German in a colony that contained nearly 100,000 of them, Sauer considered himself a watchdog for non-English-speaking colonists. His newspaper, along with his popular

[1] He admitted as much himself. See, *Minutes of the German Free Schools*, William Smith Papers, Box 3, University of Pennsylvania. Pages 35-36. Accessed online on June 11, 2016. The minutes are held by the University of Pennsylvania and have been scanned and made available for digital download at: http://sceti.library.upenn.edu/franklin/txt_doc_wsmithpapers_title.cfm. The document is one part of the university's William Smith Papers collection, hereafter referred to as "Smith Papers." Regarding the Society for German's "true *Christian* Concern," see William Smith, A *Brief History of the Rise and Progress of the Charitable Scheme, Carrying on by a Society of Noblemen and Gentleman in London, For the Relief and Instruction of poor Germans, and their Decendents, settled in Pennsylvania, and the adjacent* British *Colonies in* North-America, (Philadelphia: Benjamin Franklin and David Hall, 1755), 3.

[2] For the controversy, see *Minutes of the German Free Schools*, 32-36. For the pamphlet's publication plans see, Ibid., 36 and 59-60.

German-language almanac, *Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender*, not only kept readers abreast of daily happenings in Pennsylvania, but also taught them how to take advantage of their rights as naturalized English citizens. It was in this vein, during the summer of 1754, that Sauer had first published a harmless rumor about the construction of a free English school for German settlers. Upon further investigation, the publisher had had sobering news to report:

> In our issue number 159 a mistake was advertised [that said] a High School was to be erected in Philadelphia for the benefit of the Germans, etc. But we are now by certain Accounts informed that Six English Free Schools will be kept in this Province, for the Germans in the Cities of Philadelphia, Lancaster, York, Reading, Easton, etc. German ministers are urged to learn to preach in English so that the Germans may by degrees become one nation with the English, and be provided with English clergymen. These accounts further tell us that this was done out of fear that the multitude of Germans might make up or form themselves into one separate people or body, and in time of war go over to the French, and join with them to hurt the English nation.[3]

With his eye on an upcoming General Assembly election, Sauer encouraged his readers to reject those who thought so little of German loyalty. "The Irish, the Swedes, and the Welsh, do keep their languages" he wrote, "and yet for all that [they] are not looked upon as a disloyal people."[4] Implying that the English schools were politically motivated, and, indeed, had been dreamt up by Proprietary agents to break apart the Quaker and German alliance that had benefited both groups for more than a decade, he encouraged his fellow Germans to "take it into Consideration…who will in these dangerous and Critical times preserve the libertys of the land."[5]

Sauer's criticism sent shock waves through the Society for Germans' North American leadership. Their school scheme relied entirely upon the support of leaders from Reformed and Lutheran churches. As Sauer's newspapers were "universally read by the Germans all over

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[3] Article from *The Pennsylvanische Berichte oder Sammlung Wichtiger Nachrichten aus dem Natur- und Kirchenreich*, September 1, 1754. Translation copied by Smith into *Minutes of the German Free Schools*, 32-33.
[4] Ibid., 35.
[5] Ibid.

Pennsylvania and the neighbouring Colonies," Smith began to express concern that "[Sauer] has it much in his Power, and too evidently in his Disposition, greatly to retard this good work and stir up the People against their gracious Superiours and their inestimable Benevolence for the Welfare of poor ignorant Souls." [6] Fearing their allies would soon back away from the school scheme, the Trustees agreed "that they should do effectual Service to their Country, if they could rescue so many thousands of well-meaning People from such bad hands."[7]

To counter any polemics Sauer might publish in the future, the Society decided to launch a German-language newspaper—to be run by Benjamin Franklin and Anton Armbüster—where it could directly address his criticisms mere days after the weekly *Berichte* made its way into the hands of impressionable Germans. To help mitigate damage from Sauer's earlier attacks, the Trustees also commissioned a work that would lay out in the most "inexceptionable language" their true origins and motives. During the first week of September, they chose Smith to compose this work and "lay it before the Trustees when finished in order that, when it has their approbation, it may be printed in English & Dutch…to be disposed in the Country among the People."[8] The resultant pamphlet—*A Brief History of the Rise and Progress of the Charitable Scheme*—provided a master class in political mythmaking.

"For several Years past," read the pamphlet's opening paragraph, "the small Number of reform'd Protestant *Ministers,* settled among the *German Emigrants* in *Pennsylvania,* finding the *Harvest* great, but the *Labourers* few, have been deeply affected with a true *Christian* Concern, for the Welfare of their distressed Countrymen, and the Salvation of their precious Souls." With countless impecunious Germans losing touch with modern civilization, more and more of them

[6] Ibid., 21. Smith paraphrases a letter written to him by a German-Lutheran minister named Henry Melchior Muhlenberg,
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid., 35-36.

lived "under the deepest Affliction, being settled in a remote Corner of the World, where the Light of the *blessed Gospel* has but lately reached, and where they are very much destitute of the Means of *Knowledge* and *Salvation*."[9] But take heart, reader! According to *Rise and Progress,* these poor souls were not yet lost! "In the Year 1751," you see, "a very moving Representation of their State having been made by a Person, whose unwearied Labors for the Benefit of his dear Countrymen have been for some Years conspicuous, the States of *Holland*, and *West-Friesland*, granted 2000 Guilders *per Annum*, for five Years from that Time, to be applied towards the Instruction of the said *Germans*, and their *Children*, in *Pennsylvania*." This "Person"—the reverend Michael Schlatter—was then "commissioned by the Synods of *Holland*, and Classis of *Amsterdam*, to solicit the friendly Assistance of the Churches of *England* and *Scotland*."[10]

To a discerning reader, Smith's focus on Holland might have tipped his true motives. The German Reformed Church in Pennsylvania operated under the council of Calvinist synods based in the Netherlands. More than anything else, Smith wanted his readers to understand that the Society represented an internal movement within the international Reformed community, not an external movement pressed upon Pennsylvania's Germans by their British neighbors. With this in mind, Smith mentioned the Church of Holland again and again in the opening two pages of his pamphlet: "[Protestant ministers] have entreated the *Churches* of *Holland*, to commiserate their unhappy *Fellow-Christians*"; "The *Churches* of *Holland*…did, from Time to Time, contribute to the Support of *Religion* in these remote Parts"; "The Rev. Mr. Thomson was commissioned by the Synods of *Holland."*[11] Readers of the pamphlet no doubt came away from it with the impression that concerned Pennsylvanian ministers, lamenting the poor quality of life along the

[9] William Smith, *A Brief History*, 3-4.
[10] Ibid., 4. Here, Smith intentionally leaves Schlatter nameless. Much more on this in chapter five.
[11] Ibid., 1, 4, 5, 11.

frontier, had sought help from spiritual leaders in the Netherlands, who in turn had delegated executive functions to their British allies in London. Ultimately, this London-based Society had decided that its members resided "at too great a Distance" to ascertain the best locations for schools or to interview potential teachers. Therefore, Smith wrote, it "devolved the general Execution of the whole upon *Us*, under the Name of *Trustees-General*, for the Management of the *Charity*."[12] He and his North American counterparts were not political actors, as alleged by Sauer, but rather stand-ins for the Churches of Holland and the men in London with whom they had entrusted their money. The English schools were not intended to decide elections nor to phase out German culture. The Trustees simply wanted Germans to qualify "for all the Advantages of *native English Subjects*"—to be able to "know what is doing in the Country round them; and, in a Word, to *judge* and *act* entirely for themselves." And why should any German have thought otherwise? "A Design for *instructing* a People, and adorning the Minds of their Children with useful *Knowledge*," Smith wrote, "can carry nothing in it but what is friendly to *Liberty*."[13]

This last line was a *tour de force* of political salesmanship. It was also entirely disingenuous. Sauer's assertions in his newspaper were true, almost to the word. As an ordained deacon and priest in the Anglican church, Smith no doubt cared for the well-being of Pennsylvania's Germans; nonetheless, his motives for the German Free Schools were and always had been political. The North-American branch of the Society for the Education of Germans existed primarily to anglicize Germans and erode their reliance upon a Quaker-led General Assembly, which was intent upon stripping the Penn family of whatever remained of its token authority in Pennsylvania. Initially appealing to non-pacifistic politicians who held both pro- and

[12] Ibid., 8.
[13] Ibid., 16.

anti- proprietary positions, the Society, under Smith's leadership, became increasingly partisan in ensuing years. With an Anglo-French war hovering menacingly on the horizon, the German Free School movement soon became the first phase of a decade-long effort not only to ensure frontier Germans remained loyal to the British crown, but also to return the colony's proprietors to their proper place at the top of Pennsylvania's political hierarchy. Pennsylvania's Germans had become too important, too numerous, and too powerful to ignore. It was Smith's job to convince them to shift allegiances.

***

When describing the historiography of eighteenth-century Pennsylvania's sizable German population, it is hard to avoid defaulting to the old but convenient prerogative—seemingly held by historians since they went to work in sleeveless chitons and girdles—to complain about the egregious neglect endured by one's beloved and yet criminally underrepresented field of study. By 1754, German-speaking immigrants accounted for roughly one half of the population of British North America's most populous colony.[14] At a time when many of the so-called "founders" of the United States were coming of age, British colonies were already dealing with the wide-ranging ramifications of mass immigration by a foreign-language-speaking people. These experiences played a crucial role in how the next generation of Americans would define what, exactly, it meant to *be* an American and who, exactly, deserved to benefit from this honor. Why don't more people care about this?

The reason eighteenth-century German immigration remains on the periphery of colonial American studies has more to do with approach than it does with a lack of appeal. From a strictly academic sense, Pennsylvania's struggles with heterogeneity are well-chronicled. A handful of

[14] Per numbers reported in *The London magazine. Or, Gentleman's mostly intelligencer*, May 1755. For a full chart of the magazine's tallies, see chapter one, note 6.

monographs *do* exist, which explore how the colony navigated the tiny rivulet that separated its utopian dream from its comparably messy reality.[15] Yet, at least in part because the American Revolution hit a paradigmatic reboot button just as Germans began to fully flex the power in their numbers, individual events such as the German Free School scheme are often relegated to footnotes or passing mentions in works that cover entire centuries of political evolution. Indeed, most of the major works on German Pennsylvania capture the region through a panoptic lens. To demonstrate the sheer magnitude of these mass migrations, as well as to relay how important they were to the many spheres of late-colonial life, historians have been forced to produce temporally expansive books filled with data, charts, and ship registries.[16] These works remain incredibly important. Still, a deficit of detail exists. It is only by adjusting our lens for a closer look at mid-eighteenth-century Pennsylvania that the true enormity of the immigration story comes into proper view.

Few events hold more promise in this regard than does the establishment of the German Free Schools. Like a single cell set under a microscope, the story of William Smith's early Anglicization efforts reveals a large and vital world hidden within what at first glance appears to be a hyper-specific problem. The story I tell in this thesis is almost absurdly transnational: William Smith, a *Scotsman*, working on the behalf of Thomas Penn, an *English* proprietor, co-opts a charity movement created by a *Swiss* minister named Michael Schlatter, who worked for members of the *Dutch* Calvinist synods, who themselves were concerned with the spiritual and

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[15] A good example of this approach can be found in Sally Schwartz, *A Mixed Multitude: The Struggle for Toleration in Colonial Pennsylvania* (New York: New York University Press, 1988).

[16] See Aaron Fogelman, *Hopeful Journeys: German Immigration, Settlement, and Political Culture in Colonial America, 1717-1775* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996). Also, Marianne S. Wokeck, *Trade in Strangers: The Beginnings of Mass Migration to North America*. (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999). A notable exception to these broad but crucial examinations can be found in A.G. Roeber, *Palatines, Liberty, and Property: German Lutherans in Colonial British America* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993). In this text, Roeber investigates how political situations in Germany during the seventeenth and eighteenth century came to shape the political behaviors of Lutheran immigrants in Pennsylvania.

physical well-being of *German* immigrants in North America. Yet, of all the concerns wrapped up in this international web of motives and agendas, none was more prominent than local colonial politics.

At the onset of the Seven Years' War, German immigration was *the* key issue in Pennsylvania. Matters of defense certainly sat at the fore of the discourse in this period; yet, largely because pacifistic Quakers remained intractably unified, battles over war funding and militia mustering were fought almost entirely within the context of securing German swing votes. The Quakers, a minority in the colony, maintained control of Pennsylvania's General Assembly solely because of their alliance with sectarian Germans. Though this story makes it clear that William Smith's true motives involved expanding the power of his proprietary superiors, it is also true that the preacher and future provost understood that the only way to properly protect Pennsylvania was to take advantage of pre-existent divides within what his superiors had once incorrectly viewed as a singular German body. To do this, Smith sought common ground between the two major protestant branches in the British community, Anglicans and Presbyterians, and the two mainstream churches in the German community: Lutherans and Reformed Calvinists. Rather than use this common ground for short-term political gain, he set his sights higher. He fully intended, from the start, to make these Germans *British*.

By exploring the earliest stages of this effort, I hope to demonstrate exactly what an eighteenth-century political scheme looked like on the ground. Doing so involves following the birth and evolution of a single idea. This idea began as an effort by Reformed protestants to secure funding for frontier ministers. It ultimately came to fruition through a political initiative to construct multiple school buildings and produce a German-language newspaper to compete with Christopher Sauer's. How this effort progressed between these polar ends involves countless

moving parts, which demonstrate just how quickly programs intended to solve local problems can become international in scope. In this thesis, I do make an argument meant to add to the ongoing historiography of the German Free Schools—chiefly that these institutions were not only political, but also partisan.[17] With each amendment made to an Anglicization plan first put forth by Benjamin Franklin in 1753, Smith hoped to swell the ranks of pro-Proprietary sympathizers, further isolate dangerous sectarian preachers, and put an end to the disproportionate power of Pennsylvania's Quaker minority. This involved a great deal more collusion between Smith and Thomas Penn than historians have previously reported. More importantly, however, I aim to tell a story: one about how people from radically different backgrounds struggled to live in harmony; one about an epic cultural war hidden within the banality of political discourse; one I hope will provide illustrative color within the wonderful outlines historians have already drawn of German Pennsylvania over the course of the past two centuries.

[17] I have only found only one historian who has treated the German Free Schools as a primary subject: Samuel Edwin Weber, *The Charity School Movement in Colonial Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: George F. Lascher, 1905). This short book, which seems to have received only a limited print run, was submitted as a Doctoral Thesis to the University of Pennsylvania in 1905. In this work, Weber too argues that these schools were politically motivated—though only in a general sense. He almost entirely ignores the crucial role played by Thomas Penn, as well as how the proprietor's involvement pushed Smith toward partisan politics. The historians who have come the closest to making the argument put forth in this thesis are Whitfield J. Bell Jr., Melvin H. Buxbaum, and, particularly Bruce Richard Lively. See Whitfield J. Bell. Jr., "Benjamin Franklin and the German Charity Schools," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 6 (1956): 381-387; Melvin H. Buxbaum, "Benjamin Franklin and William Smith Their School and Their Dispute," *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 4 (1970): 361-382. Bruce Richard Lively, "William Smith, The College and Academy of Philadelphia and Pennsylvania Politics 1753-1758," *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 3 (1969): 237-258. These historians correctly touch upon the plan-making process between Smith and Penn, though, again, briefly in journal-length articles. It is also worth noting that these articles devote only a few sentences to Michael Schlatter—who plays a pivotal role in this thesis. For other treatments, see Ralph Frasca, "To Rescue the Germans out of Sauer's Hands: Benjamin Franklin's German-Language Printing Partnerships," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 4 (1997): 329-350; Glenn Weaver, "Benjamin Franklin and the Pennsylvania Germans," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 4 (1957): 536-559; and John B. Frantz, "Franklin and the Pennsylvania Germans," *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 1 (1998): 21-34.

Chapter One: Pennsylvania's German Problem[1]

In early March 1754, Thomas Penn, proprietor of Pennsylvania, received a perplexing and unexpected report. For the past few months, Penn had been meeting regularly at his London home with William Smith, a newly-ordained preacher and deacon of the Anglican church who had recently made waves with two influential pamphlets on the future of colonial education.[2] At the time, Benjamin Franklin and Richard Peters were putting together plans for a chartered college in Philadelphia. Included within these plans was a tentative design for charity schools intended to teach English to the youngest generation of Pennsylvania's German population. The men had handpicked Smith to convince Penn to sign off on these interlocking schemes. During one of Penn's final conversations with Smith, the educator had apparently passed along Franklin's rough estimates regarding Pennsylvania's population. The specifics caused Penn much consternation. Of the 190,000 inhabitants of Pennsylvania, Franklin estimated that 100,000 were German. The proprietor refused to believe it. "How is this calculation made," he asked Peters later that month. "Pray inform me soon…the [population] I imagined larger, and a greater proportion of English & others, to the Germans."[3]

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[1] The title of the chapter is taken from Dietmar Rothermund, "The German Problem of Colonial Pennsylvania," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 1 (1960), 3-21.

[2] Thomas Penn to Richard Peters, 31 October 1753. Penn Personal Letterbook, III, 256. Historical Society of Pennsylvania (hereafter cited as HSP). Viewed on microfilm at the New York Public Library. Also, see William Smith to Benjamin Franklin and Richard Peters, February 1754. Founders Online, National Archives, last modified October 5, 2016, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Franklin/01-05-02-0063. [Original source: The Papers of Benjamin Franklin, vol. 5, July 1, 1753, through March 31, 1755, ed. Leonard W. Labaree. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962, pp. 203–218.] Hereafter, all personal letters obtained through the National Archive online archive will be cited as: National Archives, Founders Online.

[3] Thomas Penn to Richard Peters, 9 March 1754. *Thomas Penn Letterbook*, III, 309. HSP.

Penn, of course, knew Pennsylvania brimmed with Palatines. Germans had flocked to the colony since the beginning of the century, and his territory's unique heterogeneity had caused him headaches since the first day he had taken over as chief proprietor upon the death of his brother in 1746.[4] Penn himself had lived in Pennsylvania between 1732 and 1751. During this time, he had witnessed thousands of Germans enter his family's colony. But if his memory served him correctly, "in some papers published by Franklin several years ago," the publisher had "computed [the Germans] at [only] 70,000."[5] Even more intriguing, Penn believed Franklin had underestimated Pennsylvania's overall population—a concern that possibly held merit. Per a report published in the May 1755 edition of *The London magazine*, Pennsylvania's true population sat somewhere around 250,000—roughly 60,000 people north of Franklin's most recent tally.[6] The scientist's best guess at the German population, however, hit much closer to the mark.

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[4] This thesis will not cover this initial burst of immigration. Much, however, has already been written on the subject. See the works of Marianne S. Wokeck and Aaron Fogelman cited below. For the death of John Penn, see Howard M. Jenkins, "The Family of William Penn (continued). IX. Thomas Penn," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 3 (1897), 330. Once John died, Thomas Penn held three-fourths of the family's property in Pennsylvania.

[5] Penn to Peters, 9 March 1754.

[6] *The London magazine. Or, Gentleman's mostly intelligencer*, May 1755. This made Pennsylvania Great Britain's most populated North American colony. The magazine used "Militia Rolls, Poll-Taxes, Bills of Mortality, returns from Governors and other Authentic Authorities" to determine an approximate population in each of Great Britain's colonies, which appeared in a chart recreated below:

Halifax and Luneburg in Nova-Scotia……...5,000
Massachusetts-Bay……220,000
Rhode Island and Providence…….…….35,000
Connecticut……100,000
New-York……..100,000
The Jerseys……100,000
Pennsylvania……..250,000
Maryland……..85,000
Virginia……85,000
North-Carolina……..……...45,000
South-Carolina……..……...30,000
Georgia……6,000
Total number…….1,051,000

As it turned out, Penn had based his own estimations on outdated information. At the time the proprietor left Pennsylvania for his permanent home in London, it was widely held that the War of Austrian Succession had greatly hampered trans-Atlantic immigration, both *from* the Rhineland and *into* Pennsylvania. Between 1740 and 1749 a deluge of German-speaking immigrants had slowed to a trickle.[7] What Penn could not have known, however, was that even an ocean-spanning war could not stop those who had already made the trip from writing back home with glowing reviews of America. As the bottleneck of potential colonists burst open upon the conclusion of the war, German-speaking immigrants flooded into Pennsylvania at unprecedented levels. More than 9,500 made the trip in 1749 alone.[8] Between 1750 and Penn's meeting with Smith in early 1754, nearly 20,000 more joined them.[9] Added to Franklin's count of 70,000—which Penn had read "several years ago"—these numbers had helped push the overall German population in Pennsylvania closer to his rough estimate of 100,000.

All of this, of course, amounted to picking nits. Whether Penn accepted Franklin's tally or preferred the estimate published by *The London Magazine*, his underlying problem remained the same: roughly measured, by 1754, German-speaking citizens accounted for either just below or just above one half of Pennsylvania's population. Unsurprisingly, as German shop signs and street names proliferated across the colony, prominent figures took notice. "The Observation concerning the Importation of Germans in too great Numbers into Pennsylvania, is, I believe, a very just one," Franklin wrote to James Parker in 1751.[10] "This will in a few Years be a German Colony: Instead of Learning our Language, we must learn their's, or live as in a foreign

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[7] See Wokeck, *Trade in Strangers*, 44-45.
[8] See Table 1.1 in Fogelman, *Hopeful Journeys*, 2. Also, see Table 2 in Wokeck, *Trade in Strangers*, 45.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Benjamin Franklin to James Parker, 20 March 1751. Founders Online, National Archives, last modified October 5, 2016, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Franklin/01-04-02-0037. [Original source: The Papers of Benjamin Franklin, vol. 4, July 1, 1750, through June 30, 1753, ed. Leonard W. Labaree. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961, pp. 117–121.]

Country." If this cultural shift were to continue, then the respectable English would soon be replaced by what the Pennsylvania Assembly would later describe as the "Refuse" of the German nation.[11] "Already the English begin to quit particular Neighbourhoods surrounded by Dutch," Franklin added, "being made uneasy by the Disagreeableness of disonant Manners. In Time, Numbers will probably quit the Province for the same Reason."[12]

Beyond concerns regarding the cultural makeup of the colony, Franklin, Peters, and other prominent Pennsylvanians were just as concerned with how these immigrants used Great Britain's liberal naturalization laws to their advantage. Beginning with the Naturalization Act of 1740, to earn full citizenship rights, immigrants to British colonies needed only to have lived in their new home for seven years, professed loyalty to the Crown, confessed to their Christian (non-Catholic) faith, and paid two shillings. This extremely accommodating act even allowed exceptions to these stipulations for Quakers and other sects of Christians who refused to take oaths on religious grounds.[13] Indeed, Pennsylvania's Quakers had for decades used this policy to earn and maintain the support of sectarian German communities. Though these communities were significantly less populous than their Lutheran and Reformed counterparts in Pennsylvania, they were comparatively dogmatic about protecting their newfound religious freedom.[14] These voters, almost to the man, supported the Quaker majority on the General Assembly, largely because they shared their strict pacifistic beliefs. The history of this alliance, seemingly as intractable as it was nettlesome for Penn and his supporters, sat at the very core of the

[11] Pennsylvania Assembly, reply to Governor John Penn, 15 May 1755. Founders Online, National Archives, last modified October 5, 2016, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Franklin/01-06-02-0018. [Original source: The Papers of Benjamin Franklin, vol. 6, April 1, 1755, through September 30, 1756, ed. Leonard W. Labaree. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1963, pp. 38–41.]
[12] Franklin, letter to Parker, 20 March 1751.
[13] For more on this see James H. Kettner, *The Development of American Citizenship, 1608-1870* (Raleigh: University of North Carolina Press, 1978), 74-78.
[14] For an excellent summary of German sectarian beliefs, see Roeber, *Palatines, Liberty, and Property*, 62-65.

proprietor's conversations with Smith, as they sat for weeks discussing how, exactly, they might handle what was quickly becoming Pennsylvania's "German Problem."

AN INCONVENIENT ALLIANCE

The alliance between Quakers and sectarian Germans did not come together overnight. This was true largely because the heart of this partnership, pacifism, did not play a major role in Pennsylvania's politics between the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 and the onset of King George's War in 1739. In fact, the Quaker-led General Assembly shared a general degree of comity with Penn's proprietary councilors during this period. Though concerns over currency and property distribution caused occasional tension during these years, for the most part the groups benefited mutually from a colony that was, by most accounts, a resounding success.[15] This remained true even as the Quakers faded into a minority in Pennsylvania following the population booms between 1719 and 1738. Presenting a unified front and using an attractive platform of limited taxes and individual liberties to their full advantage, the Quakers established a comfortable status quo in the colony. Few Pennsylvanians saw the need to upturn it.[16]

If the period between 1719 and 1738 proved a high-water mark for effectual colonial government, the subsequent three decades constituted a veritable nadir. In 1739, British officials began encouraging colonial governments to shore up defense in anticipation of what would ultimately become King George's War. This decree, which came jointly from the executive and

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[15] Indeed, Penn's main concerns during this period mostly involved holding onto his charter. The main threat came not from the Assembly, but from the Crown. It is also true that the Proprietary Party placed enough highly-regarded allies on the Assembly itself to largely assuage concerns of factionalism throughout the 1720s and early 1730s. See Norman S. Cohen, "The Philadelphia Election Riot of 1742," The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, 3 (1968), 306-308.

[16] See Alan Tully, *William Penn's Legacy: Politics and Social Structure in provincial Pennsylvania 1726-1755* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1977), 141-142. Also, Chester Raymond Young, "The Evolution of the Pennsylvania Assembly, 1682-1748," *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 2 (1968), 149-151.

legislative branches of the British government, caused John Penn, William's successor (and Thomas' predecessor), to express great concern over the disproportionate number of pacifists in Pennsylvania. Writing to Governor George Thomas, he predicted "great Difficultys" when the time came to press Pennsylvanians into military service. No doubt, any law that would "oblige them to Carry Arms" would be viewed as persecution.[17] Thomas presented these concerns directly to the Assembly on October 16. "There is too much Reason to apprehend," he said, "that a Neighboring Nation, powerful and watchful of all Advantages, will join with Spain, and that a bloody & destructive War is like to Ensue." In a particularly deft example of a politician attacking the elephant in the room without ever directly acknowledging its presence, Thomas went on to say, "I hope your Resolutions will be such as will tend to persevere His Majesty's Regard for you, to the Security of this Province, and I may say of this part of the British Empire in America."[18] Citing the efforts in Virginia to defend the ground between their respective colonies, the governor completed this sentiment by calling on the Assembly to "not be unmindful of His Majesty's, your own, and the general Honor and Interests of those parts of His Majesty's Dominions, when the neighbouring Provinces are vigoursly pursuing these laudable Ends."[19]

In an equally shrewd political measure, the Quaker Assembly politely informed the governor that they needed more time to think about whether they would help fund a defense against potential Spanish invaders. In the meantime, the House would "adjourn until the thirty-first Day of December next."[20] For the next few months, an issue regarding the colony's paper currency dominated proceedings. Then, suddenly, one full month before the date they had

[17] John Penn to George Thomas, 2 August 1739, Penn Papers, Letterbox of Thomas Penn, Letterbook I, 306-307. HSP.
[18] *Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania: Volume Four* (Harrisburg: Theo. Fenn & Co., 1851), 354-355.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid., 355.

promised to respond to Thomas' appeal, the Assembly made an official statement on the governor's call to arms:

> Be pleased to know, That soon after the Royal Charter Granted of this Province to our late worthy Proprietor, among other Laws which were agreed on between him and those who were Purchasers of him and proposed to become Adventurers with him, That for the full Enjoyment of Liberty of Conscience was one…That our Proprietor in his Charter of Privileges granted to the Freemen of this Province, did thereby Solemnly declare, promise, and grant for himself, his Heirs and Assigns, That the Article therein contained relating to Liberty of Conscience and every part and Clause therein 'According to the true intent and meaning thereof, should be kept and remain without any Alterations inviolably for ever.'[21]

Thomas' response to this argument perfectly encapsulated the political struggle that would define Pennsylvania politics for the next three decades. "Religion," he wrote, "where its Principles are not destructive to civil Society is to be judged of by Him only who is the Searcher of all Hearts."[22] But while Thomas thought it unreasonable "to persecute Men for their religious Opinions as for their Faces," he believed that religious principles would not "protect us from an Enemy." In fact, he added, "were we event to Content ourselves with Cottages and the spontaneous productions of Nature, they would rob us of the very Soil."[23]

In January, the Assembly patently refused to write or sign any legislation pertaining to a state-mandated militia or defense. The next six months of 1740 proved predictably rife with turmoil. In April, Thomas presented the Assembly with a proclamation from King George II, announcing the formation of a North American army intended to make trouble for Spain in the West Indies.[24] Looking to sidestep the assembly by piecing together a volunteer militia, Governor Thomas promised potential recruits anonymity and plunder if they agreed to join the fight. Though Thomas' superiors had only hoped for 400 volunteers, he managed to procure

[21] Ibid., 367.
[22] Ibid., 369.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid., 396.

more than 700 potential soldiers.[25] Many of these men were indentured servants. Thomas justified drawing his militia from Pennsylvania's labor force by arguing freemen would not volunteer without a bounty. Given that the Assembly would never fund such an incentive, he had had no choice but to target men in comparably dire straits.

On July 2, 1740, the Assembly strongly rebuked Thomas for his implementation of the bounties. They had even harsher words regarding an order he had passed on from the Crown, which was meant to procure funds for the transportation of British soldiers into the North American colonies. Though the Assembly understood the necessity of taxes, it could not in good conscience allow the governor to collect public money for "the Uses recommended to us in the Governor's speech." To do so would be "repugnant to the religious Principles professed by the greater Number of the present Assembly, who are of the People called Quakers."[26]

James Logan, a longtime ally of the Penn family, soon reported that the issues described above galvanized pacifistic Pennsylvanians. Thomas' orders "so generally provoked the People, that on the then ensuing last Election, notwithstanding the utmost Efforts of the opposite Side, the Representatives are all Quakers but four, and the Resentments run high in each party against the other." Over the course of the next two elections, Presbyterians and Anglicans largely joined the de facto Proprietary Party—led by Penn and his sympathetic governor. Most of these men came from the frontier, where they lived in constant fear of attacks from Native Americans. Conversely, Quakers and like-minded sects continued to support the pacifistic Assembly. This left only Lutheran and Reformed congregations unaffiliated. Unfortunately for Penn, most so-

[25] For an excellent account of this process and the subsequent debate, see Schwartz, *A Mixed Multitude*, 166-167. Also, see James Logan to Thomas Story, 2 November 1740, published in "The Correspondence of James Logan and Thomas Story," *Bulletin of Friends Historical Association* 2 (1926), 65.

[26] *Pennsylvania Archives, Eighth Series: Votes and Proceedings of the House of Representatives of the Province of Pennsylvania*, Gertrude MacKinney, ed. 7 vols. 3: 2593. All volumes of Pennsylvania Archives hereafter cited as: Pennsylvania Archives.

called "Church Germans" continued to support the Quakers, largely because they did not approve of the proprietor's systematic removal of German settlers from territory he planned to either redraw for future development or envelope within his own personal holdings.[27]

All of this came to a head during the hotly-contested General Assembly election of 1740. According to Israel Pemberton, an influential Quaker assemblyman, that year's election drew more voters than any in the colony's history.[28] The turnout made an equal impression on William Allen, an enemy of Pemberton's and a major player within Penn's pro-proprietary faction. In the election, Allen reported, the Proprietary Party had produced "200 more [votes] than ever lost it before."[29] Despite this, the Quakers again dominated the Assembly, largely because they had "brought down upon us about 400 Germans who hardly ever came to elections formerly, perhaps never 40 of them having voted at any other election."[30] The significance of this was not lost on Allen. The Quakers, he implied, had just forged a formidable political alliance.

John Phillip Boehm, the de facto leader of the German Reformed Church in Pennsylvania, soon corroborated these concerns. Boehm, like most Church Germans, was *not* a pacifist. Greatly concerned about colonial defense, he sided with Governor Thomas on the militia issue—a decision that did not sit well with those of his neighbors who abhorred proprietary rule. Boehm later detailed how the 1740 election had divided the German community. Describing the event as a "great tumult," he wrote that Thomas had categorically failed to win over the sectarian German vote. "The Protestant country people," he wrote, "were so prejudiced by the Quakers and other sects, which told them of all kinds of hardships that would follow [should the Quakers be voted out of office]." According to Boehm, the results

[27] See Fogelman, *Hopeful Journeys,* 139-140.
[28] See Schwartz, *Mixed Multitude,* 168.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid.

incensed the governor. Thomas, like Allen, largely blamed Germans for the Quakers' victory, and he was now determined to directly address the source of the Assembly's power. "All efforts are put forth to make [these efforts] a success," Boehm wrote, "for the German people will now be naturalized in a different way than formerly, namely, by order of the King and Parliament." Boehm went on to state that immigrants now had to take an oath in "High German," which attested to their Protestant faith. In addition, they also had to produce a certificate from a minister confirming that they had received communion within the last three months. "If this is found to be true," Boehm concluded, "they are accepted, otherwise not."[31]

Ostensibly meant to weed out any Catholics who might sympathize with French or Spanish invaders, those who wrote this new naturalization policy knew full well that Quakers and most German sectarians refused to take oaths. The new law, without explicitly saying so, had the potential to stanch the flow of the Assembly's newly-established lifeblood. In addition to this tactic, James Logan also turned to sympathetic leaders within the German community itself. With Boehm already in tow, Logan managed to convince Conrad Weiser, perhaps the most respected German Lutheran in all of Pennsylvania, to encourage non-sectarian Germans to vote against the Quaker Assembly. Weiser, who served as the colony's main Indian liaison, soon wrote a widely-circulated pamphlet titled *Serious Advice to our Countrymen the Germans*. In this document, he urged Germans to vote out Quaker obstructionists, who threatened to leave the frontier defenseless against potential French or Spanish attacks. Weiser also published German translations of the new naturalization oaths in hopes that Church Germans would take

[31] John Phillip Boehm to the Classis of Amsterdam, 25 July 1741. Reprinted in ed. William Hinke, *Life and Letters of the Rev. John Phillip Boehm: Founder of the Reformed Church in Pennsylvania 1683-1749*, (Philadelphia: Sunday School Board of the Reformed Church in the United States, 1916), 334-345. This oath was meant to ensure that naturalized citizens were indeed Protestant. They then needed to receive a certificate from a Calvinist or Lutheran priest to earn naturalization.

advantage.[32] According to Boehm, this tactic proved more successful at stopping German pacifists from naturalizing than it did at enticing Church Germans to join the Proprietary cause. During the Supreme Court sessions of April 10 and 11, more than 200 Germans showed up wanting to naturalize. All were "rejected, except those who were properly qualified and had their certificates." In all, the new law did indeed stop several pacifist voters from naturalizing; unfortunately for Penn, it only managed to enfranchise twenty-eight likeminded Lutheran and Reformed Germans.[33]

This failure likely had something to do with another pamphlet that had hit the streets of Philadelphia quickly behind Weiser's *Serious Advice*. A direct response to Weiser, this one, likely written by Christopher Sauer, revealed the Proprietary Party's true intentions for the oath stipulation in the new naturalization law.[34] Things only got worse for Allen and his allies the following year. In May 1742, the Assembly drafted a bill that would allow non-Quaker sects to naturalize without taking an oath. Either out of true concern for its German constituents or as a calculated political counterpunch, the Assembly included estate rights in this bill. This new law would allow naturalized Germans (and particularly widows) to bequeath property to their children.[35] Penn and his supporters voiced immediate concern that the property law was an attempt "to curry favour with the Germans against the next election."[36] Apart from immigration recruitment and safety regulations for transport vessels, no issue loomed larger on the German psyche in this era than did land bequeathal. Penn feared that should the Assembly tie hereditary

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[32] For more on this see, Fogelman, *Hopeful Journeys*, 136.
[33] Boehm to the Classis, *Life and Letters*, 334-335.
[34] See Fogelman, *Hopeful Journeys*, 137. Also, see Schwarz, *Mixed Multitude*, 171.
[35] See, PA, 3: 2752. "A Bill intitled, *An Act to enable divers Protestants Aliens to become naturalized; and to remedy the Inconveniences which have arisen, or may arise, by Purchase of Lands within this Province, made by such Aliens before their being naturalized*."
[36] Thomas Penn to George Thomas, 17 September 1742, Letter Book II: 9. H.S.P. Also see Schwarz, *Mixed Multitude* 160-162.

rights to the naturalization process, many formerly apolitical sectarians would finally seek full citizenship.[37] As it turned out, he was right. Germans again provided the swing votes required for the Quakers to maintain their majority on the Assembly in 1742; and, indeed, the naturalization issue stood at the heart of what turned out to be one of the most violent elections in colonial American history.

In the days preceding the October 1 election, numerous Germans marched on Philadelphia, claiming, much as Boehm had described earlier, that officials had denied them their right to naturalize. Rumors abounded that their numbers had swelled to as many as 500.[38] Allen, working in Penn's interests, looked to counterbalance these numbers by rallying a host of discontented Pennsylvanian sailors, whom he knew resented the Quaker merchants who grew rich through their dangerous labor.[39] Incensed about their employers' consistent disregard for workplace safety, hundreds of sailors banded together and made their presence known in Philadelphia on the morning of the election. As the official Recorder of the voting process, it was Allen's duty to ensure peaceful and equitable proceedings. Yet, per testimony given to the Assembly after the election, many in Pennsylvania "blamed" Allen as "an Author of the Mob." Allen denied instigating the rebellion, though John Koster, a resident of Philadelphia, later claimed that he had heard an ally of the Proprietary Party admit that "We got these Sailors to answer those Dutchmen."[40]

On the morning of the election, chaos ensued. Fifty or sixty sailors, armed with clubs, attacked prominent Quaker politicians, including Israel Pemberton. "There goes a Parcel of

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[37] Ibid.
[38] Pennsylvania Archives, vol. 4: 2996.
[39] See Michael Bradley McCoy, "Absconding Servants, Anxious Germans, and Angry Sailors: Working People and the Making of the Philadelphia Election Riot of 1742," *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 4 (2007), 442-444.
[40] PA, 4: 2996.

Quaker Sons of Bitches," one cried out. "They are the men we want; Men with broad Hats, and no Pockets."[41] The sailors then moved on to the Philadelphia court house, where they hoped to prevent Germans and other pro-Quaker factionalists from voting. Eventually, a coalition of Quakers and Germans met the mob, and, after a bloody exchange, forced the sailors to retreat.[42] According to the October 7 edition of the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, "the Inhabitants, losing at length all Patience, furnished themselves with Sticks from the neighboring Wood piles, and turn'd upon the Sailors, who immediately fled to their Ships and hid themselves." By the end of the night "near 50 of them were committed to prison."[43]

In the end, the Quakers scored a resounding victory. As reported in the *Gazette*, "a great Number of Votes [were counted] in all the Counties of this Province, than have appear'd for several Years past…and (except in Bucks County) the Majority [were] in favour of the old Assembly."[44] Not only did the Quakers maintain their majority, but Allen himself lost his seat on the body.[45] Thanks in large part to their German supporters, after 1742, "no parties powerful Enough to make any Considerable Opposition" to the Quakers would exist for another decade.[46]

OBSERVATIONS ON MANKIND

By the time Franklin recruited Smith to meet with Penn in late 1753, Pennsylvania had developed a deeply divided two-party political system. As a member of the Assembly, Franklin carefully toed the line between these factions. While the publisher-turned-politician did not

[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid., 2977.
[43] *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 7 October 1742.
[44] Ibid.
[45] It is worth noting that nearly all of the testimony given about the 1742 election was done so by Quakers and their allies in an effort to pin the riots on Allen.
[46] Isaac Norris to Robert Charles, 11 August 1743. Quoted in Cohen, "Election Riot of 1742," 319.

demonstrate the same sort of outright disdain for the Quakers as did more ardent supporters of the proprietors, he did care very much about the cultural makeup of Pennsylvania. Likewise, he had long worked to ensure the colony's defense. Following Governor Thomas' ill-fated attempts to form a militia in the early 1740s, Franklin had gone to great lengths to bridge the gap between proprietary agents and the Quaker-led Assembly in his own crusade to create a proper provincial defense. In 1747, the publisher had cherry-picked and published in his newspaper a few passages from *Barclay's Apology*—a seminal Quaker text first published in 1678—which he hoped would convince his Quaker neighbors that their doctrine was not "absolutely against *Defensive War*."[47] To convince the rest of Pennsylvania of the necessity of a militia, he had published the infamous pamphlet *Plain Truth: or, Serious Considerations On the Present State of the City of Philadelphia, and Province of Pennsylvania*.

In this work, Franklin reached out directly to German frontiersmen, reminding them that they were the direct descendants of a "Warlike Nation, whose Sons have ever since the Time of Caesar maintained the Character he gave their Fathers, of joining the most *obstinate Courage* to all the other military Virtues."[48] Though Franklin would later claim in his autobiography that *Plain Truth* had a "sudden & surprizing Effect," the pamphlet ultimately failed to convince sectarians and Quakers to change course.[49]

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[47] See Pennsylvania Gazette, November 5, 1747. Franklin quotes Barclay as saying: "And therefore, while they are in that Condition, we shall not say, that WAR, undertaken on a JUST OCCASION, is altogether unlawful to them." Franklin interprets this quote thusly: "By this we see it is the Opinion of the Quakers, that WAR, undertaken upon a JUST OCCASION (and no Occasion can be more just than that of *defending* one's Country) is unlawful only to *such Christians as have attained Perfection:* But that such as are yet *in the Mixture*, that is, those who, tho' reformed in many Respect have not in all Things the *patient Suffering Spirit*, but are attached to the World, and vindictive of their Rights, Possessions, and Dues; these *are not fitted* for this Form of Christianity, and therefore *cannot be Undefending themselves*; and what a Man CANNOT do, being with Regard to him an *Impossibility*, doubtless is not required of him; and if he does what he *cannot avoid* doing, he is not *for that* to be condemned."

[48] Benjamin Franklin, *Plain Truth: or, Serious Considerations On the Present State of the City of Philadelphia, and Province of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: 1747).

[49] See Benjamin Franklin, *The Autobiography and Other Writings* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf 2015), 121.

By 1751, Franklin had begun to lose patience. That year, he published a particularly pointed polemic against the group at the tail end of his pamphlet, *Observations on the Increase of Mankind*. In this piece, Franklin asked his English readers, "Why should *Pennsylvania,* founded by the *English*, become a colony of *Aliens,* who will shortly be so numerous as to Germanize us instead of our Anglifying them, and will never adopt our language or customs, any more than they can acquire our complexion?"[50] Belaboring this point, the author went on to make a comment that would have huge political ramifications ten years later during a re-election bid for his spot on the General Assembly: "Why should the *Palatine Boors* swarm into our settlements, and by herding together establish their languages and manners to the exclusion of ours."[51]

Though Franklin soon ceased making such incendiary comments in public, he continued to express similar concerns in his private correspondence as late as 1753. As a war from France escalated from plausible to likely, he shifted into problem solving mode. Writing to Collinson in May, he cited a rumor that the French were forming a predominately German colony in the "Ilinoes Country." [52] Speculating that these Germans "may in time come to an understanding with ours," he then let loose a storm of frustration, drawn from past experiences. "During the last war our Germans shewed a general disposition that seems to bod us no good," he wrote. "For when the English who were not Quakers, alarmed by the danger arising from the defenceless state of our Country entered unanimously into an Association within this Government and the lower Countries raised armed and Disciplined [near] 10,000 men, the Germans except a very few

[50] Benjamin Franklin, *Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind, Peopling of Countries, &c.* (New York: S. Kneeland 1755), 10.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Benjamin Franklin, letter to Peter Collinson, 9 May 1753. Founders Online, National Archives, last modified October 5, 2016, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Franklin/01-04-02-0173. [Original source: The Papers of Benjamin Franklin, vol. 4, July 1, 1750, through June 30, 1753, ed. Leonard W. Labaree. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961, pp. 477–486.]

in proportion to their numbers refused to engage in it."[53] Worse, the Germans represented "the trouble hazard and Expence of defending the Province, as a greater inconvenience than any that might be expected from a change of Government."

Seemingly relieved by airing these grievances, he soon softened his tone. Despite everything, he wrote to Collinson, Germans were "excellent husbandmen" who contributed "greatly to the improvement of a Country." This considered, he no longer believed Pennsylvania should summarily reject German immigrants. "All that seems to be necessary," he wrote, "is to distribute them more equally, mix them with the English, establish English Schools where they are now too thick settled, and take some care to prevent the practice…of sweeping the German Gaols to make up the number of their Passengers."[54]

As Franklin began to formulate plans for these "English Schools," he was also hard at work reinvigorating a preexistent scheme to establish an accredited university in Philadelphia. He had first drawn up plans for such an institution in 1743. To run it, he had in mind Peters—an Anglican clergyman and a longtime ally of Thomas Penn. "At that time," Franklin would later write in his autobiography, "thinking the Reverend Mr. Peters, who was out of employ, a fit person to superintend such an institution, I communicated the project to him; but he, having more profitable views in the service of the proprietaries which succeeded, declined the undertaking: and, not knowing another at that time suitable for such a trust, I let the scheme lie awhile dormant."[55]

As it turned out, a proper suitor for this job would not present himself for another decade. Between the end of 1752 and the early months of 1753, Franklin came across a pamphlet entitled

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[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Franklin, *Autobiography*, 121.

Some Thoughts on Education. He quickly became enamored with the piece. On April 19, 1753 Franklin received a second pamphlet from the same author, this one entitled *A General Idea of the College of Mirania*. "For my Part," Franklin wrote a few weeks later, "I know not when I have read a Piece that has more affected me, so noble and just are the Sentiments, so warm and animated the Language."[56] Indeed, Franklin was so "affected" by these pamphlets, he found himself willing to entrust not only his fledgling college but also his designs for the reeducation of Germans to their author. And so it was that Franklin first summoned William Smith to Pennsylvania.

[56] Franklin to Smith, 3 May 1753. Founders Online.

Chapter Two: William Smith

In the fall of 1752, Phila De Lancey, a prominent New York socialite, and William Smith, then a twenty-four-year-old tutor to the children of Colonel Josiah Martin on Long Island, began a cerebral conversation on the future of Pastoral poetry. A well-read and insightful woman, De Lancey reveled in the exchange, which seems to have begun in person before transitioning into a written correspondence in the opening weeks of November. From the onset, the pair shared undeniable platonic chemistry. Smith was young and boastful; De Lancey slightly older and deferential. *He* waxed poetic with the bombastic prose of an ascendant intellectual; *she* responded in kind with her own heightened rhetoric, though always humbly, with the sort of carefully-worded deflection expected of an eighteenth-century woman lucky enough to receive the condescension of a male peer. "I presume you will receive the Excuse I have made as the most I can offer to clear myself from the Imputation of being extremely rude," De Lancey wrote, apologizing for her delayed response to one of Smith's earlier letters. "I must confess this Truth, that it would have been more to my Satisfaction, could I, by any Means, have evaded the Task of writing to a Person of your peculiar Genius."[1]

This gender dynamic played out again and again in their short exchange of letters, culminating when the conversation settled upon the poems of Alexander Pope—or, more precisely, how Smith planned to improve upon them. De Lancey held Pope among her favorite poets.[2] In a previous conversation, she had impressed Smith with her commentary on the

[1] Phila De Lancey to William Smith, 11 November 1752. Smith Papers. University of Pennsylvania. The letter is a part of the *Penn in the Age of Franklin* series. All quotes in this work are as originally written and are therefore [sic].
[2] William Smith to Phila De Lancey, 15 November 1752. Smith Papers. University of Pennsylvania. Apparently, Smith and De Lancey had discussed Pope before either in person or in non-extant letters. In a segue between paragraphs, Smith wrote to De Lancey: "You remember the fine Lines of your favorite Pope…"

Englishman's oeuvre—so much so that he soon encouraged her to try her hand at writing her own verse. "My inferior Judgment renders me very incapable to relish the generous Charms of Wit and enter into the Graces and Beauties of Poetry," De Lancey responded, "a truth which will readily gain Credit with you, when you consider me a meer American, and of a Sex entirely deprived of the happy advantages of Education."[3]

De Lancey's statements on the inferiority of her gender were no doubt disingenuous. Her insecurity regarding her status as an American, she genuinely wore like a raw wound. Born in New York in 1722, she had lived her entire life in the British diaspora. Conversely, Smith was no "mere American." Born in Scotland, he had received a Master's Degree five years earlier from the University of Aberdeen. A friend of De Lancey's husband, Oliver, Smith had arrived in New York in May 1751 carrying a letter of recommendation addressed from the Archbishop of Canterbury to Phila's brother-in-law, lieutenant governor James De Lancey.[4] Mrs. De Lancey basked in the erudition inherent in Smith's Britishness, and the young educator was more than willing to accept this flattery. This was most evident as Smith began to lecture his friend's wife on the literary *bucolic*, also known as the "Pastoral."

"A Pastoral is a short dramatic Piece, as the Drama is a short Epic," Smith wrote in an essay attached to his November 15 response to De Lancey. "In the Former, the Actors, or Speakers, are Shepherds, or at least rural Persons; & the manners are either imaginary or real;—Imaginary, when more beautiful in Description than in common Life;—real, when copied from Nature & the Scene about us." Pastorals from the Golden Age of Greek literature, Smith went on to explain, featured unsophisticated narrators who, thanks to their direct connection to nature,

[3] De Lancey to Smith, 11 November 1752.
[4] For Smith's introduction to the family, see Horace Wemyss Smith, *Life and Correspondence of the Rev. William Smith, D.D.* (Philadelphia: Ferguson Bros. & Co., 1880), 20-21.

occasionally stumbled upon sublime if inarticulate revelations about their quaint and simple lives. These "Rustics," as Smith described them, "[discover] no Knowledge but in rural Affairs; to which they continually allude, with an unaffected Simplicity, and Innocence of heart."

Pope, in his acclaimed poems in the genre, had helped develop a new type of Pastoral for the modern age. According to Smith, the "Actors" in Pope's poems were "still rural Persons" but ones capable of understanding "their several Relations, as Men, as Citizens, & as Creatures of God."[5] But in this sense, Pope had gone too far. He had raised his characters too much into the "imitation of Virgil." In doing so, he had disrespected the purity of their simple lives. Pope's British readership may have accepted this, but Smith, after having lived in New York for these past few years, pined for something more. He desired a story where a simple "Rustic" might obtain "Knowledge without having refined away the unaffected Dictates of sober Nature." He wanted an *American* pastoral, one that portrayed its enlightened protagonist as "refined, yet natural; sublime, yet simple; Spirited, yet easy; learned, yet familiar; flowing, yet briefly plain; always manifesting a good Heart, joined at least to an ordinary Head."

While De Lancey denigrated the American lifestyle with her apologetic tone, Smith basked in the romantic notion of enlightenment from beneath. "Among us, as in the first Ages of the World," he wrote, "men continue pretty much on a level; & either our most knowing Persons, who lead the rural Life, are to be considered as Shepherds, else we have none."[6] No doubt, De Lancey found herself charmed by such humble and unrepentantly kind condescension. Smith's shiny portrayal of rustic wisdom in the years leading up to his move to Pennsylvania perfectly demonstrated his belief in the potential of British Americans. Still, while a rustic "Shepherd" may have been capable of surprising an educated man with a pithy proverb or an insightful

[5] Smith to De Lancey, 15 November 1752.
[6] Ibid.

anecdote, he nonetheless needed guidance from his superiors to truly grow into a respectable and modern man. If British America wanted to take the next step in its cultural development, it needed to raise and promote shepherds, not of sheep but of men. In short, it needed *educators*.

Not unlike the duties of a shepherd, it was an educator's job to keep a group of frightened and disoriented animals from running directly into the mouths of predators. An educator protected a man from the outside world, then he taught the same man to protect himself. While math, logic, physics, and rhetoric were all important, none could "direct [students'] Conduct, nor prevent their falling a Prey to designing Men."[7] For this reason, it was "dangerous to send raw and unpractis'd Virtue abroad into a World where Right and Wrong are too often confounded." Citing the Greek poet Aratus, he described the world as being "surrounded with Wants and Dangers, the whole Species at Enmity with one another, the stronger lording it over the weaker, and nothing secure to any Man, but what he can either acquire or maintain by Violence." Only education, he believed, "[could] mend and rectify the Heart."[8]

NEW YORK AND BEYOND

Like so many late-colonial immigrants, little is known of William Smith's early life. Born on September 7, 1727 near the town of Aberdeen, he grew up under the watchful eye of his native Scotland's academy system. Between the ages of eight and fourteen, he studied with the Society for the Education of Parochial Schoolmasters. He entered the University of Aberdeen in 1741, but seems to have moved to London nine years later without having finished his degree.[9]

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[7] William Smith, *A General Idea of the College of Mirania*, 27-28.
[8] Ibid., 10.
[9] This point remains up for debate. His original biographer, Horace Wemyss Smith, claimed that he graduated in 1747, though later historians point out that no record of his graduation exists. See, *Live of Rev. Smith*, 20. Also, see, Thomas Harrison Montgomery, *A History of the University of Pennsylvania From Its Foundation to A.D. 1770* (Philadelphia: George W. Jacobs & Co, 1900), 185.

During Smith's brief stint in England, he allegedly worked as a clerk for the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel—the evangelical wing of the Anglican church.[10] By the end of 1751, he had gained employ as a private tutor for the children of Josiah Martin, the former president of the royal council of Antigua. Smith pleased Martin enough in this capacity that the colonel insisted the tutor come along when he and his family moved to New York the following year. The Martins, Smith in tow, settled at Far Rockaway, Long Island, on May 1, 1751.[11]

Once in New York, Smith wasted no time interjecting himself into colonial debates on faith and education. Smith's relationship with Martin put him into direct contact with the upper crust of New York society. This included the De Lancey family, as well as James Parker, publisher of the *New York Gazette*. No doubt, charming literary conversations like the one he shared with Phila De Lancey played a large role in his ascent up New York's social hierarchy. Smith was an articulate and charismatic man. He spoke with authority, and, based upon his immediate reception among the colonial elite, his peers seemed to have quickly recognized his potential. "He is a very Ingenious Modest Man," colonial agent Richard Jackson would later write to Benjamin Franklin in March 1754. "My friends at the University, whose Conversation with him, I suppose has been more in the Literary Way, give him a great Character."[12]

At the time, leading New Yorkers were putting together plans to establish what would eventually become King's College. Great debate existed over the necessity of such a project. The New York House of Representatives argued, at times vehemently, over the legality of public

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[10] Historians make this argument based upon Archbishop Sherlock's 1753 recommendation to Smith, which contains the sentence: "He came to me from Scotland about two years ago, with very amble Testimonials of his capacity and morals and affection to the King and our Constitution." See, Archbishop Sherlock to Thomas Penn, 19 September 1753. Penn Papers.

[11] See Montgomery, *History of the University of Pennsylvania*, 186.

[12] See, Richard Jackson, letter to Benjamin Franklin, 17 March 1754. Founders Online, National Archives, last modified October 5, 2016, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Franklin/01-05-02-0070. [Original source: *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, vol. 5, July 1, 1753, through March 31, 1755, ed. Leonard W. Labaree. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962, pp. 240–250.]

universities during a series of meetings throughout the early 1750s. Looking to interject himself into this debate, Smith wrote a tract in 1752, titled *Some Thoughts on Education: with Reasons for Erecting a College in this Province, and fixing the same at the City of New York: to which is added a Scheme for employing Masters or Teachers in the mean Time, and also for raising and endowing an Edifice in an easy Manner*. In this work, Smith dealt predominantly with the necessity of a college in New York, as well as the colony's readiness to commit to such a project. Originally intended for direct presentation to the New York House of Representatives, Smith soon pulled off a larger coup when he managed to get the pamphlet into the hands of Parker. The newspaper man published the piece in early November, even going so far as to write complimentary commentary on Smith's work, which he published in *The New-York Mercury* and *New-York Gazette.*[13] The pamphlets ultimately did their job. Having arrived just over one year earlier as a private tutor to two young children, Smith's peers in New York now viewed him as a foremost authority on the future of collegiate education.

Soon thereafter, Smith took his *Thoughts on Education* and expanded them into an eighty-page philosophy. Telling the story of a mythological college in a town called "Mirania," this second pamphlet laid out the basic tenets of Smith's vision for a Liberal-Arts-based education. The author set up *Mirania* within an elaborate framing device. The ideas he put forth in the pamphlet, he claimed to have obtained from a conversation with a fictional man named "*Evander*." With his tongue in his cheek, Smith credited Evander as the source of an educational model "worthy of Imitation."[14] "After some Conversation on learn'd Topics," he wrote,

> [Evander] was led to give me an Account of a Seminary establish'd about twelve Years ago in that Province, in which I thought I perceiv'd all that seems excellent in the ancient and modern *Institutions* reduc'd to the greatest Method and Simplicity. This I have presum'd to propose to your Consideration; which, as it may be further improv'd by you,

[13] 6 November 1752, *New-York Gazette, or Weekly Post-Boy*; 6 November 1752, *The New-York Mercury*.
[14] Smith, *Mirania*, 8.

> and other learn'd Men among us, seems extremely well adapted to the Circumstances of this Province of *New York*, as we are now entirely such as the *Miranians* were when they founded their College, with Regard to Riches, Trade and the Number of People.[15]

Evander's story was one of success and pragmatism. His colony—according to Smith, an English one, "in what Degrees of Lat. &c. it lies, is of no Importance"—flourished thanks to its "extensive Country, capable of producing all the Necessaries, and many of the Superfluities of Life."[16] In the "Course of growing Luxury," a number of Mirania's most sensible citizens decided to "contrive and execute a proper Scheme for…checking the Course of growing Luxury." These men, Evander claimed, understood that their economic and cultural accomplishments had been earned through "a Combination of lucky Circumstances, almost wholly independent on them" and that "they shou'd be wanting to themselves if they depended longer on blind Chance for any Thing which was now in their Power to command."[17] By providing all capable men of Mirania with a proper education, its government was convinced that it would not only ensure continued financial success, but also produce a colony full of well-tempered and rational citizens who would rarely require discipline or oversight.

The wise men of Mirania, however, had an additional problem to solve. Much like New York and Pennsylvania, the colony's endless bounty of natural resources had attracted men not just from Great Britain, but also from all around the world. According to Evander, the Miranian government understood the threat such diversity posed to their cultural and societal cohesiveness. "Among the Foreigners," he said,

> who were as numerous as the English, many Distinctions were forming upon their different Customs, Languages and Extractions, which, by creating separate Interests, might in the Issue prove fatal to the Government. They wisely judg'd, therefore, that Nothing cou'd so much contribute to make such a Mixture of People coalesce and unite

[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid., 10.
[17] Ibid.

> in one common Interest, as the common Education of all the Youth at the same public Schools under the Eye of the civil Authority. Thus, said they, indissoluble Connexions and Friendships will be form'd; Prejudices worn off; and the Youth will in Time either forget their very Extraction, or from a more liberal Education, and many Turn of Thought, learn to contemn those little ridiculous Distinctions that arise among the Vulgar, because their Fathers first spoke a different Language, or drew Air in a different Clime.[18]

This passage, coupled with his progressive views on how to mix a classical education with a modern Liberal Arts scheme, seems to have been aimed at a much wider audience than just New York. Apparently, not everyone in the colony bought into Smith's radical theories on education. In the postscript to *Mirania*, he mentions men who had written unkind words about his qualifications (or lack thereof) to take part in New York's heated educational debates. Implying that some of these men saw him as improperly ambitious for a newly-arrived tutor, he claims that his enemies had ascribed "everything I have done to a selfish Motive."[19] Seemingly out of fear that this criticism would cause his influence in New York to plateau, he turned his attention elsewhere in the months to follow.

Sometime before April 1753, Smith had informed Josiah Martin that he planned to return to England.[20] Whether he intended to stay there remains unclear.[21] At the age of twenty-five, Smith met the minimum age requirement to become an official Anglican priest.[22] With powerful

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[18] Ibid., 11.
[19] Ibid., 79.
[20] See Phila Delancey to William Smith, 11 April 1753. Also, Benjamin Franklin to William Smith, 19 April 1753. Founders Online, National Archives, last modified October 5, 2016, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Franklin/01-04-02-0169. [Original source: The Papers of Benjamin Franklin, vol. 4, July 1, 1750, through June 30, 1753, ed. Leonard W. Labaree. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961, pp. 467–470.
[21] A letter written to Franklin in February 1754 hints that Smith had at least considered staying with Archbishop Sherlock, who in turned had expressed to Smith that "I would have an opportunity of doing more good with you [Franklin and Peters] than in England; and that the Encouragement would be better than I could expect at first setting out in England even if I had the greatest friends." See William Smith to Benjamin Franklin and Richard Peters, February 1754. Another letter written from Franklin to Smith in April 1753, demonstrates that Smith had, at bare minimum, intentions for a lengthy stay in England (see note 90).
[22] See Roger L. Geiger and Nathan M. Sorber, "Tarnished Icon: William Smith and the College of Philadelphia," published in *Iconic Leaders in Higher Education: 28* (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, 2011), 6.

allies back in London, including Archbishop Sherlock, Smith expected to receive ordination by the end of the year. Before leaving, he saw it as his duty to ensure Martin's children continued to receive a proper education. It was under this pretense that he first reached out to Benjamin Franklin. During his time in New York, Smith had kept abreast of Franklin's fledgling Philadelphia Academy—a chartered institution, which operated something like a modern high school.[23] When considering what to do with the Martins, he ultimately decided to ask Franklin whether the boys might matriculate in Pennsylvania.[24] With this letter, Smith included a copy of *Mirania*. By this time, Smith had read Richard Peters' *Sermon on Education*, which Franklin had helped produce.[25] No doubt, he saw these men as kindred spirits. If New York was not ready for Smith's progressive views on education, then he would simply take his talents elsewhere. In this way, his critics in New York were not wrong. The future provost of the College of Philadelphia wore his ambition on his sleeve. He had every intent of accomplishing in British America what would have been utterly impossible for him back in England: he wanted to establish himself as a leading man at an accredited university.

A FORTUITOUS MEETING

Smith's efforts to impress Franklin and Peters proved immediately successful. Franklin received *Mirania* on April 11, 1753. As it turned out, Franklin had already read Smith's first

[23] Between 1750 and 1752, James Parker, Smith's close friend, had published multiple reports on Philadelphia's young Academy in his newspaper. See, 17 September 1750, *New York Gazette or Weekly Post-Boy.* Also, 25 November 1751. On November 25 of the following year, he published his first-hand account of the Academy, and used Franklin's efforts to make the case that New York, too, was ready to pursue a chartered university.
[24] This letter is now lost.
[25] At the time, this pamphlet was readily available in New York See the advertisement for said pamphlet in 9 March 1752, *New-York Gazette, or Weekly Post-Boy*.

pamphlet, *Some Thoughts on Education*.[26] On the merit of this work alone, he sent the young tutor an enticing invitation. "If it suits your Conveniency to visit Philadelphia, before your Return to Europe," he wrote, "I shall be extreamly glad to see and converse with you here, as well as to correspond with you after your Settlement in England. For an Acquaintance and Communication with Men of Learning, Virtue and Publick Spirit, is one of my greatest Enjoyments."[27] In May, after he and Peters had fully reviewed *Mirania*, Franklin again wrote to Smith. This time he heaped lavish praise on the young educator. "Mr. Peters has just now been with me," he wrote, "and we have compar'd Notes on your new Piece. We find nothing in the Scheme of Education, however excellent, but what is, in our Opinion, very practicable."[28] Impressed that Smith had created a plan ready for immediate application, Franklin went on to confess that he and Peters "reciev'd great Pleasure in the Perusal of it. For my Part, I know not when I have read a Piece that has more affected me, so noble and just are the Sentiments, so warm and animated the Language."[29].

Smith reached Philadelphia in late May. Franklin so impressed him with his Academy that he quickly wrote a 270-line poem dedicated to the institution—a largely celebratory piece, which Franklin published in early June.[30] Inspiration aside, Smith's week or so in Pennsylvania

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[26] See Franklin to Smith, 19 April 1753 and 3 May 1753. Note that many sources claim that it was *Mirania* that had first impressed Franklin. His letters to Smith, however, make it clear that he had read Smith's previous work first. In April, he states that "I received your Favour of the 11th Instant, with your new Piece on Education, which I shall carefully peruse; and give you my Sentiments of it as you desire, per next Post." Here, he is clearly referencing *Mirania*, which implies he had yet to read the newer pamphlet. Later in the same letter, Franklin writes, "Your former Piece I read with great Approbation and Pleasure, and could never conceive what it was that could provoke the Treatment you met with on that Occasion." This piece had to have been Smith's earlier pamphlet, *Some Thoughts on Education*. Franklin's May 3 letter confirms he had not read *Mirania* until the end of April. "Mr. Peters has just now been with me, and we have compar'd Notes on your new Piece."

[27] Franklin to Smith, 19 April 1753. Founders Online.

[28] Franklin to Smith, 3 May 1753. Founders Online.

[29] Ibid. While Franklin indeed heaped praise on Mirania, he did advise Smith to excise any insults to his enemies in future editions. "I ought to mention, he writes, "that I wish you had omitted, not only the Quotation from the Review, which you are now justly dissatisfy'd with, but all those Expressions of Resentment against your Adversaries, in Pages 65 and 79. In such Cases, the noblest Victory is obtained, by Neglect, and by *Shining on*."

[30] See William Smith, *A Poem on visiting the ACADEMY of* Philadelphia (Philadelphia: June 5 1753).

turned out to be incredibly important to both his and Franklin's plans. Letters sent after Smith reached London suggest that he and Franklin spent a great deal of time together. They immediately established mutual respect and seem to have discussed several sensitive issues in a very short period. Knowing that Smith was soon on his way to England, Franklin and Peters quickly enlisted him to approach Thomas Penn with their designs for a new institution, which they hoped would become the first accredited college in British North America.[31] Planning to use preexistent buildings within the Academy grounds, Franklin and Peters hoped that Smith might obtain from Penn a proper charter and potential funding for professors, including a salary for Smith himself. "Unless the Proprietors shall think fit to put the finishing Hand to our Institution," Franklin wrote in November 1753, "it must, I fear, wait some few Years longer before it can arrive at that State of Perfection which to me it seems now to be capable of; and all the Pleasure I promis'd myself in seeing you settled among us, vanishes into Smoke."

Smith cut a perfect candidate for this task. His passion for education would no doubt make an impression on Penn. Even better, he had already written in *Mirania* about the importance of anglicizing foreign-language speaking immigrants. Indeed, Smith's reports pertaining to his subsequent meetings with Penn—held between December 1753 and April 1754—demonstrate that the German issue was every bit as urgent to the men behind the College of Philadelphia as was the university itself. To this end, Smith soon found himself party to a complicated political mission for the benefit of a colony he had only briefly visited. Franklin held nothing back from Smith during these early June conversations. He told him about his detailed plans for schools intended to teach English to German-speaking Pennsylvanians; he

[31] Smith had apparently offered to help Franklin in this regard the very first time he wrote him. Though this letter remains lost, Franklin's response to it states politely that "when you are settled in England, we may occasionally make use of your Friendship and Judgment." See, Franklin to Smith, 19 April 1753. Founders Online.

described to him why these schools were growing more and more important as a war with France became seemingly unavoidable; and, perhaps most importantly, he seems to have informed him of the recent charitable missions of a German Reformed preacher named Michael Schlatter— a man who might have stumbled into a solution for Pennsylvania's German problem.[32] Indeed, as Smith left for London a few weeks later, Schlatter was very much on his mind.

[32] Richard Peters wrote to Thomas Penn during Smith's visit, stating, "[Smith] has been here ten days and has made himself perfectly well acquainted with our Plan, and the execution of it." Richard Peters to Thomas Penn, 5 June 1753. Penn Official Correspondence. Volume 7, 47. Also, see Smith to Franklin and Peters February, 1754. Founders Online. In this letter, Smith writes Franklin what reads very much like a mission update. Point-by-point, he describes his progress addressing several agendas that he had to have set with Franklin at some point before his trip to London—including an update about Schlatter. More on this in Chapter Four.

Chapter Three: Michael Schlatter

At first glance, it is perhaps hard to understand why important men like Benjamin Franklin and William Smith would care so much about a marginal figure like the Swiss-born Michael Schlatter. In extant literature on the late-colonial era, Schlatter is at best an historical footnote—a name one might stumble upon when searching for someone more important in the *Dictionary of American Biography*. Popping up occasionally in books about eighteenth-century immigration, he mostly lives on in short summaries, which read something like the following:

> Michael Schlatter: A Reformed preacher, born in 1716 in St. Gall, Switzerland, who, between 1746 and 1750 helped to organize the German Reformed Church in Pennsylvania. His efforts to secure funding for the employment of ministers drew the interest of English benefactors, who soon employed him as a supervisor in a scheme to establish English Schools for German-speaking Pennsylvanians. He went on to serve as a chaplain for the British Army during the Seven Years' War. Sympathetic to the American Revolution, he was arrested after failing to obey orders during an invasion of Germantown in 1777. He died in 1790.

To the men who lived and worked with Schlatter, this brief and dispassionate distillation of his life would have proven surprising. While the Swiss-preacher remains a shadowy figure today, his contemporaries held extreme opinions on the man, which ranged from hero-worship to outright abhorrence. Indeed, to know Schlatter was to love or to hate him. Between 1746 and 1754, few Pennsylvanians proved more divisive.

That modern historians largely ignore the man perfectly encapsulates the firm but fickle bond between history and legacy. Though essentially an abstract construct, legacy has a concrete effect on history and particularly the way historians report it. This is true even when describing its basic mechanics. To obtain the attention of one's contemporaries, then later that of historians,

an historical actor must first achieve "something." The larger and more impactful the "something," the better chance this actor has at obtaining long-term relevance. Fame, however, does not stand alone on this sliding scale of legacy. Scrutiny too moves in step with the scope and scale of attention. As one's accomplishments are celebrated by larger and larger degrees, one's sins sprout like weeds around a grave. This course-correction is one part of a larger effort to land somewhere nearer to the truth—but it is also handy to historians, who, like most humans, are not immune to the schadenfreude that comes from knocking someone down a peg or two.

Alas, there exists a soft-spot in the yin-and-yang of legacy—one that might even be preferable for middling figures like Michael Schlatter. If one's accomplishments are of note, but fall far short of universal impact, there is a chance one will be judged solely on the merit of one's accomplishments (if only due to indifference). This allows a person like Schlatter to remain known to historians without ever falling victim to increased scrutiny. Schlatter's historiography efficiently demonstrates this phenomenon. Published in 1856, his earliest biography reads very much like hagiography. Written by Henry Harbaugh, a Reformed German pastor, *The Life of Rev. Michael Schlatter* positions the man as *the* key player in the establishment of the German Reformed church in North America.[1] Harbaugh marginalizes the many complaints made against the preacher during his lifetime, in a book that presents him as the very best sort of revolutionary Christian—a man whose passion and ambition were misunderstood by many of his peers, but were now appreciated by a comparably progressive generation. Schlatter received similar treatment in early-twentieth-century histories written by religious scholars and members of the

[1] Henry Harbaugh, *The Life of Rev. Michael Schlatter; With A Full Account of His Travels and Labors Among the Germans In Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland and Virginia; Including His Services as Chaplain in the French and Indian War, and in the War of the Revolution. 1716-1790* (Philadelphia: Lindsay & Blakiston, 1857).

German Society of America.[2] These treatments, while slightly more measured than Harbaugh's, also downplayed the seriousness of Schlatter's challengers. Even more egregious, these historians continued to ignore Schlatter's moral shortcomings, which were very much evident in the records from which they drew their primary material.

For more than a century, these biased histories and biographies served as the principal secondary sources on Schlatter. It was not until 1981 that an historian offered a true reappraisal of his life. Working from original letters and council minutes she found in Swiss and Dutch archives, Marthi Pritzker-Ehrlich published a new biography of him that year, entitled *Michael Schlatter von St. Galle (1716-1790): Eine Biographische Untersuchung zur Schweizerischen Amerika-Auswanderung des 18. Jahrhunderts*. No historian has translated this book into English—again, seemingly due to a lack of interest.[3] If Harbaugh's first biography of Schlatter skews toward hagiography, Pritzker-Ehrlich's book reads like an outright polemic. Freely using loaded words such as "cowardly" and "mendacious" when describing Schlatter, she unfortunately lets some of the air out of what remains an irrefutable argument: Michael Schlatter was far from a perfect man, and his efforts to organize congregations of Reformed Protestants in Pennsylvania were at bare minimum influenced by personal interest. At worst, they were entirely opportunist. This added layer of scrutiny certainly complicates Schlatter's legacy, but its impact does not stop there. His missteps, long lost to history, played a pivotal role in the foundation and application of Smith's scheme to Anglicize Pennsylvania's Germans. When viewed as part and

[2] For a good example, see Daniel Miller, *Early History of the Reformed Church in Pennsylvania* (Reading: Daniel Miller Publisher, 1906).

[3] Marthi Pritzker-Ehrlich, *Michael Schlatter Von St. Gallen (1716-1790): Eine Biographische Untersuchung Zur Schweizerischen Amerika-Auswanderung Des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Zurich: ADAG Administration & Druck, 1981). This book is the only source for much of the newly-upturned information on Schlatter and is therefore cited heavily throughout this chapter. Pritzker-Ehrlich pieced together many of these revelations through two biographies—both drawn from the *Stemmatologia Sangellensis*, which are kept at the Archives of St. Gall. She also cites countless unpublished documents found in the State Archives in Zurich, Switzerland.

parcel of the pettiest vestiges of human frailty—jealousy, resentment, fear—Schlatter's image problems are interesting but ultimately trifling anecdotes. When taken seriously, however, the events that triggered these problems obfuscate what was already a largely contrived origin story for the Society for Germans. While Thomas Penn and William Smith saw Schlatter's involvement in the scheme as a concession that might assuage concerns regarding political manipulation, Schlatter himself had considerable skin in the game. The German Free Schools not only offered Schlatter a new source of income, but they also presented him with something far more enticing: a chance to salvage his greatly tarnished legacy.

YOUTHFUL TRANSGRESSIONS

Michael Schlatter was born on July 14, 1716 in St. Gall, Switzerland. Descendent from a long line of Christian reformers, he grew up within what Harbaugh has described as a "circle of intelligent and pious relatives."[4] Schlatter's grandfather, also named Michael, was a renowned educator and preacher.[5] Though his father, Paulus, worked in the secular world as a book-keeper, Schlatter's paternal uncle, again named Michael, worked as a rector at a local Gymnasium and was married to the daughter of a prominent St. Gall pastor.[6] Through his mother, Schlatter also shared relations with the Zollikofer and Schlaparizi families, both of which played a prominent role in the short history of the Swiss Reformed Church.[7]

As a young boy, Schlatter matriculated at his uncle's school, where he studied until 1734. His family then managed to place him at the local theological university under the direction of a

[4] Harbaugh, *Life of Schlatter*, 28-29. Both Harbaugh and Pritzker-Ehrlich report Schlatter's birth date based upon the "Stemmatologia Sangallensis" in St. Gall.
[5] Pritzker-Ehrlich, *Michael Schlatter*, 18.
[6] Ibid., 28.
[7] Harbaugh, *Life and Labors*, 28.

professor named Wegelin (either Bartholome or his son Kaspar).[8] According to two short biographies written by contemporary St. Gall officials, Schlatter seems to have soon grown restless with his studies, as he took off for Holland without graduating. According to Pritzker-Ehrlich, "for what purpose and for how long is not clear." It is only known that Schlatter did not inform his parents of the move before he took flight and that he eventually wound up in the care of relatives in the Netherlands. He reappears on the historical record in late 1736, when he matriculated at Leiden University.[9] By 1739, he had returned to St. Gall, where he resumed his studies with Wegelin, having seemingly completed his examinations to become a priest.[10] A surplus of preachers made life difficult for Schlatter in St. Gall. This meant that he spent most of his young professional life bouncing back and forth between Switzerland and Holland looking for employment. During this period, he worked predominately as a teacher.[11]

By 1744, Schlatter had secured a vicariate job, working beneath a priest named Johann Jakob Beyel in Thurgau, Wigoltigen—a position he seems to have held for roughly one year. Harbaugh's biography touches only briefly on this period of Schlatter's life, stating that he soon traded the post for a better job as a Sunday evening preacher back in St. Gall.[12] As Pritzker-Ehrlich demonstrates, however, Schlatter's sudden shift was not nearly so innocent. It was at this point, in Thurgau, between 1744 and 1745, that Schlatter committed an act that would dog him for the rest of his professional life. In early 1745, Schlatter struck up a relationship with the

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[8] Pritzker-Ehrlich, *Michael Schlatter*, 23.
[9] Ibid. Also, see Joseph Henry Dubbs, *The Reformed Church in Pennsylvania* (Lancaster: Pennsylvania-German Society, 1902), 144.
[10] Pritzker-Ehrlich, *Michael Schlatter*, 23.
[11] Ibid., 34. Pastor positions were scarce at the time in northern Europe. Wegelen spoke openly of this to his students, so Schlatter would have constantly kept this in mind. It was a common practice for young clergymen to obtain vicarates beneath elderly priests, then simply wait for them to die. Schlatter had this set up for himself in Thurgau—Weyel was at the time 70 plus years old—but he obviously had to give up this prime position upon impregnating Weyel's daughter.
[12] Harbaugh, *Life and Labors*, 32.

daughter of his employer: a married woman named Anna Burkli-Beyel. According to the Stemmatalogie, Anna was "a wife living absent from her husband, who nevertheless had eight surviving children of his."[13] During this period, she moved in with her father, where she presumably met Schlatter. Pritzker-Ehrlich reports that by Pentecost of the same year, Schlatter had learned that Anna had become pregnant. Soon thereafter, she informed Schlatter that he was the father. He later denied the claim.[14]

Schlatter's move to St. Gall, then, came at an extremely opportune time. Based upon a letter of recommendation Beyel wrote for the young priest before he left Wigoltigen, it does not appear Anna had told her father of their predicament by the time of his flight.[15] By the Fall of 1745, however, the affair had become known in Thurgau. Anna gave birth to a son in January 1746. Around the same time, the Bailiff (Landvogt) of Thurgau wrote to St. Gall with news of the controversy.[16] Because of the Schlatter family's prominence in the city, the Mayor's office seems to have helped keep the subsequent legal proceedings quiet until July 1747, when the death of the child obviated any lingering financial obligations. Schlatter was not present for any of these proceedings.[17] In January 1746, either shortly before or after his affair became known in St. Gall, he had once again uprooted and removed himself to Holland. It was during this second flight from his problems that Schlatter stumbled into the opportunity of a lifetime.[18]

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[13] Pritzker-Ehrlich, *Michael Schlatter*, 25. In German, this reads: "eine von ihrem Mann abwesende Ehefrau, die von demselben gleichwohl acht lebende Kinder hatte."
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Pritzker-Ehrlich, *Michael Schlatter*, 30-31.
[18] See, Harbaugh, *Life and Labors*, 32. It is worth noting that Harbaugh does not describe any of these events in detail, even though it is likely he had access to the Stemmalagie, as well as countless other legal documents Pritzker-Ehrlich used in her later biography. Harbaugh says only that "from these facts in his early life, it appears that young Schlatter was possessed of an active, somewhat restless and roving disposition. Though these characteristics betrayed him into errors of conduct, an earnest survey of this period of his life must lead us to discover alike in the evil and the good, the stirrings of the spirit of an important mission, which realized itself in his future labors and success in the New World."

THE HISTORY OF THE REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA

Timing, more than any other factor, was to determine the course of Schlatter's future. As the embattled young priest set up camp in Holland in early 1746, influential members of the North and South Synods were sharpening their focus on an issue that had previously hovered for decades on their periphery: the welfare of German-speaking Reformed Protestants in British North America.

The unique tie between Germans in North America and the Dutch Reformed Church originated 150 years earlier in Germany. Most historians agree that the roots of the Reformed Church stem from the 1571 Synod held in the city of Emden between a group of Dutch elders, who had fled the Spanish Netherlands five years earlier.[19] This meeting established the first Dutch "Synod"—a word that came to refer to a governing council with the ability to develop and enforce official Reformed doctrine. During this conference, the council settled upon a basic Presbyterian governmental structure, which, when coupled with the Belgic Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism, served as the backbone for their new religion. After the 1581 formation of the Dutch Republic, these congregations moved quickly out of the shadows. After further reformations in the early-seventeenth century—particularly those made at the 1618 Synod of Dort—the Reformed faith became a "privileged" religion favored by republican authorities. From this point forward, all Dutch Reformed protestants answered to a geographic "Classis" (sometimes also referred to as a "Coetus"). Members of each Classis then elected representatives to take part in an overarching Synod, which held authority over much larger territories.[20]

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[19] See Willhelm Nijenhuis, *Ecclesia Reformata: Studies on the Reformation Volume II* (Leiden, New York, and Cologne: E.J. Brill, 1994), 123-124.
[20] David Demarest, *History and Characteristics of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church* (New York: Board of Publication of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church, 1856), 127-130.

The Dutch Reformed religion first made its way to North America through New Amsterdam in the 1630s.[21] It proved particularly resilient, as it managed to survive even as Dutch influence waned on the continent. After the English conquered the colony in 1674, large populations of formerly Dutch citizens remained in New York. Most of these families gradually anglicized, but many clung to traditional Dutch religion—including Reformed Protestantism. Before the English takeover, Reformed congregations had turned to the Dutch West India Company for the education and ordination of ministers. This established a relationship between these bodies and the Classis of Amsterdam—a powerful Reformed administrative board, which often provided these services at the request of company officials. After the English conquered the colony, vestigial Reformed congregations began to report directly to the Classis itself.[22] This relationship remained in place throughout the eighteenth century, and it was through this channel that the Holland Synod first caught wind of the plight of their German counterparts.

Rooted in the same Heidelburg-influenced movement as the Dutch iteration, the German Reformed Church also grew to prominence in the Palatinate during the seventeenth century, though, thanks in large part to persistent religious wars, it remained consistently embattled. Intertwined with the complicated electorate system of the Holy Roman Empire, individual religions in the region, as they did in all of the empire's many counties and protectorates, fell in and out of favor as regimes shifted and territory changed hands.[23] Located along the Rhine, the Palatinate stood in the heart of more than a century's worth of carnage and destruction—most infamously during the Thirty Years' War, when Protestant Bohemians attempted to replace the

[21] Ibid., 61-62.
[22] See Demarest, *History and Characteristics,* 84-85.
[23] For a good summary of the Palatinate and its tumultuous history, see, Peter H. Wilson, *The Thirty Years' War: Europe's Tragedy* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2009), 314-347.

Catholic emperor, Ferdinand II, with Frederick V, the Protestant Elector of the Pfalz (Palatinate) in 1618.[24]

Reformed Protestantism first seized majority status in the Palatinate in 1563. After a century of turmoil, the same region became Catholic when Phillip William of Neuburg inherited the Electorate in 1685.[25] Another war followed when Elizabeth Charlotte, sister to the former Elector, laid claim to the region. Afterward, the Palatinate remained Catholic, though pressure from Prussia, Holland, England, and Sweden convinced Phillip William's successor to make room for displaced Protestants.[26] To help streamline this process, in 1705, the Empire passed a *Religionsdeklaration*, which ensured that five out of every seven parishes in the region were Reformed, with the other two remaining Catholic. Lutheran villages in the Palatinate were placed under the leadership of Reformed authorities. Unsurprisingly, this caused a great deal of infighting.[27] Even for suddenly empowered Reformed citizens, the complicated political framework became too much to bare. This, along with extreme land scarcity, caused many "Palatines" to entertain removal to British North America.[28]

Unlike Quakers and other protestant sects, no extant records suggest a mass movement of Reformed adherents into Pennsylvania between its foundation in 1681 and 1710.[29] Most came to the colony individually or in family units. While sectarian congregations welcomed new immigrants into established social structures, Reformed communities were comparably small, disparate, and unorganized.[30] This did not stop the most devoted Reformed settlers from

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[24] Ibid.
[25] See Roeber, *Palatines, Liberty, and Property*, 42-43.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.
[28] See Fogelman, *Hopeful Journeys*, 23-24.
[29] See Hinke, *Life and Letters of Boehm*, 27.
[30] Ibid., 27-28. "In this widely extended region," the Dutch Synod wrote in 1728, "where the first settlers bearing the name of Christians were Quakers, and whither men of all sorts of sentiments have come, about eighteen years ago there came from time to time here and there, widely separated from one another, some of the Reformed faith, from

attempting to establish some semblance of stability in their new home. Devotees from across Pennsylvania often gathered for "religious meetings…according to the doctrine and order of the Reformed Church, so far as it was known to them."[31] Still, lacking properly ordained ministers, many settlers openly questioned whether these meetings were valid. This was particularly worrisome for those who thought it necessary to have their children baptized by official church authorities.

After years of turmoil in their homeland, most Reformed Germans had grown accustom to the government dictating where and when they should worship. The government had also provided them with ministers whenever the need would arise. In this regard, Reformed Pennsylvanians were wholly lacking. According to a 1731 report out of Holland, many Germans soon grew dissatisfied with the lack of structure in Pennsylvania. "Finding no religious worship," they wrote, "many, attracted by the good morals and blameless conduct of the Quakers, joined themselves to them, preferring their worship to none."[32] Others did not convert, but chose instead to attend Presbyterian services, which were near enough to their own traditions to justify co-worship—this despite the fact many if not most of these immigrants did not speak English. Indeed, contemporary accounts suggest that many Presbyterians and Reformed saw little difference between their respective faiths. Some even suggested they were one and the same. In 1730, Rev. Jedidiah Andrews of the Buttonwood Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia wrote to a friend in Boston, saying, "Those [Palatines] who have come of late years are mostly Presbyt'n, or as they call themselves, Reformed…they did use to come to me for baptism for their children,

different parts of Germany and other places, and also some few from the neighboring Provinces of New York and New Jersey."
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid.

and many have joined with us in the other sacram't."[33] Indeed, another Reformed minister claimed that until 1725 most of his fellow congregants had also taken "communion with the Presbyterians in Philadelphia."[34]

Most extant accounts of Reformed behavior during this pre-Schlatter period come from the writings of John Philip Boehm. A former schoolmaster in Hesse, Boehm made the journey to America in 1720 due to a general disillusionment with the state of his local German church.[35] His educational background made him immediately attractive to Reformed settlers, many of whom thirsted for religious leadership. At first, Boehm's lack of proper ordination made him too uncomfortable to serve in a ministerial position. Eventually, he caved to peer pressure. Acknowledging that he was probably the closest thing many of these communities had to a minister, he began administering communion in 1725.[36] Over the course of the next three years, he served fledgling congregations at Falkner Swamp, White Marsh, and Skippack.[37]

On September 21, 1727, George Michael Weiss, a properly ordained Reformed minister, arrived in Philadelphia alongside 109 other Palatine immigrants.[38] Apparently sent to Pennsylvania by the Upper Consistory of the Palatinate to serve Reformed frontiersmen, Weiss took immediate exception to Boehm's ministry and soon attempted to have the lay minister held accountable by local Presbyterian authorities. Little did Weiss know that Boehm and his followers were already one step ahead of him. During the summer of 1728, Boehm reached out to Dutch ministers in New York, hoping authorities there might end the controversy by granting

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[33] Ibid., 28.
[34] Ibid.
[35] See Hinke, *Life and Letters of Boehm*, 17-21.
[36] See Joseph Henry Dubbs, *The Reformed Church in Pennsylvania* (Lancaster: Pennsylvania German Society 1902), 65.
[37] Hinke, *Life and Letters of Boehm*, 29.
[38] See William Hinke, *A History of the Goshenhoppen Reformed Charge Montgomery County Pennsylvania 1727-1819* (Lancaster: New Era Printing Company, 1920), 23-27.

him proper ordination. Believing the matter beyond their purview, the Dutch encouraged Boehm and his congregation to petition the Classis at Amsterdam. They did just that in July 1728.[39]

Along with a detailed description of how their minister had organized their three congregations, the authors of Boehm's petition delivered an impassioned plea. "Our three congregations…are spread out more than sixty English miles from each other," they wrote, "and are distant full one hundred and seventy miles from New York [where the closest official Synod resided]." Citing the numerous Quaker and sectarian communities residing in these areas, the authors claimed that "the most unassuming sects (as they seem to be) among which we live, seek to captivate the simple-minded under a Pharisaic cloak of hypocrisy, so they are also very persistent in all kinds of allurements." These sects particularly targeted the poor and the hungry, promising to support them upon conversion. "Unless we were willing, therefore, to abandon the innocent lambs, these poor people, as a prey to the constant attacks of ravening wolves in sheep's clothing, there seemed to be no other feasible way [than to rely upon Boehm for protection]." After writing extensively on the quality of Boehm's leadership, the authors of the petition asked the Classis to authenticate him as a true Reformed minister.[40] This letter catalyzed a correspondence, which in effect established Boehm as the point man for the Reformed Church in Pennsylvania. Representatives from the New York Classis officially ordained the man in 1729.[41]

Upon receiving subsequent letters from Boehm, authorities in Amsterdam took an immediate interest in the size and location of their North American flock. In 1734, Boehm sent the Synod an unscientific yet elucidating report. In it, he detailed eight congregations, which

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[39] Hinke, *Life and Letters of Boehm*, 33-34.
[40] All quotes in this paragraph take from: Consistories of the German Reformed Churches of Falkner Swamp, Skippack and Whitemarsh to the Classis of Amsterdam, July 1728. Published in Hinke, *Life and Letters of Boehm*, 162-163.
[41] Ibid.

totaled just 386 members (based solely upon a roll call taken the last time each of these organizations offered communion).[42] The majority of Reformed citizens, he implied, were scattered around Pennsylvania, did not have ready access to one of these eight congregations, and were therefore difficult to tally. Boehm's subsequent reports, written between 1734 and 1744, make it clear that he had a hard time pinning down exact numbers for Reformed Christians living northwest of Philadelphia. Concerning the congregations situated in the newly-named Lancaster County, he wrote in 1734 that he "had little information, for up to this time they acted according to their own pleasure." He went on to rebuke these populations, saying they "have never cared much for church order, but thus far have allowed themselves to be served by irregular men."[43]

In all, Boehm painted a picture of the Reformed Church in Pennsylvania that featured a strong nucleus in communities located near Philadelphia, but stood in utter chaos along the frontiers. Reformed Germans located on the fringes of Pennsylvania were either forming their own sects built upon "New Born" principles, or they were falling victim to itinerant preachers and sectarian missionaries.[44] Without proper ministers and school teachers, these communities were in danger of falling entirely away from the Reformed faith. Even congregations within the well-established city of Germantown were now holding open discussions with sectarians, Separatists, and "whatever other kinds might be mentioned."[45] No doubt, Boehm's final report, written in 1744, played a significant role in the Dutch Synods ramping up their efforts to whip their North American churches into order. By January 1746, the plight of the German Reformed

[42] *Minutes and Letters of the Coetus of the Reformed Congregations in Pennsylvania 1747-1792* (Philadelphia: Reformed Church Publication Board, 1903), 1. These congregations were located at: Falkner Swamp, Skippack, Whitemarsh, Philadelphia, Germantown, and Conestoga, Tulpehocken, and Gosenhoppen.
[43] *Reformed Minutes*, 8.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid., 28.

Church had finally moved to the forefront of the collective attention of the Synods of North and South Holland. After years of vague details, they now desired a concrete appraisal of the situation in Pennsylvania.

Schlatter first heard of the "Pennsylvania option" while in Heidelburg in January 1746. The previous month, the Holland Synods had disseminated a call for preachers, particularly those from the Palatinate, to accept five-year missions to America.[46] A few years earlier, the Reformed congregation in Lancaster had pledged to pay a preacher nearly five times the amount Schlatter had received as a Sunday-evening preacher in St. Gall.[47] When it became clear that the Synods were looking not only for preachers, but for a single person to help organize their operations in North America, Schlatter took immediate interest. The timing of this effort could not have been better for him. On the lam from St. Gall, he wanted to put as much distance as possible between himself and his troubles back home. Even beyond his personal failings, Schlatter was at the time "a promising student without good prospects."[48] He no doubt understood how a temporary stay in foreign lands might greatly bolster his resume.

A March 1746 entry in the minutes of the South Holland Synod shows that "on the publication of our Letters in the Palatinate, a preacher from St. Gall in Switzerland with the name of Michael Schlatter, has through the churches in Heidelberg, stated that he is willing to accept the vineyard work in Pennsylvania."[49] Citing his "sufficiently laudable" recommendations, the Synods accepted Schlatter's application and with "satisfaction" recommended that he be sent to Pennsylvania. In a moment of uncanny timing that would strain the disbelief even of modern-day

[46] Pritzker-Ehrlich, *Michael Schlatter*, 49.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Ibid., 44.
[49] Ibid., 51. The original German reads: "…auf die Publikation unseres Briefes in der Pfalz hin ein Prediger aus St. Gallen in der Schweiz mit dem Namen Michael Schlatter beim Kirchenrat von Heidelberg angegeben habe, willens, in den pennsylvanischen Weingarten arbeiten zugehen."

moviegoers, at the exact same time Schlatter angled for the religious office that would come to define his career, his parents were back home in St. Gall fighting a contemptuous legal battle involving his financial responsibility for his alleged son with Anna Beyel. Taking full advantage of belabored early-modern communication channels, Schlatter managed to keep his troubles secret from his new employers. During one of his final interviews for the Pennsylvania job, a representative from the Synods asked him why he would prefer to make a "long and tedious journey" when he could work much more comfortably back in St. Gall. Schlatter replied that he was still "young and unmarried." He told his interviewer about the surplus of preachers in Switzerland, then implied that he planned to work in Pennsylvania until one of St. Gall's many elderly preachers had died, at which time he could slide into the newly-opened position.[50] Winning over the support of officials from the Palatinate and Holland, the preacher secured final approval of the Holland Classis on May 22, 1746.[51] He left for North America on June 1.[52]

MISSION TO AMERICA

Schlatter arrived at Boston on August 1, 1746. He reached Philadelphia just over one month later, "where the elders of the German Reformed Church received [him] with much tender affection and joy."[53] Schlatter took up residence with an unnamed church official and used this house as a home base as he travelled across Pennsylvania over the next eight months. Afterward, he set up his own homestead in Philadelphia, though he rarely lived there for any length of time

[50] Ibid., 51.
[51] Harbaugh, *Life and Labors*, 118.
[52] William Hinke, "Diary of the Rev. Michael Schlatter: June 1-December 1, 1746," *Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society* 3 (1905): 105.
[53] Harbaugh, *Life and Labors*, 127. In this book, Harbaugh published the final version of Schlatter's journal, which was itself published in 1752. Hinke's version of Schlatter's diary, published in *Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society* is the original 1746 version, which the preacher sent to the Dutch Synods.

between 1746 and 1750. By the end of this period, Schlatter had travelled "more than 8,000 English miles."[54]

The Synod had charged Schlatter with several goals.[55] First, he was to finally take an accurate tally of the number of Reformed colonists living in Pennsylvania—one part of a larger effort to organize proper congregations. This was no easy task. Boehm's 1743 report to the Dutch Synods only provided membership numbers for five of the eight prominent Reformed churches. By the time Schlatter arrived, these congregations had gone rogue in terms of religious practices and orthodox doctrine. Boehm's last report stated that he was no longer sure if these people still considered themselves members of the Reformed Church. Based solely upon Boehm's initial tallies, Schlatter could only account for 759 Reformed settlers—a fraction of the population the Dutch Synod believed to live in region. A 1730 report, published by the Synods of North and South Holland, suggested that Reformed settlers accounted for nearly one half of the men and women who had immigrated to Pennsylvania from the Palatinate between 1700 and 1730.[56] This same report estimated their numbers to total 15,000. Writing to the Synod in 1746, Schlatter put the number closer to 12,000.[57] By the time he would publish a diary of his Pennsylvania adventure five years later, he would more than double this tally. The historian William Hinke has speculated that the latter calculation is more accurate, as it included not only members officially attached to a congregation but also those living in the hinterlands who had been baptized into the Church but did not regularly attend services.[58] Whatever his methods or motives, by 1751, Schlatter claimed that more than 30,000 members of the Reformed church

[54] Ibid., 215.
[55] Ibid., 98-99.
[56] Ibid., 35.
[57] Hinke, "Diary of Schlatter," 162-163.
[58] Ibid.

called Pennsylvania home—a number later corroborated by William Smith.[59] As Schlatter tabulated these numbers, he simultaneously drafted plans to create new congregations and to combine others in order to make churches readily available for all who wanted to attend. By the end of his initial four-year mission, Schlatter would establish thirteen regions with varying numbers of congregations in Pennsylvania, as well as one a piece in Virginia, Maryland, and New Jersey.[60]

Schlatter's second goal involved determining whether these newly formed congregations could afford to employ full-time ministers based upon local subscriptions. The results of such inquiries were heartening, in that Reformed congregants were more than willing to use their meager earnings to support their own respective ministries. Unfortunately, the funds these men could muster would not be nearly enough to get the job done. This was true even in Philadelphia, where Schlatter found that "the majority of the charges, as I have proposed to form them, are able and willing to contribute nearly 200 guilders and some still more, to the support of a regular minister."[61] Yet, "The case is such in Pennsylvania, that a minister, especially if he has a family, cannot get along with less than 430 guilders."[62]

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[59]Harbaugh, *Life and Labors*, 201.

[60] Ibid., 203-204. Schlatter listed these congregations based upon how many might be served ably by one or two ministers. The congregations were set up as follows after his trip:

1. Philadelphia and Germantown—overseen by Schlatter.
2. Gosenhoppen and Great Swamp—served by George Michael Weiss.
3. Falkner Swamp and Providence—served by John Philip Leidich.
4. Skippach, Witpen, Indian Creek, and Tohicken—still in want of a minister.
5. Lancaster and Schaffer—one vacant position, one taken by John Bartholomaeus Reiger.
6. Yorktown, Kreutz Creek, Conewago, and Bermudian—overseen by Jacob Lischy.
7. Tupelhocken—served by Dominicus Bartholomaeus (though he was apparently seriously ill).
8. Weiseichenland, Modecreek, Cocalico, and Zeltenrich—all in need of ministers.
9. Donegal, Swatara, and Quitopehilla—also without a minister.
10. Northampton and Southampton—Jonathan Du Bois.
11. Great Lehigh, Little Lehigh, Forks of Delaware, Saccony, and Springfield—all without a minister.
12. Heidelberg, Egypt, and Jordan—also without a minister.
13. Magunchy, Allemängel, Schmaltzgass, and Manatawny—also without a minister.

[61] Ibid., 207.

[62] Ibid., 208.

Then there was the matter of who, exactly, was to receive these funds. Schlatter himself took control of the congregations in and around Philadelphia, but the rest of the community remained desperately wanting for qualified priests.[63] Even Boehm, who had struggled so mightily to obtain his ministry, had taken ill by 1748 and was no longer able to fulfill his duties. Before he had left for Pennsylvania, Schlatter had obtained permission to ordain ministers as he saw fit. This was an amazing allowance given how seriously Reformed protestants took the ordination process. He used this power to ordain a handful of ministers who had already been working, similarly to Boehm, without proper authorization along the frontiers. Still, there were not nearly enough qualified candidates to fill the vacancies, which, based upon his own inferences, amounted to between fifteen and twenty openings.

Between 1747 and 1750, Schlatter finished the initial phase of his mission by helping to establish a North American Synod.[64] By the end of these trips, his assessment of the situation in Pennsylvania remained the same as it had at the end of his very first year in North America. "I must say," he reported,

> that I have met in various places, many truly upright and pious people, who awakened my inward sympathy, when, with tears in their eyes, I heard them lament the pitiable condition of their brethren in the faith, and that of their innocent children—the former for years together deprived of spiritual nourishment and care; the latter wandering without instruction in the first principles of religion—and who, destitute of faithful pastors and teachers, have been drawn toward all kinds of erroneous opinions and sects. Such with a flood of tears, and by all that is holy, entreated and implored that I would, by the help of God, assist them as far as I possibly could, and thus secure help and comfort to poor forsaken souls.[65]

By the time he left for Holland to make his final report in 1751, Schlatter had set into stone three key strategies that would help him achieve this lofty goal. First, he wanted to procure

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[63] The official minutes of this congregation still exist, though in extremely rough shape. See *Old First Reformed Church. Records, 1741-1976. Series 1. Administrative*. Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Collection 3010.
[64] Schlatter's Diary in Harbaugh, *Life and Labors*, 155-156.
[65] Ibid.,142-143.

donations from established Synods across the Christian world, which would be "transferred to Philadelphia, and made over into the hands of Coetus, and by them divided and applied to such points as have most pressing need."[66] This money was to be used to hire and support priests, some of whom might double as school teachers. Second, he needed to secure assistance from "the Most Honorable Civil Authorities of this Province, and to the attention of His Majesty, the Stadtholder of the United Provinces"—in other words, British and Dutch authorities.[67] Finally, he needed to find laborers to help build congregations: good men, he later wrote, "in the prime of their lives; inured to toil; that both love to labor and have strength for it."[68]

During his travels across Pennsylvania, Schlatter made allies with many local authorities. This included Governor James Hamilton, who presented him with a signed passport in January of 1751, which would help him move freely through England and the Netherlands. Schlatter soon set sail for Europe, where he presented his findings to the collected Synods in the Netherlands on June 25.[69] Church authorities enthusiastically accepted his recommendations. By the end of the conference, the body had given Schlatter permission to ask for donations in churches throughout the Netherlands; committed 2,000 annual Florins to help train and support "five or six learned, devoted, and sound ministers"; and commissioned him to locate five or six more ministers from Switzerland and Germany.[70] In addition, the Synod gave Schlatter permission to ask for collections from the Dutch government, the collected sums of which "should be put to interest in our Province, under the supervision of the Reverend Deputies, who shall annually send the interest to Pennsylvania."[71]

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[66] Ibid., 209.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Ibid., 211.
[69] PA, II: 67-68.
[70] Schlatter's Diary in Harbaugh, *Life and Labors*, 227-228.
[71] Ibid., 228.

Most importantly to our story, the Dutch Synods also agreed that "the Rev. Schlatter ought to call upon the Hon. Thomas Penn, worthy Proprietor of Pennsylvania, and in the name of both Synods, solicit his aid and protection."[72] Schlatter visited Penn in London on an unknown date soon thereafter.[73] One year later, he wrote Penn to remind him of this conversation. In this letter, Schlatter made clear, for the first time, that the Dutch Synods were willing to entrust the proprietor with any money they raised to support the training and implementation of Reformed ministers in Pennsylvania. "This the Dutch Synod Deputies," he wrote, "beg leave humbly to expect from your known generosity and goodness and also that you will graciously be pleased to take into your hands the money that shall be collected for the fund, that they might have ample security for its being surely placed."[74] A letter to Penn from H.B. Hoedmaker, president of the Synod of South Holland, further clarifies that the Church desired Penn to hire a "director of administration" for the funds, who would then periodically release them to the Pennsylvania Coetus.[75]

To convince Penn to participate in these efforts, Schlatter reiterated his earlier contention that the families living along the Pennsylvania frontier were devolving into a "savage" state. He then added to this assertion a remarkable statement about the threat these men posed should he choose to ignore them (sic throughout):

> The Annals of German history prove this truth, by a number of extraordinary revolutions their uncultivated tempers has of often made Sovereigns tremble on their thrones, because it was often attended with Rebellion and Revolt. Now by the introduction of an orderly discipline and ministry, which is the end of the fund in question the instructions of religion being regularly administered [by] Pastors not entirely dependent upon them—and the motives to virtue being properly inculcated, the fatal effects of ignorance and vice

[72] Ibid., 229.
[73] Michael Schlatter to Thomas Penn, 12 June 1751. *Penn Family Papers. Official Correspondence. Volume V*, 17. "You will perceive by this Honoured Sir, that this Letter is relative to what I had the honour of communicating to you in London, with respect to the State of the German Reformed Congregations in Pennsylvania." Also see H.B. Hoedmaker to Thomas Penn, 4 May 1751. *Penn Family Papers. Official Correspondence. Volume V*, 139.
[74] Schlatter to Penn, 12 June 1751. HSP.
[75] Hoedmaker to Penn, 4 May 1751. HSP.

> may thro' the blessing of God be happily prevented: and many made good subjects, who at present can scarcely be called men.[76]

Schlatter was not finished. He proceeded to make one final point, the subtext of which no doubt gave Penn pause during the build up to the Seven Years' War. Returning to the subject of funds, Schlatter wrote that "[they] might in progress of time enable us to send missionaries among the poor Indians, a practice in which the French undermine us by their intrigues and zeal to make Proselytes among the six Nations."[77] Here, Schlatter by no means suggested that German settlers were a threat to join the French, nor that they were indifferent to the color of the flag that flew atop the buildings of Philadelphia. Yet, this reference *did* acknowledge that the Germans lived far enough away from civilization as to guarantee exposure to the French and their Native American allies. While no reply exists from Penn, this letter no doubt made a mark on the proprietor. And he was not the only one that year to take the preacher's words to heart. Indeed, by early 1752, Schlatter's cause had transformed from an obscure charitable scheme into a veritable cause célèbre in London.

SCHLATTER'S "TRUE HISTORY"

Between 1746 and 1750, Schlatter kept a detailed journal of his activities in Pennsylvania. Shortly after securing the support of the Dutch Synods in 1751, he published a Dutch-language edition entitled *A True History of the Real Condition of the Destitute Congregations in Pennsylvania*. Expanding upon an earlier report he had made to the Synods at the end of his first year in British North America, this revised addition included information on

[76] Schlatter to Penn, 12 June 1751. HSP.
[77] Ibid.

the period between 1747 and 1750.[78] In early 1752, Schlatter again expanded this material and had it translated into German. Meant for churches and charitable organizations in Switzerland, this edition of his "True History" included an impassioned introductory plea for donations, and a second introduction replete with a letter of approval from the Classis of Amsterdam.[79] Schlatter himself seemed pleased with the book. Writing to Penn for a second time in 1751, he reported that this "little piece" had been universally praised by "Reform'd Protestants."[80] Indeed, by the end of 1752, Schlatter's journal had secured nearly 45,000 florins, thanks at least in part to the newfound interest of the Prince of Orange, William IV.[81]

With these funds already secured, the Holland Synods soon turned their collective eye toward England. For this effort, they impressed the services of David Thomson, a Scottish preacher of an English congregation in Holland, who also held membership within the Classis of Amsterdam. Throughout 1752, Thomson travelled across Scotland and England, carrying letters of recommendation from the Dutch Synods.[82] There he found incredibly receptive audiences. The Church of Scotland, upon receiving Thomson's initial appeal, hastily set up communication with the Holland Synods to help "promote and propagate the pure Reformed religion" and soon mandated that all parishes in Scotland take up a door collection on the last Sunday of November.[83] This collection alone netted nearly 1,200 pounds sterling for Schlatter's cause.[84]

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[78] Schlatter submitted an unedited draft of the first year of his journal to Amsterdam sometime in the years before his trip to Holland in 1751. For this original draft see, W.M. J. Hinke, "Diary of Schlatter," 105-121, and W.M.J. Hinke "Diary of the Rev. Michael Schlatter: June 1—December 15, 1746 (continued)," *Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society* 4 (1905), 158-176. As for the first published edition,

[79] For a full translation of this work, see Harbaugh, *Life of Schlatter,* 87-234.

[80] Michael Schlatter to Thomas Penn, 10 August 1751. *Penn Family Papers. Official Correspondence. Volume V.* Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

[81] Weber, *The Charity School Movement in Colonial Pennsylvania,* 24.

[82] James Good, *History of the Reformed Church in the United States 1725-1792* (Reading: Daniel Miller 1899), 437. Also see Pritzker-Ehrlich, *Michael Schlatter*, 185-186.

[83] Weber, *Charity School Movement,* 25. Other reports have the collection taking place on December 2, 1752. Also see, Good, *History of the Reformed* Church, 438.

[84] Good, *History of the Reformed* Church, 438.

Thomson's 1752 trip to London would prove even more fortuitous. After earning an audience with the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomson soon found himself making his case to the council of King George II. At the time, the king was away from London. While the council informed Thomson that their hands were tied until their sovereign returned, they encouraged the Scottish preacher to continue his advertising efforts. In the ensuing months, Thompson managed to secure the support of fourteen prominent Englishmen. Soon thereafter, these men formed a committee known as "The Society for the Propagation of the Knowledge of God among the Germans."[85] Because Thomson felt he could no longer remain in absentia from his home congregation in Holland, he hoped these men would maintain his efforts after his return home. By the time he did so in May 1753, his newly formed society had succeeded beyond his wildest imagination. In addition to the 500 pounds pledged by committee members, the "Society for Germans" had collected a promise of 1,000 pounds from King George II himself, as well as an additional 100 pounds from the Princes Dowager of Wales.[86] By October, the King had pledged additional funds totaling £5,000.[87]

Even more important than the money was the fact that Thomson had secured a stamp of approval for Schlatter's mission from many of the most important men in Great Britain. He did so, however, at a considerable cost. It was William Smith who would ultimately write this agenda, shortly after his arrival in London in December 1753. By the time Smith was done reworking Schlatter's initial plans for the donation money, the project was far more concerned with Anglicization than it was with training preachers. While this might have upset Schlatter

[85] The original society members were as follows: Lord Willoughby of Parham, Sir Luke Schaub, Sir Josiah Van Neck, Thomas Chittey, esq., Thomas Fluddyer, alderman of London, Benjamin Avery, LL. D., James Vernon esq., John Bance, esq., Robert Ferguson, esq., Nathaniel Price, Rev. Dr. Birch, Rev. Casper Wetstein, Rev. David Thomson and Rev. Samuel Chandler. See Smith, *Rise and Progress*, title page.
[86] See William Smith, *Rise and Progress*, 7. Also, see Harbaugh, *Life and Labors*, 269.
[87] Good, *History of the Reformed Church*, 444.

under different circumstances, reality soon dictated otherwise. Indeed, as Thomson travelled through England scoring victory after victory for their collective cause, Schlatter was back in Pennsylvania putting out fires. Even as the rich and powerful in Great Britain began to demonstrate great admiration for Schlatter and his work, he once again found himself amid a frustrating and largely self-inflicted controversy, this time within his own congregation in Philadelphia.

PETTY DISPUTES

When Schlatter returned to North America in July 1752, he brought with him six newly-committed Reformed ministers. Five of these men—Philip Otterbein, John Waldschmidt, Heinrich Stoy, Theodor Frankenfeld, and Johann Wiesler—came from Nassau-Dillenberg. The sixth minster, Johann Kaspar Rubel, originated from Grafschaft Berg, a duchy in the Rhineland near modern-day Düsseldorf.[88] That Rubel immediately stood apart from his peers is fitting. While most of the new crew would stay loyal to Schlatter, Rubel was destined to become one of his greatest enemies.

Discord between Schlatter and Rubel began before they had even landed in New York. During the trip across the Atlantic, Schlatter apparently exerted his authority by hosting extravagant meals, while others on board were forced to make do with a limited ration of ham. At some point, Rubel questioned this practice.[89] In response, Schlatter called the man "eine Bratwurst," before accusing him of being more interested in pork than in the Bible. Schlatter proceeded to wake Rubel up on a subsequent morning and force him to get down on his knees to

[88] Harbaugh, *Life and Labors*, 248.
[89] Johann Rubel to Jacob Lischy, November 1753. Published in Pritzker-Ehrlich, *Michael Schlatter*, 143.

pray—an action he replicated upon safe arrival in New York, when he again compelled Rubel to "bow his stiff knees and thank God dutifully."[90] These confrontations did not sit well with Rubel. Writing in the official minutes of a Coetus meeting held in August 1752, Schlatter informed the Dutch Synods that shortly after their ship reached Philadelphia in July, Rubel took residence at an inn, where he began regular conversations with "those who do not wish to subject themselves to the orders of the Very Reverend and Christian Synods."[91]

Chief among these dissenters was a preacher named Conrad Steiner. Steiner, who had arrived in Pennsylvania in September 1749, had for years stood as Schlatter's chief adversary in the colony. Originally earmarked for service in Lancaster, Steiner had instead set root in Philadelphia, where he worked openly to ruin Schlatter's reputation in the region, at least in part in an effort to take his place as the city's primary preacher.[92] He did so by exploiting pre-existent rifts between Schlatter and his flock. Indeed, by 1749—two years before the preacher had travelled to Holland to present his findings—Schlatter and his congregation in Philadelphia had already negotiated their way through numerous conflicts. The most heated of these conflicts involved Schlatter's insistence that the congregation had no constitutional right to choose its own preacher. He claimed that this power resided entirely within the hands of the Pennsylvania Coetus—a body he had helped found and now largely controlled.[93]

Steiner and his followers believed that Schlatter had designed the Pennsylvania Coetus to ensure his singular authority, seemingly for life. In addition to this perceived power grab, the congregation also resented the preacher for accruing a large amount of debt during the construction of their first church building, as well as for his handling of charitable funds, which

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[90] Ibid.
[91] *Minutes of the Reformed Church*, 63.
[92] See *Minutes of the Reformed Church*, 57. Also Harbaugh, *Life and Labors*, 60.
[93] Good, *History of Reformed Church*, 377-378.

had been collected and presumably misused by a man name Jacob Reiff.[94] During the fall Coetus meeting of 1749, Schlatter's detractors sought out Steiner. Officially or otherwise, they placed the newly-arrived preacher at the head of their revolt. Despite such subversion, after a great deal of bitterness and a belabored arbitration process, Schlatter managed to survive Steiner's initial moves against him. When he had left for his 1751 trip to Holland, he had done so with his position at the head of the Reformed community weakened but still intact.[95]

Schlatter's enemies, however, continued to harbor great resentment toward him, and, indeed took full advantage of his lengthy absence in 1751. After giving up his attempt to take over in Philadelphia, Steiner soon moved to Germantown. During this time, he continued to preach against Schlatter's dominance in the region. He also recruited new allies, including George Michael Weiss—a man who had questioned Schlatter's motives since his arrival in 1746 and who would soon play a major role in the controversy to follow.[96] In the meantime, the church in Philadelphia remained greatly divided into pro-Steiner and pro-Schlatter factions. This, in effect, created two congregations in Philadelphia, which congregants soon referred to as the "new" and "old." Rubel, after routine meetings with Schlatter's enemies in the month after his troubled passaged across the Atlantic, took over the former in the summer of 1752.

He and his allies made their first move against Schlatter in the lead up to the Coetus meeting of October the same year. Weeks before the conference, Rubel had written a letter to Jacob Lischy—an ally of Schlatter's—expressing his opinion that congregational elders should be allowed to join the Coetus. To this point, the body had consisted solely of ministers. Rubel

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[94] Ibid., 379. See minutes 57. Reiff was accused of fraud, and Schlatter deemed him innocently. For more on the church building controversy, see Pritzkler-Ehrlich, *Michael Schlatter*, 106-109.
[95] For a detailed account of these events, see Good, *History of Reformed Church*, 385-390. For the ruling in Schlatter's favor see *Minutes of the Reformed Church*, 55-59.
[96] *Minutes of the Reformed Church*, 63.

understood that by including elders in the voting process, he could greatly undermine Schlatter and maybe even oust him from office. Schlatter and other authorities denied this request, and Rubel soon used this measure to turn the tables on the Swiss minister. On October 21, the Coetus elected Schlatter as its president.[97] After hearing this, Rubel stormed into the meeting and claimed that Schlatter was ineligible. He had long ago stepped down from his position at the head of the "old" Philadelphia congregation, knowing full well that reconciliation was not possible if he held onto the position. By Schlatter's own decree, only preachers could sit on the Coetus. Ultimately, the body voted to maintain Schlatter and to continue to deny the vote to church elders. Rubel, Weiss, and other prominent Reformed ministers left the Coetus in protest.[98] Despite such displays, the governing body allowed Rubel and Steiner to maintain control of their respective congregations in Philadelphia and Germantown.

During the subsequent Coetus meeting in April 1753, Schlatter began to divvy up the initial funds collected by the Dutch Synods. At this point, Thomson was still fundraising in Great Britain, so this money constituted the entire pool of donations. Upon orders from the Synod, Schlatter received a hefty payment of £360 and 9 shillings. The rest was to be divided evenly between Pennsylvania's other Reformed preachers, most of whom received between £30 and £40.[99] As if Schlatter's exorbitant payment were not enough to raise the ire of Rubel, Weiss, and Steiner, he also announced plans to retake his position at the head of Philadelphia's "old" congregation. All of this happened in their absence, as Schlatter's enemies now refused to attend Coetus meetings. These divides were only inflamed by the news that absent Coetus ministers—

[97] Ibid.
[98] Ibid., 65-66.
[99] Ibid., 86-88.

including Rubel, Weiss, and Steiner—were not to receive funding from the Synods until they fell back in line.[100]

This last fact, at least temporarily, brought Weiss back into the fold. He, accompanied by another dissenting preacher named Leydich, approached Schlatter in May 1753 stating that they had only left the Coetus to "maintain love" within their home congregations. Both ministers claimed that their churches "were not in favor of subordination to Holland and to our Coetal (sic) institutions and directions."[101] According to Schlatter, he soon gave Weiss and Leydich £10 each to mend old wounds. In July, however, a letter arrived from the Dutch Synods, which quickly undid this short-lived reconciliation. The Classis of Amsterdam informed Schlatter that he was not to pay subversive preachers a single pound.[102] Schlatter claimed that upon learning this Weiss immediately informed him that he and other dissenters "would have nothing to do with me if they could expect no more money from me."[103]

Rubel, Weiss, and Leydich soon became "so overbearing and obstinate" that they "assumed to have orders from your Reverences to hold a meeting of Coetus in spite of [Schlatter]."[104] Called hastily into session on October 9, the day before the official Coetus had planned to meet, Weiss and his allies opened proceedings before Schlatter and his chief allies could feasibly arrive. At this Coetus, officials elected Weiss as president. Among other measures, it voted to combine the two Philadelphia congregations and hold a proper vote for the minister position—an act they knew would end with Schlatter's dismissal. Most notably, the rival Coetus, which in the past had openly discussed its reluctance to work with the Dutch

[100] Ibid., 89.
[101] Ibid., 92.
[102] Ibid., 92.
[103] Ibid.
[104] Ibid., 93.

Synods, wrote to Holland that such rumors had caused the body "much embarrassment" and that it in fact viewed the Dutch Synods with "the most dutiful esteem."[105]

Schlatter managed to crash this meeting, though Weiss and his board refused to let him take part in official proceedings. In response, Schlatter called the "official" Coetus into session the following day in Lancaster, stating that Weiss' meeting had been unlawful.[106] Schlatter claimed that because Leydich and Weiss had called their meeting into session on a Monday, "most of the ministers if they had wished to be present at the appointed time would have had to spend Sunday in travelling, and to neglect their congregations." Some of these ministers would have had to have travelled "almost 150 miles or more." Worse, "no certificate was required from any minister or elder, but all were granted a seat [on the Coetus] and a vote without distinction." Rather than treating the meeting as a religious ceremony, Schlatter argued, "it was opened with reproaches, continued with quarrels and offenses, and finished with provocation and slander, so that after attending it for two or three hours, with D. Stoy and others, I returned home again."[107]

Things soon escalated. Rubel and "30 or more farmers" disrupted Schlatter's "official" Coetus meeting and "prevented our deputies from having any private conversation with one or other of the ministers, and abused them and also the rest of us."[108] Schlatter proceeded to ban these men from the next session. Nonetheless, damage had already been done. Records taken during this meeting show that Rubel, Weiss, and others had been in communication with Holland and the Dutch Synods in previous months. Schlatter used the meeting's official minutes to express dismay that these bodies had taken seriously at least a few of the accusations made against him. "It appears to us very distressing," he wrote on behalf of the Pennsylvania Coetus,

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[105] Ibid., 110.
[106] Ibid., 94.
[107] Ibid., 88-89.
[108] Ibid., 97.

"that it pleases your Reverences to treat such ministers as have caused and still continue to [cause] public schism, with equal consideration as ourselves, who endeavor to conduct ourselves strictly according to church order."[109] In subsequent points, the Coetus continued to express disbelief that "your Reverences can consent to accept such accusations as well founded, and without delay, or any defense, place the accused in the wrong, or indeed condemn him utterly."[110]

Schlatter may have reacted differently had he fully understood why, exactly, the Dutch Synods were willing to accept the accusations leveled against him. Based upon records in The Hague, it appears that by this point the Dutch Synods had finally learned of his youthful affair in Wigoltigen (more on this in the next chapter). Even without this knowledge, however, Schlatter had already seen the writing on the wall. With his reputation, fairly or otherwise, greatly tarnished among German-speaking Pennsylvanians, he began to seek allies elsewhere—a shrewd move that would pay immediate, if short-lived dividends.

At the end of the October Coetus meeting, Schlatter declared his intent to travel to Holland to properly defend himself against the accusations of Rubel and Weiss. A letter written by the Lutheran minister Henry Melchior Muhlenberg demonstrates that Schlatter had by this point begun meeting with Richard Peters, Pennsylvania's provincial secretary. By the time Schlatter left for Europe in 1753, Peters had presented the preacher with "an officially certified letter of amiably minded church members in Philadelphia" and a letter of recommendation "to David Thompson in Amsterdam." The "amenable preachers" Muhlenberg mentioned in this letter did not refer to Schlatter's allies, but rather German-speaking ministers who were willing to take part in the English-schools, which Smith had recently embarked to promote in London.

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[109] Ibid., 98.
[110] Ibid.

"As motives for this trip," Muhlenberg wrote in March 1754, Schlatter cited "the planned construction of schools whose funding was already almost secured, and the disagreements and conflicts among the Reformed in America." [111]

Schlatter, it seems, had learned through conversations with English officials, that Thomson had procured large donations based upon the many iterations of his diary. As his North American enemies went about sullying his name, his allies overseas were turning him into a veritable celebrity. More important to our investigation, however, is that Muhlenberg's letter also proves that Schlatter was privy to the adaptations then being made to his scheme by the Society for Germans, schemes that had redirected the emphasis for the movement away from educating and organizing German-speaking ministers and toward the establishment of free English-schools for German youth. It was under these conditions and with this knowledge that Schlatter again travelled to Europe at the end of 1753.

[111] *Die Korrespondenz Heinrich Melchior Muhlenbergs: as der Anfangzeit des deutschen Luthertums in Nordamerika*. Volume II 1753-1762 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1986), 125, footnote 32:
"In Dezember 1753 war Schlatter, ausgestattet mit einem amtlich begläubigten Brief der ihm freundlich gesonnenen Gemeindeglieder in Philadelphia und einem Empfehlungsschreiben des Provinzesekretars Richard Peters an David Thompson in Amsterdam, zu seiner zweiten Euroreise aufgebrochen. Als Beweggründe fur diese Reise gab Schlatter dem holländischen Coetus die geplante Errichtung von Schulen, deren Finanzierung bereits nahezu gesichert war, und die Unstimmigkeiten und Auseinandersetzungen unter den Reformierten in Amerika an."

Chapter Four: London, October 1753-May 1754

On November 7, 1754, George Davis, captain of the Philadelphia-based Britannia, pulled up anchor, set his sails, and embarked for Pennsylvania to complete another in a long line of carrier trips between mainland England and its North American colonies. The captain had a blessed first day at sea. Around noon the next, however, he steered his vessel directly into an infamous sandbar near the city of Margate—a particularly nasty obstruction, which British merchants referred to as the "Wool Pack."[1] The ship became stuck, and Davis seemed at a loss for what to do next. A few months later, the Pennsylvania Gazette reported that none of the ship's passengers left the vessel "till midnight, when Captain McPherson, a passenger and four more, jump'd into one of the [life boats], and row'd to a larger Boat that lay at Anchor at a small Distance, and sent her back to bring off some of the rest."[2] The rescuers were moments too late. By the time they reached the Britannia, "the Ship was thrown on her Broadside, and every Soul wash'd off the Decks, so that the eight which were sav'd, were hanging by the Masts and Tackle, some of them almost dead." Thirteen people, including the captain and his son, were drowned.

For those who had entrusted Davis with their money and goods, the tragedy of the Britannia did not end with the mere loss of life. "The Ship and Cargo are entirely lost," the London Evening Post reported the following week, "except two Anchors, which were saved by the Assistance of Boats as were some of the Passengers."[3] That the Post treated the survivors of the Britannia tragedy as an afterthought is telling. The loss of a merchant vessel often spelled

[1] *Pennsylvania Gazette*, January 22, 1754.
[2] Ibid.
[3] *London Evening Post*, Issue 4,057, November 10 – November 13 1753.

financial doom for business men on both sides of the Atlantic. "I am so disheartend at the Loss of Capt. Davis, that I cannot tell how to sett Penn to paper," wrote Peter Collinson, a London-based scientist and friend to Benjamin Franklin, in January 1754. "I had so amply Employed my Budget in 2 or 3 pacquetts…and all [are] gone."[4] Informing Franklin of the goods he had lost, Collinson listed a large pack of books, a series of magazines, and a box of Parisian Bird thermometers. And then there were the letters. "I had writ you Largely of Mr. Smiths Affair," he added. A missive he now presumed rested on the ocean floor just off the coast of Margate.

Indeed, this was not the only lost report pertaining to William Smith's mission to London in 1753. Writing to Smith on April 18 the following year, Franklin expressed consternation that he had yet to receive more than a cursory update from the young educator on his progress with Penn. "I have had but one Line from you since your Arrival in England," he wrote, "which was a short one, via Boston."[5] Apparently, Smith had written Franklin a message in mid-October, which had spelled out his plans to send a detailed account of his progress along with Davis' ship. Even after news of the wreck reached Philadelphia in late January 1754, Franklin remained nonplussed. Smith was already in London at the time of the Britannia tragedy. He would have heard about the wreck shortly after it happened. This meant that he did not think to write Franklin at any point between November 1753 and February 1754. As Franklin pointed out in April, at least two merchant ships had arrived in Philadelphia from London during this period, "And I hear nothing from you."[6] While Franklin admitted that "this chagrins me not a little," he

[4] Peter Collinson to Benjamin Franklin,14 January 1754. Founders Online, National Archives, last modified October 5, 2016, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Franklin/01-05-02-0054. [Original source: *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, vol. 5, July 1, 1753, through March 31, 1755, ed. Leonard W. Labaree. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962, p. 188.]
[5] Franklin to Smith, April 18, 1754. Founders Online.
[6] Franklin to Smith, April 18, 1754.

went on to write that he was comforted by the possibility that Smith only omitted writing him because he was currently on his way home, where he would soon fill him in "*vivâ voce*."[7]

In fact, Smith *had* written Franklin at some point in February 1754. This letter remains in Franklin's papers, meaning he likely obtained it shortly before Smith's long-anticipated arrival in Pennsylvania that June. In it, Smith predictably pointed to the loss of Davis' ship for his delayed response. Lamenting that he had spent "above a week" writing the sunken letters, he noted that three or four other letters of "great importance" from Penn and Collinson were also gone, before continuing to make his case for forgiveness by detailing the frantic measures he had taken in the previous weeks to put together a package that resembled the one that had been lost. Among these reassembled documents was a detailed account of "the Scheme for your Academy and the Arguments for it, which I hope are conformable to your own Sentiments."[8]

Behind this thin veil of humility pulsed an eagerness Smith could only just contain. As he wrote Franklin in February 1754, he did so knowing that his trip to London had already proven a resounding success. Franklin had sent Smith across the Atlantic to achieve two goals. First, he was to secure Thomas Penn's approval for a college in Philadelphia. Second, he was to sell the proprietor on the importance of English schools, at a time when all involved knew that David Thomson's Society for Germans was determining how to use the large pool of money already donated by Dutch and English authorities. On both accounts, Smith had succeeded beyond all reasonable expectations. He had done so in the matter of three mere months.

THE MAKING OF A CAREER

[7] Ibid.
[8] Smith to Franklin, February 1754.

The exact date Smith arrived in London remains unknown. A letter from Penn to Richard Peters, dated October 31, 1753, suggests he arrived at some point during the previous month, carrying a letter of recommendation from Thomas Herring, the Archbishop of Canterbury.[9] Smith stayed with Penn for two nights, during which time he made an immediate and lasting impression. In his February 1754 letter to Franklin and Peters, Smith bragged that Penn's admiration of *Mirania*, combined with "the good Archbishop's Letter procured me an uncommon share of [Penn's] confidence, and such as no indifferent person ever before enjoy'd." He had been "several days with [Penn] in the country, and have the Honor to dine once or twice with him in Town every week especially on Sundays." During these visits, Penn had been "pleased to consult me upon every point that relates to literature in his Country, which he sees absolutely necessary to maintain good Government."[10]

On Franklin's college, Smith had good news. Penn, after much debate, had agreed to approve the project. In trademark fashion, Smith toed a fine line between braggadocio and pride as he described how he had managed to achieve this goal. "The proprietor was not at first satisfy'd that such liberal institutions were useful in an infant Country," he wrote. "Your Academy also interfered with a Design he had in view of his own, and of which he intended to be the Founder." Smith ultimately prevailed—largely by explaining how a College at Philadelphia, run by private citizens, could only strengthen trust in the proprietary government. "When I was able to shew the worthy Gentleman the necessity of such a seminary in a political light," Smith wrote, "he generously agreed to ingraft his Scheme upon yours in the two Foundations proposed, provided I would undertake to be the person to execute them."[11]

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[9] Thomas Penn to Richard Peters, 31 October 1753. Penn Letter Book II, 256. HSP.
[10] William Smith, letter to Benjamin Franklin and Richard Peters, February 1754. Founders Online.
[11] Ibid.

Though Smith's letter suggests that Franklin had never expressly endorsed Smith to *run* said college, Penn certainly walked away from his conversations with the young Scot having taken this impression. "He intends to occupy the office of Rector of the Academy," Penn wrote to Peters, "which I suppose all the Trustees will be much pleased with." After promising to write these trustees soon, Penn let it be known that Smith's "Temper & Disposition" appeared to be "well fitted for such an undertaking." He even agreed to pay a large part of Smith's salary.[12] Smith's explanation to Franklin and Peters on how this had occurred illustrates his great growth as a political actor. The young educator had already become skilled at capitalizing on opportune moments for professional and social promotion. In his February 1754 letter, he relented that he had gone over the heads of his benefactors to earn his promotion. He did not, however, apologize. In a remarkably confident tract, he suggested that Franklin and Peters would have no choice but to honor the proprietor's wishes. "Tho' I had not, nor have not yet, heard from either of you I agreed to this," Smith wrote, "hoping that the person who had been the great means of such an Union (which otherwise might have been the work of years) even if not personally known to you, would be welcome to all the Trustees, when he comes recommended by the proprietor."[13]

From the letters written between Smith and Penn during this period, it appears that the two men had ironed out these details within weeks of their first conversation. Though Franklin could not have known it at the time, the mutual respect earned between Smith and the proprietor during these conversations would fundamentally alter the course of Pennsylvanian politics for more than a decade to come. From this point forward, Smith was no longer Franklin's man.

[12] Thomas Penn to Richard Peters, 31 October 1753. Penn Letter Book II, 256. HSP.
[13] Smith to Franklin, February 1754.

Instead, he would work tirelessly to promote Penn's interests in Pennsylvania, even when these interests stood in direct conflict with Franklin's.

For the time being, however, Smith retained a great deal of respect for the scientist. Indeed, he continued to advocate for Franklin as he shifted his conversation with Penn toward the topic of the Pennsylvania Dutch. Here again, Smith pulled off a remarkable feat. Working from the rough plans formulated to different degrees over the past year by Franklin, Collinson, Peters, and Penn, Smith soon crafted a highly-detailed plan for English schools—a plan that would ultimately transfer complete control of Schlatter's preacher initiative from the Dutch Synods to a small group of influential Pennsylvanians. During one month, December 1753, Smith managed to redirect the focus of this initiative from training and employing Reformed preachers to reshaping and redefining the very character of young German-speaking Pennsylvanians.

THE SCHEME BEFORE SMITH

In its earliest stages, the plan to ease the suffering of Reformed frontier Germans had little to do with schools. Schlatter does mention "schooling" in his diary from 1746, but only within the context of providing individual teachers to various Reformed communities.[14] Schlatter's original efforts to secure donations were intended only to establish a general fund for aid and assistance. As he wrote in the "Plea" attached to the published version of his journal, "the aggregate of the collected gifts could be transferred to Philadelphia, and made over into the

[14] Harbaugh, *Life and Labors*, 227. Schlatter is charged to "solicit from [the Dutch Synods]…efficient help and support, in order that forty six feeble congregations might be adequately provided with ministers, schoolmasters, and books, inasmuch as about 30,000 Reformed members are found in that region."

hands of Coetus, and by them divided and applied to such points as have most pressing need."[15] The Dutch Synods would send any donated funds to the Pennsylvania Coetus—a body Schlatter himself controlled. This body would then use its collective wisdom to determine how to best put it to use. After a serious of scandals in the Philadelphia church, he and the Dutch Synods decided in 1751 to ask Thomas Penn to hire a prominent Pennsylvanian to oversee the process.[16] Nonetheless, his initial plan remained largely intact.

The Scheme's added English language element seems to have resulted from linear thinking. While Franklin, Collinson, and Peters had all discussed the need for Germans to learn English, David Thomson independently came to a similar conclusion in 1753, though for drastically different reasons. The Scottish preacher, who was then hard at work establishing the Society for Germans in Pennsylvania, makes an appearance in a letter written that year from Penn to Peters, dated January 9. "One of your Sermons I gave to Mr. Thomson," Penn informed Peters, "a very worthy and sensible Man, who is now here on the part of the reformed Church in Holland."[17] Penn went on to speculate that Thomson would find success on an upcoming fundraising trip to Scotland. "No doubt he will too here," wrote the proprietor, "if he does as it is intended to place Schoolmasters among the Dutch to teach Children the English Language."[18]

Thomson never intended to fund and build actual schools. *His* plan involved teaching English to German-speaking preachers. These newly bilingual ministers would then help bridge the gap between Germans and their English counterparts. Smith himself describes this plan in a pamphlet he wrote shortly before his 1754 letter to Franklin and Peters.[19] Entitled *A Memorial of*

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[15] Ibid., 214.
[16] Schlatter to Penn, 12 June 1751. Penn Family Official Correspondence. HSP.
[17] Penn to Peters, 9 January 1753. Thomas Penn Letter Book II, 188.
[18] Ibid.
[19] See Smith to Franklin and Peters, February 1754. Founders Online. "I have this day drawn out a short memorial of 3 pages, containing the case of the Germans without any reasonings on Education. This is gone to the Press and you shall have a few next Ship."

the Case of the German Emigrants Settled in the British Colonies of Pensilvania, and the back parts of Maryland, Virginia, &c., the pamphlet details the origin of the German-speaking element in North America. Smith included in this discussion a short summary of Schlatter's earliest actions in Pennsylvania, as well as Thomson's invention of the Society for Germans. This discussion provides the best overview of where the charitable plans stood before Smith's involvement. The Society, he revealed, had by this time understood the necessity to teach German Pennsylvanians the ins and outs of an English colony. "And as proper teachers and faithful instructors are necessary to promote knowledge and religion," he wrote, "the society proposes to send over and encourage a few ministers more than they now have, to instruct these emigrants in their own language." At the same time, he continued, the Society encouraged these ministers to learn English "and promote the learning it amongst their people, that they may in time be able to preach to them in it one part of every *Sunday* in their respective congregations."[20]

While Smith appreciated these efforts, he arrived in London in late 1753 with greater aspirations. Thomson's plan was modest. It called only for the continuance of a basic preacher-recruitment scheme—one that had, to this point, failed to accomplish its goal of bringing stability to colonial congregants. The addition of familiarizing Germans with the English language was welcome, but insufficient. First, Thomson's plan only concerned itself with the Reformed Church. Built upon Franklin's initial suggestions, Smith's plan would incorporate *all* Pennsylvania Germans into the Scheme. Second, Thomson's plan focused predominately on adult congregants. Smith argued for the education of the young.

Based upon extant records, it appears that Franklin and Peter Collinson had inspired Smith in this regard. Collinson, a renowned British botanist and a Fellow of the Royal Academy,

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[20] William Smith, *A Memorial of the Case of the German Emigrants Settled in the British Colonies of Pensilvania, and the back parts of Maryland, Virginia, &c* (London 1754), 12-13.

is largely remembered today as a sounding board for Franklin as the Pennsylvanian sussed out his famous theories on electricity. In fact, their letters covered myriad other subjects. This included Franklin's gestating concerns regarding frontier Germans. One of these letters, written by Franklin on May 9, 1753, took a deep dive into the philosophical and ethical quandaries inherent in mass immigration. In this missive, Franklin expressed in measured but concerned terms, his anxiety regarding the growing disconnect between the English and German elements in Pennsylvania. While his general opinion of the Germans had improved in the two years subsequent to his insensitive comments in *Observations on the Increase of Mankind*, he remained worried that "thro' their indiscretion or Ours, or both, great disorders and inconveniences may one day arise among us."[21] As evidence for this, he pointed to the Germans' natural distrust for authority—an attribute Schlatter himself had warned Penn about three years earlier.[22] Franklin worried that Germans would remain indifferent if French soldiers began to move further into the hotly-contested Ohio territory. In his exchange with Collinson, he reiterated the inherent danger of the language divide—pointing out that the vibrant German press in Pennsylvania had made it entirely unnecessary for Germans to learn English. This gave an undue amount of power to men like Christopher Sauer, who could not be trusted to keep Pennsylvania's best interests at heart.

In response, Collinson wrote that he had passed along Franklin's thoughts to "2 of the Members for the German Affairs," who themselves planned to forward the information to members of the English legislature. He then provided Franklin with his own seven-point plan to solve Pennsylvania's German problem:

1st To Establish More English Schools amongst the Germans.
2dly To Encourage them to Learn English Lett an Act of Parliament

[21] Franklin to Collinson, 9 May 1753. Founders Online.
[22] Schlatter to Penn, 12 June 1750. Penn Official Correspondence. HSP.

3d To prohibit any Deeds, Bonds, or writeings &c. to be Made
4 To Suppress all German Printing Houses that print only
5th To prohibit all Importation of German books.
6 To Encourage the Marriages of Germans with English and
7ly To Discourage the sending More Germans to the Province [23]

Franklin's response to this list is undated. Context suggests that it was written in the summer of 1753—the same period Franklin finally met Smith in person, and the same period he seems to have convinced the educator to act as his agent in London. Clearly, Franklin had moved on from theorizing by this time and had begun assembling allies to formulate a basic plan for free English schools. A letter written that August from Penn to Peters demonstrates that the proprietor too had already begun to show interest in this element. In it, he described a meeting that he held that month with a London-based trustee of Thomson's German Society, in which they had discussed possible locations for school buildings. This same letter also suggests that Peters had already enlisted Michael Schlatter's help with the project (which is interesting for many reasons that we will discuss below).[24] Penn agreed with this appointment, stating that the preacher would be "best able to inform" the Society on the number of necessary English schools, as well as where to place them.[25]

This was the state of the Scheme upon Smith's June 1753 arrival in Philadelphia, and it remained the state when he embarked for London in the Fall. The educator would amend Franklin's initial plans throughout December 1753. Working from a short list of general motivations and goals, he would soon create an intricate plan for what would eventually become known as the "German Free Schools." Soon thereafter, Penn encouraged Smith to present these plans directly to David Thomson and his Society for Germans. He did so with aplomb.

[23] Collinson to Franklin 12 August 1753. Founders Online.
[24] Thomas Penn to Richard Peters, 16 August 1753. Penn Letter-book II. HSP.
[25] Ibid.

TWO DRAFTS AND A FINAL PITCH

In December 1753, Smith wrote two drastically different drafts of a letter he addressed to Thomson's Society, which he referred to as "the Society Entrusted with Monies Collected for the Use of Foreign Protestants in Pennsylvania." Because his second draft was lost during the Britannia tragedy, Smith sent Franklin an earlier version of his pitch, claiming that he did not have time to make a copy of his argument in its final form.[26] Smith later produced a different copy of his second draft, which makes it possible to determine how his thoughts on the German Free Schools evolved as he committed his initial ideas to paper. The revision process also demonstrates the degree to which Smith's version of a Liberal Arts-based education had seeped into the marrow of the overarching scheme. As Smith approached the Society, the Trustees had yet to sign off on the idea of proper English schools. Most remained fixed to Thomson's strategy for the employment of bilingual preachers. Smith's pitch, then, sought to establish the need for comparably drastic measures.

From the start, Smith demonstrated a remarkable gift for persuasion. His first draft began by portraying Pennsylvania's Germans as a threat to the colony's security. After making the case that German-speaking colonists were "strangers" to the freedoms they enjoyed under English law, he claimed these people were "utterly ignorant and apt to be misled by our ceasing enemies."[27] Smith augmented this argument with a sharp warning regarding the language gap

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[26] See Smith to Franklin and Peters, February 1754. Smith did not have access to a copy of his official letter to the Society. In his rush to provide Franklin with an update on his accomplishments, he sent "the original Copy as it was done *currente calamo*, as I could not possibly transcribe it. You will see many repetitions and faults of Diction which were not in the fair and more concise Copy to Mr. Penn. This last mentioned Copy was read before the Society entrusted with the moneys for the Germans."

[27] "A Copy of a letter to the Pensylvania &c Society: Copies of Which have been made for the Lord Archbishop of Cantebury, the Lord Chancellor &c, the Church of Scotland &c With some Remarks by the Archbishop of Cantebury on the same. For Messierus Peters and Franklin". Attached to: Smith to Franklin and Peters, February 1754.

between the Germans and their English superiors. This barrier, he suggested, made it "hardly possible for us to warn them of their danger, or remove any prejudices they entertain…[and] such prejudices may be every day encreased among them by designing persons, even without our knowing it."[28]

Sometime between this and the final draft, Smith shrewdly recast the Germans not as a threat but rather as victims of circumstances beyond their control. While one can only speculate as to why he took this tonal shift, it is possible Smith believed an audience of preachers and philanthropists would respond better to sympathy than it would fear and frustration. Indeed, rather than portraying the Germans as dangerous, he now presented them as children lost in the woods. "It is deeply affecting to hear that this vast branch of the protestant Church is in danger either of sinking into barbarian ignorance," he wrote, "or of being seduced at last from that religion for which they and their fathers have suffered so much." Throughout this final letter, Smith established the Germans as victims, not aggressors—poor and forsaken souls. "To you, ye noble Patriots! they address themselves," he wrote. "To you their helpless Children lisp their tender plaint thro' my Pen."[29] Smith was confident enough in this new approach that he presented entire tracts in his final pitch written in the first person from the German perspective, passages he referred to as the "daily lamentations of these poor people."[30]

Smith put this softer tone to great use as he laid out his case to shift the Scheme's focus away from the training of ministers and onto the education of German youth. Returning to his earlier conceit about the Germans' ignorance of how to behave in a free nation, he agreed that educating adults within individual congregations would help instill in them a better

[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Smith, *Life and Correspondence*, 37.

understanding of how to participate in governance. “But the old can only be exhorted and warn’d,” he wrote, “The Young may be instructed and form’d.” Elder Germans were incapable of learning English and of letting go of their own “national manners”—but the “young may do both.” It was futile to direct attention on men “apace to the grave.” The young, he argued, “have their whole prime of life before them, & their influence is strong & lasting.” [31] More importantly, by educating young Germans alongside their British peers, “acquaintances & connexions will be form’d.” This would forge a bond between them that would remain intact throughout their transition into adulthood.[32]

Smith drew this last argument directly from *Mirania.* As presented in Chapter Two, Smith had already written extensively about the bonds created by a shared education. In his pitch to the Society for Germans, this theory served as his overarching thesis. By intertwining the lives of young Germans and young Englishmen, he wrote, “the English language & conformity of manners will be acquired, & they may be taught to feel the meaning & exult in the enjoyment of liberty, of home & social endearments.” Once this occurred, “no arts of our enemies will be able to divide them in their affection; and all the narrow distinctions of extraction, &c., will be forgot—forever forgot—in higher interests.”[33]

With his case made on the importance of focusing on youth, Smith finally presented a detailed synopsis of his plan for German Free Schools. He broke this plan down into four points. First, he laid out the basic pedagogy for the schools—a system he drew entirely from the Liberal Arts-based *Mirania*. Again, he made the case that classical languages were no longer necessary to teach “ethics, civil & religious.” The English language, he argued, “together with writing,

[31] Ibid., 30.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid., 31.

something of figures, & a short system of religious & civil truths & duties, in the *Socratic* or *catechetic* way, is all the education necessary to the people." The chief goal of the proposed schools was to Anglicize young Germans. It was better to streamline the process, rather than prolong it. "It is obvious that it must be calculated rather to make good subjects than what is called good scholars," Smith wrote. The schools, then, should focus on "the different forms of Government" and "the excellency of our own," both of which could be presented by well-trained teachers "during the 3 or 4 years the people otherwise spend in learning to read, write &c."[34]

Smith's second point involved basic governance and administration. For this, he suggested a board of Trustees, not dissimilar to the one used by the Society to which he now appealed. This board would consist of "one sett of men"—ideally "6 or 7 principal Gentlemen in Pennsylvania." Smith went on to add that one of these Trustees would "once every year visit all the Schools & examine the Scholars."[35] In addition, the Trustees would enlist "six deputy-trustees for every School, 3 of them being English, & 3 Germans, for the sake of forming more connexions." These deputy-Trustees would visit the schools once a month and send official reports to the board of Trustees, which would then compile these summaries into bi-annual letters to the Society in London. This, in effect, would establish a three-tiered hierarchy for the Scheme, with the England-based Society on top.[36]

Third, Smith argued that all potential ministers and schoolmasters should "be found & educated in America." True to Thomson's initial plan for bilingual ministers, these men were to understand "English & high Dutch, with Mathematics, Geography, Drawing, History, [and] Ethics." Teachers would inculcate German youth on "the Constitutions & Interests of the

[34] Ibid., 34.
[35] Ibid., 35.
[36] Ibid.

colonies."[37] Smith believed that "strangers cannot be thus qualified." While foreigners might understand both languages, he argued, "we could not be sure of their principles." The whole point of the German Free Schools was to foster connections between the English and Germans. Smith argued that preachers sent from Switzerland or the Palatinate might "counterwork" and "defeat" this "desired Coalition."[38] Luckily, Smith continued, "there is a flourishing Seminary [in Philadelphia], where by men be educated"—this in addition to the new college, which had recently earned the approval of the "honorable proprietary."

Finally, Smith made an impassioned plea for funding. "With regard to the maintenance of these instructors," he wrote, "that must come in a great measure from you." While the money already raised by Thomson and the Synods would prove enough to launch the campaign, reality dictated that the schools would require a constant stream of donations in order to maintain success. In making this argument, Smith soon played directly to the Society's emotions. He once again presented the Germans as sheep exposed to wolves on the prowl. Writing from the voice of a German, he lamented:

> We penetrated the howling wilderness, & sat down in places before untrod by Christian foot, where only savage beasts prowled round us, content to suffer the worst of difficulties, for the sake of religious liberty & a good conscience. But, O deplorable situation! we are again threatened with all those dangers from which we fled. On the one side Popery, & on the other heathen-ignorance, make dreadful approaches towards us. The French-Germans, well supply'd with missionaries, are our near neighbors; and if we should escape their snares, who shall save our Children—Our Children![39]

Smith soon returned to a similar metaphor fit for one of his bombastic letters to Phila De Lancey. He positioned himself, as well as each member of the Society of Germans, as the exact sort of "Shepherd" poor frontiersmen required to avoid the jaws of the ravenous French and

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[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid., 36.

deceitful sects. "Thus," he wrote, "instead of hearing the sound of lamentation & sorrow among a vast people, wandering without Shepherds in a dry & barren land, we shall hear the voice of Joy among them." Through succeeding generations, the Germans "shall be happy & enlightened; so that, in the sublime strains of the Prophet, The wilderness and solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice & blossom as the rose."[40]

This impassioned plea made an immediate impact on the Society. Shortly after Smith sent this letter, one of the Trustees read it aloud during an official meeting. According to Smith, "They were pleased to thank me for what I had laid before them, and desired me against their next meeting to shorten it that a few [Copies] might be transcribed for the Archbishop, Lord Chancellor, Lord Halifax, and the minister, and the speaker of the H. of commons."[41] This was not the only good news Smith had to report to Franklin and Peters. "They have adopted your scheme," he wrote, "and are satisfy'd that the Education of youth ought to be their more immediate object."[42] Smith, of course, was being modest. While he credited Franklin as the owner of the Scheme, by this point, the plan for German Free Schools was very much his own.

In his February 1754 letter to Franklin and Peters, Smith describes the many amendments to the Scheme he had made on the fly during his brief stay in London. The first of these changes, he laid out in surprisingly explicit terms. "Another great part of my aim," he wrote, "was to have the management of this important Trust devolved upon Men of the first rank of Pennsylvania, and not upon Clergy who depend on Dutch Synods." Franklin seems to have been fine with the notion that the Dutch Synods would supply ministers to Pennsylvania as to their original arrangement with Schlatter. Smith saw this as antithetical to the Society's true aims. If he and his

[40] Ibid., 38.
[41] Smith to Franklin and Peters, February 1754.
[42] Ibid.

allies could convince the Germans to train their ministers either at the pre-existing Philadelphia Academy or at Franklin's newly-chartered college, then Pennsylvania might "shake off" any dependence on a foreign ecclesiastical body. Thanks to Smith's efforts, influential Reformed ministers would now have to turn to English authority to receive funding. In his own words, this was enough to "keep their Clergy who are under our pay in proper awe." This strategy was as calculated as it was ingenious. If Smith and his board of Trustees were responsible for the donation pool, then the Philadelphia Coetus would have no choice but to ally itself with pro-Proprietary politicians. This coalition might then help end Quaker dominance on the General Assembly, which would in turn increase the chances of funding a proper Pennsylvania militia.

In the end, the London-based Society for Germans signed off on Smith's plan, down to the last detail. Before he could celebrate, however, he still had one last hurdle to clear. Because Michael Schlatter and his widely-read journal had become synonymous with the efforts to organize and protect Pennsylvania's Germans, Smith had no choice but to include him in his Scheme. By this time, Smith had regularly met with Schlatter at Thomas Penn's residence. These talks brought to light the preacher's recent troubles back home. Far from an asset, Schlatter was now a liability. His necessary inclusion in the German Free School project required what Smith himself referred to as a "second Scheme." He soon described this scheme in detail to Franklin and Peters.[43]

HANDLING SCHLATTER

In many ways, Schlatter's incredible year in Europe rivaled Smith's, both in terms of productivity and drama. In October 1753, Schlatter stepped down from the Pennsylvania Coetus

[43] Ibid.

after learning that the Dutch Synods had entertained the many accusations made against him by Rubel and Weiss. In doing so, he "begged to be relieved in the future from receiving the donations intended for Pennsylvania."[44] Writing in his defense, the Lancaster Coetus expressed that it had reluctantly accepted Schlatter's resignation in order that "he may be able to gain his livelihood wherever the Lord may be pleased to send him."[45]

While Schlatter's allies presented the man's resignation as an altruistic act, in truth, the Swiss preacher had had no choice but to step down. True or not, Rubel's accusations regarding Schlatter's mishandling of donated money had made him an incredibly divisive figure in Pennsylvania. The minister seems to have finally understood that his neighbors and congregants had become sensitive to his perceived power plays. This was true even when the Dutch Synods had continued to support him. The moment his relationship with Holland began to fray, any authority he had left in Pennsylvania had been permanently compromised.

It is no surprise, then, that Schlatter soon embarked on another trip to Europe. He seems to have left Pennsylvania either in late December 1753 or in early January 1754.[46] While the preacher would indeed return to the Netherlands in an effort to salvage whatever was left of his career with the Dutch Synods, he first stopped in London, where he immediately set up camp with Thomas Penn. "Mr. Schlatter arrived in very good health, and in very proper time," Penn wrote to Richard Peters in a letter dated February 1754.[47] Schlatter had been in sporadic

[44] *Minutes of the Reformed Church*, 102.
[45] Ibid. This was the Coetus that met in Lancaster as a direct response to the unofficial Coetus meeting then being held in Cocalico.
[46] See Thomas Penn to Richard Peters, February 1754, Thomas Penn Letter Book II, 303. HSP.
[47] Ibid.

communication with the proprietor since the letter he had written on behalf of the Dutch Synods in 1751.[48] For the most part, this contact seems to have been conducted through Peters.[49]

After Schlatter arrived in London in early 1754, Penn immediately looped him in to his conversations with Smith. Smith saw Schlatter as a necessary but unfortunate distraction. "I have been at some pains with him," he wrote to Franklin and Peters.[50] To the Scot's chagrin, Schlatter remained too loyal to the Dutch Synods, as well as other "clergy who would counterwork our design."[51] As the men continued to talk, however, Smith came away with the impression that Schlatter's allegiance to the Synods was not so intractable as he had once believed. Schlatter's recent resignation from the Pennsylvania Coetus had clearly shaken the man, and Smith recognized that his troubles back home had opened the door for a shift in allegiance. By Schlatter's own admission, he could no longer hold a position of authority in Pennsylvania without a great deal of controversy. Smith, then, made the case that by working with the English, Schlatter might be "made easy." The German Free Schools would offer Schlatter a chance to salvage his career. "He will have more powers than ever before," Smith wrote to Franklin and Peters, "and yet seem to have less as he will be screen'd by some great names."[52] Smith speculated that Schlatter should then be installed as the superintendent mentioned in the third point of his pitch to the Society for Germans. The Trustees would "appoint Mr. Schlatter with one or other of their own number to visit all the Schools once a year," Smith wrote. "Besides this, Schlatter will also have a commission from the Dutch Synods to superintend and visit all the

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[48] See, Thomas Penn to Richard Peters, 9 January 1753. Penn Letter Book II. HSP. Penn cared enough about Schlatter, that he even seems to have been kept appraised about Schlatter's many difficulties with members of the Reformed Church. "Pray tell Mr. Schlatter I am sorry to hear he has met with fresh disappointment and hope he will live to see an end put to all this opposition."
[49] Ibid.
[50] Smith to Franklin and Peters, 1754.
[51] It is unclear to whom Smith refers to here, though it is likely David Tenant. (Explain this situation in this footnote, then end with…Schlatter seems to have been in contact with Tenant both in Pennsylvania and in London.
[52] Smith to Franklin and Peters, February 1754. Founders Online.

Churches, which he may do at the same Time. For this service, and in Consideration of what he has suffered, the Society propose £100 Sterling to him per annum, which, with his Congregation in Philadelphia will support him." Ultimately, these efforts would not rescue Schlatter's reputation in Pennsylvania. To the contrary, the man's involvement in the scheme would soon become a constant source of vexation both for Smith and the Trustees. For the moment, however, Smith had managed to check off the final box required to finally implement his plan.

Chapter Five: 1754. Implementation and Politicization

William Smith returned to Philadelphia on May 22, 1754. Three days later, he joined Franklin's Academy, where he "commenced teaching in the philosophy class," as well as other advanced classes on ethics and rhetoric.[1] In the ensuing days, he delivered a letter, written by Samuel Chandler, which called into duty the seven men the Society for Germans had chosen to represent the group in Pennsylvania: "James Hamilton, Esq., Lieutenant-Governor of Pennsylvania; William Allen, Esq., Chief Justice; Richard Peters, Esq., Secretary of Pennsylvania; Benjamin Franklin, Esq., Postmaster-General; Conrad Weiser, Esq., Interpreter, and the Rev. William Smith."[2]

Smith's momentum, however, soon hit a snag. Peters and Franklin were set to depart in a few days to attend the famous Albany Congress in New York.[3] "We cannot, therefore do anything in the business you so generously recommend to us until their return, especially as Mr. Weiser attends them," Smith wrote to Chandler on May 30, 1754. "In the meantime, however, the gentlemen have desired me to assure you in their name that they are sensible of the honor done them by the illustrious Society, and that they will decline no labor in the execution of their important trust."[4] This delay turned out to be an unexpected blessing for Smith. He spent the next few weeks strategizing—most notably with prominent Lutheran and Calvinist ministers.

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[1] From an entry in Smith's Diary, reprinted in Montgomery, *History of the University of Pennsylvania*, 201.
[2] Samuel Chandler to Trustees, 15 March 1754. Reprinted in, Smith, *Life and Correspondence*, 40.
[3] See *Minutes of the German Free Schools*, Smith Papers, University of Pennsylvania, 7. For a good summary of Pennsylvania's role in the Albany Congress, see Roger Trask, "Pennsylvania and the Albany Congress, 1754," *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 3 (1960): 273-290.
[4] William Smith to Samuel Chandler, 30 May 1754. Smith, *Life and Correspondence,* 45-46.

Though Smith had already worked on behalf of Pennsylvanian politicians for more than a year by this point, he had yet to live in the colony. As the educator began to establish his own niche within the colonial ecosystem, he soon came to make his own informed opinions on his new home's social and religious communities. He also began to forge relationships with influential Pennsylvanians. Of these men, few would prove as immediately useful to his Scheme than a prominent Lutheran minister named Henry Melchior Muhlenberg. By the time Smith met Muhlenberg, the pastor had already lived in the colony for twelve years. Like Schlatter, he had originally been in the business of organizing and stabilizing congregations. Before his arrival in Pennsylvania in 1742, German Lutherans had mostly worshipped under the guidance of lay ministers and other un-ordained priests. Initially setting up shop in Providence (modern day Trappe), Muhlenberg spent his first years in British North America recruiting proper Lutheran priests and putting them at the head of new congregations throughout Pennsylvania and Maryland.[5]

Trained at the Georg-August University of Göttingen, Muhlenberg was a staunch ally of Gotthilf August Francke, the son of an influential theologian from the city of Halle. Muhlenberg kept an extensive correspondence with Francke throughout his life.[6] In these letters, as well as in his voluminous diary, Muhlenberg described life in German Pennsylvania in incredible detail. One of these missives—written on June 18, 1754—described the intractable marriage between religion and politics in Pennsylvania at the time of Smith's arrival. Writing with a straightforwardness that is wholly lacking in English documents from the same period,

[5] Biographical detail taken from, Trans. Theodore G. Tappert and John W. Doberstein, *The Journals of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg Volume I* (Philadelphia: The Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania and Adjacent States, 1942), viii-ix.
[6] Most of this material remains untranslated.

Muhlenberg described an incredibly fractured and highly nuanced society. "The German inhabitants," he wrote,

> as a whole can be viewed as three large factions. One large faction consists of nearly uncountable parties, sects, and opinions. Another large faction is Calvinist, and is also divided into different parties. The third and largest are the Lutherans. The government consists of two parties, namely the Quakers and the so-called Church or State people. Both parties fear the great growth of the Germans, and each recruit from them. During common election days, where the most prestigious offices were appointed by the majority of votes of the free inhabitants, the Quakers advertised with the German newspaper writer in Germantown to get the most votes from the German Sects and the Church Realm. The other party looked for the most votes from the German church kingdoms (Lutherans and the Calvinists) through their preachers.[7]

Indeed, long before Smith's arrival in Pennsylvania, Penn and his allies had already looked to the so-called "Church Germans" to counterbalance the votes of sectarians, whom they assumed were under the influence of Christopher Sauer. This strategy had previously involved calling upon Reformed and Lutheran preachers to work as advocates for the Proprietary cause, as well as the hardening of naturalization laws (as described in Chapter One). Muhlenberg's letter suggests that these efforts had failed at least in part because Penn, Richard Peters, and William Allen had failed to understand the specific concerns of Church Germans beyond a shared interest in defending Pennsylvania's frontier. Describing a previous election, Muhlenberg mentioned that Penn and his allies had angered Germans "from all three factions" with a scheme that would have forced German churches to support the production of fortresses and weapons through a roundabout reimbursement scheme drawn from Church tithes. Muhlenberg reported that this

[7] My translations. Henry Muhlenberg to Gothilf Francke, 18 June 1754. See, *Die Korrespondenz Heinrich Melchior Muhlenbergs*, Band II, 150. The original German reads: "Die teuschen Einwohner insgesammt laßen sich in 3 großen Theilen betrachten. Ein großer Theil bestehet fast aus unzehlbahren Partheyen, Secten und Meinungen. Der andere große Theil aus Calvinisten, und ist auch in verschiedene Partheyen gethielt. Der dritte als der größeste aus Lutheranern. Das Gouvernment bestehet aus 2 Partheyen, nehmlich aus Quakern und so genanten Kirchen oder Staats-Leuten. Beyde Partheyen fürchten den großen Anwachs der Teutschen, und eine jede wirbet um die Teutschen. Wenn vor diesem gemeine Wahltage waren, wo die vornehmsten Amter durch die moisten Stimmen der freyen Einwohner bestellet warden, so pflegten die Quaker durch den teustschen Zeitungs-Schreiber in Germantown um die moisten Stimmen bey den teustschen Kirchen-Reiche der Lutheraner und Calvinisten, durch ihre Prediger die moisten Stimmen."

"made preachers very hateful."[8] Lutheran ministers would have gladly supported a militia through lotteries or taxes. The prospect of funding them directly through church money, however, greatly offended them.

Smith soon realized that if his schools were to thrive, he needed to better understand the specific concerns of Lutheran and Reformed colonists. This included not only their overarching desires, but also what angered them. He found his foothold in this regard by exploiting the old axiom, "the enemy of my enemy is my friend." For years, Christopher Sauer had used his popular *Pennsylvanische Berichte* to publish polemics against prominent Lutheran and Calvinist figures. Fiercely independent, Sauer reviled organized religion. He often made the petty struggles of ministers into front-page news. Favoring sectarian Protestanism to established church order, Sauer had in Muhlenberg's words "hammered" against salaried priest in his yearly calendars and weekly newspapers, while also speaking out against "Sacraments and other sources of Grace."[9] In the eyes of many Church Germans, Sauer not only wreaked havoc on Pennsylvanian politics, but also did "true religion indescribable harm."[10]

This resentment, along with the specter of increasingly successful sectarian missionaries, provided Smith with a point of entry into the trust and support of Church authorities. He soon used the German Free School project to take direct aim at German sectarians, accepted Muhlenberg's council on many occasions, and, in effect, drew leaders from established German churches directly into the fold. Though he would have much more success with Lutherans than he would with Schlatter's churches, this effort would eventually lead to an ascendant coalition, which would reshape Pennsylvania's political sphere until the onset of the American Revolution.

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[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid., 151.

MINUTES OF THE GERMAN FREE SCHOOLS

In March 1754, Smith began to record the official efforts of his charitable society in the *Minutes of the German Free Schools*.[11] This remarkable book chronicles the establishment of the Society for the Education of Germans in Pennsylvania, beginning with a letter from Samuel Chandler and ending with a series of accounting sheets for several newly built schools. Chandler's letter, which was also sent to potential Trustees, laid out Smith's plans for the English schools down to the smallest detail. Assuming the Trustees were to accept their charge, they were to begin by assisting with the "Encouragement & Council" of "the rev. Michael Schlatter, whom the Society has ordered, with an yearly Salary of £100 Sterling, under your Direction, to be their Supervisor & Visitor of the Schools."[12] These schools were to be erected in Reading, York, Easton, Lancaster, Shippach, and Hannover—all areas "where the Germans are principally settled." Their purpose was to "instruct their Youth in the English Language & the Knowledge of the common principles of the Christian Religion & Morality."[13] The Trustees were to rely upon Schlatter to find suitable bilingual school teachers, who were to be paid up to £20 a year for their services.

Chandler's next command suggests that both the London and Pennsylvania branches of the Society had relegated to an afterthought Schlatter's original mission to recruit Reformed ministers. "As to German Ministers," he wrote, "we have as yet appointed none."[14] The Trustees were to keep their eyes open for potential candidates, though Chandler gave no deadline for their employment. Indeed, as Smith transitioned into his own history of the next few days, he entirely

[11] See Minutes of the German Free Schools, 1.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid., 5.

dropped the subject of preachers and focused instead on matters of colonial defense. "The Affairs of the Germans become every Day more interesting," he wrote. "You have doubtless heard of the Encroachments of the French upon the Ohio, & can guess at their Designs."[15] He went on to explain that the French were feeling increasingly insecure about their ability to hold on to their North American colonies. "Their government," he wrote, "has hitherto retarded the Migration of Europeans to settle these Colonies, while ours have been the constant Asylum of distress'd Foreigners of all Countries." Their only recourse, Smith implied, was to draw from preexistent pools of North American immigrants: "Hence they have turn'd their Eye upon the vast Body of Germans settled in the back parts of this Province &c, hoping that many of these Germans, who have been born in this Country, may be drawn over to them, as they are entirely ignorant & have not the same notions of French Government, which their European Parents had."[16]

As Smith brought his opening argument to a close, he took an apocalyptic tone that was totally absent in his initial plea to the Society back in December 1753. The majority of Germans, he implied, cared not a whit for English rule. They only concerned themselves with land and farms—neither of which they would lose should the French conquer Pennsylvania. "Thus vast Numbers," he wrote, "will be induced to go over to the Enemy, & others who have come from many Parts of Europe & settled Lands without any Title or Patent, will accept such from, & promise Allegiance to the French."[17] Without a single mention of Schlatter nor of potential Reformed ministers, Smith concluded that the only defense against this mass betrayal was to build a "common Union of our Strength & Councils, together with a proper Instruction of these

[15] Ibid., 7.
[16] Ibid., 8.
[17] Ibid., 8-9.

poor Emigrants." This would require the Quaker-led Pennsylvania General Assembly to cooperate with the proprietary council, as well as a commitment from prominent Germans to cease enabling dissenters through their press and through their votes.

ADDRESSING CHRISTOPHER SAUER

The German Free School project remained in abeyance until Franklin, Peters, and Weiser returned to Pennsylvania at the end of July 1754.[18] On August 10, William Allen, Franklin, Peters, and Smith met at Allen's house to finally consider "the Business so warmly recommended to them in the foregoing Letter from the Secretary of the honorable Society."[19] Their first action was to initiate an effort to find between six and ten Deputy Trustees for every one of the six towns earmarked for school buildings. Though Chandler had not mentioned such a function in his letter to the would-be Trustees, Smith *had* laid out such plans in his letters to Franklin and Peters from London. Again, in stark contrast to Schlatter's original effort to secure Reformed ministers, Smith and his allies sought Trustees from across the religious spectrum. In addition to Reformed Calvinists, they also wanted to employ "Lutheran Germans" and "Englishmen of any Protestant Persuasion whatever."[20]

The group soon came to a consensus that future school teachers were to be culled from the ranks of the English schools themselves. Smith admitted that it had already proven difficult to find "proper Schoolmasters skilled in both languages." He already knew of several children from Franklin's academy who spoke both English and high Dutch, whom he believed capable of

[18] Franklin wrote to Peter Collinson on July 29, saying "I am just return'd from Albany." See Franklin to Collinson, 29 July 1754.
[19] German Free School Minutes, 9. The page numbering in the official Minutes repeats itself here. Smith's own numbering has two 9 and 10 spreads. In effect, this page is actually page 11, but seeing as though Smith continues on from this number uninterrupted, it is necessary to mark this passage as having come from the second page 9.
[20] Ibid., 10.

taking over the schools upon reaching maturity. In a letter written from Penn to Peters in February 1754, the proprietor had already promised to subscribe £50 yearly to support "five Boys," who were to be chosen in concert with Mr. Schlatter, unless you should find it necessary to begin before he arrives."[21] Notably, Smith's first choice for one of the schoolmaster positions was not German, but rather a Brit whom he referred to only as "Magaw."[22]

With this out of the way, the committee turned its attention to an entirely different matter. On August 3, 1754, Franklin had received a letter from Muhlenberg.[23] Paraphrasing this letter, Smith stated that Muhlenberg had "rejoiced" in learning of their efforts "for promoting the Knowledge of God among the Germans in Pennsylvania & for making them loyal Subjects to the sacred Protestant Throne of Great Britain." Unfortunately, many of Muhlenberg's neighbors were not so enthusiastic. "Ill-minded Persons would strive to defeat so just & noble a view, as they had of late done many others, to the Offence of many thousand ignorant but well-meaning Souls." Muhlenberg laid the responsibility for this distrust solely at the feet of Christopher Sauer.

Muhlenberg's interests in this matter were not entirely selfless. As early as 1743 he had accused Sauer of being in the mud-raking business. That year, he noted that the publisher had had "a great deal of fun" when reporting on a sixty-three-year-old minister named Kraft, who had intended to marry a seventeen-year-old girl.[24] Things turned personal in 1745, when Sauer attacked Muhlenberg after he had taken a public stance against the publisher's German-language Bible. "The German printer here, named Christopher Sauer," he wrote in a report to Halle, "[sought] in private and in public, to make both myself and my office odious."[25] As if Sauer's

[21] Penn to Peters, February 1754.
[22] Minutes, 11-12. Apparently, Magaw was then taking German lessons from a German Lutheran named Brunnholt.
[23] Ibid., 12.
[24] *Muhlenberg Journals*, Volume I, 90.
[25] Ibid., 96.

words were not bad enough, his newspaper also served as a safe house for slanderers and gossips. “They cannot drag the preachers before the authorities and the courts, when they have not transgressed against the law,” Muhlenberg wrote in 1751. So instead “these malevolent people resort to the German newspaper publisher in Germantown.[26]

According to Muhlenberg, Sauer was at this very moment using his platform to slander the German Free School project. “The joyful News were no sooner heard than Mr. Sauer…made haste to ferment them against the Scheme.” Alongside his letter to Franklin, Muhlenberg attached English translations of two newspaper clippings: one from June 16 and another from July 1. The first took aim at Franklin’s Academy. Sauer rebuked those Germans who had already enrolled in the high school for having “no mind to get their living by honest Labour,” before going on to warn his readers to be warry of any sort of knowledge or “Honesty” that came from “abroad.” In Sauer’s eyes, Germans should not concern themselves with anything but “what is daily in view.”[27] The second clipping presented a conspiracy theory regarding Thomas Penn’s efforts to reclaim land from German settlers. Smith and the other committee members present that day in the home of William Allen were instantly revolted by these comments. So much so that the Trustees amended their scheme, on the spot, to address Sauer directly. “These two recent Instances of Sauer’s evil mind,” Smith wrote, “together with what has been long [been] observ’d especially in Time of Elections, that Sauer, by means of his Paper, can spread Prejudices faster than all the honest men in the Province could remove them, convinced the Trustees that they should do effectual Service to their Country, if they could rescue so many thousands of well-meaning People from such bad Hands.”[28]

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[26] Ibid., 312.
[27] *Minutes of the German Free Schools*, 18-19.
[28] Ibid.

This passage is crucial for several reasons. First, it marked the first time Smith openly admitted that he was concerned with election results. Taking a strong pro-Proprietary tone, Smith's reaction to Muhlenberg's comments show that he had already begun to concern himself with repairing Penn's image among Church Germans. Second, it explains why Franklin stayed involved with the scheme, despite his rapidly declining relationship with the proprietor. While the newspaper scheme appeared spontaneous, it was in truth anything but. Franklin had come to the meeting with a plan already in place. A few days before, Franklin had received a message from a German printer named Anton Armbüster, who desired to purchase his printing house. "If the Trustees thought it best to have the Press under their own Direction," Smith wrote, "he wou'd endeavor to engage the Printer in their Service, both as a Schoolmaster & Printer."[29] By the end of the meeting, Franklin had agreed to sell his printing equipment to the Society for twenty-five pounds less than its value. "This generous Proposal of Mr. Franklin was unanimously agreed to; it was recommended to Him to engage the Printer by offering him a House, a few Acres of Land, twenty Pounds Sterling as a Schoolmaster per Annum, & Wages for every Thing he may be further employ'd in as a Printer."[30] The Trustees justified these expenses on the flimsy logic that the press could be used to "print small Tracts" for use in the German Free Schools.[31]

SHORING UP SUPPORT

With these plans firmly fixed, Smith and the Trustees soon turned their attention to securing the support of Lutheran and Reformed churches. Perhaps because Muhlenberg had already sought out such a partnership, the group began by shoring up enthusiasm among the

[29] *Minutes of the German Free Schools,* 22.
[30] Ibid., 23.
[31] Ibid 21.

Lutherans. Their efforts proved immediately successful. Two weeks after the meeting at Allen's house, Smith, Peters, and Franklin visited Governor Hamilton, carrying two petitions signed by dozens of local ministers. The first of these petitions saw congregations from New Providence and Shippach offer a newly-built schoolhouse for use in Smith's Scheme. Signed by eleven ministers, the petition wished "Success to the Undertaking of the honorable Society in London and their Trustees-general in Pennsylvania, to instruct the poor Germans in all that is needful to render them true Christians [and] good Subjects to the Sacred Protestant Throne of great-Britain."[32] The second petition came from the Lutheran Congregation at New Hanover. They too offered a recently built schoolhouse, which was "very conveniently situated in the middle of the township" and made available "for the Children of the several Protestant Denominations, who are exceeding numerous and helpless for want of Instruction."[33]

The Trustees agreed to accept these offers, assuming the Reformed congregations in the surrounding areas would "signify their approbation, and concur in the choice of and situation of these schoolhouses."[34] To achieve this desired comity between denominations, the Trustees encouraged Muhlenberg to host a meeting between Lutheran and Reformed leaders to discuss the buildings. In the meantime, the Trustees turned their collective eye to choosing deputy board members for both proposed schools, as well as for four additional institutions slated to be erected in Lancaster, Easton, Reading, and York. Their decisions in this regard demonstrated a clear modus operandi.

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[32] *Minutes of the German Free Schools*, 24. Signers included: John Schrack, Anthony Heilman, Jacob Schrack, Valentine Sharrar, John Heebner, John Heilman, Nicholas Custer, Hieronymus Haas, Michael Bastian, Conrad Yost, and Nicholas Seidel.
[33] Ibid., 26. Signers included Goerge Geiger, Andrew Kepner, Valentine Geiger, George Back, Michael Schweinhard, Adam Wardman, Casper Singer, Henry Krebs, Michael Schlonecker, George Burchard, Matthias Holleback, John Rinker, Nicholas Miller, Matthias Richard, John Wingel, and John Seidel.
[34] Ibid., 27.

Where possible, Smith and company decided to install a prominent English citizen at the head of each Deputy-Trustee board. For Lancaster, they chose as president Edward Shippen, a former Philadelphia mayor who had moved to the predominately German county in 1752 to serve as Prothonotary.[35] For Reading, the Trustees chose James Read, who served in the same office in his own home county. For Easton, they tabbed William Parsons, a former Surveyor General, who now served as a Justice of the Peace.[36] New Hanover and New Providence were the only two schools spared English overseers—no doubt because the Lutheran ministers attached to these institutions had already taken proactive measures by offering their own buildings. This left only York, which remained greatly in flux. The man the Trustees had chosen to advise them on this school, Conrad Weiser, was then heading to the frontiers on official colony business. Nonetheless, he agreed to interview potential candidates before embarking on his journey into the colonial hinterlands. [37]

For the rest of the schools, the Trustees were careful to fill out the remaining boards of Trustees with two Reformed representatives, two Lutherans, and two Brits. As the group put together these lists, one unnamed member took note that they had neglected an entire subgroup of Pennsylvanian society. While the Trustees had taken painstaking measures to ensure a proper mix of faiths on the boards, they had neglected to name any actual ministers. When it was suggested that the group remedy this by adding one Reformed and one Lutheran preacher on each of the school boards, Weiser loudly objected. "So great was the jealousy of the people at present against the clergy in general," he said, "that such a measure at first might be a hindrance

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[35] For more on Shippen, *Letters and Papers Relating to the Provincial History of Pennsylvania, with Some Notices of the Writers* (Philadelphia: Crissy & Markly, 1855), xxxviii-xxix.
[36] See John W. Jordan, "William Parsons. Surveyor General, and Founder of Easton, Pennsylvania," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 3 (1909), 341.
[37] See *Minutes of the German Free Schools*, 29-31.

to the scheme, especially as these jealousies are daily fomented [in Sauer's newspaper]."[38] Others argued that the entire Scheme had been predicated on the notion of removing "such prejudice" and promoting "a sense of religion and a greater regard to their clergy among the Germans, without which there was little probability of rendering them peaceable, industrious, and governable subjects."[39] Ultimately, the Trustees decided to keep their lists intact.

As the August 20 meeting closed, Smith no doubt left feeling optimistic about the prospects of his Scheme. In two short months since returning from London with the plan he had forged with Thomas Penn, he had already secured the support of Pennsylvania's Lutheran population, and had, in fact, secured two schoolhouses without having to expend a single penny. As to why the Lutherans were so helpful in this regard, Muhlenberg's correspondence with Francke provides a few clues. Explaining the situation in June 1754—two months before he had presented Smith with his petitions—Muhlenberg had expressed a great deal of angst regarding the tumultuous air in Pennsylvania.

In addition to his fear that Sauer would continue to undermine established churches, he also worried that the Reformed Church, by allying itself with government officials, was now poised to receive special treatment in the colony. Muhlenberg particularly pointed to the financial ties that now existed between the Society for Germans in England, Thomas Penn, Michael Schlatter, the Dutch Synods, and the various preachers Smith planned to hire for his English Schools. No doubt these resources would provide the Reformed church with a competitive edge when wooing potential congregants. "There can be no other consequence," he wrote, "than the Calvinist Church will become impregnated and devoured by our young and old

[38] Ibid., 30.
[39] Ibid., 21.

members."[40] After discussing his misgivings about the Calvinistic tenet of predestination, Muhlenberg went on to describe a battle for souls in Pennsylvania that would ultimately require faith in God's overarching plan for the colony. "Time will tell whether the majority of fish will be caught in the Dort, Episcopal, or Quaker net," he wrote.[41] Muhlenberg sought to get in on the ground floor of any effort that would not only strengthen the bonds between English and German colonists, but also provide his Church with the resources to compete for potential congregants as the colony's population continued to swell. Muhlenberg's concerns were to prove slightly misguided. Though Schlatter and Thomson had willingly turned over their charitable efforts to English authorities, rank and file Calvinists in Pennsylvania had never signed off on such an alliance. Smith was to have a much harder time convincing these men to cooperate than he was the Lutherans—at least in part because the Pennsylvania Coetus refused to make a firm commitment until Michael Schlatter finally returned from Europe.

SCHLATTER ON TRIAL

As Smith and the Trustees began to implement their plans in Pennsylvania, Schlatter was conspicuously absent. Through conversations with Penn, Smith understood that the Swiss preacher was then dealing with several professional crises in the Netherlands—crises that had begun immediately after Schlatter had left their company in London back in March 1754. As Smith began to write Franklin with updates regarding his many victories with Penn and the Society for Germans, Schlatter had been summoned by the Dutch Synods to attend a meeting in The Hague. Apparently called into session to deal with the many accusations made against him

[40] Muhlenberg to Francke, 18 June 1754. Printed in *Muhlenberg Korrespondenz*, I, 152.
[41] Ibid., 153.

in Pennsylvania, the meeting wound up covering ground that far exceeded the embezzlement charges presented by Steiner and Rubel. Schlatter soon faced charges of multiple affairs, including the one that had produced a child back in Wigoltigen. At some point between 1751 and 1754, word of the controversy had finally made it back to the Dutch Synods. In the weeks leading up to this March 1754 meeting, a member of the Synods had written to Johann Conrad Wirz, head of the Reformed Church in Switzerland, for clarification on the matter. By the time Schlatter arrived in The Hague, deputies were still awaiting a response.[42]

Schlatter seems to have known of the upcoming charges. Many of them were the same that he had already successfully defended himself against in an arbitration case back in Pennsylvania in 1750. These charges had largely dealt with his mishandling of donation money, but they had also involved a comparably embarrassing accusation that he had carried on an affair with the wife of a man named Wissler.[43] On March 19, two representatives of the Classis of Amsterdam subjected Schlatter to what Pritzker-Ehrlich describes as a "strict examination." To address the first charge of adultery, Schlatter presented the arbitration results in which a Pennsylvania judge had found him innocent on all charges. Incredibly, to further rebut the same charge, he used the character reference written by his former employer, Johann Beyel, shortly before the preacher had learned that Schlatter had impregnated his daughter.[44] For the time being, Schlatter's defense held. The investigators from the Synod were already predisposed to dismiss the embezzlement charges. Until further evidence could be collected, they decided to reserve judgment on the charges of sexual misconduct. Schlatter's victories did not stop there. Among other developments during this initial meeting, the Synods had agreed to ban Rubel from

[42] All of this is described in Pritzker-Ehrlich, *Michael Schlatter*, 163. The author draws these details from the *Akten der Deputierten beider Synoden*
[43] Ibid., 165.
[44] Ibid.

preaching in Philadelphia and had deemed Steiner's "Rival Coetus" invalid. They also officially recommended Schlatter for the superintendent job at Smith's English schools.[45]

Despite these wins, Schlatter largely remained in stasis. He could not leave the Netherlands until Wirz reported back from Switzerland on the Wigoltigen affair. A letter finally arrived in early April. Its contents greatly complicated the judgments already laid down by the Dutch Synods. Wirz confirmed Schlatter's affair with Beyel, though he stipulated that from what he had heard, Schlatter had merely been "seduced by a horny woman."[46] In Wirz's eyes, Schlatter's sins had occurred in the distant past, long before he had set out to complete his admirable work in Pennsylvania. The Synods mostly accepted Wirz's judgment. Nonetheless, all involved knew that such a revelation would send shockwaves through an already divided colonial community. Realizing that he had been backed into a corner, Schlatter offered to step down as preacher to the Philadelphia congregation, so long as the Dutch Synods did not include news of his affair within their report to the Pennsylvania Coetus. Ultimately, the Synod agreed to these terms. On May 14, 1754, Schlatter submitted his resignation, though he cited his upcoming superintendent duties as the official cause. Despite all of this, the Synods agreed to allow Schlatter to stay on as a member of the Pennsylvania Coetus.[47]

With this resolved, one more hurdle remained for Schlatter. The Synods had long ago scheduled an official Coetus meeting for June 10, 1754 in the city of Harlem. Among other issues on the docket, the Synods were to discuss the recent developments in England regarding the German Free Schools. David Thomson had made the trip to attend this meeting and therefore bore witness as the collected leadership of the Dutch Reformed Church handed down final

[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid.

judgment on Schlatter. Though terms had been agreed to months before, the deputies in charge of handling the scandal had apparently needed to make them official. Ultimately, the governing body decided to protect Schlatter, on the following grounds: the preacher had from a young age received countless glowing references from his superiors with regards to his considerable abilities; Wirz himself had vouched for him; his sins with women were all the fault of seductive coquettes and were committed long before his accomplishments in Pennsylvania; and, finally, Schlatter himself had apparently already made peace with Swiss authorities and had now bravely submitted himself to the Coetus and pledged to accept its judgment. After the Coetus members had settled upon this outcome, they called Schlatter into the meeting, where he accepted everything "with much humility and courage."[48] Fearing that news of Schlatter's indiscretions might ruin the good work he had done in Pennsylvania, the body then agreed to "to keep a sacred silence about everything concerning this matter."[49] For the time being, his sins in Wigoltigen were to remain a secret. Schlatter did not, however, escape this second trial without repercussions. In addition to accepting the preacher's resignation from his post in Philadelphia, the body also banned him from the Pennsylvania Coetus. In terms of his employment, this left only his new appointment as superintendent of the German Free Schools. As Schlatter would soon find out, this position too was anything but secure.

BRIBERY

Unlike the Lutherans, Pennsylvania's Reformed Calvinists did not immediately embrace the German Free Schools. This was not for a lack of Smith's trying. A few months after Henry

[48] Ibid., 168.
[49] Ibid., 169.

Muhlenberg and his Lutheran congregants had offered existent school buildings for use in their Scheme, the Trustees sent Muhlenberg a detailed account of their plans and asked him to help "bring the Calvinist Congregations to concur in the same Choice."[50] In addition, on September 20, 1754, Smith wrote to two Reformed ministers named William Stoy and John Reiger.[51] In this letter, he described the school scheme in great detail, relaying that he and his Trustees were "empowered to increase the yearly salaries of pious and well-behaved ministers among you, and will accordingly do the same, especially if all things are amicably settled between you and Mr. Schlatter, for as few of you are personally known to us we must depend in some measure upon his resolution."[52] Given that Smith had previously mentioned the benefit of keeping Reformed ministers on the Society's payroll, this offer amounted to a bribe.[53] Smith promised to keep said ministers informed on the Society's plans and even committed to receiving their "advice from time to time in the management of the whole design."

Reiger and Stoy responded two days later. Explaining that Schlatter himself had yet to return to Pennsylvania, the preacher informed Smith that they would wait to make any decisions on the matter until "our next classis, which will be held, D.V., next spring in Lancaster."[54] Schlatter returned to Philadelphia on September 28, 1754. Carrying letters from the Dutch Synods that were meant to end the schism between the church's pro- and anti-Schlatter factions, the preacher also had orders to convince congregants to accept Smith's plan for the German Free Schools. In response to these measures, Schlatter called a special Coetus meeting for October 30.[55] Unfortunately for Smith, and especially Schlatter, this left a full month for impressionable

[50] German Free School Minutes, 37.
[51] William Smith to Reiger and Stoy, 30 September 1754. Published in Smith, *Life and Correspondence*, 81-84.
[52] Ibid., 82.
[53] See Smith to Franklin and Peters, February 1754.
[54] John Bartholomaus Reiger and William Stoy to William Smith, 1 October 1754. Published in Smith, *Life and Correspondence*, 84.
[55] See *Coetus Minutes*, 114.

Reformed congregants to consider the dissent Christopher Sauer was then publishing in his newspaper.

Of all the accusations Sauer made against the founders of the German Free Schools, one particularly resonated with his readership: he greatly resented the charges that German citizens were disloyal to the British Crown. Sauer could not have known of the letter Schlatter wrote to Thomas Penn in 1750 in which he had commented on the rebellious nature of the German people.[56] Nonetheless, he placed responsibility for this narrative directly at the man's feet. "Slatter has accused the Germans to such a degree, and presented them as if they were a nation of a Roguish and mischievous disposition," the newspaper man wrote, "that in time of War would probably join with the French and villainously espouse their cause." After taking a shot at Schlatter's character, Sauer went on to argue that the schools could only subvert the independent streak that had long ago come to define Pennsylvania's Germans. If anything, he implied, the *Germans* should teach the *English* a thing or two about the true Christian faith. "The Preacher Solomon says [in Chapter 9, verse 18]: Wisdom is better than Weapons of War," he wrote. "But one single artful and wicked Man destroyeth much Good. The wicked Man may either preach English or german, yet it is to no purpose of benefit, for no soul shall be mended thereby, nay, not himself."[57]

Much to Smith's dismay, Sauer went on to encourage Germans to support the Quakers in the upcoming Assembly election. As discussed in the Introduction to this thesis, Sauer's article did considerable damage to the Trustees' plan. In addition to establishing a German-language press, the group also commissioned Smith to write a short history, which they hoped might mitigate some of the carnage. This *Memorial*, however, would not be ready until the following

[56] Once again, see Schlatter to Penn, 12 June 1750. Penn Official Correspondence. HSP.
[57] *German Free School Minutes*, 35.

January.[58] This left Smith to deal with an obstinate, if not altogether irate Reformed Church. The Coetus, of course, was no fan of Sauer. The body abhorred his sectarian leanings. Many among its ranks had fallen at some point or another within the man's career-destroying sights. Nonetheless, many among the Reformed community did take great offense to charges of disloyalty. Summarizing his disappointment with this impression, Stoy would later write to the Dutch Synods that they "perceive that our condition has been exhibited to you under an exceedingly sad and gloomy aspect, on account of the Papists rushing in hither." Where this rumor came from, Stoy could not say. "But be assured it is utterly false. None of us are acquainted with many priests, and no one on these shores passes over readily to the camps of the priests." In fact, Stoy continued, "We know of only one Jesuit in the whole of Pennsylvania. Of French Jesuits we know none at all; and they will not be endured so long as we have not to bear the French yoke."[59]

To address the source of this resentment, the Trustees of the German Free Schools asked Muhlenberg to attend the October meeting of the Reformed Coetus. Writing to the preacher with detailed directions, Smith took a tough tone when describing how Muhlenberg should handle any dissent. "If by any ill-timed Discord they shall defeat the benevolent Design of the Society," he wrote, "they will be accountable to God not only for their own Ignorance but all that Ignorance & misery which they will thereby entail upon their unhappy Children."[60] Six days later, Muhlenberg reported back that he would not need to attend the Coetus as he had already held a meeting in his own home with "Mr. [Leydich] & the chief Men of the reformed Calvinists at New Providence, and several honest Men of other Denominations."[61] At this time, Muhlenberg

[58] Ibid., 35-36.
[59] Harbaugh, *Life and Labors*, 286-287.
[60] *German Free School Minutes*, 38.
[61] Ibid., 39.

had made Smith's case and they "had unanimously agreed to concur in the Choice of our offered Lutheran School-house as the best situated for our Children of all Denominations." Leydich had even offered up the use of another existent schoolhouse for use "when our Children of all Denominations should grow too numerous to be contained in."[62] Schlatter's letters, it seems, combined with Smith's promise to raise the salaries of all who took part in the school project, had achieved their desired result. For the time being, the Reformed Church signed off on Smith's plan, and he was finally free to begin opening his schools.

[62] Ibid., 40.

Chapter Six: Failure 1755-1762

Throughout 1754, Thomas Penn watched from afar as Smith's long-brewing Scheme finally came to fruition. By the onset of 1755, the proprietor would drop any pretense when discussing the true motivations for the German Free Schools. On February 1, he responded to a letter from Richard Peters, in which the councilman had lamented the Quakers' continued domination of the 1754 General Assembly election. Peters had taken offense to a smear campaign conducted by the proprietor's enemies and expressed anxiety about whether the German Free Schools would achieve their desired effect.[1] Penn thought these concerns premature. "I observe of your account of Mr. Allens and our Friends disappointment in the election of Members of the Assembly," he wrote, "and do not at all wonder at the conduct of the Germans: you cannot expect at once to change their opinions of People they have long believed their friends."[2] Penn believed the Trustees of the German Free Schools should maintain "cautious measures." As for the smear campaign: "False storys must be made use of from the nature of the thing, unless human nature should change, at all elections, and you should not let such give you any concern."[3]

In this same letter, Penn also informed Peters that the Society in London had signed off on the many adaptations to the Scheme made by the Trustees in Pennsylvania—particularly the plan involving Franklin's German newspaper. "They approve of your purchasing a press," he wrote, "and I hope by means of that and the Schools, the Germans will in a few years be

[1] Richard Peters to Thomas Penn 23 December 1754. Penn Official Correspondence. Volume 6, 251.
[2] Thomas Penn to Richard Peters, 21 February 1755. Penn Letterbook II. HSP.
[3] Ibid.

undeceived, and drawn off from the attachment they now have to the Quakers."[4] Still, the proprietor remained concerned about other matters. One week later, he wrote Smith a cautionary note. No doubt with his eye on population numbers, he feared the educator might have alienated the Reformed Church by favoring cooperative Lutherans. After praising him for the acquisition of the Lutheran schoolhouses, he advised the educator to take great care not to "give any reasonable cause of disgust to the Calvinists to whom this Society owes its rise."[5] Carrying on this theme as he commented on Smith's *Brief History*, he counselled the educator to continue to reference Schlatter's and Thomson's original intentions for the Society, while slowly acclimatizing the Reformed Church to the many changes to the Scheme made by the Trustees. "There is only one thing I think rather too strongly mentioned, he wrote, "which is the assistance to Ministers, which seems to imply that the Society would apply the Land principally for their maintenance, whereas the establishing of Schools is the favourite part of the Scheme."[6]

With these matters settled, Smith finally put his plans into effect. On April 10, 1755, Smith reported to Penn that "the free schools flourish."[7] By June, he and his cohorts had opened schools at New Providence, Upper Salford, Reading, Tulpehocken/Heidelberg, Easton, and Vincent Township.[8] In July, another opened in Lancaster.[9] In all, Smith claimed to have petitions for eighteen additional schools and that he found "little difficulty in obtaining Masters & schoolhouses for all of them."[10] In the meantime, Franklin and Armbüster began publishing their half-English and half-German newspaper, the *Philadelphische Zeitung*, in July the same year.

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[4] Ibid.
[5] Thomas Penn to William Smith, 28 February 1755. Smith Papers. University of Pennsylvania.
[6] Ibid.
[7] William Smith to Thomas Penn, 10 April 1755. Penn Official Correspondence. Volume 7, 23. HSP.
[8] *Free German School Minutes*, 64-65.
[9] Weber, *Charity Schools*, 46.
[10] William Smith to Thomas Penn, 1 May 1755. Penn Official Correspondence. Volume 7, 29. HSP.

All in all, Smith took on an optimistic tone when corresponding with his superiors. "The Calvinist ministry seem now entirely reconciled & have addressed us in the most respectful manner," he wrote. Better yet, "Sauer is little believed in the affairs of the schools & I am told has made many Enemies by his opposition to so good a Design."[11] In October, Penn responded favorably to this rosy tenor. "I am much pleased with the account you give of the Schools," he wrote, "and at our next meeting shall inform the Society what you write on that effect."[12] As for Sauer, Penn was pleased that the man's invective against the schools had fallen flat. "For when a man is supposed capable of misrepresenting in one article," wrote the proprietor, "he may soon be supplanted, and I hope to hear the people will not be so eager to allow his poison."[13]

As it would turn out, both Penn and Smith had greatly overestimated the degree of their success. Despite immediate interest in the schools and the cooperation of prominent Lutheran ministers, both the school endeavor and Franklin's newspaper largely failed to gain traction. This was true for three chief reasons. First, the presence of Michael Schlatter continued to cause fits for the Trustees. Always a lightning rod for controversy, he continued to make decision after decision that would further alienate him from his peers. Second, Sauer's continued attacks on the Scheme picked up intensity as he learned and published more details regarding the true motivations of the Trustees. Finally, Smith himself lost patience with the scheme. As the Seven Years' War began to ravage the frontiers of Pennsylvania, Smith attempted to streamline his dream of a homogeneous colony by making an impassioned plea to the British Parliament to greatly restrict the rights of German immigrants. Not only would this effort fall disastrously flat, but Smith's own words would soon be used as the ultimate argument against his German Free

[11] Ibid.
[12] Thomas Penn to William Smith, 24 October 1755. Penn Letterbook. Volume 2. HSP.
[13] Ibid.

Schools. Combined, these factors caused the schools to sputter along through seven largely ineffectual years, before finally shutting down for good in 1762.

A MATTER OF CHARACTER

Michael Schlatter returned to Philadelphia in the fall of 1754 with what had to have been incredible peace of mind. When the Dutch Synods agreed not to inform the Pennsylvania Coetus of the Wigoltigen affair, Schlatter found himself, for the first time in more than a decade, unhaunted by the specter of his past. All he had to do to maintain this second chance at an uncontroversial life was to honor the pledge he had made to the Synods not to serve the Church in any capacity beyond his superintendent duties for the German Free Schools. Unbelievably, Schlatter did not even make it a month before breaking this promise. In doing so, he put Smith's scheme at great risk.

Upon arriving in Philadelphia, Schlatter called a special Coetus meeting, which he held at his own home on October 30, 1754. In the days before the meeting, members of the body had already agreed to allow children to attend classes at the schoolhouses offered by Muhlenberg and his Lutheran allies.[14] This allowed the group to turn its attention to more pressing matters, including finally ending the schism that had divided the church since Rubel's arrival in 1752. "It was resolved," the group wrote in its official report to the Dutch Synods, "not to call this present assembly of the brethren an ordinary Coetus, as at this time it was principally our object to establish a perfect unity and Christian bond among and between the ministers."[15] To this end, Schlatter carried a letter from the Dutch Synods, which detailed "his dismissal of June 16 of this

[14] As described in Chapter Five. See, *German Free School Minutes*, 38.
[15] *Coetus Minutes*, 114.

current year, received from you at Haarlem." Schlatter soon resigned—but not before passing on another letter, which in effect banned Rubel from preaching in Pennsylvania.[16]

What happened next remains disputed. The Coetus would later admit that the records of the special October meeting were less than truthful. According to Schlatter, in his absence, the group expressed great consternation regarding his dismissal. The body immediately called for him to return to the meeting and soon created a new position for him, which put him in charge of all "church affairs."[17] In addition, the group also reinstated him to the Coetus. Schlatter accepted these commissions though "only provisionally, until the Rev. and Christian Fathers in Holland were able and willing to approve of it and consent to it."[18] In the meantime, Steiner and other enemies of Schlatter confessed "before God in all sincerity in whatever we were convinced to have given offense or provocation." This act finally brought the Reformed leadership in Pennsylvania to a "genuine peace."[19] According to Schlatter's report, by the end of the meeting, the Coetus had agreed that he was to be the only one in correspondence with the Dutch Synod—apparently to avoid the sort of he-said-he-said tattling that had resulted from the previous year's schism.

Unsurprisingly, Schlatter wasted little time writing the Dutch Synods with excuses for defying the body's orders. Writing on November 3, 1754, he completed his trifecta of disobedience, admitting that he had also consented to preach at Philadelphia "at the unanimous request and advice of the brethren…until your Reverences will be pleased to send them a minister."[20] As to the special commission his peers had bestowed on him, as well as his

[16] Ibid., 115.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid., 119.

reinstatement to the Coetus itself, he implied that he had had no choice but to accept. "I can unhesitatingly testify that neither the one nor the other was sought by me directly or indirectly," he wrote. "On the contrary I was compelled to be satisfied with it until your Reverences will deem it advisable either to approve or disapprove of this resolution."[21] While he waited for a response, Schlatter no doubt reveled in the spiraling descent of Rubel, who seemed "ill at ease, and not well satisfied with his dismissal" and whose "congregation is decreasing, and the majority wish that they could be rid of him."[22]

At some point, between June and October of 1755, two letters from the Synods finally arrived.[23] Though these letters no longer exist, it is clear the Reformed leadership in the Netherlands had become incensed with Schlatter. The Pennsylvania Coetus responded in horror after a special meeting held on October 8. "We have learned from them that to our Coetal proceedings D. Schlatter added a letter, containing some other things of which there is no mention in the proceedings themselves," wrote William Stoy, Schlatter's Coetus-appointed replacement. "This appears to be not unlike fraud."[24] According to Stoy, Schlatter had willfully limited the Coetus' ability to communicate with the Synods, no doubt to spin the acceptance of his new offices as reluctant and altruistic. "On the contrary," Stoy wrote, "we saw that he was very eager for it." In fact, "of his own accord he offered himself, and undertook the work not unwillingly, knowing that the burden of the schools would not be too great for him."[25]The Coetus had only "assented to Mr. Schlatter's wishes for the sake of preserving friendship."[26] Soon thereafter, Schlatter joined Rubel as a shepherd without a flock.

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[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid.
[23] See ibid., they are apparently dated May 1 and June 2.
[24] Ibid., 133-134.
[25] Ibid., 134.
[26] Ibid.

All of this put Smith in an incredibly awkward position. Starting in February 1755, Schlatter had begun travelling to and from the various schools the Trustees had erected throughout Pennsylvania. "The people in many places are averse to poor Schlatter," he wrote to Penn on July 2, 1755, "which occasions some little Inconveniences."[27] Unable to find a suitable replacement, Smith was forced to smooth things over with the Reformed leadership through other means. Unfortunately, the situation soon intensified. In October, the Reformed Coetus sent the Dutch Synods a scathing rebuke of the German Free Schools. "Apparently at least, and most likely, they will not be of much public or private service to our Church," it wrote, "because,

1. The only object of these schools is the introduction of the English language among the Germans, which is purely a political matter, hence
2. Our German schools can expect nothing, as examples show.
3. What has appeared to us especially wonderful and strange is, that the direction and management of these schools under the auspices of the Trustees has been entrusted—the Reformed in Lancaster, for example having been entirely passed over—to Moravians, Quakers, Separatists, perchance even Deists and others of this class. Can you think of a wolf caring for the pastures of fleece-bearing sheep?[28]

Smith himself soon stoked these fires. Over the summer, a Reformed preacher named Otterbein had apparently written him with some of the complaints listed above, stating that the schools were not "in accordance with the wishes of the Rev. Fathers [in Holland]."[29] Smith allegedly responded by declaring: "The Fathers in Holland have nothing to do in it."[30] This exchange culminated in the discussion between Smith and Penn reprinted in the introduction to this chapter.

Records show that the Coetus only softened its stance against the schools after Smith had "showed to us not only more clearly the origin of the schools from the London instructions, but

[27] William Smith to Thomas Penn, 2 July 1755. Penn Official Correspondence. Volume 7, 81. HSP.
[28] *Coetus Minutes*, 138.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid.

also delivered a certain [sum] of money to each one of us."[31] Smith had shrewdly calculated such payments were the best way to keep the Reformed leadership under his thumb. Back in July, Schlatter had tried to convince Smith that donated funds should go directly to the Coetus itself for disbursement. A letter Smith wrote to Penn in July 1755 explains why the educator had preferred otherwise. Harkening back to plans he had previously envisioned with Penn back in 1753, Smith contended that unless the Trustees were the ones handing out payments, "We should have no check upon the Ministers, & no opportunity of seeing them." [32] He therefore devised a plan that "the ministers should be told on receiving [payment] that it was given by the Society for their trouble as Catechists of the free schools, under their respective cares. This will convince the Ministers of our Regard to Religion, and keep them firm to the Interest of the schools, because they think their salary depends entirely on their services among the children." If the Society were to " either give the money in one Sum, or give it to them merely as ministers…they might perhaps openly oppose them. But as Catechists we have a right to advise & direct them."[33] This remarkable letter marks a clear line of demarcation between Schlatter's original mission and Smith's new Scheme. The Reformed Ministers were no longer to receive charitable funds simply to preach and oversee their flock, but had in affect become employees of the German Free Schools. This final measure effectively kept the Reformed leadership in check throughout the remaining years of the school project.

As for the man who had originated the movement five years prior, Schlatter's reputation in Pennsylvania had been permanently damaged. By 1756, it was clear to the Trustees that he had become more trouble than he was worth. In June of that year, Penn, on the council of

[31] Ibid., 144.
[32] Smith to Penn, 2 July 1755. Penn Papers. HSP.
[33] Ibid.

Richard Peters, recommended to Smith that he try to get Schlatter a job as a chaplain for the German-speaking regiment in the British Royal Army.[34] "He is a considerable Burden to the Society," Penn wrote, "and the Schools would not suffer greatly if they were left without him, tho' we must say he is always ready, although not always agreeable to his unstable and ungreatful countrymen."[35] It was no coincidence, then, that in March 1757, John Campbell, Commander and Chief of the British Army, sent Schlatter a letter requesting his service.[36] Schlatter served in this role until the end of the war in 1759.[37] Afterward, he settled in Chestnut Hill.[38] During the Revolutionary War, he once again served as a chaplain in the Royal Army. Toward the end of the conflict, British officers arrested him when he refused to obey orders during the invasion of Germantown. While Schlatter wasted away in prison, soldiers ransacked his home.[39] No doubt this final rebellion had a great effect on early German-American historians. When looking for a sole progenitor for the Reformed Church in America, this act of defiance made Schlatter an appealing candidate.

Schlatter died sometime in October 1790. His family buried him in the cemetery at the German Reformed church in Philadelphia, which town officials long ago tore down.[40] In a twist that would no doubt elicit a chuckle from the many enemies he had accrued over his controversial but meaningful life, Schlatter's remains now lie under the Franklin Square Mini Golf Course, where tourists from across the country can attempt to finagle a ball through the crack in a life-size replica of the Liberty Bell.

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[34] For more on this history of this German-speaking regiment, see Harbaugh, *Life and Labors*, 322-324.
[35] Thomas Penn to William Smith, June 1756. Penn Papers. HSP.
[36] See Harbaugh, *Life and Labors*, 325.
[37] Ibid., 328.
[38] Ibid., 330.
[39] Ibid.,
[40] Ibid., 356.

SAUER

With the support of the Reformed Coetus finally secure, one major obstacle continued to impede Smith's German Free Schools: Christopher Sauer. As Sauer's attacks on the schools increased in volume and severity throughout 1755, Franklin's proposed competition failed to gain its desired audience. Writing to his superiors on October 3, 1755, Smith tap danced around this fact with a largely contradictory update. "The German News-paper succeeds well; there being upwards of 400 Subscribers & more daily coming in," he claimed. "But it is so very low that it will do no more than clear itself & that not till the year's End."[41] Muhlenberg, Franklin, and Smith seem to have been working from the premise that the only reason so many Germans read Sauer's newspaper was for a lack of better options. As it turned out, Sauer's wide circulation had much more to do with the unprecedented amount of trust he had accrued over several decades of reporting.[42]

Though Sauer was at times harsh and unrepentantly aggressive, no one in Pennsylvania could deny the man had a deep and abiding love for his home colony. For more than thirty years, he had been one of the most active proponents of removal to North America.[43] Writing to the governor of Pennsylvania three years before his death, Sauer acknowledged the impact of letters he had written to peers in the Palatinate, estimating that their influence had grown exponentially over the decades. "I wrote largely to all my friends and acquaintances of the civil and religious liberty, privileges, etc., and of the goodness I have heard and seen," he wrote. "My letters were

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[41] *German Free School Minutes*, 70.

[42] Historians estimate that Sauer's newspaper circulation sat somewhere between 8,000 and 10,000 at its peak. These numbers would have meant that Sauer had the collective ear of nearly one-tenth of Pennsylvania's German-speaking population. Frasca, "Rescue the Germans," 338.

[43] Sauer to Brothers and Friends, 1724. Reprinted in "Johann Christopher Sower and Johann Christoph Sauer, "An Early Description of Pennsylvania. Letter of Christopher Sower, Written in 1724, Describing Conditions in Philadelphia and Vicinity, and the Sea Voyage from Europe," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 3 (1921): 249.

printed and reprinted, and provoked many a thousand people to come to this Province.[44] It is no surprise, then, that by the mid-1750s his *Hoch-Deustche Americanische Calender* and his long-running newspaper, *Der Hoch-Deutsch Pensylvanische Geschicht-Schreiber*, had become *the* source of news for German-speaking settlements throughout Pennsylvania. [45]

In these publications, Sauer often wrote in a bombastic and highly rhetorical style. By 1755, he seems to have settled on a more direct tone. As he began to launch his assault on the German Free Schools, he augmented his written pieces with straightforward letters to prominent German-speaking citizens. One of these letters, written to Conrad Weiser on September 16, 1755, provides perhaps the best extant summary of his misgivings toward the project. Sauer, it seems, had detailed knowledge of conversations held between members of the schools' Trustees. Whether through investigative reporting or through sheer prescience, Sauer sniffed out Smith's true intentions, down to the last detail. This resulted in a largely cynical letter that put forth a conspiracy theory that only barely overstated the truth:

> I wonder whether it is really that Gilbert Tennent, Schlatter, Peters, Hamilton, Allen, Turner, Shippen, Smith, Franklin, Muehlenberg, Brunholtz, Handschuh, etc. do care in the least for the real conversion of the ignorant Germans in Pennsylvania or whether the institution of Free Schools is rather supposed to be the foundation for the subjection of this country, since everybody will pursue his own selfish ends by means of this scheme. As far as Hamilton, Peters, Allen, Turner, Shippen and Franklin are concerned, I know that they care very little either for religion or for the cultivation of the Germans, they rather want the Germans to stick out their necks by serving in the Militia in order to protect the property of these gentlemen.[46]

Sauer went on to allege that Schlatter and Smith were colluding to put many of these men on the General Assembly. Here he sharpened his rhetorical axe. "These assemblymen," he wrote, "will

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[44] Christopher Sauer to Robert Hunter Morris, 15 March 1755. Reprinted in, Martin Grove Brumbaugh, *A History of the German Baptist Brethren in Europe and America*, (Illinois: Brethren Publishing House, 1899), 376-377.
[45] The full title was *Der Hoch-Deutsch Pensylvanische Geschicht-Schreiber, oder Sammlung Wichtiger Nachrichten aus der Natur und Kirchen-Reich*. Roughly translated, this read, *The High German Pennsylvania Recorder of Events, or Collection of Important News from the Realms of Nature and the Church*."
[46] Christopher Sauer to Conrad Weiser, 16 September 1755. Reprinted in Rothermund, *Layman's Progress,* 171.

make a law with [Governor Robert Hunter Morris] to establish a Militia, to build fortifications, drill soldiers, and to fix a stipendium or salary for preachers and schoolteachers, so that it will no longer be necessary to write letters to Halle pleading for funds."[47]

Sauer went on to relate to Weiser what he was hearing in German communities regarding the schools. Based upon his own conversations, he found that most German-speaking Pennsylvanians did not want to be Anglicized. They did not want their children playing with nor dressing like English children. Others feared that the schools were intentionally placed at great enough distances to ensure that the "Poor cannot participate in the scheme."[48] Whether these views constituted majority opinion in Pennsylvania did not matter. Ultimately, they resonated with readers more than anything Franklin published in his rival newspaper. Indeed, Sauer's circulation numbers remained lofty until his death in September 1758. Franklin's *Philadelphische Zeitung* did not last two years.[49]

AN INVIDIOUS PAMPHLET

As Smith and the Trustees continued to open schools across Pennsylvania, and as the Reformed Church continued to waffle in its allegiance to the scheme, the war with France and its Native American allies escalated in the Ohio Country. Added to the pressure of pleasing the proprietor, Smith now felt the stress of impending doom. "Since I last wrote you I have been engaged in one trouble after another," Smith wrote Thomas Barton in November 1755. "We have had nothing here but alarms upon alarms."[50] Rumors abounded that the French had already employed Delaware and Shawnee Indians to wreak havoc along the Pennsylvania frontier. As

[47] Ibid., 172.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Frantz, "Franklin and the Pennsylvania Germans," 24.
[50] William Smith to Thomas Barton, 2 November 1755. Reprinted in Smith, *Life and Correspondence*, 120.

Philadelphia itself fell at risk, Smith became increasingly open in his attacks on the proprietor's enemies. "The Lives and properties of the People are things too sacred to be trifled with," he wrote in October 1755. "And yet while our Government rests in the hands of *Quakers*; they must trifle on the Subject of Defence."[51] Now, more than ever before, Smith believed the Quakers must be expunged from the General Assembly. This meant committing himself to a drastic reassessment of the Scheme he had spent the better part of two years developing—an endeavor that had seen him rise from a lowly tutor to the provost of a prominent North American college.

Though Smith held much disdain for the Quakers, his opinion of German voters suddenly took center stage. The Quakers, after all, relied entirely on German ignorance to maintain their stranglehold on the General Assembly. When Smith first began to amend Franklin's initial plans for German Free Schools in 1753, he had understood that the project would take time. By focusing on the young rather than the old, Smith had seen his true victories as being a decade or so off in the future. Penn had signed off on this approach as he had agreed that the Germans could only be brought around through "gentle means."[52] Upon the defeat of General Edward Braddock in July 1755, however, the future of Pennsylvania itself was no longer guaranteed. Though Smith would not initially admit it to Penn, his actions from the summer of 1755 onward suggest that the optimism he had relayed after his summer dealings with Reformed ministers was less than authentic. He soon openly admitted to his peers in Pennsylvania and London that the Scheme was destined to fail if it did not receive increased aid from Great Britain.

Sometime before August 1755, Smith sat down to write yet another pamphlet. Published anonymously, the resultant *Brief State of the Province of Pennsylvania* dropped all pretenses,

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[51] William Smith to the Archbishop of Canterbury, 22 October 1755. Reprinted in Ibid., 118.
[52] Thomas Penn to Smith, 24 October 1755. Smith Papers. HSP.

lifting the thin veil that had once separated Smith's charitable concerns from his partisan agenda. In many ways, *Brief State* was the antithesis of *Rise and Progress.* In the latter, he had written in a rosy and largely reverential tone as he described the challenges facing Pennsylvania. Now he wrote with the pessimistic vigor of an apocalyptic preacher. "We are now in an alarming Situation," he declared in his opening tract, "but we have brought the Evil upon ourselves, and Things are now come to that Crisis, that if I was under no Obligation to satisfy your Expectations, yet I should deem my Silence an unpardonable Neglect of the Duty I owe to my Country."[53]

Smith opened the heart of his pamphlet with a quick breakdown of the makeup of Pennsylvania, particularly its population and the basic structure of its government. Written for a London audience, he gladly reported to his readers that of all Great Britain's North American colonies, "Pennsylvania is the most flourishing." Inhabited by 220,000 people, approximately half were German. Pennsylvania's legislative branch consisted of a Governor and a General Assembly, the latter of which was "chosen annually" and worked and adjourned on its own "without being prorogued or dissolved by their Governors."[54] Throughout Pennsylvania's earliest history, he wrote, various Quaker-led Assemblies had ruled over small populations within a political framework that gave disproportionate power to everyday citizens. This system had worked because "the People being few…the Government may also be administer'd without the Faction and Anarchy incident to popular Forms."[55] In recent decades, however, the population of Pennsylvania had boomed. Now, "the People, instead of being subjected to more

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[53] William Smith, *A Brief State of the Province of Pennsylvania, in which The Conduct of their Assemblies for several Years past is impartially examined, and the true Cause of the continual Encroachments of the French displayed, more especially the secret Design of their late unwarrantable Invasion and Settlement upon the River Ohio* (London: R. Griffiths, 1755), 9-10. Reprinted by Joseph Sabin (New York: 1865).
[54] Ibid., 10.
[55] Ibid., 12.

Checks, are under fewer than at first; and their Power has been continually increasing with their Numbers and Riches, while the Power of their Governors, far from keeping Pace with theirs, has rather been decreasing in the same Proportion ever since." To Smith, the consequences of this were clear. Pennsylvania had become a "pure Republic." As more and more immigrants flocked to the colony, the government had become "so unwieldly as to fall a Prey to any *Invader*, or sink beneath its own Weight, unless a speedy Remedy is applied."[56]

Smith went on to drop the hammer on the current Quaker-led Assembly. He accused it of having openly defied "the Orders of the Crown" to muster a militia. As the French moved further and further into the Ohio Country, the Quakers had left their colony largely undefended. "In *Pennsylvania*, we have but one small Fortification, and that raised and supported at the Expence of private People," he wrote. "The Proprietors, indeed, generously made us a Present of twelve large Cannon, part of the twenty-six we have mounted, and they have also given the Gunner of the Fort a Salary of twenty Pounds *per Annum* toward his Support." Otherwise, he continued, "we are entirely naked."

Though he confessed he understood the importance of religious convictions, Smith contended that this argument did not apply to the majority on the General Assembly. The Quakers' pacifistic views were merely a smokescreen for their true concern: maintenance of power. Said Smith: "Our Assemblies apprehend, that as soon as they agree to give sufficient Sums for the regular Defence of the Country, it would strike at the Root of all their Power." By creating an official colonial militia, Pennsylvania would create a "vast Number of new Relations, Dependencies, and Subordinations in the Government." The Quakers, then, feared that militiamen would vote based upon the wishes of their officers, who themselves would receive

[56] Ibid., 13-14.

guidance directly from the government. This would no doubt cost them a significant number of votes come election time.

In the meantime, Pennsylvania's citizens were growing increasingly restless. "A Petition from a Thousand of these poor Families, who inhabit the back Parts of the Colony," Smith wrote, "was presented to the Assembly, last *August*, soon after *Washington's* Defeat, praying that they might be furnished with Arms and Ammunition for their Defence."[57] And yet, the Quakers, a minority in Pennsylvania, had rejected the Petition "with Scorn." To this, Smith responded with a rhetorical question: "But here it may be justly asked, by what means the *Quakers,* who are so small a Part of the Inhabitants, and whose Measures are so unpopular, get continually chosen into our Assemblies?" In short, he answered, the Quakers held power because of the irresponsibility of German voters.

Here, he again took aim at Christopher Sauer. Falsely claiming that Sauer had once been a Catholic, Smith implied that the publisher was in fact "a Popish Emissary." His newspaper, "which is universally read and believed by the *Germans* in this Province," was a constant source of disinformation. Smith went on to allege that the Quakers had taken Sauer "under their pay" to convince Germans that the proprietary government meant "to enslave them." Sauer had for years printed stories that suggested "all the Miseries they suffered in *Germany*, with heavy Aggravations, would be their Lot, unless they joined to keep in the *Quakers*, under whose Administration they had so long enjoyed Ease and Tranquillity."[58]

Smith explained to his London audience that German-speaking colonists had long since become the decisive demographic in Pennsylvania's elections. Ever since the Quakers had learned this "Secret," they had routinely used Sauer to win German votes. "The Germans," he

[57] Ibid., 26.
[58] Ibid., 49.

wrote, "instead of being a peaceable industrious People as before, now finding themselves of such Consequence, are grown insolent, sullen, and turbulent." Smith contended that this "insolence" would eventually lead the Germans to join French invaders and help them "eject all the *English* Inhabitants."[59] Though Smith and his allies had made many efforts to "convince the *Germans* of our common Danger," all these efforts had failed.[60] Smith could "now see no Remedy left among ourselves." He relented that Pennsylvanians must now turn to "our Mother-Country for Succour, and if not speedily granted, this noble Province seems irrecoverably lost."[61]

After making this startling confession, Smith finally got around to describing how, exactly, he planned to free Pennsylvania from the tyranny of Quaker rule. First, he encouraged Parliament to repeal the segment of Great Britain's naturalization law that exempted Quakers from having to take an oath of allegiance to the Crown. Second, he suggested suspending "the Right of Voting for Members of Assembly, from the *Germans*, till they have a sufficient Knowledge of our Language and Constitution."[62] Colonial leadership would then revisit this plan in twenty years, assuming the Germans would shift allegiances and combine with pro-government factions into "that *Coalition*, which we desire."[63] Third, Smith encouraged the British Parliament to directly fund his German Free School project. Here, Smith admitted that the Trustees were running out of money and needed considerable donations. Fourth, Smith proposed that all bonds, contracts, wills, and other legal documents be ruled "void, unless in the *English* Tongue." Finally, Smith proposed that Parliament should ban any foreign-language newspaper in

[59] Ibid., 31.
[60] Ibid., 38.
[61] Ibid., 39.
[62] Ibid., 40.
[63] Ibid., 41.

Pennsylvania, "unless there be a just and fair *English* Version…printed in one Column of the same Page or Pages, along with the said foreign language."[64]

Smith's final two suggestions to Parliament show that the educator believed the Free Schools were destined to fail without the official backing of the British government. Even if everything were fine with Pennsylvania, the Scheme would greatly benefit from imperial oversight. By ending the Society's reliance on charitable clergymen, and by accepting orders directly from Parliament, the Trustees would in effect become another branch of the local government—one with great influence over legislation that might simultaneously fill their coffers and put an end to Sauer's unprecedented pull with the German people. Franklin's paper, which was printed per the exact specifications listed in Smith's final point, would then be free to dominate Pennsylvania's media.

Predictably, Smith's pamphlet, which was published in London and spread throughout the empire by the end of the year, elicited a strong reaction from the Quakers, who fully acknowledged the precariousness of their political situation during a time of war. Published sometime between late summer and early fall, the group soon issued an official response in a tract entitled, *An Answer to an invidious Pamphlet*.[65] After offering a sixty-plus page history on how the Quakers had in the past managed to keep true to their pacifism while also supporting the defense of the colony, the author of this pamphlet eventually turned his eye toward Smith's accusations against Pennsylvania's Germans—and particularly Christopher Sauer. The author relented that it was true Sauer seemed to promote the election of pacifists. But this "ought to throw no reflection on the Quakers."[66] Claiming that Pennsylvania was in effect "the birthright"

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[64] Ibid., 42.
[65] *An Answer to an invidious Pamphlet, intituled, A Brief State of the Province of Pennsylvania* (London: S. Bladon, 1755).
[66] Ibid., 65.

of Quaker citizens, the author went on to argue that even if they "did solicit the assistance of the Germans to preserve their own interests, they were certainly in the right of it."[67]

As for Sauer, the author put forth that he should not be punished for telling the truth as he saw it. "This printer seems to be more terrible to them than the Quakers themselves, as he hath above 100,000 *Germans* at his devotion," the author added, "who if he but whistles, *come down in shoals, and carry all before them*, as he shall direct."[68] Making light of Smith's argument that Sauer was some sort of "Herculean typographer," the author shrewdly argued that the enemies of the Quakers must not think much of the German character to cast them as sheep in search of a demagogic shepherd. Even worse, Smith had questioned the loyalty of an entire populace that was in truth vital and indispensable to the future of Pennsylvania. "It seems a very great inconsistency," the author argued, "that they should leave *Germany* to avoid the tyranny of their natural princes, and yet willingly put themselves under the power of the French, who are more arbitrary still than the German."[69] He then presented a resounding defense of German communities, with which he claimed the Quakers were for more familiar than were Smith and his pro-proprietary allies. Contrary to Smith's allegations, the Germans were a "people easily governed, without power, and [were in] no ways ambitious of authority." The community dreaded "the thoughts of an absolute government, and are sensible of the liberty and other blessings which they enjoy under an English constitution; they have such horrible ideas of Popery and arbitrary power from woeful experience in their own countries, especially that of the French King, that to a man they would prefer death rather than submit to live under it."[70]

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[67] Ibid.
[68] Ibid., 68.
[69] Ibid., 71.
[70] Ibid., 72.

The author followed this statement by breaking down Smith's five suggestions one by one, portraying all of them as attempts to deprive Germans "of their privileges." Unsurprisingly, such ringing endorsements of the German population played well in these communities. Just as predictably, word of Smith's pamphlet soon spread throughout German Pennsylvania. In the July 1, 1756 edition of the *Pennsylvanische Berichte*, Sauer published a story, which used a satirical conceit to address "a rumor" that Smith's ears had been cut off and posted to a whipping post in the heart of Philadelphia. "As witnesses testify," he wrote, "the professor has first written a shameful and lie-ridden report to England, in which the Germans and the Quakers are together godlessly and violently slandered, and presented to Parliament, that Germans are dumb and ignorant louts."[71] English law dictated that such slander merited the removal of the offending party's ears. With his tongue planted firmly in his cheek, Sauer reported that the ears pegged on the whipping post were not real but rather black and made from paper—much like the savage words used by the "black preacher" from the German Free schools.

Given the negative reactions to Smith's pamphlet, as well as the failure of Franklin's newspaper, it is no surprise that Smith's schools soon struggled to find students. No attendance rolls exist before the year 1759. This list, which was attached to a report given to the Society in London, showed 440 students enrolled in eight schools. According to the same report, attendance had maxed out at around 750 sometime before French and Indian allies had destroyed two schoolhouses, one at Easton and another in Codorus Township.[72] While sectarian Germans opposed the schools on religious grounds, Smith's pamphlet had made it difficult to maintain

[71] My translations. See Pennsylvanische Berichte, July 1 1755. Original German reads: "Wie die Beweisthumer zeugen, so hat dieser Professor erst eine schandliche Lugen=volle Schrifft nach Engelland geschrieben, worinnen die Teutsche in Pensilvanien und auch die Quacker mit einander gotloser weise auf das heftigste verlaumdet sind, und dem Parlement vorgestellt, das die Teutsche dumme unwissende grobe Flegel senen." I am going to assume all quirky spelling is 18th century . . .

[72] See Weber, *Charity School Movement*, 47.

support among Lutherans and Calvinists. Many continued to support Quaker leadership, while cooperating with other endeavors to protect the colony through private means.[73] By 1761, the schools were all but extinct. "Regarding the free schools," the Reformed Coetus reported to the Dutch Synods in June of that year, "we can hardly say anything, because the entire matter has been taken out of our hands. In general, we can say that there are still three schools of which we know; two of them are all English and one half German."[74] In 1763, the Society in London redirected all remaining donation money to a new Charity School project run by the College of Philadelphia.[75] In 1764, Samuel Chandler confessed in a letter to Richard Peters that the German Free Schools were now at "an End."[76]

[73] Chiefly through Benjamin Franklin who soon abandoned the German Free Schools as his politics shifted toward the Quaker majority and who would subsequently manage to procure substantial donations of horses and wagons from German Pennsylvanians for use in the war effort. See Whitfield J. Bell and Leonard W. Labaree, "Franklin and the 'Wagon Affair,' 1755," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 6 (1957): 551-558.
[74] *Coetus Minutes*, 198.
[75] See Weber, *Charity School Movement*, 56.
[76] Ibid., 55

Epilogue: A Good Name in the World

Rarely has an institution of higher learning seen a more outlandish dichotomy of comings and goings than did the nascent College of Philadelphia on February 4, 1758. Presumably, those students who were not scheduled to meet with Provost William Smith that morning went about their business as usual, toiling the day away at the school house at Fourth and Arch streets. Everyone else went to prison.

Indeed, Smith's students, assuming no one played hooky that morning, packed up their books, tucked away their ledgers and pencils, then made their way to the jail house on the corner of Third and Market streets, where the good reverend wasted away in a "Common Gaol…the Place for Thieves, Murderers, & Felons." No doubt, this was a strange trip for Smith's protégées. The Pennsylvania General Assembly had taken Smith into custody on January 6 and moved him into the jailhouse on the 25th. During this time, the Provost's students had remained in frustrating abeyance. Class or no class? New professor or old? After weeks of waffling, Smith's peers at the university finally "considered how the inconvenience from thence arising to the College might best be remedied, and Mr. Smith having expressed a Desire to continue his Lectures to the Classes which had formally attended them [and] the students also inclining rather to proceed in their studies under his care…ordered that the Said classes should attend him for that Purpose at the usual Hours in the place of his present confinement."[1]

[1] Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania Minute Books, volume 1, 1749-1768 (College, Academy and Charitable School), 91. Facsimile available at http://sceti.library.upenn.edu/sceti/codex/public/PageLevel/index.cfm?WorkID=787&Page=115.

And so, for the better part of two months, Philadelphia's best and brightest crowded outside of an eighteenth-century holding cell, which Smith almost certainly shared with a revolving door of criminals, drunks, and debtors. There they listened to their mentor pontificate about philosophy, rhetoric, the classics, and, ironically enough given the setting, *ethics*.[2] While the unusual nature of such a scene may have caused the most romantic of Smith's colleagues to celebrate his determination (and others, no doubt, to merely roll their eyes), the provost's stubborn commitment to his students would not have surprised any of his peers. It was obstinacy that had put him in prison in the first place. Arrested for "having directed the republication… in the German Language" of an alleged "Libel against a former dissolved House of Assembly," Smith needed only to print an apologetic retraction to earn his release.[3] He refused to do so. According to his own account of the trial that had resulted in his incarceration, he had met the Assembly's request for recantation with dogged refusal and theatrical flair. To much applause in the courtroom, he had declared during the trial's closing moments that "his lips should never give his heart the lie, there being no punishment which [the Assembly] could inflict half so terrible to him as the thought of forfeiting his veracity and good name with the world."[4]

Not only did Smith insist the alleged "Libel"—written by his future father in law, William Moore—was nothing of the sort, but he also professed a sacred duty "to keep the *Dutch Press* as *free* as any other *Press* in this province."[5] Two English publications —including Franklin's own *Pennsylvania Gazette*—had printed Moore's criticism of the Assembly months before its appearance in Smith's paper. As the provost told the story, Moore had merely "applied to the rev'd Mr. Smith…to have the same inserted in a German News-paper, whereof the said Mr.

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[2] See Smith, *Life and Correspondence* 45.
[3] William Smith, *Request for Opinion,* Smith Papers. University of Pennsylvania.
[4] See *American Magazine and Monthly Chronicle for the British Colonies.* January 1759, 200.
[5] Ibid.

Smith was one of the Directors or Managers, as a Trustee under an honorable private Society in London." Smith, then, had simply passed along the piece to his printer, Anton Armbüster, for translation. After all, he argued, "there could be no harm in Printing what the Assembly's Printer had done so long before." And should not the Germans "see every Thing that was in the English Papers?"[6]

As Smith toiled away the hours in his prison cell, he had to have wondered, why now? He had publicly criticized the Quakers countless times over the past five years. But Moore's polemic seems to have touched upon a raw nerve. Could it be the General Assembly finally worried it was losing ground with its German-speaking base? Indeed, as war continued to rage along the frontier, the Quakers were growing increasingly vulnerable. Smith, then, was on to something. Despite the relative failures of his schools and newspaper, Germans from the traditional churches *were* beginning to mobilize against their sectarian countrymen. After years of frustration, Smith finally found himself on the precipice of a political revolution.

After Smith's arrest and subsequent release in 1758, the provost continued to beat the drum against Quaker leadership. By 1764, he would finally manage to form his desired coalition between traditional Church Germans and the Proprietary Party. That year, Benjamin Franklin began his famous effort to pry Pennsylvania loose from its proprietary government. Perhaps more impactful, the Quakers famously betrayed their own pacifistic tenets that summer to defend themselves against a mob of rampaging frontiersmen. Smith used this hypocrisy to turn the tables against his enemies. He secured enough German votes to permanently damage the

[6] Ibid.

Quakers' ability to govern. Launching a campaign primarily aimed at his former friend, Franklin, he managed for the first time to unseat several prominent anti-Proprietary assemblymen.[7]

As to how he accomplished this feat, answers would come early in 1765. Chafing from the election results, two of Franklin's allies approached Henry Muhlenberg for an explanation. The Lutheran minister proceeded to tell a story that must have brought Smith considerable satisfaction. In the past, Muhlenberg admitted, he and his Lutheran brethren "had done their best to stay out of colonial politics."[8] They had watched from afar as Christopher Sauer had informed German-speaking colonists "as to how they should vote and whom they should elect." The core of Sauer's message had always been to "take care to elect assemblymen who will not relinquish one tittle, yea, one hairbreadth, of the ancient privileges, rights, and liberties granted by King Charles II to the proprietor, Wm. Penn, and through him to the people." Accordingly, "the Germans would preferably have given up their lives rather than to have elected anybody but old Friends to the Assembly." But "all of a sudden" things had changed. "In recent years," he continued, "it appears from the public prints that the great majority of our provincial *Assembly* favors a direct government by our gracious king and that their petition has been signed by a number of inhabitants." While Muhlenberg's congregation very much appreciated the liberal allowances of King George III, they still lived under a charter signed by King Charles II. This charter had always ensured that "every inhabitant has the power and liberty to cast his vote for any man whom he deems most suitable for the Assembly."[9] During the election of 1764, men

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[7] For the election results, see Franklin Papers, *Election Results in Philadelphia County, 1764[1-3 October 1764]*. "Election Results in Philadelphia County, 1764 [1–3 October 1764]," Founders Online, National Archives, last modified October 5, 2016, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Franklin/01-11-02-0107. [Original source: The Papers of Benjamin Franklin, vol. 11, January 1, through December 31, 1764, ed. Leonard W. Labaree. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1967, pp. 390–395.] For a good treatment of the Paxton Boy Massacres and the Quakers' defense see Kevin Kenny, *Peaceable Kingdom Lost: The Paxton Boys and the Destruction of William Penn's Holy Experiment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 147-155.
[8] *Muhlenberg Journals*, II, 191.
[9] Ibid., 192.

like Smith had successfully argued that his party wanted to maintain this policy through the status quo of proprietary government. They had even been willing to support the placement of a German on the so-called "New Ticket."[10] Muhlenberg explained that while Smith and his allies had launched an undoubtedly mean-spirited campaign against their Quaker enemies, he and his fellow congregants were intelligent enough to understand when and how politicians went about trying to control them. In this case, Smith had merely presented them with a preferable platform that they believed best suited their future interests. The switch had not come by way of lies and deception, but rather by inclusion and open discourse.

After the 1764 election, the Quakers would never again dominate the General Assembly. This victory, of course, proved short-lived. The American Revolution fundamentally reshaped Pennsylvania's government, as well as Smith's role in promoting it. But for the time being, the provost could rejoice in having finally accomplished an epochal goal. When he had first set out to Anglicize Pennsylvania's Germans, he had been a twenty-six-year-old tutor. Now, he stood at the head of a preeminent North American university. While the German Free School scheme had failed by most metrics, the movement had no doubt played a significant role in launching this rapid ascent. Likewise, the relationships he formed while heading the scheme had helped earn him valuable allies within the German community. Thereafter he became a consistent presence in German neighborhoods. [11] It had taken the educator more than a decade, but he seems to have finally settled on new and comparably effective methods. Rather than trying to reprogram Pennsylvania's Germans, he began to search for common ground. Rather than pretending to represent them through charitable schemes with dubious motives, he built a political platform

[10] See Franklin Papers, *Election Results in Philadelphia County, 1764*.
[11] See *Muhlenberg Journals* II and III. Starting in 1764, Smith appears in Muhlenberg's journal more than thirty times.

based upon the shared interests between his own faction and a group of people whom he now understood to value individual liberty above all else. As it turned out, it was much easier to listen than it was to cudgel; easier to compromise than it was to manipulate.

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