

The Practice of Pluralism: Congregational Life and Religious Diversity in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, 1730–1820. By MARK HÄBERLEIN. (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009. 288 pp. Bibliography, index. \$79.)

In ground-breaking studies a generation ago, Dietmar Rothermund, Wayne Bockleman, and Owen Ireland explored the ethnic and religious fissures that underlay Pennsylvania politics in the second half of the eighteenth century. While appeals to the conflicting interests of Presbyterians, Mennonites, Quakers, and Anglicans may have influenced voting behavior in county elections, Mark Häberlein, a professor at the University of Bamberg, has made a convincing argument in his thoroughly researched study of Lancaster that denominational rivalry did not enter into the daily life of the community. His intensive examination of one community is an important contribution to American religious history.

In the 1740s, Moravian efforts to supply Lutheran and Reformed pulpits split congregations and sometimes led to violent attempts to oust a pastor or retain a church building; but this was the exception. Church leaders and their most active members learned to live and work together on friendly terms. Lancaster pluralism was not the result of widespread indifference to religion or the diminishing influence of the churches. By comparing tax records with local church records, Häberlein demonstrates that 65.2 percent of Lancaster taxpayers in 1751 and 72.5 percent of those named on the 1773 tax list “repeatedly appear in church records.” Lancaster was a largely German-speaking community. Roughly a third of Lancastrians rented pews in the Lutheran church in 1773, and Häberlein calculates that in that year Lutherans comprised 40 percent of the town’s population, Reformed were 20 percent, and Moravians constituted 10 percent. The smaller Catholic congregation and the Jewish community were also mainly German-speaking. Anglicans, Presbyterians, and Quakers made up only some 12 percent of the inhabitants on the eve of the Revolution. This left 15 percent unaffiliated with any religious group (8–9). Laura Becker documented a similar pattern in Reading in 1773 (153).

Häberlein devotes chapters to studying Lancaster’s Protestant churches in comparative perspective, finding a common quest for stability and order, and tracing interactions among their congregants. He does not neglect Lancaster’s Catholics and Jews, but he acknowledges that they “did not alter its predominantly Protestant character” (180). Lancaster provides ample evidence for the role of laypeople in shaping congregational life from the beginning.

Pluralism was the rule among Germans in rural Pennsylvania, where Lutherans, Reformed, and Mennonites commonly shared a meetinghouse and schoolhouse. Lancaster’s German churches kept extensive records, enabling Häberlein to identify transfers of church membership and marriages across

denominational lines. Extended families might well include Lutheran, Reformed, Catholic, and Mennonite kinfolk, making the practice of pluralism personal. Far less common was marriage or church membership across ethnic lines. Language was the least permeable boundary. English-speaking Lancastrians demonstrated a similar ease with one another. Anglican minister Thomas Barton reported in 1764 that “The Presbyterians and such of the Germans as understand English attend also occasionally when they happen to have no service of their own” (139). Anglican vestryman Edward Shippen rented a pew in both the Anglican and Presbyterian churches, attending each on alternate Sundays.

During the four decades after the Revolutionary War the religious makeup of Lancaster changed only slightly. The small Quaker and Jewish communities disappeared and a small Methodist congregation was organized. Order and continuity characterized Lancaster churches in the new republic, with interdenominational cooperation in charitable and educational efforts. The practice of pluralism made Lancaster “a laboratory of diversity” in which confessional boundaries were negotiated and adjusted (244).

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The Other Loyalists: Ordinary People, Royalism, and the Revolution in the Middle Colonies, 1763–1787. Edited by JOSEPH S. TIEDEMANN, EUGENE R. FINGERHUT, and ROBERT W. VENABLES (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009. x, 210 pp. Figures, index. \$70.)

This slender volume aims to fill significant gaps in our understanding of the American Revolution by focusing on loyalism among “ordinary people” in the middle colonies. Its seven essays are organized into three sections entitled “Places,” “Groups,” and “People.” In part 1, the most effective section of the book, two essays stress how the particular circumstances of place shaped loyalism in the Delmarva Peninsula and in eastern New Jersey, and their mutual consideration of loyalist violence engagingly connects them with one another. Wayne Bodle imaginatively reconstructs the small but explosive resistance of China Clow to patriot authority near the Maryland border of Kent County, Delaware, in April 1778, and how it remained a source of local controversy into the 1790s. “The Ghost of Clow” proved hard to put to rest even though it produced just a handful of direct primary sources with which Bodle could work. David J. Fowler’s detailed assessment of loyalist insurgents who moved effectively from the outposts of garrisoned New York City into varied parts of eastern New Jersey builds on impressive research and convincingly explains the “crescendo of retributive violence” (65) in the area that is well exemplified by Loyalists’ execution of cap-