

bread, and, most significantly, flaxseed from Philadelphia, the center of the trade, to Ireland. On the return trip, their ships brought, along with linen and butter, paying passengers, redemptioners, and indentured servants wishing to try their luck in the colonies.

After 1763, when the Paxton Boys brought criticism down upon all Scots-Irish, merchants formed groups such as the Presbyterian Committee to represent their ethnic interests, even as they simultaneously enjoyed a dual identity as British and American subjects. They became involved in politics and made common cause with Scots-Irish and German farmers in the backcountry against Pennsylvania's Quaker bloc. Scots-Irish merchants were also instrumental in Baltimore's rising status as a seaport that rivaled Philadelphia. During the imperial crisis, some merchants even led Baltimore's Sons of Liberty. As tensions with Britain increased, flaxseed was initially excluded from nonexportation, but the flaxseed-emigrant shipments ended when the Continental Congress suspended all exports to Britain on the eve of war.

MacMaster's research on both sides of the Atlantic is truly impressive. However, this extensive research contributes to both the strength and weakness of the book. Those with interests in particular merchants will revel in the wealth of detail, which, at times, may overwhelm other readers. Maps would have been a welcome addition, and tables could have illustrated succinctly the rising immigration and flaxseed trade and compared flaxseed with other exports such as tobacco and rice. While MacMaster expertly taps into a rich trove of primary sources, sometimes I wanted more background—about the Irish weavers and linen drapers, for example, and bleaching meadows and brown linen markets. The book closes somewhat abruptly by claiming that the flaxseed trade came to an end “at least for the present” in 1775 (298). I was left longing for a conclusion that explained what happened after the war. Perhaps, though, that is the mark of a good book—it made me want to learn more.

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The Correspondence of Heinrich Melchior Mühlberg, Volume 3, 1753–1756.

Translated and edited by WOLFGANG SPLITTER and TIMOTHY J. WENGERT.
(Rockland, ME: Picton Press, 2009. 416 pp. Index. \$64.50.)

It has been well over a dozen years since the first volume of the *The Correspondence of Heinrich Melchior Mühlberg* was published by Picton Press. Publication of the third translated and edited volume is a welcome step toward making the letters of the German Mühlberg edition accessible to scholars and students whose familiarity with eighteenth-century German is limited but who are interested in learning more about a significant group of

Lutheran immigrants and settlers and their German as well as English-speaking neighbors in the middle colonies.

The *Correspondence of Mühlenberg* is an essential tool and resource. The period covered in volume 3 is one of growth, uncertainty, upheaval, and war as viewed through the observational lens of a man who had come to colonial Pennsylvania as a young man with the mission to tend to three Lutheran congregations. By 1753 Mühlenberg's mission had stretched into more than a decade and the energy and enthusiasm of the young minister had given way to an acute realization of the extraordinary weight his responsibilities represented. As he labored in his ministry to a very large, widely dispersed, diverse, unruly, and mostly poor flock, he was often frustrated with the sporadic and limited support from European colleagues, mentors, and sponsors. The *Correspondence of Mühlenberg* allows insight into the thinking and actions of the man and his time to a degree seldom matched for an eighteenth-century German-speaking and educated immigrant.

The *Correspondence of Mühlenberg* is a source of information that is thoroughly researched and fully reliable and is best used in conjunction with the German edition (even by scholars whose knowledge of German is limited) since the structure of the English-language edition reflects the original, especially in the numbering of the documents, which is critical for cross-referencing. At times, the casual researcher may be overwhelmed by the annotation, but the specialist will welcome the care with which the editors have added value to the correspondence through their explanatory notes that provide data on people, places, events, and allusions to biblical texts and Protestant hymns. The extent and detail of the research reflected in the notes and referenced in the indices is most useful, and the quality of the translations is impressive. It reflects a labor demanding of intellectual rigor and linguistic sensitivity and subtlety that English readers will not comprehend but upon which they are fully dependent as they make good use of this source.

I hope that in subsequent volumes the editors will provide relevant maps of the American colonies and of Europe (Germany), a bibliography of the works cited, and a more economical layout of the indices that may allow for slightly more generous margins of the text. I also hope that the press advertises this volume well and that libraries add it to their collections so that internet search engines bring this research and reference tool to the notice of the scholars and students who will want to use it.

The *Correspondence of Mühlenberg* is undertaken by a multinational staff of experts and supported by several American and German foundations and institutions, all of whom can be pleased with this publication, which serves as the best possible rationale for continuing support of this project.