

REGULAR BAPTISTS IN COLONIAL ANGLICAN VIRGINIA:

CIVIL OBEDIENCE DURING RELIGIOUS TOLERATION

By

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## *Abstract*

This thesis explores an under-examined corner of Virginia Baptist history while gauging Anglican responses to Regular Baptist settlement in the British North American colony of Virginia. Regular Baptists practiced civil obedience to the religious toleration regulations in colonial Virginia. Their leadership in their faith circle and in their larger communities offered evidence that religious pluralism was not a barrier to peaceful community life. The presence of dissenters did not turn out to be a social problem that needed close scrutiny via government-sanctioned toleration measures. Regular Baptists' strategy of civil obedience was a less dramatic but an important factor in the decision of Anglican leadership to allow space for dissenters. Much of the ecclesiastical and historical scholarship on religion in Virginia during the eighteenth century has focused on the conflict between Virginia Anglicans and Separate Baptists, and the impact of that conflict on religious freedom. Much of the major scholarship on this was completed in the mid-twentieth century. Regular Baptists were lightly treated by these scholars, and more recent scholarship has generally followed this pattern. The thesis further observes that the transition from religious toleration to religious liberty was costly for both established church and dissenting churches. For the established church, it meant losing its place as a junior partner in the governance of the colony turned commonwealth. For dissenters, years of struggling to live peaceably with an anxious, insecure Establishment finally yielded the freedom for which they yearned, but with society's assumption that they would otherwise conform to its expectations.

## *Dedication*

Dedicated to my husband, C. Fred Smith, PhD, whose whole-hearted enthusiasm, loving and holistic support of my research and writing made it possible to see this thesis through to conclusion.

Dedicated to my parents, Percy and Linda Young. Their love and support were indispensable ingredients in who I am today. Thank you for teaching me to read and to pursue excellence.

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On this side of the Atlantic, I want to acknowledge the support of the staff of several libraries and archives which I had the privilege to access. In Lynchburg, Virginia, I crossed the thresholds of the Jerry Falwell Library at Liberty University, and the Jones Memorial Library on a weekly basis during the research phase. In Richmond, Virginia, materials were made available to me at several archives: The Library of Virginia, the official archive of the Commonwealth of Virginia; the Virginia Baptist Historical Society and Center for Baptist Heritage Studies at the University of Richmond; and the Library at the Virginia Museum of History and Culture. The Thomas Balch Library in Leesburg, Virginia, provided access to original documents related to churches in Loudoun County, Virginia.

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To paraphrase British poet John Donne, no scholar is an island entirely to herself.

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## Introduction

In mid-eighteenth-century colonial Virginia, Regular Baptist Elder David Thomas and Anglican Minister Patrick Henry were on opposite sides of the Anglican-Dissenter divide. The Establishment Rev. Henry often complained to his Virginia Anglican Church Commissary of dissenter activity in and around his parish.<sup>1</sup> Dissenting Regular Baptist Elder David Thomas worked to keep himself and his preaching protégés out of trouble with the law, seeking the guidance of the Regular Baptist elders who were his colleagues in the Philadelphia Baptist Association.<sup>2</sup> Both men were overseeing congregations in a period of Virginia colonial life when migratory patterns were changing the religious landscape of the colony. In 1699, the Virginia House of Burgesses, many of whom were members of their local Anglican parish vestry, had reluctantly adopted a policy of religious toleration. It was based on the Act of Toleration adopted in England in 1689. The Burgesses adopted the policy because of a successful appeal to the Board of Trade of Presbyterian dissenters in Virginia who sought permission to establish churches, citing the 1689 Act as precedent.<sup>3</sup>

English and colonial policy on religious toleration in the long eighteenth century was the outworking of efforts in the seventeenth century to create a lasting peace following the

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<sup>1</sup> P. Henry, Rector of Henrico Parish, Letter to Commissary William Dawson, Hanover County, December 3, 1747, *William Dawson Family Papers*, United States Library of Congress (Washington, DC, 1975), microfilm, image 68.

<sup>2</sup> R. B. Semple, and G. W. Beale, *A History of the Rise and Progress of Baptists in Virginia* (Richmond, VA, 1894), p. 376; J. L. Clark, *'To Set Them in Order': Some Influences of the Philadelphia Baptist Association upon Baptists of America to 1814* (Springfield, MO, 2001), p. 141.

<sup>3</sup> Virginia General Assembly, 27 April 1699, 'Act 1, An act for the more effectual suppressing of Blasphemy, Swearing, Cursing, Drunkenness and Sabbath Breaking', in W. W. Hening (ed.), *The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia from the First Sessions of the Legislature in the Year 1619*, vol. 3 (Baltimore, MD, 2003), pp. 171, 360, CD-ROM; S. T. Logan, Jr., 'Francis Makemie: Presbyterian Pioneer', in S. D. Fortson (ed.), *Colonial Presbyterianism: Old Faith in a New Land*, Princeton Theological Monograph Series (Eugene, OR, 2007), pp. 1-25.

English Civil War and the resulting political/religious turbulence.<sup>4</sup> The period from 1649 to 1688 was rife with friction in England. Significant events during this period included the decapitation of Charles I in 1649, the Commonwealth era under Oliver Cromwell, the restoration of the Monarchy with the enthronement of Stuart king Charles II in 1660, succeeded by his Catholic brother, James II, who reigned until 1688. This period saw the Established Church in England and Scotland pulled between various political factions that had a trans-Atlantic impact on the Anglican Church in Virginia. For example, political infighting resulted in the Rev. James Blair losing his Episcopalian Church of Scotland pulpit for refusing to accept James II as head of the church in Scotland. Blair, at the recommendation of the Bishop of London, immigrated to Virginia in 1685 to take a pulpit in Henrico County, and eventually became the Bishop of London's Commissary for Virginia.<sup>5</sup> Dutch Protestant William III, who was invited by the Parliament to rule England in 1688 beside his Protestant English Stuart wife Mary, wanted to grant dissenting Protestants space to worship freely while continuing to block English Catholics from the same privilege.<sup>6</sup> William endorsed limited religious toleration to stabilize the government of England.

Virginia's Act of Toleration, and the opening of Virginia's mountain west to settlement by dissenters, changed Virginia from almost exclusively Anglican to well-settled plural expressions of Christianity, an example of the cultural problem created by migration that David Fischer and James Kelly see in the tension between unity and pluralism.<sup>7</sup> The migratory pattern permitted by the government brought many varieties of dissenting

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<sup>4</sup> J. Gregory and J. Stevenson, *The Routledge Companion to Britain in the Eighteenth Century* (New York, 2007), pp. ix, 403.

<sup>5</sup> N. D. Johnson and M. Koyama, *Persecution and Toleration: the Long Road to Religious Freedom* (Cambridge, 2019), pp. 173-177; P. Rouse, Jr., *James Blair of Virginia* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1971).

<sup>6</sup> P. Zagorin, *How the Idea of Religious Toleration Came to the West* (Oxford, 2003), p. 267; Johnson and Koyama, *Persecution and Toleration*, p. 175.

<sup>7</sup> D. H. Fischer, and J. C. Kelly, *Bound Away: Virginia and the Westward Movement* (Charlottesville, VA, 2000), pp. 9-10.

Christians into Virginia, including different sorts of Baptists. These Baptist groups had differing strategies for interacting with local Anglican parishes. Their strategies put a focus on the inadequacy of the religious toleration policy enacted in 1699, and opened the door for religious liberty in the early Republican period of Virginia, post Revolution.

The Regular Baptist strategy of civil obedience will be the specific focus of this thesis, though commentary on the Separate Baptists will be included to illuminate Anglican responses to Baptist activity. This thesis will demonstrate that Regular Baptists' conformity to the Toleration Laws, as well as their generally responsible interaction with their Anglican neighbors, contributed, in ways not previously recognized, to the eventual acceptance of disestablishment and religious freedom in Virginia. Further, the government's efforts to manage religious activity had social implications for both Establishment and Dissenting congregational leaders, most especially the ethical implications of decisions taken by the government on regulating slavery. These decisions met muted resistance in the churches, both Anglican and Regular Baptist, due to legal and social structures, explored especially in chapter five, that strongly discouraged interference. Indeed, the back and forth between Establishment Virginia leadership and dissenters, including Regular Baptists, eventually moved Virginia from religious establishment to religious freedom, but at a cost to both the Established Church and the dissenters among them. The Established Church lost its position as a center of community oversight with tax support. Dissenters gained religious freedom but were expected, indeed encouraged, to otherwise fit into the social and economic organization of society. This was easily done in the matter of the struggle for independence from Great Britain. While not necessarily an open *quid pro quo*, overall silence and complicity on the issue of slavery may have been a tradeoff for religious freedom. Most accepted the tradeoff readily; some did not, and their challenge to slavery revealed the presence of the possible tradeoff.

### *Toleration Law in Virginia*

The first laws in Virginia related to non-Anglican Christians were negative in nature. The Virginia colonial government during the 1600s kept the presence of dissenting Christians to a minimum. Quakers, for instance, were banned from the colony. During the Grand Assembly called by Govenour Berkeley, in 1659/60, ship's captains were forbidden to allow Quakers to disembark in Virginia, incurring a penalty of 100 pounds sterling. Quakers were considered dangerous because of their 'influence upon the communities of men both ecclesiastical and civil endeavouring and attempting thereby to destroy religion, laws, communities, and all bonds of civil societie, leaving it arbitrarie to everie vaine and vitious person whether men shall be safe'.<sup>8</sup> They were not considered neighbors one could depend upon since they refused to participate in monthly militia training events.<sup>9</sup> However, when the Crown sent Huguenots, French Protestants fleeing the Edict of Nantes, to Virginia and other southern colonies in 1685, these refugees were welcomed by the Virginia government. The Huguenot settlement in Virginia occurred pre-Act of Toleration and, as language was initially a barrier to worship for the new migrants, the House of Burgesses set up King William parish in 1700 for these first-generation migrants, when sufficient numbers had arrived. This parish functioned as a French-speaking Anglican parish, with a French-speaking minister. William Foote indicates the Burgesses assumed the next generation would assimilate into the English-speaking population and the parish would remain Anglican.<sup>10</sup>

The barrier to settlement by religious dissenters, clearly already permeable, was permanently breached when Presbyterians in Virginia in 1689 appealed for the right to build

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<sup>8</sup> The Virginia Grand Assembly, March 1659/60, Act VI, 'An act for suppressing the Quakers', in Hening, *Statutes*, vol. 1, pp. 532-533, p. 532; J. Worrall, *The Friendly Virginians: America's First Quakers* (Charlottesville, VA, 1994), pp. 23-25.

<sup>9</sup> Worrall, *Friendly Virginians*, p. 40.

<sup>10</sup> W. H. Foote, *The Huguenots, or Reformed French Church. Their Principles Delineated; Their Character Illustrated; Their Sufferings and Successes Recorded* (Richmond, 1870), pp. 501-502.

meeting houses, based on the English Act of Toleration of 1689. The English Act of Toleration became the basis upon which the Presbyterians challenged the anti-dissent laws in Virginia. The Presbyterian Church had establishment status in Scotland, which gave them some legitimacy to launch an appeal. Presbyterian preacher, Francis Makemie challenged the idea that the English Act of Toleration did not apply in England's colonies.<sup>11</sup> By 1699, Virginia followed England's law by enacting similar provisions. Embedded in a statute designed to penalize moral infractions, the Burgesses inserted language which exempted 'their majesties protestant subjects dissenting from the Church of England from the penalties of certain lawes',<sup>12</sup> related to regular attendance at their parish church. This provision was repeated in 1705, in an act 'for the effectual suppression of vice and restraint and punishment of the blasphemous, wicked and dissolute persons'.<sup>13</sup>

In 1717, Lieutenant Governor Alexander Spotswood paid the passage of the first Lutheran settlers in Virginia in exchange for eight years of indentured service. They moved off his land as soon as their indenture was over, as William Huddle notes, and created Virginia's first Lutheran church in 1725.<sup>14</sup> These and a scattering of Baptists and Presbyterians were also present in the late seventeenth century and early eighteenth century. As long as these instances were isolated and not too numerous, the Anglicans seemed to tolerate their presence. It was in light of these developments that in the 1740s, Virginia

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<sup>11</sup> T. C. Johnson, *Virginia Presbyterianism and Religious Liberty in Colonial and Revolutionary Times* (Richmond, 1907), pp. 13-25. See W. H. Foote, *Sketches of Virginia: Historical and Biographical* (Philadelphia, 1850), also pp. 40-84.

<sup>12</sup> 'Act of Toleration, 1688, 1 Will. & Mar, chap. XVIII', <http://www.justis.com.ezproxye.bham.ac.uk/document.aspx?doc=e7jsrUrxA0LxsKjIoYyJmZCJmXWlIvLerIOJitrVqJeJn4GZiXGZiXmcmJCdm2icIIouDYL2CKL2y0L2BULezIOdm9baa&relpos=0> (Accessed: 21 November 2015); Virginia General Assembly, 27 April 1699, Act 1, 'An act for the more effectual suppressing of blasphemy, swearing, cursing, drunkenness and sabbath breaking', in Hening, *Statutes*, vol. 3, p. 171.

<sup>13</sup> Virginia General Assembly, 4 October 1705, Chap. XXX, 'An act for the effectual suppression of vice, restraint and punishment of blasphemous, wicked, and dissolute persons', in Hening, *Statutes*, vol. 3, pp. 358-362, p. 360.

<sup>14</sup> W. P. Huddle, *History of the Hebron Lutheran Church, Madison County, Virginia, 1717 to 1907* (New Market, VA, 1908), pp. 1-9.

Lieutenant Governor William Gooch was able to push successfully for legislation from the General Assembly to allow dissenters to migrate into the far western, mountainous, region of Virginia, in order to protect more settled areas from French and Shawnee aggressions.<sup>15</sup>

Along with the Scots-Irish Presbyterians, Regular Baptists migrated into the western areas, and their presence marked the beginning of a social process that led to the legal compact for religious freedom less than half a century later. This process will be traced in the following chapters and will show how Regular Baptists demonstrated that religious dissent and good citizenship were compatible.

As Regular Baptists migrated into the mountains and Anglicans migrated westward, a blending of their settlements was inevitable, and in fact led to further legislation that impacted the lives of these Baptists. In 1772, the House of Burgesses approved a ‘Bill for extending the Benefit of Several Acts of Toleration to his Majesty’s Protestant Subjects, in this Colony, dissenting from the Church of England’. This bill outlined very specifically what was expected of protestant dissenters who wanted to benefit from toleration. The expectations included registering their meeting houses. Like Anglican parish churches, these meeting houses ‘shall be built or set apart for the Purpose aforesaid’. Meetings shall take place in day light periods only, and the doors of the meeting house shall not be locked. If a preacher should preach at any other location, where ten or more (outside the preacher’s family) are gathered without authorization, he is subject to civil penalties as determined by the county

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<sup>15</sup> ‘An Address from the Executive Council to the Honorable Governor, William Gooch, March 31, 1747’, in H. R. McIlwaine (ed.), *Legislative Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia*, Vol. II (Richmond, VA, 1918), pp. 402-404; W. R. Hofstra, *The Planting of New Virginia: Settlement and Landscape in the Shenandoah Valley* (Baltimore, MD, 2004), pp. 4-7; E. Bond and J. Gundersen (eds.), ‘The Episcopal Church in Virginia, 1607-2007’, *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 115 (2007), pp. 163-344; G. M. Brydon, *Virginia's Mother Church and the Political Conditions under Which It Grew*, Vol. I, *An Interpretation of the Records of the Colony of Virginia and the Anglican Church of That Colony, 1607-1727* (Richmond, VA, 1947); Fischer and Kelly, *Bound Away*, pp. 104-134.

court. It also included provisions against teaching or preaching to slaves, for which the preacher shall be imprisoned for one year.<sup>16</sup>

The 1772 amended Act of Toleration set up dissenting Christians for failure by restricting the licensing process, limiting their outreach to their local area, and forbidding contact with enslaved persons without the express permission of their owners. When this Bill was published in the *Virginia Gazette*, Morgan Edwards indicated that ‘the Baptists saw themselves under a necessity of remonstrating against it’ because of the restrictions beyond the original Act of Toleration.<sup>17</sup> Regular Baptists worked to obey the provisions; but Separate Baptists acted in opposition to these requirements and suffered for it. For example, in Fauquier County in February 1770, John Picket, a Separate Baptist Elder, was brought to court ‘for preaching contrary to Act of Parliament’<sup>18</sup> and sent to ‘gaol there to remain until he give security for his good behavior in the sum of two hundred pounds and two securities of one hundred pounds each’.<sup>19</sup> Separate Baptist imprisonments, which they took cheerfully, became the stuff of legend.<sup>20</sup> A critic of toleration commented in the Gazette, ‘no government can be well regulated which turns every religious order, uncontrolled, loose on society’.<sup>21</sup> By the late eighteenth century, the Anglican-majority Virginia House of Delegates did just that

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<sup>16</sup> *Virginia Gazette* (Rind), 26 March 1772, <https://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/va-gazettes/VGSinglePage.cfm?issueIDNo=72.R.06> (Accessed: 19 October 2019).

<sup>17</sup> M. Edwards, ‘Materials toward a History of Baptists in the Provinces of Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia’, vol. III (1772), p. 106, manuscript, South Carolina Digital Library Collections, <https://cdm16821.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/jbt/id/17> (Accessed: 19 October 2019).

<sup>18</sup> W. S. Simpson, Jr., *Virginia Baptist Ministers 1760-1790, A Biographical Survey*, vol. IV (Richmond, VA, 1990), pp. 193-195; L. P. Little, *Imprisoned Preachers and Religious Liberty in Virginia: a Narrative Drawn Largely from the Official Records of Virginia Counties, Unpublished Manuscripts, Letters, and Other Original Sources* (Lynchburg, VA, 1938), p. 193.

<sup>19</sup> L. P. Little, *Imprisoned Preachers*, p. 193. In today’s dollars the £400 total security bond would cost Picket \$76,457.04, (E. W. Nye, ‘Pounds Sterling to Dollars: Historical Conversion of Currency’, <https://www.uwyo.edu/numimage/currency.htm>, [Accessed: 23 November 2019]).

<sup>20</sup> C. F. James, *Documentary History of the Struggle for Religious Liberty in Virginia* (Lynchburg, VA, 1900), p. 26; L. P. Little, *Imprisoned Preachers*, pp. 310-328.

<sup>21</sup> *Virginia Gazette* (Purdie), 13 December 1776, p. 1, <https://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/va-gazettes/VGSinglePage.cfm?IssueIDNo=76.P.82&page=1> (Accessed: 29 November 2019).

by eliminating enforcement of religious toleration and enacted the first legal expression of religious freedom in the new nation, Virginia's Statute of Religious Freedom (1786).<sup>22</sup> As Robert Semple observed, 'Persecution often defeats its own cause. Men cannot refrain from thinking; and they will think that a bad cause which requires force to support it'.<sup>23</sup>

Virginia's Act of Toleration regulated religious practice in an effort to limit the growth of Christian dissent from the colony's Established Church. They thought everyone should be Anglican, willing and eager participants in the life of the parish; but if not, new migrants had to prove worthy of trust. Virginia was also a new beginning for the migrants, and offered opportunities for, as Chris Beneke and Christopher Grenda recall, a 'lively experiment',<sup>24</sup> however unwelcome the experiment's conditions were at first. Regular Baptists were willing participants in this effort. Their cooperation with the toleration scheme, their 'civil obedience', helped establish that religious pluralism need not be dangerous to society. They maintained their strategy despite the confusion created by the actions of Separate Baptists, who chose civil disobedience in reaction to Anglican regulatory efforts to limit dissenting church expansion in Virginia.<sup>25</sup>

Thus, began a rough process of tolerance and assimilation. Anglicans believed all Virginians were part of their parishes, but dissenting groups were allowed to set up religious meetings if they followed the law. The dissenters in Virginia, however, claimed they need not be active parishioners at the Established Church to be good citizens and orthodox Christians, and, further, their ability to exercise their faith was infringed upon by the restrictions imposed

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<sup>22</sup> M. D. Peterson and R. C. Vaughan (eds.), *The Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom: Its Evolution and Consequences in American History* (New York, 1988), pp. xvii-xviii.

<sup>23</sup> R. B. Semple, *A History of the Rise and Progress of Baptists in Virginia* (Richmond, 1810), p. 180.

<sup>24</sup> C. Beneke, and C. S. Grenda (eds.), *The Lively Experiment: Religious Toleration in America from Roger Williams to the Present* (Lanham, MD, 2015), pp. 1-16.

<sup>25</sup> R. Alley, *A History of Baptists in Virginia* (Richmond, VA, 1973), p. 56; G. Ryland, *The Baptists of Virginia 1699-1926* (Richmond, 1955), p. 33; H. L. McIlwaine, *The Struggle of Protestant Dissenters for Religious Toleration in Virginia*, John Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science, H. B. Adams (ed.), Twelfth Series (Baltimore, MD, 1894), p. 65, note 2.

by the Anglican majority. Anglicans had the legal mandate to monitor the religious and moral life of all residents in their parishes, including the dissenters among them, whether or not they co-operated.<sup>26</sup> Such conditions were a recipe for conflict.

### *Baptist Migration into Virginia*

General Baptists, so-called for their belief that the atonement accomplished by Christ's death on the Cross made salvation generally available to anyone who believes, first migrated into the Tidewater region of southeastern Virginia in 1714 before moving to North Carolina in the 1740s possibly because of disease.<sup>27</sup> Little is known about them except that they lived quietly as farmers during their time in Virginia. The history of the Mill Swamp Baptist Church in Isle of Wight County, Virginia, indicates that the church met for some time beginning in 1714, under the name Burleigh Baptist Church, but apparently disbanded by 1740 and did not meet again until 1774 when it reconstituted as a Regular Baptist church named Mill Swamp Baptist Church. Members of the Burleigh congregation may have been part of the migration into North Carolina in the 1740s.<sup>28</sup>

Regular Baptists are descendants of English Particular Baptists, who migrated to the new world a generation or two earlier. The Separate Baptists come from a different source. They were former Congregationalists in New England who embraced the religious fervor of the Great Awakening and 'separated' from Congregational churches that most decidedly did not. They later embraced baptism by immersion, and thus became Separate Baptists. Both groups maintained the Particular Baptist doctrine that Christ's atonement for sin was

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<sup>26</sup> R. Isaac, "'The rage of malice of the old serpent Devil': The dissenters and the making and remaking of the Virginia Statue of Religious Freedom", in Peterson and Vaughan (eds.), *Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom*, pp. 139-169, p. 142.

<sup>27</sup> J. Asplund, *The Universal Register of the Baptist Denomination in North America, 1790-1793 and part of 1794* (Boston, 1794), p. 6-7; Edwards, *Materials* (1772), vol. III, pp. 21-22.

<sup>28</sup> *History of Burleigh Baptist Church and Mill Swamp Baptist Church, 1714, 1774-2014* (2014); Alley, *Baptists*, pp. 22-28.

available only to those whom God had elected *particularly* to salvation. Like the Presbyterians, who splintered into two groups in reaction to the first Great Awakening in the colonies in the 1740s, Baptists also divided over the revival. Regular Baptists, like the Old Light Presbyterians, were suspicious of the emotionalism of revival meetings; they wanted *regular order* in their meetings. Separate Baptists, like the New Light Presbyterians, embraced the emotional fervency of the Great Awakening and became known for their livelier and enthusiastic worship style.<sup>29</sup>

Regular Baptists and Separate Baptists migrated into Virginia in the 1740s. Regular Baptists entered from Maryland and Pennsylvania, into the Shenandoah Valley when Lieutenant Governor Gooch welcomed dissenters into Virginia's wilderness region in the 1740s.<sup>30</sup> Separate Baptists migrated through western Virginia, eventually settling in North Carolina just south of the Virginia boundary line. From there, they travelled into Virginia, preaching, establishing unlicensed meeting houses, and thereby incurring the wrath of the authorities.<sup>31</sup> Separate Baptists and Regular Baptists both resisted assimilation, but had differing resistance strategies. These strategies were a product of their differing pasts and understanding of how best to engage the majority Anglican culture around them. These groups were also somewhat suspicious of each other. Jewel Spangler argues that too much is sometimes made of the differences.<sup>32</sup> While the two groups had doctrinal positions in common, Separates considered Regular Baptists too cozy with the gentry and Regular Baptists considered Separate Baptists not 'sufficiently explicit in their principles, having never published or sanctioned any confession of faith and that they kept within their

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<sup>29</sup> McIlwaine, *Religious Toleration*, p. 44.

<sup>30</sup> Hofstra, *Planting of New Virginia*, pp. 4-7.

<sup>31</sup> Alley, *Baptists*, pp. 31-51.

<sup>32</sup> J. Spangler, *Virginians Reborn: Anglican Monopoly, Evangelical Dissent, and the Rise of the Baptists in the Late Eighteenth Century* (Charlottesville, VA, 2008), pp. 80-83, p. 83.

communion many who were professed Arminians, etc.’.<sup>33</sup> This mixture of theological and social divergences kept them from uniting into one association of churches for many years.

Eighteenth-century Baptist churches had no hierarchical structure governing them. Each church, once constituted, was responsible for its own maintenance, finances and governance. However, to support Baptist believers with no local preaching elder nearby, or to accomplish larger tasks together, such as sending missionaries, the churches organized into voluntary associations, usually within a fairly limited geographical area. Even so, the association had no authority over the member churches, but was governed itself by designated delegates from the member churches. John Hammett observes that this practice followed the Association pattern established by Baptists in England.<sup>34</sup> No bishops, commissaries, superintendents or other higher authorities regulate Baptist church life. This is a clear contrast to Anglican organization, and it must have seemed to the Established church as if the Baptists were more of an unruly mob than a church of Christ.

### *Regular Baptists and Toleration*

Religion in society cannot be studied outside its cultural context. Christianity, as a historically situated religion, impinges upon the events happening around its adherents, and is, in turn, shaped by those events. Regular Baptists offered a contrast to the Separate Baptists by their different behavior within the same cultural context. Their different response to their circumstances in Virginia had a profound influence on events in the late eighteenth-century.

Regular Baptists chose to adhere to the toleration regulations. They are mentioned in most histories about religion in colonial and early republic Virginia, but the details of how the path of civil obedience worked out in their relationship with their Anglican neighbors has

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<sup>33</sup> Semple and Beale, *Baptists in Virginia* (1894), pp. 67-68; 98-101, 100.

<sup>34</sup> J. S. Hammett, *Biblical Foundations for Baptist Churches: A Contemporary Ecclesiology* (Grand Rapids, MI, 2005), pp. 143-144.

never been fully explored. When one gets into the details, the results offer a fuller picture of how Baptists in Virginia went from a group on the margins of society to a respected and influential religious body. The story of Baptists in colonial Virginia has primarily focused on Separate Baptists, who embraced civil disobedience as their response to the toleration regulations. They were seen by colonial authorities as threatening to the existing order. Much has been written about these Baptists and their influence on that era. The often-overlooked Regular Baptists' story, by contrast, is one largely of cooperation and a generally positive relationship with their Anglican Church neighbors. Late colonial Virginia leaders' experience with Regular Baptists, as well as other peaceful dissenters, demonstrated that religious pluralism was not itself a threat to the good order of society, which was the underlying concern of colonial leaders. The 'civil obedience' of Regular Baptists helped make the concept of religious freedom acceptable in the early republic. By recognizing the authority of the Virginia House of Burgesses to manage religious affairs in Virginia, Regular Baptists provided evidence that pluralism need not be destructive to society. It is their story which will be the main focus then of this thesis.

### *Literature Review*

To explore the context of Regular Baptists in Anglican Virginia, this study heavily relies on extant primary sources that cover Colonial and Early Republic Virginia: Governors' Correspondence, County Court Records, Anglican Commissary Records and Parish Records, and Regular Baptist Church Business Meeting Minutes. These records are examined in light of colony-wide policies set by the colonial government and their superiors in London.

Regular Baptist presence in Colonial Virginia has not been a focus of extended research, and secondary literature is lacking, making heavy reliance on primary sources necessary. Using a combination of archived, microfilmed, and published records, the primary sources yielded much data when collated and examined for interaction between neighbors living in proximity

to one another. Studies of religious groups most often focus exclusively on their own activity and do not touch on their interaction with other religious bodies. This siloed approach, while useful for limiting the scope of research, does not tell the full story of the adherents' lived experience. By collating names and verifying identities through name clusters in the primary records, the activity of Regular Baptists, and the Anglican response to Regular Baptist presence among them, is authenticated. Anglican and Regular Baptist records, considered together, and in light of Virginia's legal and religious milieu, reveal a heretofore missing aspect of the historical record. Both Anglicans and Regular Baptists, functioning in civil obedience to the toleration guidelines required by Virginia's colonial government, found their activity constrained by the government, especially when government policy was challenged. This further illumines the precipitating factors that eventually made religious toleration unworkable and made way for religious freedom in Virginia by the end of the eighteenth century.

Secondary sources are drawn upon to help explain and analyze the findings in the primary sources, and to discuss the impact of religious toleration on Virginia. They are also used to analyze the conflict between colonial policy in Virginia regarding slaves, and the ethical obligation of both Anglicans and dissenters to care for slaves' souls. Histories of America and Virginia, informed by recent Atlantic Studies, provide background information that impacted Virginia's government. The work of able historiographers of Anglican and Baptist histories is accessed as documentary evidence where original material is lost, and to provide points of comparison and contrast. Virginia is also replete with regional histories; these are supplemented by materials from Pennsylvania and North Carolina, Virginia's colonial neighbors. Drawn together, the secondary sources, ranging from the early nineteenth to the twenty-first century, reveal a dynamic colonial life in Virginia, often impacted by decisions taken in London.

## Primary Documentation

### Colonial Virginia Legal Sources

Legal information was gleaned from several sources. These sources helped to document the cultural milieu that Regular Baptists encountered when they migrated into Virginia. Henry McIlwaine's multi-volume editions of the *Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia* (6 volumes), *Journals of the House of Burgesses* (9 volumes), and *Legislative Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia* (3 volumes). Wilmer Hall edited the *Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia*.<sup>35</sup> The Executive Council served as the upper house of the General Assembly, vetting legislation from the House of Burgesses, or lower house, of the General Assembly. Attorney William Hening's thirteen-volume *Statutes at Large* provides a published record of Virginia's early laws, from 1609 to 1792, and will be the reference cited for Acts of the General Assembly that governed the activity of dissenters in Virginia between 1750 and 1792.<sup>36</sup> These texts offer a record of decisions taken by the Virginia General Assembly related to religion. Robert Brock's edited volumes of the letters of various Virginia Chief Executives provide primary insight into how crown officers in Virginia managed the business of the colony, including ecclesiastical issues. The volumes on the letters of Alexander Spotswood and Robert Dinwiddie document the decision-making of these crown officials.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> H. M. McIlwaine, ed., *Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia*, vol. 1 (Richmond, 1925), vol. 5 (Richmond 1945), edited by Wilmer L. Hall and vol. 6 (Richmond, 1966), edited by B. J. Hillman, <https://archive.org/details/executivejournal01virg> (Accessed: 22 November 2015); idem, *Journals of the House of Burgesses*, vol. 3 (Richmond, 1913), <https://archive.org/details/journalsofhouse03virg> (Accessed: 22 November 2015); idem, *Legislative Journals*, 3 vols.; W. L. Hall, (ed.), *Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia*, vol. V (Richmond, 1945).

<sup>36</sup> See for example, Hening, *Statutes*, vol. 3, pp. 171, 360.

<sup>37</sup> R. A. Brock, (comp.), *The Official Letters of Alexander Spotswood, Lieutenant-Governor of the Colony of Virginia, 1710-1722*, New Series, vol. 1, Collections of the Virginia Historical Society (Richmond, VA, 1882); R. A. Brock (ed.), *The Official Records of Robert Dinwiddie, Lieutenant-Governor of the Colony of Virginia*, vol. 3, New Series, Collections of the Virginia Historical Society (Richmond, VA, 1883).

Another helpful primary source is the *Virginia Gazette*, published in Williamsburg as the newspaper of record for the colony from 1736-1780 by various publishers, sometimes with competing issues.<sup>38</sup> It published local and international news and opinion pieces. It is the latter that is most interesting for this study, because, like sermons, it gives the reader a view of local attitudes toward religious issues as they presented themselves as items of general interest. The issues published during the time period of this study were checked for religious topics that the editors considered important enough to include in the space available for each issue. The *Virginia Gazette* is also a treasure trove of data on run-away slaves.

### Regional County Court Documentation

In the eighteenth century, Virginia's system of founding new counties (and Anglican parishes alongside them), was well developed. When a region of an existing county had enough population, the region's inhabitants would petition for a new county, and a new county would be created by an Act of the Virginia House of Burgesses, and a new county court seat would be created. The county courts saw activity once or twice a month, depending on the need. Wills were processed through them, as were property transfers. Suits for recovery of property were also heard there. Grand juries were convened periodically to resolve property disputes, and minor violations of church or colonial law.<sup>39</sup> All of these events were recorded in the counties' Court Order Books and Will Books.<sup>40</sup> As Regular

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<sup>38</sup> Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 'Virginia Gazettes: Williamsburg Newspapers from 1736 to 1780', <http://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/va-gazettes/> (Accessed: 15 October 2015).

<sup>39</sup> O. P. Chitwood, *Justice in Colonial Virginia*, John Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science, Series XXIII, Nos. 7-8, eds. J. M. Vincent, *et al* (Baltimore, MD, 1905), chap. 3.

<sup>40</sup> **Augusta County:** L. Chalkley, *Chronicles of the Scotch-Irish Settlement in Virginia: Extracted from the Original Court Records of Augusta County, 1745-1800*, 3 vol. (Rosslyn, VA, 1912); **Frederick County:** J. E. S. King, *Abstracts of Wills, Inventories, and Administrations Accounts of Frederick County, Virginia (1973)*; C. O'Dell, *Pioneers of Old Frederick County, Virginia* (Marceline, MO, 1995); **Hampshire County:** W. L. Kerns, *Historical Records of Old Frederick and Hampshire Counties, Virginia*, rev. (Bowie, MD, 1992); **Loudoun County:** 'Fairfax County Tithables, 1749', *Tidewater Virginia Families: A Magazine of History and Genealogy* (November/December 1994), pp. 170-176; P. B. Duncan, (comp.), *Loudoun County Order Books A-I: 1757-1786* (Westminster, MD, 2007), CD-ROM; Loudoun County Revolutionary War Index, <https://www.loudoun.gov/DocumentCenter/View/780> (Accessed: 4 November 2017); M. Hiatt, *Loudoun County, Virginia Tithables, 1758-1786* (Athens, GA, 1995); **Fauquier County:** J. P. Alcock, *Fauquier Families 1759-1799: Comprehensive Indexed Abstracts of Tax and Tithable Lists, Marriage Bonds, and Minute, Deed*

Baptists settled in an area, one observes their activity in the court books, and their appointment to responsible offices within the county or parish where they dwelled. Not all dissenters were mistrusted and mistreated in colonial Virginia.

### Primary Church Documents

The sort of documentation extant for eighteenth-century churches in Virginia is a reflection of their essential ecclesiology. For Anglicans in Virginia, documents stretch across the Atlantic as the Bishop of London had direct oversight of all colonial Anglican churches. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts generated records of the colonies north and south of Maryland and Virginia, the only colonies where the Anglican Church had sufficient support to not require the society's aid. The Virginia church had a commissary, an official that operated in the ecclesiastical no man's land between the local parish vestries with their ministers and the government bodies in Williamsburg, Virginia. For Regular Baptists in Virginia, the local church's Saturday meeting minutes and the churches' Association meeting records are available, and these reflect the independence from ecclesiastical oversight that is a hallmark of Baptist ecclesiology. This ecclesiastical difference will be on full display in the pamphlet exchange between Anglican Rev. James Maury and Regular Baptist Elder David Thomas, which is the focus of chapter five.<sup>41</sup>

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*and Will Books, and Others* (Athens, GA, 1994); R. Sparacio and S. Sparacio, *Minutes Book Abstracts of Fauquier County, Virginia, 1759-1761*, vols. 3-4 (McLean, VA, 1993); **Isle of Wight County**: 'Isle of Wight County Records', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 7 (1899), pp. 205-315, pp. 211-212; Isle of Wight County, Virginia, Order Book, 1746-1752, microfilm, Isle of Wight Reel #119, County Records Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia; Isle of Wight County, Virginia, Court Order Book, 1772-1780, microfilm, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia; **Southampton County**: Southampton County Court Minute Book 1786-1790, [http://www.brantleyassociation.com/southampton\\_project/southampton\\_project\\_list.htm](http://www.brantleyassociation.com/southampton_project/southampton_project_list.htm), (Accessed: 20 September 2018); Southampton County Court Order Book, 1772-1777, 1778-1784, 1784-1788, 1786-1790, [http://www.brantleyassociation.com/southampton\\_project/southampton\\_project\\_list.htm](http://www.brantleyassociation.com/southampton_project/southampton_project_list.htm) (Accessed: 20 September 2018); **Sussex County**: W. L. Hopkins, *Sussex County, Virginia Will Books A-F* (Richmond, VA, 1990); Sussex County, Virginia, Court Order Book, 1770-1776, microfilm, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

<sup>41</sup> J. Maury, *To Christians of Every Denomination among Us, Especially Those of the Established Church, an Address: Enforcing an Inquiry into the Grounds of the Pretensions of the Preachers, Called Anabaptists, to an Extraordinary Mission from Heaven to Preach the Gospel; Recommending a Method, by Which Even the Unlearned May Engage in and Prosecute That Inquiry, So as to Satisfy Themselves Whether Their Pretensions*

### *Anglican Church Officers Documents in Virginia*

How the Act of Toleration was applied is fleshed out in the correspondence between Virginia's Anglican Commissaries, other Virginia officials, and the Bishop of London, who was the bishop for the English Established Church in the various colonies. They discussed among themselves the activity of dissenters in the colonies and how to refute dissenters' arguments for extending the terms of toleration. The Commissaries' correspondence with the Bishop of London is preserved in the Fulham Palace Papers. The attitudes expressed by the individuals writing to the Bishop along with the guidance sent to them in response shed light on the attitude of the leadership in London and Virginia toward dissenters.<sup>42</sup>

The Dawson Family Papers is a collection of the correspondence of William Dawson and Thomas Dawson, brothers who served consecutively as Virginia's Church Commissary following the long tenure of James Blair. The letters and sermons preserved in this collection document the pastoral concerns of local parish ministers who were dealing with the expansion of non-conformist congregations in their parishes. The Dawsons wrote to the Bishop of London requesting guidance. Sermons preached by the Dawsons at gatherings of the parish ministers are also included in this collection.<sup>43</sup> Commissaries William Robinson (1761-1768), James Horrocks (1769-1772), and James Camm (1773-1776) are documented in *Historical Collections Relating to the American Colonial Church, vol. 1: Virginia*, edited by William Stevens Perry.<sup>44</sup> Richard Bland, a member of the General Assembly, published an

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*Be Admissible or Not, on Scripture Principles; and Shewing, That There Is but One Case, Wherein the Members of the Established Church Can Innocently Separate from Her Communion; Together with the Sin and Danger of Separating in Any Other Case* (Annapolis MD, 1771); D. Thomas, *The Virginian Baptist: Or a View and Defence of the Christian Religion, as It Is Professed by the Baptists of Virginia. In Three Parts: Containing a True and Faithful Account [f.] of Their Principles. Ii. Of Their Order as a Church. Iii. Of the Principal Objections Made against Them, Especially in This Colony, with a Serious Answer to Each of Them* (Baltimore, MD, 1774).

<sup>42</sup> Lambeth Palace Library, *The Fulham Papers at Lambeth Palace Library* (University Microfilms, 1970). Volumes 13-15 contain the Virginia correspondence from the period under consideration.

<sup>43</sup> *William Dawson Family Papers, 1728-1775*.

<sup>44</sup> W. S. Perry, ed., *Historical Collections Relating to the American Colonial Church*, vol. 1, Virginia (Hartford, CT, 1870), <https://archive.org/details/cu31924092469604> (Accessed: 20 November 2015).

open-letter to Virginia clergy reacting to a letter the Bishop of London wrote to the London Board of Trade. The Bishop asked the Board to recommend that the king not approve the clerical salary scheme that Virginia's General Assembly passed.<sup>45</sup> Bland insisted that the clergy, rather than the General Assembly, were the ones undermining the authority of the Crown. The 'Parson's Cause' undermined the support the Virginia General Assembly gave to the Established Church.

Sermons published by the clerical hierarchy in England were published and distributed. Some were sold to benefit the first English mission society, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, which, like many charities in England, hosted an annual sermon for their supporters. Others were distributed for popular reading. These sermons offer a snapshot of the thinking and theological reflection of official Anglicanism in this period. This in turn, shaped the perception of dissenters and their doctrine by lay Anglicans such as served in the Virginia General Assembly and Virginia clergy of the Established Church. The topics of these sermons included management of non-Anglican immigrants, as well as the issue of slavery.<sup>46</sup>

#### *Local Anglican Parish Records in Colonial Virginia*

The parish vestry in colonial Virginia was the most local elected office, responsible for the maintenance of parish property, and salaries of ministry staff. As they were the closest elected officials, the vestries were also charged with maintaining property lines between

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<sup>45</sup> R. Bland, *A Letter to the Clergy of Virginia, in Which the Conduct of the General-Assembly Is Vindicated, against the Reflexions Contained in a Letter to the Lords of Trade and Plantations, from the Lord-Bishop of London, By Richard Bland, Esq; One of the Representatives in Assembly for the County of Prince-George. [One Line in Latin from Cicero]* (Williamsburg [Va.], 1760), p. 4, Eighteenth Century Collections Online.

<sup>46</sup> **On non-Anglican immigrants:** R. H. Drummond, *A Sermon Preached before the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts; at Their Anniversary Meeting in the Parish Church of St. Mary-Le-Bow, on Friday February 15, 1754. By the Right Reverend Father in God, Robert Lord Bishop of St. Asaph.* (London, 1754); **On Slavery:** T. Hayter, *A Sermon Preached before the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts; at Their Anniversary Meeting in the Parish Church of St. Mary-Le-Bow, on Friday February 21, 1755. By the Right Reverend Father in God, Thomas Lord Bishop of Norwich.* (London, 1755).

residents. New parishes were formed when a population around a ‘chapel of ease’ was sufficient to create a new parish. New parishes were authorized by the Virginia House of Burgesses, and often upon the petition of area residents. Sometimes county and parish lines coincided, sometimes the lines did not; much depended on the geography. An election was subsequently called to create a vestry, normally filled by local Anglican large landowners, who might also serve as one of Burgesses from the county in the House of Burgesses. A vestry membership was a life-time appointment, subject only to resignation or to recall.<sup>47</sup> Occasionally, vestries were dissolved due to corruption and a new vestry election held by order of the Virginia House of Burgesses.<sup>48</sup> The vestry parish records contain a variety of data that reflects the responsibilities of the vestry: the names of people who were needing charitable assistance with the names of their benefactors; the assignment of caretakers for orphans; and the confirmation of property boundaries between residents processions). Records were kept by the church clerk or minister in the parish’s vestry book.<sup>49</sup> Where these records are no longer extant, published histories have been accessed.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> W. Seiler, ‘The Anglican parish vestry in colonial Virginia’, *The Journal of Southern History* 22 (August 1956), pp. 310-337.

<sup>48</sup> Frederick Parish, for example, was re-organized in 1752 due to fiscal misappropriation by the vestry, who laid heavy levies upon the populace to build or maintain churches but neglected the task. Virginia General Assembly, February 1752, 25<sup>th</sup> George II, Chap. XXII, ‘An Act for dissolving the Vestry of Frederick Parish, in Frederick county, in Hening, *Statutes*, vol. 6, pp. 258-260.

<sup>49</sup> Albemarle Parish (Sussex County, Va.), Parish Vestry Record, Accession 30085, Church records collection, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia; Augusta Parish (Augusta County, Va.) Vestry Book, 1747-1782, Manuscript, Accession 20429, Church Records collection, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia; Frederick Parish Vestry Book, 1764-1780, manuscript, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

<sup>50</sup> Published parish records include L. C. Bell, ‘Albemarle Parish’, *Tyler’s Quarterly* (January 1950), pp. 3-5; reprint (Richmond, 1950): pp.147-173; M. L. Boisseau, *Vestry Book of Camden Parish, 1767-1820: With Other Miscellaneous Records* (Danville, VA, 1986); V. L. H. Davis and A. W. Hogwood (eds.), *The Vestry Book of Albemarle Parish, 1742-1786, Surry and Sussex Counties, Virginia* (Baltimore, 2008); M. L. Hopkins, *Cameron Parish in Colonial Virginia* (Lovettsville, VA, 1997); M. L. Hopkins and N. H. Phillips, *Anglican Parishes of Loudoun* (Lovettsville, VA, 1997); G. King and H. Sanford, *The Register of Overwharton Parish, Stafford County, Virginia, 1723-1758, and Sundry Historical and Genealogical Notes* (Fredericksburg, VA, 1961); E. K. Meade, *Frederick Parish, Virginia, 1744-1780: Its Churches, Chapels, Ministers and Vestries* (Winchester, 1947); L. Minghini and T. E. VanMetre, *History of Trinity Episcopal Church and Norborne Parish: Martinsburg, Berkeley County, West Virginia, Diocese of West Virginia; 185th Anniversary, 1771-1956* (Martinsburg, WV, 1956); J. Moore, B. L. W. Staunton, and R. A. Brock, *Annals of Henrico Parish* (Richmond, VA, 1904); ‘Register of St. Stephen’s Parish: Northumberland County’, *The William and Mary Quarterly* 18 (1909): pp. 129-137, is a register of births and deaths, in alphabetical order, in this parish since its founding

### *Regular Baptists Meeting Records*

The first Regular Baptists in Augusta County settled near Smith and Linville Creek; the congregation later took the name Brock's Gap. Smith Creek Regular Baptist Church in Harrisonburg, Virginia, claims the Brock's Gap congregation as part of its heritage. The records of Brock's Gap cover 1756 to 1844 and are in the church records collection of the Library of Virginia. The original records were relied on for cross-checking with parish and county records, and for notable events that reflect on the Regular Baptist's interaction with their community and events impacting them.<sup>51</sup> They also provide evidence of Regular Baptist's strategies for interacting with neighbors as a minority religious group in Virginia.

Mill Creek Baptist Church was originally settled in Frederick County in 1753; the church site is now located near Berkeley, West Virginia. Among its leaders were Regular Baptist Elders John Garrard, David Thomas, and John Corbly.<sup>52</sup> Thomas would move eastward into Fauquier County and his contributions there will be documented in chapter three. John Corbly moved deeper into the wilderness and found churches in what is now West Virginia and Pennsylvania.<sup>53</sup>

Ketocin Baptist Church Minute Book extant records begin in 1776.<sup>54</sup> James' address on the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the church's founding bemoaned the loss of the earlier records,

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during the colonial period; G. R. B. Richards, trans. and ed., *Register of Albemarle Parish Surry and Sussex Counties 1738-1778* (Richmond, VA, 1958); B. Ruffin, *Augusta Parish, Virginia 1738-1780* (Verona, VA, 1970); P. Slaughter, *A History of St. Mark's Parish, Culpeper County, Virginia with Notes of Old Churches and Old Families, and Illustrations of the Manners and Customs of the Olden Time* (Baltimore, MD, 1877); P. Slaughter and E. L. Goodwin, *The History of Truro Parish in Virginia*, (Philadelphia, 1908).

<sup>51</sup> Brock's Gap Church (Rockingham County, Va.), *Records, 1756-1844*, nee Smith Creek and Linville Creek Baptist Church, Manuscript, Accession 19984, Church Records Collection, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia; W. A. Good, *Smith Creek Baptist Church: A Beacon Light in the Wilderness* (Harrisonburg, VA, 1994).

<sup>52</sup> Mill Creek or Opequon Baptist Church, *Minutes from 1757-1928*, facsimile copy, Virginia Baptist Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia.

<sup>53</sup> G. T. Rogers, *West Virginia Baptist History: The Early Years 1770-1865* (Terra Alta, WV, 1990).

<sup>54</sup> Ketocin Baptist Church (Loudoun County, Va.), Minute Book 1776-1890, manuscript facsimile, Accession 20316, Church records collection, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

believing them deliberately ‘cut out or destroyed’.<sup>55</sup> The first Baptist Association in Virginia was founded at Kettoctin Baptist Church. In 1808, William Fristoe, one of David Thomas’ protégés, published ‘*A Concise History of the Kettocton Baptist Association . . .*’. This book is a key primary source for information on the Regular Baptists of the colonial period. The Association was named after the church where the meeting to organize Regular Baptist Churches in northern Virginia into their own association, apart from their mother association, the Philadelphia Baptist Association. Fristoe gives a brief account of each founding church, including Kettoctin, their various pastors, and their doctrine and practice. While not doubting the memory of a credible eyewitness, extensive searches for records related to the onerous toleration permitting process for a dissenting church to meet, that Fristoe describes, were not located. It could well be that such records did not survive the wear of time and accident. His summary of the effects reflects his lived experience. ‘We . . . see monarchial tyranny, and priestly policy, harmoniously uniting—the king supporting the favorite clergy of the established church, and the clergy, knowing their preservation and support is dependent on the crown, afford their aid in support of the government, and of course all non-conformists must go to the wreck’. His testimony of events, just over thirty year in vintage, stands as an example of the worst results of toleration regulations in practice.<sup>56</sup>

David Thomas was instrumental in Colonial Baptist life in Virginia through his pulpit and his pen. David Thomas and Broad Run Baptist Church in Fauquier County are perhaps the best documented colonial Regular Baptist elder and meeting house. Thomas was a

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<sup>55</sup> F. H. James, *A Brief Historical Sketch of Kettoctin Baptist Church from Its Organization 150 Years Ago*, 1906 in Folder of Materials 1 related to Kettoctin Baptist Church, Folder #53-308, Thomas Balch Library, Leesville, Virginia.

<sup>56</sup> W. Fristoe, *A Concise History of the Kettocton Baptist Association: Wherein a Description Is Given of Her Constitution, Progress and Increase, the Intention in Associating, the Doctrines Holden by Her, Reasons for the Names of Regular and Separate Baptists, an Account of the Death of Sundries, Constitution and Order of Churches, the Manner of Administering Baptism, of the Ordination of Ministers, Bounds of the Association, the Doctrines Preached, Providing for the Ministry, Annual Meetings, the Number of Ministers, of Persecution, the Mode of Redress, of Circular Letters, Objections to the Baptists Replied to, of Good Works, and of Her Civil Policy*, American Historical Imprints (Staunton, VA, 1808), pp. 72-76, p. 76.

Pennsylvania Regular Baptist who was well educated and well connected. Broad Run Church's Minute Book from 1762 to 1872 is among the treasured possessions of the Virginia Baptist Historical Society. A manuscript facsimile of the document makes the script readable. This document was gleaned for member names and significant activity. A note on the history of the church was posted in the Minute Book in June 1785. David Thomas, assisted by John Marks of Ketocin Baptist Church, founded the church.<sup>57</sup>

The minute books of Mill Swamp Baptist Church, and Raccoon Swamp Baptist Church, both pastored by Regular Baptist Elder John Meglamre provide documentation of the churches founding, and month to month relations between their members.<sup>58</sup> Meglamre was a key regional leader, presiding over both the Kehukee (North Carolina) Association and early Portsmouth (Virginia) Association Meetings.<sup>59</sup> The Black Creek Baptist Church minute book begins in 1774, and provided ample detail on the life of its members, including their discussion of slavery.<sup>60</sup> By constructing timelines using the available records and histories of the region and Regular Baptist David Barrow's activity, as well as the activity of other members of the church, one can develop a sense of how the both Established Churchmen and dissenters interacted with each other and responded to the government and social pressure.

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<sup>57</sup> Broad Run Baptist Church (Fauquier County, Virginia), Minute Book, 1762-1872, manuscript facsimile, Virginia Baptist Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia, p. 18.

<sup>58</sup> Mill Swamp Baptist Church, Ivor, Virginia, Church Minutes of 1774-1790, Manuscript, Accession 20554, Church Records Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia; Antioch Baptist Church, nee Raccoon Swamp Church (Sussex County, Va.), Minutes, Accession 27920, Church Records Collection, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia; The Record Book of the Baptist Church of Christ at Raccoon Swamp Meetinghouse since Changed to Antioch, Sussex County, Virginia, containing the constitution and numbers when constituted, their rules of decorum, and the names of the living members belonging thereto, with their acts, orders, appoints, and resolutions, 1832-1892, manuscript, Virginia Baptist Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia.

<sup>59</sup> 'Minutes of the Kehukee Association, Nov. 6th, 1769 to 1777' in *James Sprung Historical Monograph*, vol. 5 (Chapel Hill, NC, 1904); R. Jones, *A History of the Virginia Portsmouth Association* (Raleigh, NC, 1881).

<sup>60</sup> Black Creek Baptist Church, 1774-1835, Southampton County, Virginia, Typed Transcript, Virginia Baptist Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia.

Barrow also became an outspoken advocate for Jefferson's vision for the church-state relationship and for the manumission of enslaved people.<sup>61</sup>

### *Secondary Documentation*

#### Eighteenth-Century Atlantic Studies

##### *Colonial Leadership*

As England's first colony, the story of colonial Virginia is best told keeping an eye on social and cultural developments in the mother country for helpful comparisons. The mid-eighteenth century in America saw the fruit of efforts toward religious toleration in Europe and England. Benjamin Kaplan's work on religious toleration in early modern Europe, *Divided by Faith*, when examined with Virginia in mind, reminds the reader how very European were Virginian opinions and practices of religion. Though the volume covers mostly pre-eighteenth-century Europe, Kaplan's reflections on England offer a helpful check on other historians who reflect on English colonial history from the development of religious liberty out of the individualism that was inherent in enlightenment thought. Carla Pestana offers a macro-view of religion as it was expressed before and throughout the colonial expansion of Great Britain. While Kaplan focuses on movement within European borders, Pestana examines the effect of emigrants crossing the Atlantic. Immigration is a key theme in Atlantic studies,<sup>62</sup> and frames much of the story of settlement of dissenters in mid-eighteenth-century Virginia. It especially impacts chapter two's story of the early settlement of Regular Baptists in the valleys west of Virginia's Blue Ridge mountain range.

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<sup>61</sup> C. R. Allen, Jr., 'David Barrow's Circular Letter of 1798'. *The William and Mary Quarterly* 20 (1963), pp. 440-451. D. Barrow, *Involuntary, Unmerited, Perpetual, Absolute, Hereditary Slavery Examined on the Principles of Nature, Reason, Justice, Policy and Scripture*, America's Historical Imprints (Lexington, KY, 1808).

<sup>62</sup> B. Kaplan, *Divided by Faith: Religious Conflict and the Practice of Toleration in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA, 2007); C. G. Pestana, *Protestant Empire: Religion and the Making of the British Atlantic World* (Philadelphia, 2009); S. Foster (ed.), *British North America in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, The Oxford History of the British Empire Companion Series, edited by W. R. Louis (Oxford, 2013).

Atlantic Studies also provides context for the responses of the Virginia colonial government to pressures coming from influencers in London: the military, the Board of Trade, and the Bishop of London. Stephen Webb's *Marlborough's America* documents how the Duke of Marlborough, an advisor in and out of positions of influence with the royal households that he served as commanding general, placed favored subordinate officers into colonial sinecures to help their majesties maintain the peace and prosperity of their empire. Several of Virginia's governors and lieutenant governors came through Marlborough's ranks. Webb's insights into their character and policy-making strategies contribute to understanding how these officials related to the subjects under their charge. Lieutenant Governor Spotswood, for example, was one of Marlborough's subordinates; and often reminded his Virginia circle that his 'service with Malborough . . . had won him the command of Virginia'.<sup>63</sup> He recruited German miners to operate a silver mine. They established a Lutheran Church as soon as they had paid off their indenture and moved off of his land. This is an early example of how an economic interest drove immigration, which in turn brought more religious variety to the colony.<sup>64</sup>

A recent trans-Atlantic study, Max Edelson's *New Map of Empire*, describes how the Board of Trade maintained their influence by 'generating and controlling information', such as regularly updated maps of North American settlement. Information is power, and up until the 1750s, the colonies were only too pleased to cooperate in the trade system, even as their economies grew quietly and largely unnoticed by the British government. This changed as a result of Britain's military venture into the North American theatre of the Seven Years' War,

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<sup>63</sup> S. S. Webb, *Marlborough's America*, The Lewis Walpole Series in Eighteenth-Century Culture and History (New Haven, 2013), p. xxi.

<sup>64</sup> Webb, *Marlborough's America*, p. 344; see also R. Schrock, 'Alexander Spotswood (1676-1740)', *Encyclopedia Virginia* [https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/spotswood\\_alexander\\_1676-1740#start\\_entry](https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/spotswood_alexander_1676-1740#start_entry) (Accessed: 22 August 2019); A. G. Roeber, *Palatines, Liberty, and Property: German Lutherans in Colonial British America* (Baltimore, MD, 1998), pp. 101-102.

which gave them a far clearer picture of the wealth of their colonies. This knowledge led to new tax policies such as had hitherto been unknown to the colonials. They considered themselves the king's subjects and were disturbed by the efforts made to tax their wealth gained by the sale of raw material to England.<sup>65</sup> The timing was perhaps perfect for the Anglican ministers in the colony to get the attention of the Bishop of London, and the Board of Trade, over what they considered an unjust decision to change their compensation system in Virginia. This produced a reaction from the Virginia Burgesses, who expected London to rubber stamp the legislation they passed. James Walsh indicates that they were highly disgruntled, as will be seen below, with this effort of their ministers to go over their heads.<sup>66</sup>

*British North America in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century*, edited by Stephen Foster, frames social history on both sides of the Atlantic. Jeremy Gregory's essay examines what it meant to be a member of the Established Church or a dissenter in North America. As in Kaplan's Europe, the Established Church in one colony was the local dissenting church in another colony, depending upon the charter of the colony. Dissenters were often forced to leave the Established Church's territory prior to the Act of Toleration. The government's initiative to protect Virginia's hinterlands resulted in the Established Church's need to enforce the Act of Toleration as Virginia became more religiously diverse.<sup>67</sup>

Emory Evans, in *A Topping People*, chronicles how Virginia's gentry leveraged their tobacco crops to create English civilization in the wilderness, complete with county courthouses and parish churches. Major debt, from promising more than their crops yielded,

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<sup>65</sup> S. M. Edelson, *The New Map of Empire: How Britain Imagined America before Independence* (Cambridge, MA, 2017), pp. 7-9, 23.

<sup>66</sup> J. P. Walsh, "'Black Cotted Raskolls': Anti-Anglican Criticism in Colonial Virginia", *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 88 (1980), pp. 21-36; R. Isaac, 'Religion and Authority: Problems of the Anglican Establishment in Virginia in the Era of the Great Awakening and the Parsons' Cause', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 30 (January 1973), pp. 3-36.

<sup>67</sup> J. Gregory, 'Establishment and Dissent in British North America: organizing religion in the new world', in Foster (ed.), *British North America*, pp.136-169.

would ruin many of them. By the eighteenth century, Virginia's cash crop was tobacco and the basis of the colony's economy. Harvested and sold to wholesalers who shipped it to England, the leaves were also traded as currency in Virginia, and used to pay county and parish expenses. African slaves were imported to work the land, because indentured servants and indigenous people were deemed not permanent enough sources of labor to support the cultivation of this plant. Allan Kulikoff and T. H. Breen offer a thorough examination of the tobacco and slave economy and the culture thereby fostered.<sup>68</sup> Anglican clergy active resistance to a scheme to pay them in cash rather than tobacco soured the gentry against them, and undermined their support in the General Assembly when dissenters pressed for more privileges.<sup>69</sup> Tobacco was truly king and fortunes rose and fell depending on the quality and quantity of the annual harvest.<sup>70</sup> The ability of the land to support a quality Tobacco crop often influenced settlement patterns in Virginia, particularly in the Tidewater. Dissenters who had been roundly resisted earlier in the eighteenth century found space, later in the century, on arable land in the backwaters of southeastern Virginia.

The planter's unsteady social position at the top is further documented by Kathleen Brown, in *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs*. The planters had a tenuous hold on the top of society. Women often challenged their fathers and husbands; asserting their rights to property (both real and chattel). One of the most unique figures at the top of the social strata in Virginia was Thomas, Sixth Lord Fairfax, whose royal proprietary

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<sup>68</sup> A. Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves: The Development of Southern Cultures in the Chesapeake, 1680-1800* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1986); T. H. Breen, *Tobacco Culture: The Mentality of the Great Tidewater Planters on the Eve of the Revolution* (Princeton, 1985).

<sup>69</sup> J. K. Nelson, *Blessed Company: Parishes, Parsons, and Parishioners in Anglican Virginia 1690-1776* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2001), p. 49.

<sup>70</sup> B. A. Ragsdale, 'George Washington, the British tobacco trade, and economic opportunity in prerevolutionary Virginia', *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 97 (1989), pp. 32-162; M. Stoner, 'Tobacco', in W. Kaufman and H. S. Macpherson (eds.), *Britain and the Americas: Culture, Politics, and History* (Santa Barbara, CA, 2005), pp. 967-969; E. J. Salmon and J. Salmon, 'Tobacco', *Encyclopedia of Virginia*, [http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Tobacco\\_in\\_Colonial\\_Virginia#start\\_entry](http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Tobacco_in_Colonial_Virginia#start_entry) (Accessed: 29 November 2015).

encompassed most of Northern Virginia. Stuart Brown wrote a biography of him, but little else has been recently produced on this reclusive unmarried English Baron. He immigrated to Virginia to protect his property interests. His land agent, Robert ‘King’ Carter, was doing a better job lining his own pockets than he was collecting rents and defending Fairfax’s rights. Also, proprietary rents were not paid to the royal colonial government, so many a Governor looked for ways to reclaim the property a little at a time. Fairfax vigorously defended his land holdings, including having an official survey done by a young George Washington.<sup>71</sup>

### *The Anglican Church in Eighteenth Century England*

The Anglican Church was a willing partner in the drive to colonize Virginia and exploit its natural and human resources. Jeremy Gregory, W. M. Jacob and others, building on the work of Norman Sykes, have brought a needed corrective to the image of the eighteenth-century Anglican Church as spiritually moribund, though critics, such as Jacob Blosser, remain active.<sup>72</sup> John Walsh, with Colin Haydon and Stephen Taylor, edited an essay collection, *The Church of England c. 1689-c. 1833*, which brought together several strands of current research on the Anglican Church in the long eighteenth century. Gregory essays in this volume traces strategies used by parish ministers to deal with dissenters in their locale after toleration.<sup>73</sup> Essays such as these identify similarities and differences in ministry strategy between churches in England and in Virginia.

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<sup>71</sup> E. G. Evans, *A ‘Topping People’: The Rise and Decline of Virginia’s Old Political Elite, 1680-1790* (Charlottesville, VA, 2009); K. M. Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1996); S. E. Brown, Jr., *Virginia Baron: The Story of Thomas 6<sup>th</sup> Lord Fairfax* (Baltimore, MD, 2003).

<sup>72</sup> J. Gregory, *Restoration, Reformation, and Reform, 1660-1828: Archbishops of Canterbury and Their Diocese* (New York, 2000); W. M. Jacob, *The Clerical Profession in the Long Eighteenth Century 1680-1840* (New York, 2007); N. Sykes, *Church and State in England in the Eighteenth Century: The Birkbeck Lectures in Ecclesiastical History Delivered at Trinity College, Cambridge, 1931-33* (Cambridge, 1934); J. M. Blosser, ‘Irreverent empire: Anglican inattention in an Atlantic world’, *Church History*, 77 (September 2008), pp. 596-628.

<sup>73</sup> J. Gregory, ‘The eighteenth-century Reformation: the pastoral task of Anglican clergy after 1689’, in J. Walsh, C. Haydon, and S. Taylor (eds.), *The Church of England c. 1689-c. 1833: From Toleration to Tractarianism* (Cambridge, 2009), pp. 67-85.

David Bebbington commends Norman Sykes for offering the first challenge to the narrative of an eighteenth-century spiritual malaise that has been offered by nineteenth century church historians. Sykes' lectures in 1934 outlined the issues facing the church after toleration became law in England. He assessed that, while the church's leadership could have been more politically astute, they were making a good effort to address concerns of disaffected parish residents by providing effective ministerial training and discipline. Having the terms of engagement shifted by the Act of Toleration, it was a good strategy to tighten the standards for ministerial training and supervision of parish-level clergy to avoid giving non-conformists poor examples to highlight in their local circle of influence. This was a defensive strategy certainly, but beneficial to the spiritual health of the parish.<sup>74</sup> In the North American colonies, a Commissary system was set up in the colonies the late seventeenth century for similar purposes. It was the English church's effort to improve conditions for the colonial Anglican. The system gave the Bishop of London a leading minister on the ground in each colony to vet ministerial candidates. James Blair was Virginia's second Commissary and most influential.<sup>75</sup> The commissaries that followed him contributed to the tension that built up between dissenters and the governing authorities in Virginia.

Gregory and Jacob build on Sykes' thesis. Gregory's monograph on the Archdiocese of Canterbury includes a chapter on how the Archbishop and his local officials dealt with dissenters in their midst, including Baptists, who were part of migration to the new world. Gregory also published an article on clerical livings in England. It appears that the parson's

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<sup>74</sup> D. Bebbington, *Patterns in History: A Christian Perspective on Historical Thought* (Vancouver, 2000), p.181; Sykes, *Church and State in England*.

<sup>75</sup> J. Bell, *The Imperial Origins of the King's Church in Early America, 1607-1783*, *Studies in Modern History*, edited by J. C. D. Clark (New York, 2004), pp. 58-73; 72-73.

salary was an issue on both sides of the Atlantic. He also wrote an essay on how the self-understanding of the Church of England was influenced by joining the colonial enterprise.<sup>76</sup>

Jacob's companion volumes on clerical and laity life in eighteenth-century England highlights lay activity in the Church of England, from underwriting the livings of clergy, to supplying decorative items for the church, to participation in singing and in social action. Jacob's characterization may be of a minority in the Established Church, but it does change the narrative away from the traditional portrayal of an utterly desolate spiritual situation. Jacob's volume on the clergy in eighteenth-century England highlights the best and worst of their relationships with their parishes and their bishops. Clerical candidates worked hard to get the education required to be ordained, and then struggled with indifferent parishioners, active dissenters, and were sometimes in the awkward position of pressing their parish residents for the real estate tax paid to support their salaries where they did not have underwriters (in Virginia it was a head tax rather than a land tax).<sup>77</sup> James Blair worked to give Virginia a college, the College of William and Mary, where her clergy candidates could gain their qualifying education prior to taking the voyage to London for ordination, with his recommendation in hand.<sup>78</sup> The rigors of that round-trip voyage perhaps sharpened the disdain of Virginia's Anglican pastors toward dissenters whose congregations so easily set men apart as Baptist Elders. The pamphlet exchange between the Anglican Rev. James Maury and Regular Baptist Elder David Thomas highlights this point of tension between the two groups.

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<sup>76</sup> Gregory, *Restoration*; J. Gregory, "'A just and sufficient maintenance': some defences of the clerical establishment in the eighteenth century", *Studies in Church History* 24 (January 1987), pp. 321-332; J. Gregory, 'Transatlantic Anglican Networks, c.1680 – c.1770: transplanting, translating, and transforming the Church of England', in J. Gregory and H. McLeod (eds.), *International Religious Networks*, SCH Subsidia 14 (Rochester, NY, 2012), pp. 127–142.

<sup>77</sup> Jacob, *Clerical Profession*; W. M. Jacob, *Lay People and Religion in the Early Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, 2002).

<sup>78</sup> P. Rouse, Jr., 'James Blair of Virginia', *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church*, 43 (June 1974), pp. 189-193, p. 192.

## Colonial Virginia Anglican Historiography

Colonial Virginia's Anglican Church has been the subject of distinguished church historiographers. Bishop William Meade in the mid-nineteenth century used his memory and extant documents to memorialize the church in Virginia. His work was built upon by Bishop George Brydon in the twentieth century who was much more careful with documentation than Meade and offers a more balanced assessment of the church's life in the colonial period. Brydon's two-volume work has become a *grundtext* for historians who work on this topic. Wesley Gewehr's *The Great Awakening in Virginia* looks at the effect of the movement on the Anglican Church, and on the non-conformist groups in Virginia. These three works combined have served extensively as documentary support for the work of current researchers.<sup>79</sup> Parke Rouse's biography of James Blair, the longest-serving Commissary in Virginia, documents his struggle to meet the needs of the parishes, and his triumph in founding Virginia's College of William and Mary, which was designed to supply the education needs of students seeking ordination.<sup>80</sup>

In 1999, Rhys Issac started the current conversation on Virginia's religious life with *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790*, offering a critical assessment of both Anglican and dissenting churches. His ethnographic study brought both churches' history out of the confines of the church history and set it in the larger context. Like Blosser, his thesis asserts that the Anglican Church in Virginia was negligent of its spiritual purpose. Pastors were more concerned with lining their pockets than tending to the spiritual needs of their parish. Virginians were more focused on making a living than they were on spiritual matters. Thus,

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<sup>79</sup> W. Meade, *Old Churches, Ministers and Families of Virginia*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia, 1861); Brydon, *Virginia's Mother Church*, vol. I; G. M. Brydon, *Virginia's Mother Church and the Political Conditions under Which It Grew*, Vol II, *The Story of the Anglican Church and the Development of Religion in Virginia 1727-1814* (Philadelphia, PA, 1952); W. Gewehr, *The Great Awakening in Virginia: 1740 to 1790* (Gloucester, MA, 1965).

<sup>80</sup> Rouse, *James Blair of Virginia*.

they were easy pickings for non-conforming itinerant preachers who took the colony by storm. Even so, Isaac gives no attention to Regular Baptists in this otherwise important work. As Lauren Winner and John Nelson note, lay Anglicans took their faith seriously, even if they sometimes failed to attend the parish church more often than the law required. The Book of Common Prayer was a prized possession in households who could afford their own copy.<sup>81</sup> Isaac's section on method at the end of the book gives grist for historians wanting to take a new look at the church in Virginia in this era.<sup>82</sup>

Nelson and Winner also took up the challenge to balance Isaac's historiography. Nelson looks at both clergy and laity in the colonial Virginia Anglican church, and his book would be a good companion volume to study these two groups alongside Jacob's volumes on English Anglicans. Winner offers an examination of the religious life of Virginia gentry, as expressed by the artifacts from their homes. Shorter works that are quite helpful for documentary support include Daniel Hockman's look at William Dawson's struggle against dissenters, and Paul Longmore's two articles covering the social change of Virginia parishioners from supplicants to an all-mighty governing authority to constituents to be placated, and the General Assembly's creation of a Committee on Religion to manage the Assembly's response to all the changes demanded by Established Church parishioners and dissenting churches alike.<sup>83</sup> Like Sykes, Walsh, and Gregory in England, these writers have challenged Isaac's negative image of Anglican clergy in Virginia the eighteenth century.

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<sup>81</sup> L. F. Winner, *A Cheerful and Comfortable Faith: Anglican Religious Practice in the Elite Households of Eighteenth-Century Virginia* (New Haven, CT, 2010), pp. 100-101; Nelson, *Blessed Company*, pp. 244-248.

<sup>82</sup> R. Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia: 1740-1790* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1982).

<sup>83</sup> Nelson, *Blessed Company*; Winner, *Cheerful and Comfortable Faith*; D. M. Hockman, "Hellish and malicious incendiaries": Commissary William Dawson and dissent in colonial Virginia, 1743-1752', *Anglican and Episcopal History*, 59 (June 1990), pp. 150-180; P. K. Longmore, 'From supplicants to constituents: petitioning by Virginia parishioners, 1701-1775', *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 103 (October 1995), pp. 407-442; P. K. Longmore, "'All matters and things relating to religion and morality": the Virginia Burgesses' Committee for Religion, 1769 to 1775', *Journal of Church and State* 38 (Autumn 1996), pp. 775-797.

Joan Gundersen's *The Anglican Ministry in Virginia, 1723-1766, A Study of a Social Class* examined the lives and ministries of the Anglican clerics who served as trailblazers as parishes were created in Virginia. Her portrait depicts an earnest, hard-working group of pastors with an occasional immoral minister, who blemished the image. Their parishes were extensive, and they were often called upon to provide ministry in neighboring parishes. Pluralism in Virginia was not a pocket-lining luxury that it was perceived to be in England. It was a necessity because of frequent vacancies. Gundersen's biographical sketches appendix is an invaluable tool for the researcher to identify subjects appropriate for study. She covers the time period at the heart of Commissary James Blair's project to staff the ever-forming parishes in Virginia with qualified clergy. Gundersen has also written articles on the recruiting of Anglican ministers and on women's roles in supporting religion in colonial era Virginia. She joined Edward Bond as co-editor of a special edition of the *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, marking the 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Anglican/Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia, marking Virginia's 400<sup>th</sup> year of existence. This is the most recent survey of the church's history in Virginia, and effectively recaps 400 years of Anglican presence in Virginia.<sup>84</sup>

### Baptist Historiography

Eighteenth-century English Baptists have received harsh treatment by twentieth century historians. Raymond Brown's series on English Baptists has been treated as reliable by Baptists in America for information on their English co-religionists. However, he focuses on negative aspects of Baptist life, especially their tendency to bicker and indulge in

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<sup>84</sup> J. Gundersen, *The Anglican Ministry in Virginia: 1723-1766: A Study of a Social Class*, Outstanding Studies in Early American History (New York, 1989); J. Gundersen, 'The search for good men: recruiting ministers in colonial Virginia', *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church*, 48 (1979), pp. 453-464; J. Gundersen, 'The non-institutional church: the religious role of women in eighteenth-century Virginia,' *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church*, 51 (1982), pp. 347-357; Rouse, *James Blair*; Bond and Gundersen (eds.), 'Episcopal Church in Virginia', pp. 163-344.

factionalism, so much as to make it seem amazing that these Christians even bothered to worship together. Divisiveness was part of the reason that Regular and Separate Baptists initially would not fellowship with one another. A more balanced assessment is offered by others. Frank Maudlin's assessment deeply examines the varied ways Baptists in England approached the truth in scripture. Their desire to 'rightly divide the word of God' (2 Timothy 2:15) was the source of much of the debate between Baptist groups highlighted by Brown. Michael Watts' book covers the history of all dissenting in groups in England from the Reformation to the French Revolution, and is a more complete history of Baptist development in England in the eighteenth century. His section on Baptists accounts for their struggle to interpret and apply scripture correctly, while trying to thrive under a system that reluctantly made space for them. The discussion on understanding scriptural truth was also underway among Anglicans, but the two groups did not consult one another on the topic.<sup>85</sup> The scripture discussion crossed the Atlantic with the Baptists who migrated here. General Baptists held to an Arminian understanding of personal salvation. Particular Baptists, and their sub-groups, Separate and Regular Baptists, were Calvinist in their understanding of personal salvation.<sup>86</sup>

Bebbington recently authored *Baptists through the Centuries, A History of a Global People*. His chapter on the eighteenth century looks at how the Evangelical Awakening impacted English Baptists, particularly as some embraced missions. Haykin, perhaps trying a bit of historic rehabilitation, devotes a monograph to documenting the experience of revival among English Baptists in the eighteenth century. This contradicts earlier characterizations of

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<sup>85</sup> R. Brown, *The English Baptists of the Eighteenth Century*, English Baptists, edited by B. R. White (London, 1986); F. L. Mauldin, 'Truth, heritage, and eighteenth-century English Baptists', *The Baptist Quarterly*, 35 (1994), pp. 211-228; M. Watts, *The Dissenters: From the Reformation to the French Revolution* (Oxford, 1978).

<sup>86</sup> W. H. Brackney (ed.), *Baptist Life and Thought: A Sourcebook*, rev. ed. (Valley Forge, PA, 1998), pp. 97-107.

eighteenth-century English Baptists as a beleaguered, isolationist sect with little ambition but to survive in a country barely tolerant of their presence.<sup>87</sup>

Given the opportunity or necessity, either through wealth or an indenture arrangement, to cross the Atlantic to begin anew, English Baptists who settled in Pennsylvania, a religiously tolerant Quaker colony, flourished. The Philadelphia Baptist Association, founded in 1707, consisted of thirty-one member churches in six mid-Atlantic colonies by 1764, including three in Virginia, Kettocton in Loudoun County, Opekon (aka Mill Creek) in Frederick County and Smith's Creek (Smith Creek and Linville Creek) in Augusta County.<sup>88</sup> Abram Gillette's edited *Minutes of the Philadelphia Association* records the history of early Baptist churches in middle colonies of Delaware, the Jerseys, and Pennsylvania. These Particular Baptist churches supported the efforts of Baptists who settled in northern Virginia and in North Carolina to form meeting houses and, later, associations of their own, the Kettocton and Kehukee Associations. James Clark documents these early church-strengthening efforts.<sup>89</sup> For General Baptists, Lemuel Burkitt and Jesse Read co-authored a history of General Baptist activity in North Carolina. Some of these ministers, under the influence of Philadelphia Baptist Association representatives, led their churches into the Regular Baptist church order. North Carolina Regular Baptist elders, John Meglamre and David Barrow migrated into Tidewater Virginia, organizing Baptist work in the 1770s.<sup>90</sup>

Modern historiography on Baptists in America includes Leon McBeth's *The Baptist Heritage*, which offers a wide-ranging historical survey of Baptist work in North America,

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<sup>87</sup> D. W. Bebbington, *Baptists through the Centuries: a History of a Global People* (Waco, TX, 2010); M. A. G. Haykin, *Ardent Love to Jesus: English Baptists and the Experience of Revival in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Bridgend, Wales, 2013).

<sup>88</sup> A. D. Gillette (ed.), *Minutes of the Philadelphia Baptist Association 1707-1807 Being the First One Hundred Years of Its Existence*, Tricentennial Edition, Philadelphia Association Series (Springfield, MO, 2007), p. 93.

<sup>89</sup> Gillette (ed.), *Philadelphia Baptist Association* (2007), p. 93; Clark, *Philadelphia Association*.

<sup>90</sup> L. Burkitt and J. Read, *A Concise History of the Kehukee Baptist Association from its Original Rise Down to 1803*, 2d rev. ed. (Philadelphia, 1850).

though it gives no attention to Regular Baptists in Virginia. James Leo Garrett, Jr., a historical theologian, published *Baptist Theology, A Four-Century Study*, which surveys movements and preachers who have significantly influenced Baptist theology. Thomas Kidd and Barry Hankins co-wrote *Baptists in America, A History*, which offers a balanced view of the theological and pragmatic tensions that are the fruit of Baptist efforts to adhere to scripture. Their discussion of Regular Baptists is subsumed under the Particular Baptists. While their treatment of Regular Baptists is limited, these texts will assist in assessing the primary materials on Regular Baptists. Janet Lindman's *Bodies of Belief* explores the rituals practiced in the Baptist churches in colonial North America, highlighting the physicality of their praxis. She includes a chapter on the relationship of slaves to Baptist church life, and provides a helpful table of Baptists in the Chesapeake and Mid-Atlantic region though it does not specify which ones were Regular Baptists.<sup>91</sup>

Spangler examines Baptists in their colonial Virginia context in *Virginians Reborn*. She does give some attention to the rise and influence of Regular Baptists, unlike so many sources, distinguishing them from the Separate Baptists. Like Brown, she explores the effect of conversion on households, particularly the heads of the home. It was a step down in social status when a white male head of household turned away from his parish and embraced non-conforming religion. Spangler characterizes Regular and Separate Baptist activity as successful partially as a result of weak parish leadership.<sup>92</sup> While this may indeed be the case in the western parishes that took a while to populate with Anglicans, the same could not be said of Tidewater parishes or of the leadership for Loudoun and Fauquier county parishes.

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<sup>91</sup> L. McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage: Four Centuries of Baptist Witness* (Nashville, TN, 1987), pp. 153-200; J. L. Garrett, Jr., *Baptist Theology: A Four-Century Study* (Macon, GA, 2009); T. S. Kidd and B. Hankins, *Baptists in America: A History* (New York, 2015); J. M. Lindman, *Bodies of Belief: Baptist Community in Early America* (Philadelphia, 2011).

<sup>92</sup> Spangler, *Virginians Reborn*, pp. 105-107; Brown, *Good Wives*, pp. 140-144.

Charles Irons' essay, 'The spiritual fruits of revolution', offers a survey of the background of Baptists in Virginia leading up to their effort to disestablish the Protestant Episcopal Church after the conclusion of the Revolution. The article is a helpful contrasting companion to the one piece of published scholarship that is focused solely on Regular Baptists in Virginia, Douglas Weaver's article on 'David Thomas and the Regular Baptists in Colonial Virginia'. Weaver traces the ministry of David Thomas and the contributions of Regular Baptists to Virginia Baptist history, in contrast to the Separate Baptists whom Irons describes as out for revenge on the Anglicans. Randolph Scully's *Religion and the Making of Nat Turner's Virginia*, offers a helpful study of the background of black and white Baptist communities in Tidewater Virginia running up to Nat Turner's rebellion in Southampton in the 1830s.<sup>93</sup> These three works together help create a general outline of Baptist life in mid to late eighteenth-century Virginia.

#### Virginia as a Slave Society

Slavery was an overarching fact of life in colonial Virginia. Its prevalence created the need for governing Anglicans to prescribe how Anglican ministers and dissenting preachers alike might interact with enslaved persons. The intersection between government regulation and the Christian imperative to offer salvation to all souls bent the church to the will of the government.

The Virginia Tidewater region is the location of the earliest successful English settlement in North America. Baptists came into the region about a century later. By the eighteenth century, slavery was a way of life. The economic interests that required the perpetuation of slavery superseded the moral and ethical concerns of both Anglicans and

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<sup>93</sup> C. F. Irons, 'The spiritual fruits of revolution: disestablishment and the rise of the Virginia Baptists', *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 109 (2001), pp. 159-186; D. Weaver, 'David Thomas and the Regular Baptists in colonial Virginia', *Baptist History and Heritage*, 18 (1983), pp. 3-19; R. F. Scully, *Religion and the Making of Nat Turner's Virginia: Baptist Community and Conflict, 1740-1840* (Charlottesville, VA, 2008).

Baptists. Michael Anesko documents that the Anglican Church early on had its activity among slaves tightly regulated by the government.<sup>94</sup> Anthony Gavin, a rather forward minister in St. James parish in Goochland wrote the Bishop of London, ‘There is one thing that grieves my heart, viz: to see Episcopacy so little regarded in this colony, and the cognizance of spiritual affairs left to the Governor and council by laws of this colony. And next to this, it gives me a great deal of uneasiness to see the greatest part of our Brethren taken up in farming and buying slaves which in my humble opinion is unlawful for any Christian, and in particular for a clergyman’.<sup>95</sup> The government of the period assumed that both groups would accommodate the economic interests of the landed gentry. While slavery was a colony-wide presence, it was particularly prevalent in the Tidewater region. Africans were 66 percent of the population in the Tidewater Region by the mid-eighteenth century.<sup>96</sup> Gary Nash’s volume sets the issue of slavery on a national platform. Slavery was an entrenched social evil in the south, while people in the north also held to deep-seated racism and did not see the manumission of slaves as an issue on which to stake everything.<sup>97</sup>

Anthony Parent defines a slave society such as Tidewater Virginia, as one in which ‘slavery is the primary source of income for the elite’. His volume includes an essay that summarizes how slavery was encoded into the laws in Virginia. He notes that wealthy planters created law to protect their debt-encumbered investment in slaves. This included law

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<sup>94</sup> M. Anesko, ‘So Discreet a Zeal: Slavery and the Anglican Church in Virginia, 1680-1730’, *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 93 (July 1985), pp. 247-278.

<sup>95</sup> Letter of Mr. [Anthony] Gavin to the Bishop of London, St. James Parish, Goochland, August 5, 1738 in Perry (ed.), *American Colonial Church*, vol. 1, pp. 360-361.

<sup>96</sup> C. F. Irons, *The Origins of Proslavery Christianity: White and Black Evangelicals in Colonial and Antebellum Virginia* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2008), pp. 23-24; M. Sobel, *The World They Made Together: Black and White Values in Eighteenth-Century Virginia* (Princeton, 1987), p. 3.

<sup>97</sup> G. B. Nash, *Race and Revolution* (Lanham, MD, 2001).

governing everything from Christianization, to bastardy, and emancipation.<sup>98</sup> The law created a barrier between the races that Christians did not seriously challenge.

Scully argues in an article, and later in his book, that the Baptists in Tidewater Virginia had members with strong anti-slavery sentiment. The Baptists welcomed slaves into their membership, but ‘struggled to define the exact status of their black members’.<sup>99</sup> The elite were aware of this language and use of this language in front of slaves ‘made Baptists and other evangelicals deeply suspect in the eyes of other white Virginians. Evangelicals had to defend themselves from charges of stirring rebelliousness among slaves, especially in the eighteenth century. For suspicious whites, there was plenty of evidence that slaves took the linkage between religious, spiritual, and personal liberty to heart’.<sup>100</sup> Scully’s monograph builds on his article and provides ample documentation of how the Baptists, whom Rebecca Goetz asserts accommodated racism within their faith, also argued for manumission.<sup>101</sup>

Like Scully, Goetz notes that for slaves, ‘Christianity became, over the course of the eighteenth century, a way of articulating both their spirituality and their rejection of slavery’.<sup>102</sup> Her monograph argues that, in order to exploit indigenous tribes and Africans imported as slaves, Virginia colonists chose to define who was capable of being a Christian and who was not racially.<sup>103</sup> By dehumanizing the other, non-English denizens of Virginia, they were able to exploit their labor, as they did their plough horses or cows, without thought of their innate dignity of being God’s image bearers alongside the English. As Goetz notes,

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<sup>98</sup> A. S. Parent, Jr., *Foul Means: The Formation of a Slave Society in Virginia 1660-1740* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2003), pp. 105-134, p. 133; Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves*, pp. 3-15, 41.

<sup>99</sup> R. Scully, “‘Somewhat liberated’: Baptist discourse of race and slavery in Nat Turner’s Virginia, 1770-1840,” *Explorations in Early American Culture*, vol. 5 (2001), pp. 327-371, p. 341.

<sup>100</sup> Scully, “‘Somewhat liberated,” p. 347; Scully, *Nat Turner’s Virginia*.

<sup>101</sup> R. A. Goetz, *The Baptism of Early Virginia: How Christianity Created Race* (Baltimore, MD, 2016), pp. 179-181.

<sup>102</sup> Goetz, *Baptism of Early Virginia*, p. 175.

<sup>103</sup> Goetz, *Baptism of Early Virginia*, p. 20.

there was some resistance among Anglican clergy to this false categorization. Clergy such as Goetz's example, Morgan Godwyn, in the seventeenth century, and Thomas Hayter, Bishop of Norwich, spoke out against this notion.<sup>104</sup> In Virginia, Rev. Anthony Gavin lent his voice objecting to the idea that clergy should participate in the practice.<sup>105</sup> Yet these objections were few and isolated and the attitude Goetz describes persisted. With 'the advent of religious toleration in the New World', in the eighteenth century, Goetz comments, 'race trumped religion as the most important category of difference',<sup>106</sup> as Virginia transitioned from a society with slaves to a slave society, even as plural expressions of Christianity among whites was officially tolerated.

While Goetz attributes this transition to the Anglo-Virginians, one wonders if this differentiation has its deeper roots in the interaction between Christians in Europe and Muslims in Spain, North Africa, and the Levant. Kaplan notes that 'In Christian teaching, Jews and Muslims were both infidels, that is, unbelievers. . . . From a Christian perspective, [they] were quintessential religious outsiders. . . . They were both, in different ways, an imminent presence and perceived threat to Christian society'.<sup>107</sup> Might this otherness, with its roots in the fifteenth century, have been carried to the New World along with other cultural markers of Christianity? Goetz traces this early interface with North African 'Turks', as a root of this attitude but indicates that any effort to convert New World others was abandoned after Potomac attacked Jamestown in an effort to extirpate the English colony from the shores of his kingdom.<sup>108</sup> Goetz further argues that Anglo-Virginia law, in the late seventeenth century, controlling access to the ritual of baptism, redefined 'Christianity and [racialized]

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<sup>104</sup> Goetz, *Baptism of Early Virginia*, pp. 18-19; Hayter, *Sermon*, 21 February 1755.

<sup>105</sup> Letter of Gavin to the Bishop of London, 5 August 1738, in Perry (ed.), *American Colonial Church*, vol. 1, pp. 360-361.

<sup>106</sup> Goetz, *Baptism of Early Virginia*, p. 24.

<sup>107</sup> Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, p. 296.

<sup>108</sup> Goetz, *Baptism of Early Virginia*, pp. pp. 30-51; 76-77.

Indians and Africans as non-Christians, a process that reverberated throughout the greater Atlantic. However, ritual baptism became a requirement in many European countries for Jews and Muslims to continue living in those countries.<sup>109</sup> It is likely that the Anglo-Virginians were applying a use of baptism to control their boundaries that was practiced in Europe.

Both pro-slavery and pro-manumission opinions could be found in the congregations among Tidewater Regular Baptists. Monica Najar describes how the issue of slavery became a point of friction in evangelical churches, including Regular Baptist Churches, in the Upper South. To keep the church in harmony, many churches and their related Baptist Associations, would set slavery over on the 'state' side of the equation and deem it not a suitable point of discussion. Advocacy for manumission was marginalized as the governing authorities were intractable on the issue. It became hard for anyone, including Regular Baptists, to imagine life in an agricultural setting without slaves.<sup>110</sup> The secondary material illuminates the minute books of the Baptists and parish records of the Anglican vestries.

The government's oversight of slaveholding is analyzed in several recently published books. Slaves were both a means of production and an 'internal enemy' as Alan Taylor characterizes them.<sup>111</sup> Many of the laws and regulations regarding slavery were enacted out of fear of a slave uprising, such as Nat Turner's nineteenth century revolt. Many attempts to control dissenter preaching were triggered by their outreach to slaves. Eva Wolf summarizes that Virginia society, already made fragile by the exigencies of war during the Revolution, was further endangered by dissenters (specifically Methodists and Baptists) seeking out slaves as audiences for gospel preaching. Wolf also speculates emancipation may have had a

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<sup>109</sup> Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, pp. 158-159.

<sup>110</sup> M. Najar, "Meddling with emancipation": Baptists, authority, and the rift over slavery in the upper South', *Journal of the Early Republic*, 25 (Summer 2005), pp. 157-186.

<sup>111</sup> A. Taylor, *The Internal Enemy: Slavery and War in Virginia 1772-1832* (New York, 2013).

fighting chance in the early Republic had Virginia, as the most populated of the new states in the Union, sided with the states that were advocating for it.<sup>112</sup>

### Reflections on Colonial Religious Toleration

The scholarship on religious toleration in the colonial era and the intersection of religion and government in public life has focused on the impact of the effort to negotiate the particulars of each intersection. This material reflects on how the colonial government's religious toleration policies did not create a friendly environment for either Established churches or dissenting meetinghouses in Virginia. In keeping with the effort to maintain context, this study draws from material regarding the English as well as the American milieu. As Stevens, Waterman, and Zagorin note, the Act of Toleration created all sorts of ramifications for how plural communities related to one another. Zagorin frames how the concept transferred from the pens of certain enlightenment philosophers to policy laid out in law in Europe. Stevens describes Anglican efforts to conform to the law while trying not to lose parishioners to the dissenting groups in the neighborhood. Waterman, on the other hand, examines the intersection of religion and politics from the dissenters' view. Both Stevens and Waterman describe Christians in both categories struggling to get it right, while governing leadership took advantage of the vacuum created by the tensions between the groups.<sup>113</sup>

The history of this process has been ably analyzed by three recent volumes, Andrew Murphy, *Conscience and Community*; James Hutson, *Church and State in America*, and Steven Waldman's 2019 *Sacred Liberty: America's Long, Bloody, and Ongoing Struggle for Religious Freedom*. Murphy analyzes the roots of toleration in the West, following Zagorin's

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<sup>112</sup> E. S. Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation: Emancipation in Virginia from the Revolution to Nat Turner's Rebellion* (Baton Rouge, LA, 2009), pp. 6, 11.

<sup>113</sup> Zagorin, *Religious Toleration*; R. Stevens, *Protestant Pluralism: The Reception of the Toleration Act, 1689-1720*, *Studies in Modern British Religious History*, vol. 37 (Suffolk, UK, 2018); A. M. C. Waterman, 'The nexus between theology and political doctrine in church and dissent', in K. Haakonssen (ed.), *Enlightenment and Religion: Rational Dissent in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (New York, 1996), pp. 193-218.

trail into the Atlantic World, comparing English struggles and those struggles expressions in the new world. Hutson's volume covers the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries in America, outlining the importance of religion to the development of a governing consensus in the new nation, and how religion influenced that consensus further into nineteenth century. Steven Waldman's volume does a macro-analysis of mini conflicts over religious expression that has shaped prior 'culture wars' and how the law has reacted in response to them.<sup>114</sup>

Religious toleration policy in England emerged out of an effort to promote peaceful co-existence between Established Church parish leaders and the dissenters who live among them. Steve Bruce and Chris Wright combine to offer a macro-look at how the Established Church and dissenters approached toleration once it was law and how this in turn impacted society. They assert that dissent became possible due to the social changes brought about by enlightenment thought and the effects of industrialization, which fragmented society and created the opportunity for widespread dissent.<sup>115</sup> Meanwhile in America, Ralph Pyle and James Davidson, examine how religious establishments in colonial America reinforced social strata, and with it access to 'power, privilege, and prestige during the colonial period'.<sup>116</sup> Shellard suggests that religious toleration historically failed because the focus has been on state toleration of minorities, rather than creating policies that encouraged individual and community efforts at toleration.<sup>117</sup> These three articles highlight the social tension created by government policies of religious toleration.

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<sup>114</sup> A. R. Murphy, *Conscience and Community: Revisiting Toleration and Religious Dissent in Early Modern England and America* (University Park, PA, 2001); J. H. Hutson, *Church and State in America: The First Two Centuries* (Cambridge, 2007); S. Waldman, *Sacred Liberty: America's Long, Bloody, and Ongoing Struggle for Religious Freedom* (New York, 2019).

<sup>115</sup> S. Bruce and C. Wright, 'Law, social change, and religious toleration', *Journal of Church and State*, 37 (1995), pp. 103-120; p. 112.

<sup>116</sup> R. E. Pyle, and J. D. Davidson, 'The origins of religious stratification in colonial America', *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, vol. 42 (March 2003), pp. 57-76; p. 57.

<sup>117</sup> J. Shellard, 'Liberalism and hate laws: toleration versus tolerance', *Policy Magazine*, 25 (August 2009), pp. 39-44.

### *Patterns of Religious Toleration in British North America*

A survey of secondary materials related to the founding of the other colonies and their founders' policies on religious toleration reveals that Virginia and the Massachusetts Bay colonies were anomalies among the British North American colonies. While Virginia and Massachusetts vigorously enforced a religious establishment in their territory and complied with the 1689 Act of Toleration, the other colonies were more lenient, to varying degrees, in applying religious toleration laws to dissenters. Regional historiography reveals three patterns: (1) an exclusive establishment; (2) religious freedom; and (3) religious toleration with an establishment. These regional monographs rely on original seventeenth and eighteenth century legal and ecclesiastical documents.

#### *An Exclusive Establishment*

New England (Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Connecticut), dominated by the Congregational Church first established in Massachusetts, had little space for non-Congregational dissenters. William McLoughlin's volumes, *New England Dissent* (1971) and *Soul Liberty* (1991) documents the varying methods that the townships in New England sought to make Baptist dissenters living among established church adherents uncomfortable at best. Carla Pestana also documents this, contributing a broader examination comparing the strategies of Quakers and Baptists who remained in Massachusetts.<sup>118</sup> As officials tried to push out or deter settlement of dissenters in their midst, Baptists and Quakers both found refuge in other colonies.

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<sup>118</sup> W. G. McLoughlin, *New England Dissent, 1630-1833: the Baptists and the Separation of Church and State*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA, 1971); W. G. McLoughlin, *Soul Liberty: the Baptists' Struggle in New England, 1630-1833*. (Hanover, NH, 1991); C. Pestana *Quakers and Baptists in Colonial Massachusetts* (Cambridge, 2009).

## *Religious Freedom*

Rhode Island was founded by Roger Williams as a colony for dissenting refugees from New England's enforcement of a Congregational Church establishment. Several nineteenth and early twentieth century histories of Rhode Island and biographies of Roger Williams and John Clarke point to the uniqueness of this colony, and its fierce protection of religious liberty despite the pressure exerted by its colonial neighbors with Congregational church establishments. Samuel Arnold's 1984 history provides the historical background of the founding of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations. Sydney James provides an in-depth biography of Williams' early partner in the colony, John Clarke, and argues that while Williams provided in the inspiration for soliciting a charter from the crown, Clarke did the work of securing the charter and defending the charter against pressure placed on it by Congregationalist interests in Massachusetts and Connecticut. Baptists thrived in this New England outer borough, as Reuben Guild outlines in his biography of James Manning and history of Rhode Island College (now Brown University).<sup>119</sup>

Roger Williams himself is the focus of a pair of studies. Timothy Hall highlights the ground-breaking influence of Roger Williams on the discussion surrounding the idea of separating church from state. Teresa Bejan uses Williams' writings as a tracer element in a discussion of the limits of toleration. Both Hall and Bejan see the author of the *Bloodie Tenant of Persecution* as an outlier, ahead of his time, whose ideas shaped discussion of the role of religion in the public square on both sides of the Atlantic.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> S. G. Arnold, *History of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations from the Settlement of the State, 1636, to the Adoption of the Federal Constitution, 1790*, vol. II, 1700-1790 (New York, 1860); S. V. James, *John Clarke and His Legacies: Religion and Law in Colonial Rhode Island 1638-1750*, edited by T. D. Bozeman (University Park, PA, 1999); R. A. Guild, *Life, Times and Correspondence of James Manning and the Early History of Brown University* (Boston, 1864).

<sup>120</sup> T. Bejan, *Mere Civility: Disagreement and the Limits of Toleration* (Cambridge, MA, 2017); T. L. Hall, *Separating Church and State: Roger Williams and Religious Liberty* (Chicago, 1998).

Pennsylvania's founder, Quaker William Penn, also founded his charters with religious freedom clauses, out of conviction that this was inherently right. The middle Atlantic colonies (Pennsylvania, the Jerseys, and Delaware), gave protestant dissenters plenty of space to establish themselves in North America. William Frost documents the process under which Penn and the Quakers who ran Pennsylvania maintained the religious freedom provisions of his charter and other governing documents, despite the efforts of many interests to limit the religious freedom provisions. Sally Schwartz documents the struggle of Pennsylvania's pluralistic society to maintain religious freedom, where Quakers often combined with other dissenters to stymie efforts to limit religious toleration in the colony. However, the same dissenters could join with the Anglicans when Quaker pacifism threatened the colony's need to raise a militia. This give and take resulted in a society that highly prized the value of being a good neighbor.<sup>121</sup>

#### *Religious Toleration with an Establishment*

Maryland, Virginia's Chesapeake neighbor, allowed toleration of religious expression to protect the ability of Catholic settlers, in a proprietary chartered by a Catholic nobleman, to practice their faith quietly. John Krugler's history of the Lords Baltimore outlines the efforts of this family of Catholic noblemen to navigate the political tension inherent in their professed faith. The English peerage, including the King, viewed them suspiciously, while Roman Catholic missionaries allowed to serve in Maryland, chafed at the restrictions placed upon them.<sup>122</sup> This lasted until the Calverts temporarily lost their charter, under pressure from Virginia, at the turn of the eighteenth century, and the colonial legislative body set up the Anglican church as the Established Church. The Russos document the rivalry between

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<sup>121</sup> J. W. Frost, *A Perfect Freedom: Religious Liberty in Pennsylvania* (University Park, PA, 1993); S. Schwartz, *'A Mixed Multitude': The Struggle for Toleration in Colonial Pennsylvania* (New York, 1987).

<sup>122</sup> J. D. Krugler, *English and Catholic: The Lords Baltimore of the Seventeenth Century* (Baltimore, 2004).

Maryland and Virginia.<sup>123</sup> Maryland, unlike Rhode Island, was not able to protect her charter from the designs of a neighboring colony with a church establishment. Colonial officials in Maryland, however, did not seek to force Catholics or protestant dissenters out of the colony.

Anglican settlers were also eventually able to force an establishment in the Carolinas. Carolina proprietary's initial grant of religious toleration allowed dissenting protestants room to thrive in that proprietary. When it was eventually established by law, the Anglican parish system never had a strong presence in the interior of the colony and struggled to maintain its ministry, even with the assistance of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.<sup>124</sup> James Underwood and Lewis Burke edited a collection of essays that document the effort of the proprietors to maintain religious freedom. The essay collection documents the early arrival of various religious traditions in the Carolinas. Thomas Wilson's monography very helpfully documents how the efforts to maintain religious freedom in spite of an official establishment influenced the political culture in the Carolinas.

The northern part of the Carolina colony, never well governed until it became its own colony, proved a very difficult mission field in which to plant an Established Church. Noeleen McIlvenna characterizes the early, pre-division settlement of the territory bordering Virginia as a home to privacy-loving, religiously non-conforming migrants from Virginia and elsewhere who fought an Anglican establishment like it was an invasive germ and they were anti-bodies. Even with government sanction (however little support), the Anglican church never really secured its place in this region. She sees in this struggle the early roots of American resistance movements.<sup>125</sup> Essays on early North Carolina in Tise and Crow's

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<sup>123</sup> J. B. Russo and J. E. Russo, *Planting an Empire: the early Chesapeake in British North America* (Baltimore, 2012).

<sup>124</sup> J. L. Underwood and W. L. Burke (eds.), *The Dawn of Religious Freedom in South Carolina*, (Columbia, SC, 2006); T. D. Wilson, *The Ashley Cooper Plan: The Founding of Carolina and the Origins of Southern Political Culture* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2016).

<sup>125</sup> N. McIlvenna, *A Very Mutinous People: The Struggle for North Carolina, 1660-1773* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2009).

curated collection affirm this estimate with Charles Irons providing an essay surveying the evangelical presence in North Carolina.<sup>126</sup>

Georgia, the last chartered of the British North American colonies, was born out of a reform effort in England to provide relief to the debtors' prisons in England. James Oglethorpe's charter was patterned after the Carolina proprietary charter, providing religious toleration from the outset, though the Anglican church was officially supported. David Williams' documentation of early expression of religion in the colony describes a place where religion was not especially adhered to in any form, though missionaries from a variety of Christian protestant groups made efforts to establish churches there. Oglethorpe even invited Presbyterians into the colony because, like Goode in Virginia, he saw Scots-Irish migrants as good soldiers, able to resist any incursion by the Spanish Catholics just south of his position in Florida.<sup>127</sup>

The British North American colonies each had their own reasons and motivations for granting or not granting religious toleration to their migrants. For some it was a pragmatic, economic concern, they did not want to turn away potential paying customers. For others, it was a philosophical issue. They did not want their own religious expression hindered so they would not hinder anyone else in their practice. Massachusetts and Virginia's resistance to the settlement of non-conforming Christians in their midst created a migratory pattern within the colonies as these dissenters left or were pushed out. The economic and political influence of Massachusetts and Virginia kept the weaker colonies vigilant to protect not only their territorial interests but their chartered efforts to serve all comers.

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<sup>126</sup> C. F. Irons, 'Evangelical Geographies of North Carolina', in L. E. Tise and J. J. Crow (eds.), *New Voyages to Carolina: Reinterpreting North Carolina History*, (Chapel Hill, NC, 2017), pp. 144-165.

<sup>127</sup> D. S. Williams, *From Mounds to Megachurches: Georgia's Religious Heritage* (Athens, GA, 2008).

*Thomas Jefferson on Religious Toleration and Religious Liberty*

Religious toleration and religious liberty cannot be addressed without discussion of American founder Thomas Jefferson's views on this topic. Jefferson regarded Virginia's Statute of Religious Freedom (1786) as one of the high-water marks of his long public career.<sup>128</sup> Recent Jefferson scholarship has been re-examining his views on the relationship of church and state. A collection of essays, *The Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom: Its Evolution and Consequences in American History*, marks the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its passage. Rhys Isaacs contributed an essay to the collection on dissenters' contribution to its creation and passage. He notes that without the efforts of dissenters pressing for disestablishment of the Anglican Church, it likely would not have happened. The Anglican Majority in Virginia among its leadership were not convinced at first that such a drastic change was necessary or even helpful for church-state relations.<sup>129</sup> John Ragosta explores the discussion of Jefferson's views in *Religious Freedom: Jefferson's Legacy, America's Creed*. Many sides use Jefferson's writings and actions as a sort of 'Rorschach test' to affirm their own thinking.<sup>130</sup> Daniel Dreisbach began the recent conversation about rethinking Jefferson's wall in 1991, contending that wall between church and state was permeable at the point of ethics.<sup>131</sup> Andrew Holowchak's 2016 article also reflects on early influences on Jefferson's thought on the matter of religion and morality. It is at this point of public morality that government often wishes to manage religious expression. Echoing Charles Sanford, he points out that 'Jefferson

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<sup>128</sup> 'Brief Biography of Thomas Jefferson', [Monticello.org/thomas-jefferson/brief-biography-of-jefferson/](http://Monticello.org/thomas-jefferson/brief-biography-of-jefferson/) (Accessed: 15 July 2020); J. Ragosta, *Religious Freedom: Jefferson's Legacy, America's Creed* (Charlottesville, VA, 2013), p. 3.

<sup>129</sup> Isaacs, "'Rage of malice of the old serpent Devil'" in Peterson and Vaughan (eds.), *Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom*, pp. 139-169.

<sup>130</sup> Ragosta, *Religious Freedom*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>131</sup> D. L. Dreisbach, 'A new perspective on Jefferson's views on church-state relations: the Virginia Statute for Establishing Religious Freedom in its legislative context', *American Journal of Legal History*, 35 (1991), pp. 172-204; p. 202.

. . . used his beliefs about Jesus as a guide to accomplish needed social reforms'.<sup>132</sup> Jefferson resisted a formal alliance between church and state, not willing that anyone's conscience should be burdened, but he did see its usefulness in promoting public morality.

So how has Jefferson's vision of the relationship between church and state worked out in American life? Church and state impact one another, simply because both are expressions of human systems that try to answer two questions: (1) What is significant about the individual? and (2) How does one exist in relationship to other human beings? The American arrangement came out of an effort to create space where the plurality of answers to those questions could exist in the same space. That space then helped facilitate other cultural pluralities. This thesis draws together disparate notes to illuminate the roots of this issue. Jan Lewis notes that family life was shaped by the isolation of homesteading in colonial Virginia, and that this isolation impacted the way that religion was practiced in the colony.<sup>133</sup> Chris Beneke argues in *Beyond Toleration* that the efforts that brought the tolerance of religious pluralism created space for other sorts of cultural pluralism to flourish. Jürgen Habermas concurs; arguing that creating the space for religious tolerance in the West set a cultural precedence for other sorts of cultural pluralism.<sup>134</sup> Anthony Gill, however, points to the European roots that sought a solution to religiously inspired conflict, and American setting that created conditions that provided the space for pluralism that eventually required religious freedom.<sup>135</sup> Christopher Grenda in an article published in 2003, points out that the roots of

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<sup>132</sup> M. A. Holowchak, 'Duty to God and duty of man: Jefferson on religion, natural and sectarian', *Sophia*, vol. 55 (2016): pp. 237-261; p. 241; see also C. B. Sanford, 'The religious beliefs of Thomas Jefferson', in G. W. Sheldon and D. Dreisbach (eds.), *Religion and Political Culture in Jefferson's Virginia* (Lanham, MD, 2008), pp. 61-92.

<sup>133</sup> J. Lewis, *The Pursuit of Happiness: Family and Values in Jefferson's Virginia* (Cambridge, 1983). See also S. S. Rohrer, *Wandering Souls Protestant Migrations in America, 1630-1865* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2010).

<sup>134</sup> C. Beneke, *Beyond Toleration: The Religious Origins of American Pluralism* (New York, 2006); J. Habermas, 'Religious tolerance—the pacemaker for cultural rights', *Philosophy*, 79 (January 2004), pp. 5-18.

<sup>135</sup> A. Gill, *The Political Origins of Religious Liberty* (Cambridge, 2012). See also Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*.

American liberalism is in the activism of religious dissent in the colonial period.<sup>136</sup> The way that America settled the issue of religious freedom by creating space for contending religious cultures created a template for other types of activism in America.

The question of toleration and conscience, however, requires discussion in every generation. Because religion is even now a strong influencer of behavior and conscience, the state, Emilio Gentile contends, works to use religious language and concepts to shape public policy. He builds on the work of Robert Bellah who in 1975 presented the case that America's founders and leadership since created a civil religion to crowd out other expressions of faith in the public square. Their analysis will be drawn upon to examine how colonial and early republic Virginia's leaders in both civic and religious areas worked to find space for each other their functions.<sup>137</sup> Concerned about secular overreaction to religious influence in the public square, Martha Nussbaum extols the benefit to religious and other cultural minorities of the legal equality of their faiths. Kaurin suggests that the early template on religious toleration may be worn out, and in need of re-casting as respect or charity rather than toleration.<sup>138</sup> The state, though it does not mandate the details of religious expression, does borrow from and use religious expression for its own ends, often at the expense of the religions being drawn upon to create the end that is the state's goal. Did America's founders open a closet to push religious pluralism out of the public square, and replace free religious

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<sup>136</sup> C. S. Grenda, 'Revealing liberalism in early America: rethinking religious liberty and liberal values', *Journal of Church and State*, 43 (Winter 2003), pp. 131-163. See also P. Gorski, 'Religious pluralism and democratic inclusion: the American recipe for peace', *Society*, 5 (2014), pp. 623-635; J. Butler, 'Coercion, miracle, and reason: rethinking the American religious experience in the revolutionary age', in R. Hoffman and P. J. Albert (eds.), *Religion in a Revolutionary Age* (Charlottesville, VA, 1994), pp. 1-30.

<sup>137</sup> E. Gentile, *Politics as Religion*, translated by G. Staunton (Princeton, NJ, 2006); R. Bellah, *The Broken Covenant: American Civil Religion in the Time of Trial* (New York, 1975). See also R. Finke, 'Religious deregulation: origins and consequences', *Journal of Church and State*, 32 (Summer 1990), pp. 609-626, on the impact of government removing its regulatory oversight from religion.

<sup>138</sup> M. C. Nussbaum, *Liberty of Conscience: In Defense of America's Tradition of Religious Equality* (New York, 2008); P. M. Kaurin, 'On the virtue of charity: re-visioning religious "toleration" in America', *Bridges*, 7 (2000), pp. 167-186.

expression with an agreed-upon civil religion that all must respect to enjoy personal religious freedom? Did Virginia's dissenting Regular Baptists help create the template used to create that civil religion?

### *Conclusion*

Nineteenth century and twentieth-century Virginia histories of religion that discuss Baptists are mostly focused on the experience of Separate Baptists in colonial Virginia. They follow Semple's assessment of Regular Baptists as basically having little influence because they did not challenge the Anglican Establishment as the Separate Baptists did.<sup>139</sup> Separate Baptists' resistance to the toleration regulations fed into Anglican concerns about maintaining an orderly society. Regular Baptist laity and Elders, however, did the patient work of demonstrating with their lives and ministries that pluralism among Christians need not cause civil division or chaos. Semple's assessment of Regular Baptists should not be the last word.

This thesis examines the social history and religious culture of Regular Baptists living among Anglicans in eighteenth-century Virginia to argue for a fuller, more nuanced view of the process by which Regular Baptists transitioned from a marginalized minority into a respected and influential religious body, in concert with the Separate Baptists. Specific Regular Baptists' contributions to religious and civic life in colonial Virginia influenced the transition to religious freedom that came about after the Revolution in Virginia. The Regular Baptist strategy civil obedience may also inform current conversations about tolerance in civil society.

Chapter one is a background presentation on the development of the concept of religious toleration in Europe and England, and its application in each British North American colony outside of Virginia. The chapter defines religious toleration and examines its influence on the Britain's North American Colonies as they were chartered.

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<sup>139</sup> Semple and Beale, *Baptists in Virginia* (1894), pp. 15-16, 385.

Chapter two examines the legal context of religion in Colonial Virginia, by surveying the records of the General Assembly, the Governor's Council, the Anglican Church Commissaries, and the Executive Leadership. The chapter examines the dynamics between the royal government of 18<sup>th</sup> century Virginia and its Established Church as both tried to manage the presence of dissent in the colony, which had not been a welcome presence during the seventeenth century.

Chapter three examines the social history of the Regular Baptist preachers who migrated into western Virginia with other settlers from Pennsylvania, in the context for the French and Indian War. Dissenters such as Presbyterians and Baptists were invited to settle in the trans-mountain region to help defend the frontier in the 1740s. The chapter will answer the question whether the frontier settlement enabled Regular Baptists to establish patterns for relating to the Established Church.

Chapter four will focus on the Kettocton Association of Regular Baptist Churches and the pastors who were associated with it. Baptist Elder David Thomas was among the Baptists who were refugees pushed eastward by Shawnee Indian raids in Frederick county into Loudoun County during the French and Indian War. Thomas, in Fauquier County, began systematically training literate men (mostly converted Anglicans) to establish meeting houses throughout northern Virginia. This chapter will evaluate how integration into their communities in northern Virginia affected Regular Baptist polity and practice.

Regular Baptists in the Tidewater region are the focus of the fifth chapter. These Baptists migrated northward from North Carolina in the mid-1770s. This region was the heart of Anglican Virginia, yet Regular Baptist churches grew in the shadow of well-established parishes in the 1770s. Chapter five will also be the locus of reflection on the effect of slavery on both Anglican and Baptist ministry practice.

Chapter six analyzes a pamphlet exchange between Anglican Rev. James Maury and Regular Baptist Elder David Thomas to illustrate the suspicions about Baptists that were widely held by Anglicans, sometimes with good cause, and Thomas' effort to demonstrate Baptist orthodoxy even as they were loyal subjects to the crown. Were Anglican suspicions justified? Did Thomas' rejoinder meet his goal?

The final chapter reflects on the effect of toleration on both Anglicans and Regular Baptists and their adaption to access to a free public square. Both groups took advantage of the toleration laws to strengthen weaker congregations. The first contested election of the new republic will be highlighted as an example of religion exercising its influence unfettered by government oversight.

The Regular Baptists were a sub-set within a minority and yet leaders in their communities. The Regular Baptists were not treated as harshly as Separate Baptists, because they obeyed the law. However, like colonial militia officers who chafed at taking orders from lesser-ranked regular army British officers during the French and Indian War, so Regular Baptist preachers chafed at restrictions on their abilities to minister to their congregations and their neighbors.<sup>140</sup> They joined with fellow dissenters to press for equality with the Anglican clergy. Kaplan comments that 'historians have done only limited research on patterns of social integration between peoples of different faiths in the many parts of early modern Europe that were religiously mixed'.<sup>141</sup> In a manner similar to the situation of dissenters in Europe described by Kaplan, this study contributes to this body of research by examining Regular Baptists' social integration in colonial Virginia. Regular Baptists (and other non-conformists) lived and worshiped in Virginia under religious toleration, more easily than the Separate Baptists, even though friction between even them and the Anglican majority

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<sup>140</sup> M. Ward, *Breaking the Back Country: The Seven Years' War in Virginia and Pennsylvania 1754-1763* (Pittsburgh, PA, 2004), pp. 119-120; Fristoe, *Ketocton Baptist Association*, pp. 72-73.

<sup>141</sup> Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, pp. 237-265; p. 263.

occasionally arose. Regular Baptists' efforts to obey the toleration regulations and to provide positive, supportive leadership in the community, even as part of a distrusted religious minority group, helped Virginia's Anglican majority eventually release legal control over religious faith and practice in Virginia.

## Chapter One

### Religious Toleration in the British North American Colonies

Religious toleration for non-Catholic dissenters, as official government policy, was of relatively new vintage in England, though the concept had precedents on the Continent. The eighteenth century was a proving ground in England, and in Virginia, to determine how the Act of Toleration would affect the churches. A survey of the European and English social and legal constructions of religious toleration, along with how the policies were applied in the British North American colonies, is a helpful point of reference for comparing Virginia's governing policies regarding the space dissenters should have in society.

Virginia was the first successful colony planted by English adventurers in 1607.<sup>1</sup> Their experiment eventually took root and other colonies soon followed. Other groups soon followed through the 17<sup>th</sup> century and bringing their own rules and parameters for religious life within their boundaries. Like city-states in Europe,<sup>2</sup> each colony had its own strategy of dealing with religious minority groups living among them. What did Virginia's colonial officials see as her role as first among equals in the colonies? Did they try to influence other colonies in regard to their policy? How were the settlement pattern of dissenters, like Regular Baptists, affected by these varying policies? Virginia early on defined the parameters of what

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<sup>1</sup> J. L. Wakelyn (ed.), *America's Founding Charters: Primary Documents of Colonial and Revolutionary Era Governance* (Westport, CT, 2006), p. 27

<sup>2</sup> Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, pp. 11-12.

was acceptable and not acceptable as far as religious practice was concerned. The Anglican Church was the established church and dissenters, particularly Quakers, were not welcome.<sup>3</sup>

*Religious Toleration: An Eighteenth-Century Experiment*

In the long eighteenth century, England's leadership, with the not-so-distant memory of the Commonwealth behind them, was looking for a means to allow non-Catholic dissenters to have space to worship God as their consciences guided them. Religious toleration was advocated as a scheme to define the terms of relationship between peoples living together with differing convictions on Christian religion. How would governing authorities navigate the pressing demands of the differing communities? Kaplan describes several strategies that worked more or less well in early modern Europe: (1) allowing dissenters to leave the community to worship outside the town borders on Sunday; (2) permitting the building of meeting places that did not look like traditional churches; or (3) sharing the centrally located church in town.<sup>4</sup> Kaplan highlights these as evidence that Christian communities in near proximity to one another were trying live peaceably prior to and after the Thirty Years' War. Prior to the Reformation there were others—Jews and Muslims—who occasionally visited or perhaps set up a gated community on the edge of town, but otherwise everyone worshipped at the community church at the center of the township.<sup>5</sup>

In England, the Commonwealth period brought some relief to dissenters, but that was quickly though not completely reversed at the Restoration as Archbishop Laud sought to reassert, with the support of the Crown, the Church of England's hegemony over the religion practiced by English subjects. Parliament did not cooperate fully with Laud's ambitions. The

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<sup>3</sup> The Virginia Grand Assembly, March 1659/60, Act VI, 'An act for suppressing the Quakers', in Hening (ed.), *Statutes*, vol. 1, pp. 532-533, p. 532; Worrall, *Friendly Virginians*, pp. 23-25.

<sup>4</sup> Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, 'Crossing Borders', pp. 145-171; 'Fictions of Privacy', pp. 172-197; 'Sharing Churches, Sharing Power', pp. 198-234.

<sup>5</sup> Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, pp. 130-132.

anxiety brought on by the succession of Charles II's brother, Catholic James II, brought about the Glorious Revolution, when Parliament removed James from the throne, and invited William of Orange and James' Protestant niece Mary to accede to the throne of England.<sup>6</sup>

During this struggle, influential thinkers were publicly and privately advocating for religious toleration. John Locke, who assisted with the writing of the Carolinas fundamental constitutions,<sup>7</sup> viewed religious toleration as an intrinsic good. He said that 'the toleration of those that differ from others in matters of religion is so agreeable to the genuine reason of mankind, that it seems monstrous for men to be so blind as not to perceive the necessity and advantage of it in so clear a light'.<sup>8</sup> On October 3, 1689, the same year that Parliament passed William III's Act of Toleration, Locke's pamphlet, *A Letter Concerning Toleration, Humbly Submitted*, was licensed for publication in London.<sup>9</sup> Appearing just months after William III's Act was published in March 1689, and coming on the heels of the Act passed by Parliament in May 1689, Locke's treatise, originally published in Latin, was quickly translated into English and widely distributed. It influenced discussion and practice regarding religious dissent throughout the following century.<sup>10</sup>

The Act of Toleration and Locke's Treatise that supported it did not appear in a vacuum; there were other thinkers who advocated various terms of toleration on religious

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<sup>6</sup> N. Sykes, *From Sheldon to Secker: Aspects of English Church History* (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 68-106.

<sup>7</sup> Wilson, *Ashley Cooper Plan*, p. 44.

<sup>8</sup> J. Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (1796), p. 9.

<sup>9</sup> J. Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration, Humbly Submitted* (London, 1689), Early English Books Online. Stanton indicates that the first edition of *Epistola de tolerantia* was written as early as 1685, three years before the Glorious Revolution. T. Stanton, 'Natural law, nonconformity, and toleration: two stages on Locke's way,' in J. Parkin and T. Stanton (eds.), *Natural Law and Toleration in the Early Enlightenment*, Proceedings of the British Academy 186 (New York, 2013), pp. 35-58, p. 35.

<sup>10</sup> William III, King of England, *Toleration being an Explanation of that liberty of religion, which may be expected from His Majesty's declaration, with a bill for comprehension and indulgence, drawn up in order to an act of Parliament* (London, 1689), Early English Books Online (Accessed 23 June 2015); 'William and Mary, 1688: An Act for Exempting their Majestyes Protestant Subjects dissenting from the Church of England from the Penalties of certaine Lawes. [Chapter XVIII. Rot. Parl. pt. 5. nu. 15.],' in John Raithby (ed.), *Statutes of the Realm*, vol. 6, 1685-94 (1819), pp. 74-76, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/statutes-realm/vol6/pp74-76> (Accessed: 28 September 2015); M. H. Fitzpatrick, 'From natural law to natural rights? Protestant dissent and toleration in the late eighteenth century,' *History of European Ideas* 42 (2016), pp. 195-221, p. 198.

matters. Kaplan asserts that religious toleration of the very early modern period ‘required no principle of mutual acceptance, much less an embrace of diversity for its own sake’.<sup>11</sup>

Toleration had more the meaning of enduring; putting up with an obnoxious neighbor’s bad habits, hoping that it would not be a bad influence on one’s own children. Toleration presumed the tolerating group had religion right. Thomas Paine and Johann von Goethe described such an attitude as one side of the same coin; whether the ‘despotism’ was intolerance, ‘the right of withholding liberty of conscience,’ or tolerance, ‘the granting of it.’ As Goethe phrased it, ‘To tolerate is to affront’.<sup>12</sup>

Paul Avis characterizes Locke as an Anglican whose views on religion were influenced away from Calvinism (by Hooker) and toward Unitarianism, though he never explicitly denied the Trinity. He sets Locke amidst a group of ‘early liberal Anglican Protestants’.<sup>13</sup> Among these were John Hales, whose tract on schism argued for allowing separation on well-reasoned grounds.<sup>14</sup> Another Anglican influence was Lucius Cary, Lord Falkland, who hosted a seventeenth-century ‘think tank’ at his estate, Great Tew.<sup>15</sup> In his pamphlet, ‘Of the Infallibility of the Church of Rome,’ Falkland commented, ‘One much prevailing argument which they [Rome’s defenders] make, is this, that whosoever leave them, fall into dissention between themselves, whereas they in the meane while are

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<sup>11</sup> Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, pp. 8-9, 237-293.

<sup>12</sup> J. W. von Goethe, *The maxims and reflections of Goethe*, translated by B. Saunders (New York, 1906), p. 137; T. Paine, *The Rights of Man*, in M. D. Conway (ed.), *Writings of Thomas Paine*, vol. 2 (1779-1792), Project Gutenberg (2003), p. 35.

<sup>13</sup> P. Avis, *Anglicanism and the Christian Church* (New York, 2002), pp. 97-100.

<sup>14</sup> J. Hales, *Four Tracts by the Ever Memorable Mr. John Hales of Eaton College. Viz. I. Of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. II. Of the Power of the Keyes. III. Of Schism and Schismaticks. IV. Missellanies* (London, 1677), Early English Books Online (Accessed: 23 June 2015).

<sup>15</sup> Avis, *Anglicanism*, p. 86.

always at unity. I answer, first, in this whereof the question is their uniformity who consent'.<sup>16</sup>

Locke also followed Falkland's argument that enforced uniformity was not unity. 'Nobody is obliged in that matter to yield obedience unto the admonitions or injunctions of another, further than he himself is persuaded'.<sup>17</sup> Alexandra Walsham characterizes seventeenth century England as hearing from a multitude of voices advocating more and lesser degrees of toleration—Anglican latitudinarians, the poet John Milton, Baptists and other non-conformists.<sup>18</sup> Teresa Bejan characterizes the efforts of Roger Williams, Thomas Hobbes, and John Locke calling for civility as toleration as 'sophisticated efforts to think through what coexistence under conditions of fundamental disagreements requires'.<sup>19</sup> Eighteenth century toleration laws were an applied experiment to determine whether the concepts these thought leaders promoted in the seventeenth century worked in real time law.

Religious toleration in England in the eighteenth century was the fruit of a struggle that began when Henry VIII declared himself sovereign over the church as well as the state. Church theologians saw in Henry's fiat an opportunity to reform the church. This ended abruptly when Edward VI died without an heir and Henry's older daughter Mary acceded to the throne. Queen Mary wanted to bring the Church in England back into communion with the Roman Catholic Church. This was met with fierce resistance that inspired Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*. Elizabeth I, who reigned after Mary, guided the leadership of the Church of England toward a *via media*, but toleration for Non-Anglicans was seen as too dangerous given the intrigues against her throne. When the Stuart era began, the King's advocacy for toleration

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<sup>16</sup> L. Cary, Viscount Falkland, *Of the infallibilitie of the Chvrch of Rome a discourse written by the Lord Viscount Falkland ...* (Oxford, [1645]), p. 14, Early English Books Online (Accessed: 23 June 2015).

<sup>17</sup> J. Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, p. 33, Kindle edition.

<sup>18</sup> A. Walsham, *Charitable Hatred: Tolerance and Intolerance in England, 1500-1700* (New York, 2006), pp. 232-233.

<sup>19</sup> Bejan, *Mere Civility*, p. 11.

was seen by Parliament as a back doorway to give the Catholic Church a stronghold in England, something that was deemed inimical to English sovereignty. The fear was so great that civil war broke out, punctuated by the beheading of Charles I and the protectorship of Cromwell, with a Presbyterian-dominated Parliament. Sykes reflects that, after the restoration, the Anglican Church sought to reassert its authority over the spiritual life of the land and did not negotiate in good faith with the Presbyterians in Parliament.<sup>20</sup>

The ecclesiastical tug-of-war in the seventeenth century did not leave dissenters in England very many clear lines within which to negotiate their place in society. Their pastors were jailed; their churches were small and struggling. W. K. Jordan highlights several dissenters whose writings contributed to the popularity of the concept of toleration.<sup>21</sup> Among these was the Baptist Roger Williams, whose *Bloudy Tenent of Persecution*, first published in 1644, carried arguments for toleration similar to John Locke's *Letter Concerning Toleration*.<sup>22</sup> Legal scholar Owen Yeates sees Locke and Williams as products of the larger effort of the on-going Protestant Reformation to create a church fully conformable to God's prescriptions for faith and practice. Like their Anglican co-religionists, Locke and Williams sought to ground their positions in the sources, *ad fontes*, of apostolic tradition.<sup>23</sup>

The legal environment for Virginia residents in the mid-eighteenth century was affected by the Parliamentary act granting toleration to dissenters following the Glorious Revolution. William III's Act of Toleration in 1689 extended protection from prosecution to English non-Catholic nonconformists. The Act protected non-conformists from the penalties normally exacted upon those who refused to attend the Established Church in their parish,

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<sup>20</sup> Sykes, *Church and State in England*, p. 90.

<sup>21</sup> W. K. Jordan, *The Development of Religious Toleration in England*, vol. 3, *From the Convention of the Long Parliament to the Restoration* (Gloucester, MA, 1965), pp. 472-542.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 472-506, p. 488.

<sup>23</sup> O. D. Yeates, 'Tolerating on faith: Locke, Williams, and the origins of political toleration' (PhD diss., Duke University, 2007), p. 344; Bejan, *Mere Civility*, pp. 76-77.

provided they took an oath of allegiance to the crown and subscribed to most of the thirty-nine articles of the Established Church. Preachers had to register with the General or Quarter Sessions Clerk of the Peace, paying a fee of six pence. Further, the preacher so registered could not preach in a space that was ‘locked, barred, or bolted’.<sup>24</sup> For Baptists, paragraph 10 exempted them from subscribing to the articles on baptism. Paragraph 18 provided for punishment of any who disturbed a lawful gathering of non-conformists for worship. Lawful gatherings had to be certified by the officer of the diocese or registered in their county, paying of fee of six pence.<sup>25</sup> William III and the Earl of Nottingham published in 1689 an extended commentary that helped explain his majesty’s intentions toward non-conformist subjects. They wanted to clarify what non-conformists’ rights were; to make sure that ‘the Nonconformist should [not] have their consciences choakt and be deprived of their liberty’.<sup>26</sup>

The Anglican Church took on the challenge of this new space for dissenters by seeking to strengthen the effectiveness of their ministers and parishes in the colonies. Rev. Thomas Bray, a former Bishop’s Commissary in Maryland, founded the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG) to support the work of the Anglican Church in England’s colonies. While they did not work in Virginia or Maryland, as these two colonies had well-established parish systems, they did support pastors who worked in colonies north and south of the Chesapeake region. Their annual meeting, in London, featured a sermon by a high-ranking church official. This sermon was subsequently printed and sold.<sup>27</sup> The sermons usually reflected on some aspect of the society’s missionary purpose,

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<sup>24</sup> ‘Act of Toleration’, 1688, 1 Will. & Mar., para. V.

<sup>25</sup> ‘Act of Toleration’, 1688, 1 Will. & Mar., para. X, XVIII.

<sup>26</sup> William III, King of England, and H. Finch, Earl of Nottingham, *King William's Toleration Being an Explanation of That Liberty of Religion, Which May Be Expected from His Majesty's Declaration, with a Bill for Comprehension & Indulgence, drawn up in Order to an Act of Parliament* (London, 1689), p. 9, Early English Books Online (Accessed: 1 January 2015).

<sup>27</sup> D. O’Connor, *Three Centuries of Mission: The United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, 1701-2000* (New York, 2000), p. 7; J. F. Woolverton, *Colonial Anglicanism in North America* (Detroit, MI, 1984), p. 87.

but occasionally spoke out about the spiritual condition of the church in the colonies and rallied to the King's side when trouble was afoot on the other side of the Atlantic. These sermons provided a first-hand official reaction to the challenge of immigration to the colonies, conditions of slaves, the French and Indian War, and other events, including an initial reaction to the start of the rebellion. Bishop of St. Asaph, Robert Drummond reflecting on immigration to the colonies, stated, 'A great influx of foreign Protestants into those remote parts is an acquisition, but to be managed with care: for if they live in large bodies, uninstructed by us, and unmixed with us, they will probably fall into Barbarism or Popery: and though they are under allegiance to the Crown of Great Britain, they may be, after a course of years, more estranged from us, in civil and religious concerns, than at their first arrival'.<sup>28</sup>

#### *The Act of Toleration's Trans-Atlantic Impact*

The 1689 Toleration Act not only provided 'Protestant nonconformists with greater protection from Anglican harassment but also ensured that the religious conflict that tore England apart during the Civil War would not be repeated again'.<sup>29</sup> As 'a milestone in the history of religious liberty', Anthony Gill comments, 'it legally bound the monarchy to respect dissenting religious beliefs so long as they did not disturb the security of the nation'.<sup>30</sup> Ralph Stevens notes that 'The Toleration Act could do little in the short term to change attitudes toward Protestant separatism [in England], but it confirmed the retirement of secular law as a method of dealing with the sin of schism'.<sup>31</sup> In England, between 1689 and 1710, 3,910 dissenting houses of worship were opened, to the great alarm of the Anglican Church.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Drummond, *Sermon Preached February 15, 1754*, p. 4.

<sup>29</sup> Gill, *Political Origins*, p. 89.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Stevens, *Protestant Pluralism*, p. 4.

<sup>32</sup> Hutson, *Church and State in America*, pp. 49-50.

English clergy were required to tolerate the presence of dissenters in their parishes and could not rely on the courts 'to impose Anglicanism' on their neighbors.<sup>33</sup>

Religious toleration laws were an effort to ease social friction. However, as John Shellard points out, this effort 'to solve the problem of *interpersonal intolerance* [had] been unwittingly at the expense of *state toleration*'.<sup>34</sup> Further, '*state toleration* therefore reduces the "stakes" of religious difference, but it does not eliminate the possibility of social and interpersonal conflict'.<sup>35</sup> The law is too heavy an instrument to deal with day-to-day social friction. Steve Bruce and Chris Wright comment, 'The motive force behind the state's gradual abandonment of its medieval and early modern role as arbiter of religious truth, contrary to common assumption, was necessity rather than principle'.<sup>36</sup> The state, in sum, finally declared 'itself incompetent to' make decisions on matters of religion.<sup>37</sup> Chris Beneke asserts this was due to the social pressure created by the presence in the colonies of religious pluralism among different sorts of Christians.<sup>38</sup> Indeed, sorting Christians among the Establishment-Dissenter categories, and having one set of laws governing the Establishment Anglicans and yet another set for other dissenting Christians, created a situation where managing the activity of the various groups became too much of a burden for lawmakers.

The laws accommodating dissent, however, did create a template for laws and customs that would accommodate the cultures and customs of new immigrants as they affected the public life of each colony. Newcomers were often perceived negatively and met resistance. Beneke observes, 'formal adherence to the principle of toleration was no more a

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<sup>33</sup> Gregory, 'Eighteenth-century reformation', pp 65-85, p. 70.

<sup>34</sup> Shellard, 'Liberalism and hate laws', pp. 39-44, p. 40.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>36</sup> Bruce and Wright. 'Law, social change, and religious toleration', pp. 103-120, p. 103.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 104.

<sup>38</sup> Beneke, *Beyond Toleration*, p. 35.

guarantor of egalitarian social norms here than it was across the Atlantic'.<sup>39</sup> As with religious toleration, space was eventually made for the customs of new migrants and pluralism of customs was accepted.

Bejan calls this space 'mere civility', something Roger Williams advocated for in his experiment in Rhode Island.<sup>40</sup> Lambert outlines this space as the development of a religious 'marketplace', similar in structure to the commercial market.<sup>41</sup> In the first Great Awakening, Lambert observes, 'Virginia clergymen and their counterparts throughout the colonies suddenly faced stiff competition. The itinerants assumed that religious affiliation was a matter of choice, not compulsion . . . . If they could be effective in propagating their message by adapting commercial techniques, then they were willing to be religious entrepreneurs'.<sup>42</sup> He further observes that Virginia's founders 'regarded the church more as an instrument of social control than as a vehicle of personal salvation'.<sup>43</sup> Andrew Murphy describes this carve out of space as a move to accommodate 'religious voluntarism', in which 'the "inner" nature of religion and religious experience was elevated to the forefront at the expense of forms, doctrines, and liturgies'.<sup>44</sup>

Kaplan reflects that 'just as bigotry and discrimination are inherent in tolerance, so was conflict in even the most peaceful coexistence'.<sup>45</sup> It is quite easy to dismiss such struggles as out of time, without due appreciation for the tremendous social transitions caused by the Reformation and Counter-Reformation. In England, the Commonwealth, the Restoration and the Glorious Revolution, with their ensuing frictions, mirrored these

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<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> Bejan, *Mere Civility*, p. 70.

<sup>41</sup> F. Lambert, *The Founding Fathers and the Place of Religion in America* (Princeton, NJ, 2003), p. 72.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 72.

<sup>44</sup> Murphy, *Conscience and Community*, p. 229.

<sup>45</sup> Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, p. 9.

transitions. Dismissing this continental shift in culture as unnecessary friction over religion fails to appreciate just how integral faith was in the lives of early moderns. As Kaplan muses, ‘then, perhaps as now, people did not have to love each other in order not to kill each other’.<sup>46</sup> Bell observes that in England ‘the impact of the new freedoms provided by the law was seen in the vast proliferation of places of dissenting worship’.<sup>47</sup> This would soon be the case in British North America.

*Religious Toleration Policies in the Colonies  
and their Impact on Colonial Baptists*

The colonies in North America, while eventually managed by the Crown’s Board of Trade, operated somewhat like European city-states in that the religion expressed by the leaders was expected to be adhered to by all residents, except where that was not expected. Benjamin Kaplan outlines the sorts of arrangements where plural communities in Europe worked to keep the peace. Some of them maintained an official expression of faith while allowing dissenters to either leave the borders of the community to worship or keep their religious services in entirely private space. Others, only under duress of the threat of conflict did community leaders create arrangements to ‘share power and sometimes even churches’.<sup>48</sup> The New England colonies (Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Connecticut), under the influence of Massachusetts Bay Colony, sent dissenters from the Congregational Churches out of the colony if they disturbed the peace or refused to pay taxes to support the local established Congregational Church. New York, nee New Amsterdam, adapted to the Anglican Church as the Established Church, but allowed Dutch Reformed churches to continue to meet. Among the Chesapeake Colonies Virginia had exclusive and well-

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<sup>46</sup> Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, p. 12.

<sup>47</sup> J. Bell, *Empire, Religion and Revolution in Early Virginia, 1607-1786*, Studies in Modern History, edited by J. C. D. Clarke (New York, 2013), p. 168.

<sup>48</sup> Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, pp. 11-12.

established Anglican establishments early in their existence. Maryland is an interesting story of early freedom of religion followed by an Anglican establishment in the eighteenth century, coming on the heels of the Glorious Revolution. The Southern Colonies, North Carolina and Georgia had weak Anglican establishments that clung to the coastal regions, rarely venturing into the hinterland. South Carolina offered freedom of religion but sometimes aggressively supported the established Anglican church. Rhode Island stands out as an anomaly among the colonies because complete religious freedom was built into the governance of the colony. It was the Middle Colonies, Pennsylvania, the Jerseys, and Delaware, under the influence of William Penn, that created a laboratory to apply European thought leaders' concepts of religious toleration and religious freedom. This laboratory allowed Baptists and other dissenters the space to develop their own networks and, as people migrated between colonies, they took their faiths with them.

### New England Colonies

#### *Massachusetts*

Massachusetts Bay Colony was founded in 1630 by Puritans keen on creating a 'city upon a hill' and aware that 'the eyes of all people are upon us', echoing a parable taught by Jesus encouraging his disciples to display their faith boldly.<sup>49</sup> Between 1620 to 1640, some 21,000 English Puritans immigrated to North America.<sup>50</sup> By the eighteenth century, the Congregational Church was well ensconced as the established church. Samuel Stabler observes that Massachusetts settled religious conflict by banishing non-conformists into the

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<sup>49</sup> Gospel of Matthew 5:14; see J. Winthrop, 'A Model of Christian Charity', Digital History, [https://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp\\_textbook.cfm?smtID=3&psid=3918](https://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtID=3&psid=3918) (Accessed: 30 August 2020); Wakelyn (ed.), *America's Founding Charters*, pp. 67, 322.

<sup>50</sup> Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, p. 159.

wilderness outside more settled areas. Puritans could not push people out of town in England or Europe, but they could where they controlled the space.<sup>51</sup>

The creation of new towns was often the result of religious disputes among Puritans.<sup>52</sup> In Plymouth colony, the leaders were somewhat tolerant of the presence of nonconformists. McLoughlin indicates that in towns where Baptists were in the majority, there was reluctance to pay the taxes to support the Congregational Church in the locale.<sup>53</sup> When the disparate colonies around Cape Cod merged with the Massachusetts Bay colony 1691, officials tried to force nonconformist churches to hire Congregational ministers. Quakers appealed this effort 'to the king in 1723, claiming that this was contrary to the Toleration Act that had been passed by Parliament in 1689. The king agreed and demanded that the Congregationalists stop taxing other dissenters for support of their churches. Although the king had no objection to Anglican churches taxing dissenters, he saw no grounds for Congregationalists to assume this right'.<sup>54</sup> In the early 1700s, Massachusetts passed laws allow nonconforming Christians exemption from tax paid to support the Congregational Church.<sup>55</sup> This effort 'seemed to satisfy the Baptists. They quietly agreed to the idea of an established church as long as they did not have to support it'.<sup>56</sup>

Baptists had 'begun their history in the American colonies as rebels against the corruptions of the standing order in both old England and New England in the 1630s. They quickly established a reputation for turbulence, for obstinacy, and for stubbornly insisting on their own interpretation of church order and doctrine against all authority. The law banishing

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<sup>51</sup> S. Stabler, 'Church, Space, and Pluralism: Two Puritan Settlements, Territory, and Religious Tolerance', *Sociology of Religion*, 80 (Summer 2019), pp. 222-246.

<sup>52</sup> Stabler, 'Church, Space, and Pluralism', pp. 222-246.

<sup>53</sup> McLoughlin, *Soul Liberty*, p. 5.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

them from Massachusetts Bay in 1644 described them as turbulent and obstinate men'.<sup>57</sup> Baptists came to live in Massachusetts Bay colony early in its existence, and they were 'grudgingly granted limited toleration ion 1691', having to appeal to the King (who was no friend to the Congregationalists) to achieve this.<sup>58</sup> McLoughlin indicates, that unlike the Quakers who were cruelly treated by Massachusetts authorities because they would not stay banished, 'most Baptists started as good Calvinistic members of Puritan congregations'.<sup>59</sup> Mode of Baptism was not considered of primary importance.<sup>60</sup> Baptists in Massachusetts, however, had two distinct disadvantages. They did not have any educated clergy among them and their opponents associated them with Anabaptists who had taken over Munster, Germany and were said to practice polygamy and rebellion against their rulers.<sup>61</sup> As some Baptists were in Virginia, the Baptists in New England 'were not the most tactful and reasonable of men'.<sup>62</sup> Baptists built a meetinghouse near a mill pond in the heart of Boston, telling the curious that they were building a brewery. After their first worship service, authorities boarded up the building.<sup>63</sup> Puritans in England, hearing of their treatment of dissenters, pressured their new world kinsmen to lay off because they were suffering themselves under pressure from the restoration government of Charles II. McLoughlin surmises, "Fearing that the king might revoke their charter, in 1682 the Puritans in Massachusetts finally related to the point of allowing the Baptists to worship freely in the Boston meetinghouse".<sup>64</sup> As Carla Pestana notes, 'Colonial leaders, who would have preferred to squelch sectarians altogether,

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<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 178.

<sup>58</sup> McLoughlin, *Soul Liberty*, p. 1.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3-4.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4-5.

clearly felt compelled by royal pressures and changing circumstances to adopt a more tolerant approach'.<sup>65</sup>

This limited toleration did not mean that there was not local friction. Baptists in Massachusetts were quiescent during the Great Awakening in the 1740, deeming it a Congregationalist movement.<sup>66</sup> However, some Congregationalists whose churches they deemed hopelessly opposed to the Great Awakening, separated from their congregations and adopted believer's baptism, thus becoming 'Separate Baptists'.<sup>67</sup> McLoughlin indicates that the older Baptists did not want much to do with the newer Baptists, and the feeling was mutual.<sup>68</sup> The Separate Baptist energy focused some local trouble. In 1774, Chileab Smith published a poem, 'Answer to Many Slandrous Reports Cast on the Baptists in Ashfield'.<sup>69</sup> McLoughlin indicates the poem describes how 'spiteful (not really envious) rural New Englanders could be against nonconformist neighbors who challenged traditions and who appealed to the legislature or the king over the majority will of the town meeting'.<sup>70</sup> Chileab Smith recounts being forced to pay for the moving expenses and salary of a new minister and for the meeting house of the Congregationalists in town. They appealed to the Courts for tax relief to no avail.<sup>71</sup> When the King heard their appeal and overturned the law in 1771, Smith was seized by a warrant and searched his property for counterfeit money to no avail, but they destroyed his shop and grounds in the process.<sup>72</sup> Like Baptists in Virginia, Baptists in

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<sup>65</sup> Pestana, *Quakers and Baptists*, p. 145.

<sup>66</sup> McLoughlin, *Soul Liberty*, p. 6.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 182-183.

<sup>69</sup> C. Smith, *An answer to many slandrous reports cast on the Baptists, at Ashfield. Wherein is shewn, the first rise and growth of the Baptist church there, together with the sufferings they have passed through* (Norwich, CT, 1774), Eighteenth Century Collections Online.

<sup>70</sup> McLoughlin, *Soul Liberty*, p. 138.

<sup>71</sup> Smith, *Baptists at Ashfield*, pp. 12-14.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

Massachusetts tried civil obedience as well as advocating vigorously for religious equality.<sup>73</sup> In the 1770s, Baptists were proud to be jailed for failure to pay church supporting taxes. Thus, Baptists in Massachusetts and in Virginia had similar experiences in relation to local leaders who were members of the Established Church Congregation. Regular Baptists in Massachusetts reported in 1774 to the Philadelphia Association reported a total of twenty-seven churches in their Association with 217 baptisms the previous year.<sup>74</sup> McLoughlin observes that these Baptists fought their oppression; ‘they did not simply suffer for consciences’ sake. They stood up and fought back. And it is their fight for religious liberty that ties the Great Awakening to the Revolution’.<sup>75</sup>

### *New Hampshire*

European settlement of territory above Massachusetts began as early as 1623, under the shadow of the Massachusetts Bay colony and with their established Congregational Church. It was not until 1679 that New Hampshire became a royal colony.<sup>76</sup> As a result, the territory that became New Hampshire colony early on had an established church, but with some differences in the laws. Because most of it was wilderness, dissenters considered it a safe haven from the oppression they experienced in Massachusetts.<sup>77</sup> McLoughlin indicates that ‘by the time the first Baptist church was founded in the colony in 1755, the ecclesiastical patterns was well established. . . . The Baptists found when they arrived in large numbers that their reception varied greatly from town to town, and they faced many of the same problems of certification, incorporation, and social ostracism which had led them to emigrate’.<sup>78</sup> The

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<sup>73</sup> McLoughlin, *Soul Liberty*, p. 166.

<sup>74</sup> Gillette (ed.), *Philadelphia Baptist Association*, p. 141.

<sup>75</sup> McLoughlin, *Soul Liberty*, p. 186.

<sup>76</sup> J. R. Daniell, *Colonial New Hampshire: A History* (Lebanon, NH, 1981), p. 79; Wakelyn (ed.), *America’s Founding Charters*, p. 240.

<sup>77</sup> McLoughlin, *New England Dissent*, vol. II, p. 833.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*; Daniell, *Colonial New Hampshire*, p. 175.

New Hampshire laws place religious exercise in the hands of local towns, specifically two-thirds of the towns freeholders. Whereas Massachusetts mandated that local towns set up religious services and hire a minister, the New Hampshire laws assumed that would be done but did not specifically require it to be done. That oversight was corrected later. The religious regulations also left it up to the town's two-thirds majority to find an 'able, learned and orthodox'<sup>79</sup> minister. They did not specify what sort of minister and this left open the possibility of a town hall where two-thirds of the participants, being non-Congregationalists, could potentially hire a Baptist or Quaker, or even an Anglican minister. Further the law enacted a right to exemption for paying taxes to support the town minister, 'something which Massachusetts and Connecticut did not acknowledge'<sup>80</sup> at the time.

The first Baptist church to form in New Hampshire originated and dissolved before 1770, by emigrants from Rhode Island, and were Regular Baptists, as distinguished from the 'come-outers' that had separated from the Congregationalists during the First Great Awakening and adopted believers baptism, calling themselves 'Separate Baptists'.<sup>81</sup> The town had not settled a minister, but when they did, they taxed the Baptists, who resisted paying the tax. When a petition for tax exemption was dismissed, Baptists and Quakers joined to take over a town hall meeting with a two-thirds majority and thereby granting themselves the sought-after tax exemption. The Congregationalists appealed this vote to the legislature, which declared it void. Frustrated neighbors suggested that the Baptists be carved out of the township; however, the 'Baptists refused to accept the town's offer to be set off as a separate parish'.<sup>82</sup> The Baptist church in Newton dissolved in 1768 due to internal tensions

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<sup>79</sup> McLoughlin, *New England Dissent*, vol. II, p. 836.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 842.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 842-843.

before the issue could be resolved.<sup>83</sup> They, along with the Quakers and Congregationalists, ‘battled over the Newton ministry for more than decade without resolving their differences’, according to Danielle, mostly because of the ‘unwillingness of the townspeople to accept the principle of religious toleration’.<sup>84</sup>

Baptists and other non-Congregationalists, however, were not shut out of New Hampshire. Though their lot was not an easy one. McLoughlin points out that ‘the Baptists in particular felt the same social prejudices existed against them among Congregationalists here that existed in the older states’.<sup>85</sup> After the revolution, a Declaration of Rights was drawn up by the New Hampshire congress that include (1) the rights of conscience as an inalienable right; (2) the inalienable right to worship God as one sees fit to do so, provided such does not disturb the peace; (3) that townships and parishes are allowed to appoint their own ministers and levy taxes for their support and that dissenters who regularly attend their own churches are exempt from the levy to support the town’s established church.<sup>86</sup> McLoughlin indicates that the Bill of Rights ‘codified the slightly more liberal establishment which had already evolved in New Hampshire’.<sup>87</sup> Baptists and others fought hard for exemption from paying religious taxes township by township, parish by parish, until the New Hampshire legislature in 1819 ‘finally put a formal end to compulsory religious taxes, the practice [of which] had already ceased in at least half the towns in the state’.<sup>88</sup> Unlike in the Virginia system, where a locally-elected vestry determined the level of taxation for the residents of a parish, all of the free holders in a town meeting in New Hampshire, including non-conformists, had the opportunity to oppose the tax before it was levied.

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<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 843.

<sup>84</sup> Daniell, *Colonial New Hampshire*, p. 186.

<sup>85</sup> McLoughlin, *New England Dissent*, vol. II, p. 860.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 844-845.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 845.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 858.

## *Connecticut*

Settlement in Connecticut began in 1636 and the colony received its charter in 1638.<sup>89</sup> The Fundamental Orders, according to Scott Gerber, set up the civil government ‘to preserve the Congregational churches’.<sup>90</sup> In 1650, the General Court in Connecticut, established a Code of Laws. One section, on ‘ecclseasticall’ matters, outlined the expected behavior, practice, and demeanor of colonists to attend church, and to never openly opposed a minister who is faithfully executing his duty to preach. The penalty for failure to do so was open oprobium first of the congregation and then in the public square if they are ‘an open and obstinate contemner’.<sup>91</sup> McLoughlin indicates that dissenters were not a problem ‘until the eighteenth century’. Having migrated from Massachusetts, these Congregationalists set up their new colony with laws on dissent similar to that of their mother colony.<sup>92</sup> Churches had to have the consent of the Connecticut legislature and neighboring congregations to set up a regular meeting place.<sup>93</sup> Gerber indicates that the early settlers of Connecticut views the survival of their commonwealth as dependent ‘on the laws protecting the churches’.<sup>94</sup>

When Charles II was restored to the throne of England, Connecticut sought a new charter, which was granted in 1662 and combined the River Colony and New Haven colony into one entity.<sup>95</sup> Charles II chartered the colony even though it did not ‘embrace religious toleration’, Gerber contends, because the king wanted to counter the ‘overbearing behavior of

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<sup>89</sup> Wakelyn (ed.), *America’s Founding Charter*, p. 125.

<sup>90</sup> S. D. Gerber, ‘Law and Religion in Colonial Connecticut’, *American Journal of Legal History* 55 (April 2015), pp. 149-193, p. 152.

<sup>91</sup> J. H. Trumbull, *The Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut prior to the Union with New Haven Colony* (Hartford, CT, 1850), 509-563, pp. 523-525

<sup>92</sup> McLoughlin, *New England Dissent*, vol. I, p. 247.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> Gerber, ‘Law and Religion’, p. 160.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 171.

Massachusetts'.<sup>96</sup> In the ministerial support law passed in 1697 to 'levy and collect religious taxes even when they had no settled ministers. The fund was to be given to the county court which used it to hire supplies until the town obtained a minister'.<sup>97</sup>

Dissenters began making efforts to secure a legal place for themselves in the colony just after the turn of the century, following William and Mary's Act of Toleration.<sup>98</sup> Baptists began struggling for a legal presence in 1704.<sup>99</sup> Connecticut had seen the bitterness of the struggle in Massachusetts, which almost lost its charter over failure to tolerate the presence of the Church of England within its borders. Having learned from this cautionary tale, they began working toward a toleration arrangement in 1708.<sup>100</sup> SPG complaints alongside that of other dissenter groups pressured the Connecticut General Assembly to respond.<sup>101</sup> In response to the Act of Toleration, Connecticut's General Assembly, passed a provision that allowed for the 'libertie of worshipping God in a way separate from that which is by law established' provided 'that nothing herein shall be construed to the prejudice of the rights and privileges of the churches as by law established in this government, or to the excusing any person from paying any such minister of town dues, as are now, or shall hereafter be due from them'.<sup>102</sup> In other words, dissenters are permitted to worship God their own way, but still must pay the taxes imposed to support the towns' established church minister.

The cause of religious liberty in Connecticut for Quakers and Baptists had to deal with the reaction of the Connecticut courts to a group called the 'Rogerenes', a group that

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<sup>96</sup> Gerber, 'Law and Religion', p. 172.

<sup>97</sup> McLoughlin, *New England Dissent*, vol. I, p. 248.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 249.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 254-262.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 249.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 254.

<sup>102</sup> 'At a General Assembly and Court of Election holden at Hartford, May the 13<sup>th</sup>, 1708', in C. J. Hoadley (ed.), *The Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut, from October, 1706 to October, 1710*, vol. V (Hartford, CT, 1870), pp. 40-64, pp. 50-51, Internet Archive (Accessed: 7 September 2020).

broke away from Seventh Day Baptists founded by Rhode Island founder John Clarke.<sup>103</sup>

This group disturbed the peace by public baptisms, travelling openly on Sunday, and working their trade on Sunday instead of resting, as they saw Saturday as the true, biblical Sabbath.<sup>104</sup>

The efforts at public shaming did nothing to dissuade the leadership of this company.

McLoughlin indicates that their antics made things hard for other dissenters. ‘Their activities justified the prevailing belief that without strict state control of religion the spiritual life of Connecticut, or any community, would quickly disintegrate into vile fanaticism and infidelity (as it had in Rhode Island)’.<sup>105</sup> The Connecticut legislature, having sorted through who was an orderly congregation and who was not, finally granted Baptists exemption from the tax in 1729.<sup>106</sup>

This did not remain solid law as the exemptions granted in 1729 were repealed in the 1740s. Gerber indicates ‘the landmark 1708 statute permitting “soberly dissent” was repealed during the 1743 legislative session, in large part because the general court feared that proponents of so-called false religions were taking advantage of a law that was never intended to accommodate them’.<sup>107</sup> Thus, Baptists, Anglicans, Separating Congregationalists, and Presbyterians had to once more appeal to be exempt from paying taxes to support the Congregationalist church in their local vicinity. In the 1750s, the general court tried to settle this issue by reprinting prior regulations that supported tax exemption for certain groups.<sup>108</sup> In 1769, a request came from the Baptist churches in Connecticut to the Philadelphia Association for assistance with appealing to the King over the suffering ‘for nonconformity

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<sup>103</sup> McLoughlin, *New England Dissent*, vol. I, pp. 250-251.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 251.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>106</sup> ‘At a General Assembly and Court of Elections holden at New Haven . . .’, October 9, 1729, in Hoadley (ed.), *Public Records of Connecticut*, vol. V, p. 257.

<sup>107</sup> Gerber, ‘Law and Religion’, p. 177.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 178.

to the religious establishment' in that colony. The Philadelphia Association went into action, sending letters and messengers to the Associations south of Pennsylvania seeking their signatures on the petition to the king.<sup>109</sup> Finally, in 1770, 'the [Connecticut] general court granted blanket permission to all Protestants to hold separate worship services without penalty'.<sup>110</sup> It was not until 1818, however, that Connecticut ceased supporting the Congregational churches in their townships with taxed monies.<sup>111</sup>

### *Rhode Island*

Rhode Island was founded in 1637, by Roger Williams, a fugitive from Massachusetts Bay justice whose extreme commitment to purifying his fellow Massachusetts colonists' faith led to his expulsion from the colony. Williams was a threat to the good order of the colony because he insisted on tangible separatist behavior of the Puritans from the Anglicans in Massachusetts, he objected to the Crown claiming the right to give away land that did not belong to the King, he inveighed against the use of loyalty oaths, and, worst of all, challenged the civil magistrate's authority over personal conscience.<sup>112</sup> Indeed, Timothy Hall comments that before Jefferson built a wall, 'Roger Williams envisioned a wall . . . that divided the godly from the profane, the righteous and those whose lives were polluted by spiritual error. . . . Roger Williams championed a vision of government that would leave untroubled the consciences of its citizen'.<sup>113</sup> Thus, forced out of the Puritan's colony, Roger Williams headed into the wilderness around Narragansett Bay, and with a few other refugees, founded the colony of Rhode Island.<sup>114</sup> Williams' Providence Compact (1638) would create the first

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<sup>109</sup> Gillette (ed.), *Philadelphia Association*, p. 108.

<sup>110</sup> Gerber, 'Law and Religion', p. 191.

<sup>111</sup> McLoughlin, *New England Dissent*, vol. II, pp. 1059-1060.

<sup>112</sup> Wakelyn (ed.), *America's Founding Charters*, p. 143; T. L. Hall, *Separating Church and State*, pp. 33-37.

<sup>113</sup> T. L. Hall, *Separating Church and State*, p. 5.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 99.

government that did not establish structural oversight of the faith of the resident colonists.<sup>115</sup>

The compact reads

We whose names are hereunder, desirous to inhabit in the two of Providence, do promise to subject ourselves in active or passive obedience to all such orders or agreements as shall be made for public good of the body, in an orderly way, by the major assent of the present inhabitants, masters of families, incorporated together into a town-fellowship, and such others who they shall admit unto them, only in civil things.<sup>116</sup>

This experiment of the civil magistrate only be responsible for outward concerns was an anomaly among the British colonies, so much so that the colony was labeled ‘rogue’s island’ and considered ‘a scandal to decent order and propriety’.<sup>117</sup> Hall observes that it was not at all certain that it was possible ‘to construct a social order without the foundation of religious uniformity’.<sup>118</sup> Williams thought of Rhode Island as the king’s experiment on ‘whether civil government could consist with such liberty of conscience’.<sup>119</sup> James suggests that the king was not so much concerned about religious liberty in Rhode Island, but ‘objected to the lack of it in the rest of New England.’<sup>120</sup> Here was this close neighbor of Congregationalist Massachusetts choosing religious liberty when Massachusetts resisted the king’s church (along with other dissenters) within her borders.

The seeming disorder of his colony created space for Massachusetts Bay Colony to attempt to take control of Rhode Island. To thwart their effort, Williams made a journey to England in 1643 to secure his patent, and after the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, worked with John Clarke to secure a firm charter for the colony.<sup>121</sup> Rhode Islanders also

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<sup>115</sup> T. L. Hall, *Separating Church and State*, p. 100.

<sup>116</sup> A. M. Eaton, ‘Roger Williams: The Founder of Providence—The Pioneer of Religious Liberty’ (1908), p. 7, *Rhode Island History*, Book 17, digitalcommons.providence.edu/ri\_history/17 (Accessed: 17 September 2020).

<sup>117</sup> McLoughlin, *Soul Liberty*, p. 3; Bejan, *Mere Civility*, p. 81.

<sup>118</sup> T. L. Hall, *Separating Church and State*, p. 100.

<sup>119</sup> Roger Williams to Major John Mason, Providence, 22 June 1670, in J. R. Bartlett (ed.), *Letters of Roger Williams 1632-1680* (Providence, RI, 1874), pp. 333-350, p. 346.

<sup>120</sup> S. V. James, *John Clarke*, p. 64.

<sup>121</sup> T. L. Hall, *Separating Church and State*, p. 102.

feared that the 1644 charter may be challenged since it was issued by Parliament during the English Civil War.<sup>122</sup> The 1663 charter included a provision for religious liberty.

No person within said colony, at any time hereafter, shall be any wise molested, punished, disquieted, or called in question, for any difference in opinion in matters of religion, and do not actually disturb the civil peace of our said colony; but that every person and persons may . . . freely and fully have and enjoy his or their own judgments and consciences, in matters of religious concernsments . . . they behaving themselves peaceably and quietly, and not using this liberty to licentiousness and profaneness, nor to the civil injury or outward disturbance of others.<sup>123</sup>

Hall comments that ‘the Rhode Island charter . . . was the first such document in which the guarantee stood side by side with the framing of the government’.<sup>124</sup>

In the midst of exercising his religious entrepreneurial spirit, Williams briefly aligned himself with Baptists and established the first Baptist church in British North America in 1639.<sup>125</sup> The colony also welcomed the building of Congregational and Anglican churches in their midst because there was no establishment.<sup>126</sup> When these congregants urged for a public subsidy for their congregations in 1716, legislators responded with a firm encouragement that church expenses ‘be raised by free contribution and no other ways’.<sup>127</sup> Thus, with no religious establishment, Baptists thrived in Rhode Island, even establishing a college in 1764 for the training of their ministers that was supported by Baptists in New England.<sup>128</sup>

McLoughlin comments that the college had to be founded in Rhode Island because ‘none of the Puritan colonies would grant a charter to a Baptist institution’.<sup>129</sup> Pennsylvania Regular Baptist Elder David Thomas, who move to Virginia in the 1750s, received an honorary MA

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<sup>122</sup> S. V. James, *John Clarke*, p. 59.

<sup>123</sup> T. L. Hall, *Separating Church and State*, p. 102.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112, n. 16.

<sup>125</sup> McLoughlin, *Soul Liberty*, p. 3; Eaton, ‘Roger Williams’, p. 8.

<sup>126</sup> S. V. James, *John Clarke*, p. 111.

<sup>127</sup> Arnold, *Rhode Island*, vol. II, p. 58.

<sup>128</sup> McLoughlin, *Soul Liberty*, p. 7.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

degree from the college in 1769, at its first commencement, 'being well recommended by the Faculty for literary merit'.<sup>130</sup> The colony, considered a one-off that would in no way succeed without a firm religious establishment, became an example of what was possible, with a little imagination. Between Roger Williams' vision and John Clarke's skill as a lawyer for the colony, the colony succeeded. As eccentric as he was, Roger Williams took the arguments for religious tolerance a step further and demonstrated that a free conscience was no threat to civil society.<sup>131</sup>

### Middle Atlantic Colonies

#### *New York*

Founded in 1625, as a Dutch trading colony, New Amsterdam, the colony was handed over to Great Britain in 1663, after the Dutch wars.<sup>132</sup> While some recent scholars have made the connection between the tolerance of the Dutch protestant government during the seventeenth century and the religious tolerance practiced in New Amsterdam, Jeremy Bangs asserts that the New Amsterdam government was not particularly interested in promoting religious toleration. In fact, it was quite the opposite. As Bangs characterizes it, 'New Netherland's authorities allowed Quakers and their supporters the liberty to retain their beliefs and to choose to be scourged'.<sup>133</sup> A colleague of Roger Williams, 'William Wickenden . . . was fined and deported because he had baptized people during a visit in 1656'.<sup>134</sup> When the Dutch colony was taken over by England, the articles of capitulation agreed to in 1664 allowed 'The Dutch here shall enjoy the liberty of the consciences in

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<sup>130</sup> Guild, *James Manning*, p. 89.

<sup>131</sup> Bejan, *Mere Civility*, pp. 165-166.

<sup>132</sup> D. J. Barrevelde, *From New Amsterdam to New York* (Lincoln, NE, 2001), pp. 259; 261; Wakelyn (ed.), *America's Founding Charters*, p. 162.

<sup>133</sup> J. D. Bangs, 'Dutch Contributions to Religious Toleration', *Church History*, 79 (September 2010), pp. 585-613; p. 590.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 591; S. H. Cobb, *The Rise of Religious Liberty in America: A History* (New York, 1902), p. 317.

Divine Worship and Church discipline'.<sup>135</sup> Later, the Duke of York published a 'Charter of Liberties and Privileges' in 1683.<sup>136</sup> The charter included this paragraph,

That no person or persons which profess faith in God by Jesus Christ shall at any time be anyway molested, punished, disquieted, or called in question for any difference of opinion or matter of religious concernment, who do not actually disturb the civil peace of the province; but that all and every such person or persons may, from time to time and at all times, freely have and fully enjoy his or their judgments or consciences in matters of religion throughout the province, they behaving themselves peaceably and quietly and not using this liberty to licentiousness nor to the civil injury or outward disturbance of others . . . .<sup>137</sup>

Lest, however, this seems like an early expression of religious liberty, the charter goes on to empower two-thirds of a town's population on Long Island, to choose a minister and set a general levy for the support of the clergy. The levy was to be collected by an appointed collector who was empowered to enforce the levy. There was not provision for dissent from supporting this two-thirds approved local minister.<sup>138</sup> Thus, a very localized religious establishment took root in New York. Douglas Jacobson observes that while trade became the regulator of life in New York City, and thus religious establishments were overlooked, in more rural areas of the colony, 'a segregated pattern of countrywide religious establishments developed as a result of the law that called for a vote to decide which local church should be publicly funded'.<sup>139</sup>

Sanford Cobb notes that though his charter permitted religious diversity, at no time did the Duke's laws 'surrender civil control over religious affairs'.<sup>140</sup> After the Duke of York became the King of England in 1686, he sent instructions that the Church of England be

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<sup>135</sup> Cobb, *Religious Liberty*, p. 325.

<sup>136</sup> Wakelyn (ed.), *America's Founding Charters*, pp. 177-181.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 179.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 180.

<sup>139</sup> D. G. Jacobsen, *An Unprov'd Experiment: Religious Pluralism in Colonial New Jersey*, Chicago Studies in the History of American Religion, edited by J. C. Brauer and M. E. Marty (New York, 1991), pp. 181-182.

<sup>140</sup> Cobb, *Religious Liberty*, p. 327.

established as the church in New York. ‘The governor was forbidden to prefer any minister “to any benefice” without a certificate from the archbishop that he is of the Church of England; and he was empowered to remove any “scandalous” minister and to fill the vacancy at his “discretion”’.<sup>141</sup> The instructions, however, did not change the terms of the charter already in place, so other churches continued to operate. This set up a tension between the efforts of the colonial governors of New York to set the Church of England as the Established Church, with the aid of Society for Propagation of the Gospel,<sup>142</sup> and the cherished and closely held localized town establishments of non-Church of England congregations.<sup>143</sup> By 1707, ‘all attempts at coercion upon recognized “dissenting” churches and ministers ceased’.<sup>144</sup> Thus, Virginia settler John Harrison, Sr., newly converted to the Baptist faith, sought baptism by immersion from a minister known to his family in Oyster Bay, New York.<sup>145</sup> Baptists were present in Oyster Bay as early as 1700 with a church built in 1724.<sup>146</sup> This church had neighbors; the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel founded Christ Church in Oyster Bay in 1704. A Friends meeting house was erected in 1724 and a Dutch Reformed congregation in 1734. Oyster Bay Regular Baptist church was founded in 1748 and joined the Philadelphia Association in 1750.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> Cobb, *Religious Liberty*, p. 334.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 346.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 346-353.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 353-354.

<sup>145</sup> Brock’s Gap Church, Records, p. 6; J. W. Wayland, *Virginia Valley Records; Genealogical and Historical Materials of Rockingham County, Virginia, and Related Regions (with Map)* (Baltimore, MD, 2001), p. 48; J. H. Harrison, *Settlers by the Long Grey Trail: Some Pioneers to Old Augusta County, Virginia, and Their Descendants of the Family of Harrison and Allied Lines* (Dayton, VA, 1935; reprint, Baltimore, MD, 2007), pp. 13, 24.

<sup>146</sup> B. F. Thompson, *History of Long Island Containing an Account of the Discovery and Settlement; with other Important and Interesting Matters to the Present Time* (New York, 1839), p. 330.

<sup>147</sup> P. Bailey (ed.), *Long Island: A History of Two Great Counties Nassau and Suffolk*, vol. 1 (New York, 1949), p. 468-469; Gillette (ed.), *Philadelphia Baptist Association*, p. 93.

## *Pennsylvania*

The Duke of York's foster son, William Penn, was granted a charter for "Penn's Woods" in 1680.<sup>148</sup> Penn's aim, according to Sally Schwartz, was 'the establishment of a "holy experiment", a refuge where Western Europeans could live with minimal infringement upon their religious inclinations and enjoy the fundamental rights of English subjects. To accomplish this end, he drafted a series of constitutions that guaranteed religious freedom and promoted his colony not only in the British Isles but on the Continent as well'.<sup>149</sup> By recruiting widely for immigrants to his colony, Penn created a very diverse population with plural expressions of religious faith. By 1775, there was a plurality of ethnic groups in the colony and none had an absolute majority; 35 percent were English, 33 percent were German, 11 percent were Scotch-Irish, and 9 percent were Scottish.<sup>150</sup> Philadelphia, by 1775, 'was the most cosmopolitan city in the colonies.'<sup>151</sup> When the colonies' Continental Congress met to draft a response to Parliament and the Crown in 1775, the delegates saw first-hand how such religious freedom worked in actual practice.<sup>152</sup>

Penn's first charter, granted in 1680 by Charles II, included this provision that he must provide worship according to the Church of England 'if any of the inhabitants of the said province, to the number of twenty, shall at anytime hereafter be desirous'.<sup>153</sup> Anglican Christ Church, Philadelphia, was thus founded in 1695.<sup>154</sup> According to Jean Sunderland,

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<sup>148</sup> Wakelyn (ed.), *America's Founding Charters*, p. 249; B. A. Konkle, 'Delaware: A Grant Yet Not a Grant', *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, vol. 54 (1930), pp. 241-254, p. 242.

<sup>149</sup> Schwartz, *Mixed Multitude*, p. 2.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1, 3.

<sup>151</sup> Frost, *Perfect Freedom*, p. 1.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>153</sup> J. R. Soderlund (ed.), *William Penn and the Founding of Pennsylvania: A Documentary History* (Philadelphia, 1983), p. 47.

<sup>154</sup> N. R. Burr, 'The Welsh Episcopalians of Colonial Pennsylvania and Delaware', *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church*, vol. 8 (1939), pp. 101-122, p. 106.

Penn sought a charter for land in America in serve God, honor the king, and to make a profit in the process.<sup>155</sup> In 1681, Penn wrote to the inhabitants of Pennsylvania,

Theses are to let you know that is has pleased God in His providence to cast you within my lot and care. . . . I hope you will not be troubled at your charge and the king's choice, for you are now fixed, at the mercy of no governor that comes to make his fortune great; you shall be governed by laws of your own making, and live a free and, if you will, sober and industrious people. I shall not usurp the right of any, or oppress his person. . . . Pray submit to the commands of my deputy, so far as they are consistent with the law, and pay him those dues (that you formerly paid to the order of the governor of New York) for my use and benefit.<sup>156</sup>

Thus, his first charge to the current inhabitants was to live quietly and pay their rent.

To encourage immigration to his chartered colony, Penn published a pamphlet that he distributed in Quaker and other circles in Europe. A widely known Quaker, he 'made no mention of his religion or of his plans for a holy experiment in this pamphlet. Clear William Penn was hoping to appeal to a wider, non-Quaker audience, but he also sent the tract to Friends throughout England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, and it was quickly translated into Dutch and German'.<sup>157</sup> Hence mixture of nationalities was planned from the start. In Summer of 1681 Penn signed the first constitution. Among the first provisions Penn declares,

I do hereby declare for me and mine and establish it for the First Fundamental of the government of my country, that every person that does or shall reside therein shall have and enjoy the free possession of his or her faith and exercise of worship towards God, in such way and manner as every person shall in conscience believe is most acceptable to God, and so long as every such person uses not this Christian liberty to licentiousness (that is to say, to speak loosely and profanely of God, Christ, or religion, or to commit any evil in their conversation), he or she shall be protected in the enjoyment of the aforesaid Christian liberty by the civil magistrate.<sup>158</sup>

In 1682 the laws that were agreed to by England had this provision in paragraph 35,

'That all persons living in this province who confess and acknowledge the one almighty and eternal God to be the creator, upholder, and ruler of the world, and that

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<sup>155</sup> Sonderlund, *William Penn*, pp. 3, 190.

<sup>156</sup> William Penn, Proprietor of Pennsylvania, to the Inhabitants of Pennsylvania, 8 April 1681, London, in Sonderlund, *William Penn*, p. 55.

<sup>157</sup> Sonderlund, *William Penn*, p. 58.

<sup>158</sup> 'The Fundamental Constitutions of Pennsylvania as they were drawn up, settled, and signed by William Penn, Proprietary and Governor, and consented to and subscribed by all the first adventurers and freeholders of that province, as the ground and rule of all future government' in Sonderlund, *William Penn*, pp. 97-108, p. 99.

hold themselves obliged in conscience to live peaceably and justly in civil society, shall in now ways be molested or prejudiced for their religious persuasion or practice in matters of faith and worship, nor shall they be compelled a any time to frequent or maintain any religious worship, place, or ministry whatever'.<sup>159</sup>

Welsh Quakers were among the first immigrants; Richard Davies though he never migrated, purchased 5000 acres from Penn, which he distributed among his fellow Welsh Quakers.

Sunderland indicates that 'Welsh Quakers were a doubly oppressed people in the 1680s: the were persecuted for their religion and handicapped by extreme poverty'.<sup>160</sup> A German who migrated to Pennsylvania, communicated the following to his fellow countrymen, 'Now you might perhaps ask whether I with a pure and undisturbed conscience could advise one and another of you to come over to this place. I answer with good deliberation that I would be heartily glad of your dear presence; yet unless you (1) find in yourselves freedom of conscience to go, (2) can submit to the difficulties and dangers of the long journey, and (3) can resolve to go without most of the comforts to which you have been accustomed in Germany, such as stone houses, luxurious food and drink, etc., for a year or two, then follow my advice and stay where you are for some time yet. But if the things I have mentioned do not come too hard for you, depart the sooner the better'.<sup>161</sup>

Some Quakers in England were concerned that the government that Penn set up could not guarantee Quaker control of the government in Pennsylvania. Penn's letter to Jasper Batt, in February 1683, after a near take over of the colony's government by non-Quakers, demonstrates that despite this concern, Penn remained steadfastly 'committed to the principles of religious toleration, and to political freedom for all Pennsylvania colonists,

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<sup>159</sup> 'Laws agreed upon in England by the Governor and divers of the Freemen of Pennsylvania, to the further explained and confirmed there by the first Provincial Council and General Assembly that shall be held in the said Province, if they see meet', in Sonderlund, *William Penn*, p. 127-132, pp. 131-132.

<sup>160</sup> Sonderlund, *William Penn*, p. 373.

<sup>161</sup> [F. D. Pastorius], 'Positive Information from America Concerning the Country of Pennsylvania by a German who Traveled There', Philadelphia, 7 March 1684, in Sonderlund, *William Penn*, pp. 353-360, p. 359.

Quakers and non-Quakers alike'.<sup>162</sup> Penn's policy of tolerance, according to Schwartz, consisted of 'liberal attitudes toward members of other religious, national, or cultural groups, an acceptance of the right not to conform and to hold different beliefs'.<sup>163</sup> This issue of who governed, however, would continue to be a challenge to governing Pennsylvania even after Penn had left the scene.<sup>164</sup> Finally, in 1701, the frame of government that 'would govern the colony until the Revolution', restated Penn's original 'declaration of liberty of conscience'.<sup>165</sup> Thus, as Frost assesses, 'long before the influence of factors like the Great Awakening, pietism, and the Enlightenment that historians often cite as the antecedents of the American pattern of separation of church from state—Pennsylvania stood for non-coercion of conscience, divorce of the institutional church from the state, and the cooperation of the church and state in fostering the morality necessary for prosperity and good government'.<sup>166</sup> Pennsylvania thus became a plural society, heavily influenced by but not quite dominated by the Friends, and thus created a peace between differing traditions that did not let 'the weed of persecution'<sup>167</sup> grow in their midst.

Thus, Quakers, Presbyterians, Lutherans and Baptists flocked into Pennsylvania, seeking a new life and fresh start. By the 1730s, 'most Pennsylvanians, clergy and laity alike, accepted the diversity that characterized the colony and concentrated on strengthening their own denomination'.<sup>168</sup> Because of the 'bewildering variety of religious sects and churches', Frost indicates, 'the laity created churches that enforced moral standards, trumpeted

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<sup>162</sup> Sonderlund, *William Penn*, p. 199.

<sup>163</sup> Schwartz, *Mixed Multitude*, p. 10.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10-11.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32-33.

<sup>166</sup> Frost, *A Perfect Freedom*, p. 2.

<sup>167</sup> William Bradford letter to James Madison, 4 March 1774 in *The Founder's Constitution*, vol. 5, *Amendment 1 (Religion)*, Document 17 (Chicago, 1974), p. 60, [http://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/documents/amendI\\_religions17.html](http://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/documents/amendI_religions17.html) (Accessed: 8 August 2020).

<sup>168</sup> Schwartz, *Mixed Multitude*, p. 118.

distinctive doctrines and practices, and rejoiced in the conditions of civil and religious liberty'.<sup>169</sup> There may have been one exception to this rejoicing. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, the Anglican Mission founded by Thomas Bray in 1701, was quite active in Pennsylvania, even as they found operating in a plural environment challenging. Schwartz comments that, 'in their pleas for ministers, [Pennsylvania] Anglicans stressed the threats posed by liberty of conscience. . . . If priests did 'come not timely, the whole country would be overrunne with Presbyterians, Anabaptists, and Quakerism'.<sup>170</sup> This disorder, Schwartz suggests, 'caused some of the Anglican clergymen to press for a colonial bishop as the only way for their church to survive.'<sup>171</sup>

Anglican concern over Quaker influence in the government of colony became acute when Pennsylvania colonists were asked to organize militia to defend the colonies against the French. The Friends-dominated assemblies generally resisted calls to arms and only provided monies for the government's use for non-military support functions needed for a militia.<sup>172</sup> Anglicans decried this failure as 'an infringement of an Anglican's liberty of conscience'.<sup>173</sup> The assembly shrugged this complaint off, Frost assesses, 'Outsiders could either accept Quaker principles, form a voluntary militia, or leave'.<sup>174</sup> Thus Friends deeply held conviction toward pacifism, like the stance of Puritan Congregationalism in Massachusetts, became a take it or leave it proposition. Because the colonies had the luxury of much undeveloped land surrounding their communities, such stances were possible.

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<sup>169</sup> Frost, *Perfect Freedom*, p. 45.

<sup>170</sup> Keith to Bray, 24 February 1702/3, *S.P.G. Letterbooks*, A1, no. 87, quoted in Schwartz, *Mixed Multitude*, p. 58.

<sup>171</sup> Schwartz, *Mixed Multitude*, p. 59; see Frost, *Perfect Freedom*, p. 54-55; J. B. Bell, *A War of Religion: Dissenters, Anglicans, and the American Revolution*, Studies in Modern History, edited by J. C. D. Clark (New York, 2008), who describes colonial-wide efforts to establish a Bishop in North America as one of the key factors to bring on the Revolution.

<sup>172</sup> Frost, *Perfect Freedom*, p. 30.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

The earliest Baptist church in Pennsylvania was established in Bucks County in 1684; followed by the First Baptist Church in Philadelphia in 1698. According to Philip Klein and Ari Hoogenboom, Baptists did not flock into Pennsylvania in great numbers prior to the Revolution.<sup>175</sup> When looking at a map marking the locations of Baptist churches in the Delaware River Valley by 1757, it is evident that the majority of the churches were in New Jersey, but there were eight in Pennsylvania. The Philadelphia Baptist Association was founded in 1707 by five churches, three of which were in New Jersey, one in Pennsylvania, and one in Delaware.<sup>176</sup> These churches had all been founded by Welsh migrants.<sup>177</sup> The Association grew from 5 churches in 1707 to 64 churches by the turn of the nineteenth century. By 1790, there were 5000 Baptists in churches in Pennsylvania.<sup>178</sup> By the end of the eighteenth century, the Association's member churches spread over 400 miles from New York to Virginia.<sup>179</sup> The prosperity engendered by being located in the environs of Philadelphia made possible the churches' willingness to underwrite the founding of Rhode Island College, and the travel of pastor-evangelists who helped establish new Regular Baptist churches regionally.<sup>180</sup> Thus, Penn's commitment to religious toleration, not just for Quakers, created an environment where denominations of all sorts could flourish.

### *Delaware*

Delaware was one of William Penn's colonial projects, seeking an outlet to the ocean for his colonies. Sally Schwartz indicates that 'he attempted to guarantee liberty of

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<sup>175</sup> P. S. Klein and A. A. Hoogenboom, *History of Pennsylvania* (University Park, PA, 1980), p. 236.

<sup>176</sup> Gillette (ed.), *Philadelphia Baptist Association*, p. xviii; the churches were: Lower Dublin (Pennepek, PA) founded November 1688; Middletown, NJ founded November 1688; Piscataqua NJ founded 1689; Cohansey, NJ founded 1690; and Welsh Tract, Delaware founded in 1701.

<sup>177</sup> H. G. Jones, Jr., 'Preface' in Gillette (ed.), *Philadelphia Baptist Association*, p. 3.

<sup>178</sup> Klein and Hoogenboom, *Pennsylvania*, p. 236.

<sup>179</sup> Jones, 'Preface' in Gillette (ed.), *Philadelphia Baptist Association*, p. 4-5.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6-7.

conscience and actively recruited emigrants from among persecuted Protestants scattered throughout the British Isles and western Europe'.<sup>181</sup> The first Europeans to settle in the region were Swedes who brought with them their Lutheran faith in 1640.<sup>182</sup> This colony was co-opted by the New Amsterdam proprietary in 1655, 'when Peter Stuyvesant sensed too much competition for the fur trade. Only three hundred persons and one priest remained when the colony surrendered to the Dutch'.<sup>183</sup> The Dutch sent a vice-director down to Delaware to oversee things and to protect the 'Reformed religion', though how deeply this was enforced is uncertain.<sup>184</sup> The Delaware territory did not stay in the hands of the Dutch very long; the English taking over when New Amsterdam was ceded to the Duke of York in 1664.<sup>185</sup> With this change of hands, William Penn saw an opportunity to gain access to the ocean for his colony, Pennsylvania, and asked then King James II to grant him the charter over this territory. James II's forced departure from England during the glorious revolution thwarted the clear title to this land for Penn.<sup>186</sup> Penn was required in his charter, however, as for Pennsylvania, to allow a Church of England congregation to form if a certain number of persons wished it.<sup>187</sup>

The Swedes, however, continued to practice their Lutheran faith through all these changes. In 1693, the colonists wrote the king of Sweden requesting a new priest who 'may defend the true Lutheran faith which we do confess'.<sup>188</sup> The Swedish and English royal

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<sup>181</sup> S. Schwartz, 'William Penn and Toleration: Foundations of Colonial Pennsylvania', *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies*, vol. 50 (October 1983), pp. 284-312, p. 294.

<sup>182</sup> J. A. Munroe, *History of Delaware*, 4 ed. (Newark, NJ, 2001), p. 23.

<sup>183</sup> K-E Williams, 'Rose Among the Thorns: Colonial Swedes and Anglicans in Delaware', *Anglican and Episcopal History* 74 (March 2005), pp. 3-22, p. 4.

<sup>184</sup> J. T. Scharf, *History of Delaware 1609-1888* (Philadelphia, 1888), p. 62.

<sup>185</sup> Cobb, *Religious Liberty*, p. 325.

<sup>186</sup> Konkle, 'Delaware', pp. 241-254.

<sup>187</sup> Burr, 'Welsh Episcopalians', pp. 101-122, p. 106.

<sup>188</sup> K-E Williams, 'Rose Among the Thorns', p. 4, quoting P. S. Craig, *The 1693 Census of the Swedes on the Delaware* (Winter Park, FL, 1993), p. 159.

houses were close allies, and the Lutherans church officers in Sweden arranged to have their mission appointees vetted by the Church of England as Society for the Propagation of the Gospel missionaries. Thus, in 1697, the Church of England created a language mission among the Swedes that would eventually become English-speaking parishes in Delaware.<sup>189</sup> This is similar to the arrangements in Virginia for French-speaking Huguenot priests to settle in a parish that would eventually become an English-speaking parish.<sup>190</sup>

Once Penn had assurance that Delaware was his to manage, his agents spread out in Wales. Penn promised the Welsh who immigrated a large forty-thousand-acre tract to settle, beginning in 1684. Quakers streamed into the tract in Delaware up until about 1740 when, Nelson Burr indicates, ‘the stream of Welsh settlers practically ceased’.<sup>191</sup> Second in migratory numbers were the Baptists, whose migration around 1718 was spurred by persecution in Wales.<sup>192</sup> Baptists had arrived earlier in Delaware, settling in a Welsh Tract in New Castle County there in 1703.<sup>193</sup> The Welsh Tract church would be the mother church of Baptist meeting houses in Kent County, and a group of them migrated as far as south as the Pedee River in South Carolina, founding the Welsh Neck Church.<sup>194</sup> Thus, as in Pennsylvania, Delaware Baptists and other dissenters were welcome to worship God as their consciences guided them without outside influences.

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<sup>189</sup> Williams, ‘Rose Among the Thorns’, p. 7-8.

<sup>190</sup> Foote, *The Huguenots*.

<sup>191</sup> Burr, ‘Welsh Episcopalians’, p. 104.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 104-105.

<sup>193</sup> H. G. Jones and M. Edwards, ‘History of the Baptists in Delaware’, *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, vol. 9 (1885), pp. 45-61, p. 47.

<sup>194</sup> R. B. Cook, *Early and Later Delaware Baptists* (Philadelphia, 1880), p. 16.

*East and West Jersey (New Jersey)*

The Jersey proprietorships were chartered in 1664 (East Jersey) and 1675 (West Jersey); they were combined into a single colony under a charter in 1683.<sup>195</sup> Douglas Jacobsen characterizes the proprietorships as early on tolerant of religious diversity. They were ‘the first colonists to internalize the diversity that later came to characterize the nation as a whole’.<sup>196</sup> As the colony increased in population, various church groups did organize and thus strengthen their influence, but, Jacobsen indicates, this ‘was always partial and limited’.<sup>197</sup> The colony’s legislature early on was relatively liberal. Jacobsen’s summarizes, ‘The earliest laws encouraged the growth of religious diversity; later laws tried to limit diversity through the creation of an informal establishment of religion; and, finally, legislation . . . during the royal period seemed designed to maintain the status quo regarding religious freedom and diversity’. He further develops the following timeline: from 1664 to 1676, New Jersey’s leadership was basically open to anyone migrating into the colony, no matter their religion. From 1675 to 1700, New Jersey’s leadership was looking to establish good public order, including on matters of religion (the ‘tightening up’). When New Jersey became a royal colony in 1702, the English laws actually liberalized some of New Jersey’s native laws.<sup>198</sup> New Jersians general solution to religious pluralism was to invoke the golden rule, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself’ (Gospel of Mark 12:31).

Chesapeake Bay Neighbors

*Virginia*

English Virginians worshipped in an Established Church in the seventeenth century that was a weaker version of the Church of England, imperfectly governed though legally protected in a

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<sup>195</sup> Wakelyn (ed.), *America’s Founding Charters*, p. 182.

<sup>196</sup> Jacobsen, *Unprov’d Experiment*, p. 1.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14, 21-22.

challenging environment.<sup>199</sup> Hening comments in a preface to his *Statutes at Large*, volume 1, ‘In the infancy of our legislation, the laws were few and simple. They related chiefly to the church government; to the culture of tobacco and other staple commodities; to defensive operations against the Indians, and such other subjects as would naturally engross the attention of the legislature, in a newly settled country’.<sup>200</sup> Prior to the 1689 Act of Toleration,<sup>201</sup> Virginia was not accommodating to non-Anglican Protestants. Quakers were forbidden to gather for worship under penalty, including banishment. In ‘An act prohibiting the unlawfull assembling of Quakers’, if five or more Quakers were found assembled for worship not authorized ‘by the Laws of England or this country’, they were subject to a fine of 200 pounds of tobacco; a second offense garnered a fine of 500 pounds of tobacco; upon the third offense banishment from the colony was imposed. Ship captains could be fined 5000 pounds of tobacco for delivering a Quaker to Virginia.<sup>202</sup>

When the news of the Act of Toleration reached Virginia, Governor Francis Nicholson was reluctant to give dissenters much space in Virginia, fearing that Quakers, whose pacifism meant they would not aid the colony’s defense, were fifth columnists for the French. Nicholson entertained similar fears regarding other dissenters as well. In 1690, as ‘a series of conflicts broke out between England and France’, Nicholson, a military veteran, anticipated an invasion of Virginia by the French and their Indian allies.<sup>203</sup> The first acknowledgement in Virginia of the 1689 Act of Toleration did not appear until 1699, when a provision for non-Anglican Protestants was passed by the General Assembly within an Act that

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<sup>199</sup> Virginia General Assembly, March the 5<sup>th</sup>, 1623/4, Act 1, paragraph 3 in Hening, *Statutes*, vol. 1, pp. 123, affirmed February 24, 1632/2, Act 1, Order for the Mynisters, p. 155, and Grand Assembly, September 4, 1632, Acts 1-XVII, establishment and oversight of the Established Church of England, pp. 180-185.

<sup>200</sup> ‘Preface to the First Edition’ in Hening, *Statutes*, vol. 1, pp. iv-v.

<sup>201</sup> William III, King of England and Finch, Earl of Nottingham, *King William’s Toleration*.

<sup>202</sup> Virginia Grand Assemblie, September 1663, 15<sup>th</sup> Charles II, Act 1, ‘An act prohibiting the unlawfull assembly of Quakers’ in Hening, *Statutes*, vol. 2, pp. 180-183.

<sup>203</sup> T. E. Buckley, *Establishing Religious Freedom: Jefferson’s Statute in Virginia* (Charlottesville, VA, 2013), pp. 12-13.

imposed penalties for Sabbath breaking.<sup>204</sup> This provision was brought about by legal pressure from Presbyterian Synod of Philadelphia on behalf of Presbyterian settlers in Virginia.<sup>205</sup>

When Presbyterian minister Francis Makemie appealed the refusal of the General Assembly to allow him to build Presbyterian meeting houses in the colony, Nicholson reluctantly allowed them to build as long they did not disturb the peace.<sup>206</sup> The Virginia General Assembly encoded the toleration provisions into Virginia Law on May 10, 1699.<sup>207</sup> This provision was inserted into Act 1 of the April 1699 session, and it was further confirmed in 1705 in a subsequent session of the General Assembly when they passed laws related to toleration.<sup>208</sup>

The Presbyterian Synod of Philadelphia was the first group to petition for relief for the Scots-Irish inhabitants of western Virginia based on the 1699 provision for toleration. Their petition, in 1738, was received by Governor Gooch, himself a Scotsman. He needed good, sturdy men on the western border.<sup>209</sup> Distance seemed to him a sufficient buffer between these dissenters and the more populated areas of Virginia with well-established Anglican parishes.<sup>210</sup> The first Presbyterian Church in western Virginia, Opequon church, was established in 1732, six years before the parishes for Frederick or Augusta counties were established.<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>204</sup> Virginia General Assembly, April 1699, 11<sup>th</sup> William III, Act 1, ‘An act for the more effectual suppressing of Blasphemy, Swearing, Cursing, Drunkenness and Sabbath breaking’, in Hening, *Statutes*, vol. 3, pp. 168-171, p. 171.

<sup>205</sup> McIlwaine, *Religious Toleration*, p. 42.

<sup>206</sup> McIlwaine (ed.), *Executive Journals*, p. 427.

<sup>207</sup> McIlwaine (ed.), *House of Burgesses*, p. 158.

<sup>208</sup> The first mention of toleration is Virginia General Assembly, April 1699, 11<sup>th</sup> William III, Act 1, ‘An act for the more effectual suppressing of Blasphemy, Swearing, Cursing, Drunkenness and Sabbath breaking’, in Hening, *Statutes*, vol. 3, pp. 168-171, p. 171. It is further applied during the Virginia General Assembly, October 1705, 4<sup>th</sup> Anne, Chap. XXX, ‘An act for the effectual suppression of vice, and restraint, and punishment of blasphemous, wicked, and dissolute persons’, in Hening, *Statutes*, vol. 3, pp. 358-362, see para. VII, p. 360.

<sup>209</sup> Gewehr, *Great Awakening*, pp. 40-42; McIlwaine, *Religious Toleration*, p. 43.

<sup>210</sup> Gewehr, *Great Awakening*, p. 42; F. L. Hawks, *A Narrative of Events Connected with the Rise and Progress of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia*, vol. 1, *Contributions to the Ecclesiastical History of the United States of America* (New York, 1836), pp. 99-100.

<sup>211</sup> ‘History of Opequon Presbyterian Church,’ Opequon Presbyterian Church website, <http://opequonchurch.com/> (Accessed: 5 January 2014); E. J. Salmon and E. D. C. Campbell, Jr. (eds.), *The Hornbook of Virginia History*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Richmond, VA, 1994), p. 182. The Anglican parishes received their first

When William III's parliament created the Act of Toleration in 1689 to allow for peaceful co-existence with non-Catholic dissenters in England, the Virginia colony and its Established Church had to accommodate the new legal environment. Isaac comments, 'Virginia traditionalists . . . took the view that toleration implied only a respect for the status quo—a right to continue in the doctrine with which one had been nurtured. They did not consider that it included the right to disturb existing social arrangements by embracing new beliefs and propagating them'.<sup>212</sup> Therefore, the Virginia House of Burgesses assumed it would continue managing religion within the borders of the colony as they had done so prior to the Act of Toleration. Virginia Anglicans could decry 'schismatic' activity, but for those dissenters who abided by the toleration regulations, there was little else the Anglicans could do but attempt to limit their expansion.

Virginia's toleration act gave Lt. Governor Gooch, who wanted to populate the western transmountain region with Presbyterian Scotch-Irish immigrants in 1740, the basis upon which to invite settlers who dissented from the Established Church to migrate into western Virginia. As a result, Christians not affiliated with the Established Church migrated into Virginia's western wilderness in the 1740s-1750s from Pennsylvania and in the 1760s-1770s from North Carolina. A few Regular Baptists migrated along with an even greater number of Presbyterians. Separate Baptists, the Regular Baptists' noisy cousins, soon migrated down from Connecticut.<sup>213</sup> These new settlers did not stay west of the mountains as had been the intention when they were invited into the colony. This set up a period of social trial and error that would answer the question of whether the Established Church could adapt

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Anglican ministers in the 1740s, John Gordon in Frederick Parish beginning in 1744 and John Hindman at Augusta Parish in 1747. Gundersen, *Anglican Ministry*, pp. 250, 255.

<sup>212</sup> T. S. Kidd, 'Act of Toleration (1689)', in *Encyclopedia Virginia*, [http://www.EncyclopediaVirginia.org/Act\\_of\\_Toleration\\_1689](http://www.EncyclopediaVirginia.org/Act_of_Toleration_1689) (Accessed 5 June 2019); Isaac, 'Religion and authority', pp. 3-36, p. 27.

<sup>213</sup> Hofstra, *Planting of New Virginia*, pp. 4-7; Alley, *Baptists*, pp. 35-51.

to a large population of dissenters. Like their compatriots in England, who faced a new marketplace of religion beginning in 1689, Anglican clergy in colonial Virginia were distressed by the presence of active dissenter gatherings in their parishes.

The Crown's desire to populate the North American colonies with Protestant subjects to forestall the encroachment of Spain and France had the result of allowing religious pluralism to become a fact of life in the colonies. Locally, as the colonies' wealth grew and separation began to be considered, the management of religion became an avoidable distraction.<sup>214</sup> This migratory pattern of dissenters from Pennsylvania and North Carolina was one of the factors that suggested to the colony's leadership that 'restrictions on religious minorities'<sup>215</sup> was not in the best interest of the colony's prosperity.

### *Maryland*

The smaller of the two colonies surrounding the Chesapeake Bay, Maryland was founded in 1632, 25 years after Virginia's founding, under the proprietorship of Cecil Calvert, the 2nd Lord Baltimore.<sup>216</sup> A scion of an Irish Catholic family, Cecil Calvert, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Lord Baltimore, protected the family's proprietorship of Maryland, granted by Charles I, through the English Civil War, the Commonwealth, and the Restoration periods. As a faithful Catholic, following his father's, George Calvert, intentions for the nascent colony, John Krugler indicates that Cecil developed 'the Calvert model for Church-State Relations'.<sup>217</sup> Though the proprietor was Roman Catholic, the colony would not have an established church at all in its boundaries almost through the seventeenth century. 'Conditioned by his father's experience and by practical necessity, Cecil Calvert rejected the beliefs that his colonists had

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<sup>214</sup> Gill, *Political Origins*, p. 113.

<sup>215</sup> Chalkley, *Scotch-Irish Settlement*; Gill, *Political Origins*, pp. 75, 113.

<sup>216</sup> Wakelyn (ed.), *America's Founding Charters*, p. 109.

<sup>217</sup> Krugler, *English and Catholic*, p. 152.

to profess his religious faith and that he had to control their religious practices. . . . His novel concept that religion was a private matter, free from government assistance or restraint, marked a significant break from the dogmas of the age'.<sup>218</sup> Anglican Virginia became an instant source of disturbance, seeking to spy out the liberty in Maryland for any sign of Roman Catholic dominance.<sup>219</sup> Calvert was well aware of the apprehensions of his Virginia neighbors. Krugler indicates that 'to ensure civil peace, Baltimore sought to avoid the appearance that any particular religious group receiving special treatment'.<sup>220</sup> While he invited Jesuit priests to work among the Catholics who immigrated to Maryland, he enjoined all Catholic immigrants to not openly express their faith least non-Catholic immigrants take up offense.<sup>221</sup> Krugler observes, 'With Baltimore's adversaries eagerly awaiting an opportunity to undermine the charter, every effort had to be made to deprive them of ammunition'.<sup>222</sup> While free to worship, Catholics were not free to proselytize; perhaps the first instance of 'don't ask; don't tell' in the new world, an arrangement similar to the *schuilkerk*, or clandestine church, in Holland.<sup>223</sup> What was unique in Maryland is that the proprietor was Catholic and was enjoining his fellow Catholics to not practice their faith openly. By strictly maintaining the non-establishment of any Christian denomination in Maryland, a politically astute second Lord Baltimore was able to maintain his colony as a place of religious freedom despite the best efforts of activist Catholic priests and Anglican laity complaining of not having the privilege of government support that their neighboring parishes enjoyed in Virginia.<sup>224</sup> More helpfully, Maryland became a refugee center for

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<sup>218</sup> Krugler, *English and Catholic*, p. 153.

<sup>219</sup> Russo and Russo, *Planting an Empire*, loc. 1710, Kindle.

<sup>220</sup> Krugler, *English and Catholic*, p. 154.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 156-157.

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 165.

<sup>223</sup> Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, p. 174.

<sup>224</sup> Krugler, *English and Catholic*, p. 222.

displaced religionists who found themselves on the wrong side politically during the Commonwealth and the Restoration periods.<sup>225</sup>

Calvert's 'Maryland designe'<sup>226</sup> for religious freedom came to a sudden halt when Maryland's colonial government was taken over by local rebels who passed legislation establishing the Church of England in 1692.<sup>227</sup> With the third Lord Baltimore exiled in England, Francis Nicholson, the Crown's troubleshooter, was appointed Governor of the Colony in 1694.<sup>228</sup> He vigorously proceeded to strengthen the Anglican church in Maryland.<sup>229</sup> Nicholson asked the Bishop of London, Henry Compton, to send a 'superintendent, commissary, or suffragan'<sup>230</sup> to Maryland. Thomas Bray, an Anglican minister, was dispatched to Maryland as the Bishop of London's Commissary in 1699.<sup>231</sup> He became convinced that an organization was needed to support Anglican mission work, based on the Anglican church's dire need of support in most of the colonies.<sup>232</sup> Thus, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts was chartered in 1701 and supported Anglican mission efforts in North America, except in the Chesapeake region, where it was well established.<sup>233</sup>

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<sup>225</sup> Krugler, *English and Catholic*, p. 184.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 154.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 248.

<sup>228</sup> D. Noble, 'Life of Francis Nicholson', (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1958), p. 644.

<sup>229</sup> S. S. Webb, 'The Strange Career of Francis Nicholson', *The William and Mary Quarterly* 3d series 23 (October 1966), p. 533; Russo and Russo, loc. 2158, 2168, Kindle.

<sup>230</sup> Francis Nicholson to Henry Compton, May 1691, Fulham Mss., Maryland, no. 145, quoted in Woolverton, *Colonial Anglicanism*, p. 137.

<sup>231</sup> H. P. Thompson, *Into All Lands: The History of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts 1701-1950* (London, 1950), p. 10; S. C. McCulloch, 'Dr. Thomas Bray's Commissary Work in London, 1696-1699', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d series. Vol. 2, No. 4 (October 1945), pp. 333-348, p. 348.

<sup>232</sup> R. Strong, 'A Vision of an Anglican Imperialism: The Annual Sermons of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts 1701-1714', *Journal of Religious History*, 30 (June 2006), pp. 175-178, p. 175.

<sup>233</sup> S. C. McCullough, 'Dr. Thomas Bray's Trip to Maryland: A Study in Militant Anglican Humanitarianism', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d series. Vol. 2, No. 1 (January 1945), pp. 15-32, p. 31.

Nicholson was aware of the pluralism that the Calverts had engendered but was determined to ‘make good Anglicans of the population that were not committed dissenters’.<sup>234</sup> Williams III’s Act of Toleration in 1689 provided all of Maryland’s non-Anglicans a means to continue practicing their faith. Quakers and Presbyterians were the main dissenting groups in Maryland prior to 1700.<sup>235</sup> Baptists would appear in 1709.<sup>236</sup>

Henry Sator, a General Baptist, settled in the Chestnut Ridge area of Maryland in 1709, having immigrated from England. He made a habit of opening his home to Baptist ministers for preaching. By 1742 enough were gathering regularly to constitute a church with fifty-one members.<sup>237</sup> For permission to meet, under the new Anglican-government toleration regulations, the church members submitted their statement of faith to the local officers of the court. The statement notes that their confession of faith is the same as that ‘maintained in the forms or confessions of the Baptists in England, differing in nothing from the articles of the Church of England and Scotland except in infant baptism, modes of church government, the doctrine of absolute reprobation, and some ceremonies’.<sup>238</sup> They were thus providing the governor the context of who they were back in England. Interestingly, because of the colony’s recent transition from a Catholic colony with religious freedom to a colony with an Anglican establishment, they sought to assure the governor that they were not Catholic sympathizers. ‘We do also bind ourselves hereby to defend and live up to the protestant religion, and to abhor and oppose the whore of Rome, pope, and popery with all her antichristian ways’.<sup>239</sup> To differentiate themselves from the Quakers, who were also

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<sup>234</sup> Noble, ‘Francis Nicholson’, p. 644.

<sup>235</sup> Krugler, *English and Catholic*, p. 232; Russo and Russo, *Planting an Empire*, loc. 2168, Kindle.

<sup>236</sup> M. Edwards, ‘Maryland,’ in *Materials* (1772), vol. III, p. 1.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*; W. L. Allen, *You Are a Great People: Maryland/Delaware Baptists 1742-1998* (Franklin, TN, 2000), p. 5.

<sup>238</sup> M. Edwards, ‘Maryland’, in *Materials* (1772), p. 12.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*

numerous in the colony, they also assured the court, ‘We do further declare that we are not against taking oaths, nor using arms in defence [sic] of our king and country when legally called thereto; and we do approve and will obey the laws of this province’.<sup>240</sup> They finally commit that any who join them will be bound by the terms of this document, ‘We also engage that all persons upon joining our society shall yield consent to and subscribe this our solemn league and covenant’.<sup>241</sup>

Members of this church, having heard the preaching of Particular Baptist preachers out of the Philadelphia Baptist Association, decided to form a Particular Baptist Church in 1754 at Winter Run. The church joined the Philadelphia Association the same year.<sup>242</sup> An interesting connection to Virginia Regular Baptists is the founding of Seneca Church. Daniel and William Fristoe, along with Baptist preachers Richard Major and Jeremiah Moore, helped organize this congregation in 1773. Daniel Fristoe became their pastor and served them until his untimely death of smallpox in 1775 in Philadelphia while attending the Philadelphia Baptist Association meeting.<sup>243</sup>

Edwards indicated that the ‘Baptists in Maryland have not endured any thing from the civil power which may be properly called persecution’.<sup>244</sup> Comparing Maryland to Virginia, he commented, ‘Neither has this government at any time refused the benefits of the toleration acts to dissenters as has been too common in Virginia’.<sup>245</sup> Apparently, the new leadership in the colony was sensitive to the fact that so many denominations had experienced religious freedom. Therefore, it was best not to molest them for worshipping in their own way, though

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<sup>240</sup> M. Edwards, ‘Maryland’, in *Materials* (1772), vol. III, p. 13.

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>242</sup> W. L. Allen, *Maryland/Delaware Baptists*, p. 11; Edwards, ‘Maryland’, in *Materials* (1772), p. 6.

<sup>243</sup> W. L. Allen, *Maryland/Delaware Baptists*, p. 22; Gillette (ed.), *Philadelphia Baptist Association*, p. 140; J. B. Taylor, *Virginia Baptist Ministers with an Introduction by J. B. Jeter*, Series I (Philadelphia, 1859), pp. 42-43.

<sup>244</sup> M. Edwards, ‘Maryland’, in *Materials* (1772), vol. III, p. 13.

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

all residents were now taxed to support their local Anglican parish church.<sup>246</sup> The fourth Lord Baltimore eventually reclaimed the family proprietorship, but only after joining the Anglican church in 1715.<sup>247</sup>

## The Carolinas and Georgia

### *South Carolina*

The Carolinas were a colony founded in 1670 by a proprietary group lead by Ashley Cooper, the first Earl of Shaftesbury.<sup>248</sup> The area encompassed both North and South Carolina; the North not becoming its own royal colony until 1712.<sup>249</sup> According to Thomas Wilson, ‘Ashley Cooper envisioned a new kind of society in Carolina, one quite different from other colonies. In contrast to Virginia, it would be carefully balanced in design to avoid an accumulation of power by one class of society. In contrast to New England, it would have a secular government capable of ensuring Protestant religious tolerance’.<sup>250</sup> Charles II deemed Cooper’s plan worthy of duplication in the development of other colonies and granted the charter in 1663.<sup>251</sup> The colony’s first city was a planned urban environment named for their king, Charles Town (today’s Charleston), which became the fourth largest, and one of the wealthiest urban centers in the colonies, thanks to its advantageous location for involvement in the Atlantic Triangle Trade, which was ‘heavily oriented toward enslavement of Africans’.<sup>252</sup> While Cooper expected slaves to form a part of the give and take of the classes within his planned society, he never expected the Carolinas to become a slave society,

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<sup>246</sup> Russo and Russo, *Planting an Empire*, loc. 2158-2168, Kindle.

<sup>247</sup> Krugler, *English and Catholic*, p. 248-249.

<sup>248</sup> Wilson, *Ashley Cooper Plan*, p. ix.

<sup>249</sup> L. E. Tise and J. J. Crow, ‘A New Description of North Carolina’, in Tise and Crow (eds.), *New Voyages to Carolina*, pp. 354-390, p. 366.

<sup>250</sup> Wilson, *Ashley Cooper Plan*, p. 7.

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12, 32.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65; E. C. Smith, *Order and Ardor: Order and Ardor: The Revival Spirituality of Oliver Hart and the Regular Baptists in Eighteenth-Century South Carolina* (Columbia, SC, 2018), p. 17.

which it quickly became with the migration of English planters from Barbados with their slaves.<sup>253</sup> Carolina law quickly made sure that any evangelization of slaves would not induce thoughts of freedom.<sup>254</sup> Wilson notes that by 1720, the majority of persons in the southern section of Carolina were enslaved Africans.<sup>255</sup>

Shaftesbury was quite progressive and had the aid of John Locke in drafting the early governing documents for the colony.<sup>256</sup> Shaftesbury wanted the colony ‘designed to achieve balanced government, societal harmony, sustainably prosperity, impartial justice, and religious tolerance’.<sup>257</sup> Regarding religion, he was a skeptic of embracing religious influence in government; considering it a threat should it wield too much influence.<sup>258</sup> He considered the ‘intimate and collusive relationship between religion and government . . . a perfect formula for tyranny’.<sup>259</sup> The Lords Proprietors provided for a limited religious tolerance, “No man shall be permitted to be a freeman of Carolina, or to have any estate or habitation within it, that doth not acknowledge God, and that God is publicly and solemnly to be worshipped’, while endowing the Church of England as the only religion in Carolina to be underwritten by the government.<sup>260</sup> However to avoid scaring away potential immigrants who might be nonconformists,<sup>261</sup> the proprietors offered this, ‘any seven or more persons agreeing in any religion, shall constitute a church or profession, to which they shall give some name, to

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<sup>253</sup> Wilson, *Ashley Cooper Plan*, p. 2, 7, 32.

<sup>254</sup> W. Edgar, ‘Introduction’, in Underwood and Burke (eds.), *Religious Freedom in South Carolina*, pp. ix-xv, p. xi; Wilson, *Ashley Cooper Plan*, p. 80.

<sup>255</sup> Wilson, *Ashley Cooper Plan*, p. 80.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.

<sup>259</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 78.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 78-79.

<sup>261</sup> J. L. Underwood, ‘The Dawn of Religious Freedom in South Carolina: The Journey from Limited Tolerance to Constitutional Right,’ in Underwood and Burke (eds.), *Religious Freedom in South Carolina*, pp. 1-57, 2.

distinguish it from others.’<sup>262</sup> They forbade ‘religious persecution, hate speech, and all forms of intolerance’; however, they banned ‘any religious assembly [that spoke] irreverently or seditiously of the government or governors, or state matters’.<sup>263</sup> Shaftesbury’s proprietary board provided for freedom of religion, at least for Protestants, while providing government support for the Church of England, and banned persecution, even as everyone was enjoined to not speak ill of the government or its officials. Apparently, state security was the primary concern of colonial officials.<sup>264</sup> Thus, Shaftesbury hoped to balance the question of religious toleration in his colony.

The balance he hoped for did not last. James Underwood characterizes religious toleration in South Carolina as unstable, subject to the vagaries of the Carolina parliament.<sup>265</sup> In 1704, the Carolina’s government passed a ‘exclusion act’ that limited ‘the rights of dissenters’ and made the ‘Church of England the official state religion’.<sup>266</sup> This limited the rights of dissenters to participate in the governance of the colony, a condition which they vigorously objected, taking their case to England’s Parliament. The act was subsequently repealed in 1706.<sup>267</sup> Walter Edgar assesses, ‘Even though South Carolina sometimes seemed to submerge individual religious initiative by an intricate set of regulations of the Church of England, the colony escaped the harshness that sometimes occurred in older colonies in the seventeenth century’.<sup>268</sup> Thomas Little indicates, nevertheless, that despite the repeal of the

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<sup>262</sup> Edgar, ‘Introduction’, in *Religious Freedom in South Carolina*, ix-xv, ix.

<sup>263</sup> Wilson, *Ashley Cooper Plan*, p. 79.

<sup>264</sup> Underwood, ‘Dawn of Religious Freedom’, in Underwood and Burke (eds.), *Religious Freedom in South Carolina*, p. 5.

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1-57, 8.

<sup>266</sup> Wilson, *Ashley Cooper Plan*, p. 122.

<sup>267</sup> Wilson, *Ashley Cooper Plan*, p. 94; Underwood, ‘Dawn of Religious Freedom’, in Underwood and Burke (eds.), *Religious Freedom in South Carolina*, pp. 18-19.

<sup>268</sup> Edgar, ‘Introduction’, in Underwood and Burke (eds.), *Religious Freedom in South Carolina*, p. ix.

1704 act, the measure did ‘effectively [check] the growth of dissenting Protestantism in the Carolina lowcountry’.<sup>269</sup>

This less harsh environment for dissenters had the attractive effect that the proprietors had hoped. The first Anglican church was established in 1670 in Charles Town.<sup>270</sup> By 1698, ‘dissenters composed about two-thirds of the [white] population of the colony’,<sup>271</sup> and they were a mixture of various Protestants, Huguenots, Quakers, and Jews.<sup>272</sup> The first Baptists came on shore in Charles Town in 1690s, refugees from the influence of Congregationalists living in an area controlled by the Massachusetts Bay Colony in what is now Kittery, Maine. Their minister, William Screvan, had been cited for offensive speech and forbidden to hold meetings in the province.<sup>273</sup> By 1695, Gilbert Ashley, a Baptist minister who was also a justice of the peace and a Carolina assemblyman, was drawing crowds to his preaching.<sup>274</sup> By 1703, Nicolas Trott complained to the archbishop of Canterbury ‘that the colony was “very much infested with the Sect of Anabaptists’.<sup>275</sup> In the mid-1700s, a group of Welsh Baptists from the Welsh Tract in Pennsylvania arrived in South Carolina and settled in the backcountry. They called their settlement ‘Welsh Neck’, attracted to South Carolina by the agricultural possibilities and legal conditions.<sup>276</sup>

William Screvan’s Baptist group in Charles Town thrived for a while, but a split over Particular Baptist versus General Baptist principles in the mid-1740s had left the church with

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<sup>269</sup> T. L. Little, *The Origins of Southern Evangelicalism: Religious Revivalism in the South Carolina Lowcountry, 1670-1760* (Clemson, SC, 2013), p. 49

<sup>270</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>271</sup> Underwood, ‘Dawn of Religious Freedom’ in Underwood and Burke (eds.), *Religious Freedom in South Carolina*, p. 19.

<sup>272</sup> Edgar, ‘Introduction’, in Underwood and Burke (eds.), *Religious Freedom in South Carolina*, p. ix.

<sup>273</sup> T. L. Little, *Southern Evangelicalism*, pp. 8, 27, 38-39; E. C. Smith, *Order and Ardor*, p. 2.

<sup>274</sup> T. L. Little, *Southern Evangelicalism*, p. 42.

<sup>275</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>276</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106; Cook, *Delaware Baptists*, p. 16.

few sustaining members.<sup>277</sup> Like other Baptists elsewhere, they petitioned the Philadelphia Regular Baptist Association for assistance. Oliver Hart, a former Quaker who became a Regular Baptist during the Great Awakening, volunteered to go to their assistance, moving to Charles Town in 1750.<sup>278</sup> Little indicates that Hart plunged into the work, getting to know fellow ministers and organizing the Charleston Baptist Association.<sup>279</sup> Hart was so well respected in Charles Town that in 1754 his friend, Richard Clarke, the rector of St. Phillip's Church, asked Elder Hart to conduct a funeral for him when he was ill. The two of them became friends during the evangelical revival that occurred when Hart entered ministry in Charleston.<sup>280</sup> Such an unlikely friendship was facilitated by the legal religious toleration in South Carolina that the Anglican rector abided by and the nonconformist Baptist enjoyed. Hart's ministry leadership in Charles Town came to an end in 1775 when the South Carolina Provincial Congress commissioned him and Congregational minister William Tennant III and statements William Henry Drayton to travel through the backcountry of South Carolina to persuade backcountry settlers, many loyalists, to join the plan to dissolve the colonies' union with Great Britain.<sup>281</sup> When Charleston was blockaded by the British in 1780, Hart fled north to Pennsylvania, and died in Hopewell, New Jersey, in 1795, while pastoring the Baptist church there.<sup>282</sup> Baptist work in Southern Carolina thrived under Oliver Hart's leadership because religious toleration had been the policy, even as the Anglican leadership sought to game the system to their advantage.

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<sup>277</sup> T. L. Little, *Southern Evangelicalism*, p. 111-112; E. C. Smith, *Order and Ardor*, p. 15.

<sup>278</sup> E. C. Smith, *Order and Ardor*, pp. 14, 16.

<sup>279</sup> T. L. Little, *Southern Evangelicalism*, p. 175.

<sup>280</sup> E. C. Smith, *Order and Ardor*, p. 100.

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>282</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

## *North Carolina*

There were no good ports in the northern region of the Earl of Shaftesbury's Carolina colony. The coastline was treacherous with sand bars and the Great Dismal Swamp, a region shared with Virginia, was a perfect place for people who were not interested in civilized living to farm and generally be left alone.<sup>283</sup> Remotely governed from Charleston, this area became infamous for refusal to pay taxes, regardless of the authorities' efforts. As part of the Carolina proprietary, the Anglican church was the established church, but other denominations were free to form churches as they saw fit. The Anglican church in North Carolina was never very strong; only getting some support from the North Carolina Assembly in 1701, but as Charles Irons points out, 'this rearguard action was not enough to close Carolina's borders to missionaries and immigrants of every persuasion'.<sup>284</sup>

Seen by the gentry as a 'theological validation of social hierarchy',<sup>285</sup> the Anglican Church was used as a wedge to undermine the political influence of dissenters, especially Quakers.<sup>286</sup> By 1703, the assembly elected by North Carolinians was about half Quaker and, with other dissenters, they 'declared their designs of making void the act for establishing the Church'.<sup>287</sup> Noeleen McIlvenna characterizes this early resistance. 'Practicing Quakers did not make up a majority of the colony's electorate, but many citizens sympathized with the Quakers and trusted that their principles would lead them to be good representatives of small farmers'.<sup>288</sup> They essentially rendered the establishment of the Anglican Church in North Carolina a dead letter. By 1715, the Anglican planter class had regained the upper hand and

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<sup>283</sup> McIlvenna, *Mutinous People*, p. 3.

<sup>284</sup> Irons, 'Evangelical Geographies', in Tise and Crow (eds), *New Voyages to Carolina*, pp. 144-165, p. 146.

<sup>285</sup> McIlvenna, *Mutinous People*, p. 3, 94.

<sup>286</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103.

<sup>287</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 104.

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105.

reasserted the establishment of the Anglican church. McIlvenna assesses that ‘the refusal to pay tithes marked the limits of the settlers’ defiance of Anglican-planter control.’<sup>289</sup>

Anglican ministers, underwritten by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, found the process of organizing religious services in northern Carolina daunting. For example, the Anglicans in North Carolina assumed that the Rev. John Blair, sent by the Society in 1704 to Albemarle ‘was obliged to serve them throughout the colony, whereas the minister himself hoped to settle in Chowan and attend only to St. Paul’s Parish’.<sup>290</sup> The arrival of the Reverend John Urmston in 1711 illustrates the culture shock for Anglican missionaries that was life in North Carolina. Expecting deference, he got quite the opposite. He complained, ‘Had I servants and money I might live very comfortably’, but ‘I am forced to work hard with axe, hoe and spade’. They think there is no difference between a gentleman and a labourer’.<sup>291</sup> North Carolina’s settlers were, in his mind ‘a very factious, mutinous, and rebellious people most of them allied to the Quakers and at all times at their beck read to oppose either church or state’.<sup>292</sup> This spirit was carried into the interior of North Carolina as small farmers sought land in the piedmont region in the mid-eighteenth century.

Baptists, who had been well settled and integrated into the slave society that was South Carolina, only appeared in North Carolina in the mid-eighteenth century. Like many, some were fugitives from the pressure applied by Virginia on dissenters, living in and around the Great Dismal Swamp. These were General Baptists, who first settled in the coastal region of North Carolina in the 1740s.<sup>293</sup> Separate Baptists, who had settled in the Piedmont in the 1750s around Sandy Creek, were led by ‘Shubal Stearns, a charismatic evangelist who . . .

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<sup>289</sup> McIlvenna, *Mutinous People*, p. 159.

<sup>290</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106.

<sup>291</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 137-138.

<sup>292</sup> *Ibid.*, p.139.

<sup>293</sup> R. Knight, *History of the General or Six-Principle Baptists in Europe and America in Two Parts* (Providence, RI, 1827), p. 317; McIlvenna, *Mutinous People*, pp. 162-163.

quickly cultivated a dense network of Baptist churches in the Piedmont'.<sup>294</sup> Stearns organized these churches into the Sandy Creek Baptist Association in 1758.<sup>295</sup>

In the 1760s, Piedmont farmers tired of their royal government ignoring them, organized a protest of the government's 'political corruption'.<sup>296</sup> Governor Tyron, who made an effort to govern the ungovernable,<sup>297</sup> targeted the Separate Baptists, thought to be conspiring with Quakers to refuse to pay taxes to support the government. The government's reaction to the 'Regulator War' in 1771 devastated the population of Separate Baptists in the Piedmont.<sup>298</sup> Thus it was not the practice of their faith that brought the wrath of the government onto dissenting farmers in North Carolina. Rather the government targeted their dissenting status to punish them for failure to pay taxes; presumably including the tithes to support the Anglican church.

### *Georgia*

James Oglethorpe's planned community around Savannah, Georgia, was the last of the proprietary colonies founded by English reformers in 1729. They wanted to create a colony to serve 'as a refuge for deserving poor', part of their effort to reform prison conditions in England.<sup>299</sup> Oglethorpe's colony was founded during the Enlightenment, patterned after the Carolina plan, and originally prohibited slavery.<sup>300</sup> David Williams indicates that the charter for the colony 'explicitly offered freedom of religion, save to

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<sup>294</sup> Irons, 'Evangelical Geographies', in Tise and Crow (eds.), *New Voyages in Carolina*, p. 147.

<sup>295</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 148.

<sup>296</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 149; McIlvanna, *Mutinous People*, p. 163.

<sup>297</sup> Tise and Crow, 'New Description', in *New Voyages in Carolina*, pp. 354-390, p. 365-366.

<sup>298</sup> L. H. Hoyle, 'Baptists', in W. G. Jonas, Jr. (ed.), *Religious Traditions of North Carolina: Histories, Tenets, and Leaders* (Jefferson, NC, 2018), pp. 15-32, p. 18.

<sup>299</sup> Williams, *From Mounds to Megachurches*, p. 18; R. G. Gardner, C. O. Walker, J. R. Huddleston, and W. P. Harris, *History of the Georgia Baptist Association, 1784-1984* (Atlanta, GA, 1996), p. 9.

<sup>300</sup> Wilson, *Ashley Cooper Plan*, p. 9.

Catholics’, whose presence in Spanish-controlled Florida was keenly felt.<sup>301</sup> This provision in the charter created space for a variety of faiths to settle, including Jews, Lutherans, and Moravians.<sup>302</sup> Oglethorpe, wanting to fortify the colony’s Atlantic coastline, recruited Scottish Highlanders. These Highland Presbyterians arrived in 1736. When the colony became a royal colony in 1758, the Church of England became the established church for the colony. David Williams, however, indicates that ‘the effect on non-Anglican or “dissenting” churches was not overly oppressive’.<sup>303</sup>

Williams indicates that churches did not thrive in the Savannah and coastline heat. The missionaries dispatched to Georgia from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel did not stay very long at their posts. John Wesley, who arrived as a Methodist missionary, was considered a nuisance by Oglethorpe, and his efforts bore little early fruit.<sup>304</sup> Baptist work, however, did somewhat better. A Baptist named William Calvert came to Georgia with Oglethorpe, but ‘in 1750 there were only seven known Baptists in the colony.’<sup>305</sup> One congregation of Seventh Day Baptists, who worked on Sunday, existed from 1759 to 1763. Their habit of working on the traditional sabbath day lead to conflict, and they moved to the relative freedom of South Carolina.<sup>306</sup> Robert Gardner indicates that Baptists grew from three in 1740 to 137 in 1770, and growth was slowed by the effects of the revolutionary war.<sup>307</sup> The first Baptist church in Georgia with a sustained presence in the colony, was a Separate

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<sup>301</sup> Williams, *From Mounds to Megachurches*, p. 19.

<sup>302</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

<sup>303</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>304</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 27-29.

<sup>305</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>306</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>307</sup> Gardner, *et al*, *Georgia Baptists*, p. 12.

Baptist congregation founded in 1772. By 1790, Williams estimates ‘there were more than forty Baptist churches in the state’.<sup>308</sup>

### *Conclusion*

Roger Williams’ lively experiment in Rhode Island had parallel efforts in most of the British North American colonies. It seems, at a scan, that the Congregationalists in New England and the Anglicans in Virginia were more the exception than the rule on maintaining and enforcing an established church within their sphere of influence. In accessing the colonial toleration period, Rogers notes ‘toleration . . . implies that one sect has the lawful right to control the worship of another, but from motives of expediency or from charity, grant the privilege of worshipping God according to the dictates of their own conscience. Toleration grants the privilege, yet denies the right, and claims to say when or where it can be enjoyed’.<sup>309</sup> Contrasting toleration with liberty, Rogers points that ‘liberty is the right that everyone has, independent of sect or State to worship God, as his conscience prompts—right from God which no law can disregard without infringing upon the divine prerogatives of man’.<sup>310</sup> This pastor offers an early expression of religious liberty as a human right, embraced from outside the halls of government or the academy.

The mid-Atlantic and Southern colonies official religious toleration or freedom provisions were crafted by English proprietors who were interested in populating their chartered territories. Having relaxed regulations on who could settle there made economic sense. William Penn’s Pennsylvania Quaker government offered religious freedom out of conviction that the conscience should be free, and that influenced Delaware and the Jerseys.

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<sup>308</sup> Williams, *From Mounds to Megachurches*, pp. 30, 33.

<sup>309</sup> S. H. Rogers, *A Centennial Discourse Delivered before the Kettoctin Church, Loudoun, Va. to which is appended a catalogue of the members* (Washington, DC, 1857), Virginia Baptist Historical Society Archives, Richmond, Virginia, p. 8.

<sup>310</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

Quakers in the Carolinas kept the pressure on the Anglican establishment there to respect their freedom to worship. Maryland, Virginia's Chesapeake neighbor, was founded by a Catholic nobleman who astutely understood that he had to allow for religious freedom in order for the Catholic families who did settle in the colony to avoid harassment by the Anglicans who also migrated to Maryland. Virginia's influence was too strong, however, and this period in Maryland came to an abrupt halt at the turn of the eighteenth century when Virginia was at its height of influence in the Chesapeake.

Regular Baptists, with their center in Pennsylvania, spread through the colonies where they could peaceably live, eventually including Virginia. Perhaps the religious and political conflict that the English experienced at home in the seventeenth century motivated many of the lords proprietors, who wanted to encourage migration to the new world, to try something a little different. England's first stable colony, Virginia, however, sought to transplant much of English culture to the new world, including an established church. Eventually, Virginia also became a religiously plural protestant society during the eighteenth century. Virginia the influencer would be in turn influenced by religious non-conformists when she was forced by the 1689 Act of Toleration to join the lively experiment, but, at her insistence, to do so in a controlled, regulated fashion.

## Chapter Two

### Colonial Regulation of Religion in Virginia

The Virginia General Assembly, which regulated religious life in eighteenth-century Virginia, carved out a parish system much like England's system but modified to local conditions. The colony lacked an ecclesiastical superstructure to support the local parish, an inconvenience not shared with their English counterparts. Instead, the instructions issued to the colony's Lieutenant Governors included responsibilities for church governance among other matters. In addition, the Virginia General Assembly empowered Anglican parish vestries to manage their parishes, to conduct assigned civil responsibilities, and to set up local networks to support widows, orphans, and the destitute. The Office of Commissary, who reported to the Bishop of London, was added in the late seventeenth century to offer limited support for the parishes in North America. These were appointed to colonies that had a significant parish structure, such as Virginia and Maryland.<sup>1</sup> This resulted in improved conditions for the Established Church in Virginia through the mid-eighteenth century.

The Act of Toleration brought changes to the regulation of religion in colonial Virginia that both Anglican clergy, vestries, the commissary and the colonial legislature and governor had to accommodate. This change in policy from London created opportunities for the government to allow a limited presence of dissenters in the colony while tightly regulating their presence to protect the interests of the Established Church. How did their efforts impact the Established Church and the non-conformists in their midst?

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<sup>1</sup> Woolverton, *Colonial Anglicanism*, p. 84.

Baptists entered Virginia early in the eighteenth century,<sup>2</sup> and faced a government that was protective of the perquisites of the Established Church. The mid-to-late eighteenth century was a tumultuous period in Virginia life. The population of dissenters increased, even as relations grew strained between local gentry and their Anglican clergy.<sup>3</sup> Colonists chafed at their changing relationship with England after the French and Indian War.<sup>4</sup> Regular Baptists managed to assimilate fairly well into the colony's social structures within the place for white yeomen farmers, and they earned the trust of their Anglican neighbours by supporting the community's needs, sometimes by serving in leadership roles. As extant records indicate, Anglican government officials worked to accommodate the presence of dissenters in Virginia, once the Act of Toleration was ruled applicable to the colonies as in England. Like their English brethren, Virginia Anglicans had some difficulty adjusting to these changes.<sup>5</sup> The Regular Baptists, for their part, demonstrated that they were loyal subjects of the crown through civil obedience; and, when called upon, supporters of the effort to gain liberty from England.<sup>6</sup> Through their efforts, and the activity of other dissenter groups in Virginia, pluralism among Christians went from a condition to be avoided due to the apparent social friction it caused, to an accepted reality because both the Anglican majority and the dissenters found a way to give each other space for religious expression while working together to improve their communities.

The Regular Baptists' story has not been deeply or well told. The better known story of Virginia's path from religious toleration to religious liberty highlights the contribution of

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<sup>2</sup> F. Anderson, 'The genesis and the genius of Virginia Baptists: 300 years of Baptists in Virginia', *The Virginia Baptist Register* (2014), pp. 3710-3720, p. 3710.

<sup>3</sup> Isaac, *Transformation of Virginia*, pp. 161-168.

<sup>4</sup> Edelson, *Map of Empire*, pp. 306-308; A. Taylor, *American Revolutions: A Continental History, 1750-1804* (Charlottesville, VA, 2016), p. 77, 79-82.

<sup>5</sup> Gregory, 'Eighteenth-century reformation', pp. 67-85; Walsham, *Charitable Hatred*; McIlwaine, *Religious Toleration*.

<sup>6</sup> Weaver, 'David Thomas', pp. 3-19.

Separate Baptists, who chose to commit civil disobedience to the requirements of the toleration laws, that is, they chose to ‘obey God rather than people’.<sup>7</sup> This story is more generally told because Separate Baptists’ active resistance to toleration regulations generated county court records and historical narratives recounting their behaviour as dissenting Christians in Virginia.<sup>8</sup> An examination of the largely untold story of Regular Baptists’ contrasting strategy of civil obedience, under the encouragement of Regular Baptist church elders in Pennsylvania,<sup>9</sup> creates a more nuanced, and less adversarial, picture of the relationship of at least some dissenters and Anglicans in Colonial Virginia.

Virginians welcomed newcomers readily but expected them to assimilate eventually into the existing social structures and rhythm of life.<sup>10</sup> The Anglican Parish partnered with the county courthouse to provide structure for Virginians carving out lives in the wilderness. Burgesses formed new counties out of larger counties as the population in an area increased, mainly to insure that there was a nearby courthouse for every population center.<sup>11</sup> Towns were created for purposes of defense.<sup>12</sup> New parishes were created when it was determined that the parish church for the region was too distant for some inhabitants to maintain regular and legally mandated attendance.<sup>13</sup> Thus the Virginia General Assembly made sure that a county courthouse and a parish church were accessible to all of the colony’s inhabitants,

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<sup>7</sup> Acts of the Apostles 5:29, New English Translation, bible.com (Accessed: October 23, 2019). Further references to the Bible will be from the New English Translation (NET) unless otherwise specified.

<sup>8</sup> L. P. Little, *Imprisoned Preachers*.

<sup>9</sup> Edwards, *Materials* (1772), vol. III, p. 34.

<sup>10</sup> D. J. Boorstin, *The Americans: The Colonial Experience* (New York, 1958), pp. 134-135.

<sup>11</sup> Virginia General Assembly, November 1753, 27<sup>th</sup> George II, Chap. XIV, ‘An Act for adding part of the county and parish of Augusta to the county and parish of Frederick, and for dividing the county and parish of Frederick, and the part of Augusta to be added thereto, into two counties and parishes’, in Hening, *Statutes*, vol. 6, p. 377. Thus, Hampshire County was formed.

<sup>12</sup> Virginia General Assembly, March 1761, 1<sup>st</sup> George III, Chap XII, ‘An Act for establishing the town of Woodstock, in the county of Frederick, March 1761’, in Hening, *Statutes*, vol. 7, p. 406.

<sup>13</sup> Virginia General Assembly, April 1757, 39<sup>th</sup> George II, Chap. XVIII, ‘An Act for dividing the Parish of Saint Anne, in the County of Albemarle’, in Hening, *Statutes*, vol. 7, p. 141. Tillotson Parish was formed out of St Anne.

providing infrastructure for both law, trade, and religion. After the passage of the 1689 Act of Toleration in England, religious toleration became an unwanted but mandated add-on to the governing infrastructure of the colony. Allowing another kind of church to locate in a parish was as sensible, in their terms, as having a special court in a county for people living there who did not want to transact business in the ‘established’ court provided by the colony. There was one county court; there should be need for only one church as well. However, the King’s new law prevailed; and the add-on was adopted but with great reluctance.

### *Colonial Virginia in the Eighteenth Century*

By 1750, Virginia was a well-established agrarian colonial society with scattered villages. It was a destination for enterprising risk-takers. With plentiful and deep rivers, and a deep-water bay that facilitated shipping across the Atlantic, it was second to none among the colonies. It was a coveted seat for colonial governors.<sup>14</sup>

Virginia’s population expanded from around 58,000 inhabitants in 1700 to around 230,000 by midcentury.<sup>15</sup> This increase was encouraged by the General Assembly, which passed an act in 1705 for naturalization of white settlers. The Preamble stated the rationale; that ‘all possible encouragement should be given to persons of different nations to transport themselves hither’.<sup>16</sup> Immigrants were expected to sign an oath of loyalty to Queen Anne, which affirmed they held no loyalty to any Jacobite pretenders, and required a fee of 50 shillings.<sup>17</sup> Queen Anne was the last of the Protestant Stuarts and did not produce an heir. Her half-brother James and his son Charles were solid Catholics who posed an active though not

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<sup>14</sup> Boorstin, *The Americans*, pp. 97-143; Salmon and Campbell (eds.), *Hornbook*, pp. 24-33; Webb, *Marlborough’s America*, xxi.

<sup>15</sup> Salmon and Campbell (eds.), *Hornbook*, p. 24.

<sup>16</sup> Virginia General Assembly, October 1705, 4<sup>th</sup> Anne, Chap. XLV, ‘An Act for Naturalization’, in Hening, *Statutes*, vol. 3, p. 434

<sup>17</sup> Virginia General Assembly, October 1705, 4<sup>th</sup> Anne, Chap. XLV, ‘An Act for Naturalization’, Para. IV, in Hening, *Statutes*, vol. 3, p. 435.

effectual threat to Protestant Briton, and it was important that no colony give aid or shelter to supporters of the Pretenders. The Jacobite threat, with French support, lingered over Great Britain until 1745, and Linda Colley assesses, was in large part the reason that Great Britain did not give much administrative attention to the North American colonies until after the Seven Years War.<sup>18</sup> The British equated Catholicism with oppression; Protestantism with freedom, and when Great Britain was at war with France, English Catholics suffered through the paranoia of their neighbors.<sup>19</sup>

British settlers, encouraged by generous terms, pressed up past the first set of water falls on the James River, despite efforts to limit their settlement of land beyond borders set by treaty with tributary Indians.<sup>20</sup> The growing colony prospered, its wealth generated by the cultivation of tobacco by indentured servants, and Indian and African slaves.<sup>21</sup>

Indentured white servants, who entered the colony with a contract in hand or who were otherwise sold on the wharf upon arrival, had living conditions only a little better than slaves. The same 1705 session specified those who were slaves and who were servants:

That all servants imported or brought into this country, by sea or land, who were not Christians in their native country, . . . shall be account and be slaves, and as such be here brought and sold notwithstanding a conversion to Christianity afterwards. . . . That a slave's being in England shall not be sufficient to discharge him of his slavery, without other proof of his being manumitted there.<sup>22</sup>

The General Assembly also required property owners who had purchased white indentured labor to provide freedom dues upon conclusion of their indenture period. A male servant received 'ten bushels of indian [sic] corn, thirty shillings in money or the value thereof in

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<sup>18</sup> L. Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation* (New Haven, CT, 2005), pp. 12, 25, 135.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 23, 35.

<sup>20</sup> K. M. Shefveland, *Anglo-Native Virginia: Trade, Conversion, and Indian Slavery in the Old Dominion, 1646-1722* (Athens, GA, 2016), pp. 61-62.

<sup>21</sup> See for example, Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves*; Breen, *Tobacco Culture*; Ragsdale, 'Washington', pp. 32-162; Stoner, 'Tobacco', in *Britain and the Americas*, vol. 3, pp. 967-969.

<sup>22</sup> Virginia General Assembly, October 1705, 4<sup>th</sup> Anne, Chap. XLIX, 'An Act concerning Servants and Slaves', para. IV, in Hening, *Statutes*, vol. 3, pp. 447-448.

goods, and one well fixed musket or fuzee, of the value of twenty shillings, at least'.<sup>23</sup> He was released with '50 shillings and a year's worth of corn'<sup>24</sup> to start his new free life. A female servant received '15 bushels of indian corn and forty shillings in money or the value thereof in goods'.<sup>25</sup> Masters who withheld this payment could be sued in court for it.<sup>26</sup> These laws exhibited English Virginians' bias against exotic foreigners, and their continued insistence that no one could claim freedom based on a conversion to Christian faith. Apparently the example of Onesimus in the Apostle Paul's letter to Philemon was insufficient as an example of what owners should do about runaway slaves.<sup>27</sup>

England's craving for tobacco created a market that Virginia desperately needed. Virginians used the leaves of the plant to pay taxes and to purchase imported goods. The General Assembly established pay rates of officers and soldiers in pounds of tobacco per day.<sup>28</sup> Most Virginians were involved in the cultivating, marketing or shipping of tobacco. Tobacco was the foundation of Virginia's economy and essential to the colony's viability.<sup>29</sup>

Cultivation of tobacco was labor-intensive. Planters began to rely exclusively on slave labor to support their tobacco-raising enterprise as early as 1705.<sup>30</sup> By the middle of the eighteenth century there was a well-established cycle of tobacco cultivation, drying, and

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<sup>23</sup> Hening, *Statutes*, vol. 3, p. 451.

<sup>24</sup> Hening, *Statutes*, vol. 3, p. 451.

<sup>25</sup> Hening, *Statutes*, vol. 3, p. 451.

<sup>26</sup> Hening, *Statutes*, vol. 3, p. 451; A. T. Bly and T. Haygood, *Escaping Servitude: A Documentary History of Runaway Servants in Eighteenth-Century Virginia* (Lanham, MD, 2014), p. 17.

<sup>27</sup> Saint Paul's Letter to Philemon, verses 15-16; R. Keen, 'Bible and Slavery', in R. Williams, J. R. McKivigan, P. P. Hinks (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Antislavery and Abolition* (Westport, CT, 2007), pp. 92-96.

<sup>28</sup> Virginia General Assembly, October 1748, 22d George II, Chap. XXXIX 'An Act for making provisions against Invasions and Insurrections', para. VIII, in Hening, *Statutes*, vol. 6, p. 116.

<sup>29</sup> Breen, *Tobacco Culture*, pp. 40-83.

<sup>30</sup> Salmon and Campbell (eds.), *Hornbook*, pp. 17-18; Stoner, 'Tobacco.'

storing in huge barrels for shipping. In London, middlemen took delivery and sold the wholesale tobacco, took their percentage, and shipped finished goods back to the planters.<sup>31</sup>

Virginia's prosperity, however, was challenged mid-century by the Seven Years War, which began in North America as the French and Indian War (1755-1762). Virginia needed immigrants in the western wilderness, but settlement became increasingly difficult because France, with its new world tribal alliances, sought to halt English expansion into the North American interior.<sup>32</sup> The Virginia General Assembly passed legislation in response to this threat in February 1752; seeking to encourage 'his majesty's natural born subjects' and 'foreign Protestants' to settle in far western Augusta County, because 'the settling of that part of the country will add to the strength and security of the colony in general'.<sup>33</sup> The inhabitants were exempted from all taxes, tithes, and levies for ten years. This migration initiative had the indirect consequence of creating an environment of religious pluralism in a colony unfamiliar with it, and as James Bell puts, 'created a new situation for the Church'.<sup>34</sup>

The religious pluralism in Augusta, Frederick, and Hampshire counties created few problems due to their remoteness from more populated areas of the colony. As migration increased, the colony's local county judges and parish wardens found themselves adjudicating the church attendance of non-Anglicans. Though colonial policy welcomed all nations, it was assumed that those nations would assimilate into the county and church system provided by the colony. Anglicans were penalized for non-church attendance; therefore, dissenters who did not have a designated chapel provided by the colony, were expected to attend the parish church. Though the details of governmental response to

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<sup>31</sup> Ragsdale, 'Washington', pp. 132-162.

<sup>32</sup> C. M. Dobbs, 'French and Indian Wars,' in W. Kaufman and H. S. Macpherson (eds.), *Britain and the Americas: Culture, Politics, and History*, vol. 2 (Santa Barbara, CA, 2005), pp. 404-406.

<sup>33</sup> Virginia General Assembly, February 1752, 25<sup>th</sup> George II, Chap. XXI, 'An Act for encouraging persons to settle on the waters of the Mississippi', in Hening, *Statutes*, vol. 6, p. 258.

<sup>34</sup> J. Bell, *Empire*, p. 133.

dissenters varied among the counties and parishes, in general, where Regular Baptists were present, they lived peacefully, obeyed the toleration regulations, and supported their communities. Thereby, Anglican attitudes gradually progressed from a position of distrust and concern to a place of acceptance of the presence of dissenters. These local adjustments created the environment where the House of Burgesses could, however slowly and reluctantly, move Virginia's law and culture from religious toleration to religious freedom.

### *The Anglican Church's Relationship to the Colonial Government*

Along with the colony, the Anglican Church prospered in the early and mid-eighteenth century. As settlers populated an area, a new parish would be created by the General Assembly; when the settlement grew in number, the Assembly would sub-divide the parishes.<sup>35</sup> By 1750, there were seventy-nine parishes and forty-five counties in Virginia.<sup>36</sup> The establishment of the College of William and Mary to train ministerial candidates made it easier to supply ministers for the Anglican parish churches, even as additional candidates for parishes arrived on Virginia's shores.<sup>37</sup> The Anglican Church in Virginia ministered to its parishes through an unusual operating structure. There was no bishop in residence, or other parts of the 'traditional English . . . apparatus of . . . deaneries, archdeaconries, dioceses, archdiocese, and cathedrals. Such an ecclesiastical structure was unfamiliar and probably unwanted by non-Anglican observers'.<sup>38</sup> The parishes, therefore, looked to governing authorities outside the church to facilitate the provision of ministers. The appointment of ministers to parishes was a months-long venture. Young men seeking ordination voyaged to London, carrying letters of recommendation from the Governor and the Commissary to the

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<sup>35</sup> Nelson, *Blessed Company*, pp. 20-25.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

<sup>37</sup> Gundersen, *Anglican Ministry*, pp. 64-67; Nelson, *Blessed Company*, pp. 87-106. By 1776, two thirds of Virginia Anglican clergy were born in Virginia.

<sup>38</sup> J. Bell, *Empire*, p. 144.

Bishop of London. There they waited for an appointment for ordination. Once ordained, the new minister sailed home, and the parish hoped he had not meanwhile heard of an offer from a better, more prosperous parish elsewhere.<sup>39</sup> The Established Church ministers had little sympathy for dissenters who had to travel from distant regions in Virginia to Williamsburg for licenses from the General Court. Dissenter licenses did not require a six-month trans-Atlantic endurance test.

The highest governing authority in the colony was the crown-appointed Governor. Most were governors *in absentia*, whose deputies (Lieutenant Governors) collected the crown's quit rents and acted on their behalf.<sup>40</sup> Notable deputies include Alexander Spotswood, who was a career military man, William Gooch, Robert Dinwiddie, and Francis Fauquier.<sup>41</sup> Spotswood led a group of explorers into the western mountains of Virginia, dubbing those who participated 'Knights of the Golden Horseshoe'.<sup>42</sup> Gooch opened up the settlement of dissenters in Virginia in the west. Robert Dinwiddie encouraged land speculation and was governor at the beginning of the French and Indian War. Francis Fauquier became Lieutenant Governor in 1758, during the French and Indian War and successfully guided the colony through the conclusion of the conflict.<sup>43</sup> The governors and parishes did not always have an amicable relationship. Spotswood, for example, clashed with the St. Anne's parish vestry over who had the right to grant incumbency to a minister.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Gundersen, 'Good Men', pp. 455-456; Nelson, *Blessed Company*, pp. 125ff.

<sup>40</sup> Salmon and Campbell (eds.), *Hornbook*, p. 105.

<sup>41</sup> Webb, *Marlborough's America*, pp. 330-370.

<sup>42</sup> C. E. Kemper, 'The Settlement of the Valley', *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* (April 1922), pp. 169-182, p. 171.

<sup>43</sup> P. S. Flippin, *The Royal Government in Virginia, 1624-1775*, Studies in History, Economics, and Public Law (New York, 1919), pp. 124-127, 127-133, 133-136; Fischer and Kelly, *Bound Away*, pp. 100-103.

<sup>44</sup> Alexander Spotswood, Lieutenant Governor of Virginia, to the Lord Commissioners of Trade, August 14, 1718, in Brock (comp.), *Official Letters of Alexander Spotswood*, pp. 286-298, p. 292-294.

Most members of the Virginia General Assembly were also on a parish vestry at home, so the General Assembly functioned somewhat like a colony-wide vestry. The Burgesses were elected by the landowners to represent their county in the General Assembly.<sup>45</sup> The election process was similar to English county elections for Parliament during this period. When a parish or a county needed to be established or divided, the assembled Burgesses determined the new boundaries. They also granted permission to the vestries to purchase land on which to build churches and to develop the minister's glebe.<sup>46</sup> The glebe was the parcel of land on which the parish minister's home was located and included enough land to serve as the minister's plantation.<sup>47</sup>

These arrangements were not without controversy. Sometimes residents in an area would not be happy with their elected vestry and would petition the General Assembly to dissolve a vestry and authorize new elections. The residents of Nottoway parish (Amelia County) petitioned the General Assembly to declare a vestry election illegal. The General Assembly responded by passing an Act in February 1752, which dissolved the Nottoway parish vestry and instructed the residents to hold an election.<sup>48</sup> This did not occur frequently. Nelson indicates that the vestry system was normally quite stable.<sup>49</sup>

The parish vestry was the most local unit of government. Colonial leadership made only four demands of the vestry: to care for the poor, widowed and orphaned, to manage the parish, to provide regular Sunday worship according to the Book of Common Prayer, and to report lapses in morals to the county court. As in England, vestries were responsible for the

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<sup>45</sup> Boorstin, *The Americans*, pp. 114-116.

<sup>46</sup> Nelson, *Blessed Company*, pp. 12-13.

<sup>47</sup> Salmon and Campbell (eds.), *Hornbook*, p. 209; Brydon, *Virginia's Mother Church*, vol. I, pp. 414-418.

<sup>48</sup> Virginia General Assembly, February 1752, 25<sup>th</sup> George II, Chap. XXVIII, 'An Act for dissolving the Vestry of the parish of Nottoway, in the county of Amelia, and electing a new Vestry in the said parish', in Hening, *Statutes*, vol. 6, p. 272-273.

<sup>49</sup> Nelson, *Blessed Company*, pp. 36-37.

building, care and upkeep of church buildings and furnishings. They were also charged with providing the salary of the minister (as set by the government).<sup>50</sup>

When the Virginia General Assembly created a parish, a new vestry was locally elected and charged with building the parish church. The vestry supervised the building and furnishing of the parish church and any chapels built in distant sections of the parish. Parishes could be several hundred squares miles in extent and attending the main church could be difficult, even in the best seasons.<sup>51</sup> ‘Chapels of Ease’ were built to make it easier for more distant residents to comply with mandatory church attendance. The newly elected vestries were authorized by the General Assembly to tax residents to pay for the construction of all of these new buildings.<sup>52</sup>

Unlike in England, Virginia had no ecclesiastical courts to deal with moral infractions. Commissary James Blair’s attempt to establish one for the purpose of policing the moral lapses of clergy met with stiff resistance.<sup>53</sup> Hugh Jones, an early historian, remarked, ‘In Virginia there is no Ecclesiastical Court, so that Vice, Prophaneness, and Immorality are not suppressed so much as might be: The People hate the very Name of the Bishop's Court’.<sup>54</sup> The Church Warden was responsible to report serious moral lapses to the local county court.

Bell comments that the ‘absence of any oversight from ecclesiastical officials in London for more than 70 years provided an opportunity for laymen to step forward and assert

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<sup>50</sup> Nelson, *Blessed Company*, pp. 33-42; Longmore, ‘From supplicants to constituents’, p. 409; Jacob, *Lay People*, pp. 192-193.

<sup>51</sup> Bond and Gundersen (eds.), ‘Episcopal Church in Virginia’, p. 185.

<sup>52</sup> Virginia General Assembly, November 1753, 27<sup>th</sup> George II, Chap. XVIII, ‘An Act for dividing the parish of St. Andrew, in the county of Brunswick’, in Hening, *Statutes*, vol. 6, pp. 386-387. St. Andrews parish in Brunswick County was divided in 1753, and residents of the new Meherrin parish were charged with electing their vestry, and the vestry was authorized to lay a levy on their tithables.

<sup>53</sup> Rouse, *James Blair*, p. 39; P. Bonomi, *Under the Cope of Heaven: Religion, Society, and Politics in Colonial America*, updated ed. (New York, 2003), p. 43; B. Spangenberg, ‘Vestrymen in the General Assembly; protection of local vestry autonomy during James Blair’s term as Commissary (1690-1743)’, *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church*, 32 (June 1963), pp. 79-80.

<sup>54</sup> H. Jones, *The Present State of Virginia* (London, 1724), p. 97.

leadership over local church affairs'.<sup>55</sup> This was an important adaptation, as it gave local leaders ownership of local decisions. The most important responsibility for the parish vestry was taking care of the poor. Families were paid to take in orphans or to care for the sick. A significant portion of every parish levy was budgeted for the relief of the poor.<sup>56</sup> For example, the levy of 1756 in St. Paul's Parish in Hanover County raised 67,680 pounds of tobacco at 32 pounds per resident. 13,160 pounds of this was for support of the poor.<sup>57</sup>

A levy was collected from the heads of households based on the number of income-producing members, men and teenaged boys and male and female slaves, to fund parish responsibilities. The tithe in Virginia was a head-tax, unlike in England where it was a property tax.<sup>58</sup> The parish vestry set a budget that covered the parish's expenses and then divided it by the number of tithables residing in the parish. The sum of that division was the parish levy and could be the highest tax paid; usually double that of the county levy.<sup>59</sup> This process was never without friction, as dissenters were not keen on paying the salary of an Established church minister. Potential migrants from freer colonies hesitated to settle in Virginia because of the parish levy.<sup>60</sup> Tobacco was the currency, so each household was responsible to deliver their vestry-mandated allotment of tobacco to the church warden, who sold it on behalf of the parish.<sup>61</sup>

Dissenters paid these compulsory levies to their Established Church parish. There was generally no exemption for residents of a parish who were dissenting Christians, unless the General Assembly made an exception, which they did occasionally. When Queen Anne

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<sup>55</sup> J. Bell, *Empire*, p. 7.

<sup>56</sup> Nelson, *Blessed Company*, p. 14.

<sup>57</sup> Seiler, 'Anglican parish vestry', pp. 310-337, p. 327.

<sup>58</sup> Gregory and Stevenson (eds.), *Routledge Companion*, pp. 398.

<sup>59</sup> Nelson, *Blessed Company*, pp. 43-47.

<sup>60</sup> Brydon, *Virginias Mother Church*, vol. II, pp. 246.

<sup>61</sup> Nelson, *Blessed Company*, pp. 43-47.

settled French Huguenot Protestant refugees in the colonies in 1700, the ones who settled in Virginia were granted a seven-year exemption from taxes and were allowed to support their minister in their own way, likely due to the language barrier.<sup>62</sup> The refugees petitioned Lieutenant Governor Nicholson to release funds for the building of a simple church ‘without ornaments’,<sup>63</sup> and a house for the minister. Such exceptions were an early indicator that Virginia was willing to be somewhat flexible with non-Anglicans who arrived on their shores and who complied with local law.

Because of the unique situation of Virginia, vestries took on much stronger management of parish affairs than in England. Governor Spotswood negatively characterized this arrangement as governance by ‘twelve bishops’.<sup>64</sup> With no patronage system in Virginia, clergy were also very much at the mercy of their vestry.<sup>65</sup> The Established Church in Virginia was the junior partner in the church-state arrangement.

#### *Virginia Government Responses to Non-Anglican Protestants in Virginia*

Virginia’s colonial government structures, including county courts (judges and sheriffs) and parish vestries (vestry, clerk, minister), responded in various ways to the presence of Non-Anglican protestants in their midst which was engendered by the Act of Toleration. To some extent, the authorities’ responses to the swiftness of dissenting growth were shaped by the population and level of development in a particular county or parish, but they were also a reaction to how dissenters behaved. Where most dissenters obeyed the laws,

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<sup>62</sup> R. A. Brock (ed.), *Documents, Chiefly Unpublished, Relating to the Huguenot Emigration to Virginia and to the Settlement of Manakin-Town, with an Appendix of Genealogies, Presenting Data of the Fontaine, Maury, Dupuy, Trabue, Marye, Chastain, Cocke, and Other Families*, Collections of the Virginia Historical Society *New Series*, vol. V (Richmond, 1886), p. ix.

<sup>63</sup> Huguenot Petition ‘To His Excellency, Francis Nicholson, Esquire, His Maj’ty’s Lieutenant and Governor-General of Virginia’, in Brock, *Huguenot Emigration*, pp. 54-59, p. 57.

<sup>64</sup> F. V. Mills, Sr., *Bishops by Ballot: An Eighteenth-Century Ecclesiastical Revolution* (New York, 1978), p. 93; Brydon, *Virginia’s Mother Church*, vol. II, p. 321.

<sup>65</sup> Brydon, *Virginia’s Mother Church*, vol. I, p. 101.

things developed quite differently from places where dissent took a more resistance turn. The following sections describe the role of colony-level management of the practice of Christianity in Virginia.

### The Bishop of London's Virginia Commissary

The Bishop's Commissary served as the Bishop of London's emissary to the colony (*in loco episcopus*), although he had little real authority. He could not ordain ministers but referred them for ordination to the Bishop of London instead. He provided minimal oversight to parish ministers. He also served as a liaison between the parish ministers and the Governors' Executive Council. James Blair, the longest-tenured Virginia Commissary (1689-1743) met with stiff resistance from both the Governor and the vestries when he tried to set up ecclesiastical courts in order to discipline errant clergy and those that offended the moral law. This innovation was patterned after the English ecclesiastical courts which, according to Brydon, 'had proven such a bitter curse to the religious life of England during earlier reigns'.<sup>66</sup> Brydon reflected, 'the people of Virginia, . . . remembering the dreadful trials and punishments of dissenters in the star-chamber and other ecclesiastical courts of the earlier Stuarts, were fully determined that no vestige of ecclesiastical court should be set up in Virginia'.<sup>67</sup> They did not want such structures in the new world. The House of Burgesses put a stop to it. Brydon surmised, 'Commissary Blair had received a rebuke that affected his whole later life and work'.<sup>68</sup> The county court system, as it had been organized, was functioning well enough fining those who cursed or blasphemed or failed to attend church services. They saw no need for a duplicate system. Thus, the Established Church found

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<sup>66</sup> Brydon, *Virginia's Mother Church*, vol. 1, p. 285.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 287.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

another boundary across which it could not tread in addition to the regulations regarding ministry to the enslaved. There would never be an ecclesiastical court established in Virginia.

Upon the death in 1743 of James Blair, the office of Commissary passed to a series of men who held this role successively from 1743 to 1776.<sup>69</sup> The Commissary's role was the eyes and ears for the Bishop of London and spokesman for the Established Church in the colony. Leading under difficult circumstances with strong vestries, and often-complaining Anglican ministers, each Commissary struggled to represent effectively the interests of the Established Church in the Governor's Executive Council.

William Dawson was commissioned as Commissary, confirmed by a letter dated July 18, 1743 from Edmund Gibson, the Bishop of London.<sup>70</sup> Shortly thereafter, he received a letter from Benjamin Waller, a prominent Williamsburg lawyer and Burgess for James City from whom he had solicited an opinion on the application of the Act of Toleration.<sup>71</sup> In the letter, dated January 30, 1745, Waller agreed that 'calm, gentle persuasion and good examples' should be able to convince the thinking dissenter to conform to the church. He offered a summary of how laws related to dissenters in England were applied in England and described the law as currently in force in England. The letter writer then speculated on whether the Act applies to new sects.<sup>72</sup> Waller wrote,

Now on this act of Toleration is a nice question whether the words all persons dissenting extend to a new sect after passing the act, tho' I am inclinable to think it does, notwithstanding it is as adjudged that Statute relating to Trades in general terms is not . . . But [in the] conditions of the Statute . . . you will find that the proviso of such is not complied with and therefore they are still liable . . . for not coming to church.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Rouse, *James Blair*, p. 254.

<sup>70</sup> E. Gibson, Bishop of London, 'Commission Appointing William Dawson as Commissary for the Colony of Virginia', London, July 18, 1743, *Dawson Papers*, microfilm, image 10.

<sup>71</sup> Hockman, 'Hellish and Malicious Incendiaries', p. 150.

<sup>72</sup> Benjamin Waller, Letter to William Dawson, Williamsburg, January 30, 1747, *Dawson Papers*, microfilm, image 19.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

The Evangelical Awakening produced new divisions (Waller's 'new sects') among Protestant non-conformists in the colonies. Particular Baptists became 'Regular' Baptists who embraced the Awakening but insisted on 'regular' order in their worship gatherings. Congregationalists, who embraced the Awakening enthusiastically and separated from their churches over their rejection of the Awakening, later adopted believer's baptism, and thus became 'Separate' Baptists.<sup>74</sup>

William Dawson may not have immediately applied Waller's guidance to Separate and Regular Baptists. Of more immediate concern to him was the matter of George Whitefield, who, while claiming to conform to the Established church, preached in open fields and embraced non-Anglican protestant supporters. The Bishop of London responded by sending pamphlets to his commissaries which had been used to good effect in England to critique Whitefield's practices.<sup>75</sup> William Dawson also tried to guide his resident clergy in dealing with itinerant preachers. The Rev. Patrick Henry, wrote to inform him that he was working with Rev. Stith at William and Mary to draw up a petition to the House of Burgesses asking them to better regulate itinerants who were moving about the colony.<sup>76</sup>

Thomas Dawson succeeded his brother as Commissary in 1752. His tenure was marked by the controversy surrounding the 'Two Penny Act' which sought to move clerical salaries off the tobacco standard and onto the seemingly volatile colony currency. The ministers successfully lobbied to get the Crown to veto the act and, in the process, soured relations with many members of the Virginia General Assembly. Richard Bland, who represented Prince George County, inveighed against a letter written to the Board of Trade by the Bishop of London on behalf of his clergy in Virginia. He termed the characterization in

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<sup>74</sup> Gewehr, *Great Awakening*, pp. 106-109.

<sup>75</sup> E. Gibson, Letter to William Dawson, Whitehall, March 6, 1743/4, E. Gibson, Fulham, September 6, 1744, *Dawson Papers*, microfilm, image 27.

<sup>76</sup> P. Henry, Rector of Henrico Parish, Letter to William Dawson, Hanover County, December 3, 1747, *Dawson Papers*, microfilm, image 68.

the letter of the General Assembly's efforts an 'invidious and insolent charge, without foundation, and contrary to facts'.<sup>77</sup> The 1750s were also a time when non-conformists were moving into Virginia. Rev. James Maury in 1755 was particularly vexed by the presence of non-conformists in his area. 'What breaches of charity, what ruin and decay in the families of well-meaning but deluded people, what confusion and disorder, and disaffection in the people to regular pastors, of unblemished morals and unquestionable abilities, together with many other unhappy effects have usually attended the ministry of itinerants and enthusiasts in this colony, wherever they have either boldly intruded or been legally licensed'.<sup>78</sup> He concludes the letter with a request for some sort of solution to these intruders whom he believed were harmful to the spiritual well-being of those in his parish.<sup>79</sup>

Dissenters were not just a spiritual problem; the planters feared they were also challenging the use of slaves in producing tobacco. Edwin Conway, a planter, sent Thomas Dawson a letter with the insinuation that one non-conformist preacher, Presbyterian Samuel Davies, was distributing a leaflet among slaves that pointed out that 'they are stronger than the whites, being equal in number then and having an annual addition of thousands'.<sup>80</sup> Conway hoped that Dawson would take this information straight to the Governor's Executive Council so that it would be brought to the attention of the next General Assembly.

The Commissaries received intelligence on dissenting activity and feedback from the Bishop of London on how to interpret the Act of Toleration. One of the most egregious behaviors of dissenters was itinerancy, which meant the establishing of meeting houses (legally or not) in different parishes from those in which the itinerants actually lived. When

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<sup>77</sup> Bland, *Letter to the Clergy in Virginia*, p. 4; see also Walsh, 'Black Cotted Raskolls', pp. 21-36.

<sup>78</sup> J. Maury, Fredericksville Parish, Letter to Thomas Dawson, Fredericksburg, October 6, 1755, *Dawson Papers*, microfilm, image 173.

<sup>79</sup> J. Maury to Thomas Dawson, October 6, 1755, *Dawson Papers*, image 174.

<sup>80</sup> E. Conway, Letter to Thomas Dawson, [1757], *Dawson Papers*, microfilm, image 198.

the situation was brought to the attention of the Bishop of London, he responded to Thomas Dawson, ‘The Act of Toleration was intended to permit the dissenters to worship in their own way, and to exempt them from penalties but it was never intended to permit them to set up itinerant preachers to gather congregations where there was none before. They are by the Act of William and Mary to qualify in the County where they live, and how [they] can be said to live in five different countrys [sic], they who granted the license must explain’.<sup>81</sup>

Commissaries tried to encourage the established ministers in the colony, over whom they had only the authority of influence. Thomas Dawson called a gathering of the clergy in October 1754 in which he assured them that they had his full support and he admonished them to stick to the Church of England rubric for praying. ‘We are not at liberty to use or to refuse what prayers we please, in the publick service, but must be governed by the rubricks of our liturgy. We must strictly observe those standing rules, which both the authority of our superiors and our own subscriptions and declarations oblige us’.<sup>82</sup> The clergy and their parishioners were no doubt observing the impromptu prayers of dissenting ministers. Perhaps the ministers hoped to keep their flock intact by adopting this innovation themselves.<sup>83</sup> Dawson opposed the use of such innovation in parish pulpits.

The Commissaries who succeeded the Dawson brothers found themselves dealing with the fallout from the Parsons’ Cause. Governor Fauquier did not appreciate the Bishop of London’s appointment of Robinson as Commissary in 1761. The Bishop apparently neglected to provide Rev. Robinson an official commission, so Fauquier refused to release the salary

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<sup>81</sup> Bishop of London, letter to Commissary Thomas Dawson, *Dawson Papers*, image 239. In the early seventeenth century, Anglican ministers were required to take on plural livings because there were so few qualified ministers in the colony. Thanks to Commissary James Blair’s leadership, the paucity of clergy for the Virginia parishes requiring plural livings had been resolved by the mid-eighteenth century. Gundersen, ‘Good Men’, pp. 453-464.

<sup>82</sup> Thomas Dawson, Address to the Assembled Clergy, Williamsburg, Virginia, October 31, 1754, *Dawson Papers*, image 296,

<sup>83</sup> Bond and Gundersen, ‘Episcopal Church in Virginia,’ p. 191.

for the role. Robinson chafed at his position and at the growth of dissenters in Virginia. He comments to the Bishop of London, ‘This colony was originally an asylum for the Church . . . , as some of the others were for the sectaries. . . . We have some who are great Latitudinarians in point of government, respecting either Church or State, who seem willing to acknowledge no jurisdiction but that of the Governor, the Assembly, and the King’.<sup>84</sup> Thus, without a nearby officer of the church who was equivalent to the Lieutenant Governor, the Established Church in Virginia was under the operational control of the Lieutenant Governor, rather than a Bishop. Horrocks succeeded Robinson, but left the colony to improve his health, leaving Rev. William Willie as an interim Commissary until his return. Horrocks never returned and Willie only tentatively filled a role he was not comfortable filling.<sup>85</sup>

#### The Virginia General Assembly and the Assembly’s Committee for Religion

The Virginia General Assembly on matters related to the church acted as the only infrastructure support for the Established Church in the colony. Most of the Burgesses were on the vestries of their home parish. The Assembly took decisions that would impact all the parishes (such as granting authority to levy a parish tithe; the amount and kind of support established church ministers could expect). Parish vestries had to petition the assembly for permission to build chapels to be closer to residents of the parish as settlers moved away from more settled areas and/or to split parishes (though this meant that a new minister would need to be secured). Occasionally, the residents of a parish were not pleased with the management of the vestry overseeing the temporal affairs of the parish. They would petition for a dissolution of the offending vestry and request a new election for the vestry. In 1769, as dissenting ministers began to press, through the petitioning process, for greater latitude to

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<sup>84</sup> William Robinson, Commissary, Letter to the Bishop of London, King and Queen County, Virginia, August 12, 1765, in W. S. Perry (ed.), *American Colonial Church*, vol. 1 *Virginia*, pp. 470, 504-506, p. 506.

<sup>85</sup> Brydon, *Virginia’s Mother Church*, vol. I, pp. 350-352.

operate within the confines of religious toleration, the Assembly created a Committee for Religion, delegating to members of this body the oversight of parish issues, and to bring recommendations to the assembly on all religion-related petitions. Through this committee, much of the negotiating happened between Burgesses who staunchly protected the Established Church and those who sought reasonable accommodation for dissenters. This committee handled routine matters such as parish divisions or ordering vestry elections. It also became the dead letter box for petitions filed by dissenters for increased toleration of their religious practices.<sup>86</sup>

#### The Governor's Executive Council

The Governor's Executive Council approved or returned for further consideration legislation that was passed by the General Assembly. On matters of religion, they routinely approved for the Governor's consideration parish divisions, chapels and church buildings, and minister's glebe details. However little if anything was recorded in their journal related to dissenters. In 1747, William Gooch invited Presbyterian Scots-Irish migrants into the western fringes of the colony for defensive purposes. His Executive Council took the occasion of reporting on a fire in Williamsburg that had spared important tax documents to communicate the councilor's concern regarding dissent. They compared the damage of itinerant preachers to the vandals who had burned an important government building, decrying their mutual subversion of church and state.<sup>87</sup> The address indicated that free-ranging preachers were an acute concern of the council. Longmore indicates, 'During the 1750s and 1760s, Virginia leaders increasingly feared the rapid growth of Presbyterian and Baptist congregations would weaken social cohesion and undermine the constituted ecclesiastical, social and political

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<sup>86</sup> Longmore, 'All Matters', pp. 775-797.

<sup>87</sup> 'An Address from the Executive Council to the Honorable Governor, William Gooch, March 31, 1747', in McIlwaine (ed.), *Legislative Journals*, vol. II, pp. 402-404.

authority'.<sup>88</sup> Like their European counterparts a century or so earlier, the Burgesses saw unity in Protestant Christianity, as managed by the government, as key to social stability.<sup>89</sup> Just as Britons saw their unity as Protestants as a strength against the Jacobites,<sup>90</sup> so Virginia's leadership saw religious unity as a redoubt against the expansion efforts of French Catholic colonizers in the northwest territory behind the British Atlantic coast colonies, on land claimed by both Virginia and Pennsylvania. Virginians used the French threat to their faith as a rallying cry to recruit militia for the Seven Years War effort. Governor Dinwiddie, in responding to Commissary Dawson's efforts to rally the clergy behind the nascent war effort, urged the clergy to 'inculcate into the people the great danger we are exposed to both as to our lives, liberties, estates, and what should be most dear to us, our [Protestant] religion'.<sup>91</sup>

These ecclesiastical and government administrators were concerned about the impact of dissenters in their midst. Dissenting preachers attracted many of their uninformed and unprotected parish denizens away from the government-sanctioned church, which was provided for them to worship God in an authorized, ecclesiastically orthodox environment. The Commissaries, wrestling with restive parish vestries and complaining parsons, had little patience with dissenters in the parishes and lobbied for legal barriers to little effect. After all, land-owning white male dissenters were enfranchised with the vote. Commissaries advocated for barriers in reaction to the growth of non-conforming meeting houses in their midst.<sup>92</sup>

How was this dynamic experienced by Regular Baptists? They entered a colony where religious toleration was a relatively new legal framework. The Virginia General

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<sup>88</sup> Longmore, 'All Matters', p. 778.

<sup>89</sup> Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, pp. 99-124; R. L. Wilkins, *Liberty in the Things of God: The Christian Origins of Religious Freedom* (New Haven, CT, 2019), pp. 80-98.

<sup>90</sup> Colley, *Britons*, pp. 18-19.

<sup>91</sup> T. Dawson, 'Address to the Clergy Assembled, William and Mary, October 30, 1754', in *The Fulham Papers at Lambeth Palace Library*, volumes 11-20, General Correspondence Virginia, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries (London, 1870), vol. 13, image 138-139; 147, microfilm.

<sup>92</sup> Isaac, *Transformation of Virginia*, p. 155.

Assembly was still filling in details. The General Assembly, not to mention the local population in areas where Regular Baptists settled, needed time to become familiar with these new settlers and to tailor their application of the toleration law to the different reality they presented as loyal subjects to the crown while remaining apart from the Established Church.

### *Baptists in Eighteenth-Century Anglican Virginia*

The earliest record of Baptists in Virginia was of small settlements of General Baptists in the Tidewater counties of Isle of Wight and Prince George. In 1714, there was one church, Burleigh Baptist Church, which wrote to a General Baptist congregation in Kent, England, requesting a pastor. The General Baptist Association commissioned two men to sail to Virginia. Robert Norden survived the voyage and served the church until his death in 1725.<sup>93</sup> This church disbanded after 1740. These Baptists likely dispersed into North Carolina due to disease or other trouble. Baptists did not organize again in this area until the formation of Mill Swamp Church as a Regular Baptist meeting house in Isle of Wight County in 1774.<sup>94</sup> The region by then had only a dim memory of Baptist presence among them until very near the beginning of the Revolutionary War.

In the 1740s and 1750s, a different group of Regular Baptists entered Virginia through the western transmountain area.<sup>95</sup> John Alderson entered Augusta County, Virginia, in 1745 and after eleven years of preaching, Linville Creek Baptist Church was constituted in 1756.<sup>96</sup> John Garrard came into Frederick County, Virginia sometime between 1750 and 1754. The pressure of Shawnee nation hostility forced him to move into Loudoun County, Virginia,

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<sup>93</sup> Anderson, 'Virginia Baptists'; F. Anderson, 'In search of Robert Norden', *The Virginia Baptist Register* (2014), pp. 3730-3734.

<sup>94</sup> *History of Mill Swamp Baptist Church*, p. 17.

<sup>95</sup> Gillette (ed.), *Philadelphia Baptist Association*, p. xv.

<sup>96</sup> J. W. Wayland and D. A. Heatwole, *Virginia Valley Records: Genealogical and Historical Materials of Rockingham County, Virginia, and Related Regions* (Baltimore, MD, 1996), pp. 48-49.

where he served briefly as pastor of Kettocton Baptist Church in 1754.<sup>97</sup> He returned to Frederick County sometime later in the 1750s and led Mill Creek Church.<sup>98</sup> Regular Baptists did not, however, stay on the periphery of Virginia colony. They opened meeting houses not only in the western mountains, but in Lord Fairfax's northern Virginia proprietary. In the late Colonial period, Regular Baptists from North Carolina returned to the heavily settled Tidewater region. Asplund, an early Baptist demographer, characterized Regular Baptists as 'generally . . . men of more learning and more orthodox in judgment, so they had more regular rules of discipline and public worship, and not so enthusiastic in their proceedings'.<sup>99</sup> Their elders preached in homes and the congregations built meeting houses once there were enough people gathering to establish one.<sup>100</sup>

Other Baptists, from New England, migrated through Virginia, settling in North Carolina. This group were 'Separate Baptists' and sent preachers north to set up meeting houses in Virginia from their base in Sandy Creek, North Carolina. The Separates had the most difficulty with Virginia's Anglican establishment because they refused to register their meeting houses.<sup>101</sup> The Separate Baptists set up their first meeting in Pittsylvania County in August 1760, and quickly became the larger of the Baptist groups in Virginia.<sup>102</sup> This may have been due to their aggressive pursuit of new converts, in addition to the curiosity factor that naturally accompanied the presence of a boldly and loudly different group new to the neighborhood. By 1774, Separate Baptists in Virginia counted approximately 3,954 members,

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<sup>97</sup> Fristoe, *Kettocton Baptist Association*, p. 5; Gillette (ed.), *Philadelphia Baptist Association*, p. 71. Fristoe uses county names as they existed in 1808. Berkeley was created out of Frederick County in 1757; Loudoun out of Fairfax County in 1772. See M. Doran, *Atlas of Virginia County Boundary Changes* (Athens, GA, 1987), pp. 22-28.

<sup>98</sup> Fristoe, *Kettocton Baptist Association*, p. 5.

<sup>99</sup> Asplund, *Universal Register*, p. 6.

<sup>100</sup> Semple and Beale, *Baptists in Virginia* (1894), p. 11; G. T. Rogers, *West Virginia Baptist History*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>101</sup> Semple and Beale, *Baptists in Virginia* (1894), p. 12. The Separates adopted their name around 1744.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17; L. P. Little, *Imprisoned Preachers*, p. 46.

while Regular churches had around 1000 members.<sup>103</sup> Virginia's population in 1770 was 447,016. Combined, the Baptists were only about 1 percent of the population.<sup>104</sup>

While these two Baptist groups adhered to similar doctrines, they held little in common in church practice. Baptist preacher John Leland characterized the difference. 'The Regulars were orthodox Calvinists, and the work under them was solemn and rational; but the Separates were the most zealous, and the work among them was very noisy'.<sup>105</sup> Once the Separate Baptist group settled in North Carolina, Isaac Sterns (the only ordained minister in the group) sought out a Regular Baptist preacher to assist with ordination. The Regular Baptist pastor refused, because he considered Separates 'a disorderly set, suffering women to pray in public and permitting every ignorant man to preach that chose; that they encouraged noise and confusion in their meetings'.<sup>106</sup> Wary though they were of each other, the legal challenges they faced as dissenters in Anglican Virginia made them allies.

#### *Baptist Interactions with Virginia Anglican Authorities*

The relationship between the Established Church authorities in Virginia and the Baptist dissenters among them has often been presented as a drama filled with unjust persecution and patient suffering.<sup>107</sup> Though no Baptists in Virginia died as a result of institutional obstacles or mob action, the friction between the two groups has certainly made

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<sup>103</sup> Irons, 'Spiritual fruits', p. 161, note 5.

<sup>104</sup> Salmon and Campbell (eds.), *Hornbook*, p. 92.

<sup>105</sup> J. Leland with L. F. Greene, *The Writings of the Late Elder John Leland, including Some Events in his Life Written by Himself* (New York, 1845), p. 97.

<sup>106</sup> Semple and Beale, *Baptists in Virginia* (1894), p. 16; see also P. N. Mulder, *A Controversial Spirit: Evangelical Awakenings in the South* (New York, 2002), pp. 42-43.

<sup>107</sup> See, for example, L. P. Little, *Imprisoned Preachers*; W. T. Thom, *The Struggle for Religion Freedom in Virginia: The Baptists*, Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science, edited by H. B. Adams, Series XVIII, Numbers 10-11-12 (Baltimore, MD, 1900).

for some excellent storytelling as Virginia moved from a policy of religious toleration toward religious liberty and ultimately disestablishment.<sup>108</sup>

Regular Baptists and Separate Baptists' differing strategies for dealing with Establishment authorities deserve highlighting at this point. Both groups considered themselves faithful to the Scriptures, but, because of their differing perspectives on church practice, they looked to different scriptures for direction. Regular Baptists chose to follow the guidance of Romans 13: 'Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. . . . Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed . . . respect to whom respect is owed, honour to whom honour is owed'.<sup>109</sup> Separates saw Mark 16:15-16, 'And he said to them, 'Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned', as a general mandate superseding civil law.<sup>110</sup> Separate Baptists then were willing and perhaps eager to defy laws restricting the location of meeting houses, who would preach, and other matters. For example, a question was put to the first Separate Baptist Association meeting in 1771 from Lower Spotsylvania Church, 'Whether it is lawful and expedient for our ministers to obtain license from the civil law, for only one or more meeting-places, and so be restricted from general license given them by King Jesus—Mark xvith chapter, 15th and 16th verses, etc.?'<sup>111</sup> It is likely that the expected answer was 'no' along with encouragement to defy the restrictions in obedience to Jesus. Regular Baptists were, by contrast, reluctantly willing to abide with the restrictions, seeing the government as an instrument of God. The Established

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<sup>108</sup> Semple and Beale, *Baptists in Virginia* (1894), pp. 29-54, offers an entire chapter surveying the legal persecution of Baptists; see also J. Ragosta, *Wellspring of Liberty: How Virginia's Religious Dissenters Helped Win the American Revolution and Secured Religious Liberty* (New York, 2010); Ragosta, *Religious Freedom*; Buckley, *Establishing Religious Freedom*.

<sup>109</sup> St. Paul's Letter to the Church at Rome 13:1-7, English Standard Version (UK).

<sup>110</sup> The Gospel According to Mark 16:15-16.

<sup>111</sup> Semple and Beale, *Baptists in Virginia* (1894), p. 73.

Church was, however, their mutual obstacle to preaching the gospel freely, and both groups resented structures that were intended to impede their efforts.

When William Dawson succeeded James Blair as Commissary in 1743, he showed no sympathy for dissenters. His brother, Thomas, succeeded him in 1752. Though preoccupied by the Parson's Cause (resisting the enactment of the Two-Penny Act), Thomas Dawson also asked the Bishop of London for guidance on managing dissenters.<sup>112</sup> The Dawson brothers were succeeded by William Robinson. Most of the discussion about dissenters in letters to the Bishop of London focused on parishes with no minister, which were ripe for the growth of dissenting churches.<sup>113</sup> All three Commissaries were perplexed over what could be done legally. William Dawson, alarmed by the inroads of the Presbyterian New Lights (Presbyterians who had embraced the Evangelical Awakening) in Hanover County, sought to shape the application of the Virginia regulations related to the Act of Toleration to make them more restrictive for dissenting preachers. The General Assembly however did not cooperate, and his efforts were thwarted.<sup>114</sup>

Even so, things were difficult for Baptists. William Fristoe described the process for securing a license for Baptist meeting houses. The first step involved petitioning the colony's General Court. According to McIlwaine, the General Court in Williamsburg was 'determined to keep the matter of licensing [of dissenting meeting houses] in its own hands'.<sup>115</sup> Among the documents required to support the petition were the signatures of at least twenty local residents.<sup>116</sup> The petition also required the signature of two justices of the

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<sup>112</sup> On William Dawson, see Brydon, *Virginia's Mother Church*, vol. II, p. 256; on Thomas Dawson, see Brydon, vol. II, p. 269; Nelson, *Blessed Company*, p. 351, n14; Isaac, *Transformation of Virginia*, pp. 144-157.

<sup>113</sup> For example, William Robinson, Virginia Commissary, letter to the Bishop of London [Richard Terrick], 12 August 1765, King and Queen County in Perry, *American Colonial Church*, vol. 1, p. 516.

<sup>114</sup> Hockman, 'Hellish and Malicious Incendiaries', pp. 150-180.

<sup>115</sup> McIlwaine, *Religious Toleration*, p. 54.

<sup>116</sup> Fristoe, *Ketocton Baptist Association*, p. 72.

peace, who certified the signatories as qualified residents. These signatures of the justices of the peace were hard to obtain. Sometimes the only way to get a certifying signature was the promise to support the justice in an upcoming election.<sup>117</sup> Sometimes when a license was obtained, it was for a specific location only and not a license that permitted the minister to itinerate among several meeting houses. While preaching in several area chapels and churches was often required of Anglican ministers, it was not permitted for dissenters. This location-specific license reflects policies favored by the Commissaries who were trying to limit dissenting congregations. Sometimes the General Court in Williamsburg would refuse to grant a Baptist pastor a license to preach simply because a Presbyterian meeting house was already present, and one dissenting house within a parish was deemed sufficient.<sup>118</sup>

Fristoe continued: if a license was granted [by the General Court] ‘the preacher who applied for the license had to pass an examination by a church clergymen before a license issued; . . . application was to be made to a minister of the Church of England, by the person licensed, and there give his assent to the thirty-nine articles of the above church, except three, and a part of a fourth . . . this certificate was bore back to the court, upon which a license issued from the clerk table’.<sup>119</sup> This test was normally the responsibility of a Williamsburg-area local Anglican parish minister. It was expected that the dissenting applicant would give assent to the thirty-nine articles of faith of the Church of England except for three and part of the fourth that the Act of Toleration identified as designated exceptions.<sup>120</sup> If the Anglican parson signed off on the dissenting preacher’s assent, then the dissenting preacher took this

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<sup>117</sup> Fristoe, *Ketocton Baptist Association*, p. 73.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 72-73.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 74-75.

<sup>120</sup> Act of Toleration, 1689, Will. 3, chap. 18, paragraph VIII, [www.jacobite.ca/documents/1689toleration.htm](http://www.jacobite.ca/documents/1689toleration.htm) (Accessed: 11 February 2020), offers exceptions to the thirty-fourth (church traditions), thirty-fifth (prescribed homilies), thirty-sixth (ordination of ministers), and the portion of the twentieth article (authority of the church) which says ‘the Church hath power to decree rites or ceremonies, and authority in controversies of faith and yet’.

back to the General Court clerk, who then issued the license upon receipt. Fristoe complained that many Anglican clergy were disdainful in their demeanor toward petitioning dissenters, especially the Anglican ministers who were on the faculty of William and Mary.<sup>121</sup> The granting and issuing of licenses was made as arduous and demeaning as possible.

Fristoe summarized the frustration. It ‘was intolerable for one set of men to make application to another set of men (cap in hand) and in the most humble posture, ask their consent and allowance, to worship the God that made them’.<sup>122</sup> As hard as this was, the Regular Baptists chose to comply, knowing that they would face legal prosecution otherwise.

After Charles II was restored to the throne of England, it became common practice that all offices and licenses were secured by an oath affirming the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England. King Charles, in his preface, states ‘That the Articles of the Church of England . . . do contain the true Doctrine of the Church of England agreeable to God’s Word: which We do ratify and confirm, requiring all Our loving Subjects to continue in the uniform Profession therof, and prohibiting the least difference from the said Articles’.<sup>123</sup> Several articles are pointedly anti-Catholic. Article XIX, Of the Church, claims that the ‘Church of Rome hath erred, not only in their living and manner of Ceremonies, but also in matters of faith’. Article XXII, Of Purgatory, states ‘the Romish Doctrine concerning Purgatory, Pardons, Worshipping and Adoration, as well of Images as of Relics, and also invocation of Saints, is a fond thing vainly invested, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God’. Article XXVII, Of the Lord’s Supper, directly critiques the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation, ‘Transubstantiation (or the change of the substance of Bread and Wine) in the Supper of the Lord, cannot be proved by holy Writ; but

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<sup>121</sup> Fristoe, *Ketocton Baptist Association*, p. 74.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>123</sup> The Church of England, ‘Articles of Religion’, <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/book-common-prayer/articles-religion#VI>, (Accessed: 25 October 2020).

is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a Sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions'. Article XXI, of the One Oblation of Christ Finished Upon the Cross, contains this comment, 'Wherefore the sacrifices of Masses, in the which it was commonly said, that the Priest did offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, were blasphemous fables, and dangerous deceits'.<sup>124</sup> Clearly, the Articles were intended to make sure British subjects, who wanted civil responsibility, had to avoid any association with Catholicism.

The Thirty-Nine Articles, however, gave non-Anglican dissenters conscientious difficulties. When King William issued the Act of Toleration in 1689, he did not change the Articles but exempted non-Anglican dissenters from affirming the language of the 'thirty-fourth, thirty-fifth, and thirty-sixth' articles, along with some language in the twentieth article. The thirty-fourth article proscribes a deliberate breaking of the traditions and ceremonies of the Church, something which 'hurteth the authority of the Magistrate'. Article XXXV offers a list of approved topics for homilies, and Article XXXVI deals with the consecration of ministers and bishops. Non-conformists were also allowed to strike out "the Church hath power to decree rites or ceremonies, and authority in controversies of faith".<sup>125</sup> These exemptions, along with the Act's Article X applied the exemption to the language in Article XX to the form of baptism, thus granting Baptists the right to practice believer's baptism.<sup>126</sup> These exemptions did not apply to Catholics.

What most alarmed the Establishment were the crowds Separate Baptist preachers attracted. In 1771, when a group of fourteen Separate Baptist churches gathered in Orange County to form the first Separate Association in Virginia, the clerk recorded a total of 1335

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<sup>124</sup> The Church of England, 'Articles of Religion', Articles XIX, XXII, XXVII.

<sup>125</sup> The Church of England, 'Articles of Religion', Articles XXXIV, XXXV, XXXVI, XX.

<sup>126</sup> Toleration Act, 1689, <http://www.jacobite.ca/documents/1689toleration.htm> (Accessed: 25 October 2020), Article X.

members. Isaac indicates a contemporary observer, estimated that there were 4000 or 5000 people present for the preaching service on Sunday.<sup>127</sup> The Separate Baptists grew from seven churches in Virginia in 1769 to fifty-four in 1774. By 1774 over 4,000 adherents were reported by the churches belonging to the Separate Baptist Association in Virginia.<sup>128</sup>

Separate Baptists were fearless; they embraced civil disobedience. They refused to follow the process that Regular Baptists endured to gain licenses for their meeting houses. Because they would take an oath subscribing to the 39 Articles with the exceptions stricken, they were considered dangerous non-conformists. Morgan Edwards records an incident involving an Anglican gentleman turned Baptist convert, Col. Samuel Harris. Ordained an elder in 1759, he travelled throughout Virginia. In Orange County, Capt. Ball and his men engaged in a melee, shouting ‘you shall not preach here’. Men in the congregation who had gathered to hear Harris protected him from harm. He was accused in court of being a ‘vagabond, a heretic, and a mover of sedition everywhere’.<sup>129</sup> Magistrates would jail Separate Baptists for disturbing the peace; they sang hymns as they were escorted to the jail.<sup>130</sup> This was understandable, because, being people of the book, and following the Philadelphia Confession of Faith that deemed hymn singing an orderly element of worship, these men, like Paul and Silas in the Philippian jail in Acts 16:25, sang.<sup>131</sup> They would appeal to Williamsburg, and occasionally get a hearing. John Blair, acting as deputy governor in 1768,

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<sup>127</sup> Semple and Beale, *Baptists in Virginia* (1894), p. 70. Isaac, *Transformation of Virginia*, p. 192.

<sup>128</sup> Isaac, *Transformation of Virginia*, p. 173; Gewehr, *Great Awakening*, p. 117.

<sup>129</sup> Edwards, *Materials*, vol. 1, pp. 59-60, p. 60.

<sup>130</sup> Fristoe, *Ketocton Baptist Association*, p. 71; Semple and Beale, *Baptists in Virginia* (1894), p. 30.

<sup>131</sup> Philadelphia Baptist Association, *A Confession of Faith, Put Forth by the Elders and Brethren of Many Congregations of Christians (Baptized Upon Profession of Their Faith) in London and the Country. Adopted by the Baptist Association Met at Philadelphia, Sept. 25. 1742: To Which Are Added, Two Articles Viz. Of Imposition of Hands, and Singing of Psalms in Publick Worship. Also a Short Treatise of Church Discipline. [Three Lines of Scripture Texts]* (Philadelphia, 1743), chapter xxiii, page 83, America’s Historical Documents (Accessed: November 30, 2015); Garrett, *Baptist Theology*, p. 73.

commended the Baptists' morality, and advised the King's attorney in Spotsylvania to 'quietly overlook their [the Baptists'] meetings' until the next court session.<sup>132</sup>

Brydon placed the cause of the Baptist phenomenon squarely as a class issue; the educated elite were repelled by the fire and bombast of Baptist preaching. The 'dullest clods of humanity' were attracted to the direct challenge offered by the preaching.<sup>133</sup> The preachers among Regular Baptists, however, worked within the system to advance their message. Their experience evidenced the possibility that peaceful pluralism made government toleration regulations an unnecessary source of friction.

The authority's efforts to tightly regulate the presence of non-conforming Protestants was thwarted by the great distance away from Williamsburg of many of these small gatherings, as well as the Separate Baptists disinclination to seek licenses for their meetings. Sometimes the Anglican minister was sporadic in attending to the chapels of ease, which gave space for non-conforming preachers to find a ready audience.

Separate Baptists, through their civil disobedience, created much of the friction. Regular Baptist patience in the face of sporadic and local Anglican intolerance, while being loyal to king, colony, and county, helped build a case for the government in Virginia to cease regulation of religious matters altogether. The next chapters will assess the impact of government-mandated religious toleration on both Anglicans and Regular Baptists in their local context in three Virginia regions: the western mountain wilderness, northern Virginia, and the Tidewater.

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<sup>132</sup> Semple and Beale, *Baptists in Virginia* (1894), pp. 30-31.

<sup>133</sup> Brydon, *Virginia's Mother Church*, vol. II, p. 190.

## Chapter Three

### **Regular Baptists in the Western Mountain Wilderness: Community Leadership in Peace and Conflict**

Governor Sir William Gooch's effort to defend the boundaries of Virginia from the French had the unintended consequence of creating a new wave of colonization, but this time the settlers were not mostly Anglican. When Gooch opened the western Virginia frontier to settlement in the 1740s, Pennsylvania Regular Baptists Samuel and Martha Newman bought land in Augusta County in 1744. This region was not under the direct influence of Virginia's established church until 1747 when Augusta parish was formed.<sup>1</sup> Would the Newmans and their fellow Regular Baptists establish patterns to follow or would their experience in the wilderness of the western Virginia highlands be too unique? Gooch's opening of this western wilderness, along with the government-sanctioned settlement of non-conformists in Virginia, created an environment where a plurality of Christians, including Anglicans, were all newcomers to the area. Unlike the first colonists in 1607, who established an uneasy truce with the Powhatan confederacy, the new colonists west of the mountains faced the immediate opposition of the Shawnee nation who were intent on protecting their hunting grounds in the Shenandoah Valley.<sup>2</sup> In more settled areas east of the mountains, counties and parishes were quickly set up by dividing older counties and parishes when the population was sufficient to require a new county or parish. West of the mountains, white protestant settlement was the

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<sup>1</sup> Good, *Smith Creek Baptist Church*, p. 3; Augusta Parish Vestry Book, 1747-1782.

<sup>2</sup> Ward, *Breaking the Back Country*, pp. 6-8.

government's mandate; organizing the county governance structures and parish life was not an immediate priority.<sup>3</sup>

The colonial settlers' relative isolation, and their need to support mutual survival in the wilderness west of the mountains, created an environment where a practical pluralism became their lived reality. Presbyterians met in one valley on Sundays; Regular Baptists met where two streams converged on the Newmans' farm. In May 1738, a group of Presbyterians sent 'a deputation to wait on the [Virginia] Governor and Council' seeking to settle families 'in the back parts [of Virginia]. Gooch answered them affirmatively, stating, 'you may be assured that no interruption shall be given to any ministers of your profession who shall come among them; so as they conform themselves to the rules prescribed by the Act of Toleration'.<sup>4</sup> Regular Baptists were not so well organized and sent preachers once settlers were in place in Virginia. Until the clusters of settlers came into contact with one another, there was little if any friction. Anglicans quickly moved into the area as well. Survival and defense created outward pressure that mitigated against much attention to insider religious friction disturbing these nascent communities. By the time parish structures were set up just three years after the area opened up for settlement, there was already a habit of cooperation between these religious groups, one that had long range consequences for the acceptance of religious freedom just a few decades later.

### *History of the Transmountain Region of Colonial Virginia*

#### The French and Indian War

Sometimes events turn on an accidental encounter. The Seven Years War, and its North American theatre, the French and Indian War, serves as the background for the

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<sup>3</sup> W. R. Hofstra, "'The extension of his Majesties dominions': The Virginia backcountry and the reconfiguration of imperial frontiers", *The Journal of American History*, 84 (March 1998), pp. 1281-1312.

<sup>4</sup> R. Davidson, *History of the Presbyterian Church in the State of Kentucky with a Preliminary Sketch of the Churches in the Valley of Virginia* (New York, 1847), p. 18.

churches and religious leaders studied in this chapter. The Seven Years War was fought by the British and French in multiple theatres, and the British victory came at enormous expense. Parliament sought to recoup some of the expenses of the war by taxing the colonies, an innovative move much despised by the colonists.<sup>5</sup> Wealthy Virginians were seeking land to claim and rent out to settlers. With Lord Fairfax's claim taking up hundreds of thousands of acres in northern Virginia, they were looking north of the Potomac River for new land for speculation.<sup>6</sup>

Matthew Ward notes that the decade-long war changed Virginia significantly, paving the way toward the outbreak of resistance in the 1770s that led to revolution. Virginia was required to raise and provision an army, and it gave a young Virginia militia officer George Washington, experience as a field commander. Washington was an eye-witness to the deadly blundering of Edward Braddock in the wilderness claimed by both Virginia and Pennsylvania, which created doubt in the minds of Virginians about the skills of British regulars outside of familiar terrain; perhaps they could be resisted. The colony's relationship with Native Americans was changed for the worse; it was relatively easy for a small number of people to ignite conflict in the area where white squatters came into contact with Native Americans. Ward further assesses that the backcountry settlers, were not really ready or willing to organize to fight a common enemy.<sup>7</sup>

Joseph Miller's list of men who served in the French and Indian War includes the names of perhaps three Regular Baptists.<sup>8</sup> The Frederick County militia's involvement in the

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<sup>5</sup> F. Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766* (New York, 2000), pp. 641-729.

<sup>6</sup> L. Mulkearn (comp. and ed.), 'Minutes of the Ohio Company Committee, March 27, 1750', *George Mercer Papers Related to the Ohio Company of Virginia* (Pittsburgh, PA, 1954).

<sup>7</sup> Ward, *Breaking the Back Country*, pp. 3-5; P. Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors: How Indian War Transformed Early America* (New York, 2008), pp. xxv-xxvi.

<sup>8</sup> J. L. Miller, 'Augusta men in the French and Indian War', *West Virginia Historical Magazine* (1903): pp. 128-144; see also W. W. King, 'Companies organized in 1756 for the defense of Augusta County, Virginia',

French and Indian War was not so glorious; many of Frederick County's militia were court martialed for various infractions.<sup>9</sup> This is illustrative of Ward's observation that backcountry men were not easy to organize into disciplined regular troops.<sup>10</sup>

The transmountain western region of the colony had an indeterminate boundary, often claiming portions of what is now western Pennsylvania. Regular Baptists first entered Virginia in this region, and their story begins here. The British desired a buffer zone of settlement of farming families between the French and the more populous sections of the colony. Hofstra notes that in Virginia security and speculation interests 'transformed what Europeans called wilderness into property'. Colonial land speculators desired to license unsettled (by Europeans) land. This led to government policies that encouraged settlement. This created a setting for conflict with France and the indigenous tribes allied with France.<sup>11</sup>

These remote parishes became living demonstrations that religious pluralism and cooperation for the common good was possible, refuting the notion that a single established church was necessary for an orderly society. The government overrode established church practice for a desired political end. When sufficient Anglican land holders had settled in the county, the vestry was challenged in 1748, but their petition to remove the Scots-Irish Presbyterian members was rejected. 'Governor Gooch had no intention of disturbing the equanimity of the Valley Scots-Irish whom he counted on to defend the colony from the Indians on the western frontier. The Presbyterians were eventually replaced by Anglicans on the vestry in 1757'.<sup>12</sup>

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*National Genealogical Society Quarterly*, XXV (1937): pp. 70-72; W. W. King, 'Virginia, 17 July 1756 Council of War held at Augusta Court House', *National Genealogical Society Quarterly*, XXV (1937), pp. 45-46.

<sup>9</sup> A. Milbourne, 'Records of Frederick County, Virginia, Militia in the French and Indian War Period', *National Genealogical Society Quarterly*, XXVII (1939), pp. 57-60.

<sup>10</sup> Ward, *Breaking the Back Country*, pp. 92-95.

<sup>11</sup> Hofstra, 'Virginia backcountry', pp. 1281-1312, p. 1285; Hofstra, *Planting of New Virginia*.

<sup>12</sup> Ruffin, *Augusta Parish*, p. 18-19.

The first Regular Baptists in Augusta County settled near the confluence of Smith and Linville Creeks; the congregation later took the name Brock's Gap. Smith Creek Regular Baptist Church in Harrisonburg, Virginia, claims the Brock's Gap congregation as part of its heritage. The church had among their early membership men who were also leaders in their community. This became a point of contact between the Regular Baptists in the area and the regional Established Church authorities. Silas Hart, who came into the area likely from Pennsylvania in the 1750s, and Samuel Newman, a Pennsylvania Baptist who moved into Augusta County in 1740s, are both listed as caretakers for orphans.<sup>13</sup> The Frederick Parish Vestry record for 1764 through 1780 documents a parish that struggled to care for many widows and orphans, as well as dealing with the deprivations of the Native American incursions on their homesteads.<sup>14</sup>

Mill Creek Baptist Church was originally settled in Frederick County in 1753; the church site is now located near Berkeley, West Virginia. The church records show that though it was deep in the wilderness west of the mountains, news of events in Virginia and in other colonies did penetrate to their community. In 1774, they agreed to participate in the fast day the Virginia General Assembly had called for in response to the British blockade of Boston. The names of some Mill Creek church members are also recorded in the Frederick Parish Vestry book and in the county records. Among its leaders were Regular Baptist Elders John Garrard, David Thomas, and John Corbly.<sup>15</sup> Garrard and Thomas fled with other white refugees from Shawnee nation violence in 1755<sup>16</sup> eastward into Loudoun and Fauquier County, and their contributions there will be documented in chapter three. Garrard eventually

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<sup>13</sup> Augusta Parish Vestry Book, pp. 79, 106 (Silas Hart); pp. 99 (Samuel Newman). See also on Silas Hart, J. W. Wayland, *Men of Mark and Representative Citizens of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County* (Staunton, VA, 1943), p. 404. On Samuel Newman, see Brock's Gap Church Records, p. 6.

<sup>14</sup> Frederick Parish Vestry Book; E. K. Meade, *Frederick Parish*.

<sup>15</sup> Mill Creek or Opequon Baptist Church Minutes, pp. 3-4.

<sup>16</sup> K. L. Brown, N. T. Sorrells, and J. S. Simmons, *The History of Christ Church, Frederick Parish, Winchester 1745-2000: Building a Faithful Future* (Staunton, VA, 2001), p. 17; Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors*, pp. 34-35.

returned to Mill Creek, post-Shawnee violence. John Corbly moved deeper into the wilderness and founded churches in what is now West Virginia and Pennsylvania.<sup>17</sup> These men were preceded by preacher-emissaries from the Philadelphia Baptist Association.

### *The Philadelphia Baptist Association*

Behind the Baptist churches in Virginia, supporting the nascent gatherings, was the Philadelphia Baptist Association (PBA), the first Association of Baptists formed in colonial America. This was an Association of Baptist Churches in Pennsylvania and around the mid-Atlantic region, whose influence was felt throughout the colonies. Particular Baptists in Wales not only emigrated to Pennsylvania, but, according to Bebbington, maintained a regular flow of supportive correspondence with Baptists in the colony.<sup>18</sup> The Philadelphia Association churches were willing to support the travel of their member church elders into less settled areas to preach for Baptists in those regions. These elders would check on the spiritual well-being of Baptists in areas without a settled congregation until a man qualified to serve as an elder moved to live in the community. Without this crucial support, it is doubtful Virginia Regular Baptists would have thrived. Both Regular and Separate Baptists, rooted in the Particular Baptist tradition, looked to the Association for guidance.<sup>19</sup> In 1772, the Kettocton (Regular) Baptist Association, formed by the PBA churches in Virginia in 1766, addressed their letter to the Philadelphia Association, ‘Dear Mother’.<sup>20</sup>

Association formation was a part of Baptist expansion strategy they brought with them from England. Watts offers a profile of Baptists in England and conditions in England

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<sup>17</sup> G. T. Rogers, *West Virginia Baptist History*, pp. 11-12.

<sup>18</sup> D. Bebbington, *Baptists Through the Centuries*, p. 234.

<sup>19</sup> Gillette (ed.), *Philadelphia Baptist Association* (2007), pp. 31, 86 (Regular Baptist David Thomas’ ordination certificate issued by the Association in 1762), p. 120 (Separate Baptist Samuel Harris’ report of revival in Virginia received with approval in 1771), p. 227, 233. See also report of Anglicans preaching Jesus with ‘unusual warmth’, p. 120.

<sup>20</sup> Clark, *Philadelphia Association*, p. 141; R. G. Gardner, ‘The Kettocton and Philadelphia Associations in the 18<sup>th</sup> century’, *Virginia Baptist Register*, 27 (1988), pp. 1365-1382, p. 1365.

in the seventeenth century that prompted immigration to the colonies.<sup>21</sup> Some of the Baptists who settled in Pennsylvania eventually migrated into Virginia. The 1689 toleration law enacted in England and applied in the 1699 Act of Toleration in Virginia, had a major impact on churches there. Finke and Starke use an economics model on the impact of toleration and religious freedom on churches in America. Like the Anglicans in England, the toleration laws required adjustments to leading local churches. Gregory rightly points out that the ministers in England had to be more pro-active in their member care. The same was likely true in Virginia but was not widely practiced by Virginia Anglicans. Roger Finke and Rodney Stark demonstrate that member care (or the lack thereof) contributed to the decline of formerly Established Churches. While the preaching improved after James Blair's reforms, the newer, more energetic sects had a decided advantage.<sup>22</sup>

The Philadelphia Association was the first Baptist Association formed in the colonies. Watts indicates that Baptists in England formed Associations for mutual support, by 'personal contacts and by correspondence'. It was a 'determined effort to establish and preserve denominational exclusiveness'.<sup>23</sup> British Baptists formed Associations early in their presence in England.<sup>24</sup> The pastors who had migrated from England and Wales into the dissenter-friendly Mid-Atlantic colonies patterned the Philadelphia Baptist Association after those in England. The Philadelphia Confession, adopted in 1742, was modeled after the Second London Confession of Faith.<sup>25</sup> Elders and lay leaders of Baptist churches throughout the region were welcome to participate provided they affirmed the Philadelphia Confession.

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<sup>21</sup> Watts, *Dissenters*, pp. 166; 213-215.

<sup>22</sup> R. Finke and R. Stark, *The Churching of America, 1776-2005: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy* (New Brunswick, NJ, 2005), pp. 55-60, 82; Gregory, 'Eighteenth-century reformation', pp. 67-85.

<sup>23</sup> Watts, *Dissenters*, p. 166.

<sup>24</sup> J. Ivimey, *A History of the English Baptists* [London 1814], p. xvi.

<sup>25</sup> A. D. Gillette, ed., *Minutes of the Philadelphia Baptist Association from A.D. 1707 to A.D. 1807, Being the First Hundred Years of Its Existence* (Philadelphia, 1851), p. 26, HaitiTrust (Accessed: 5 February 2017).

In addition to convivial fellowship, the churches would send letters with questions related to orthodoxy and orthopraxy. The October 1761 minutes document the reception of a new church into the association, and a response to a query from the church at Oyster Bay, New York on the function of the Bible and the Holy Spirit in guiding Christian faith. The meeting also drafted a ‘circular letter’ to distribute among the churches that contained as usual some note of encouragement and exhortation.<sup>26</sup> Francis Sacks characterizes this practice,

Among Philadelphia Baptists, associations possess real power and authority to influence church life. Their advice and decisions, when based upon Scripture, carry considerable weight and authority. Such authority, however, comes from the force of the Word itself as the only infallible rule of faith and life, not from the authority of the association. The latter is only an advisory organization, not a superior forum for authentic interpretation of the meaning of Scripture. . . . The evidence shows that the Baptists of the PBA believe the association possessed no power but that which it received from the churches’ mutual consent.<sup>27</sup>

The churches had confidence that the combined wisdom of the church elders meeting together would offer authoritative guidance on questions of church doctrine and practice.

The Association of Particular Baptist Churches annually held at Philadelphia was organized in 1707, by Particular Baptists who had migrated to Pennsylvania from England, Ireland, and Wales.<sup>28</sup> They adopted as their statement of faith the London Confession of Faith published in England in 1689.<sup>29</sup> The Philadelphia Association was the first Baptist association in the North American British colonies and served as a sounding board for Baptist doctrine and practice for Baptist churches. The minutes of the Association’s meetings contained responses to queries from member churches. For example, in 1753, the church at

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<sup>26</sup> Gillette (ed.), *Philadelphia Baptist Association* (1851), pp. 81-84.

<sup>27</sup> F. W. Sacks, *The Philadelphia Baptist Tradition of Church and Church Authority, 1707-1814: An Ecumenical Analysis and Theological Interpretation*, vol. 48, *Studies in American Religion* (Lewiston, NY, 1989), p. 548.

<sup>28</sup> W. B. Shurden, ‘The development of Baptist Associations in America, 1707-1814’, *Baptist History and Heritage*, 4 (1969), pp. 31-39, p. 33.

<sup>29</sup> Gillette, ed., *Philadelphia Baptist Association* (2007), pp. xi, 4.

Kingwood (New Jersey) asked if assurance of salvation was necessary for membership; the response was in the affirmative.<sup>30</sup>

#### Philadelphia Baptist Association and Virginia Regular Baptists

The Association was not a diocesan-type organization; no church was under its authority. Morgan Edwards, an early Baptist historian, described the association as ‘a confederate body of delegates from the churches . . . [which] raises them no higher than an advisory council; it gives them no ecclesiastical legislature, nor jurisdiction, nor coercive power, not anything else which may interfere with the rights of particular churches, or those of private judgment’.<sup>31</sup> Whenever a church asked for guidance, however, the Association would offer a response. In 1726, a church inquired about receiving a letter of dismissal from Baptist churches in England, since it was difficult to know from which group of Baptists the letter was issued. When a church member was planning to move away from an area, it was customary to ask the church for a ‘letter of dismissal’ attesting to the bearer’s salvation experience and good standing as a member. The letter would be presented to a Baptist Church near where the believer relocated, when she applied for membership in that church. The Association advised ‘that the churches here may take no further notion of the letters by such persons brought here, than to satisfy themselves that such are baptized persons . . . and to take such into church covenant as if they had not been members of any church before’.<sup>32</sup>

The Association did have some functions similar to an Anglican diocese. Reuben Jones, historian for the Portsmouth (Virginia) Baptist Association, noted that the Philadelphia Association sent representatives into the Tidewater area of Virginia and into North Carolina to correct false doctrine among some Baptist churches. The churches that became ‘orderly’

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<sup>30</sup> Gillette, ed., *Philadelphia Baptist Association* (2007), p. 70.

<sup>31</sup> M. Edwards, *Materials toward a History of the American Baptists*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia, 1760), p. 123.

<sup>32</sup> Gillette (ed.), *Philadelphia Baptist Association* (2007), p. 28.

formed the Kehukee Association in 1765.<sup>33</sup> The Philadelphia Association also issued certificates of ordination.<sup>34</sup> David Thomas asked for the Association's assistance obtaining a license for a meeting house in Virginia. The Virginia court accepted his ordination from the Philadelphia Association as documentation of his legitimacy as a minister.<sup>35</sup>

Churches could affiliate with the Philadelphia Baptist Association provided they adopted the Philadelphia Confession of Faith, which the Association adopted in 1742.<sup>36</sup> Prior to a meeting of the Association, the churches would send a letter, by way of their appointed representatives, reporting the growth of the churches, and containing questions on which the church wanted feedback.<sup>37</sup> At the conclusion of a meeting, the Association would appoint a committee to produce a letter to be circulated among their member churches, containing doctrinal teaching and spiritual encouragement. Minutes from Smith and Linville Creek church's business meeting on the 'Saturday before the 2d Sunday in September 1788' noted that the minutes and circular letters from the Kettocton Association and the Philadelphia Association meeting were read to the gathering.<sup>38</sup> The letter from Philadelphia is a detailed discussion of a portion of the Philadelphia Confession of Faith.<sup>39</sup>

The Philadelphia Association did not appoint missionaries but was quick to encourage entrepreneurial risk-takers like Elders John Alderson, John Garrard and David Thomas, who moved to Virginia to start churches. John Garrard entered Berkeley county Virginia between 1750 and 1754 from Maryland and gathered a group to form Mill Creek church. Shawnee

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<sup>33</sup> R. Jones, *Virginia Portsmouth Association*, p. 12.

<sup>34</sup> Elder David Thomas' certificate of ordination, complete with the seal of the city of Philadelphia affixed upon it, is transcribed in Gillette's history of the Association. Gillette (ed.), *Philadelphia Baptist Association*, (2007), p. 86.

<sup>35</sup> Edwards, *American Baptists*, p. 126.

<sup>36</sup> 'Confessions of Faith', Baptist Studies Online, <http://baptiststudiesonline.com/wp-content/uploads/2007/02/philadelphia-confession.pdf> (Accessed: 18 January 2015).

<sup>37</sup> Edwards, *American Baptists*, p. 124; Gillette (ed.), *Philadelphia Baptist Association* (1851), p. 140.

<sup>38</sup> Wayland and Heatwole, *Virginia Valley Records*, p. 60.

<sup>39</sup> Gillette (ed.), *Philadelphia Baptist Association* (1851), p. 30.

forces drove the group east into Loudoun County. There Garrard briefly pastored Kettocton church in 1756.<sup>40</sup> David Thomas came into Virginia from Pennsylvania, preaching in Berkeley County in 1760, but settled in Fauquier County, where he started Broad Run church in 1762.<sup>41</sup> Kettocton and Broad Run churches supported the startup of other churches in Northern Virginia.<sup>42</sup> Regular Baptist pastors, based in North Carolina, made their way into the Tidewater area of Virginia, where they organized meeting houses in the Southampton, Sussex, and Isle of Wight counties and vicinities.<sup>43</sup>

The Philadelphia Baptist Association strategically sent ministers into Virginia and North Carolina to check on small populations of Baptists who did not yet have a preaching elder living in their vicinity. Once these outlying groups had established a church, they would join the Philadelphia Baptist Association, and eventually form more local Associations that had a corresponding relationship with the mother Association.<sup>44</sup> Sack's analysis of the Association's authority among Baptist churches indicates it was derived from consensus around Scripture.<sup>45</sup> The Association thus had the power of influence, but no direct authority over any of its member churches.

The Philadelphia Baptist Association asked its churches to support the travel of ministers such as John Thomas to strengthen weaker congregations. John Thomas was a

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<sup>40</sup> Semple and Beale, *Baptists in Virginia* (1894), p. 376.

<sup>41</sup> Weaver, 'David Thomas', p. 4.

<sup>42</sup> Thomas, Sixth Lord Fairfax, inherited a Virginia land grant proprietorship. Rather than selling it to satisfy the family's debt holders, he immigrated to see the territory for himself in 1735. S. E. Brown, *Virginia Baron*, pp. 21, 45.

<sup>43</sup> R. Jones, *Virginia Portsmouth Association*, p. 12. Among these pastors were David Barrow, who founded Mill Swamp in Isle of Wight and gathered Shoulders Hill church in 1778 after enduring a dunking by a local mob (Jones, *Virginia Portsmouth Association*, pp. 232-233), and John McGlamre (Jones, *Virginia Portsmouth Association*, pp. 266-267), who founded Raccoon Swamp Baptist Church in 1774.

<sup>44</sup> Gardner, 'The Kettocton and Philadelphia Associations', pp. 1365-1382.

<sup>45</sup> Sacks, *Philadelphia Baptist Tradition*, pp. 547-548.

Welsh Baptist and long-serving pastor of Montgomery Church in Pennsylvania until 1783.<sup>46</sup> Historian David Spencer indicates that the Association focused on strengthening weak Baptist assemblies that did not have a resident elder to preach to them regularly. Spencer observes, ‘The strong supported the weak, and the ministers were appointed to visit, preach to, and counsel with the smaller bands’.<sup>47</sup> The 1764 Associational Letter exhorted member congregations to ‘strengthen and encourage your ministers; be ready and willing to support them in visiting those churches that are destitute of the means of grace’.<sup>48</sup> Regular Baptists viewed the preaching of the gospel as the primary vehicle through which God’s salvation was made known to people who attended their meetings. Fristoe published as part of his *Ketocton Association History* the Association’s third circular letter, ‘On the subjects, and government, of a gospel church’. Preachers ‘of the gospel’ are expected ‘to be faithful in preaching the word of life, reproofing the obstinate, warning the unruly, and comforting the feeble minded’ . . . Preachers are to ‘diffuse knowledge where ever they go, and provoke others to love and good works’.<sup>49</sup> By supplying preachers for Baptists settled in remote areas, Philadelphia Association and Ketocton Association-affiliated Elders served a function similar to the Anglican parish minister visiting a chapel of ease constructed in a remote part of the parish.

### *Regular Baptists in the Transmountain Region*

Regular Baptists were among the migrants who moved into Virginia in the 1740s, after Lieutenant Governor Gooch opened the area in 1738 to religious dissenters who were not affiliated with the Established Church. Hofstra indicates that early in Gooch’s tenure, he

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<sup>46</sup> D. Benedict, *A General History of the Baptist Denomination in America, and in Other Parts of the World* (New York, 1850), p. 604.

<sup>47</sup> D. Spencer, *The Early Baptists of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 1877), p. 74; Gillette (ed.), *Philadelphia Baptist Association* (2007), p. 71; Clark, *Philadelphia Association*, p. 92.

<sup>48</sup> Gillette (ed.), *Philadelphia Baptist Association* (2007), p. 76.

<sup>49</sup> Fristoe, *Ketocton Baptist Association*, pp. 109-112, pp. 110-111.

needed to respond to the Board of Trade's expressed desire to expand the security for white settlement in the backcountry of all the colonies. Governor Gooch wanted settlement on the western edges of the Virginia colony. He deemed this strategy necessary for three reasons. First, he wanted to protect settlers from indigenous nations' resistance to white settlement, similar to the strategy England used in Ireland among the Catholic Irish. Second, he sought to prevent runaway slaves from developing maroon communities similar to those created in the mountains on Caribbean islands.<sup>50</sup> Gooch had reason to be concerned that something similar might happen in the remote mountain areas. Finally, Gooch wanted to protect British interests against French designs.<sup>51</sup>

The colony's restriction against dissenter migrants was not enforced in this region at first, as Gooch wanted population in this area. Anglican parishes organized only after the population of Anglicans became sufficient to support a parish structure.<sup>52</sup> Early on, the need for white settlers, any white settlers, was more important than the religious questions that would inevitably arise. This negligence later produced friction with Presbyterians who were at first elected to the vestry by the Scots-Irish populace in Augusta County.<sup>53</sup>

Regular Baptist cooperation with their Presbyterian and Anglican neighbors to care for orphans, to serve as local officials, and to participate in defensive military units, set the pattern for relating to their Anglican neighbors to support the welfare of the community. This part of Virginia was early impacted by the French and Indian War, the North American theatre of the seven-year conflict between England and France from 1756 to 1763. This conflict had both transatlantic and local consequences. Families were displaced from

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<sup>50</sup> Hofstra, 'Virginia backcountry', pp. 1281-1312, pp. 1299-1300.

<sup>51</sup> Hofstra, *Planting of New Virginia*, pp. 4-7.

<sup>52</sup> Virginia General Assembly, November 1738, 12<sup>th</sup> George II, Chap. XXI 'An Act, for erecting two new Counties, and Parishes; and granting certain encouragements to the Inhabitants thereof, in Hening, *Statutes*, vol. 5, p. 79, para. III.

<sup>53</sup> J. Ragosta, 'Fighting for Freedom: Virginia Dissenters' Struggle for Religious Liberty during the American Revolution', *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 116 (2008), pp. 226-261, pp. 229-230.

Hampshire and Frederick Counties as Shawnee nation warriors destroyed farms west of the mountains. England became very much aware of the mid-Atlantic backcountry and sought to map it to control its development.<sup>54</sup>

Regular Baptists followed the typical pattern of migration into Virginia. They journeyed through the Ohio River valley wilderness claimed by both Pennsylvania and Virginia, turning southward and settling in the Shenandoah Valley.<sup>55</sup> The vast majority of the settlers that flowed into Augusta County were Scots-Irish Presbyterians. Germans populated Frederick County. Colonial Virginian landowners migrated westward from more settled regions of Virginia. Regular Baptists migrated into the area from Pennsylvania, Maryland or New Jersey.<sup>56</sup> Gooch avoided friction between Anglicans and these migrants by not moving quickly to set up the system of counties and parishes in the western reaches of the colony until after sufficient Anglican settlement was in place.<sup>57</sup>

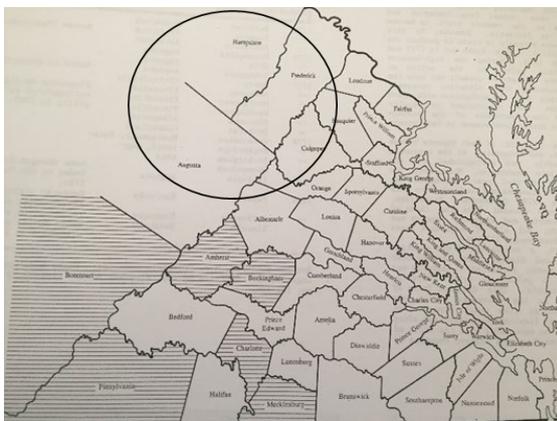


Figure 2.1: Contours of Augusta and Frederick Counties in 1761<sup>58</sup>

Regular Baptists were a smattering of the people who entered Virginia in the 1740s and 1750s. They had enough resources, however, to purchase land and became recognized

<sup>54</sup> Edelson, *Map of Empire*, pp. 65-101; Fischer and Kelly, *Bound Away*, p. 146.

<sup>55</sup> O. K. Rice and S. W. Brown, *West Virginia: A History*, 2d ed. (Lexington, KY, 1993), pp. 32-36.

<sup>56</sup> Hofstra, *Planting of New Virginia*, pp. 5-8; R. B. Drake, *A History of Appalachia (Lexington, KY, 2001)*, p. 38.

<sup>57</sup> Hofstra, 'Virginia backcountry', pp. 1281, 1308.

<sup>58</sup> Doran, *Atlas*, p. 27.

leaders in their communities. Regular Baptist Church members were among the larger landowners in Frederick and Augusta counties; some of them served as sheriffs, and as both militia officers and enlisted men. This level of involvement in the community, alongside Anglican settlers, and with official approval, demonstrated that religious pluralism did not hinder efforts at development of orderly social structures.

Regular Baptists were influential in their communities, as the region experienced the struggles of wilderness living during the French and Indian War.<sup>59</sup> Their meeting houses were established between 1756 and 1763, during the French and Indian War. In Augusta County, Baptists settled in the 1740s in the vicinity of Smith Creek and Linville Creek, which are branches of the Upper Shenandoah River. The community became part of Rockingham County when it was created in 1778. In Frederick County, Baptists settled in the 1750s near Mill Creek. The community became part of Berkeley County in 1772.

As new counties and new parishes were organized during these years, there was already a well-known and well-respected group of Regular Baptists in these places, whose contributions to community life stretched back for more than a decade. Regular Baptist laity had already settled in the upper branch of the Shenandoah River, a day's wagon ride from the county seat in Staunton, in the 1740s before a meeting house was established. The history of the beginning of the Smith and Linville Creek Baptist Church indicates that Samuel and Martha Newman and the Rees Thomas family arrived from Pennsylvania in the 1740s.<sup>60</sup> It appears that they quickly began informally seeking to convert others to the Baptist faith. The first neighbor who became convinced of the need to be baptized by immersion was John

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<sup>59</sup> Brock's Gap Church Records; Wayland, *Men of Mark*, pp. 403-404; Mill Creek Baptist Church Minutes, pp. 3-4; Kerns, *Old Frederick and Hampshire Counties*, p. 119; O'Dell, *Pioneers*, pp. 83-87, 269, 271, 169.

<sup>60</sup> Smith's Creek Regular Baptist Church in New Market, Virginia, is descended from this congregation, 'History of Smith's Creek Baptist Church', [www.smithcreekbaptistchurch.com/History.html](http://www.smithcreekbaptistchurch.com/History.html) (Accessed 14 August 2016); Good, *Smith Creek Baptist Church*.

Harrison, Sr., who traveled as far Oyster Bay, New York to receive this ordinance, because there was no ordained Baptist minister at that time in Augusta County.<sup>61</sup>

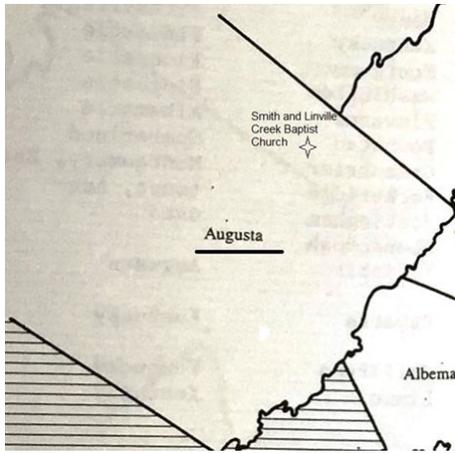


Figure 2.2: Augusta County 1761<sup>62</sup>

The Philadelphia Baptist Association sent preachers in 1756 to determine the support for a meeting house in Augusta County. These included Samuel Eaton, Benjamin Griffith, and John Gano, ‘a faithful servant . . . who was received by the love and liking of almost . . . all sorts of people’.<sup>63</sup> Gano recalls in his memoir that Samuel Newman served as a magistrate in Augusta County. Newman issued Gano a pass for travel during the French and Indian War. He used his office to help itinerant Gano avoid molestation by other authorities as he travelled. Newman enjoyed writing poetry and concluded the pass he issued with

For Jesus sake, this I demand of thee  
Stop not the bearer, through any vain pretence  
Nor use him with any insolence.  
Rather protect him from the base design  
of hellish man that should against him join  
A subject true he is to George our King  
O! join with him, to Jesus praises sing.  
Ye magistrates, who love sweet Jesus’ name  
Ye need not fear to sign the very same  
I, as your brother, under George our King

<sup>61</sup> Brock’s Gap Church Records, p. 6; Wayland, *Virginia Valley Records*, p. 48.

<sup>62</sup> Doran, *Atlas*, p. 27.

<sup>63</sup> Brock’s Gap Church Records, pp. 7-9.

Do sign this pass, and seal it with my ring.<sup>64</sup>

The pass highlights that Gano was not a threat to king or country, as was the case with Regular Baptists generally and which Newman wanted to emphasize to other area authorities.

Smith and Linville Creek Church, Augusta County, Virginia

Bell indicates that as ‘Baptists settled in the backcountry . . . [they] were . . . served initially by itinerant, and later settled, like-minded preachers’.<sup>65</sup> None of the Philadelphia Baptist missionaries remained in the area until Regular Baptist Elder John Alderson, Sr., purchased 200 acres from the Newmans to farm, to build a meeting house, and to serve as a place to bring his family from Newbritain Church in Bucks County, Pennsylvania in 1756. Smith and Linville Creek Baptist church was constituted on August 6, 1756.<sup>66</sup>

The church affirmed the Philadelphia Confession of faith, which was signed by the first eight members: John Alderson, Jane Alderson, Samuel Newman, Martha Newman, John Harrison, Sr., William Castle Berry and Margaret Castle Berry. These received brothers John and James Thomas through the ordinance of baptism, and Rees Thomas and Mary States, through ‘transient’ communion from churches in Pennsylvania.<sup>67</sup> Samuel Newman was appointed deacon and clerk of the church. It is likely that he composed the record in the church minute book.<sup>68</sup> The church was received into the Philadelphia Baptist Association on October 12, 1762, with a notation on its founding and progress. ‘A church constituted August 6, 1756, at Smith Creek, a branch of North Shenandoah, in the province of Virginia, was received into the Association the first day of the meeting. The first, and present minister of

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<sup>64</sup> J. Gano, *Biographical Memoirs of the Late Rev. John Gano, of Frankfort (Kentucky), formerly of the City of New York*, S. Gano (ed.), (New York, 1806), p. 147.

<sup>65</sup> J. Bell, *Empire*, p. 173.

<sup>66</sup> Good, *Smith Creek Baptist Church*, p. 3; Brock’s Gap Church Records, p. 3.

<sup>67</sup> Brock’s Gap Church Records, p. 6; Good, *Smith Creek Baptist Church*, p. 3.

<sup>68</sup> Brock’s Gap Church Records, pp. 6-7.

this church, is the Rev. John Alderson. The original constituents were but eleven, now they are thirty, including the eight that were baptized this year'.<sup>69</sup> Thus, the pastors in Philadelphia affirmed the work Alderson did in the Virginia wilderness.

A sketch of the Alderson family in John Cole's *History of Greenbrier County, West Virginia* reveals the typical life of a Regular Baptist elder. Most were farmers who led groups of Regular Baptists by serving as church elders. John Alderson, Sr., from Yorkshire, England, indentured himself for his ship's passage to the new world. Upon arriving in the Jerseys in 1719, a Baptist farmer named Curtis purchased his indenture. He completed his indenture in 1721 and married the farmer's daughter, Mary 'Jane' Curtis. Ordained by Hopewell Baptist Church in New Jersey, Alderson moved his family to Germantown, Pennsylvania, and eventually into Augusta County, Virginia. He and his wife parented eight children; including several next-generation preachers.<sup>70</sup> Alderson was appointed as a messenger by the church to the Kectocon Association meeting in 1762. He shared responsibilities for communion services at the meeting house with other area Baptist elders, John Garrard and David Thomas, who were based at Mill Creek Church in Frederick County, Virginia.<sup>71</sup> Alderson also appears in Augusta County records, serving as an executor for Rees Thomas' will, 21 December 1758.<sup>72</sup>

Regular Baptists had a well-deserved reputation for firm church discipline. Their Elders were not exempt from this. In 1774, Alderson was accused of 'unseemly behavior with a woman in Maryland',<sup>73</sup> and suspended from the church. By March 1777, he gave testimony of 'how the Lord hath restored him by a sound repentance' and he was 'received into his

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<sup>69</sup> Gillette (ed.), *Philadelphia Baptist Association* (1851), p. 86.

<sup>70</sup> J. R. Cole, *History of Greenbrier County* (Lewisburg, WV, 1917), pp. 308-309; W. J. Bryan, 'Baptist Beginnings and Expansion in Southern West Virginia', *American Baptist Quarterly*, 33 (2014): pp. 25-44, p. 25.

<sup>71</sup> Brock's Gap Church Records, August 1762, p. 15; May 1763, p. 16.

<sup>72</sup> Chalkley, *Scotch-Irish Settlement*, vol. 3, Kindle loc. 51-52.

<sup>73</sup> Brock's Gap Church Records, 13 August 1774, p. 23.

place in the church'.<sup>74</sup> John Alderson, Sr. eventually moved south to Botetourt County, Virginia, where he lived until his death in 1781.<sup>75</sup>

While Regular Baptists generally were well accepted by their Anglican neighbors and by the authorities, there were exceptions. Despite these frictions, members of Smith and Linville Creek made significant contributions to the good of their settlement. Little speculates John Alderson may have been jailed for failure to remit to the local Established church minister the marriage fees that he collected.<sup>76</sup> These fees were part of the perquisites that by law belonged to the Anglican Parish minister. Marriages were not legal without the parish minister's signature, even if a dissenting minister presided over the ceremony.<sup>77</sup> John Alderson's trouble with the law was likely an oversight and settled once the marriage fees for weddings he had officiated were remitted to Rev. John Jones, the Augusta parish minister.<sup>78</sup> Smith and Linville's minutes also indicate some friction with local Presbyterians. In September 21, 1757, Rev. Alexander Miller opened the Baptist meeting house, 'assumed our pulpit and there slanderously, falsely and contrary to Christian rule and order, despitefully use our minister and brother, the Deacon. . . . [Miller] 'disturbed the churches [sic] peace and the peace of our neighborhood'.<sup>79</sup>

Smith and Linville Creek Church members who left a positive imprint on Augusta County include Silas Hart and Cornelius Ruddell. Early in the church's life, in June 1758, a

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<sup>74</sup> Brock's Gap Church Records, 15 March 1777, p. 25.

<sup>75</sup> Cole, *Greenbrier County*, p. 308.

<sup>76</sup> L. P. Little, *Imprisoned Preachers*, pp. 457-460.

<sup>77</sup> 'The Memorial of the Baptist Association met at Sandy Creek in Charlotte, the 16<sup>th</sup> day of October 1780, on behalf of themselves and those who they represent' requested 'relief from the present vestry law and condition whereby marriages solemnized by dissenting ministers are not confirmed and sanctioned by law', Charlotte County, 8 November 1780, Legislative Petitions of the General Assembly, 1776-1865, Accession Number 36121, Box 53, Folder 8; 'The Memorial of the Baptist Association' petitioning for eligibility to serve on vestries and for dissenter marriage to be recognized', 3 June 1782, Legislative Petitions of the General Assembly, 1776-1865, Accession Number 36121, Box 290, Folder 27, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA (Accessed 10 January 2017).

<sup>78</sup> Ruffin, *Augusta Parish*, p. 39.

<sup>79</sup> Brock's Gap Church Records, p. 12.

gentleman ‘of no mean character, a man in authority both civil and military’, Cornelius Ruddell, who ‘had often opposed the truths we profess publicly; yet he (by the mercy of God at the opportunity) was convinced of the truth of the cause he had opposed, humbled himself to submit to the ordinances he had despised, and gave orderly obedience to them; publicly confessing his faith and hope towards God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, and owning his gospel institutions, and was accordingly received a member of the said church with the other. He was formerly by profession a Church of England man’.<sup>80</sup> In 1755 and 1761, Ruddell served as a Captain of the Frederick County Militia.<sup>81</sup>

On September 17, 1746 Silas Hart was added to the list of tithables in Augusta Parish; this designation indicated that he owned or rented land and was a householder. Though a Baptist in Pennsylvania, he did not join Smith and Linville Creek Church until May 1766, where the church noted in the minutes that he ‘was received into full communion by a letter from Penypack Church in Pennsylvania’.<sup>82</sup> He apparently held onto his dismissal letter from Penypack Church and twenty years later, presented it to Smith and Linville Church. In 1751, the Augusta Parish vestry bound out to him an orphan, John Patton. Another orphan also found a home with him, John Lyn, age eight, on August 20, 1752. Hart was obligated to train them as coopers, a trade which built barrels, and teach them to read, write and cypher.<sup>83</sup>

Hart’s experience highlights that Anglican leaders trusted Regular Baptists living among them. Religious diversity, it seemed, could work well under the right circumstances. Hart was well trusted by the larger community. He had extensive dealings with Augusta County Court where he served as a justice between 1745 and 1778, when he became a justice

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<sup>80</sup> Brock’s Gap Church Records, pp. 10-11.

<sup>81</sup> Milbourne, ‘Frederick County Militia’, pp. 57-60; pp. 57, 59.

<sup>82</sup> Chalkley, *Scotch-Irish Settlement*, vol. 1, Kindle loc. 490; Brock’s Gap Church Records, p. 18; Wayland, *Virginia Valley Records*, p. 54.

<sup>83</sup> Augusta Parish Vestry Book, pp. 79, 106.

in newly formed Rockingham County.<sup>84</sup> He also served as the High Sherriff of Augusta County in 1767.<sup>85</sup> Apparently his membership in a Baptist church did not affect his social standing. Perhaps this was due to his extensive land holdings. Hart owned about 400 acres of land on the North Branch of the Shenandoah River and 460 acres along the James River.<sup>86</sup> Even so, the level of trust placed in him attests to his character and his acceptance in the larger community.

Silas Hart was a very busy man. In March 1776, the church sent Elder John Thomas to ‘hear his reason for absenting himself from church meetings’.<sup>87</sup> It was the practice of Baptists in this period to keep their members accountable for regular attendance. They did not have the law on their side requiring attendance, so they had to use a more personal approach. It is not clear what kept Hart away for those months, but there is no record that he was ever dismissed from the membership of the church. He was as respected within his Regular Baptist congregation, as he was in the larger community.

When Hart died in 1795, his will ‘left a devise to the Baptist Association that ordinarily meets at Philadelphia for the education of youths of Baptist denomination who shall appear promising for the ministry’.<sup>88</sup> The Philadelphia Baptist Association hired a lawyer to petition the county court for the monies, but the executors of the will argued that Hart had not specified the association by name and would not honor their petition for the bequest. John Wayland indicates that case finally wound up at the Supreme Court in 1819,

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<sup>84</sup> Chalkley, *Scotch-Irish Settlement*, vol. 1, Order Book 1, August 9, 1745 through Order Book 16, February 18, 1778, Kindle.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 1, Kindle 2958.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, vol 3, Circuit Court Deed Book 2, page 260, 278.

<sup>87</sup> Brock’s Gap Church Records, p. 23.

<sup>88</sup> Chalkley, *Scotch-Irish Settlement*, Various Papers, vol. 2.

where the chief justice, John Marshall, wrote the decision. Wayland notes that this decision coincides with the founding of a ‘theological seminary at Hamilton, New York’.<sup>89</sup>

#### Mill Creek Church, Frederick County, Virginia

Mill Creek Regular Baptist Meeting House was formed in Frederick County, Virginia, by settlers in the area in 1753. This settlement was about 20 miles north of Winchester, the county seat. On May 25, 1761, members present signed a covenant to constitute Mill Creek Church. The roster of names contains 139 entries, 70 men and 69 women. The church record indicates that the church was originally constituted in 1753. Officers included John Garrard, as pastor; Isaac Sutton as ruling elder; and John Hayes, Jr. as clerk.<sup>90</sup> There is no record of business meetings between 1753 and 1761, which suggests the church did not meet regularly while the members were caught up in the defense of their homes or were war time refugees.

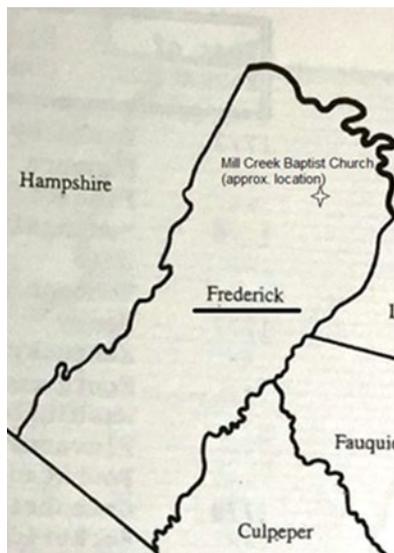


Figure 2.3 Frederick County 1761<sup>91</sup>

<sup>89</sup> Wayland, *Virginia Valley Records*, 54; United States Supreme Court, February Term 1819, *The Trustees of the Philadelphia Baptist Association et al v. Hart's Executors*, 4 *Wheaton's Reports*, 1, in *Condensed Reports of Cases in the Supreme Court of the United States*, vol. IV, edited by Richard Peters (Philadelphia, 1833), pp. 371-388, HeinOnline, (Accessed: 10 January 2017).

<sup>90</sup> Mill Creek Baptist Church Minutes, p. 10.

<sup>91</sup> Doran, *Atlas*, p. 27.

The church was aware of needs outside and inside the church membership. They followed the model of the parish church to care for the poor; although made voluntarily contributions to support them, since the congregation had no taxing authority over their membership. On August 5, 1769, the Mill Creek church clerk made this entry: ‘Whereas it has been a custom in the churches in Virginia to give up their [orphaned] infants to the care of the church, we therefore think it our indispensable duty to join them in the custom’.<sup>92</sup> Within a survey of abstracts, compiled for Frederick County, Virginia court records, compared to the church’s membership roll, however, does not indicate that members were assigned as guardians or received children for indentured service.<sup>93</sup> On October 29, 1775, church members pledged nine bushels of wheat and two bushels of corn toward the support of a couple as they were ‘incapable [sic] of maintaining themselves’.<sup>94</sup> The value of this gift is around 3.08 shillings for the wheat; 34.2 shillings for the corn; total 37.2 shillings.

The Garrard family migrated into Frederick County, Virginia in 1754, moving from Pennsylvania, where they lived among Welsh Baptists.<sup>95</sup> Shawnee raids forced Garrard and most of Mill Creek’s members to relocate into Loudoun County on the other side of the Blue Ridge from Frederick. While in Loudoun County, they helped strengthen Kettoctin Baptist Church, and Garrard served as a delegate from the church for the formation of the Kettocton Association in August of 1766.<sup>96</sup> He and David Thomas were frequent travelling

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<sup>92</sup> Doran, *Atlas*, p. 27.

<sup>93</sup> Kerns, *Old Frederick and Hampshire Counties*; J. E. S. King, *Frederick County*.

<sup>94</sup> Mill Creek Baptist Church Minutes, October 29, 1775, p. 11.

<sup>95</sup> R. B. Howell, *Early Baptists of Virginia: An Address, Delivered in New York, Before the American Baptist Historical Society, May 10, 1856* (Philadelphia, PA, 1857), pp. 31-32; J. B. Taylor, *Lives of Virginia Baptist Ministers*, 2d ed., rev. and enlarged (Richmond, VA, 1838), pp. 22-23.

<sup>96</sup> Fristoe, *Kettocton Baptist Association*, pp. 5-6. The spelling variant (Kettoctin/Kettocton) is used by church and association histories to differentiate between the two entities. Kettoctin refers to the Baptist church in Loudoun County, Virginia; Kettocton refers to the Baptist Association of which the Kettoctin Baptist Church was a founding member.

companions, preaching together in the Northern Virginia counties.<sup>97</sup> John Corbly was baptized by Garrard, when he returned to Mill Creek. Corbly shortly thereafter began itinerate preaching. Finding himself locked up in Culpeper, Virginia, once freed, he ventured into the wilderness area in Hampshire County and in the contested territory in the Ohio River Valley.<sup>98</sup> Anglican leaders did not look upon itinerant preachers with favor, as it was a relatively new preaching strategy, introduced into the colonies by George Whitefield.<sup>99</sup>

Church members were also aware of events outside their community and they were willing participants as opportunity arose. It was testimony to their neighbors that they identified closely with the community and with their fellow colonial citizens. Word had gotten to them in 1774 that a calamity had befallen Boston. The church, in an undated business session, agreed to ‘the request of our assembly that Wednesday the 15<sup>th</sup> of June 1774 be kept as a day of fasting on account of the calamity which has befallen Boston’.<sup>100</sup> This was in response to an order of the House of Burgesses proclaiming a fast day on June 1, 1774 in response to the blockade of Boston Harbour by the crown.<sup>101</sup> Such fast days, according to McBride, ‘were rooted in the political and religious culture of England’;<sup>102</sup> thus, a call for a fast day was a traditional means to call a community together to encourage a unified response to a crisis. The extent of Williamsburg’s reach is evidenced in Mill Creek’s response. On May 26, Governor Dunmore prorogued the House, but the proclamation was nonetheless printed and distributed. It apparently did not make it to the western regions of the

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<sup>97</sup> J. B. Taylor, *Virginia Baptist Ministers* (1838), p. 44.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105.

<sup>99</sup> T. D. Hall, *Contested Boundaries: Itinerancy and the Reshaping of the Colonial American Religious World* (Durham, NC, 1994), p. 37; T. S. Kidd, *George Whitefield: America’s Spiritual Founding Father* (New Haven, CT, 2014), pp. 191-193.

<sup>100</sup> Mill Creek Baptist Church Minutes, undated notation, p. 11.

<sup>101</sup> J. P. Kennedy (ed.), *Journals of the House of Burgesses*, 24 May 1774, vol. 13, 1773-1776, (Richmond, VA, 1905), p. 124, HeinOnline (Accessed: 15 August 2016).

<sup>102</sup> S. W. McBride, *Pulpit and Nation: Clergymen and the Politics of Revolutionary America* (Charlottesville, VA, 2016), pp. 12-16, p. 12.

state until after the official June 1st fast day, but Mill Creek nevertheless responded to the call of the House of Burgesses for a day of fasting.

*Local Anglican and Regular Baptist Responses to the French and Indian War*

Regular Baptists in Augusta and Frederick Counties were impacted by decisions made in Williamsburg and in London. With Lord Fairfax having a lock on northern Virginia quit rents, land speculators' interest focused northward on the Ohio Valley toward the end of Gooch's term. His successor, Robert Dinwiddie, encouraged speculator interest in the territory. Exploration of the Ohio territory, however, put Virginia into contact with the French military that was garrisoned on Lake Erie, and eventually touched off the French and Indian War, the North American theatre of the Seven Years War between England and France.<sup>103</sup>

The success of Britain's colonies in North America and in the Caribbean were a springboard for British adventurers and speculators to expand their trading networks and risk-taking possibilities. This did not go unnoticed. France had trading settlements in Canada and along the southern shores of the Great Lakes. Indigenous people groups, for whom trading was a 'peace' language, enjoyed a positive relationship with the French. France, however, was not enthusiastic about British settlers moving west from the Atlantic coastline into territory south of their position. Closer proximity in the west made both colonial powers uneasy.<sup>104</sup> The North American colonies were one of the boards on which an international 'chess match' was set, albeit with players who did not trust one another to play their part in good faith. T. R. Clayton contends that the war was not so much the result of the greed of wealthy Virginia land speculators, as the result of political maneuvers by the various seats of

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<sup>103</sup> Mulkearn (comp. and ed.), 'Minutes of the Ohio Company Committee, March 27, 1750', *Mercer Papers Ohio Company*, p. 5; Anderson, *Crucible of War*, pp. 31-32.

<sup>104</sup> Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors*, pp. 34-35.

power in Europe, using the Ohio Valley to test their strength.<sup>105</sup> Scanlan and Edelson note that the French and British Empires coveted the wealth of the Ohio River Valley. The French wanted to maintain control of the fur trade and British settlements in the region impacted their profits.<sup>106</sup> Indian groups were squeezed between the French and British. David Preston indicates ‘displaced Indian groups sought independence in Ohio, “a country between” the French and British rivals, as an Iroquois leader named Tanaghrisson characterized it’.<sup>107</sup> The region was ‘fantastically rich in arable land and fur-bearing game’<sup>108</sup> to which the Delawares, Shawnees, and Mingos moved seeking space between the Iroquois federation and the French-controlled areas. Silver summarizes that ‘Clashes between French and Virginian expeditions in this militarized borderland led . . . to formal war. Most Ohio Indians cast their lot with the French’, especially after Braddock’s defeat.<sup>109</sup>

When Robert Dinwiddie succeeded Sir William Gooch as governor in 1751, he received correspondence from Thomas Cresap, the Ohio Company agent in the region, complaining about French incursions into the territory. The British presence was troublesome to both indigenous tribes and to the French, for different reasons, and the settlers found themselves harried and endangered by settling in space contested by far-away forces at work. France wanted to maintain their monopoly of trading with Iroquois confederation in the area. Dinwiddie wanted good relations with the local indigenous groups to thwart French designs on the Ohio country. The Ohio River country became a flashpoint between the French and British because both nations saw it as vital to their North American interests, even as they

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<sup>105</sup> T. R. Clayton, ‘The Duke of Newcastle, the Earl of Halifax, and the American origins of the Seven Years War,’ *The Historical Journal*, 24 (September 1981), pp. 571-603.

<sup>106</sup> L. W. Scanlan, ‘Clash of Empires: How the French and Indian War redrew the map of North America’, *Humanities* (May-June 2005), pp. 18-22; Edelson, *Map of Empire*, pp. 29-31.

<sup>107</sup> D. L. Preston, *Braddock’s Defeat: The Battle of the Monongahela and the Road to the Revolution* (New York, 2015), p. 12.

<sup>108</sup> Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors*, p. 34.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.

were not certain of the boundaries.<sup>110</sup> The Ohioan tribes were unwilling participants in the struggle between the French and British. Settlers in the area, both dissenters and Anglican Church members were willing participants, mostly interested in the fertile land of that region which offered opportunities for a new beginning agriculturally.

Dinwiddie received permission from the Board of Trade and the Secretary for the South to negotiate with the French. He was perhaps too loose with the facts on the ground, claiming to have militia strength of fifty thousand men to back up his authority to evict them.<sup>111</sup> He commissioned the eager colonial major George Washington to parlay with the French at Fort Le Beouf, an outpost on Lake Erie. Dinwiddie sent him with a letter demanding the French departure from the Ohio Country.<sup>112</sup> Washington made the arduous journey in December 1753 and returned with the French's dismissive letter in response.<sup>113</sup>

Based on this evidence, Dinwiddie, acting on Holderness's instructions to defend the boundaries of his colony, initiated the process of gathering men for the purpose of expelling the French by constructing and manning a fort at the forks of the Ohio and Monongahela Rivers. He assumed, like his superiors in London, that a quick thrust of force would be sufficient to deter the enemy.<sup>114</sup> Dinwiddie sent letters in 1754 to the militia leaders in Frederick and Augusta counties to gather one hundred volunteers each, and send them to

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<sup>110</sup> R. Dinwiddie, Lieutenant-Governor of Virginia, letter to T. Cresap, Agent Ohio Company, 23 January 1752, in Brock (ed.), *The Official Records of Robert Dinwiddie*, p. 19; J. Wright, *A Compleat History of the Late War or Annual Register of its Rise, Progress, and Events, in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America and Exhibiting the State of the Belligerent Powers at the Commencement of the War; their Interests and Objects in its Continuance . . .*, vol. 1 (London 1765), pp. 2-3, Eighteenth Century Online (Accessed: 30 May 2016); J. Titus, *The Old Dominion at War: Society, Politics, and Warfare in Late Colonial Virginia* (Columbia, SC, 1991), p. 13.

<sup>111</sup> A. D. M. Beaumont, *Colonial America and the Earl of Halifax, 1748-1761* (New York, 2015), p. 115.

<sup>112</sup> 'Minutes of the Council held October 29, 1753', in Hall (ed.), *Executive Journals*, vol. V, p. 444; T. A. Lewis, *For King and Country: The Maturing of George Washington, 1748-1760* (New York, 2006), pp. 42-43; Anderson, *Crucible of War*, p. 41.

<sup>113</sup> Titus, *Old Dominion at War*, p. 22; T. A. Lewis, *King and Country*, pp. 111-112. Fort Le Beouf was located in present-day northwestern Pennsylvania; this area was at the time claimed by Virginia. Letter from Captain Legardeur De st Pierre to Lt. Gov. Robert Dinwiddie, 15 December 1753, 'Minutes of the Executive Council held 21 January 1754', in Hall (ed.), *Executive Journals*, vol. V, p. 458.

<sup>114</sup> Titus, *Old Dominion at War*, p. 29.

Winchester, Virginia for training.<sup>115</sup> He assigned the task of training the Virginia regiment to George Washington. Dinwiddie also asked Washington to provide an account of his first meeting with the French to a reluctant House of Burgesses to convince them to underwrite the costs of the expedition. To the House, it looked like Dinwiddie was using patriotism as a pretense to protect the speculative interests of the partners of the Ohio Company.<sup>116</sup>

James Titus points to Dinwiddie's decision to assemble a small force to build and man a fort at the confluence of the Ohio and Monongahela Rivers as the decision 'that lead directly to war'.<sup>117</sup> Washington's expedition arrived at the fork of the rivers and began building what Washington named Fort Necessity. A group of his men scouting stumbled upon a group of French near the fort site. A skirmish ensued and several French soldiers were killed. This 'first blood' brought out a French regiment from Fort Le Boeuf that forced Washington to surrender the site. Fort Necessity became Fort Duquesne, and 'Virginia had blundered into a serious conflict'.<sup>118</sup> Ward comments this 'game of brinkmanship' initiated by Dinwiddie in 1754 led to the 'largest of the colonial wars' and soon became global.<sup>119</sup>

When it became evident that Dinwiddie could not deliver the expected result, the Crown started directing matters. Major General Edward Braddock was commissioned to retake Fort Duquesne, using a mix of British Regulars and Virginia militia. The Virginians expected the problem to be dispensed with once and for all.<sup>120</sup> The spectacular loss of Braddock on a retreat from the Ohio River valley emboldened the French-Indian alliance.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Titus, *Old Dominion at War*, p. 28; T. A. Lewis, *For King and Country*, p. 125.

<sup>116</sup> Anderson, *Crucible of War*, p. 45; Titus, *Old Dominion at War*, p. 22; Ward, *Breaking the Back Country*, p. 32.

<sup>117</sup> Titus, *Old Dominion at War*, p. 29.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>119</sup> Ward, *Breaking the Back Country*, p. 31.

<sup>120</sup> Titus, *Old Dominion at War*, pp. 46, 71; Ward, *Breaking the Back Country*, pp. 57-58.

<sup>121</sup> Ward, *Breaking the Back Country*, p. 36; E. Hinderaker and P. C. Mancall, *At the Edge of Empire: The Backcountry in British North America* (Baltimore, MD, 2003), p. 108.

While most of the conflict focused on the Canadian border, the Virginia backcountry was left virtually unprotected. This left Regular Baptists and others who settled in the region vulnerable and spurred a refugee migration eastward.

There was little that the government in Williamsburg could actually do to fortify the area in so short a time. Dinwiddie ordered the building of log forts, about twenty miles apart along the mountain ridges, lightly manned by local militia, but raiders had no difficulty moving past them singly or in small groups to regroup behind them.<sup>122</sup> Settlers panicked when a Shawnee raiding party took a fort. Wagons carrying families and their possessions jammed the roads as settlers headed eastward for safety. The warfare was devastating throughout the wilderness.<sup>123</sup> Titus describes it as a ‘war of petty but bloody ambushes; unconnected skirmishes--war at its most basic level: man hunting man. . . . As raiding parties of hostile Indians descended on isolated frontier settlements, the war became not only protracted but increasingly expensive in terms of human life. . . . [The] horrors of war visited the Virginia backcountry in ways that the military planners of 1754 had never imagined’.<sup>124</sup>

Facing a common threat made allies of neighbors and such interaction may have helped pave the way for positive relations in later years between Anglican and their non-conforming neighbors. As Matthew Ward highlights in *Breaking the Backcountry*, Virginia experienced attacks by Shawnee nation warriors who saw a weakness to exploit in the western fringes of British settlement in Virginia. Most of the Virginia armed forces and munitions defending England’s prerogatives were north of the area around present-day Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The Shawnee hoped to push white settlement eastward over the mountains in Virginia. They were able to temporarily drop Frederick County’s population

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<sup>122</sup> Titus, *Old Dominion at War*, p. 102.

<sup>123</sup> Ward, *Breaking the Back Country*, pp. 56-57.

<sup>124</sup> Titus, *Old Dominion at War*, pp. 73-74.

by one-third and significantly decrease Augusta County's population.<sup>125</sup> Both Anglicans and Regular Baptists in these wilderness counties left records that reflect the hardships experienced by the settler population. Both struggled to maintain their presence and to care for those most impacted by the Shawnee raids.

### Impact of Shawnee Raids on Augusta Parish

The Shawnee raids were sporadic but quite violent. In 1756, a small contingent of militia at Fort Vause in Augusta country, Virginia, was besieged. The fort had been designed to be 100 feet square with 14-foot stockades.<sup>126</sup> When their ammunition was 'exhausted, the small garrison gave up the place upon a promise of being permitted to retire. When the men came out, the enemy, enraged on account of the small number that had withstood them, slaughtered some and carried off others as prisoners'.<sup>127</sup> Joseph Waddell's list of casualties in Augusta County from 1754 to 1758 include militia casualties of 10 killed and 2 prisoners taken and returned. The civilian casualties include 106 killed, 20 wounded, 100 prisoners (13 of whom escaped).<sup>128</sup> Ward indicates that the population of Augusta County between 1754 and 1758 was reduced by nearly one-half and did not rebound to pre-war levels until 1764.<sup>129</sup>

The Anglican commissary called a meeting of parish ministers to urge support for the coming conflict; an example of religion used to urge support for the government's martial (albeit defensive) activity. The Augusta parish minister, the Rev. John Jones, began his service in 1752, stayed with the parish through the war, and into retirement in 1769.<sup>130</sup> He

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<sup>125</sup> Ward, *Breaking the Back Country*, pp. 48-49; 60-61; C. Young, 'The effects of the Seven Years War on civilian life in the frontier counties of Virginia, 1754-1763' (PhD diss., Vanderbilt University, 1969), p. 207.

<sup>126</sup> W. W. King, 'Council of War', pp. 45-46, p. 46.

<sup>127</sup> J. A. Waddell, 'Indian Wars in Augusta County', *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 2 (1895), pp. 397-404, p. 398; J. A. Waddell, *Annals of Augusta County from 1726 to 1871*, 2d ed. (Staunton, VA, 1902), pp. 114-115.

<sup>128</sup> Waddell, 'Indian Wars', pp. 397-404, pp. 399-404.

<sup>129</sup> Ward, *Breaking the Back Country*, p. 71.

<sup>130</sup> August Parish Vestry Book, pp. 107, 465.

was among the ministers who travelled to Williamsburg in October 1754, at the start of the French and Indian War, to a meeting called by Anglican Commissary Thomas Dawson. Dawson urged clerical support for the war effort. Dawson urged those gathered to not become despondent as the church was ‘attacked by the blind zeal of fanaticism on the one hand [dissenters] and the furious malice of popery on the other’ [the French], all the while dealing with parishioners who were ‘licentious and indifferent to religion’.<sup>131</sup> Dawson exhorted those gathered, ‘. . . it behooves us to consider that consequences are in the hand of God, but that duty is in ours. That this our labor may be lost to our unhappy flock, it will not be lost to ourselves, that tho’ we save not others, we shall save our souls at that great day’.<sup>132</sup> He further urged the convention to support the fight against the French and Indians from their pulpits. A letter from Governor Dinwiddie was read to the assembly, which included the following, ‘I shall take it in kind, if you will, from your pulpits, inculcate into the people the great danger we are exposed to both as to our lives, liberties, estates, and what should be most dear to us, religion’.<sup>133</sup> Jones returned to Augusta County with a mandate to encourage support for the war effort among his parishioners. As a junior partner in the governance of the colony, Established Church ministers were expected to follow the orders given them.

The parish vestry was called on for leadership during the French and Indian War, and not without cost. A majority of the twelve elected men were required at a meeting and when someone resigned, the vestry, functioning like a self-perpetuating body, chose another community leader take the role. During this period, four vestrymen resigned their seats; Sampson Archer because he was ‘moving out of the colony’.<sup>134</sup> John Buchanan, one of the

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<sup>131</sup>August Parish Vestry Book, pp. 107, 128, 464.

<sup>132</sup> Dawson, ‘Address to the Clergy Assembled’, in *Fulham*, vol. 13, image 138-139; 147, microfilm.

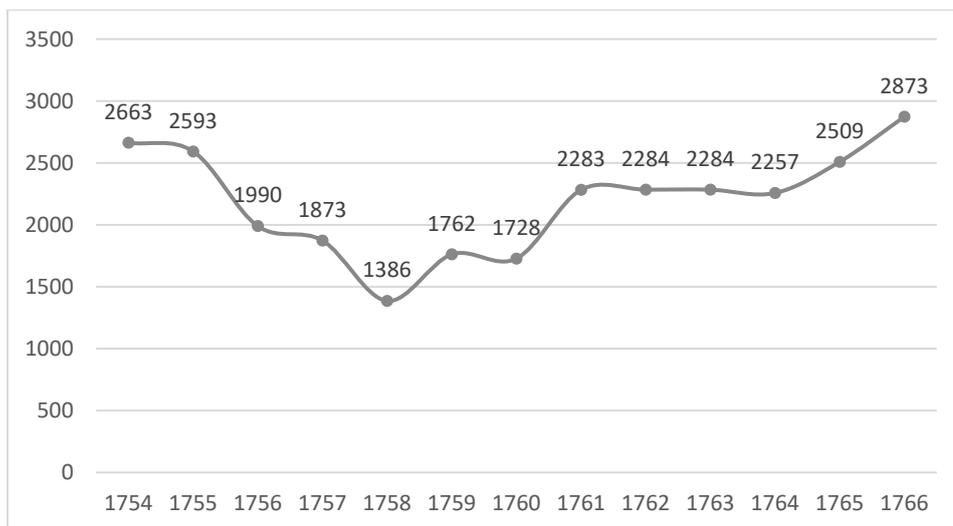
<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 13, image 47. For a summary of Thomas Dawson’s career as the Bishop’s Commissary, see Brydon, *Virginia’s Mother Church*, vol. II, pp. 271-283.

<sup>134</sup> Augusta Parish Vestry Book, pp. 233, 257, 320, 346, 356, 370.

early Vestry members, presided over the Council of War for Augusta County on July 27, 1756. Vestrymen James Lockhart and Robert Breckenridge were present at the Council designated as captains.<sup>135</sup> Israel Christian, who also served as a captain of one of Augusta County's militia companies in 1756, became a vestryman in 1759.<sup>136</sup>

During the period of the French and Indian War, the number of Tithables reflects the flight and return of householders back to their homesteads. The early years of the war saw a drop in eligible tithables of 1277 between 1754 and 1758, with the number not fully recovering until 1766.<sup>137</sup>

Table 2.1: Tithables in Augusta County, 1754-1766<sup>138</sup>



<sup>135</sup> W. W. King, 'Council of War', pp. 45-46.

<sup>136</sup> Augusta Parish Vestry Book, p. 265; W. W. King, 'Companies organized in 1756', pp. 70-72, p. 71.

<sup>137</sup> Augusta Parish Vestry Book, pp. 145-415.

<sup>138</sup> Augusta Parish Vestry Book, 27 November 1754, p. 145; 27 November 1755, p. 167; 23 November 1756, p. 187; 19 November 1757, p. 195; 26 November 1758, p. 233; 26 November 1759, p. 266; 24 November 1760, p. 310; 28 November 1761, p. 350; 29 November 1762, p. 357-358; 17 November 1763, p. 371; 24 November 1764, p. 375; 21 October 1765, p. 403; 22 November 1766, p. 415.

This presented a challenge to the parish's role as safety net. Disrupted households sometimes resulted in children without an adult male parent present in their homes.<sup>139</sup> Children whose inheritances could not support their upbringing were bound out to other parish households through the vestry, by court-order, to be indentured servants. White males were bound until twenty-one years of age; white females until eighteen.<sup>140</sup>

Augusta's vestry also dealt with progenitors of children who were not married, either by placing the child in an indenture arrangement, or by requiring a security bond of the declared father to indemnify the parish should care for the child fall to them.<sup>141</sup> Between 1747 and 1769, 184 children were placed into households, as servants, through the indenture process; nearly half of these placements took place during the French and Indian War. In 1758, at the height of the fighting and raiding in the Virginia backcountry, twenty-six children were placed in an indenture arrangement, half of them orphans.<sup>142</sup>

Regular Baptists were reliable members of the community, as evidenced by the Anglican vestry's willingness to assign orphans to them for care. The Anglican vestry trusted their Regular Baptist neighbors to care for these war orphans. Regular Baptists demonstrated their reliability to serve the needs of their community at large. The Augusta Parish Vestry Book records a few orphans who were indentured to area Regular Baptists.<sup>143</sup> Elizabeth Hodge determined that Samuel Newman, Smith and Linville's Deacon and Church Clerk, should have her son, Jacob, bound to him as a general laborer.<sup>144</sup> Later in 1752, the Augusta

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<sup>139</sup> Ruffin, *Augusta Parish*, pp. 25-27.

<sup>140</sup> Virginia General Assembly, 20 September 1671 to 24 September 1672, Act VII, 'An Act for Suppressing of Vagabonds and Disposing of Poore Children to Trades', in Hening, *Statutes*, vol. 2, p. 298.

<sup>141</sup> The securities range from 16 pounds to 100 pounds. For example, on December 6, 1757, the vestry imposed a security bond of 100 pounds, for a child not born, who 'when born may become chargeable to the parish' (Augusta Parish Vestry Book, p. 194).

<sup>142</sup> Augusta Parish Vestry Book, pp. 198-224; Young, 'Effects of the Seven Years War', pp. 320-324.

<sup>143</sup> Augusta Parish Vestry Book, Indenture Record, 25 July 1751, p. 79 (Silas Hart); Indenture record, 17 June 1752, p. 99 (Samuel Newman); Indenture Record, 20 August 1752, p. 106 (Silas Hart).

<sup>144</sup> Chalkley, *Scotch-Irish Settlement*, Will Book 1, 2 February 1752, Kindle loc. 1202.

Parish Vestry also assigned orphan John Hough to Mr. Newman.<sup>145</sup> In 1754, John Harrison accepted custody of a two-year-old child born out of wedlock.<sup>146</sup> Older orphans were allowed to choose their guardians upon a parent's decease. Josiah Davidson chose Mr. Harrison.<sup>147</sup> In August 1773, John Kerr, who had been bound out to Isaac Morris, was reassigned.<sup>148</sup>

The pressure on adult poor relief during the Shawnee raids got so tremendous that the parish, soon after hostilities ended, decided to build a house for the poor and to hire an overseer of the poor to manage the upkeep and care of the adult indigents in the county.<sup>149</sup> This was intended to replace the ad-hoc process that the levy lists reflect. People were instructed to bring their claims to the vestry with the hope that expenses they incurred while helping charity cases would be added to the list that determined the levy and that they would be reimbursed out of the collected levy. The project to secure land and build the poor house took longer than the vestry anticipated. Having initiated the project in 1764, the land was still not purchased a year later. The 1766 levy reimbursed John Poage for the timber to build the poor house on land purchased from vestry members Sampson and George Mathews. In 1768 the vestry finally contracted an overseer of the poor to manage the house.<sup>150</sup>

The raids also disrupted the worship services of the Anglican parish. In November 1757, the vestry shut down one the chapels of ease, where they had a paid reader. The record of the meeting reads, 'As it appears to this vestry that the greatest part of the inhabitants in the forks of the James River have deserted their plantations by reason of the frequent

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<sup>145</sup> Chalkley, *Scotch-Irish Settlement*, vol. 2, Augusta County Vestry Book, 17 June 1752, Kindle loc. 18124.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 1, Order book 3, 24 August 1754, Kindle loc. 1409.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 1, Order book 7, 19 May 1761, Kindle loc. 1837.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 1, Order book 15, 13 August 1773, Kindle loc. 3722.

<sup>149</sup> Augusta Parish Vestry Book, p. 379.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 400, 414-415, 427, and 454.

incursions of the enemy Indians it is therefore the opinion of the vestry that a chapel of ease in that part of the parish is unnecessary and need for the reader is thereby discontinued'.<sup>151</sup>

#### Impact of Shawnee Raids on Regular Baptists in Augusta County

Confidence in the loyalty and patriotism of Regular Baptists is illustrated by the trust placed in them by local militia leaders. Miller's lists of Augusta County men involved in the militia include Smith and Linville Creek Baptist Church members John Harrison (private) and John Ozban (sergeant).<sup>152</sup> Regular Baptists were motivated to serve in local militias. In September 1757, Indians fell 'on our settlements, and disordered the whole'.<sup>153</sup> The Brock's Gap and South Branch of the Shenandoah communities experienced casualties between November 1757 and April of 1758. One of the casualties, John States, was killed in November 1757 at Brock's Gap.<sup>154</sup> He may have been related to Smith and Linville Creek Baptist church member Mary States. Regular Baptist Elder John Alderson stayed in Augusta County during the time of the French and Indian War when church meetings were sporadic. The church did not meet regularly until January 1758. Then, in May 1763, church meetings were again disrupted 'by the barbourous enemy the Indians . . . the church being scattered' only to gather again in September 1763.<sup>155</sup> Joseph Waddell notes that 307 persons died as a result of the raiding done by the Shawnee and Delaware nations from the beginning of the war to 1758.<sup>156</sup> When the Virginia General Assembly appropriated £20,000 for authorized back pay for the militia that had served in the French and Indian War, Augusta County militia

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<sup>151</sup> Augusta Parish Vestry Book, p. 197; Ruffin, *Augusta Parish*, p. 50.

<sup>152</sup> Miller, 'Augusta men', pp. 128-144, pp. 130, 134.

<sup>153</sup> Brock's Gap Church Records, 21 September 1757, p. 12.

<sup>154</sup> Miller, 'Augusta men', p. 144.

<sup>155</sup> Brock's Gap Church Records, September 1757, p. 12; May 1763, p. 16.

<sup>156</sup> Waddell, 'Indian wars', pp. 397-404, p. 397; Ward, *Breaking the Backcountry*, p. 166.

received £3,866, three shillings, five ducats. This sum was ‘nearly three times the sum received by any other county,’ according to Miller.<sup>157</sup>

The meeting minutes of Smith and Linville Baptist Creek church reflect the instability of the period. In January of 1758, the members of Smith and Linville Church gathered, despite ‘the disorders that attended us, as that with comfort and peace, we could proceed in the ordinance the day following our meeting of business and regulation of our church affairs. The first part of said day was spent in solemn humiliation, with prayer and fasting (under a consideration of our unworthiness of the great favour we had enjoyed in such perilous times)’.<sup>158</sup> The following June, the minutes reflect a desire to understand why God allowed the raids. ‘The Indian troubles continued, and all opportunities of meeting were taken from us, and not only so, but the whole neighborhood forced either to go into forts or over the mountains, to escape their rage’. They saw the Indian raids as an expression of ‘our heavenly Fathers wrath; and we disobedient children, were not humbled’.<sup>159</sup> In 1760, a smallpox outbreak afflicted the region. The church clerk reflected,

From the time last noted, by reason of the length of the way, the difficulty of winter, the troubles of removing back from our flights caused by the enemy, and great affliction of the small pox raging in the land, we had not an opportunity to meet in church order, not hold communion till the 10<sup>th</sup> of Augusts 1760, when it pleased God, of his great mercy to permit some few of us to meet, to commemorate his undying love, and preserve us from all enemies, even those present, behaved with uncommon silence, and seemed to listen and hear the word with awful reverence (the Lord grant it might be with a godlike fear)’.<sup>160</sup>

The Regular Baptists saw the raids as God’s judgment on them and their neighbors. Regular Baptists were a subset of Particular Baptists who had a strong belief in God’s sovereignty over all affairs of life. In 1757, the Philadelphia Baptist Association’s Circular Letter

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<sup>157</sup> Miller, ‘Augusta Men’, p. 129.

<sup>158</sup> Brock’s Gap Church Records, p. 13.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

reflected on the strife of the French and Indian War. It states, ‘National calamities still remain as sad tokens that the cause is not removed, or that the sin of our nation is very great’.<sup>161</sup>

### Impact of Shawnee Raids on Frederick Parish

Unlike Augusta County, Frederick County’s second parish vestry was staffed with resident Anglican leaders. This vestry managed the parish from 1752 to 1771, and the parish was dissolved as an entity in 1780. The second vestry included Lord Fairfax, and his nephew Thomas Martin, along with military leaders. John Ashby was an Indian fighter; John Hite, a major with the militia, and John Lindsey, a militia captain. There were also on the vestry two Quakers: Lewis Neill who was acting sheriff, and Isaac Parkins, an active Quaker yet a captain of the Militia.<sup>162</sup> In 1759, the General Assembly ordered all dissenters removed from local vestries. Augusta County had petitioned for this relief, but Frederick County had not.<sup>163</sup>

Katherine Brown, Susanne Simmons, and Nancy Sorrells observe,

These frontier vestry members were leaders in their various communities around the county. It was of no great concern to the frontier Frederick Parish that some of them were dissenters or only held nominal allegiance to the established church. . . . If the government and social structure of colonial Virginia were to function on the frontier, the established church must make concessions to the reality of the region.<sup>164</sup>

Since 1607, the church had been adjusting regional vagaries as settlement pressed toward the mountains in Virginia. As the population moved west or moved into the mountains, the Established Church planned as best as it could to conditions, given its external government, and the responsibilities assigned to it by the colonial legislature.

When Dinwiddie called for each county to hold a Council of War, Thomas, Lord Fairfax, County Lieutenant, convened the Frederick County Council of War on April 14,

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<sup>161</sup> Gillette (ed.), *Philadelphia Baptist Association* (2007), p. 75.

<sup>162</sup> E. K. Meade, *Frederick Parish*, p. 15; Worrall, *Friendly Virginians*, p. 157.

<sup>163</sup> E. K. Meade, *Frederick Parish*, p. 17.

<sup>164</sup> Brown, Sorrells, and Simmons, *Christ Church, Frederick Parish*, p. 6.

1756, a full four months before Augusta county. Also present was John Hite, and captains John Lindsay, Richard Morgan, Isaac Perkins, Samuel Odell, Edward Rodgers, Thomas Caton, Jeremiah Smith, and John Long. They purposed ‘to get what vollentiers [sic] they could encourage to go in search of the Indian enemy who are dayly ravaging our frontiers and committing their accustomed cruelties on the inhabitants and the aforesaid captains being met together and finding the number of men insufficient to go out against the enemy its considered that the men be discharged, being only fifteen’.<sup>165</sup>

The local Frederick Militia was frequently called upon to aid neighboring counties as they defended their areas against native incursions. Their unwillingness to defend their neighbors contributed to the wide-spread panicked flight of many families over the mountains.<sup>166</sup> According to Young, they were not very effective fighters because they were more concerned about their own families and homesteads.<sup>167</sup> Louis Koontz reports that when Hampshire County was attacked, the consensus among the Frederick County militia was to ‘let Hampshire take care of itself as we will do if we are attacked’.<sup>168</sup> Ward indicates that Hampshire County was temporarily abandoned. Frederick County’s population was reduced by one-third, returning to pre-war levels by 1760.<sup>169</sup>

The Anglican leadership of Frederick County was remarkably stable, once it was well established. Brown, Simmons and Sorrell dismiss some of the movement between Anglicans and Baptists as that borne out of anti-British sentiment.<sup>170</sup> In November 1773, James Barnett, a long-time vestry member and reader at Cunningham’s Chapel and for the parish church at

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<sup>165</sup> Milbourne, ‘Frederick County Militia’, pp. 57-58.

<sup>166</sup> Ward, *Breaking the Back Country*, p. 94.

<sup>167</sup> Young, ‘Effects of the Seven Years War’, p. 29.

<sup>168</sup> L. K. Koontz, *The Virginia Frontier*, A Heritage Classic (Baltimore, MD, 1925; reprint, 1992), p. 85; Ward, *Breaking the Back Country*, p. 93.

<sup>169</sup> Ward, *Breaking the Back Country*, pp. 71-72.

<sup>170</sup> Brown, Sorrells, and Simmons, *Christ Church, Frederick Parish*, p. 34.

Winchester, submitted his resignation with the stated purpose of joining a Baptist Church.<sup>171</sup> Vestrymen joining dissenting congregations was apparently happening with enough frequency that the Virginia General Assembly passed a law that disqualified vestrymen who joined non-Anglican congregations. Hoping to restore them to their place, they made provision for the restoration to their office.<sup>172</sup>

Morgan was a friend to Baptists in the Opequon Creek area. A founding father among Frederick County Anglicans, Morgan Morgan, built the first chapel for Anglicans on his own land near Opequon Creek, and also appears in the records of Mill Creek Baptist Church in 1781. Andrew Balmaine, rector of Frederick Parish, in the late eighteenth century is said to have conducted Morgan's funeral. Anglican Bishop Meade noted that Morgan was noted for 'his personal piety, his active zeal, and his evangelical views'.<sup>173</sup>

#### Regular Baptists in Frederick County Post-Shawnee Raids

The membership of Mill Creek Baptist Church opted to join the flight out of Frederick County during the raids. When it was safe to return, Elder John Garrard returned to Frederick County with other Mill Creek members who had fled the Shawnee raids and served Mill Creek Church until his death in August 1787.<sup>174</sup> Garrard's ministry was not without friction. In 1781, he got into an unspecified controversy with some members that included an examination that led to his exoneration and a recommendation that they ask Anglican leader and county justice Morgan Morgan for 'a letter of recommendation for said John Garrard'.<sup>175</sup> There is no indication about the subject matter; but a reference letter from the one of the area

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<sup>171</sup> Frederick County Vestry Book, 27 November 1773, p. 67.

<sup>172</sup> Virginia General Assembly, 22 February 1759, 32d George I, Chap. XXI, 'An Act for Dissolving Several Vestries, and for Other Purposes therein Mentioned', in Hening, *Statutes*, vol. 7, pp. 302-303.

<sup>173</sup> Brown, Sorrells, and Simmons, *Christ Church, Frederick Parish*, p. 52; W. Meade, *Old Churches*, vol. 2, p. 303.

<sup>174</sup> J. B. Taylor, *Virginia Baptist Ministers* (1838), pp. 22-23, p. 23.

<sup>175</sup> Mill Creek Baptist Church Minutes, 24 March 1781, p. 11.

gentry would certainly vouch for the character of the subject. Later, in 1785, some in the congregation thought Garrard was too eager to ordain to the gospel ministry a member who was serving a neighboring church. He was also accused of ‘drinking in excess’ and suspended from his pastoral office in March 1787 but restored to his position due to lack of corroborating evidence by May 1787, three months before his death.<sup>176</sup>

John Corbly became a leader in the militia activity in the area north of Frederick County. During the period leading up to the American Revolution, Corbly’s militia was tasked with capturing loyalists who were disturbing the area. Corbly is said to have walked a group of captured loyalists to Winchester, Virginia, preaching the gospel to them along the way.<sup>177</sup> There was not line, it seems, between defending your community and religious activity. In 1776, Corbly was appointed a Justice of the Peace by Gov. Patrick Henry, and then was elected to the Virginia House of Delegates to represent Monongalia County. In 1777, Corbly was not seated as a delegate; the House of Delegates refused to seat him because he was a minister of the gospel. Virginia Colonial Burgesses and Virginia Commonwealth Delegates apparently wanted to keep clergy (whether established or dissenter) in a supporting role, not seated where they could participate in making law.

This policy had deep roots in the colonial period. Brydon records a resolution sending Rev. Bracewell home in 1653, ‘It is ordered by this present General Assembly that Mr. Robert Bracewell, Clarke, be suspended, and is not in a capacitie of serving as a Burgess, since it is unpreidential (i.e. unprecedented) and may produce bad consequence’.<sup>178</sup> Nelson observes that the commissary was ‘the sole ecclesiastic in the provincial administration . . . [his] influence was personal, not institutional . . . [this may be a] significant source of the

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<sup>176</sup> Mill Creek Baptist Church Minutes, May 1787, p. 13.

<sup>177</sup> N. L. Fordyce, (comp.), *The Life and Times of Reverend John Corbly and the John Corbly Family Genealogy* (Washington, PA, 1953), p. 19.

<sup>178</sup> Virginia Grand Assembly, 5 July 1653, in Hening, *Statutes*, vol. 1, p. 378; Brydon, *Virginia’s Mother Church*, vol. I, p. 128.

divorce of religious interests and concerns from the civil, a process that eventually would be elevated into the lofty principle of the separation of church and state'.<sup>179</sup>

### *Conclusion*

Both the Augusta County and Frederick County Anglican leadership accepted the presence of Regular Baptists among them and saw them as trusted allies in the difficult years of the mid-eighteenth century. The Regular Baptists lived and worshipped quietly and were generally left to themselves by the parishes. Governor Gooch's strategy to settle the wilderness with Europeans who were risk takers created space for the first extensive settlement of dissenters in Virginia. Survival in the wilderness area amid raiding parties precluded the luxury of most religious disputes. The unsettled nature of the transmountain west created conditions where Christians cooperated with one another to defend their homesteads and take care of the vulnerable among them.

Gooch's policy encouraging western settlement created opportunities for white settlers in the mountains, despite the treaties with the indigenous nations promising to keep white settlement east of the mountains. Land speculators demanded that their interests be protected against possible French claims over the Ohio River valley. Dinwiddie's response, together with the geo-political economic competition between the French and the British, touched off the French and Indian War, which dominoed into a global conflict with France.

The Smith and Linville Creek and the Mill Creek/Opequon Baptist congregations demonstrated two differing responses to the French and Indian War. Smith and Linville Creek, in the eastern region of Augusta County, suffered greatly through the Shawnee incursions, but apparently continued to meet, albeit irregularly. Many of the members of Mill Creek, on the western edge of Frederick County, fled the area along with their elders John

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<sup>179</sup> Nelson, *Blessed Company*, p. 171.

Garrard and David Thomas.<sup>180</sup> These differing responses reflect how well or poorly their area was supported by a defensive militia. Augusta County had a robust militia; Frederick County was not willing to mount a strong local defense.

The Shawnee response to the vacuum created in the wilderness by the French and Indian War also prompted Regular Baptists to move eastward into more settled regions. The refugees would arrive in a more settled area, with more government (county and established church) oversight. The Regular Baptists would encounter, for the first time, the need to seek licenses for their churches, a condition they had not experienced in the less-structured governance west of the mountains that was more concerned about defending Virginia's interests in the area than enforcing terms of religious toleration.

Some refugees east of the mountains stayed temporarily; John Garrard eventually returned to Mill Creek Church after the raids. Kettocton Baptist Church established an influential presence in Loudoun County under Elder John Marks, whom Garrard worked with to strengthen the nascent Regular Baptist congregation. David Thomas remained in Northern Virginia, moving into Fauquier County. His remarkable ministry and that of the men he mentored, in the context of a more settled Anglican area, had an even broader impact on the level of Anglican comfort with the presence of religious non-conformists in their midst. Dissenters had spilled eastward over the mountains, despite Gooch's intention for them to stay in the west. The Regular Baptists brought with them a history of working with their fellow Christians to eke out a living in a wilderness even as world-changing events forced many to become refugees into northern Virginia.

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<sup>180</sup> Semple and Beale, *Baptists in Virginia* (1894), p. 377.

## Chapter Four

### **Regular Baptists in Northern Virginia: Organizing and Expanding their Churches**

As Regular Baptists moved eastward between the Potomac and Rappahannock Rivers, into more inhabited parts of Virginia, they integrated into their new communities, were offered and provided leadership, and further expanded their presence in a more heavily populated region of Virginia. Regular Baptists from Mill Creek, pressed by Shawnee warriors, moved eastward over the mountains, they found some Baptist settlers on the western fringes of Loudoun County. This area was almost as isolated as the region west of the Alleghany ridgeline, and thus possessed similar geographic challenges and opportunities, though without the raids, as settlers were not in violation of the 1752 Logg's Town treaty.<sup>1</sup> Marty Hiatt's compilation of Virginia tithables records the presence of six Baptists in the county as early as 1758. All of them are in Cameron Parish, where Kettocton Baptist Church would later be founded. Notably the six are reported as the sole tithable on their property; none were slave holders.<sup>2</sup>

Loudoun County is the western most county on the eastern ridge of the Alleghany mountains, and almost as sparsely settled as the valley west of the mountains. Regular Baptists who were part of the refugee flight into Loudoun County found life to be somewhat like life in Augusta or Frederick Counties. These Baptists were not living in isolation in

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<sup>1</sup> M. N. McConnell, *A Country Between: The Upper Ohio Valley and Its Peoples, 1724-1744* (Lincoln, NE, 1992), 94-95. McConnell notes that the Logg's Town treaty was an affirmation of earlier Lancaster meeting decisions. Only the Iroquois, as the leaders of the Six Nation confederation, were consulted and thus there were no firm guarantees that white settlers would not move over the Alleghany Mountains. The Six Nations held to the agreement and no doubt the Shawnee felt justified in attacking white settlements west of the mountains. There were also Quakers present in western Loudoun County at this time, and their efforts at peace-making may have contributed to the fragile peace in the area immediately east of the Alleghenies in Loudoun County.

<sup>2</sup> Hiatt, *Loudoun County*, p. 4.

western Loudoun County. There were also communities of Quakers and German Reformed Christians, also migrants from Pennsylvania, who had settled there before the county and its parish were formed.<sup>3</sup> Virginians were also moving westward, looking for arable land. When enough Anglican population was settled in the area, Truro Parish built chapels of ease in the region so that Anglicans could attend church, near their homes, without undue difficulties.<sup>4</sup>

The Regular Baptists in the Upper Parish of Loudoun County and in Fauquier County were a mixture of migrants from Pennsylvania who had settled in the area, and refugees from the Shawnee attacks on the west side of the mountains. David Thomas and John Garrard were among the refugees, seeking safety from Shawnee nation attacks. As the Regular Baptist elders and members farmed their land, and participated in the life of the community, they demonstrated to their Anglican neighbors that pluralism of denominations need not be a socially unsettling problem.

#### *Regular Baptists and Anglicans in Northern Virginia*

When Regular Baptists entered Northern Virginia, they were close enough to the mountains to not attract too much attention, but their move into and organizing in Fauquier County would meet with brief resistance from Anglican leadership and laity. Their strategy to live peaceful lives, obeying the toleration regulations would mitigate Anglican resistance and prejudice. Moving into northern Virginia, Baptists settled in longer established Anglican parishes that expected every resident who settled in a parish to show up periodically at either the parish church or a chapel of ease, as well as to pay promptly their parish levy. When

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<sup>3</sup> R. V. Constantino, *The Quaker of the Olden Time; the Life and Times of Israel Thompson (d. 1795): His Land, Plantation, Mills, Tanyard and Mansion House and the Rise of Wheatland, Loudoun County, Virginia* (Westminster, MD, 2004); E. M. Scheel, *Quaker Country and the Loudoun Valley*, vol. 4, *Loudoun Discovered: Communities, Corners and Crossroads* (Leesburg, VA, 2002); J. W. Head, *History and Comprehensive Description of Loudoun County, Virginia* (np, 1908), pp. 112-113; J. V. Nichols, *Legends of Loudoun Valley* (Lovettsville, VA, 1996), pp. 46-47; B. Goodhart, 'The Pennsylvania Germans in Loudoun County, Virginia,' *The Pennsylvania German*, 9 (1908): pp. 124-133; E. M. Scheel, *Waterford, the German Settlement and Between the Hills*, vol. 5, *Loudoun Discovered: Communities, Corners and Crossroads* (Leesburg, VA, 2002).

<sup>4</sup> G. P. Craighill, *A History of St. James' Episcopal Church, Leesburg, Virginia, 1734-1934* (1935).

David Thomas settled in Fauquier County, he found himself having to negotiate the unease of his neighbors. Thomas not only managed but thrived, despite the occasional opposition he and those who joined Broad Run Regular Baptist meeting house experienced. Baptist work in Fauquier and surrounding counties expanded, eventually forming an association of churches, even while following the regulations that the Anglican leadership imposed.

Thomas worked hard to maintain a peaceful co-existence with the Anglican majority, even as he drew converts from Hamilton and neighboring parishes. As Thomas comments in the *Virginian Baptist*, ‘we could not reject those who we believed were really turned from sin to God’.<sup>5</sup> David Thomas first experienced the necessity to secure a license for the Regular Baptist meeting houses in Fauquier County. His license for Broad Run Baptist Church was obtained upon presentation to the magistrate of his ordination in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, which was embossed with the city’s seal upon it.<sup>6</sup> His efforts were not, however, abetted by the Separate Baptists, whose ‘pious mayhem’ troubled Thomas, ‘a thoroughgoing antienthusiast’.<sup>7</sup> Contrasting Regular and Separate Baptists, Smith indicates ‘the Regular Baptist struggled to radiate sobriety and respectability, while the Separates eschewed any compromise with the dominant culture, embracing an emphatic radicalism threatening Virginia’s prevailing religious order’.<sup>8</sup>

Northern Virginia was an area where dissenting churches expanded rapidly; and where Anglican parishes struggled to respond effectively. Rhys Isaac in *The Transformation of Virginia* points to the parishes in this region to make his case for Anglican failure to counter

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<sup>5</sup> Thomas, *Virginian Baptist*, p. 40.

<sup>6</sup> Sparacio and Sparacio, *Fauquier County*, vol. 3, May 26, 1763, p. 30; vol. 4, November 24, 1763, p. 2; May 24, 1764, p. 39; ‘The Ordination of David Thomas in 1762’, *The Virginia Baptist Register* 26 (1987), p. 1333; Gillette (ed.), *Philadelphia Baptist Association* (2007), pp. 86-87.

<sup>7</sup> J. H. Smith, *The First Great Awakening in British America, 1725-1775* (Lanham, MD, 2015), p. 276.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

the energy of dissenting preachers in the area.<sup>9</sup> Baptist Elder David Thomas can largely be credited with organizing and strengthening the Baptist influence in this region, even as he attempted to re-direct the efforts of the more energetic Separate Baptist preachers toward orderly church life. Regular Baptist Churches expanded in this context, even as they dealt with the uneven application of toleration regulations.<sup>10</sup>

As Philip Mulder points out, the Great Awakening changed the religious life of every sort of Christian, established and dissenter alike. The Established church and [by analogy] the state had faults that needed to be fixed. Dissenters, like Regular Baptists, called nominal Christians to embrace Christian faith outside its Establishment expression.<sup>11</sup> John Smith notes that Baptists often attracted crowds, particularly to their outdoor baptism ordinance. This was a scandalous innovation to most Virginians, who regarded baptism as a traditional practice done by family groups who were welcoming a new child into their family and their parish church. Baptism, to them, was done by the parish minister, using a font in the intimacy of the parish church or a bowl of water in their home. It was not to be done by immersing the full body of an adult into a natural lake or stream in front of God and anyone who happened by to witness the ordinance.<sup>12</sup>

Despite their unique practices, Regular Baptists in this region demonstrated that pluralism in religious matters did not upset the good order of society. With the support of the Philadelphia Baptist Association, the Baptists in Loudoun County and in Fauquier County built their meeting houses and became active in their communities. Like their predecessors west of the mountains, the Baptists east of the mountains would prove to be good neighbors.

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<sup>9</sup> Isaac, *Transformation of Virginia*, pp. 143-180.

<sup>10</sup> Weaver, 'David Thomas', p. 3.

<sup>11</sup> Mulder, *Controversial Spirit*, p. 5. The 'Great Awakening' in the North American colonies occurred simultaneously with the 'Evangelical Awakening' in England. M. Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism in the Age of Edwards, Whitefield, and the Wesleys* (Downers Grove, IL, 2003), p. 15.

<sup>12</sup> J. H. Smith, *First Great Awakening*, p. 277; Winner, *Cheerful and Comfortable Faith*, pp. 27- 55, p. 45.

The Regular Baptist Churches east of the mountains supported the increase in the number of Regular Baptist congregations in Northern Virginia. This was unlike the churches on the west side of the mountains, whose isolation may have limited their influence.

Elder David Thomas would become first among equals of the Baptist church elders in Virginia due to his efforts to establish new churches in the region, and supply them with trained elders. He was the scholar among Regular Baptists in Virginia. He wrote a pamphlet, *The Virginian Baptist*, likely in response to a pamphlet published by an Anglican minister who was critical of Baptist work in Virginia. He supported the education of the younger generation during the Revolution by creating an English Grammar that was distributed to teachers, but not printed, due to the hardship involved in getting the manuscript to a publisher.<sup>13</sup> When Thomas left for Kentucky as an elderly man in the late 1790s, he left behind several ministers in the northern Virginia, whom he had trained for church leadership and numerous Regular Baptist churches.<sup>14</sup> More churches, with members living well among their neighbors, only further served to support the idea that a religiously plural society was practical and beneficial.

## Loudoun County

### *Ketocin Baptist Church*

Ketocin's story in the Upper Parish of Loudoun County, close by the eastern side of the mountains, continues the pattern of respectful co-existence with the Anglican parish, similar to the experience of Mill Creek and Smith and Linville Creek Churches on the western side of the mountains. As the Mill Creek Baptist Church refugees from Frederick County settled into Loudoun County, they found already present a cluster of Welsh Regular

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<sup>13</sup> S. H. Ford, "David Thomas—The Old Blind Preacher", *The Christian Repository*, Louisville, KY, March 1857, pp. 162-170, p. 168, books.google.com.

<sup>14</sup> Weaver, 'David Thomas', pp. 3-19, p. 4-5.

Baptists on the western fringes of the county. These Baptists had migrated into Virginia from Pennsylvania's Chester and Bucks Counties.<sup>15</sup> The Caldwell and Williams surnames are present on a fragment of Fairfax County tithables from the 1749 and the 1776 membership roster of Kettoctin Baptist Church.<sup>16</sup> The tithables list identifies Hugh Caldwell as an Anabaptist living in the upper parish (now Loudoun County); Wil Williams on the tithables list is termed a preacher and 'formerly Anabaptist'.<sup>17</sup>

The earliest court record of a known member of Kettoctin Baptist Church is 1760, when Joseph Caldwell purchased property. Mr. Caldwell is among the members listed in August 1776.<sup>18</sup> Baptists living in the Short Hill region (when the area was still part of Fairfax County) contacted the Philadelphia Association in 1750 for assistance.<sup>19</sup> Kettoctin Baptist Church was officially organized in 1751 and was admitted into the Philadelphia Baptist Association in 1754, three years before Loudoun County was divided from Fairfax County and the Virginia House of Burgesses created Cameron Parish. The Philadelphia Baptist Association asked John Thomas, a pastor in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, to visit the area periodically and organize them.<sup>20</sup>

In 1757, the Philadelphia Association asked the Baptist Church in Montgomery Township, Pennsylvania, to provide young preachers for churches that did not have a

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<sup>15</sup> A. W. Thomas, *A Story of Round Hill, Loudoun County, Virginia*, (Leesburg, VA, 2004), p. 1.

<sup>16</sup> 'Tithable' is a legal term used in colonial Virginia to denote a head of household or eligible dependent who was expected to pay county and parish taxes, as well as colony-wide levies when ordered. These would include the male head of household, any male children in their teens and male or female servants or slaves on the property. Nelson, *Blessed Company*, p. 338, n. 19.

<sup>17</sup> Kettoctin Baptist Church Minute Book, p. 1; Hiatt, *Loudoun County*, p. 3. Mr. Williams' status as 'formerly Anabaptist' does not indicate whether he was at present a member in good standing with Truro parish. Both Caldwell and Williams were likely related to the Joseph Caldwell and John Williams listed as Kettoctin members.

<sup>18</sup> 'Membership List, August 1776', Kettoctin Church Minute Book, p. 1; Duncan (comp.), 'June 10, 1760', *Loudoun County Order Books, Book A*, p. 122. The records of Kettoctin Baptist Church begin in August 1776 with a membership list of nineteen men and twenty-one women.

<sup>19</sup> Gillette (ed.), 'Minutes of the 1750 Annual Meeting', *Philadelphia Baptist Association* (1851), p. 65.

<sup>20</sup> Gillette (ed.), 'Minutes of the 1754 Annual Meeting', *Philadelphia Baptist Association* (2007), p. 71; A. W. Thomas, *Round Hill*, p. 1; Clark, *Philadelphia Association*, p. 92.

minister in place.<sup>21</sup> Montgomery Church ordained John Marks in 1748, and he travelled regularly with John Thomas into Virginia. When Elder John Garrard from Mill Creek settled in this area in 1758, he took up the preaching duties at Ketoctin. He was present at the Loudoun County Court on June 14, 1758, where he ‘came into Court and took the usual oaths to his Majesties Person and Government and subscribed the abjuration oath and the test which is ordered to be certified’.<sup>22</sup> This made it clear to the county and parish officials that he was a dissenting preacher seeking authorization to preach in the county. The same day, ‘Lee Massey, Craven Peyton, John Gerrard, William Jett, and Philip Nolan[d?], Gents. are by the court recommended to the Hon’ble Francis Fauquier, Esqr. as proper persons to be added to the commission of the peace for the county’.<sup>23</sup> Garrard was recommended to serve as a commissioner of the peace, alongside Anglican residents. He likely did not take up this responsibility as he and other members of Mill Creek returned to their homes in Frederick County in 1760, after the Shawnee threat had subsided.<sup>24</sup>

On August 12, 1761, John Marks and his wife Uriah were ‘dismissed to Virginia’.<sup>25</sup> They and their eight children settled in Loudoun County near Ketoctin Baptist Church. He leased land to farm in 1762. By 1769, he was able to buy a life-lease of 200 acres of land from John Tayloe, a major landholder in the Northern Virginia.<sup>26</sup> In May 1769, the Loudoun County court directed the Cameron Parish vestry to bind out ‘Lydia Yates, a six-year-old

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<sup>21</sup> Gillette, ‘October 4-6, 1757 Meeting’, *Philadelphia Baptist Association* (1851), p. 76.

<sup>22</sup> Duncan (comp.), *Loudoun County Order Book A*, p.113.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 348.

<sup>24</sup> F. H. James, *Ketocin Baptist Church*, p. 6.

<sup>25</sup> D. H. Colombatto (comp.), ‘Reverend John Marks: 1716-1788 his descendants and relating families’, manuscript, John Balch Library, Leesburg, Virginia, p. 5. The minutes are reproduced in E. Matthews, *History of Montgomery Baptist Church in Montgomery Township, Montgomery County, Pa.* (Ambler, PA, 1895) p. 12, ancestry.com database (Accessed: 11 September 2017).

<sup>26</sup> F. D. Maull, ‘Marks Chapter’, in ‘Genealogical notebook of Flora David Maull’, manuscript, Thomas Balch Library, Leesburg, Virginia, p. 83; A. W. Thomas, *Round Hill*, p. 7.

orphan to John Marks'.<sup>27</sup> This court directive is an indicator that he had established himself as a trusted member of the community. He took on the leadership of Kettoctin Baptist Church when John Garrard returned to Frederick County, and remained the church's preaching elder beyond the Revolution. By 1769, he owned or had under lease 700 acres, and by 1784 listed '1 white servant, 2 negro servants, 9 horses and 9 cattle'. As pastor of a dissenting congregation, he could not legally marry couples until he obtained a license in 1785, the year after the House of Delegates issued regulations allowing any ordained minister to 'celebrate the rites of matrimony according to the forms and customs of the church to which he belongs'.<sup>28</sup> He shortly thereafter retired from ministry and died in 1787. His will, probated in May 1788, termed him a yeoman, though he left four farms to his sons, a library worth 8 pounds, 10 shillings, and other material possessions worth 181 pounds, 9 shillings, 6 pence.<sup>29</sup>

#### *Anglican Parishes in Loudoun County*

Cameron Parish was created out of Truro Parish in 1749 and became the parish for Loudoun County when it was created in 1757 out of Fairfax County. Truro Parish built two chapels of ease, Goose Creek (1739) and Rocky Run (1745). Surveyor Daniel Jenings is the probable creator of a map around 1748 that documents four Anglican chapels in the area (see figure 3.1 below). The furthest north is identified in Truro Parish records as Goose Creek. Prior to 1739, Hopkins indicates that the Anglican residents in the region around Goose Creek were served by a paid reader, clerks to collect tithes from area residents, and sextons once the chapel of ease was built.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Duncan (comp.), *Loudoun County Order Book D*, May 8, 1769, p. 84.

<sup>28</sup> Virginia General Assembly, October 18, 1784, 9<sup>th</sup> of Commonwealth, Chap. XXXVII, 'An Act to regulate the solemnization of marriages', in Hening, *Statutes*, vol. 11, p. 503.

<sup>29</sup> Colombatto (comp.), 'Reverend John Marks', pp. 6-7, 19; Maull, 'Marks Chapter'.

<sup>30</sup> Hopkins, *Cameron Parish*, pp. 13-14.

The first minister in Cameron Parish was John Andrews, who served from 1749 to 1768. In 1759, the Virginia House of Burgesses dissolved Cameron parish and some other parish vestries for irregularities and abuse of their neighbors. The act further noted that dissenters voted onto these vestries would not be eligible to serve on the vestry.<sup>31</sup> Loudoun County was part of the western fringes of Virginia, and was populated by Quakers and Baptists, especially in the Short Hill area close to the mountains. Loudoun was for this reason not a prime location for an Anglican minister.

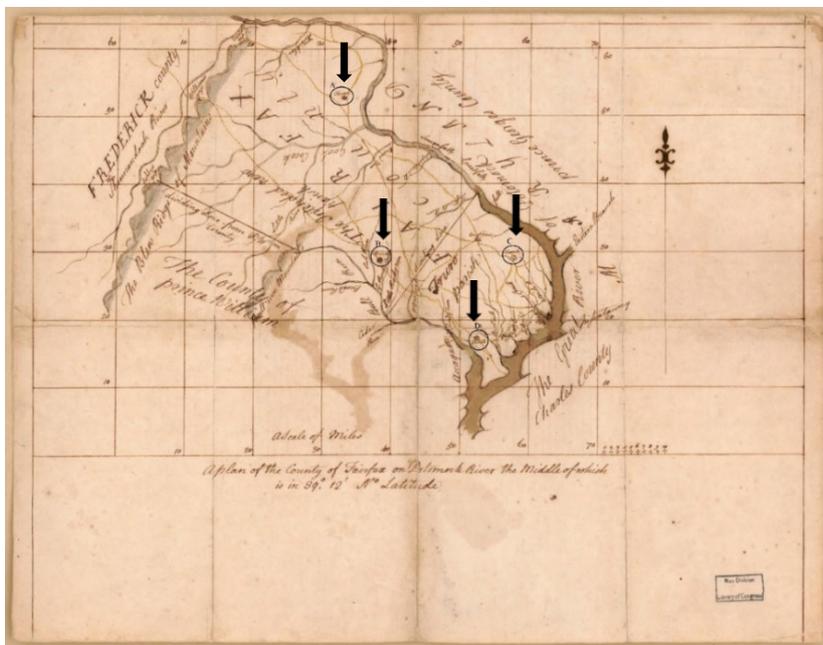


Figure 1.1 A plan of the county of Fairfax on Potomack River the middle of which is in 39° 12' No. latitude<sup>32</sup> Chapels built prior to 1749 by Truro Parish and ceded to Cameron include: A. Goose Creek (1736), and B. Rocky Run (1747). Other early Truro chapels that were built prior to 1749 were: C. Occoquan or Pohick Church (1733) and D. Falls Church (1733).<sup>33</sup>

<sup>31</sup> M. Ireland, *St. Matthew's Episcopal Church History, 1748-1996. Cameron Parish, Sterling, Virginia. a History of Tradition, a Future of Promise and an Invitation to You* (Np, 1996), p. 7; Virginia General Assembly, February 1759, 32d George II, Chap. XXI 'An Act for dissolving several vestries, and for other purposes therein mentioned', para. III, in Hening, *Statutes*, vol. 7, pp. 301-303, p. 302.

<sup>32</sup> [D. Jenings], A plan of the county of Fairfax on Potomack River the middle of which is in 39° 12' No. latitude, Map Collection, Library of Congress, <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3883f.ct006698> (Accessed: 12 August 2017). The map is attributed to Daniel Jenings, a surveyor.

<sup>33</sup> 'Notes and Queries: A Map of Fairfax County in 1748', *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 36 (1928), pp. 180-198, pp. 181-182; Hopkins and Phillips, *Anglican Parishes*, pp. 11-20.

Rev. John Andrews was a debtor and a drunkard. On May 13, 1765, he was presented to the court by a grand jury for drunkenness. Nicholas Osborn, a resident of the Short Hill community around Ketoctin Baptist Church, was one of the jurors.<sup>34</sup> Spence Grayson succeeded Andrews, followed by Archibald Avens.<sup>35</sup> The vestry, in 1771, directed John Lewis and Thomas Shore to secure a minister to preach at the courthouse in Leesburg, and also in the Mountain Chapel and, as Bishop Meade describes it, ‘some convenient place near the gap of the Short Hill, to be fixed on by the churchwardens’.<sup>36</sup> This area was west of the Goose Creek chapel, and in the neighborhood of the Regular Baptist meeting house situated near Catoctin Creek.

Shelburne Parish, consisting of the western-most region of Loudoun, was divided from Cameron Parish in 1770. The Rev. David Griffith would serve Shelburne Parish until the outbreak of the Revolution. Griffith was born in New York and received his education for ministry at the University of Pennsylvania.<sup>37</sup> He was not destined, however, to remain an obscure minister in a parish on the edge of the wilderness. He would serve the Virginia militia as a surgeon and eventually was assigned as a chaplain to George Washington’s army.<sup>38</sup> Though he may have preached at that Short Hill location while serving as the Parish minister, there is no record of any interaction he may have had with John Marks’ Baptists. He and Marks did, however, share a passion for the rights of the King’s subjects to object to perceived abuse by their sovereign or his agents. Both Marks and Griffith would play a role in the upcoming conflict. They would, as McBride describes it, ‘keep Americans in the

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<sup>34</sup> Duncan (comp.), *Loudoun County Order Book B*, May 13, 1765, p. 207.

<sup>35</sup> Hopkins and Phillips, *Anglican Parishes*, p. 43; Gundersen, *Anglican Ministry*, p. 255.

<sup>36</sup> W. Meade, *Old Churches*, vol. 2, pp. 272-273.

<sup>37</sup> Brydon, *Virginia’s Mother Church*, vol. II, p. 438; Gundersen, *Anglican Ministry*, pp. 255-256.

<sup>38</sup> G. M. Brydon, ‘David Griffith 1742-1789 First Bishop-Elect of Virginia’, *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church*, 9 (September 1940), pp. 194-230, 200-201; G. M. Brydon, ‘Passive obedience considered: in a Sermon preached at Williamsburg, December 31<sup>st</sup>, 1775’, *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church*, 17 (1948), pp. 183-199.

war'.<sup>39</sup> Elder John Marks' son, Isaiah Marks, served as a captain in the Continental Army. Reverend Griffith served as one of George Washington's chaplains.<sup>40</sup>

### *Anglican and Regular Baptist Support of the Revolution in Loudoun County*

Both Anglican clergy and Regular Baptist elders defended the resistance against Great Britain as a godly decision.<sup>41</sup> Elder John Marks would lead Ketoctin Church in Loudoun County from 1761 through the Revolutionary War. He actively supported independence, and his sons served as officers for Virginia militia.<sup>42</sup> In Loudoun County, members of Ketoctin Church were vocal supporters of the drive for independence. Two names on the Ketoctin Church roster, William Booram and John Williams, are identical to names listed on the Loudoun Resolves, published in 1774.<sup>43</sup>

Anglican Rev. David Griffith, in December 31, 1775, preached a sermon before a meeting of the Virginia Convention, which was leading Virginia after Dunmore had prorogued the meeting of the House of Burgesses.<sup>44</sup> The sermon was entitled 'Passive Obedience Considered', based on Romans 13:1-2, 'The Powers, That Be, are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God'.<sup>45</sup> Griffith aligned himself with his fellow colonists in their resistance to British authority.

Griffith's preface to the published sermon reflects his awareness that the text of the sermon would support the political agenda of the Virginia Convention that met in December 1775 to discuss defending themselves against Lord Dunmore. Griffith states, 'If it [the

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<sup>39</sup> McBride, *Pulpit and Nation*, p. 41.

<sup>40</sup> Loudoun County Revolutionary War Index, p. 41; Maull, 'Marks Chapter', p. 255; Hopkins and Phillips, *Anglican Parishes*, pp. 63-64.

<sup>41</sup> McBride, *Pulpit and Nation*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>42</sup> A. W. Thomas, *Round Hill*, p. 7.

<sup>43</sup> Ketoctin Baptist Church Minute Book, pp. 1, 5; Nichols, *Legends*; 'Resolutions of Loudoun County: Loudoun County a Hundred Years Ago', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 12 (1904), pp. 231-236, pp. 233-234.

<sup>44</sup> Brydon, 'Passive obedience considered', pp. 183-199, pp. 190, 183.

<sup>45</sup> St. Paul's Letter to the Romans 13:1-2, King James Version.

sermon] proves instrumental in promoting these desirable purposes the world will owe you an obligation, and I shall rejoice that my intentions were answered'.<sup>46</sup> The December gathering of a Convention of Delegates in Williamsburg in December was for the purpose of arranging for the defense of the colony, because 'the Earl of Dunmore, by his many hostile attacks upon the good people of this colony, and attempts to infringe their rights and liberties, by his proclamation declaring freedom to our servants and slaves, and arming them against us, by seizing our persons and properties, and declaring those who opposed such his arbitrary measures in a state of rebellion, hath made it necessary that an additional number of forces be raised for our protection and defence'.<sup>47</sup> His audience in Williamsburg were very appreciative of his 'truly patriotick and most excellent' sermon, requesting a copy from Griffith to be printed 'at the publick expense'.<sup>48</sup> In the sermon was based on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans 13:1-2, 'The powers, that be, are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the Ordinance of God'. This passage is frequently used to buttress the doctrine of the divine right of kings to reign. Jonathan Edwards, an eighteenth-century Congregational preacher-philosopher, in his commentary on Romans, comments that 'the civil government was at first a thing of divine institution . . . [part of] God's providence to the world for their good'.<sup>49</sup> Griffith, however, does not preach this passage in a manner that would support the sentiments of loyalists in Virginia.

Griffith begins the sermon concurring with Jonathan Edwards' point that government is part of God's providence for the benefit of humanity. He writes, 'man's welfare if the grand object of his dispensations; that with this view, he constituted laws for them, and that,

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<sup>46</sup> D. Griffith, *Passive Obedience Considered in a Sermon Preached at Williamsburg, December 31st, 1775* (Williamsburg, 1776), p. iii, Eighteenth Century Online (Accessed: 28 October 2020).

<sup>47</sup> Convention of Delegates, Richmond and Williamsburg, Virginia, December 1775, in Hening, *Statutes*, vol. 9, pp. 75-107; p. 75.

<sup>48</sup> D. Griffith, *Passive Obedience Considered*, p. ii.

<sup>49</sup> J. Edwards, 'Romans Chapter 13', in D. A. Sweeney, *The Power of God: A Jonathan Edwards Commentary on the Book of Romans*, edited by D. S. Lovi and Benjamin Westerhoff (Cambridge, UK, 2013), pp. 287-297.

for this end, he appointed rulers over them'.<sup>50</sup> His next point is really a question. Some argue that 'no abuse of power will justify disobedience; and however contrary their laws may be the benevolent designs of the creator, that Christians are bound to observe them with the most strict conformity'.<sup>51</sup> He demurs, however, that such obedience is 'destructive of that very end which all good men desire, and for which government was, at first, established'.<sup>52</sup> Those who advocate for absolute obedience, Griffith claims, argue from the position that fallen humans require 'a restraint which only an uncontrollable power can lay upon' [them], and 'that popular governments are insufficient to [secure the peace of society]'.<sup>53</sup> Further, it is God's will that we 'follow, implicitly and blindly, every dictate of our superiours'.<sup>54</sup> Griffith rejects this point calling it 'so destructive in itself; tending, so greatly, to debase the human mind, and to extinguish every virtuous effort, that it deserves to be rejected by every friend of truth and mankind'. St. Paul himself 'never meant . . . to give sanction to the crimes of wicked and despotick men'.<sup>55</sup>

Continuing his 'debate' with those who are asserting the need for unconditional obedience to one's sovereign, Griffith demurs that he is not advocating anarchy; however, 'I must still, think, that . . . happiness is not best promoted by a scheme of depotism'.<sup>56</sup> Reflecting a common trope against Catholics, 'Ignorance, darkness and superstition, have, ever, had their source in oppression and injustice; while truth and science have been the constant attendants upon liberty'.<sup>57</sup> Griffith condemns rulers who 'impously conceits himself

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<sup>50</sup> D. Griffith, *Passive Obedience Considered*, p. 1.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12; see also Colley, *Britons*, p. 35.

the anointed of God, and dares to presume on the authority of Heaven to sanctify his crimes'.<sup>58</sup> Returning to his passage, he asks how the Apostle Paul's actions aligned with his teaching in Romans 13. He brings to bear Paul's response to Roman authority when he is sanctioned to satisfy the complaints of Jewish authorities who are trying to silence him.<sup>59</sup> Griffith observes, 'we do not find that the apostle submitted to his authority, implicitly and without complaining: No; he condemn this conduct, as unjust and tyrannical, and appealed to the Roman constitution for that justice which we was not like to meet with from the officer'.<sup>60</sup> Citing several other instances in Acts, Griffith counters, if Paul taught the church the doctrine of passive obedience, it was not consistent with his behavior toward those in authority.<sup>61</sup> He begins his conclusion by stating 'That God expects no obedience of his people to those who live in daily violation of his commands; who destroy by their acts of power, the cause of truth and the happiness of mankind; and pervert, by their nefarious systems, the very design of social regulations'.<sup>62</sup> Observing current conditions, Griffith asserts,

it does not appear that, in the present contest between Great Britain and her colonies, the colonists are resisting a power ordained of God, a power to whom they owe obedience, an authority they are subjected to by the constitution of their country. The dispute, as I conceive, is, whether the king's subjects in America, their lives and property, are at the absolute disposal of the king and his subjects in England? Whether the legislature of Great Britain has a right to make laws, binding on America, in all cases whatsoever. The colonists think that, if this be the case, their situation is truly slavish, and are justly alarmed for the consequences.<sup>63</sup>

As a minister of the gospel, Griffith says he does not want to be thought to 'foment disorder and confusion: But it becomes us, highly, to remove every impediment from the progress of

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<sup>58</sup> D. Griffith, *Passive Obedience Considered*, p. 12.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15, citing the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 22.

<sup>60</sup> D. Griffith, *Passive Obedience Considered*, pp. 15-16.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

truth and justice to espouse the cause of humanity and the common rights of mankind'.<sup>64</sup>

Griffith reflection on the political contest between Great Britain's parliament and the colonies carries no hint of irony that for Virginia's non-conforming Christians, Virginia's House of Burgesses was behaving much the same way as parliament was toward the colonies. There was, in fact, doubt in the New England colonies as to whether Baptists would support the revolution, because of the way they had been treated by the Congregational establishment.<sup>65</sup>

There was no doubt of Baptist patriotism in Loudoun County, Virginia. In the period before the Revolution, John Marks was also an outspoken supporter of the cause of independence. Ketocin Church became a gathering place to discuss the issue.<sup>66</sup> His son, Captain Isaiah Marks recruited area men to join Daniel Morgan's rifle company when they mustered at Berryville, VA in Frederick County.<sup>67</sup> Another son, Thomas Marks, was appointed a lieutenant in the county militia in 1778.<sup>68</sup> Local historians claim that Elder Marks and a neighbor, Nicholas Osborn, held a public debate on the question of independence. Osborn had a close relationship with Ketocin Baptist Church. He allowed the Baptists to meet on his property as early as 1743, and eventually sold the church the plot of land on which the nineteenth century building is still standing. Osborn is buried in the cemetery behind the church.<sup>69</sup> Joseph Nichols indicates

one Nicholas Osburn [sic], a comparatively well-informed man of considerable ability and a rather fluent speaker, was a pronounced and out-spoken Tory. He took exception to Marks' activities and a debate was arranged between them. Of course, this event attracted the whole countryside. It is probable that Osburn would have acquitted himself very well in the discussion, but the anti-British sentiment of the audience was too strong for anyone to overcome and he was scarcely given a

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<sup>64</sup> D. Griffith, *Passive Obedience Considered*, pp. 24-25.

<sup>65</sup> McLoughlin, *Soul Liberty*, p. 162.

<sup>66</sup> W. V. Ford (ed.), *Ketocin Chronicle, Ketocin Baptist Trust Society* (Leesburg, VA, 1965), p. 1; see also J. V. Nichols, 'The Rev. John Marks Roused the Loudoun Countryside to Warfare against the British', *Blue Ridge Herald*, 15 July 1954.

<sup>67</sup> Nichols, *Legends*, p. 52.

<sup>68</sup> Duncan (comp.), *Loudoun County Order Book G*, August 11, 1778, p. 44.

<sup>69</sup> A. W. Thomas, *Round Hill*, p. 6.

respectful hearing. However, he still maintained his Tory sentiments which some years later he manifested by having his grandson named Tarleton after the hated and rather successful British cavalry leader.<sup>70</sup>

Anglicans and Regular Baptist engaged in cooperative toleration in this remote corner of the colony. Locales that were more densely populated, and thus possessed of a better organized governing parish and county structures available to them, experienced more friction in integrating dissenting Christian migrants into the community. Fauquier County represents one of these areas.

### Fauquier County

#### *Broad Run Baptist Church*

Mill Creek Elder David Thomas pressed eastward and settled in Fauquier County. Historian Robert Semple, describes Thomas' arrival in Fauquier County as key to the expansion of Baptists into northern Virginia. His arrival at 'Broad Run, and from thence over a great part of Virginia,' resulted in 'thousands [being] turned from darkness to light'. People 'traveled in many instances fifty or sixty miles to hear him'.<sup>71</sup>

In Fauquier County, he found a community of farmers who were attracted to the sermons he preached. The Minute Book for Broad Run Baptist Church contains a 1785 note about its founding. 'The church of Jesus Christ at Broad Run, holding believer's baptism and was constituted December 3, 1762 by Messrs. John Marks and David Thomas. It then consisted of 10 members. . . . Mr. David Thomas, being dismissed from a sister church in Vincent of Pennsylvania, now received by us, as a regular member, and called to officiate as our minister at the time of our constitution; he being orderly ordained before, as appeared by

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<sup>70</sup> S. H. Rogers, *Ketoclin Church*, p. 5, F. H. James, *Ketoclin Baptist Church*, pp. 6-7; Nichols, 'John Marks'; P. Osburn, 'Colonial Days in Ketoclin Church: A Long, Vigorous History', *Loudoun Times Mirror*, 8 June 1967. Nichols indicates that this incident derives from well-authenticated oral history (Nichols, *Legends*, p. 82).

<sup>71</sup> Semple and Beale, *Baptists in Virginia* (1894), pp. 379-380; see also J. S. Moore, *A History of Broad Run Baptists Church, Fauquier County, Virginia, 1762-1987* (np, 1987).

his credentials'.<sup>72</sup> The Philadelphia Baptist Association had ordained David Thomas on October 12, 1762. By ordaining him, the Association, with the city Recorder's seal on the document, functioned, in the mind of Virginia authorities, as a recognized authority over the young preacher. This made him acceptable where a self-proclaimed preacher would have been a problem.<sup>73</sup> Broad Run's early history, however, reflects Hamilton parish's struggle to accept the fact that many embraced the preaching of this stranger from Pennsylvania.

### Fauquier County and Hamilton Parish

Fauquier County was formed out of Prince William County in 1759. When the county was created, it became part of Hamilton Parish, which was created in 1730. Lindsay in his history of Hamilton parish, published in 1876, bemoans the loss of the vestry records from the colonial period.<sup>74</sup> Any records present in any history therefore are gleaned from county records. Lieutenant Governor Dinwiddie granted Rev. John Brunskill incumbency in Hamilton in 1753, but his incumbency did not last very long. While historians and the record do not specify the sort of trouble he caused, it was sufficient for the parish to ask Dinwiddie to remove him from the parish. Historian Groome notes that the 'vestry charged their minister with "divers immoralities such as profane swearing, drunkenness and immodest actions"'.<sup>75</sup> They had to resort to the Governor rather than to a Bishop because of the long-standing practice for Church of England colonial parishes to cede the placement and removal of clergy

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<sup>72</sup> Broad Run Minute Book, p. 18.

<sup>73</sup> 'Ordination of David Thomas', p. 1333.

<sup>74</sup> J. S. Lindsay, *Hamilton Parish, 1730-1876: An Anniversary Discourse, delivered by the Rector, Rev. John S. Lindsay in St. James' Church, Warrenton, VA, on the Eighth Sunday after Trinity, August 6, 1867* (Baltimore, MD, 1876), pp. 4-5; see also Virginia General Assembly, May 1730, 3d & 4<sup>th</sup> George II, Chap. XVIII, 'An Act for Making a new Parish, on the head of Overwharton Parish, in Stafford County', in Hening, *Statutes*, vol. 4, p. 304-305.

<sup>75</sup> H. C. Groome, *Fauquier during the Proprietorship: A Chronicle of the Colonization and Organization of a Northern Neck County* (Richmond, VA, 1927), p. 142.

from parishes to the Governor. Brunskill fought efforts to extricate him, which were successful, until 1757. In 1758 a new parish minister, James Craig, was secured.<sup>76</sup>

Regular Baptists were at first viewed suspiciously when they began worshipping in Fauquier County. Little notes, however, only few instances of trouble encountered by Thomas personally.<sup>77</sup> The Hamilton parish vestry, trying to encourage attendance at the parish church with a new, respectable minister in place, pushed to enforce a minimum legal attendance rate of at least once every six months. From May 1763 to May 1764, the Hamilton Parish Churchwardens cited most of the adult membership of Broad Run Baptist Church for failure to attend church three times before dropping the matter. David Thomas, the church's elder, was only cited the first time, in November 1763; apparently his ordination and permit issued for a meeting house in 1762 were ignored the first time but not thereafter.<sup>78</sup>

Thomas and his congregants occasionally experienced extra-judicial violence. Despite Thomas' best efforts to demonstrate that Regular Baptists were good neighbors who did not want to make trouble, trouble sometimes came to them. While such incidents were rare, they illustrate how much the Regular Baptists had to overcome to be accepted in northern Virginia. The location of Thomas' preaching in the following incident, a tobacco drying shed, reflects a challenge to Anglican Church order. Edwards describes an incident where 'Capt. Ball' walked into a meeting and

pulled Mr. Thomas down . . . as he was preaching in a tobacco house, dragging him by the hand out of the place. As he passed through the crowd which had gathered one would clench his fist and gnash his teeth at him; a second would do the same; and a third, in so much that Mr. Thomas's friends feared he would have been pounded to pieces by the mob.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Groome, *Fauquier*, pp. 144-147.

<sup>77</sup> J. H. Smith, *First Great Awakening*, pp. 276-277; L. P. Little, *Imprisoned Preachers*, p. 59.

<sup>78</sup> Sparacio and Sparacio, *Fauquier County*, May 26, 1763, vol. 3, p. 30; November 24, 1763, vol. 4, p. 2; May 24, 1764, p. 39.

<sup>79</sup> Edwards, *Materials*, vol. III, pp. 25-26.

Laws in Virginia at that time required that buildings used for worship should be set aside exclusively for this purpose. The Virginia General Assembly in 1623/24, put this item first among the laws they submitted to the Governor for approval. ‘Act 1. That there shall be in every plantation, where the people use to meete for worship of God, a house or room sequestered for that purpose, and not to be for any temporal use whatsoever, and a place empaled in, sequestered only to the burial of the dead’.<sup>80</sup> Capt. Ball and those who accompanied him were likely offended by the ‘tobacco house’ preaching. Worship normally took place in space consecrated for that purpose. One might practice religion in a private home; frontier living at times made this a necessity for Anglicans.<sup>81</sup> It was quite another matter, however, to worship in a building purpose-built for curing tobacco. Baptists, however, saw no problem in worshipping in unlikely places such as a tobacco drying shed.

Baptists in colonial America, including in Virginia, practiced local church autonomy. Fristoe’s explanation of how a church is constituted illumines colonial Baptist ecclesiology.

For the convenience of public worship and direction of discipline of the Lord’s house, it is thought necessary that independent congregational churches should be constituted. . . . When a number of persons . . . who lie remote from and inconveniences preventing their assembly with or forming in with a church of Christ, it makes it necessary that they should form a distinct and separate society for the purposes aforesaid.<sup>82</sup>

The third circular letter to the churches belonging to the Kettocton Association, outlines the rights of duly constituted churches. ‘You have a right to appoint a place of worship, and the time when it is to be performed, and, with the concurrence of the church, ascertain the expenses necessary to carry it into full effect, and defray every other expense, arising from your relation to each other as a religious body’.<sup>83</sup> As Hammett comments, churches ‘had a

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<sup>80</sup> Virginia General Assembly, March 5, 1623/4, Act 1, in Hening, *Statutes*, vol. 1, pp. 122-123.

<sup>81</sup> Winner, *Cheerful and Comfortable Faith*, pp. 90-118.

<sup>82</sup> Fristoe, *Kettocton Baptist Association*, p. 25.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112.

competence, a “church-power so called”, that was based on their status as a properly gathered church of Christ’s people, a pure body of regenerate baptized believers’.<sup>84</sup> Nothing in the doctrinal contours of colonial-era Baptist ecclesiology speaks of a specific location required in which to gather; the particular space is incidental to their purpose. Such space becomes sacred space when a group of baptized believers gathers there for the purpose of worship. However, repurposing a secular space for worship, even temporarily, was contrary to Virginia law and Anglican custom.

Anglicans and Baptists differing way of creating sacred space was thus a source of friction. Anglicans would build a chapel of ease in remote corners of a parish for the same reason that Fristoe outlined as a condition for establishing a new meetinghouse. The chapel of ease would provide residents of the area a convenient location in which to gather for worship. The difference, however, is how that meeting space was provided. Anglican vestries collected taxes to pay for the construction of chapels in remote areas so their parishioners could meet to worship. Baptists, as residents of a parish, were required to pay the tithable tax set by the vestry. If a chapel of ease was required, the vestry would distribute the cost among all residents of a parish, Anglican or otherwise. Non-Anglicans had to raise funds among themselves on top of this tax to fund their meetinghouses.

Baptists did not wait for a building to be constructed suitable for the purpose, but would use a home, a barn, or even meet outdoors for worship. When a cluster of Baptists gathered for worship, they made use of whatever buildings were accessible to them until they raised the funds to build a meetinghouse. The Baptists’ occasional use of non-consecrated space for worship was an illegal, according to Virginia law, and profane exercise, according

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<sup>84</sup> J. Hammett, ‘From Church Competence to Soul Competence: The Devolution of Baptist Ecclesiology’, *Journal for Baptist Theology and Ministry*, 3 (Spring 2005), pp. 145-163, p. 150.

to Anglican practice, and possibly offered justification in Captain Ball's mind for the violence done to David Thomas.

Elder Thomas' preaching attracted a wide variety of people from all ranks of society, including moderately prosperous Anglican farmers. By May 1763, Broad Run had a membership of forty-three. Thomas baptized the senior William Pickett on July 10, 1763.<sup>85</sup> The Pickett family were prominent landowners in the area, and not all of them followed the senior Pickett into the Baptist church. The younger William and Martin Pickett served on the Leeds Parish vestry in 1769 when the parish was created by dividing Hamilton parish.<sup>86</sup>

Regular Baptists in Fauquier County demonstrated willingness to support civil societal structures, including slavery, while challenging conventions that impinged on their ability to express their faith openly. Fauquier County Court records document the land transactions of members of Broad Run and indicate that some of them were fairly well-off farmers. Joseph Dodson deeded over a tract of land on September 23, 1765 on which to build a Baptist church.<sup>87</sup> This was likely the land on which Broad Run congregation built its first building. The Dodson family, early members of Broad Run, were frequently before the court for not attending the parish church and for unpaid debts. Thomas Dodson and Joseph Dodson were each ordered to pay a payment of 'five shillings to the Church Wardens of Hamilton Parish for the use of the parish'. Other soon to be members of Broad Run, Timothy Stamps,

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<sup>85</sup> Broad Run Minute Book, July 17, 1763, p. 3.

<sup>86</sup> R. W. Steinbach and J. G. Bierly, *The Picketts of Fauquier County, Virginia and Shelby County, Missouri* (Kansas City, MO, 2002), p. 48.

<sup>87</sup> Alcock, 'Fauquier County Deed Book 2', in *Fauquier Families*, p. 96; see also Sparacio and Sparacio, 'September 23, 1765', *Fauquier County*, p. 91.

Peter Cornwell, and Edward Dickenson were similarly fined.<sup>88</sup> On May 24, 1768, Thomas Dodson forfeited £7.12.7½ worth of tobacco; the sheriff confiscated it to sell it.<sup>89</sup>

The Dodsons and other Regular Baptists were not always on the wrong side of the law. They were trusted to take in orphans, to participate in surveying roads, and to serve appointments as county sheriff. The court, on September 26, 1760, ordered the Churchwardens to ‘bind Thomas Carter to Joseph Dodson, who is to learn [sic] him the trade of a Blacksmith’.<sup>90</sup> On May 28, 1765, Thomas Dodson, Jr. was appointed a road surveyor.<sup>91</sup> William Pickett, Sr. was appointed sheriff on October 26, 1767.<sup>92</sup> Mr. Pickett’s 1763 public baptism by immersion apparently did not affected his ability, as a Baptist, to serve as a county sheriff.

On November 27, 1770, George Dodson was ‘paid 80 pounds of tobacco by the county for serving as a patroller’.<sup>93</sup> Patrollers were designated by local militia officers to ‘patrol and visit all negro quarters and other places suspected of entertaining unlawful assemblies of slaves, servants, or other disorderly persons . . . or any other strolling about from one plantation to another, without a pass from his or her master, mistress or overseer, and to carry them before the next justice of peace’.<sup>94</sup> Mr. Dodson was paid for forty-eight hours of patrol duty, based on a levy of ‘twenty pounds of tobacco, for every twelve hours

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<sup>88</sup> Sparacio and Sparacio, ‘August 26, 1762’, *Fauquier County*, p. 94. Today’s value would be 35s each for a total of £8.75. L. H. Officer and S. H. Williamson, ‘Five Ways to Compute the Relative Value of a UK Pound Amount, 1270 to Present’, MeasuringWorth 2017, [www.measuringworth.com/ukcompare](http://www.measuringworth.com/ukcompare) (Accessed: 26 November 2019).

<sup>89</sup> Sparacio and Sparacio, ‘August 26, 1762’, *Fauquier County*, ‘May 24, 1768’, p. 17. Today’s value of the forfeiture would be £930 (Officer and Williamson, ‘Relative Value of a UK Pound’).

<sup>90</sup> Sparacio and Sparacio, *Fauquier County*, ‘September 26, 1760’, p. 74.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, ‘May 28, 1765’, p. 59.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, ‘October 26, 1767’, p. 96.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, ‘November 27, 1770’, p. 91.

<sup>94</sup> Virginia General Assembly, November 1766, 7<sup>th</sup> George III, Chap. VII, ‘An act to amend so much of the act for the better regulating and training the militia, as relates to the appointment of patrollers, their duty and reward’, para. I, in Hening, *Statutes*, vol. 8, p. 196.

they shall so patrol'.<sup>95</sup> Having joined Broad Run Baptist Church in 1763, Dodson saw no conflict between his faith and his role keeping enslaved persons in check. Sally Hadden indicates these patrols sometimes targeted religious gatherings that welcomed slaves to participate.<sup>96</sup> Irons indicates that 'Anglicans found slaves' participation in dissenting worship unnerving, both because it signaled a threat to their establishment and because dissenters were offering privileges to African American worshippers that threatened racial hierarchies. Many bonded men and women . . . were assembling in vast numbers to listen to dissenters' sermons'.<sup>97</sup> However, there is no indication that Broad Run Baptist Church ever suffered such a patrolling disturbance, though they record fourteen slaves as members.<sup>98</sup>

Allen Wiley, who would someday serve as a preaching elder himself, kept a lawyer on retainer from 1763 to 1771 to contest the maladministration of his father-in-law's will by one of the county justices. A female slave, named Cate, belonging to his deceased father-in-law and £10 cash were the focus of the dispute. Cate was handed over to Wiley, but the ten pounds was not, because the administrator who was the defendant in the suit did not believe the separately-documented bequest, dated 22 August 1757, was part of the deceased Jacob Holtzclaw's testate will. Witnesses gave written testimony on both sides of the dispute. Holtzclaw thought the gift of the slave girl, Cate, was sufficient, wrote one deponent, Joseph Taylor.<sup>99</sup> Another witness, William Keines, recalled Holtzclaw gifting £10 as a thank you to

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<sup>95</sup> Virginia General Assembly, November 1766, 7<sup>th</sup> George III, Chap. VII, 'An act to amend so much of the act for the better regulating and training the militia, as relates to the appointment of patrollers, their duty and reward', para. I, in Hening, *Statutes*, vol. 8, p. 196.

<sup>96</sup> S. Hadden, *Slave Patrols: Law and Violence in Virginia and the Carolinas*, Harvard Historical Studies (Cambridge, MA, 2001), p. 126.

<sup>97</sup> Irons, *Origins of Proslavery Christianity*, p. 36.

<sup>98</sup> Broad Run Minute Book, pp. 4, 5, 9, 10, 14, 15, 19, 21.

<sup>99</sup> Fauquier County (VA) Chancery Causes, 1753-1911, Allan Wiley and his wife, Eve (dau of Jacob Holtzclaw) v. Holtzclaw's Executor, Jacob Darnall and Jeremiah Holtzclaw as Executor, April 1765, image 7, Local Government Records Collection, Fauquier Court Records, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia, [www.virginiamemory.com](http://www.virginiamemory.com) (Accessed: 20 April 2017).

Eve Wiley for taking care of her deceased mother.<sup>100</sup> Peter Hitt doubted the validity of either gift as Holtzclaw was ‘very much in liquor and farther believes he did not know anything he said or did, and farther . . . that he heard no mention of any money whatsoever’.<sup>101</sup> Wiley’s suit was dismissed in 1771. The refusal of the executor to settle the dispute for several years indicates he may have considered the Wileys’ suit frivolous because numerous witnesses to Holtzclaw’s decision-making could not verify the gift of £10. The suit cost Wiley thirty shillings or three hundred pounds of tobacco plus any additional costs incurred by the defendant. The additional costs included attorney’s fees, which Anton-Hermann Chroust indicates were part of the bill of costs.<sup>102</sup> Attorney’s fees in 1764 were set at seven shillings, six pence for a successful suit in Virginia; the Wileys’ attorney likely did not collect.<sup>103</sup>

Regular Baptists in Fauquier County were wealthy enough to own slaves and comfortable in their roles as slave holders to allow their human property the dignity of church membership. Though there is no record that David Thomas, as a scholar and preacher, ever owned slaves, but there is evidence that his church members did. Further, there is no evidence that the issue of slavery became a point of contention at Broad Run Church. The Dodson’s participation in slave patrolling responsibilities and Elder Allen Wiley’s effort to reclaim Cate, who was inherited by his wife from her father, indicates the level of comfort that members of the church had with owning slaves. Fourteen slaves are recorded as members of the church at various times through the colonial period. Several were property of the

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<sup>100</sup> Fauquier Chancery, Wiley v. Holtzclaw Executors, image 7.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, image 9.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*; Sparacio and Sparacio, ‘August 28, 1771’, *Fauquier County*, p. 38. Thirty shillings in today’s money would be £186.00 (Officer and Williamson, ‘Relative Value of a UK Pound’; A-H Chroust, ‘The legal profession in colonial America’, *Notre Dame Law Review* 34 (1958), pp. 41-54, p. 48).

<sup>103</sup> Virginia General Assembly, October 1765, 5<sup>th</sup> George III, Chapter LII, ‘An Act for Allowing the full fees to which the Lawyers practicing in the several courts of this colony are entitled, in particular cases therein mentioned, to be taxed upon recovery in the bill of costs’ in Hening, *Statutes*, vol. 8, pp. 184-185, p. 185, para. 3.

Dodson's and left with them when the Dodson family migrated southward to Halifax County, Virginia in 1760s.<sup>104</sup>

Despite the earlier and occasional problems, Broad Run and other Regular Baptist churches established their places in less settled areas, mostly unmolested by the Anglican hierarchy. Thus, the marketplace of religion, created by the Act of Toleration, expanded as the Regular Baptists were positioned for growth in northern Virginia. As their memberships grew, the four pioneering churches decided they needed to form an association of their own, closer to home. They had depended on the resources of the Philadelphia Baptist Association to supply ministers and to dispense advice. They had matured to the point of being self-sustaining. These churches had the marks of self-sustaining congregations. (1) They had been duly constituted according to the regulations of the Philadelphia Baptist Association. (2) Each church had purchased property on which to build a meeting house. (3) They were meeting regularly for the purposes of church discipline and for worship, and (4) they had appointed a Baptist elder residing near them to preach and had ordained other elders and deacons as needed. With this organization in place, the spiritual needs of the Baptists and their neighbors could be sustained.<sup>105</sup>

#### *The Formation of the Kettocton Baptist Association*

By 1765, four Regular Baptist meeting houses had organized memberships and regular meetings in Northern Virginia: Smith and Linville Creek in Augusta County (now Rockingham); Mill Creek in Frederick County (now Berkeley in West Virginia); Kettoctin (Loudoun County) and Broad Run (Fauquier County). Their leadership, John Alderson, John Garrard, John Marks, and David Thomas and select lay members, regularly attended the

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<sup>104</sup> Broad Run Minute Book, May 15, 1764; June 10, 1764; M. K. Williams, 'Dodson Family History in Virginia' (Danville, VA, 1988), Manuscript, Virginia Museum of History and Culture, Richmond, Virginia.

<sup>105</sup> Fristoe, *Kettocton Baptist Association*, pp. 109-112; Thomas, *Virginian Baptist*, pp. 26-36.

annual Philadelphia Baptist Association meeting. The trip involved several days journey between their homes and the host meeting house in the environs of Philadelphia. The leadership of these four churches determined that they would organize to offer mutual support in lieu of making the arduous annual journey to Pennsylvania. The churches petitioned the Philadelphia Association for dismissal to form their own association on October 15, 1765. The petition was granted provided that the new Association continue to correspond with the Philadelphia Association and ‘provided they go on the same plan, and hold union with us’.<sup>106</sup>

The following August 1766, messengers from the four churches gathered at Ketocin meeting house to establish the Association. The combined membership of the churches was 142. By 1775, Ketocin Association had eighteen constituent churches.<sup>107</sup> Like the Philadelphia Association, member churches crossed colony boundaries, extending from the northwest area claimed by both Pennsylvania and Virginia eastward to Maryland and southward to North Carolina.

Table 3.1: Constituent Churches of Ketocin Association by 1775<sup>108</sup>

Date Joined	Church	County	Elder
August 19, 1766	Ketocin Baptist Church (host)	Loudoun	John Marks
August 19, 1766	Mill Creek Church	Frederick	John Garrard
August 19, 1766	Smith’s Creek Church	Augusta	John Alderson
August 19, 1766	Broad Run Baptist Church	Fauquier	David Thomas
August 17, 1767	Chappawamsick Church	Stafford	David Thomas
August 17, 1767	New Valley Church	Loudoun	Joseph Thomas
August 1769	Little River Church	Loudoun	Richard Major
August 1769	Mountain Run Church	Orange	Nathaniel Sanders
August 1770	Birch Creek Church	Halifax	John Kreel
August 1770	Potomac Creek	Stafford	William Fristoe

<sup>106</sup> Gillette (ed.), *Philadelphia Baptist Association* (2007), p. 95.

<sup>107</sup> Fristoe, *Ketocin Baptist Association*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10; Gardner, ‘Ketocin and Philadelphia Associations’, pp. 1371-1372.

Date Joined	Church	County	Elder
August 1772	Buck Marsh	Frederick	Daniel Fristoe
August 1772	Thumb Run	Fauquier	William Fristoe
August 1773	Brentown	Fauquier	Daniel Fristoe

William Fristoe’s *Concise History of Kettocton Baptist Association* outlined the purpose and intention of forming the Association. The Association’s purpose was to encourage the gospel, care for churches without pastors, discipline churches that stray from orthodox doctrine or practice, and offer guidance to churches who request it.<sup>109</sup> Local church governance was protected by Regular Baptists. Fristoe comments, ‘. . . a congregational church of Christ is the highest court God hath established on earth, and that has an undoubted right to decide on all matters respecting her internal government—and that it is arbitrary, tyrannical, and antichristian, to usurp over her, or pluck the reins of government from her, forasmuch as this right is vested in her by the great Lawgiver’.<sup>110</sup> The *History* contains numerous helps for churches, as well as notes explaining or contrasting Baptist practice with Anglican practice.

Fristoe published guidelines for the church on how to constitute themselves and criteria for joining the Kettocton Association.<sup>111</sup> Baptists were not as organized as Anglicans. A cluster of one or two families was sufficient for an elder to preach to them. When these have been scripturally baptized, they may elect to form a church. Anglicans, in contrast, would set up a chapel of ease when enough people had settled in the region to afford the cost of paying a reader to be present regularly to read the service out of the Book of Common Prayer. With sufficient population, a new Parish would be organized and that parish would be responsible for gathering funds via levies to set up a parish church, a glebe for the minister, and other legal obligations as the area’s social safety net for widows, orphans, and the poor.

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<sup>109</sup> Fristoe, *Kettocton Baptist Association*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 23-26.

Because of the controversy surrounding the Baptist doctrine of believer's baptism by immersion, Fristoe offers a defense of baptism by immersion and the proper procedures for baptism.<sup>112</sup> Baptismal candidates had not just to know a catechism but offer a clear testimony 'of an internal change of heart', evidenced by an acute awareness of their sin guilt before God and a definite request to God to remove that guilt based on the merits of Jesus Christ. The candidate had to satisfy, at minimum, the minister who will administer the baptism.<sup>113</sup>

Fristoe also includes ordination practices and procedures, and how churches should provide for their ministers.<sup>114</sup> Unlike the elaborate arrangement necessitated for the Anglicans by the logistics of having no bishop in place in the North American colonies, Baptist candidates did not have to travel to be ordained. However, that does not mean that candidacy was treated lightly. Fristoe describes the caution with which the process was approached by Regular Baptists. Thomas, on this topic, refers his readers to the Epistles of Timothy and Titus. Candidates, Thomas indicates, 'should be put on trial for some space of time, which is for a whole year sometimes; and often longer . . . . Every church should be especially careful to examine the gifts, and graces of such whom they choose to the sacred ministry'.<sup>115</sup>

Candidates must demonstrate, over a period of time, their calling. The home congregation has to observe the candidate carefully, listening to sermons and determining whether the candidate demonstrates improvement in understanding of doctrine and delivery. The candidate must be able to defend the faith successfully against 'gainsayers', with 'words expressive of good sense', using arguments built on the word of God.<sup>116</sup> If by life and

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<sup>112</sup> Fristoe, *Ketocton Baptist Association*, pp. 26-30.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 31-60.

<sup>115</sup> Thomas, *Virginian Baptist*, pp. 27-28.

<sup>116</sup> Fristoe, *Ketocton Baptist Association*, p. 33.

conduct, a candidate is deemed qualified for ordination, neighboring ministers are asked to gather as a council to question the candidate. If the answers are satisfactory, the ordination is then administered by the council. The ordinand kneels and the ministers gather around and place their hands on the candidate. This is followed by a sermon offered by one of the members of the council charging the candidate to be faithful in ministry. This pattern has not changed much in Baptist practice.<sup>117</sup>

In contrast to the Anglicans, Baptists did not require their ministers to be educated for the ministry. Partly this was due to opportunity. Rhode Island College, founded in 1765, was the only education available in the North American colonies for Baptist pastors, and most Baptists were not wealthy enough to send potential ministers to college.<sup>118</sup> Regular Baptists looked for leadership among people who were literate and who had an understanding of basic doctrine and praxis. Fristoe comments, that for someone with clear abilities ‘to remain silent, merely for the want of a school education, would be a pity’.<sup>119</sup> One of the key responsibilities of a Baptist elder of this period was to identify leaders who were trainable for ministry. For example, if a faithful Regular Baptist farmer prayed and read the Bible regularly, then the church elder might ask that farmer to be a travelling companion to a distant preaching engagement and give the farmer an opportunity to participate in leading the service. That farmer may then be asked to fill in for the elder (like Anglican readers when the minister is absent) when the elder was away on a Sunday. Eventually, the farmer would be ordained to lead a new meeting house as its elder, if the congregation agreed. David Thomas, elder of Broad Run Baptist Church, trained ministers and founded new Baptist congregations in northern Virginia in this manner.

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<sup>117</sup> Fristoe, *Ketocton Baptist Association*, pp. 34-38.

<sup>118</sup> I. M. Allen, ‘Brown University’, *The Triennial Baptist Register*, 2 (1836), pp. 57-61, p. 57, books.google.com (Accessed: 18 November 2017).

<sup>119</sup> Fristoe, *Ketocton Baptist Association*, p. 38.

*Elder David Thomas' Strategy to Create New  
Regular Baptist Meeting Houses*

In his biographical survey of Virginia Baptist ministers, Simpson records ten Baptist ministers who were initially baptized into the membership of Broad Run Baptist Church between the years 1763 and 1772.<sup>120</sup> The stories of these men and their movement to other counties in Virginia and their leadership of churches in their new homes document a strategy Thomas led to place at least one Regular Baptist church in counties neighboring to Fauquier and in other regions of Virginia. Kroll-Smith noticed this pattern. He explains, 'A mother church had attained a level of cultural competence sufficient to act independently of another organized group. The responsibilities of a mother church included not only meeting the religious needs of its immediate constituency but also awakening the inhabitants of the surrounding countryside to their sinful condition and the need for repentance'.<sup>121</sup> Broad Run, as a mother church, began many branch congregations in neighboring areas. Simpson documents that not all these men were previously Baptist before meeting Thomas. Except for Allen Wiley, who was a former Lutheran (married to Eve Holtzclaw), the rest were former Anglicans. Thomas and one of his 'elders in training' would visit a small group in a new area regularly until enough had been baptized to constitute a church. The church would then ask the elder trainee to take on the leadership of the new church.<sup>122</sup>

Fristoe describes these branches as ready to constitute a church when 'a number of persons having been baptized according to the institution of Christ, upon profession of their faith in Christ, who be remote from, and inconveniences preventing their assembling with or

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<sup>120</sup> Simpson, *Virginia Baptist Ministers*, 'John Creel', vol. 1, pp. 66-67; 'Lazarus Dodson', vol. 4, p. 173; 'Nathaniel Sanders', vol. 1, p. 35-37; vol. IV, p. 198; 'Daniel Fristoe', vol. 1, p. 16-17; 'William Fristoe', vol. 2, pp. 76-77; 'Allen Wiley', vol. 1, p. 45-46; 'Philip Spiller', vol. 6, pp. 354-356; 'John Pinckard', vol. 2, pp. 87-88; 'Joseph Drury', vol. 5, pp. 241-242; and 'Jeremiah Moore', vol. 1, p. 33.

<sup>121</sup> J. S. Kroll-Smith, 'Transmitting a revival culture: The organizational dynamic of the Baptist movement in colonial Virginia, 1760-1777', *The Journal of Southern History*, 50 (1984), pp. 551-568, p. 559.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 560-563.

forming in with a church of Christ, it makes it necessary that they should form a distinct and separate society'.<sup>123</sup> The inconvenience of joining an already established meeting house was a key criterion determining the need to constitute a new church. Both Baptists and Anglicans faced the challenge of a mobile and burgeoning population in Virginia. For Anglicans, the solution for the parish vestry was to build a 'chapel of ease' in the outlying regions of the parish where a paid reader would regularly meet with the area residents to read the liturgy. This was not a new church but a permanent extension of the main parish church. When the population was sufficient, the Virginia General Assembly created a new parish.

Morgan Edwards identifies four churches that were formed out of Broad Run: Chappawamsick Church and Potowmack Church in Stafford County, Manor Church in Fauquier County, and Mountain Run Church in Orange County.<sup>124</sup> These churches have in common elders who were baptized by Thomas and dismissed by Broad Run to their new ministries.<sup>125</sup> According to Weaver, Thomas valued education and sought out leaders for churches who were literate.<sup>126</sup> It is likely that all of these new elders could read, even if they had no formal education.

Chappawamsick in Stafford County was founded in 1766, with David Thomas as the church's first elder. Tillson notes that Chappawamsick drew most of its male members from the group in the county who were mainly outside the gentry class and just above the poverty line. Most Regular Baptist Churches had a similar demographic, few landowners and mostly tenant farmers.<sup>127</sup> Thomas travelled between Broad Run in Fauquier and Chappawamsick in

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<sup>123</sup> Fristoe, *Ketocton Baptist Association*, p. 24.

<sup>124</sup> Edwards, *Materials*, vol. III, pp. 27-39.

<sup>125</sup> Simpson, *Virginia Baptist Ministers*, vol. I, p. 16 (Daniel Fristoe-Church of England); vol. II, p. 76 (William Fristoe-Church of England); vol. II, p. 35 (Nathaniel Saunders-Church of England); vol. II, p. 83 (Richard Major-Presbyterian), vol. II, p. 87 (John Pinckard-Church of England).

<sup>126</sup> Weaver, 'David Thomas', p. 8.

<sup>127</sup> A. H. Tillson, *Accommodating Revolutions: Virginia's Northern Neck in an Era of Transformations, 1760-1810* (Charlottesville, VA, 2010), pp. 230-232.

Stafford County. He baptized both Daniel and William Fristoe. William Fristoe would become one of the leading Regular Baptist elders, and the chronicler of the Kettocton Baptist Association. Taylor's biography of him indicates that the Fristoe brothers, Daniel and William, were born in Stafford County.<sup>128</sup> Together with David Thomas, the brothers, having been baptized, would be the first leaders of Chappawamsick. Daniel Fristoe donated the land upon which the first building was erected. Edwards indicates that Philip Spiller and Alderson Weeks served as assistants; originating 'from Broad Run Baptist Church whereof they had been members until November 22, 1766'.<sup>129</sup> In 1770, David Thomas and Richard Major, pastor of Little River Church in Loudoun County, ordained William Fristoe an elder to lead Chappawamsick in Stafford County.<sup>130</sup> In 1771, his brother Daniel, was also ordained an elder. Stafford County was one of the older counties in the colony, founded in 1664, out of Westmoreland County.<sup>131</sup> Thomas and Major crossed a county boundary to ordain Fristoe, an activity that the Anglican authorities sought to repress among dissenters. Edwards indicates that a gang of forty men led by 'one Robert Ashby and his gang [consisting of about 40]' harassed the congregation but were thwarted by 'some stout fellows . . . [who] took Ashby by the neck and heels and threw him out of doors; his gang took his part which involved the whole multitude in a bloody fray'.<sup>132</sup> Other misadventures included a live snake and a hornet's nest, on different occasions, thrown into the midst of the congregation at worship.<sup>133</sup>

Edwards also notes that Chappawamsick congregants engaged in some of the behavior more characteristic of Separate Baptist congregations, which was scandalous to

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<sup>128</sup> J. B. Taylor, *Virginia Baptist Ministers* (1859), pp. 69-78.

<sup>129</sup> Edwards, *Materials*, vol. III, pp. 27-31.

<sup>130</sup> R. Slatten 'Early records of Chappawamsic Baptist Church, 1766-1844, Part 2, 1770-1844', *Magazine of Virginia Genealogy*, 27 (August 1989), pp. 191-198, p. 191; 'Minutes, 4 April 1770', Chappawamsick Baptist Church Minutes, 1766-1912', copy of manuscript, Virginia Baptist Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia.

<sup>131</sup> Doran, *Atlas*, p. 12.

<sup>132</sup> Edwards, *Materials*, vol. III, p. 29.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*

Anglicans. This was behavior that was rarely found among Regular Baptists. He comments that in this congregation ‘the power of God have [sic] been more visible here than any other congregation of regular Baptists’.<sup>134</sup> He transcribes the following from an entry in ‘Mr. Fristoe’s journal . . . Satur. June 15, 1771. This day I began to act as an ordained minister, and never before saw such manifest appearances of God’s working and the devil’s raging at one time and in one place’.<sup>135</sup> Church business meetings were usually held on the Saturday before the Lord’s Supper was to be administered on Sunday. Daniel Fristoe continues,

‘My first business was to examin [sic] candidates for baptism, who related what God did for their souls in such a manner as to affect many present: then the opposers grew very troublesome . . . . Sixteen persons were adjudged fit subjects of baptism. The next day [being Sunday] about 2000 people came together. Many more offered for baptism, 13 of which were judged worthy. As we stood by the water the people were weeping and crying in a most extraordinary manner, and others cursing and swearing and acting like men possessed. In the midst of this, a tree tumbled, being over-loaded with people who [Zacheus like] had climbed up to see baptism administered; the coming down of that tree occasioned the adjacent tress to fall also being loaded in the same manner, but none was hurt. When the ordinance was administered and I had laid hands on the parties baptized, we sang those charming words of Dr. Watts, ‘come we that fear the Lord’, etc. The multitude sang and wept and smiled in tears, holding up their hands and countenances toward heaven in such a manner as I had not seen before. In going home, I turned to look at the people who remained by the water side and saw some screaming on the ground, some wringing their hands, some in extacies of joy, some praying; others cursing and swearing and exceedingly outrageous. We have seen strange things today’.<sup>136</sup>

Daniel Fristoe’s reflections in his journal reflect how unusual this response was. He had administered baptism to qualified candidates, led the assembly in a hymn of commitment, and dismissed the proceedings. The melee surrounding the baptism continued as he walked home. Daniel Fristoe would later die of smallpox in 1775, near Philadelphia, where he had travelled to attend the Philadelphia Baptist Association.<sup>137</sup> William Fristoe’s note on Chappawamsick in his *History* indicates that ‘violent opposition to the preaching of the

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<sup>134</sup> Edwards, *Materials*, vol. III, p. 29.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31.

<sup>137</sup> J. B. Taylor, *Virginia Baptist Ministers* (1859), Series 1, pp. 42-43.

Gospel appeared here, and worship sometimes prevented by the enemies of the same, but notwithstanding the opposition, the Lord God Omnipotent reigned'.<sup>138</sup>

Such drama was normal among Separate Baptists, but almost unheard of among Regular Baptists. Semple describes Separate Baptist meetings where the preaching evokes 'correspondent affections . . . felt by their pious hearers, which were frequently expressed by tears, trembling, screams, shouts, and acclamations . . . . The people were greatly astonished having never seen things in this wise before. Many mocked, but the power of God attending them, many also trembled'.<sup>139</sup> Thomas describes Regular Baptist meetings: 'During the time of our convention (which commonly last from about noon till near night) our people behave with great seriousness and solemnity. . . . No bowing, no talking together, no laughing, nor removing to and from, nor any disturbance of any kind is allowed of in our assemblies'.<sup>140</sup> Their differing styles of worship resulted in a 'schism . . . among the Regular and Separate Baptists, soon after their rise in Virginia . . . although a very friendly intercourse had been occasionally kept up among them'.<sup>141</sup>

William Fristoe was instrumental with David Thomas in founding Potowmack [Potomac] Church, also in Stafford County. Edwards indicates that in 1768 Fristoe experienced some difficulty in the neighborhood, when a warrant for his arrest was issued by Captain Grant. Eluding arrest, Fristoe travelled to Philadelphia for counsel. The Philadelphia Baptist Association elders there encouraged him to return and 'to be qualified according to the toleration act'.<sup>142</sup> Edwards reports that 'the sherief [sic] of the country [Mr. Original Young] pursued Fristoe with a gun in his hand in order to kill him; but, Fristoe, taking a by

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<sup>138</sup> Fristoe, *Ketocton Baptist Association*, p. 9.

<sup>139</sup> Semple, *Baptists in Virginia* (1810), p. 4.

<sup>140</sup> Thomas, *Virginian Baptist*, pp. 34-35.

<sup>141</sup> Semple, *Baptists in Virginia* (1810), p. 73.

<sup>142</sup> Edwards, *Materials*, vol. III, p. 34.

path, escaped the ledden death. This same sherief is since become a Baptist; and a most humble and contrite Christian he is'.<sup>143</sup> Edwards also reports that Lord Bottertrot [sic], the Virginia governor, took interest in Fristoe's case. He speculates that 'had this worthy governor lived the persecution of the Baptists in Virginia had been over long ago'.<sup>144</sup> The only notation related to religious toleration in Botetourt's papers was correspondence between the Quakers in Virginia and himself. In November 1768, Lord Botetourt, when he had just begun his official duties, dispatched to the Earl of Hillsborough, copies of an address he received from a group of Quakers in Virginia and his response. The Quakers assure Botetourt of their loyalty to the crown and he in turn states, 'You may depend upon the free exercise of Your Religion being continued to You, together with that regard and protection, to which a peaceable behaviour and submission to those in Authority will forever entitle you'.<sup>145</sup> It seems that these dissenters felt the need to offer a promise of fealty to the new governor, even with a law on the books giving them 'free exercise of religion'. It was a freedom to worship, but what constituted 'peaceable behavior and submission' was determined by the authorities.

In November 1775, Hartwood Baptist Church asked Allen Wiley, one of Thomas' protégés, to take on the elder role in the church and they 'resolved that he be ordained to that office'.<sup>146</sup> In 1775, the business meeting minutes include a discussion on just war. 'Query—Whether it is lawfull for Christians to take up arms and go to war upon any occasion. Agreed that it is lawfull upon some occasions. Query—Whether it is lawfull to take up arms in the

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<sup>143</sup> Edwards, *Materials*, vol. III, p. 34.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>145</sup> D. J. McGaan, 'The official letters of Norborne Berkeley, Baron de Botetourt, Governor of Virginia, 1768-1770', M.A. thesis, College of William and Mary, 1971, pp. 65-67, p. 67. McGann cites the source as Great Britain, Public Records Office, Colonial Office Papers, vol. 5, piece 1347, folios 26-27.

<sup>146</sup> Hartwood Baptist Church Minutes, 1775-1825, 1835-41, 1858-59-61, microfilm, image 9, Virginia Baptist Historical Society, Richmond, VA. Note on inside cover: the church was organized in 1771 (as Potomac); extinct in 1860s.

present dispute with Great Briton and her colonies. Agreed it is lawfull'.<sup>147</sup> This notation may have been a reaction to the news that George Washington had assumed command of the colonies' continental army. Tillson suggests much of this congregation were likely not landowners, and thus had less of a stake in maintaining the status quo.<sup>148</sup> This is mirror opposite to Spangler's assessment of the Baptist's understanding of their stake in society. Spangler indicates that their efforts to enforce proper moral behavior 'echoed and reinforced the mores of the dominant culture'.<sup>149</sup> This divergence may reflect the varying reactions of Regular Baptists to events surrounding them. Daily, they sought to live pure lives; but, when economic or class issues flared, they joined their nearest neighbor's cause.

Manor Church, constituted on September 9, 1771, was built in the Leeds Parish, which was formed out of Hamilton in 1769. The church later took the name Thumb Run in 1772, with the Fristoe brothers being asked to 'preach the gospel, and administer the ordinances', while the more local former Anglican, John Pinkard, was chosen to serve as 'ruling elder' of the congregation.<sup>150</sup> Simpson indicates that Pinkard was baptized into the community at Manor Church by David Thomas, and he licensed by Thumb Run Baptist church as a ruling elder on April 4, 1772, but he was never ordained a minister. The Thumb Run congregation eventually censured him on June 1, 1776, for 'harsh judging and condemning a member when not warranted by the word of God and other irregularities'.<sup>151</sup> He led with the zeal of a new convert, which did not serve him or the congregation well.

Mountain Run Church, in Orange County, was formed by David Thomas in 1768, with Nathaniel Saunders as its first pastor. Thomas was the first Baptist to preach in the

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<sup>147</sup> Hartwood Baptist Minutes, image 8.

<sup>148</sup> Tillson, *Accommodating Revolutions*, p. 231.

<sup>149</sup> Spangler, *Virginians Reborn*, p. 134.

<sup>150</sup> Thumb Run [Primitive] Baptist Church, 'Church records, 1771-1890', microfilm, Virginia Baptist Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia, image 10.

<sup>151</sup> Simpson, *Virginia Baptist Ministers*, II, pp. 87-88; Thumb Run Church Records, microfilm, images 10, 13.

Orange and Culpeper County. Sanders was baptized into the membership of Broad Run Baptist Church on July 10, 1763 and in 1766, he began to travel with Thomas in Orange and Culpeper Counties, south of Fauquier County. In 1767, Colonel William Green in Culpeper County wrote to Saunders to appeal to him as a leader among the Anabaptists, ‘whose behaviour is much more moderate than most of your brethren’, to admonish his fellow Baptist preachers to not be so harsh in their depictions of Anglican worship. Such harshness was bound to elicit a response. Green finishes with, ‘I doubt not but you might enjoy your religion in peace and quietness if you would forbear to concern yourselves with those who are of the Church; who are Christians as well as yourselves’.<sup>152</sup> In August 1773, Saunders spent some time in the Culpeper County jail, the same county where John Corbly had been jailed for preaching in 1768. This was one of the few times that a Regular Baptist minister encountered legal trouble. Saunders had apparently been in jail for several weeks when Thomas wrote on September 26, 1773, to encourage him,<sup>153</sup>

Dear Brother,--I hear you are put in prison for preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Perhaps you may think it hard. But O, what honor has the Lord put upon you! I think you may be willing to suffer death now, seeing you are counted worthy to enter a dungeon for your Master’s sake. Hold out, my dear brother! Remember your Master—your royal, heavenly, divine Master—was nailed to a cursed tree for us. O, to suffer for Him is glory in the bud! O, let it never be said that a Baptist minister of Virginia ever wronged his conscience to get liberty, not to please God, but himself! O, your imprisonment (which I am satisfied is not from any rash proceedings of your own) is not a punishment, but a glory! ‘If you suffer with Him you shall also reign with him’.<sup>154</sup>

Simpson indicates that Saunders supported his family through carpentry, using enslaved labor to support his farm, and he was responsible for supporting the founding of several other churches, including Birch Creek Baptist Church in Pittsylvania County. In the *Virginia*

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<sup>152</sup> L. P. Little, *Imprisoned Preachers*, pp. 78-81; Brydon, *Virginia’s Mother Church*, vol. II, pp. 187-189.

<sup>153</sup> Semple and Beale, *Baptists in Virginia* (1894), pp. 234-235. Fordyce, (comp.), *John Corbly*, p. ix.; D. Corbly, *Pastor John Corbly* (Oklahoma City, OK, 2008), p. 65.

<sup>154</sup> Semple and Beale, *Baptists in Virginia* (1894), pp. 483-484.

*Herald*, a Fredericksburg, Virginia newspaper, his obituary reads, ‘Few instances occur of society’s being deprived of so worthy and respectable a member . . . He was a humane and indulgent master; a tender and affectionate husband; a kind and obliging parent; a warm and generous friend’.<sup>155</sup> In 1782 his household consisted of 13 whites, and two slaves.<sup>156</sup> By 1808, his estate recorded eight slaves: ‘one negro woman, Hannah, and a child, Andrew, one negro girl 15 years old named Delsey, a girl named Fanny, one negro named Harry, one negro girl named Dauphney, one negro girl name Luney, one negro girl named Clary’.<sup>157</sup> Even as he challenged the society as a Baptist, he was wealthy enough to buy into the slave-based agricultural system; indeed he achieved the encomium ‘so worthy and respectable a member’ of society’.<sup>158</sup> In 1773 Saunders may have been odious to society due to his beliefs, but with the passage of the statute of religious freedom in 1789, and by the time of his death in 1808, he was well integrated into a social system supported by slavery.

Broad Run member John Creel was baptized by Thomas in 1762, and later he and many members of the Dodson family moved south to Pittsylvania County, Virginia. They followed the pattern they had observed in the formation of Broad Run Baptist Church. They built Birch Creek Church on land donated by Thomas Dodson in 1769. According to Simpson, Creel was a patriot; serving briefly in the 12<sup>th</sup> Virginia Regiment. He ‘operated a grist mill and farmed to support his family’.<sup>159</sup> He died in 1787 when a log fell on him while

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<sup>155</sup> ‘Obituary of Nathaniel Sanders’, *The Virginia Herald*, 30 August 1808, news.google.com.

<sup>156</sup> United States Census Bureau, ‘First Census of the United States: Orange County, Virginia’, p. 39-40; p. 40, [https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1790/heads\\_of\\_families/virginia/1790m-02.pdf?#](https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1790/heads_of_families/virginia/1790m-02.pdf?#) (Accessed: 2 November 2019).

<sup>157</sup> W. P. Boyer, *Genealogical Notes on the Saunders Family of Orange County, Virginia* (1983), p. 9

<sup>158</sup> Simpson, *Virginia Baptist Ministers*, vol. I, pp. 35-36; ‘Obituary of Nathaniel Sanders’, *Virginia Herald*.

<sup>159</sup> Simpson, *Virginia Baptist Ministers*, vol. II, pp. 66-67.

assisting a neighboring family with building their house.<sup>160</sup> Lazarus Dodson, an assistant minister, was ordained an elder in 1786, following Creel as minister.<sup>161</sup>

### *Conclusion*

Regular Baptists in northern Virginia settled into their communities, with their Elders making lawful requests to establish meeting houses. Regular Baptist worship gatherings attracted hearers as well as scoffers. Regular Baptists had distinctly different practices, such as public believer's baptism and public ordination of elders, as well as Saturday business meetings that were closed to the public. Such lay involvement in church matters was a novel concept to most Anglicans, who delegated church business to the locally elected vestry.

By comparing the Loudoun County court order book records with the 1776 membership list of the Kectoctin church, a sense of the Baptist church's relationship with the community emerges. The Shawnee attacks on the western slope of the mountains did not touch Loudoun County, just east of the mountains. Therefore, the parish Churchwardens had comparatively fewer orphans to resettle. In 1769, John Marks was asked by the Churchwardens of Cameron Parish to take in a six-year old girl, Lydia Yates.<sup>162</sup> Marks and his church clerk, Thomas Humphreys, were well respected in their communities.

David Thomas' congregation in Fauquier County experienced difficulties with court appearances until he could secure a license from the county. Despite abuse 'from rude Virginians with an abundance of slander',<sup>163</sup> and threats to his life,<sup>164</sup> Thomas was able to share Baptist doctrine with interested neighbors, some of whom were literate men who would

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<sup>160</sup> Semple and Beale, *Baptists in Virginia* (1894), 332.

<sup>161</sup> Edwards, *Materials*, vol. III, pp. 24-25; Simpson, *Virginia Baptist Ministers*, vol. 4, p. 173.

<sup>162</sup> Duncan, *Loudoun County Order Book D*, 8 May 1769, p. 205. Approximately 120 children were bond to guardians by the Churchwardens of Cameron or Shelbourne Parish in Loudoun County between 1758 and 1775. Most of these were due to the natural death of a parent or the parent's inability to care for them properly.

<sup>163</sup> Edwards, *Materials*, vol. III, p. 26.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28.

become Regular Baptist church elders themselves. The Fristoe brothers also experienced pressure, but again, once they secured their licenses, the authorities in the region left them alone. Thomas' major impact upon Anglican and Regular Baptist relations in Virginia would come in his *Virginian Baptist*, a response to Anglican minister James Maury's pamphlet to dissuade Anglicans in Virginia from looking favorably upon the activity of Baptists in their parishes. Maury's objections and Thomas' rejoinder illustrate the kinds of tensions around legitimacy that were experienced between Anglicans and Baptists.<sup>165</sup>

The Philadelphia Association supported their efforts to comply with the Anglican toleration regulations, and thus they experienced only a little harassment. The Association's support for these scattered Baptists was key to their success. Regular Baptists in northern Virginia successfully navigated their new circumstances, becoming community leaders and respected citizens, even as they built a network of churches that would become the Kettocton Baptist Association. The Philadelphia Baptist Association also sent preaching elders into North Carolina. Some of the Regular Baptists there would migrate north into Virginia's Tidewater, the region longest settled by British colonists, with the oldest Anglican parishes.

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<sup>165</sup> See Chapter 6 below.

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