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Accidental Pluralism

America *and* the Religious Politics
of English Expansion, 1497–1662

E V A N H A E F E L I

The United States has long been defined by its religious diversity and recurrent public debates over the religious and political values that inform it. In *Accidental Pluralism*, Evan Haefeli argues that America did not begin as a religiously diverse and tolerant society. It became so only because England's religious unity collapsed just as America was being colonized. By tying the emergence of American religious toleration to global events, Haefeli creates a true transnationalist history that links developing American realities to political and social conflicts and resolutions in Europe, showing how the relationships among states, churches, and publics were contested from the beginning of the colonial era and produced a society that no one had anticipated. *Accidental Pluralism* is an ambitious and comprehensive new account of the origins of American religious life that compels us to refine our narratives about what came to be seen as American values and their distinct relationship to religion and politics.