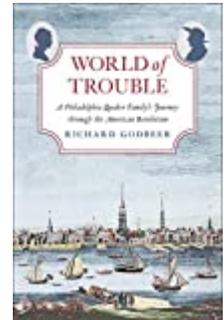


**Richard Godbeer.** *World of Trouble: A Philadelphia Quaker Family's Journey through the American Revolution.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019. 480 pp. \$38.00, cloth, ISBN 978-0-300-21998-2.



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**Published on** H-Nationalism (November, 2020)

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*World of Trouble* opens with the most harrowing experience of Elizabeth and Henry Drinker's lives. Pennsylvania patriots accused Henry Drinker of treason to the Revolutionary cause when he refused to fight due to his Quaker pacifism. As punishment, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania sent him and nineteen others to Virginia as exiles. Elizabeth called it the "tyrannical conduct of the present wicked rulers" (p. 1). Richard Godbeer's book recounts Revolutionary and early American Philadelphia from the perspective of a Quaker family, largely from the diaries of Elizabeth and the correspondence between the married couple. The book reads as part dual biography of these two individuals and part narrative of Quaker, Revolutionary, and early American history. Through its pages the merchant and his wife navigate their lives as British colonials and early Americans, sometimes at odds with their primary identity as Quakers.

Godbeer grounds the perspectives held by the Drinkers though exploring the history of Quakers in Revolutionary-era Philadelphia. While Pennsyl-

vania was founded as a Quaker colony, their religious identity did not often win them favors in the eighteenth century. Other Pennsylvanians viewed Quakers as suspect for their evolving political ideologies, which at one point included more support for the royal British government, not less. Quakers also struggled with their professions in a secular economy. Drinker's role as a merchant often took him far from home and to the cusp of acceptable Quaker behavior. Nothing, however, was as troubling as Quaker pacifism. Drinker and his peers' refusal to fight in a militia resulted in months-long exile away from their families. Through the Drinkers, Godbeer reveals how Quaker theology shaped their daily lives from raising children to marriage to Drinker's profession as a merchant and landowner.

Much of the book is based on the volumes of diaries from Elizabeth Drinker. Godbeer interprets Drinker as a woman who recognized the importance of her roles as mother, keeper of the house, and devoted wife. She thought seriously about the prospect of marrying Henry, not just for her affec-

tion toward him, which was becoming an acceptable reason for marriage, but for the life he offered her. While Quakers were known for more gender egalitarianism that allowed for women to be active members in their congregations, Godbeer reminds us that gender hierarchy remained in place. And yet, Elizabeth, who regularly deferred to husband, demonstrated an ability to operate outside of those restrictions when her family's well-being was threatened.

*World of Trouble* paints a rich portrait of the colonial and early family dynamic. Godbeer expands the view of fathers, portraying Henry Drinker as a caring and involved paternal head of his family. The book echoes some of arguments made about women during this time in *A Midwife's Tale* by Laurel Ulrich Thatcher (1990). While Thatcher used the diary of Martha Ballard to understand the lives of women in Massachusetts and present-day Maine, some of the experiences of Ballard were shared by Elizabeth Drinker and others in their respective communities. Godbeer and Thatcher both relay practices of premarital sexual relations (unaccepted by Quakers), the impact of independence on servants, and the incredible hardships of death and older age. Although his focus is on a different space, Godbeer's presentation of these topics demonstrates some of the more universal experiences in this early American period. *World of Trouble* adds to the understanding of the relationship between families and their servants, included indentured servants. The Drinkers also had several servants who were Black. Through this, Godbeer provides his readers with some insight on how Quaker Philadelphians viewed race. His account demonstrates a relatively progressive overall view when it came to Black servants in the Drinker household. However, Godbeer reveals that the Drinker family did not extend that to mixed-race couples and their offspring.

The book is organized into nine chapters. Each chapter focuses on a different theme of the family's life in Philadelphia during the colonial and ear-

ly American period, organized loosely chronologically. At times, this leaves the reader revisiting the same events and time lines in different contexts. The first three chapters predate Drinker's exile. They include the courtship of Henry and Elizabeth through correspondence, as he traveled a great deal as an emerging merchant. The fourth chapter centers on Henry's exile, largely from the perspective of Elizabeth Drinker, including her efforts to extract her husband from his punishment. Chapter 5, "Inward and Outward Trials': Surviving the Revolution," continues the narrative of the Drinkers' experience of the Revolution. These two middle chapters remind readers of the impact of the rebellion and the war itself, especially as Philadelphia moves from British to American control, forcing its residents to revise their strategies for survival. The final three chapters follow the changes to the Drinker family, especially as Henry grows more committed to his Quaker faith and transitions his professional life. These chapters also describe the Drinker children as they enter adulthood, marriage, and parenthood and face their own obstacles, which at times bring despair to their parents. Throughout these chapters, the reader encounters familiar names in the Drinkers' lives including George and Martha Washington and the physician Benjamin Rush. These remind the reader both of the small world that was so troubled and the well-to-do status of the Drinker family.

There is one weakness in an otherwise strong book: an overemphasis on Elizabeth's anxiety. The focus on her fears of disease, death, and separation edges on the side of exaggeration. Godbeer provides ample reason for her concern over the deaths of four of her nine children as infants, the constant epidemics that raged through Philadelphia, the unstable economy, and the distrust of Quakers by outsiders. At times, Godbeer provides evidence of Henry's own dismay regarding the same issues. Yet only in Godbeer's assessment of Elizabeth does he suggest the anxiety to border on a character flaw.

That said, the book is a welcome addition to our understanding of the Revolution and the early United States. Scholars of this period, as well as those interested in Quaker and gender histories, will benefit greatly from *Worlds of Trouble*.

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**Citation:** Meg Eppel Gudgeirsson. Review of Godbeer, Richard. *World of Trouble: A Philadelphia Quaker Family's Journey through the American Revolution*. H-Nationalism, H-Net Reviews. November, 2020.

**URL:** <https://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=55449>



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