

## Book Reviews

Janet Moore Lindman, *A Vivifying Spirit: Quaker Practice and Reform in Antebellum American* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2022), pp. xiii + 270. ISBN 978-0-271-09265-2. Hardback, \$119.95.

American Quakerism experienced a series of remarkable transformations throughout the antebellum period. The American Quakerism of the eighteenth century became the American Quakerisms of the late nineteenth century. This is often represented visually as a tree with multiple schismatic boughs branching from the centre trunk of seventeenth-century Quakerism. While each branch shares its roots and some commonalities with others on the Quaker family tree, they are all unique enough that Quaker historians frequently periodise their work around the schisms or they focus their work on a single faction. Janet Moore Lindman's *A Vivifying Spirit* takes a different approach by examining the whole tree of antebellum American Quakerism in the mid-Atlantic region. Using an impressive range of Quaker archival material—personal and family papers, meeting records and Quaker publications housed in multiple archives—Lindman argues that antebellum American Friends transformed their faith through several mutations to expand the spiritual expressions of Quakerism. From the single Religious Society of Friends in the eighteenth century to the Hicksite, Orthodox, Gurneyite, Wilburite, Progressive, Conservative and Liberal Quakerisms of the late nineteenth century, American Friends reorganised, expanded and transmuted their religion based on a deep desire to live out a practical and meaningful spirituality.

Lindman's work demonstrates that across the diversity of American Quakerism that emerged in this period ('from silent waiting and evangelical preaching to reform activism', p. 51), Friends within each faction were utterly committed to their form of Quakerism as being the truest expression of the faith and their practical piety. She maintains that the 'responsiveness and adaptation' of American Quakerism 'had antecedents in Friends' sectarian history' (p. 199). The 'uncompromising attitude' early Quakers had to their faith and to the hierarchical social conventions that they refused to observe shows the ways that Quakers

performed their piety from the beginning. As disagreements over theological and social concerns emerged within Quakerism, Friends employed the same practices they had used when engaging with mainstream religion and society. This led to a series of schisms, each based on deeply held commitments to particular ways of being a Quaker.

One of the book's strengths is the way that Lindman uncovers and presents the interiority of Friends' faith and the constant vigilance required of Quaker spirituality. She begins her book with George Dillwyn's 1794 *A Map of the Various Paths of Life*, maintaining that it 'provides entrée into the spiritual world of Friends during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries' (p. 2). The map represented the spiritual perils that awaited the inattentive. The path to the 'Temple of Honour' or 'Happy Old Age Hall' was narrow; only through extreme diligence could one avoid the pitfalls of places like 'Vanity Fair', 'Misery Square', 'False Rest Common', and 'Dungeon Bottom'. Lindman is correct: 'Quaker spiritual practice [was] a vigorous undertaking' (p. 3). Scholars of eighteenth-century Quakerism have shown that the silence associated with what we call Quaker quietism should not be mistaken for passivity. Eighteenth-century Quaker spiritual practice was active and required constant diligence.

Given the importance of childrearing to maintain the faith from one generation to the next, Quaker childrearing was rife with watchfulness and anxiety. Lindman uses personal and family papers to reveal the extent to which Quaker parents went to nurture in their children the habits and discipline needed to navigate the various paths of life. For instance, the Brown family kept a diary in which they 'tracked their sons' comportment' not only for their own record 'but also to read it back to them so they would improve in the future' (p. 45). And, like parents throughout time, the Browns were 'mortified' when their children misbehaved in front of guests (p. 45). Quaker parents monitored and corrected their children's behaviour, marked their developmental milestones, provided them with a 'guarded education', encouraged them to choose pious friends and counselled them in life. Family letters between parents and children at Westtown School, a Quaker boarding school established in 1799, indicate that governing, counselling and correcting continued even while children were away at school.

Quaker death rituals also offer insights into the interiority of Quaker faith. How an individual handled death reflected how one had lived. Quaker death ways were not merely performative; Lindman shows that they 'provided structure and meaning to a dreadful and traumatic event' (p. 67). By the antebellum period, memorials had become much more than a tribute to the deceased. They were a tool for instruction on how to live and die well as a Quaker. Lindman's analysis of the impact of the Hicksite schism on the rituals of death shows that they were maintained after the destructive schism, varying only in the content of post-schism memorials. Orthodox Friends incorporated evangelical concepts into their memorials and included references to the importance of 'redemption, repentance, and conversion upon death, like other evangelical Protestants' (p. 76).

In addition to schism, Lindman identifies ‘industrialization, western migration, print culture, and reform activism’ (p. 4) as forces that transformed American Quakerism. The final chapter in her book offers a fascinating exploration of the ways that nineteenth-century American Friends used history and memory ‘to claim the rightness of their beliefs’ (pp. 177–78). Practiced at using manuscript and print culture to further their cause, the flurry of written material American Quakers used to defend their theological positions advanced spiritual development (178). No single group made use of Quaker history and memory more than others. Hicksite, Orthodox, Gurneyite, Wilburite and Progressive Friends all invoked the past to legitimate their positions. As Lindman says, ‘Individually and collectively, Friends utilised history to build their specific brand while simultaneously employing deviating memories to separate from others. They steeped their spiritual identity and practical piety in a collective memory and a birthright history to draw divergent conclusions and justify distinct outcomes’ (196). The Quakerisms at the end of the antebellum period were not the Quakerism of its beginning. *A Vivifying Spirit* provides some key insights into the rich and complicated history of that transformation.

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Marianne D. Nielsen and Barbara M. Heather, *Finding Right Relations: Quakers, Native Americans and Settler Colonialism* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2022), pp. x + 213. ISBN 978-0-8165-4409-7. Hardback, \$45.

This book combines historical work and moral considerations to provide a social and political analysis of the relationship between Native Americans and Quakers from the settling of Pennsylvania until the present. This broad scope is a strength in that it provides a great deal of nuance and provides good evidence for some of the points. In some places, however, it means that the analysis feels shallow or misses engagement with other scholarly texts.

The seven chapters cover Quaker and Lenape approaches to peacemaking during the early existence of Pennsylvania; issues with Quaker governance, including a chapter which explores the Conestoga Massacres specifically and looks at the way some Scots Irish settlers were opposed to both American Indians and Quaker colonists; how colonial ideas from wider society were adopted by Quakers; Quaker involvement in education for some Native communities, including in running boarding and other schools; peacemaking principles used by Quaker, Lenape and Navajo groups at different times; and a concluding assessment of Quaker/indigenous relations in the past, present and future.

Although the combination of moral and historical analysis is different to the approach taken by some academic historians, it seems justified in the case of this

situation which involved some horrific wrongs as well as positive connections and which has many consequences up to today. From the point of view of ethical analysis, the normative approach is not made explicit but seems to have a large element of contextual work: the authors skilfully examine complex situations from multiple perspectives, clarifying the motives of all involved and showing how, even though some actions were clearly wrong, they were justified in the minds of those taking them. This includes a very helpful analysis of several situations where Quakers found their own principles in conflict, such as when they both want to support American Indian people and change their society beyond all recognition. The authors are also able to consider a wide range of different forms of causation, balancing the agency of people on all sides and broader forces including the social, political and theological.

I also found two weaknesses in the book which need to be considered. One is that some material is covered too quickly and needs more detail to support the case being made. The clearest example of this is Chapter 6, 'The Universality of Peacemaking: Hope for Social Justice?', which I found the least convincing section. Although the claim to universality which is made in the title and introduction of this chapter is not repeated in its conclusion, and the authors acknowledge that more examples would be needed to prove universality, it moves very rapidly through a large number of technical concepts not used elsewhere in the book and does not have enough time to properly ground the narrower claim of shared and transferrable elements in peacemaking processes. I am sympathetic to the goals of the chapter and hope that the authors will write a fuller exploration of this theme in future.

Besides this chapter, there are also places where a little more time introducing sources would be helpful: for example, the description of historical facts about the Conestoga Massacres on page 79 depends largely on a 2010 book by Jack Brubaker. I have no particular reason to doubt Brubaker's work and the authors clearly trust him, but for such an important source, it would be nice to read a sentence or two about what material he used as evidence and why they place that trust in it. This more minor version of the speed problem appears inconsistently, with other parts of the book providing good contextualisation for the scholarship used (e.g. the comment on page 112 about the use of diaries).

The other worry I had was about an element of the historical analysis, which is the use of a list of four 'Testimonies' in the explanation of Quaker organisation. On the one hand, these may be useful tools of analysis which can be applied retrospectively. On the other hand, the list as given here ('Peace, Integrity, Simplicity, and Equality', p. 62) would not have been used by Quakers at the time of Penn, and indeed did not appear until the mid-twentieth century (Muers 2015: 22–24). The authors do not clarify this. In fact, they state the opposite: 'During the times covered in our research, there were four Testimonies to Truth to which Quakers were expected to adhere' (p. 62). This is misleading, and since the alleged

four testimonies are used as a conceptual tool both throughout Chapter 2 and several times later in the book, it is a significant problem.

Overall, this is a useful contribution to the conversation about colonial history, how we undertake postcolonial and social justice-minded research and the role of moral judgement in historical studies. I would recommend it to those working on indigenous/settler relations more generally, those seeking to understand the complex Quaker role in colonising America and those interested in how history reverberates up to the present day.

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### References

Muers, R., *Testimony: Quakerism and Theological Ethics*, London: SCM Press, 2015.

David Lester with Marcus Rediker and Paul Buhle, *Prophet Against Slavery. Benjamin Lay: A Graphic Novel* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2021), pp. 117. ISBN 978-0-8070-8179-2. Paperback, \$15.

The recent biography of the Quaker abolitionist Benjamin Lay by Marcus Rediker (*The Fearless Benjamin Lay*, Beacon Press, 2017) rescued him from historical obscurity. As Rediker notes Lay was known and recognised for his early radical abolitionist perspective into the nineteenth century. The new graphic novel by David Lester promises to bring the life of Lay to a wider audience. Lay's life can serve as an example to twenty-first-century activists since Lay vociferously verbally criticised Quaker leaders regardless of consequences and his acts of 'guerrilla theatre' shocked those who witnessed them.

A third-generation Quaker, Benjamin Lay was born in Copford, Essex on 26 April 1682. Lay traced his religious and radical heritage back through the Leveller, Digger and Lollard movements which sprang up around England before and during the English Revolution. Quakerism, founded by George Fox and James Nayler—who was whipped and tortured in Bristol after his re-enactment of Christ's entry into Jerusalem—attracted Lay's grandparents. Throughout his life Lay held many common labour positions, such as shepherd, textile worker and glove maker. However, it was his 12 years working as a sailor on the high seas that most influenced his intellectual formation and radical abolitionist outlook. Although he possessed little formal education, as a sailor his fellow shipmates taught him how to read, and he studied theology, philosophy and history. Aboard ship and during his travels around the world, he grew to know and love humanity, but also to learn the horror and brutality of slavery. In 1718 Lay left sailing to marry Sarah, whom he remained deeply devoted to until her death 17 years later.

Later that same year the newly married couple sailed to Barbados to help the enslaved people of the island. In 1720 the couple returned to England, where due to his criticism of Quaker leaders, who he likened to wolves in sheep's clothing, he was disowned by the Quaker meetings in London and Colchester. In 1732 the couple made the perilous trip back across the Atlantic Ocean to Philadelphia, a city founded by the Quaker William Penn and one where they hoped they could receive fair treatment. While in Pennsylvania Lay regarded Quakers—who were once servants themselves—owning slaves as intolerable. Lay looked upon these Quaker leaders as destroying the Quaker faith. Lay's concern for the enslaved led him to grow his own fruits and vegetables and make his own clothing out of flax, since he believed that the act of shearing sheep was too violent. He also sweetened his food using honey, believing that sugar was 'sweetness made with blood' (p. 63). By 1758 Lay was 75 years old. However, his activism and that of others began to bear fruit as younger and poorer members of Quaker meetings questioned the morality of slavery. The year Lay died the Philadelphia meeting announced that those who traded in slaves would be disciplined and eventually disowned. Quakers would continue to own slaves until 1776.

The graphic novel consists of three parts. The first and largest part are the illustrations and text of the graphic novel by David Lester. The second part is an afterword by the historian Marcus Rediker on why we need Benjamin Lay. The afterword contextualises Lay's life and his call for an end to slavery and worldwide emancipation and discusses what Lay can teach us today about 'solidarity and agitation' (p. 113). The third and final section by Paul Buhle helps to explain David Lester's (1919: *A Graphic History of the Winnipeg General Strike*, Between the Lines, 2019) sources of inspiration for his artistic style, noting that historical comics can present more than facts, but also a 'feeling of events unfolding' (p. 115). Lester's style demonstrates his artistic influences which span the years and styles. Lynn Ward's 1930s woodcuts prefigure Lester's artwork. The influence of other artists, such as William Hogarth, Albrecht Dürer and James Gillray as well as contemporary comic artists such as Jason Lutes and Kate Evans is also evident in Lester's unique style.

This graphic novel provides a unique and accessible way to introduce first-year university students to the abolitionist movement and the history of one of its first and most committed activists. Lay's biography provides the means to interact with Quaker history, abolitionism in both England and its North American colonies, labour history and also with disability studies, due to Lay's own experience with dwarfism and having a hunchback.

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Richard C. Allen (ed.), *The Welsh Society of Philadelphia, 1798–1839* (Swansea: South Wales Record Society, 2021), pp. xii + 502. ISBN 978-1-9998326-6-7. Paperback, £35.50.

From its earliest days, early Quakers and particularly Welsh emigrants made a lasting impact on the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. There has always been a special connection between Quakers, the Welsh, Philadelphia and Pennsylvania. In 1681, William Penn and British Quakers signed an agreement which enabled Friends to purchase 40,000 acres in Pennsylvania. This land was known as the ‘Welsh Tract’ In the mid-seventeenth century, hundreds of Welsh people—including early Quakers escaping persecution—made the arduous journey across the Atlantic to settle in south-eastern Pennsylvania (and northern Delaware).

Edited by Richard C. Allen, *The Welsh Society of Philadelphia, 1798–1839* provides the reader with an historical overview and the meeting minutes of the Welsh Society of Philadelphia. The Society was formed on 1 March 1798 (St David’s Day) in Philadelphia. Sixty-four men gathered to celebrate their Welsh heritage and to create a Welsh Society. At its onset, the Welsh Society of Philadelphia was a social organisation that promoted friendship and support, but above all served an important charitable function. Members of the Society provided moral, financial and practical assistance to Welsh emigrants who encountered difficulties and hardships in trying to settle in America.

*The Welsh Society of Philadelphia, 1798–1839* is divided into four parts: ‘The Early History of the Welsh Society of Philadelphia, 1798–1839’; ‘Governance’; ‘Meeting of Minutes, Volume 1: 1789–1839’; and ‘Select Biographies of Early Members and Associates’. Amongst the four parts are unexpected yet delightful colour illustrations that are an attractive addition to this impressive tome.

‘Early History’ examines Welsh migration and William Penn’s role in the creation of the Welsh Tract—40,000 acres of land purchased by 12 influential Welsh Quakers. For scholars interested in learning more about Penn’s colonial holding and the Welsh Tract itself, Allen provides comprehensive notes throughout this section. The history then naturally leads to the development of the eighteenth-century Welsh associational life including the Society of the Sons of Ancient Britons, formed in 1729. Part 1 ends with the creation of the Welsh Society of Philadelphia. Allen examines its charitable activities and pays particular attention to its early membership, as well as its social, economic and political influence.

Part 2, ‘Governance’, provides a transcript of ‘The First Constitution and Rules Adopted by the Welch [sic] Society’ in 1798 and ‘The Second Constitution and Rules adopted by the Welch Society’ in 1802. Part 2 ends with transcripts of the ‘Bye-Laws of the Welch [sic] Society’ and the ‘Supplemental Rules and Regulations adopted by the Welsh Society’ in 1803 and 1807.

Part 3: ‘Meeting of Minutes, Volume 1: 1789–1839’ includes a comprehensive index of members and honorary members. For Quaker history scholars, the

meeting minutes of the Welsh Society of Philadelphia bear a striking resemblance to Quaker meeting minutes. The size imitates that of a Quaker meeting but also the structure and focus on charity and discipline of its members.

Part Four: 'Select Biographies of Early Members and Associates' serves as a who's who of the Welsh Society of Philadelphia. The biographical sketches include the Quakers (or Quaker descendants) Job Bacon, Clement Biddle, Benjamin Chew, John Hallowell, Joshua Humphreys, Mordecai Lewis, Richard Maris, Thomas Morris, Jesse Sharpless, William Shaw, Robert Vaux and John Price Wetherill. Arguably the most famous member of the Welsh Society during this time was Samuel Meredith, son of Rhys Meredith, a Radnorshire Quaker. Samuel Meredith rose to prominence during the War of Independence as financier of the war effort and later as the first United States treasurer from 1789–1801.

Within the introduction, Allen writes that the overarching principle has been to produce a comprehensive yet accessible and readable study. *The Welsh Society of Philadelphia, 1798–1839* is an important contribution to our understanding of early Quaker influence. That influence transcended into an organisation that was not Quaker in name but certainly Quaker in values. Scholars of transatlantic Quaker history, Welsh emigration history and Philadelphia history will find this volume of equal importance. Not only that, but it is written in such an accessible and engaging way that its audience should not be limited to scholars but indeed to a much wider audience.

Allen's meticulous transcriptions and editing has culminated in a volume that should serve as a blueprint for all future scholars examining and editing a collection of any type of meeting minutes. With *The Welsh Society of Philadelphia, 1798–1839*, Allen has taken a primary source and truly brought it to life.

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