

## Book Reviews

C. Dallett Hemphill (author), Rodney Hessinger (ed.), Daniel K. Richter (ed.), *Philadelphia Stories: People and Their Places in Early America (Early American Studies)* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2021), pp. xi + 392. ISBN 9780812253184. Hardback, \$34.95.

*Philadelphia Stories* is a labour of love: for the city of Philadelphia, for its historical personalities, for the field of Early American Studies and, above all, for C. Dallett Hemphill. It is composed of 12 character studies of lesser-known Philadelphians active from the mid-eighteenth century to the mid-nineteenth century, organised into rough groupings: ‘Colonial men of faith’, ‘Revolutionary wives’, “‘Self-made men” in the new nation’ and ‘Aspiring antebellum lives’. Hemphill had nearly finished writing the manuscript when she died in 2015, at which point it was completed by an impressive roster of Early Americanist colleagues, former students and friends.

The book reflects the strong Quaker presence in the eighteenth-/nineteenth-century city, including Anthony Benezet and Deborah Norris Logan as two of the 12 featured citizens. The Benezet chapter (completed by Jean Soderlund) is a competent summary of a life well known to Quakers, almost completely derived from George S. Brookes’ *Friend Anthony Benezet* and Maurice Jackson’s *Let This Voice Be Heard: Anthony Benezet, Father of Atlantic Abolitionism*. The Logan chapter (completed by Rodney Hessinger) has more to offer for readers already familiar with her name. The chapter is rich with detail and nuance, and benefits from comparisons to the other women featured in the ‘Revolutionary wives’ section. Familiarity with Logan’s story also pays off in reading the rest of the book, as her name reappears throughout, seemingly in more sections than any of the other featured personas. Despite these Quaker chapters and scattered references to the Society of Friends throughout the book – such as the clichéd credit that ‘Philadelphia’s social reform record owed much to its Quaker roots’ (p. 215) – the book does not have much to offer the Quaker studies community in terms of original research, fresh insights or critical perspectives.

The book is at its best when it plumbs primary sources to excavate the lives of unknown figures and hook them into broader historical trends and narratives.

One of the most compelling chapters (completed by Susan E. Klepp) focuses on Sarah Thorn Tyndale (1792–1857), a birthright Quaker who married an Anglican. Tyndale was a fascinating figure, part of the ‘great silent army’ of women reformers of her period, but with interests that fell outside the mainstream (p. 243). After her husband died, she spent years successfully running the family china shop before turning her attention to activism. She participated in anti-slavery organisations, engaged in peace advocacy and attended women’s rights conventions, but one of her more unique causes was supporting sex workers. Disdaining the male-operated Magdalen Society as an unproductive warehouse, Tyndale collaborated with other women to establish the Rosine Society, a refuge that would also offer sex workers the opportunity to find new trades. None other than Lucretia Mott praised her for this important work at the 1850 women’s rights convention in Worcester, Massachusetts. Increasingly radical, by 1851 Tyndale had started to spend periods of time at nearby utopian communes. She joined a Spiritualist circle in 1852. She befriended Walt Whitman and advised him on editorial decisions for *Leaves of Grass*. The chapter on her life is full of delicious, tantalising details like this. It is creatively and thoroughly researched, utilising a variety of primary sources. The subject, not incidentally, was an ancestor of Hemphill’s; indeed, the Hemphill family still privately owns some of the documents cited in the endnotes.

The book congratulates itself on its diversity, advertising that it ‘includes men and women, Black and white Americans, immigrants and native born’. However, readers familiar with Philadelphia history may wonder why there is only a solitary chapter dedicated to a Black Philadelphian (Francis Johnson), given that the city boasted one of the largest free Black communities of the antebellum period. Why does a book that so relishes personalities and personal connections fail to mention any Lenape or other Indigenous person by name?

Overall, the book is clearly and compellingly written, accessible to undergraduate students and non-academics. It may be most engaging for a popular audience of history-loving Philadelphians, looking to enrich their understanding of the city’s past. The book revels in individual details and connections, and, while it illustrates trends that the endnotes situate in larger scholarly frameworks, the book, overall, lacks much of a narrative structure or critical perspective. Those completely new to Philadelphia history and those with deep expertise are both liable to be disappointed by this absence. However, the initiated reader will thrill at the recurrence of certain figures as they dip in and out of the lives of their fellow citizens throughout the chapters of the book. The frequent references to particular addresses, including many buildings that still exist today, will inspire modern Philadelphians to go out and follow in their ancestors’ footsteps. And Early Americanists, skimming the table of contents, will glow in the warmth of so many luminaries coming together to complete the work of a beloved, departed comrade.

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John G. Turner, *They Knew They Were Pilgrims: Plymouth Colony and the Contest for American Liberty* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 2020), pp. x + 464. ISBN 9780300225501. Hardback, £22.50.

Published to mark the 400th anniversary of the voyage of the Mayflower, this work goes beyond offering a brief overview for commemorative purposes, usually more revealing of the society in which such works are created than the period they purport to interrogate. Instead, like James Sharpe's *Remember, Remember: A Cultural History of Guy Fawkes Day*, published to mark four centuries since Guido Fawkes' failed attempt to blow up the English parliament, a significant scholar of early modern history is offering an accessible, well-priced and certainly original interpretation of well-known, even notorious, events and individuals, including their significance to nation building and national identity.<sup>1</sup>

Turner's work offers a useful combination – for readers with a general interest in the subject, for students and for historians working in the broad field of the early modern history of religion – of fascinating insights fuelled by a wealth of archival research, using, in many cases, underused materials. This broad readership is reflected in the comments on the book's dustjacket, ranging from museum professionals to representatives of genealogical societies, as well as historians of religion. Perhaps because of this wider readership, the book is relatively descriptive, although this provides useful information on key individuals, of benefit to all readers; there is also little identification of scholarly debate and at times material is under-referenced, which would ordinarily form a larger part of such a lengthy work and is extremely useful for students. It seems likely that this was due to the work sitting between 'usual' historical studies and popular histories, which often lack original research, although this was certainly undertaken as part of Turner's work. An example, although it does not detract from the overall study, relates to the author's assertions that the majority of Mayflower passengers, other than children and indentured servants on board, were Puritan; this conclusion is not shared by all scholars and certainly a sense of the proportion remaining, once children and indentured servants are removed from the total number, would be helpful to underscore the statement.

The work also offers, for Friends and their historians, insights into the background to the persecution of Quakers in North America and elsewhere. An entire chapter, 'Friends', considers early Quakers and their experiences of preaching, imprisonment and other punishments. This ties into Turner's wider analysis of toleration and intolerance, both of and by the Puritans. As he notes, the Pilgrims' behaviour in the decades just before the rise of Quakerism, and in the following centuries, was not unusual, as 'hardly anyone in old England or New England had abandoned the idea of religious uniformity' (p. 119); even

1 Sharpe, J., *Remember, Remember: a cultural history of Guy Fawkes Day*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005.

the Pilgrims, with direct experience of imprisonment and persecution in Europe prior to journeying across the Atlantic, ‘preserved their own liberty by denying it to others’ (p. 119), including those who might be viewed as their spiritual cousins, to whom they behaved in a fashion viewed as ‘cruel and hard hearted’ (p. 119) by non-Puritan commentators in the colony.

However, it is Turner’s analysis of Quakers’ experiences that underlines the extent to which those who sought toleration for themselves continued to deny it to others for several decades. In some ways it is therefore surprising that one of the best-known victims of Puritan persecution, the Quaker preacher Mary Dyer, who has been memorialised, since 1959, with a statue outside the Massachusetts State House in Boston, is little discussed.<sup>2</sup> Given Turner’s laudable intention to include those often absent from accounts of the Pilgrims, such as enslaved indigenous peoples and the growing number of enslaved Africans, this absence is intriguing, for, even if she is well known, her commemoration as, arguably, part of later generations’ handling of the myth of the Pilgrims, including its less salubrious aspects, alongside her lack of high status, would suggest she deserves more discussion. Indeed, Turner initially introduces Dyer with an account of the supposedly ‘monstrous’ baby to which Dyer gave birth sometime during or before early 1638 (p. 195) and says nothing about how this may have coloured the religious authorities’ views of her moral state after she was arrested for preaching and eventually hanged two decades later.

Instead, Turner focusses on other Friends, although his assertions regarding Quakers going naked as a sign (p. 222) seem to overlook Kenneth Carroll’s work some years ago which identified that the ‘nakedness’ was much more likely to be a state of partial clothing rather than complete nudity.<sup>3</sup> To Turner’s credit, his focus on the Quaker preacher Humphrey Norton is impressive in the details it offers about a man about whom, as Turner notes, relatively little is known before 1655 and after 1659; indeed, greater analysis of the myths in circulation relating to the Pilgrims, including those they persecuted, would be useful at this point, to consider both Dyer and Norton, for whom a late nineteenth-century illustration of his punishment for heresy in 1656 is included, but not analysed in any detail (p. 233). Here, to return to Sharpe as a comparable work, an identifiable section of the book could profitably have analysed key representations of the Pilgrim past in popular culture in the intervening centuries.

Another area not directly related to Quakers but of interest to those aware of Friends’ involvement in abolitionism, and in the history of colonialism in North America more broadly, links to the author’s admirable efforts to decolonise the account offered as much as possible, and in so doing to include aspects of the

2 Quakers in the World (n.d.), ‘Mary Dyer’, <https://www.quakersintheworld.org/quakers-in-action/15/Mary-Dyer>.

3 Carroll, K. L., ‘Early Quakers and “Going naked as a sign”’, *Quaker History* 67/2 (1978).

Pilgrims' history little considered in more 'mythical' accounts. Turner introduces his work by making reference to the alternative potential accounts of the Pilgrims' history, noting how the more positive version was perpetuated from the first years of the Republic into the twentieth century (pp. 1–2). Although he does not cite him directly, Turner seems to draw on Roland Barthes' idea of myths from the 1957 *Mythologies*, in which, Barthes notes, objects or, in this case, events might be co-opted to support 'the current ideologies of the ruling class'.<sup>4</sup> Certainly, as noted already, visual representations of the Pilgrims and their victims are incorporated in the book and could have been analysed to a greater degree, but certainly the author does an admirable job of identifying the original, correct indigenous names for places and for people (pp. ix–x), as well as noting, throughout, the limitation of toleration with reference to the treatment of indigenous people and enslaved Africans. For example, his account of the attack, by English forces, on a Pequot village in May 1637, culminating in a huge fire that killed hundreds of villagers and was understood by English leaders as a form of sacrificial offering (p. 170) has little place in more celebratory accounts of the first decades of Pilgrim history but is offered by Turner as part of an impressive effort to decolonise the Mayflower narrative.

It may seem surprising, then, given known abuses of indigenous peoples by Europeans, that some Wampanoag people had by the 1670s converted to Quakerism, in a wider context of conversion to various denominations. Perhaps this was in hope of avoiding further violence at the hands of Europeans, although this potential reason is not considered by Turner (p. 256). However, in tracing, through limited surviving sources, a handful of histories of enslaved indigenous people in the 1670s, Turner does note their brutal treatment by their English owners compared with that experienced by English servants in the same household (pp. 311–12). This is a significant, and very original, element to the Pilgrim story offered in the work, which returns us to the issue of toleration, or its absence, as well as the impact of European colonists on the various indigenous peoples and, by the 1670s, if not earlier, on enslaved Africans (pp. 311–13). Turner's approach, and the work as a whole, is therefore pointing towards decolonisation of core elements of US history writing and identity building, without explicitly claiming this as an intention of the work. Perhaps, in the context of ongoing political controversies in the USA over race, history and identity, a context in which this work was conceptualised, researched and written, this is the best way to make careful, initial steps towards including troubling aspects in popular histories.

In conclusion, then, this work offers insights into the experiences of indigenous peoples at the hands of early English settlers within the wider context of toleration and intolerance, as well as reflecting on well-known divides between the various

4 Barthes, R., *Mythologies*, Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1957; Bradley, B. S., 'Experiencing Symbols', in Wagoner, B. (ed.), *Symbolic Transformation: the mind in movement through culture and society*, London: Routledge, 2010, p. 98.

religious groups represented. Perhaps, in an additional volume, there could be more of a sense offered of the *use* of the Pilgrims' story in later years; although touched upon in the introduction, further development of this area would enable some of the most interesting themes, such as the position of indigenous people in the seventeenth century and later periods, to be expanded upon. This would enable the reader to chart not only the events of four centuries ago but also later episodes that continue to be underrepresented, not least in the US High School curriculum, and would be significant for those seeking to reflect on contemporary implications of the testimony of equality, and its equivalent in other belief systems, in a context of difficult and complex histories.<sup>5</sup>

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Joanna Dales, *The Quaker Renaissance and Liberal Quakerism in Britain, 1895–1930: Seeking a Real Religion* (Leiden: Brill, 2020), pp. 92. ISBN 9789004438415. Paperback, €168.

The history of Liberal Quakerism inches forward about a century behind the present day. Few works go much beyond 1920 and we can look forward at some point I hope to a volume that complements Thomas Kennedy's work on British Quakerism 1860–1920, taking us from 1920 to perhaps 1980. The twentieth century saw Quakerism become truly global and the percentage of unprogrammed Friends shrink considerably in relation to the pastoral tradition. Nevertheless, Liberal Quakerism remains sociologically and theologically fascinating, as recent work by Rhiannon Grant, also in the same series as this book, has shown. History perhaps needs to be more removed from its authors and we can be grateful that Joanna Dales' volume takes us to 1930.

The Brill Research Perspectives series in Quaker Studies is a delight for those seeking short volumes on particular aspects of Quaker studies. Limited to 40,000 words, or about 100 pages, Dales' volume is typical of the accessible and well-structured work we now expect within the series. It builds on her doctoral research into the life and thought of John William Graham, 'apostle of progress', but offers useful comparisons between Graham and Edward Grubb, as well as offering a wonderful overview of the currents, within and outwith London Yearly Meeting, that led to the birth and success of the renaissance project.

Dales' work is divided multiply and the table of contents almost reads like an index. She covers so much with concision and clarity and yet never loses her great readability. We are treated to theology as well as history and Dales is an astute

<sup>5</sup> Anna Diamond, 'Inside a new effort to change what schools teach about Native American history', *Smithsonian Magazine* 18 September 2019.

observer of nuance in her comparison between Graham and Grubb. The energy drawn from the success of the Manchester Conference, the summer schools which followed it and the creation of Woodbrooke College, from a vision put forward by John Wilhelm Rowntree as a permanent summer school, give a strong sense of the momentum for renewal within British Quakerism at the time.

There are a few typos and there is not much detail past 1920. The All Friends Conference does not appear and mention of World War One is limited to its effects on student numbers at Woodbrooke. Nevertheless, as Dales points out, she offers a counterpoint to earlier studies that focus on Quakers, politics or war by suggesting that the best way of characterising this period is in terms of the Liberal Quaker quest for 'reality in religion.' This meta-narrative is what steers the research she presents here.

With Kennedy's work out of print, this volume may well find its way into Quaker Meeting houses as well as academic collections. Brill volumes are not at all cheap but do offer the very latest scholarship in a highly manageable form. Dales' work is a worthy addition to the series.

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C. Wess Daniels and Rhiannon Grant (eds), *The Quaker World* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2023), pp. xxii + 519. ISBN 9780367142513 (Hardback)/9780429030925 (eBook). Hardback, \$250; eBook, \$51.95.

This lively, refreshing and innovative volume comes along in a very timely fashion to make a huge mark in Quaker Studies. The editors express their hope that it 'lifts up voices and perspectives both historical and present that are not always heard in these volumes and that it mirrors a renewed, global Quaker faith that will continue on well into the future' (p. xiv). Accordingly, they 'have welcomed authors currently outside academia' as well as academicians themselves, whether established or early-career. They are intensely interested in finding ways for Quaker scholars to determine 'how to move forward in truth and justice', keenly recognising that Quakers have 'more work to do' in this area (pp. 1–2).

The book does surprisingly well at these ambitious goals. The editors have divided the entries into three large categories: Global Quakerism, Spirituality and Embodiment. The section on Global Quakerism can be read as a broad history of the Quaker movement, although it is structured in archaeological strata, with the most recent history first and Quaker origins last in the section. The first two chapters explore the growth of the largest population of Friends in Kenya. Robert J. Wafula explicates the growth of Kenya Friends from the arrival of the first three missionaries, Willis Hotchkiss, Arthur Chilson and Edgar Hole, while Sychellus Wabomba Njibwakale writes about the transmission of

Quaker missionary ideas in Kenya. Both authors appropriately make much of the role played by Chilson, who anchored the Quaker mission in Kaimosi for almost a quarter-century and later inaugurated the Quaker mission in Burundi. The controversies engendered by Chilson are not dealt with by either author, however, including his conflict with proto-feminist Quaker Roxie Reeves and, separately, his conflict with the Friends' Mission Board in Richmond, Indiana. These chapters focusing on Kenya are followed by ones on South African Friends (Penelope Cummins), Quakers in Bolivia (Emma Condori Mamani) and European Quakers (Hans Eirek Aarek). Each of these chapters include much rich detail. Cummins' chapter explores the degree to which South African Friends have been able to work for and to advance the cause of racial justice and social justice causes in an often oppressive environment. The chapter by Condori clearly delineates the origins of multiple yearly meetings in Bolivia. Aarek discusses the new unprogrammed meetings springing up around Europe, and also briefly acknowledges the growth of evangelical Quaker churches in Hungary and elsewhere. Chapters on the Friends World Committee for Consultation Section of the Americas (Robin Mohr), the Asia-West Section of FWCC (Ronis Chapman and Virginia Jealous) and early twentieth-century Quaker diplomat Inazo Nitobe (Isaac Barnes May and Richard J. Barnes) augment this excellent sampling of Quaker geographical diversity. The FWCC chapters include a vivid tapestry of contemporary Quaker voices. The chapter on Nitobe is a searching exploration of Nitobe's unique combination of Quaker idealism with his measured support for pre-World-War-II Japanese imperial and colonialist aims and strategies, with a parallel drawn to American Quaker interactions with Native Americans from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. Nitobe was well aware of these similarities between the mission of William Penn et al. and the Japanese thrusts that he helped to guide.

Ten chapters excavate Quaker history from the eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries, including chapters on various branches and ideological tendencies of Friends (Evangelical, Liberal, Progressive) and profiles of notable Quakers from the period (Richard Foster, Rufus Jones and Louise Wilson). The seventeenth century is represented by profiles of two female Friends, Margaret Fell (Kristianna Polder) and Elizabeth Fletcher (Barbara Schell Luetke), and Stuart Masters' chapter on 'The Religious Roots of the Quaker Way'. Seventeenth-century Quaker men are the titular subject of only one chapter in this 61-chapter book, Benjamin Wood's 'William Penn's Pragmatic Christology', in the second main division of the book, 'Spirituality'. (Penn's relations with the Native Americans are also extensively referenced in Jon R. Kershner's chapter on 'John Woolman and Delaware Indians'.) George Fox's witness is addressed, in passing, in chapters on marriage, dress, advocacy of peace and other topics, but such frequently analysed seventeenth-century male figures as Robert Barclay and Isaac Pennington are not addressed at all in this volume. Wood does give Penn a thoroughly up-to-date and convincing interpretation, labelling him a 'Janus-faced' figure whose profound



thoughts about religious toleration represent ‘the best of his world and ours’, but whose ‘yawning moral silences’ about the men and women he enslaved and oppressed sensitise us to the ‘affliction of ethical complacency’ that indict many Quakers’ reliance on ‘power and privilege’ (pp. 237–38).

Of the three main sections in this book, ‘Global Witness’, ‘Spirituality’ and ‘Embodiment’, this last section, on ‘Embodiment’, is by far the largest, representing about 40 per cent of the number of pages and chapters for this volume. The variety of topics that are dealt with in this section amazes. It includes the theological foundations of disability issues, both in the African Christian (Oscar Lugusa Malande) and liberal Quaker (Benjamin Wood) contexts; the movie representations of Quakers (Stephen Brooks); a history of Quaker inclusion of LGBTQ people (Brian T. Blackmore); Quaker dress (Deb Fuller and Mackenzie Morgan); the complicated legacies of Quaker enslavers in North Carolina, as it related to those they had enslaved (Krishauna Hines-Gaither); Quaker workcamps (Greg Woods); Quaker ambulance drivers during World War I (Rebecca J. Wynter); and much more. Chris Lord’s ‘Quakers and other Animals’ expands Quaker understandings of embodiment to non-humans, tracing a keen sensitivity to animals and animal suffering from such seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Friends as James Nayler, Benjamin Lay, John Woolman and Elias Hicks through the nineteenth-century anti-vivisectionists to twentieth-century writer and activist Ruth Harrison, whose work provided an early impetus to protests against factory farming. The witness of African American Quakers is an especial focus of this section, with illuminating chapters on Paul Cuffe (Timothy Rainey II), Sarah Mapps Douglass (Abigail Lawrence) and Bayard Rustin (Carlos Figueroa).

A review like this can only begin to gesture at the riches one can find within this encyclopaedic volume. I highly recommend this work. There is much that any scholar and any Quaker can learn from it. With the book’s 61 entries encompassing a variety of methodologies, the editors hope that the volume will stimulate further research. They are surely correct about this. While the book is not inexpensive, it would be a great investment for any library – whether in a college or university, a Quaker school or a Quaker meeting.

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