



First Generations: Women in Colonial America

By Carol Berkin

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Carol Berkin's multicultural history reconstructs the lives of American women in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries-women from European, African, and Native backgrounds-and examines their varied roles as wives, mothers, household managers, laborers, rebels, and, ultimately, critical forces in shaping the new nation's culture and history.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

This study of American women in the 17th and 18th centuries by historian Carol Berkin gives close attention to the lives of several women like Mary, who was brought to Virginia as a slave in 1622. She married another African, Antonio, and over the course of their 40-year marriage, they earned their freedom and established a 250-acre plantation before moving to Maryland in search of new land. Other black women were not so lucky and, as time progressed, laws restricting black freedom were codified. This study uses legal and other types of records to illuminate the lives and experiences of these and other black, white, and Native American women.

From Publishers Weekly

This academic study by Berkin (*Women of America: A History*), a history professor at Baruch College in New York City, examines the lives of 17th- and 18th-century women from a feminist perspective that focuses on gender and class. Employing excellent research skills, the author documents the lives of white as well as Native American and African American women in their diverse roles as wives, mothers, widows, employed workers and slaves. Although the complexity of the subject often yields more questions than answers about how women negotiated their lives, Berkin has made a notable contribution by utilizing recent scholarship to address family life in the mid-Atlantic and Southern colonies as well as in the much studied New England settlements. Her analysis of Native American and African American women, as well as of how the American Revolution affected female roles, is enlightening.

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From Library Journal

Berkin (history, Baruch Coll.) intends with this scholarly work to broaden our knowledge of women in Colonial America. Focusing not on famous women like Anne Hutchison but ordinary women from all walks of life, she examines some of the earliest settlers, including European and African American women. She discusses different geographic regions and offers excellent insight into everyday life and the role of women in the American Revolution. Along the way, Berkin explores immigration to the Colonies and the multiple roles played by women as "housewives" during the era. The final chapter is a bibliographical essay. In sum, this is a specialized, well-researched work that will appeal to collections in Colonial America and American studies. ?Dorothy Lilly, Grosse Pointe North H.S. Lib., Mich.

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Users Review

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