

## BOOK REVIEWS

*K*aren Guenther. *"Rememb'ring our Time and Work is the Lords": The Experiences of Quakers on the Eighteenth-Century Frontier*. (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 2005. Pp. 251, maps, tables, appendices, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth, \$55.00.)

Most historiography on Quakerism has focused on issues internal to the Society of Friends and the influence of the world on it. Karen Guenther's work, *"Rememb'ring our Time and Work is the Lords": The Experiences of Quakers on the Eighteenth-Century Frontier*, follows in this tradition with a microhistory of Exeter Monthly Meeting on the eighteenth-century Berks County Pennsylvania frontier. Taking a chronological and thematic approach, Guenther details the inner workings of the Meeting from its establishment in 1737 to the beginning of its decline in 1789. Her main intent is to describe how these particular Friends handled the vicissitudes of life on the frontier, why Exeter served as a "model for the survival of Quakerism on the expanding frontier" (dust jacket), and how "the story of Exeter will both reinforce and contradict traditional activities" of

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Pennsylvania Quakers (19). Ultimately, Guenther seeks to contribute to “the understanding of Pennsylvania’s pluralism” (20–21).

She accomplishes her first and second goals well through a discussion of topics that elucidate the ethnic and religious diversity of the region, Quaker reactions to Indian attacks and wars, mobility, anti-slavery activities, and education. Her most significant claim is that frontier life caused Friends to turn inward and tighten the rules of their religious discipline, especially with regard to the peace testimony. Though individual Friends took up arms to defend themselves against Indian attacks, the official position of Exeter Meeting was peace. This determination to maintain the traditional structures and testimonies of the Society, argues Guenther convincingly, “ease[d] the process of adapting to new environs” for other Friends (112).

Her success on the third point is mixed. While her argument does indeed reinforce traditional understandings of Quakerism, there is little to contradict what we know or have assumed about the Society of Friends. Readers will not find much new information or original interpretations. The study draws on a wealth of secondary sources, but challenges few of them. It generally accepts conventional wisdom on Quaker Pennsylvania – Pennsylvania as “blueprint” for America (19); Quakers losing control of the Assembly in the 1750s (67); Pennsylvania as an exceptionally peaceful and harmonious colony (19).

Despite her assertion that Exeter Friends were different from those in the original three counties (17), Guenther’s findings indicate that they were generally the same as those in Philadelphia, with a few exceptions that one might expect due to frontier life. Because they were a smaller minority in a less stable environment, the establishment of schools took longer, they were more geographically mobile, transgressions of the Discipline included more excessive drinking and military activity, and they did not dominate the economic scene. Otherwise their behaviors, religious concerns, and treatment by non-Friends were the same: they conducted their meetings in the same fashion, worried about transgressions from the Discipline and became stricter in their enforcement of it during the same period, testified against slavery, and Patriots persecuted them during the Revolution. Indeed, these shared qualities are hardly surprising considering that Exeter Monthly Meeting was under the auspices of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, which oversaw its activities. Much of Guenther’s discussion of Exeter Friends thus is based on evidence from Philadelphia.

But novelty or unexpected results need not be the only criteria in evaluating a work of history. For the professional historian, Guenther’s meticulous study

does a great service to the literature on Pennsylvania Quakerism. It supports with painstaking research and ample evidence the major claims of Quaker historiography in a different context from the usual Philadelphia metropol. While perhaps not as groundbreaking as the author hoped, it is nevertheless a useful place for historians to turn to find solid proof on which to base their arguments.

This book is perhaps best considered as a manageable and readable case study for those who might be daunted by the vast literature on the Society of Friends as a whole, for genealogists whose subjects might have attended Exeter Meeting, and for those interested in the particular history of Berks County. Such readers will find a rich source of information about many facets of Quaker life, statistics to support the assertions, extensive notes for further reading, maps, tables, and appendices with names of members.

Finally, through this close study of a Quaker meeting, we unfortunately do not get much of a sense of pluralistic Pennsylvania. The intriguing fact that Exeter Friends “managed to become the lone religious group providing [religious] services for most of the English-speaking population of the county” (171) leads one to wish that Guenther had explored their interaction with other groups, their cooperation or conflict with disparate peoples, or the possible influence this important sect had on the world despite its minority status. She finds that “[f]ew surviving comments describe the secular and religious activities of Berks County Quakers outside the meeting” (150) and that “Exeter Friends did not become too involved with non-Quakers” (164). On the other hand, she claims that others “recognized [their] contributions” (164). One wonders whether some comments might be found among the records of the other English- or German-speaking settlers with whom Friends shared the frontier – in her chapter on “Exeter Monthly Meeting and the Outside World,” she cites few non-Quaker sources. If so, we might look forward to a second book from Guenther exploring the same subject, but looking outward from the Exeter meetinghouse.

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William C. Kashatus, *Money Pitcher: Chief Bender and the Tragedy of Indian Assimilation*. (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006. xv, 199.)

As a Native American pitching for a major league dynasty in the early twentieth century, Albert Bender was a curiosity—and treated as such by fellow players as