

Pennsylvania History courses. High school teachers of American cultural history (or local history where applicable) also should find Guenther's treatment clear and well-written enough to share with their students as well.

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James Marten, ed. *Children in Colonial America*. Foreword by Philip J. Greven. (New York: New York University Press, 2006. Pp. xiii, 253, index. Cloth, \$71.00; Paper \$22.00.)

James Marten's edited collection, *Children in Colonial America*, is the inaugural volume in a new series on children and youth in America being produced by New York University Press. Marten himself serves as the series general editor. Both the organizational framework and content of this volume suggest this series is intended primarily for use in undergraduate classrooms. Indeed, in selecting twelve essays by scholars, excerpts from seven selected primary sources, and a concluding chapter of "questions for consideration" for his collection, Marten clearly gears this volume as a teacher-friendly introduction to this relatively new and exciting field of historical inquiry. The volume's content confirms this intent. Short essays (of mostly ten to fifteen pages) are grouped into four thematic sections that move forward in mostly chronological fashion from sixteenth-century Mexico to revolutionary-era Philadelphia and Boston. With its broad geographical coverage, the volume also partly reflects the Atlantic World perspective currently popular among early American historians. Many chapters focus on colonial British American topics, but there are also chapters dedicated to children in Latin America, the West Indies, and Dutch New Amsterdam, while another highlights English Puritan children in seventeenth-century Holland. Breadth of coverage is a goal. As Marten states in the introduction, readers need to understand the diverse experiences of children across colonial North America.

Still, producing an introductory, teacher-friendly volume does not mean an absence of historiographical debate and engagement. Because telling the stories of children and youth is a mostly new field in American history, these essays forge fresh interpretive ground in documenting the lives and experiences of an understudied population. The volume's colonial focus is another innovation. Most studies of children, as Marten notes, focus on the late

nineteenth or twentieth centuries, time periods when Americans more clearly distinguished childhood and youth as distinct life stages, and where sources are therefore more plentiful. The lives of colonial children, by contrast, have been largely ignored by scholars. This volume, like Holly Brewer's recent *By Birth or Consent: Children, Law & the Anglo-American Revolution in Authority* (Chapel Hill, 2005), is thus a corrective; it complexifies our understandings of colonial family life, labor, politics, education, and the law by adding children's perspectives to the mix.

Individual chapters play heavily to the theme of the diversity of childhood experiences across time and space. Part I, "Race and Decolonization," includes chapters focused on indigenous children in early Mexico, Native American children in seventeenth-century New England, and a particularly interesting chapter on enslaved children in Jamaica by Audra Diptee. Diptee, like other authors in this volume, questions how children were classified in colonial America. Many children, both English and African, labored like adults. As such, they did not merit special or more lenient treatment. But among slaves, classifying who was a child was a matter of economic necessity as adults commanded higher prices than children. In response, she notes, traders established somewhat arbitrary classification schemes to categorize kidnapped African children whose birthdays were unknown. Part II, "Family and Society," continues the cross-cultural approach. And here, C. Dallett Hemphill's essay on sibling relations is a standout. By comparing colonial British American family practices with those of Native Americans and African-Americans, Hemphill suggests the "loving and fragile" nature of sibling relations (78). The essays in Part III, "Cases and Tribulations," focus on how different colonial societies perceived of and dealt with threats to their children, or with disabled or ill children. The final section, "Becoming Americans," moves readers into the revolutionary period with a focus on the Mid-Atlantic. Lauren Ann Kattner follows the lives of immigrant German Catholic girls, comparing their experiences in the French Gulf South with those in Pennsylvania. It was interesting to learn that some of these girls were educated in the four Catholic schools that existed in Pennsylvania at mid-century. Keith Pacholl turns his attention to Philadelphia, using advice literature to define the "good education" Pennsylvanians hoped their children would obtain (192). The volume concludes with an especially clever piece by J. L. Bell about the politicization of youth in pre-Revolutionary Boston. Fifty-two percent of Boston's population in 1765, he notes, were white youth under the age of sixteen (204). Yet, when scholars write of that

city's famous series of pre-revolutionary protests, they rarely acknowledge the unique contributions children and youths made to the crowd. Bell corrects that shortcoming. He describes the functions of Boston's youth gangs and also analyzes the symbolic importance of eleven-year-old Christopher Seider at the Boston Massacre. For him, the actions of Boston's youth demonstrate how the Revolution was about lived experience, not ideology. Two additional primary readings and a concluding chapter of questions for the reader finish out the work.

Marten's volume has much to offer readers, particularly undergraduates or those new to the field. The combination of essays by scholars and primary sources leads readers along an analytical path while also leaving them room for their own interpretations. This work's geographical and chronological breadth is another advantage. It encourages readers to draw parallels and differences among peoples and time periods. In this way, colonial America is not a monolithic whole, but a patchwork of places, peoples, and cultures, as it should be.

Yet there are also some drawbacks to this volume. While these essays demonstrate the scholarly rewards of studying children and youth, they also demonstrate its challenges. Because few children left written records such as diaries, letters, or journals, getting at children's authentic voices is difficult. This challenge intensifies when studying the colonial period where extant records are already spotty. This means that most of the volume's authors narrate children's experiences through the eyes of adults, or adult-administered institutions, like the courts. And this is true of many of the work's primary sources as well. For example, an adult Venture Smith reflects on his youth in Africa and as a slave in America; an adult Benjamin Franklin likewise recalls his Boston childhood; and the adult Philip Vickers Fithian tells us of his experience with the Carter family of Virginia. These issues, though clearly endemic to the field, nonetheless leave readers wondering: do these adult perspectives or memories distort children's experiences?

Other issues are more particular to this volume and undermine its impact on readers. Essays, for example, are short, leaving authors little space in which to develop their ideas and evidence. Readers are thus left with snapshot portraits, rather than more fully formed, complex pictures of different times, places, and peoples. More significant, despite some geographical and cultural breadth, coverage focuses mostly on mainland British North America and its English settlers. By this reader's count, nine of the nineteen essays and documents in this volume deal primarily with New England. While this confirms

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Marten's claim that "New England has dominated the literature on the history of childhood," it undermines some of the volume's claims to diversity (1). Where are the children of New France, for example? What about the youth of Spain's New Mexico or even Texas settlements? Finally, there are small things. One author is misidentified as a "he" in the list of contributors. And New York University Press did an especially poor job of quality control in production. In the volume I received, every third and fourth page for nearly forty pages was missing (unprinted), thus undermining my ability to fully understand several of the chapters.

In the end, for those looking for a solid, readable introductory volume on children in colonial America—particularly British North America—this is, without doubt, a valuable work. It would work well for college classroom use and might even inspire some students to do further research in the field.

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Claiborne A. Skinner. *The Upper Country: French Enterprise in the Great Lakes*. (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008. Pp. 224, illustrations, maps, notes, index. Cloth, \$50.00; Paper, \$25.00.)

To American scholars of seventeenth and eighteenth-century North America, focus naturally tends to favor the British colonies. In *The Upper Country*, Claiborne Skinner synthesizes recent scholarship on French endeavors in the New World. In doing so, he argues that New France became the fur-based, expansionist competitor to British interests not by plan but rather by the force of specific individuals and an almost irrepressible desire by regular Canadians to tap the riches of the interior. By terminating in 1754, the book appears to end rather abruptly at the critical moment for France's dominance of the Great Lakes. Upon reflection, however, it makes sense. Scholars and students of the eighteenth century already know much about the Seven Years' War, and many sources discussing the conflict already exist. Instead, Skinner provides a unique interpretation of events leading the French to focus on the Ohio Country—a region they had largely ignored for the first hundred and fifty years of empire in North America.

According to the author, Louis XIV's finance minister, Jean-Baptiste Colbert, set the initial tone for New France. Seeing it as a source of raw