

Geoffrey Plank. *John Woolman's Path to the Peaceable Kingdom: A Quaker in the British Empire* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012). Pp. 320. Illustrations, notes, index. Cloth, \$39.95.

John Woolman's life and career have been extensively studied in a wide range of historical projects. Styling himself a model of piety and a commentator on contemporary social and religious currents, and documenting his experiences, reflections, and prescriptions for decades in a journal, Woolman practically presented himself as a subject for study. His contemporaries began editing his journal for publication as early as 1772, the year of his death. Eminent during his own lifetime and leaving a durable legacy in print, Woolman has proven to be a popular, and conveniently well documented, source for historians interested in religious history of eighteenth-century America.

In his recent study of Woolman's life and work, Geoffrey Plank brings together two threads in an already robust literature on the topic: biography of Woolman and studies of Quakerism in its social and political context. Plank embraces a thematic rather than chronological organization to emphasize his conception of Woolman as a study, alternatively exceptional and representative, of contemporary social currents.

The work remains more biography than systematic study of Quaker politics, theology, or antislavery sentiment, but the attempted marriage nevertheless sheds some light on the life and views of Woolman, as well as his world. Plank situates Woolman within the context of evolving anti-slavery sentiment and pacifism while describing a model of protest that Woolman helped to develop. Aware of his participation in an imperial economy that relied on slave labor, Woolman "resolved to spend his money only in a manner that was consistent with the public good," recognizing as he did "the global impact of consumer expenditure" (8). Plank argues that these actions prefigured those of the American patriots and laid the foundation of a method of social engagement that persists today. More broadly, Plank uses Woolman's writings and experience to reconstruct features of "colonial America, the Quakers on both sides of the ocean, and the combination of religious conviction and communal tension that gave energy to the early days of organized opposition to slavery and its place in the imperial economy" (8).

The first four chapters address Woolman's personal life and development, from childhood to marriage, and the attendant evolution of his views. Even as a youth (at least according to his own recollection), Woolman believed

that he lived in an era of increasing moral weakness. Woolman's imagined remedy to these ills and his description of his own religious realization opens a window onto Quaker theology and religious epistemology. Although there is mention of the interaction of personal experience, the reading of Scripture, and community participation as the constituent factors in religious realization, one might wish for slightly more discussion on this point. For instance, when affirming that Woolman consistently, at least in his early days, sought validation of his views from his Quaker meetings, Plank could have elucidated the degree to which that was a personal habit of Woolman's and a commentary on an evolving epistemology concerning the authentication of religious epiphany.

The next three chapters address slavery and the Seven Years' War. Plank deftly illuminates the evolving contours of Woolman's antislavery views and those of his community. Woolman was not at first an uncompromising opponent of slaveholding; nor were many of his Quaker interlocutors. He grew into a more categorical position, and also expanded his lived protest by, for instance, refusing to accept free lodging from slaveholders. An increasingly robust vision of protest and example-setting in producing positive social change paralleled Woolman's growing disillusionment with formal political channels as a means for change. Many of his fellow Friends would follow his example in protesting the Seven Years' War, applying a model of engagement that would become more important as the power of Quakers in formal politics was curtailed during and following the war.

The final two chapters and the epilogue return to a more personal focus on Woolman, recounting his late-life voyages overseas, illness, and death. He continued to criticize transatlantic trade and shipping, not only for their connection with slavery, but also for the role they played in an often-exploitative economy of which he was skeptical. Plank then details Woolman's time in England, during which, unlike some of his contemporaries, he was not directly engaged with prominent British antislavery activists. He did, however, continue his writing and embodiment of protest against luxury and opulence in, for example, his eschewal of ornamentation and fine clothing. The attention and admiration that Woolman garnered for his activities are evidenced by the prompt editing and publication of Woolman's journal immediately following his death in 1772.

If one were to quibble with any element of the book, one might note that Plank's dispensing with chronological organization in favor of thematic

treatment lends itself to some repetition and, at times, undercuts the coherence of the argument. Moreover, the subtitle is somewhat inappropriate. Plank suggests repeatedly that Woolman did not have much knowledge of imperial politics, and, unlike such contemporaries as Anthony Benezet, did not correspond with British antislavery activists. Woolman participated in the patriots' boycott of tea, for example, not because of the good's taxation but because it was sweetened with sugar produced by slave labor. In other words, Woolman's protests did have an imperial context, of which he was likely conscious, but he was not engaged with the politics of a transatlantic movement per se. Plank could at least have clarified the role of empire in framing his scholarly project. These minor points aside, Plank has produced a compelling study of Woolman's life, views, and role within his community and world.

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Hardy Green. *The Company Town: The Industrial Edens and Satanic Mills that Shaped the American Economy* (New York: Basic Books, 2012; originally published in hardcover in 2010). Pp. 271. Illustrations, notes, index. Paperback, \$16.99.

Hardy Green's *The Company Town* takes an exhaustive look at the history of corporate-developed communities across the United States. In tracing the growth, heyday, and collapse of these towns, Green argues that they are paradoxically un-American in concept yet essential to the spirit of American business. As a survey work, Green does his best to describe a wide spectrum ranging from 1820s Lowell, Massachusetts, to more modern examples of Google's work campuses in California (a descendent of the company town that gives employees all the amenities of the old cities in one location).

Company towns as described by Green follow a few basic guidelines: they are generally tied to a single industry that dominates the local community's manufacturing as well as to the single larger-than-life personality who runs that industry. Most towns also fall along the spectrum between what Green describes as utopia to "exploitationville" (6). Green argues that business leaders establish their towns in accordance to the availability of resources and labor supply, with high-profit ventures tending to be more utopian in