

The Diary of Hannah Callender Sansom: Sense and Sensibility in the Age of the American Revolution. Edited by SUSAN E. KLEPP and KARIN WULF. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010. 376 pp., Illustrations, index. \$24.95.)

Susan Klepp and Karin Wulf have done scholars of early American women's history a great service by editing, interpreting, and publishing this eighteenth-century Quaker woman's diary. Hannah Callender (1737–1801) was the daughter of wealthy and influential Philadelphians. She married Samuel Sansom, of similar parentage, in 1762. She began diary keeping at age twenty-one in 1758 and, with significant gaps during periods of family and national preoccupation, recorded her thoughts for thirty years. Her journal opens a window into the family, social, religious, intellectual, and working lives of women of the Quaker elite in the period following the withdrawal of Quaker men from control of the Pennsylvania government.

The diary itself cannot be described as a riveting read. For the most part it is a daily account of the comings and goings of family members, social visits made and received, Quaker meetings attended and speakers heard, and needlework or sewing begun and completed. Two factors make this edition compelling and valuable, however. First, Klepp and Wulf precede each of the three sections of the diary (as defined by the major gaps) with an essay that interprets the major themes of the section. Here they weave the patterns seen in the recurrent entries with the embellishments of "HCS's" occasional remarks on her feelings, the doings of family and friends, and, more rarely, events in the larger world. Especially useful is the way they interpret the diary in light of two issues of recent interest to historians: the importance of sociability at midcentury and the rise of sensibility in the era of the Revolution. They skillfully exploit the very "dailiness" of Hannah's constant round of visits and tea drinkings (she faithfully recorded all with whom she "tead") to illustrate the importance of genteel conversation in sustaining social networks. After 1780, they contrast her own lackluster marriage with her enthusiasm for the romantic choice made by her daughter. Hannah's remarks on the emotional suitability of her prospective son-in-law, and her championing of his courtship (he was not born into the Society of Friends and, despite his willingness to convert, had to overcome the resistance of Samuel Sansom and others) shows her allegiance to the new cult of sensibility. The editors' introduction, afterword, and three interpretive chapters are essential to appreciating the diary in its social and cultural context and make it both useful to specialists in the period and accessible to general readers.

This edition is also a valuable companion to the diary of HCS's friend Elizabeth Drinker (edited by Elaine F. Crane and published by Northeastern University Press in 1991). Drinker's diary is rich, but it has long stood alone as the most substantial woman's diary from eighteenth-century Philadelphia. Now we have something with which to compare it. Klepp and Wulf's notes concern-

ing Hannah's literary quotations and reading, for example, are helpful in contrasting her literary consumption with that of the more bookish Drinker. Klepp and Wulf might have followed Crane's lead, however, in providing more extensive annotation. Initial identification of persons mentioned would have greatly increased the utility of the diary for social-network analysis. But such lacunae are also assets in that while the editors' essays demonstrate the diary's significance, they do not foreclose its utility for further inquiry.

Ursinus College

C. DALLETT HEMPHILL

Revolutionary Conceptions: Women, Fertility, and Family Limitation in America, 1760–1820. By SUSAN E. KLEPP. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009. 328 pp., Illustrations, figures, tables, appendix, notes. \$24.95.)

Susan E. Klepp's *Revolutionary Conceptions: Women, Fertility, and Family Limitation in America, 1760–1820* is an outstanding study of the onset of a decline in fertility during the revolutionary era. Klepp seeks to explain why colonial birth rates were so high, why revolutionary-era women were among the first women in the world to limit their childbearing, and how the growing practice of fertility control within marriage was related to changing ideas about sexuality, health, children, marriage, family, religious authority, individuality, sentimentality, economic aspirations, numeracy, and gender.

Unfortunately, there are few sources explicitly describing couples' sexual or contraceptive practices. Through a creative reading of a wide range of sources, including letters, diaries, almanacs, portraits, medical tracts, and demographic data, however, Klepp is able to document a dramatic shift in ideas about fertility and the cultural acceptability of limited childbearing. Prior to the Revolution, social conventions characterized childbearing as procreation and associated it with the generation of wealth; afterwards they described it as reproduction and separated from the creation of wealth. "Breeding" became a term used only when discussing livestock and slaves, and pregnancy connoted sickness. Prerevolutionary portraits depicted the female body with flowers and fruit symbolizing fecundity, "cornucopias pouring out symbolic babies and future wealth from their bodies" (143). Postrevolutionary portraits represented women as less sexualized and celebrated women's restrained virtues and domestic roles.

A chapter on the technology of birth control cogently argues that women's demand for contraception and abortion was high, if not always effectively met. Contemporary definitions of disease and the perceived need to regulate the menstrual cycle provided a possible way for women to eliminate unwanted pregnancies with emmenagogic medicines. Women shared knowledge about abortifac-