

BOOK REVIEWS

Elizabeth Haddon Estaugh, 1680–1762: Building the Quaker Community of Haddonfield, NJ, 1701–1762. By JEFFREY M. DORWART AND ELIZABETH A. LYONS. (Haddonfield, NJ: Historical Society of Haddonfield, 2013. 314 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$25.)

Elizabeth Haddon Estaugh's more than half century in western New Jersey left an indelible imprint. Yet, much of her story is shrouded in mystery. Arriving in the Delaware Valley on an unknown ship sometime in 1701, she devoted more than a decade to developing an imposing homestead. She then dedicated the ensuing five decades to helping establish an enduring Quaker community in the region of what is now Delaware, western New Jersey, and southeastern Pennsylvania. Over time, her life grew into the basis for legends. These included her possible encounter with Pennsylvania founder William Penn, romantic narratives of her love affair with husband John Estaugh, and unsupportable explanations for why she was childless. Abolitionist author Lydia Maria Child, who published the first admiring biography of Haddon Estaugh in 1846, portrayed her subject as a larger-than-life legend. Just as Haddon Estaugh remained an inspiration to women, Child's biography provided a model for Quaker hagiographers.

But what was the real story of Elizabeth Haddon Estaugh? To write this most recent study of the Quaker woman's life, history detective Elizabeth Lyons spent more than forty years combing through archives in Britain, America, and the West Indies. Lyons and her brother Stewart made a valiant attempt to sort out the "reality" of the "elusive figure resistant to research" (24). Unfortunately, their search was in vain. Both died before they completed this volume or found some indication of Elizabeth Haddon Estaugh's own perspective on her story. What emerged instead were myriad bits of information about the eighteenth-century Quaker woman's context: her parents, the London neighborhood of her childhood, the New Jersey neighbors whose marriages she witnessed, the purchasers of her father's American land holding, and her sponsorship of her nephew in America. Completed by Jeffrey Dorwart, emeritus professor of history at Rutgers University, the story also explores the economy of eighteenth-century England and its transplantation to the New World, the goals of John Estaugh and other religious missionaries, the fragility of life in both Old World and New, and the growth of Haddonfield Quaker Meeting. The book "steps back from the Elizabeth Haddon legend and examines Elizabeth's world through the religious and business relationships that

she had with the men and women around her”; it is “concerned less with guessing about Elizabeth Haddon Estaugh’s innermost motives and feelings . . . [and more] with discovering her life (seen largely through the eyes of her contemporaries who left more documented evidence” (xiii). Even with this more limited goal, however, the pages of the Lyons/Dorwart volume are peppered with equivocal words like “probably,” “most likely,” and “possibly,” as there remain significant lacunae in the available documentation.

The Lyons team has done the tedious task of plowing through hundreds of archival boxes of sometimes difficult penmanship, and Dorwart has reported their work almost as a series of visual and verbal snapshots. The result is an invaluable resource for anyone wishing to reconstruct Quaker familial and economic networks in the early decades of western New Jersey settlement. It is clear that Elizabeth Haddon Estaugh and her family were integral parts of those networks. However, while Dorwart and Lyons have woven together the threads of several decades of fresh research on her story, much of Elizabeth Haddon Estaugh’s life in western New Jersey remains shrouded in mystery.

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Women in Early America. Edited by THOMAS A. FOSTER. (New York: New York University Press, 2015. 320 pp. Notes, index. \$28.)

In her afterword to this fine collection of essays edited by Thomas A. Foster, Jennifer L. Morgan confronts the issue of whether or not such a volume should be published at all. “There is a contradiction,” she writes, “in gathering a set of essays under the rubric of women in early America in which the essential argument is that one cannot write the social history of early America without women” (274). Morgan argues further that we are not at the point where writing essays on the history of women is “impossibly old-fashioned,” particularly if those studies uncover the experiences of women from many backgrounds and demonstrate the significance of gender in political, economic, and social history (274). Foster makes the case in his introduction that research on women’s lives remains necessary, despite the contributions and increasing popularity of gender history among studies of early America, because “[i]t is still largely acceptable for men to be portrayed as the universal historical subject” (3). Historians must still probe stubborn archives, using gender theory, to understand how Native American, African American, and European women participated fully in the development of North American societies.