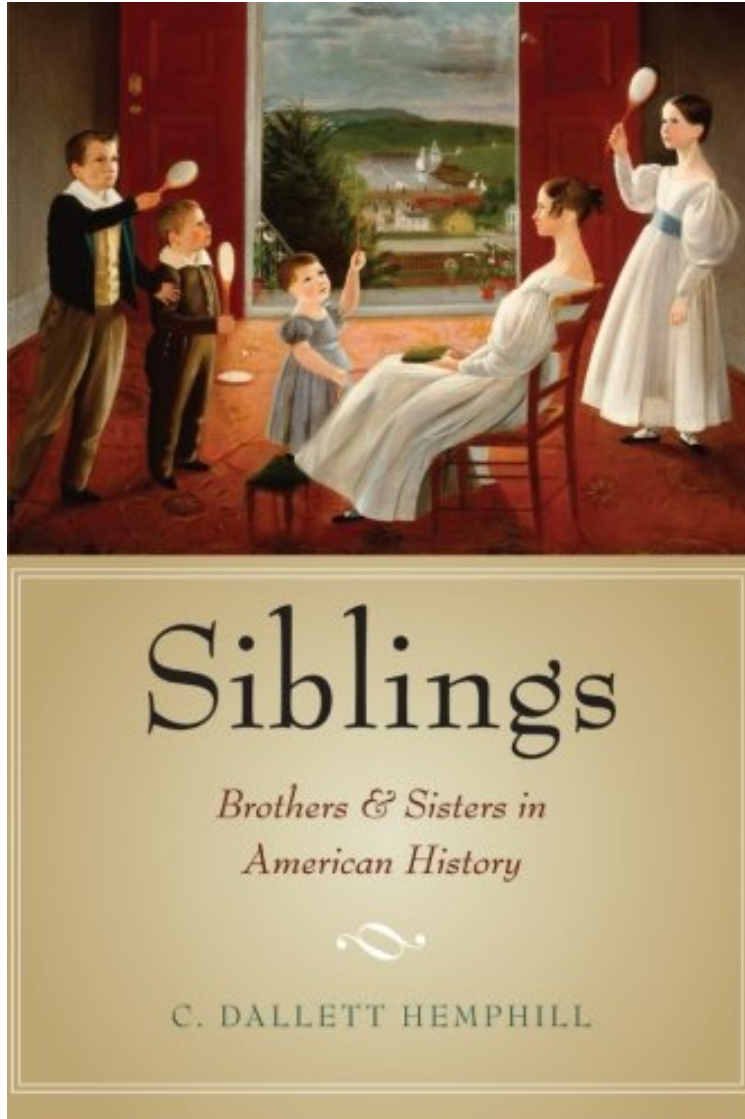


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Siblings: Brothers and Sisters in American History

C. Dallett Hemphill

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C. Dallett Hemphill : Siblings: Brothers and Sisters in American History before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Siblings: Brothers and Sisters in American History:

Brothers and sisters are so much a part of our lives that we can overlook their importance. Even scholars of the family tend to forget siblings, focusing instead on marriage and parent-child relations. Based on a wealth of family papers, period images, and popular literature, this is the first book devoted to the broad history of sibling relations, spanning

the long period of transition from early to modern America. Illuminating the evolution of the modern family system, *Siblings* shows how brothers and sisters have helped each other in the face of the dramatic political, economic, and cultural changes of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The book reveals that, in colonial America, sibling relations offered an egalitarian space to soften the challenges of the larger patriarchal family and society, while after the Revolution, in antebellum America, sibling relations provided order and authority in a more democratic nation. Moreover, Hemphill explains that siblings serve as the bridge between generations. Brothers and sisters grow up in a shared family culture influenced by their parents, but they are different from their parents in being part of the next generation. Responding to new economic and political conditions, they form and influence their own families, but their continuing relationships with brothers and sisters serve as a link to the past. Siblings thus experience and promote the new, but share the comforting context of the old. Indeed, in all races, siblings function as humanity's shock-absorbers, as well as valued kin and keepers of memory. This wide-ranging book offers a new understanding of the relationship between families and history in an evolving world. It is also a timely reminder of the role our siblings play in our own lives.

"In *Siblings*, C. Dallett Hemphill focuses on brothers and sisters in America from 1600 to the Civil War to bring rich and long-neglected evidence to light. Additionally, she fashions a new story about American family history that avoids the ahistorical assumptions of former approaches, many of which relied on modernization theory. Hemphill's discovery that the reign of sisters accompanied the reign of mothers amounts to a major revelation that will change basic conceptions of middle-class family development in America...Hemphill hopes 'to get family history rolling again'. By masterfully and artfully liberating family history from ahistorical constructions, she has made a major contribution in that direction."--*The New England Quarterly* "Accessible and engaging, recommended especially for readers in Colonial American history and historical studies of the family."--*Library Journal* "Hemphill's lively, empathetic exploration of sibling bonds recovers an essential part of family history. In transcending the conjugal model, she also moves family history outside the household, affording a richer understanding of early American society. This fresh and persuasive book illuminates the interplay of family, politics, and economy, viewed through the prism of the longest-lasting family ties."--Lorri Glover, Saint Louis University "This insightful study places sibling relations in the broad context of a changing America. In so doing, Dallett Hemphill opens up a new perspective on family, gender, and sexuality during the colonial period and early republic."--Paula S. Fass, author of *Children of a New World: Society, Culture, and Globalization* "In *Siblings*, prominent American historian C. Dallett Hemphill offers a richly detailed, wide-ranging investigation of the relationships of brothers and sisters. Little studied, these relationships provided an egalitarian counterweight to the hierarchical structures of the seventeenth century and a model for a democratizing young nation in the eighteenth. The nineteenth century saw growing regional, age, and gender distinctions, while contemporary Americans experience sibling rivalry and worry about weakened family ties. This sweeping survey with its thoughtful and engaging conclusion will appeal to specialists and beginning students alike. It opens a new field of investigation that will spark discussion and inspire future research into the history and importance of fraternal bonds."--Susan E. Klepp, Temple University "Dallett Hemphill's study of sibling relationships fills a very conspicuous, and longstanding, gap in the literature of family history. Deeply researched, carefully argued, attractively written, it lays out a broad panorama of change (in some respects) and continuity (in others). The story it tells is always interesting, and sometimes surprising; the importance of siblings, to one another as well as the larger family system, is established beyond doubt. Moreover, Hemphill is particularly astute in connecting her material to wider historical forces; indeed, sibling experience emerges as something of a catalyst for those forces. All in all, then, *Siblings* qualifies as a major contribution to social and cultural history."--John Demos, Yale University "One of the pleasures of doing family history is on rich display throughout the book: the words of family members. In these familial conversations we see people teasing and scolding, advising and arguing. We may not see our own families replicated in them, but close enough. The abiding love and the recurring irritations feel familiar to those of us with siblings. That peculiar bond of friendship, duty, longevity, connection, differences that characterizes sibling life comes to life in this book."--*Journal of Family History* "Siblings masterfully analyzes sibling relations as a window for understanding historical change in America from the mid-1600s to the mid-1800s."--*Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*

About the Author
C. Dallett Hemphill is a Professor of History at Ursinus College. She is the author of *Bowing to Necessities: A History of Manners in America, 1620-1860* (OUP).