

(Ebook pdf) The Quaker Community on Barbados: Challenging the Culture of the Planter Class

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Larry Gragg

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Larry Gragg : The Quaker Community on Barbados: Challenging the Culture of the Planter Class before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Quaker Community on Barbados: Challenging the Culture of the Planter Class:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Thorough, well researched work on Quakers of BarbadosBy QuakerstudiesLarry Gragg has provided a carefully researched thorough study of this important group of early

Caribbean colonists, many of whom later migrated to the North American colonies seeking religious freedom. He identifies a significant number of the Quaker leaders and shows both the persecution Friends endured on Barbados and the significant contributions they made to island society, especially as champions of religious civil liberty and in opposing the worst brutality of the oppressive system of slavery, even though some of the Friends there held slaves themselves. It was the condition of slaves on Barbados that led to Quaker founder George Fox issuing his historic epistle asserting the essential equality of black and Native American Indian peoples to those of European background, and declaring the clear Christian duty of every slaveholder to treat their slaves and indentured servants humanely, to have concern for the spiritual lives of slaves, and to set them free after a period of service. This book is well written, authoritative, and comprehensive, but could have benefited from more maps and perhaps discussion of the later role of Barbados Quakers in Carolina politics, which became a re-match with their former Barbados oppressors. Many Americans will have ancestors among the over 1200 Quakers of 17th century Barbados. This book was helpful to me in expanding my online database of Quakers in the Caribbean. I highly recommend it.

Prior to the Quakers large-scale migration to Pennsylvania, Barbados had more Quakers than any other English colony. But on this island of sugar plantations, Quakers confronted material temptations and had to temper founder George Fox's admonitions regarding slavery with the demoralizing realities of daily life in a slave-based economy where even most Quakers owned slaves. In *The Quaker Community on Barbados*, Larry Gragg shows how the community dealt with these contradictions as it struggled to change the culture of the richest of England's seventeenth-century colonies. Gragg has conducted meticulous research on two continents to re-create the Barbados Quaker community. Drawing on wills, censuses, and levy books along with surviving letters, sermons, and journals, he tells how the Quakers sought to implement their beliefs in peace, simplicity, and equality in a place ruled by a planter class that had built its wealth on the backs of slaves. He reveals that Barbados Quakers were a critical part of a transatlantic network of Friends and explains how they established a counterculture on the island that challenged the practices of the planter class and the class dominance in island government, church, and economy. In this compelling study, Gragg focuses primarily on the seventeenth century when the Quakers were most numerous and active on Barbados. He tells how Friends sought to convert slaves and improve their working and living conditions. He describes how Quakers refused to fund the Anglican Church, take oaths, participate in the militia, or pay taxes to maintain forts and how they condemned Anglican clergymen, disrupted their services, and wrote papers critical of the established church. By the 1680s, Quakers were maintaining five meetinghouses and several cemeteries, paying for their own poor relief, and keeping their own records of births, deaths, and marriages. Gragg also tells of the severe challenges and penalties they faced for confronting and rejecting the dominant culture. With their civil disobedience and stand on slavery, Quakers on Barbados played an important role in the early British Empire but have been largely neglected by scholars. Gragg's work makes their contribution clear as it opens a new window on the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Atlantic world.

"Larry Gragg's book presents a rich, admirably concise case study of the formation of a particular colonial Quaker community and provides a window into Barbados' society as it transitioned into a plantation-based sugar economy." Michael J. Jarvis, author of *In the Eye of All Trade: Bermuda, Bermudians, and the Maritime Atlantic World, 1680-1783*