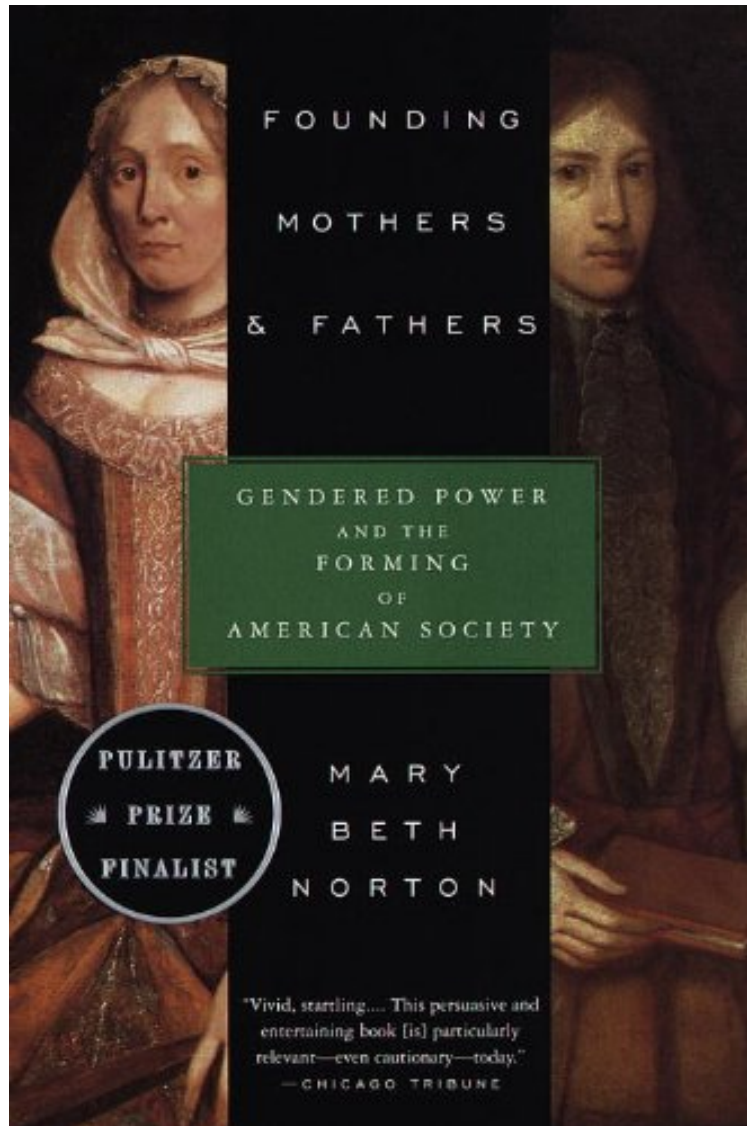


(Library ebook) Founding Mothers Fathers: Gendered Power and the Forming of American Society

Founding Mothers Fathers: Gendered Power and the Forming of American Society

Mary Beth Norton

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Mary Beth Norton : Founding Mothers Fathers: Gendered Power and the Forming of American Society before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Founding Mothers Fathers: Gendered Power and the Forming of American Society:

0 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Walker Very good book. 0 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Book By Tricia L VanVorce The book was in good condition but was not exactly what I was

looking for. It was too general a text, as I required more of a scholar study.⁸ of 11 people found the following review helpful. Book Review by Charles Michael FarleyBy Charles Michael FarleyBy Mary Beth Norton. *Founding Mothers and Fathers: Gendered Power and the Forming of American Society*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996, hardcover 1996. Pp. ix, 496, appendix, abbreviations, notes, index....hardcover.)From the time of the Pilgrims to present day, women have played more of a substantial role than they are commonly accredited for. In *Founding Mothers and Fathers: Gendered Power and the forming of American Society*, Mary Beth Norton parlays her idea that although woman did not have an independent role in the political arena of early American society there were many woman and groups of woman who knew the undisclosed sins of the community. This they used in the assumption of leadership roles among the communities. Norton goes on to explain power inside the household as well as in the community. She connected Sir Robert Filmer's (The Filmerian view) and John Lockes' philosophies (the Lockean view) to both domestic life and the political structure and formation of early American society. As you probably know, the practice of bearing children was most likely the primary focus of 17th century colonial woman. Lacking in birth control, a woman would go through a constant cycle of becoming pregnant and giving birth. Norton points out that these regular childbearing sessions excluded men from attending. It is very important to understand the role of the midwife. She could be the necessary one in keeping the woman and child alive during birth. She could, as well, expose any form of bastardization, premarital sex, adultery, and infanticide. The power of the midwives and the ignorance of men on the subject of childbearing gave way to many cases in which women could bend around the "man-made" laws. It is probably demeaning these days to say that woman "gossip." Well, according to Norton, this did indeed go on during colonial times. The reader will discover the "gossip networks." Due to the fact that woman were separated from men in many social aspects led to these networks. Rumors of criminal activities would travel this way to the Colonial Magistrate and would very often result in punishment for the crime. I found the two different philosophies on gender power to be very interesting. Should the most power come from the parent most represented, whichever that may be? This idea would bring more power to widows and present them with a greater role in the community. However, the people of this enlightened area would demand that the power of a woman's authority was inexistent outside the home. Mary Beth Norton is a very accredited historian. This book gives remarkable incite to the power of woman in colonial times. Anyone interested in the social history of our country would enjoy this book and feel enriched after reading it. Many of the woman's roles discussed were unknown to me. Norton puts them across in a very intelligent and unquestionable way using many actual cases of the times to back up her theories. This book, although written by a scholarly author, is not a difficult reading. Since it deals with many aspects of colonial life unknown to many people the readers interest should withstand through its entirety. Indeed, woman played an immense, although not formal or independent, role in the formation of our country as it is today. -Charles Michael Farley-

In this pioneering study of the ways in which the first settlers defined the power, prerogatives, and responsibilities of the sexes, one of our most incisive historians opens a window onto the world of Colonial America. Drawing on a wealth of contemporary documents, Mary Beth Norton tells the story of the Pinion clan, whose two-generation record of theft, adultery, and infanticide may have made them our first dysfunctional family. She reopens the case of Mistress Ann Hibbens, whose church excommunicated her for arguing that God had told husbands to listen to their wives. And here is the enigma of Thomas, or Thomasine Hall, who lived comfortably as both a man and a woman in 17th century Virginia. Wonderfully erudite and vastly readable, *Founding Mothers Fathers* reveals both the philosophical assumptions and intimate domestic arrangements of our colonial ancestors in all their rigor, strangeness, and unruly passion."An important, imaginative book. Norton destroys our nostalgic image of a 'golden age' of family life and re-creates a more complex past whose assumptions and anxieties are still with us."--Raleigh News and Observer

.com *Founding Mothers Fathers* is a scholarly study of the responsibilities and rewards New World colonists assigned to adults solely on the basis of gender. Historian Mary Beth Norton asserts that a changing world-view caused the limited power wielded by a handful of early colonial women to trickle away by the time the American Constitution was framed. Since nearly every moment of daily life was subject to intense scrutiny by the entire community, the court records and other public documents Norton diligently combed to make her case are anything but dull, and the offenses and punishments meted out speak loudly to the issues of gendered power. Crystallizing the inflexibility of gender roles in the American colonies is the tale of a servant known as Thomasine or Thomas Hall, alternately. Raised for two decades as a girl, Hall later switched several times between the clothes and roles of a man and those of a woman. Although outraged townswomen repeatedly assured colonial authorities that Hall was physically male, his feminine mannerisms and skill with a needle and thread so unnerved one regional commander that he demanded Hall "be putt in weomans apparell." Other stories include that of the ne'er-do-well Pinion family, who brawled through two generations of theft, adultery, and domestic squabbles in New England, and a man and woman brought up before a Virginia tribunal accused of "a great bussleling and juggling of the bed" judged unseemly in an unmarried couple. *Founding Mothers Fathers* offers a full-bellied, incisive view of a developing social hierarchy and the slim margin of power that women held and lost within it. --Francesca ColtreraFrom Publishers WeeklyDefying an Anglo-American

worldview that drew analogies between the family and the state as male-run, hierarchical institutions, women played important roles in colonial American society between 1620 and 1670. In her lively study, Cornell historian Norton highlights religious dissenter and health-care expert Anne Hutchinson, who held all-female religious meetings in her home, dispensed advice at births and preached God's free gift of salvation-activities that led to her excommunication from Boston's church in 1645. Another intrepid colonial woman, lawyer Margaret Brent, appointed in 1648 as the representative of Lord Baltimore, proprietor of Maryland, fought unsuccessfully for a vote and speaking privileges in the Maryland Assembly. We also meet a gossip group consisting of four women (including excommunicated heretic Anne Eaton, wife of Connecticut's governor) whose regular meetings elicited criminal prosecution on charges of slander and sacrilege in 1646. This erudite study is full of intriguing lore on colonial neighbors, sexual gossip and men's political squabbles. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist Norton documents the relationship between gender and power in early colonial America, basing her study on the period from 1620 to 1670. The dominant worldview of family and state during the period was patriarchal, and its leading proponent was one Sir Robert Filmer. The head of a family held power parallel to that held by the head of state, serving as justice of the peace, arbiter of order, payer of fines, and poster of bonds for all dependents, including servants. Most families were governed by men, but widows, wives of high-ranking men, and midwives, who knew the family sins and secrets, could assume leadership roles. The reader is shown how women such as Anne Hutchinson assumed religious power through the Filmerian principle that all authority flowed from the symbolic parent, father or mother--a belief soon overthrown by the encroaching Enlightenment's Lockean worldview, which initiated the confinement of women's authority to the home. A scholarly, provocative read. Patricia Hassler