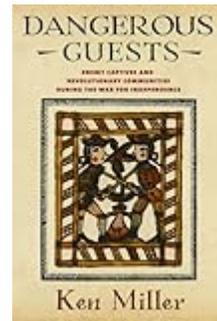


Ken Miller. *Dangerous Guests: Enemy Captives and Revolutionary Communities during the War for Independence.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014. 264 pp. \$35.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8014-5055-6.



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Commissioned by Margaret Sankey (Air War College)

Ken Miller's *Dangerous Guests: Enemy Captives and Revolutionary Communities during the War for Independence* offers a detailed look at the community of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, in the eighteenth century, while considering the role the American Revolution played in the town's evolving, and sometimes conflicted, identity. Prior to the outbreak of the war in the 1770s, Lancaster was home to a majority German population and a minority population of English, Welsh, and Scots-Irish colonists. These diverse cultural identities meant that Lancaster colonists were often at odds with each other in the first half of the eighteenth century, but Miller argues that the specific challenges wrought by the American Revolution in Lancaster helped forge the beginnings of a new American identity among German and British colonists.

The initial battles fought during the American Revolution occurred in the New England colonies and in New York, far away from central Pennsylvania. Nevertheless, the first major American victories at the Battle of Trenton in 1776 and the Battle of Saratoga in 1777 brought the war close to home as thousands of captured soldiers were sent to Lancaster and the surrounding area to be housed as prisoners of war. Similar to Lancaster's diverse populations, these prisoners had distinct cultural

identities. Some were British soldiers, either officers or enlisted men. Others were known as Hessians, troops hired from the Germanic regions of Hesse, Brunswick, and Waldeck. In some cases, these soldiers were accompanied by their wives and children, who had traveled to North America to work as cooks, laundresses, and nurses alongside the British army.

Miller utilizes a broad range of source material to examine the cultural identities of Lancaster residents and prisoners of war alike as well as the ways in which these identities shaped their interactions with one another. These materials include records from Pennsylvania's government during the American Revolution, papers of the Continental Congress, records from the British army, and dozens of letters and accounts composed by ordinary colonists and soldiers that describe their experiences during the war. This extensive research allows him to build an almost daily account of Lancaster's evolving relationship with both its own colonists and its captive soldiers, as well as decisions made by the Continental Congress on the care and treatment of prisoners of war throughout the war.

Dangerous Guests successfully navigates its way through a complex terrain of captors and captives, of-

ten fluid cultural identities, and the demands placed on both sides by the American Revolution. Miller's research on these topics is, undoubtedly, impressive. Nevertheless, Miller's work would have benefited from greater attention to other historical studies on relationships between captors and captives, for some questions remain unanswered by the book's close. How, for example, did relationships between the Lancaster colonists and their captive prisoners of war compare with relationships between the many Pennsylvania colonists taken captive during the French and Indian War and their Native and French captors? And were there any redeemed captives among the Lancaster colonists? Answering such questions may have helped with Miller's analysis of the Continental Congress's efforts to persuade Hessian prison-

ers of war to desert from the British army and join the colonial cause as newly minted Americans.

Still, this is a minor concern in comparison with both the depth of research presented by Miller and with the versatility *Dangerous Guests* provides its readers. Historians interested in the recent scholarly emphasis on the mid-Atlantic colonies in the colonial and revolutionary periods will find it a worthy addition to earlier titles on the same region. Military scholars will be intrigued by Miller's behind-the-scenes look at the logistical challenges posed by American victories during the Revolution. General readers will appreciate Miller's narrative style, while history teachers will find the book an endless source of stories to be used in classes addressing identity politics during the American Revolution.

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