

Ginny Ridder's Interpretation of a Quaker Letter

January 9, 1683

Dearest Constance,¹

Living in the Penn's Colony is much Diferent than lif in England! Heer, we ar Free to worship as we plees, as Pennsylvania is knon for Religus Freedom. Father decided we would be Quakers, sins this religion is Closest to wat we belev. Quakers hav dun something no othur Religion heer has dun, the Quakers hav givun religus rits to women. Even as I writ to thee, the women of the town ar meeting in the Chester meeting place. The women are givun a vois, even holding thir own metings and deciding thir own ruls and difiplins within the famile and church. I am not ther, tho I am sixteen, for I am going to scul. It is Inturefing to me, how much we lurn in Scul. We ar lurning curenly about the houshold chors for we Ladys. I wus givun the tafk of sweeping the scul hous and stoking the fyr. It is not as laborus as othur tafkes, but it is Cold now and I must gathur the wud mifelf. Mi Clok dus litle to sheeld me frum the Biter cold. Fathur and Muthur ar doing wel, and thou shuld see Samuel. Mi, how He has Gron. Thou wuld nevur rekognis him. Mi Brother has even out-gron Father. And Ann. Sweet Ann has gron quit Lovly. She has cot the i of many boys in town. And in adishun to that mi Muther has begun to luck for a Husband for Me. I hav no sa in hu she wil chus. I hop however that she chuses the boy living Next dor. He is a reputibel, Moral Quaker and I belev he has taken an Interest in Me. I du hop that much is tru. But, if the Lord Wils, it shal be, if not ther is no Merit in thinking further upon the Subject. The Lord wil work in Misterius ways. Mi dearest Constance, How I mis thee! The Smil thou laft gav stil shins britly in Mi Lif. How ar the darling Smiths? Is

¹ G. Edward Godwin, "Most Common Names," accessed September 21, 2016, <http://victoria.tc.ca/~tgodwin/duncanweb/documents/names.html>.

² Maggie MacLean, "Quaker Women," History of American Women, February 13, 2008, accessed September 21, 2016, <http://www.womenhistoryblog.com/2008/02/quaker-women.html>. And

Eric Dunklee et al., "Gender Roles in Colonial America," Gender and Sexuality in Colonial America, accessed September 21, 2016, <http://public.gettysburg.edu/~tshannon/341/sites/Gender%20and%20Sexuality/index.html>. And

William recoverd from his ilnes? And wat of Catherin? Is she stil the Object of Interest thru Town? How dus the Yung las fair? And wat of Thee? Such memorys we ons mad. It seems so long ago that we Lay in the Brit Sun of the hom of thy famile. I mis thee Sinferly Constance. I hav mad few companuns heer. Mi frequent Company is the Natur around Me. All is quiet heer in Penn's Colony, wyth few people to disturb the Quiet. Tho the town is most Always bufy, I mind not the nois. Thou wuld ador lif heer. Tho the Town is bufy, The people keep Quiet chusing to talk in pees. Heer, Cecilia and Abigal³ wuld be free. This thout may be surprising to thee, however tru it may be. Heer, we hav no slavs. We ar under the belef that Slavery is imoral, and Unjus. All peeple are confiderd equal heer in Penn's Colony. Church is queer, for no one speeks. In placment of this, ther is Silens, wyth the rul being that any, Man, or Woman, may speak, If the Lord movs. No one wavs hats in the Church, only out of the Church is this action Permitted.⁴ To heer the Men and Women of the colony speek is Astounding. I do enjoy such Lucjery heer. Even I hav spoken and I am yet a child. Mi Luw, mi deereft Constance, Has lif cum between we? Thou has not writin in many months, even in respons to min own Leters. Let ther be no dout about this, tho we ar apart, ther shall never be a Moment when I du not Think of Thee. Thou shal Forever be in my Hart, as wel as in mi Mind. May God grant thee the Wishes of thin Hart. I shal be praying for Thee in the yeers to cum, Mi Luw. In this, that we might ons agan be together heer. Thou shuld jorny heer, tho dificult. Thou wuld find the Pees thou ons cravd, and the Luw ons loft. Thin famile wil Forever be Welcum heer, and thou havf a Hom heer Always. I pray thee, Remember me as thou prays, for I feer in the cuming months, Persecutun wil Prevail, and the Devil wil win out aganst we hu ar heer. Pray, deereft Constance, that we hav the Strenth thru Christ to Ber such Sufering. I wil Forever Luw thee, Constance.

³ "Charleston Slave Manifests, Rg 36," Slave Manifests, [/www.archives.gov/atlanta/finding-aids/slave-manifests/charleston/names.html](http://www.archives.gov/atlanta/finding-aids/slave-manifests/charleston/names.html).

⁴ Connie Green Gritz, "Quakers: A Silent Influence," LEGACY, accessed September 29, 2016, http://www.racc.edu/StudentLife/Clubs/Legacy/vol_1/Quakers.html.

*Until we Meet Ours More,
In God,
Rose*

Dunklee, Eric, Keith Hinder, Jennifer L. Polluck, Emily Voss, and Sarah Williams. "Gender Roles in Colonial America." Gender and Sexuality in Colonial America. Accessed September 21, 2016.<http://public.gettysburg.edu/~tshannon/341/sites/Gender%20and%20Sexuality/index.html>.

Godwin, G. Edward. "Most Common Names." Accessed September 21, 2016.<http://victoria.tc.ca/~tgodwin/duncanweb/documents/names.html>.

Gritz, Connie Green. "Quakers: A Silent Influence." LEGACY. Accessed September 29, 2016.http://www.racc.edu/StudentLife/Clubs/Legacy/vol_1/Quakers.html.

MacLean, Maggie. "Quaker Women." History of American Women. February 13, 2008. Accessed September 21, 2016.
<http://www.womenhistoryblog.com/2008/02/quaker-women.html>.

Slave Manifests. "Charleston Slave Manifests, Rg 36."
[/www.archives.gov/atlanta/finding-aids/slave-manifests/charleston/names.html](http://www.archives.gov/atlanta/finding-aids/slave-manifests/charleston/names.html).

Tyson, Rae. "Our First Friends, the Early Quakers." Pennsylvania Heritage. Accessed September 29, 2016.<http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/portal/communities/pa-heritage/our-first-friends-early-quakers.html>.

Quakers in the World. "Rights of Women." Accessed September 29, 2016.<http://www.quakersintheworld.org/quakers-in-action/166>.

