



# Georgia's Frontier Women: Female Fortunes in a Southern Colony

*Ben, Ben Marsh*

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Ranging from Georgia's founding in the 1730s until the American Revolution in the 1770s, *Georgia's Frontier Women* explores women's changing roles amid the developing demographic, economic, and social circumstances of the colony's settling. Georgia was launched as a unique experiment on the borderlands of the British Atlantic world. Its female population was far more diverse than any in nearby colonies at comparable times in their formation. Ben Marsh tells a complex story of narrowing opportunities for Georgia's women as the colony evolved from uncertainty toward stability in the face of sporadic warfare, changes in government, land speculation, and the arrival of slaves and immigrants in growing numbers.

Marsh looks at the experiences of white, black, and Native American women—old and young, married and single, working in and out of the home. Mary Musgrove, who played a crucial role in mediating colonist-Creek relations, and Marie Camuse, a leading figure in Georgia's early silk industry, are among the figures whose life stories Marsh draws on to illustrate how some frontier women broke down economic barriers and wielded authority in exceptional ways.

Marsh also looks at how basic assumptions about courtship, marriage, and family varied over time. To early settlers, for example, the search for stability could take them across race, class, or community lines in search of a suitable partner. This would change as emerging elites enforced the regulation of traditional social norms and as white relationships with blacks and Native Americans became more exploitive and adversarial. Many of the qualities that earlier had distinguished Georgia from other southern colonies faded away.

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