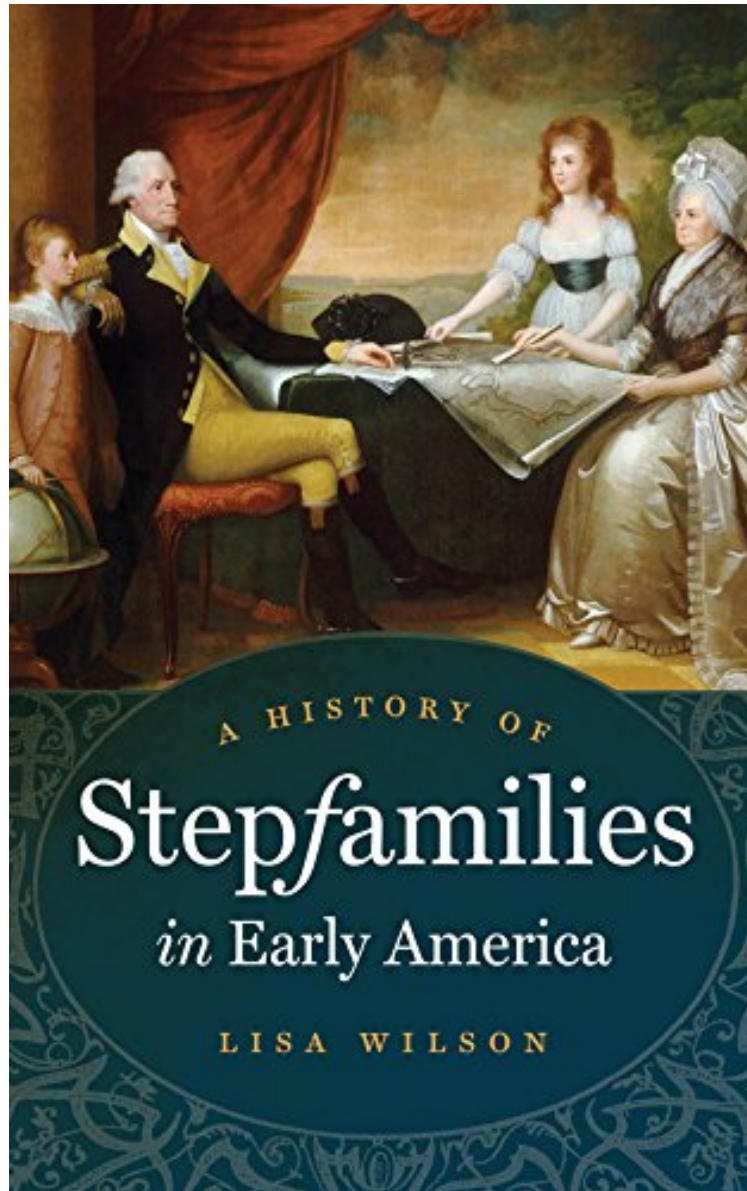


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## A History of Stepfamilies in Early America

*Lisa Wilson*

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#1704945 in Books Lisa Wilson 2014-10-06 2014-10-06Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.20 x .43 x 6.001, .0 #File Name: 1469618427172 pagesA History of Stepfamilies in Early America | File size: 64.Mb

**Lisa Wilson : A History of Stepfamilies in Early America** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A History of Stepfamilies in Early America:

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A wonderful book and a terrific presentBy Valerie HansenThis wonderful book makes a terrific present for anyone in a modern stepfamily because it demonstrates how common and

how close -- stepfamilies were in colonial America. Unlike modern America, most of the stepfamilies in the book came together after one of the parents was widowed; divorce was rare. Like today, the stereotypical stepparent, particularly the stepmother, was cruel to stepchildren, but this book offers many heartwarming examples of stepfamilies that formed new, enduring bonds. Suitably, the book covers George Washington, his wife Martha, and two children. These are not his own children, but Marthas grandchildren, whom George loved dearly. Chapter 4, my favorite, uncovers fascinating evidence of how stepchildren felt about their parents new spouses. Of course, some preferred the memory of a dead parent, but others embraced the living. Mather Byles, an English loyalist who moved to Halifax in the 1770s, married three times; his daughter Elizabeth wrote with great humor about her fathers second wife to her aunts saying, It is not with a little pleasure that I inform you, of the Birth of another Brother, I would be glad to know, if you dont think it is almost time for some of us to begin to look out. Especially as Mamma intends to have as many Boys, as there is Girls. And she liked the third wife, too. The book, filled with gems like these, is a genuine pleasure to read. 1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Great for colonial research By Customer Excellent information for those seeking to find out the rationale behind stepfamilies in colonial New England to mid-1800s. Because of the homogeneous quality of New Englanders, this is where the book keeps its focus.

Stepfamilies are not a modern phenomenon, but despite this reality, the history of stepfamilies in America has yet to be fully explored. In the first book-length work on the topic, Lisa Wilson examines the stereotypes and actualities of colonial stepfamilies and reveals them to be important factors in early United States domestic history. Remarriage was a necessity in this era, when war and disease took a heavy toll, all too often leading to domestic stress, and cultural views of stepfamilies during this time placed great strain on stepmothers and stepfathers. Both were seen either as unfit substitutes or as potentially unstable influences, and nowhere were these concerns stronger than in white middle-class families, for whom stepparents presented a paradox. Wilson shares the stories of real stepfamilies in early New England, investigating the relationship between prejudice and lived experience, and, in the end, offers a new way of looking at family units throughout history and the cultural stereotypes that still affect stepfamilies today.

"Fascinating adds delicious detail to the story of family ideology in American political discourse.--Books Culture Well-researched and fascinating, A History of Stepfamilies in Early America does a fine job of challenging enduring stereotypes and contributes to current-day conversations about the experiences of children, women, and men within stepfamilies.--Anne M. Boylan, University of Delaware Wilson tackles an unquestionably important topic at the intersection of the history of the family, the history of childhood, gender history, and a range of other subjects. This book will assuredly launch a sustained historiographical discussion about the complexity of American familism in the past and present.--Wayne Bodle, Indiana University of Pennsylvania About the Author Lisa Wilson is the Charles J. MacCurdy Professor of American history at Connecticut College.