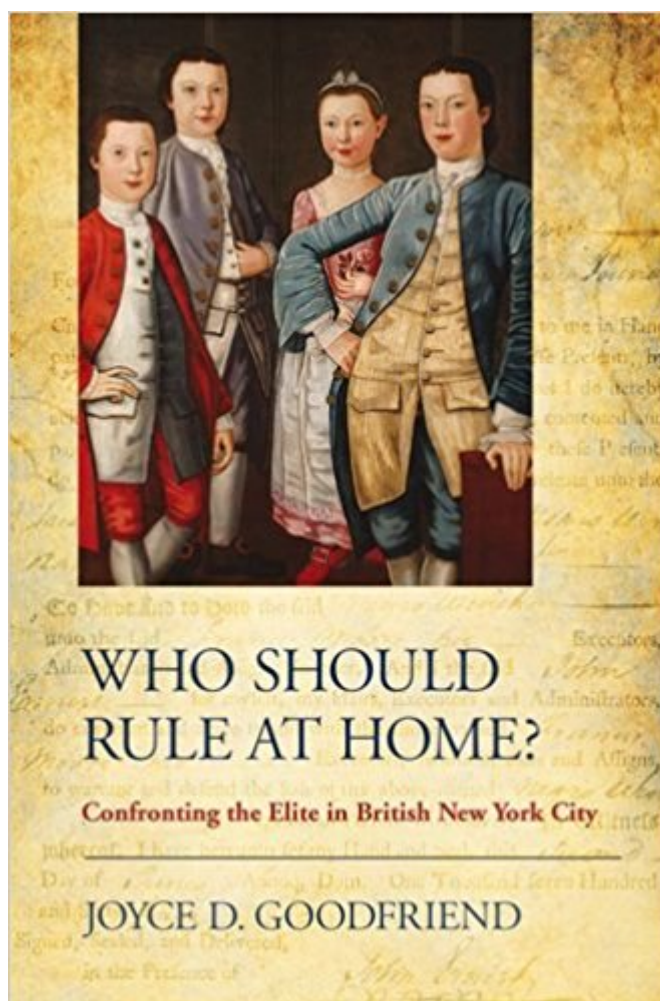


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Who Should Rule At Home?: Confronting The Elite In British New York City



Synopsis

In *Who Should Rule at Home?* Joyce D. Goodfriend argues that the high-ranking gentlemen who figure so prominently in most accounts of New York City's evolution from 1664, when the English captured the small Dutch outpost of New Amsterdam, to the eve of American independence in 1776 were far from invincible and that the degree of cultural power they held has been exaggerated. The urban elite experienced challenges to its cultural authority at different times, from different groups, and in a variety of settings. Goodfriend illuminates the conflicts that pitted the privileged few against the socially anonymous many who mobilized their modest resources to creatively resist domination. Critics of orthodox religious practice took to heart the message of spiritual rebirth brought to New York City by the famed evangelist George Whitefield and were empowered to make independent religious choices. Wives deserted husbands and took charge of their own futures. Indentured servants complained or simply ran away. Enslaved women and men carved out spaces where they could control their own lives and salvage their dignity. Impoverished individuals, including prostitutes, chose not to bow to the dictates of the elite, even though it meant being cut off from the sources of charity. Among those who confronted the elite were descendants of the early Dutch settlers; by clinging to their native language and traditional faith they preserved a crucial sense of autonomy.

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Customer Reviews

"Who Should Rule at Home?" promises to become the definitive book about early New York City. It is beautifully written and well and convincingly argued. Joyce D. Goodfriend redefines power and the

struggle over it in cultural terms. She also digs deeply in the primary sources to paint a picture of how common folks were able not only to challenge the elites but also to carve out space for full lives within families, neighborhoods, and churches. Goodfriend's emphasis on ethnicity and race is most welcome because of the enduring relevance of the ways in which Americans negotiate cultural power."â •Billy Smith, Distinguished Professor of Letters and Science, Montana State University, author of Ship of Death: A Voyage That Changed the Atlantic World"The beautifully written Who Should Rule at Home? demonstrates Joyce D. Goodfriend's deep and rich engagement with the primary sources. Her coverage of religious and devotional culture and Dutch New York are especially valuable."â •Simon Middleton, University of Sheffield, author of From Privileges to Rights: Work and Politics in Colonial New York City"Joyce D. Goodfriend's deeply researched book teems with instances of ethnic, religious, and social unrest among colonial New York City's lower ranks, who vigorously challenged the authority of those higher up. A fascinating read."â •Patricia U. Bonomi, New York University, author of A Factious People, Politics and Society in Colonial New York

Joyce D. Goodfriend is Professor of History at the University of Denver. She is the author of Before the Melting Pot: Society and Culture in Colonial New York City, 1664â "1730, editor of Revisiting New Netherland: Perspectives on Early Dutch America, and coeditor of Going Dutch: The Dutch Presence in America, 1609â "2009.

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