

Good wives, nasty wenches, and anxious patriarchs: Gender, race, and power in colonial Virginia.

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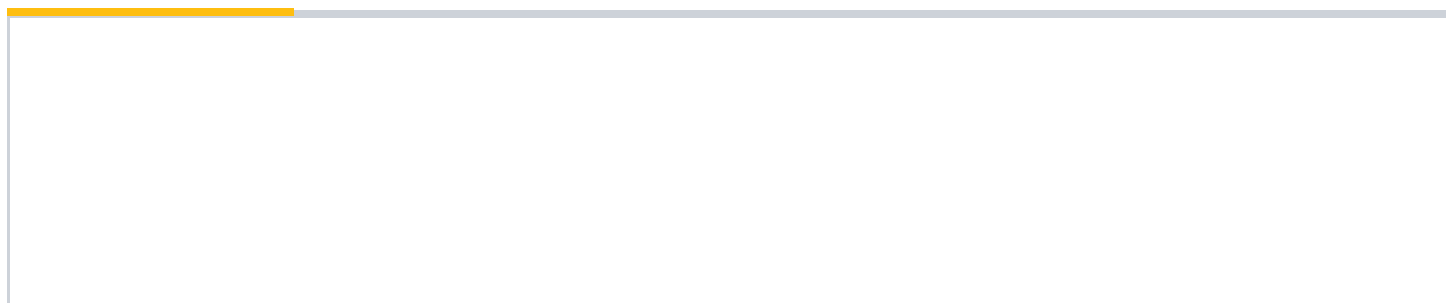
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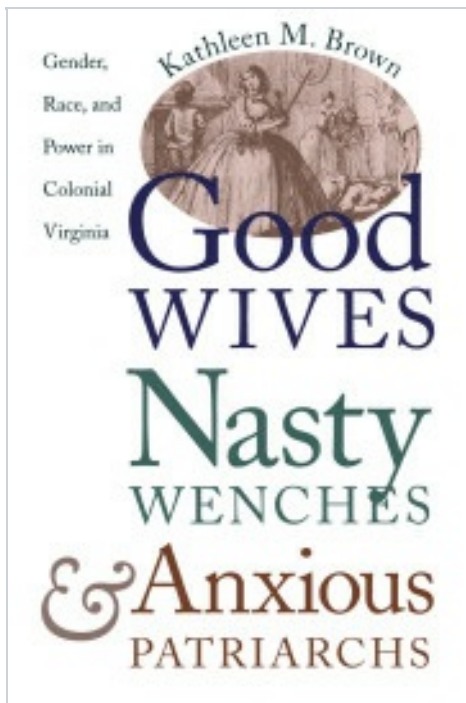


Good Wives, Nasty
Wenches, and Anxious
Patriarchs: Gender, Race,
and Power in Colonial
Virginia



In this Book





Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia

Kathleen M. Brown

2012

[Book](#)

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SUMMARY

Kathleen Brown examines the origins of racism and slavery in British North America from the perspective of gender. Both a basic social relationship and a model for other social hierarchies, gender helped determine the construction of racial categories and the institution of slavery in Virginia. But the rise of racial slavery also transformed gender relations, including ideals of masculinity. In response to the presence of Indians, the shortage of labor, and the insecurity of social rank, Virginia's colonial government tried to reinforce its authority by regulating the labor and sexuality of English servants and by making legal distinctions between English and African women. This practice, along with making slavery hereditary through the mother, contributed to the cultural shift whereby women of African descent assumed from lower-class English women both the burden of fieldwork and the stigma of moral corruption. Brown's



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