



# **In the Affairs of the World: Women, Patriarchy, and Power in Colonial South Carolina (Contributions to the Study of World History)**

*Cara Anzilotti*

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## **In the Affairs of the World: Women, Patriarchy, and Power in Colonial South Carolina (Contributions to the Study of World History) Cara Anzilotti**

This book examines how, quite by accident and under very unfortunate circumstances, Britain's colony of South Carolina afforded women an unprecedented opportunity for economic autonomy. Though the colony prospered financially, throughout the colonial period the death rate remained alarmingly high, keeping the white population small. This demographic disruption allowed white women a degree of independence unknown to their peers in most of England's other mainland colonies, for, as heirs of their male relatives, an unusually large proportion of women controlled substantial amounts of real estate. Their economic independence went unchallenged by their male peers because these women never envisioned themselves as anything more than deputies for their husbands, fathers, brothers, and friends.

As far as low country settlers were concerned, allowing women to assume the role of planter was necessary to the creation of a traditional, male-centered society in the colony. Fundamentally conservative, women in South Carolina worked to safeguard the patriarchal social order that the area's staggering mortality rate threatened to destroy. Critical to the perpetuation of English culture and patriarchal authority in South Carolina, female planters attended to the affairs of the world and helped to preserve English society in a wilderness setting.

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