

CAPTIVATING A NATION: WOMEN'S INDIAN CAPTIVITY AND AMERICAN
NATIONAL IDENTITY, 1787-1830

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ABSTRACT

Stories of Indian captivity had long interested Anglo-American readers.

Throughout the early republic, the genre of women's Indian captivity narratives took on another significance. "Captivating a Nation" places the scholarship of Indian captivity in conversation with American nationalism and reveals the ways in which Indian captivity narratives became the surface upon which Americans imagined their nation. "Captivating a Nation" is an examination of women's Indian captivity narratives published between 1787 and 1830. These narratives provided more than a continuous repository of settlers as victims in an untamed wilderness. They were narratives of nationhood in complex and contradictory ways. Indian captivity narratives were a popular genre among readers of the early American republic. Yet, less than half of those concerning male captives were published in multiple editions, while every narrative concerning a female captive was republished. Unlike the captivity narratives of men, those concerning women were republished and re-consumed because settler women taken captive to Americans of the early republic symbolized the tenuousness and vulnerability of the young nation. That is, they simultaneously gave voice to fears related to national stability as well as contained those fears with the redemption of the woman and her return to white society.

For Dan

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

During the first days of the American invasion of Iraq, Private Jessica Lynch of the U.S. Army was abducted by a group of Iraqis. After eight days in captivity, a team of American Special Forces rescued Lynch and filmed the event on a night-vision-camera, allowing for the government and media to quickly circulate her story. In addition to consistent coverage throughout national newspapers, her story was further popularized through film, including *Saving Private Lynch* (A&E), *Pfc. Jessica Lynch: An American Story* (ABC) and *Saving Jessica Lynch* (NBC). Consistently referred to as a "young blonde female soldier," Lynch became a familiar symbol of vulnerability employed as justification for American military action.¹ Jessica Lynch was not the first example of modern captivity. Working as American missionaries in Afghanistan, Dayna Curry and Heather Mercer were held in captivity by members of the Taliban. After their rescue their story gained wide circulation with the 2002 publication of *Prisoners of Hope: The Story of Our Captivity and Freedom in Afghanistan*.²

¹ Susan Schmidt, and Vernon Loeb. "She Was Fighting to the Death." *Washington Post* 3 Apr. 2003: A1

² Birgit Brander Rasmussen, "American Captivity Narratives from the Colonial Era to the Present: A New Timeline," in *Timelines of American Literature*, edited by Cody Marrs and Christopher Hager, (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2019), 280-310; Stacy Takacs, "Jessica Lynch and the Regeneration of American Identity Post 9/11," in *Why We Fought: America's Wars in Film and History*, edited by Peter C. Rollins (University of Kentucky Press, 2008), 488-510.

Notions of national security and identity have long been tied to notions of masculinity.³ In the midst of the War on Terror, the Bush administration employed gendered language to frame the actions of the American Special Forces in Iraq as redemption for the failed multilateral containment policy of the Clinton administration.⁴ The Bush administration described the United States as "helpless" and "dependent" and argued "that only violence" could redeem the damage of a weakened national image.⁵ Although Lynch later contested many of the highly sensationalized details of her experience, neither the Pentagon nor the White House publicly dispelled the more romanticized initial version of her capture. Indeed, the official narrative produced by the

³ For a late nineteenth/early twentieth-century example of such rhetoric see Gail Bederman's analysis of Theodore Roosevelt in Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 177-214.

⁴ "National Security Strategy Statement," 2002, <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nssall.html>>

⁵ Reuel Marc Gerech, "A Cowering Superpower," *Weekly Standard* 30 July 2001: 26–29; Carol Cohn, "Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals," in *Women on War: An International Anthology of Women's Writings from Antiquity to the Present*, Daniela Gioseffi, ed. (New York: Feminist Press at City University of New York, 2003), 56–68; Carol Cohn, "War, Wimps, and Women: Talking Gender and Thinking War," in *Gendering War Talk*. Ed. Miriam Cooke and Angela Woollacott, eds. (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1993), 227–46; Bradley S. Greenberg, ed. *Communication and Terrorism: Public and Media Responses to 9/11*, (Cresskill, N. J.: Hampton Press, 2002); Andrew Bacevich, *American Empire: The Realities and Consequences of U.S. Diplomacy*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002); John Howard and Laura Privera, "Rescuing Patriarchy or Saving 'Jessica Lynch': The Rhetorical Construction of the American Woman Soldier," *Women & Language* 27.2 (2004): 89–98.

U.S. government mapped perfected onto women's Indian captivity narratives of the early Republic.

The re-emergence of the captivity narrative in the context of the Iraq War is significant and demonstrates the how notions of gender, captivity and nation remain inextricably connected. The stories of Lynch, Curry, and Mercer abided by many of the conventions of the Indian captivity narrative, including emphasis on the frailty of white women, the imperial victim, as well as the construction of the "other." Whether the captors were Shawnee, Creek, or Iraqi, the image of a white woman rescued from captivity was the surface upon which the nation demonstrated masculine virtues of strength and bravery.

Indian captivity narratives have long intrigued American readers. According to Frank Mott's comprehensive study of American best-sellers, the narratives of Mary Rowlandson (1682) John Williams (1707) and Mary Jemison (1824) were the only narratives to earn such a distinction.⁶ Aside from a consistent popularity of Rowlandson and Williams' texts throughout the mid-eighteenth century, it was not for another century with the publication of Jemison's narrative in 1824 that a captivity narrative achieved best-seller status. While European settlers were interested in the captivity of men and

⁶ Frank Luther Mott, *Golden Multitude: The Story of the Best Sellers in the United States*, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1947), x, 7. The term best-seller first came into use in 1910 and referred to books which were well ahead of their contemporaries in sales figures. Specifically, in order for a book to qualify, its sales figures had to meet "one percent of the total population of the continental United States for the decade in which the book was published." Although books may have been sold abroad, American sales were the only figures considered in the total.

women, it seems as though those of the early national period were mostly interested in the captivity of women.

"Captivating a Nation" is an examination of women's Indian captivity narratives published between 1787 and 1830. My sources include English language texts published or republished between 1787 and 1830, purporting to be non-fiction, which centered on the experiences of an Anglo-American woman held captive by Indigenous people. These texts include personal narratives, newspaper accounts, depositions and biographies. Even though scholars have asserted that Anglo-Americans were not the only victims of captivity, the historical record is relatively silent on the captivity of Indigenous people by European societies.⁷ Thus, the genre of captivity narrative has perpetuated the stereotype of white settlers as victims of Indigenous violence. "Captivating a Nation" seeks to understand how the trope of settler victim, as articulated throughout women's captivity narratives, allowed Americans to imagine a nation.

Long before the arrival of Europeans, taking captives was a part of warfare among many Indigenous societies of North America.⁸ Captive taking, while it directly affected

⁷ June Namias, *White Captives: Gender and Ethnicity on the American Frontier*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 5.

⁸Several factors motivated Indians to take captives. Capture was often an outcome of war, and at times even a form of adoption. See, Alden Vaughan and Daniel Richter, "Crossing the Cultural Divide: Indians and New Englanders, 1605-1763," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, Vol. 90. (1980), pp. 23-99. For more on captives and adoption, see June Namias, *White Captives: Gender and Ethnicity on the American*

only a small portion of the population, loomed large in the American imagination as a cultural and political threat. Although both men and women have been the subjects of captivity narratives, women's accounts far outnumber men's. More importantly, men's narratives never reached the popularity of the women's texts.⁹ Thus, women's accounts were published and re-published, consumed and re-consumed because settler women taken captive seemed to Americans of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century to symbolize the tenuousness and vulnerability of the young nation.

Indian captivity narratives were highly mediated and formulaic texts.¹⁰ That is, while some editors inserted themselves more explicitly or more often than others, the role

Frontier, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993); Pauline Turner Strong, "Transforming Outsiders: Captivity, Adoption, and Slavery Reconsidered," in Philip J. Deloria and Neal Salisbury, eds., *Companion to American Indian History*, (Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), pp. 339-356; Colin G. Calloway, *Dawnland Encounters: Indians and Europeans in Northern New England* (Hanover, NH, 1991); James Brooks, *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); For more on Indian slave trade in the American Southeast and its relationship to British imperial growth see Alan Galloway, *The Indian Slave Trade: The Rise of the English Empire in the American South, 1670-1717*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).

⁹ Namias, Pg. 7. In New England alone 1,641 white captives were taken between 1675 and 1763. Alden T. Vaughan and Richard W. Clark, "Cups of Common Calamity: Puritan Captivity Narratives as Literature and History," in Alden T. Vaughan and Richard W. Clark, ed, *Puritans among the Indians: Accounts of Captivity and Redemption, 1676-1724*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 3. Teresea A. Toulouse, *The Captive's Position: Female Narrative, Male Identity, and Royal Authority in Colonial New England*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 1-2, 171.

¹⁰ Many scholars have argued that the "Indian captivity narrative was the first American literary form dominated by women's experiences" with some of the more well-known narratives being reprinted in several editions. See, David T. Haberly, "Women Indians: *The Last of the Mohicans* and the Captivity Tradition," *American Quarterly*, Vol. 28, No 4 (Autumn 1976), 431-444; Phillips D. Carleton, "The Indian Captivity," *American*

of editor was never absent in the communication of a captive's story and therefore, cannot be ignored when analyzing these sources. Second, the conformity to a set sequence of literary conventions as well as the replication of language among various captivity narratives also provokes skepticism. However, rather than circling around this seemingly unanswerable question of veracity, a more productive line of inquiry seeks to understand why women's captivity narratives remained popular and how we can use them to understand ideas related to American nationalism.

Even though women's captivity narratives were more likely to be republished than men's captivity narratives, the scholarship which has focused on the role of captivity in American history has over-privileged sources in which men were the subject. For instance, the work of Richard Slotkin includes little examination of women's Indian captivity narratives in his broader analysis of violence and mythmaking in American identity. Rather, Slotkin focused much of his analysis on texts concerning Daniel Boone, often referred to as "the patriarch of Backwoods Pioneers." Yet, as historian Timothy Shannon contends, Boone's experience as documented by John Filson in the 1784

Literature, 15 (1943-1944), 170; Kathryn Zabelle Derounian-Stodola, ed, *Women's Indian Captivity Narratives*. (New York: Penguin Books, 1998); Evelyn Keitel, "Captivity Narratives and the Powers of Horror: Eunice Williams and Mary Jemison, Captives Unredeemed," *1650-1850: Ideas, Aesthetics, and Inquiries in the Early Modern Era*, Vol. 5 (New York: AMS Press, 2000); Lisa Voigt, *Writing Captivity in the Early Modern Atlantic: Circulations of Knowledge and Authority in the Iberian and English Imperial World*, (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2009) For more on the ways in which male editors standardized models of femaleness in women's captivity narratives, see Lorraine Carroll, *Rhetorical Drag: Gender Impersonation, Captivity and the Writing of History*. (Kent: Kent State University Press, 2007).

appendix of *The Discovery Settlement and Present State of Kentucky*, should not be considered among the genre of Indian captivity narratives.¹¹ In fact, the title of Boone's story "The Adventures of Col. Daniel Boon, One of the First Settlers Comprehending Every Important Occurrence in the Political History of that Province," stands in stark contrast to the titles of almost every women's Indian captivity narrative. Yet, Boone remained a staple in the genre, as he was once again memorialized in 1833 with Timothy Flint's two hundred-fifty two pages of *The Biographical Memoir of Daniel Boone, the First Settler of Kentucky*.¹² While many of the tropes found in women's Indian captivity narratives were largely absent from Boone's, one strong similarity existed. Flint's publication of Boone's story reflected the rigid racialization of Indigenous peoples, which was consistent with other publications of the nineteenth century.

Many feminist theorists have argued that "the nation" is premised on an inside/outside dichotomy that places women, hearth, and home at the center or foundation and, at the same time, on the periphery of the civil state. Thus, the analytical tool of gender and the theoretical framework of Joan Wallach Scott has been indispensable to

¹¹ John Filson, *The Discovery Settlement and Present State of Kentucke: And an Essay Toward the Topography and Natural History of that Important Country* (Wilmington, Delaware: Printed by James Adams, 1784); Timothy J. Shannon, *Indian Captive, Indian King: Peter Williamson in America and Britain*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018).

¹² Timothy Flint, *The Biographical Memoir of Daniel Boone, the First Settler of Kentucky; Interspersed with Incidents in the Early Annals of the Country*, (Ohio: N. and G. Guilford and Co, 1833 reprint 1845 by George Conclin).

this project.¹³ Recent scholarship continues to expand on Scott's work with an inquiry into the ways in which the image of white women played a role as authorizing figures of American identity. Specifically, scholars such as Carol Smith-Rosenberg have used the eighteenth-century novels of Charles Brockden Brown and Susanna Rowson to understand the ways in which Americans invented themselves as national subjects.¹⁴

¹³ Joan Wallach Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *American Historical Review*, 91 (December 1986), 1054-1073; Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988) Using poststructuralist and psychoanalytical theories, Joan Scott defined gender as "a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes." Drawing Scott's groundbreaking work in 1986, scholars have continued to ask new questions in areas such as war, diplomacy, and politics. These actions can be more fully understood through the lens of gender.

¹⁴ For an analysis of the new wave of women's history in the 1970s see Gerda Lerner, "Placing Women in History: Definitions and Challenges," in *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 1/2 (Autumn, 1975), 5. For more on women and gender in the colonial and early republic see Linda K. Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect & Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1980), 229. For an analysis of the intellectual antecedents of republican motherhood see Mary Beth Norton, *Liberty's Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800* (Boston, 1980); Mary Beth Norton, "The Evolution of White Women's Experience in Early America," *American Historical Review* 89 (June 1984): 93-619; Jan Lewis, "The Republican Wife: Virtue and Seduction in the Early Republic," *The William & Mary Quarterly* 44 (Oct. 1987): 689-721; Ruth H. Bloch, "American Feminine Ideals in Transition: The Rise of the Moral Mother, 1785-1815," *Feminist Studies* 4 (June 1978): 101-26; Bloch, "The Gendered Meanings of Virtue in Revolutionary America," *Signs* 13 (Autumn 1987): 37-58. Rosemarie Zagarri builds on this analysis in her article, "Morals, Manners, and the Republican Mother," *American Quarterly*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Vol. 44, No. 2 (Jun., 1992), pp. 192-215. For an analysis of the Revolutionary War's impact on women see Linda Kerber. *No Constitutional Right to be Ladies: Women and the Obligations of Citizenship*. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998); Susan Klepp. *Revolutionary Conceptions: Women, Fertility, and Family Limitation in America, 1760-1820*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009); Rosemarie Zagarri. *Revolutionary Backlash: Women and Politics in the Early American Republic*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

This dissertation complements this argument through an analysis of women's Indian captivity narratives published throughout the early Republic. The narratives analyzed throughout this project inscribed the complexities and ambiguities, which were central to the construction of this national identity.

Much of the scholarship concerning Anglo-American captivity narratives has stressed the ways in which the genre has used "oppositional typification" in order to bolster notions of "civilized" identities in a "savage" environment. This approach is akin to Edward Said's contention that the representation of "the Other" is an integral element in the construction of identities.¹⁵ Within this framework, scholars have approached

Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "Subject Female: Authorizing American Identity," in *American Literary History*, Vol. 5, No. 3 Eighteenth Century American Cultural Studies (Autumn 1993), pp. 481-511.

¹⁵ Edward Said. *Culture and Imperialism and Orientalism* (1978). Scholars have often viewed the development of American identity through comparison. Jack P. Greene, *Pursuits of Happiness: The Social Development of Early British Colonies and the Formation of American Culture* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1988); Greene, *The Intellectual Construction of American Exceptionalism and Identity from 1491-1800* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1993). Greene offers an intellectual history of American identity and therefore indigenous people as well as captives play minimal role in his argument.

For scholarship that often uses Greene as a point of departure see, Robert Olwell and Alan Tully, eds., *Cultures and Identities in Colonial British America*, (Baltimore, MD, 2006); Joyce Chaplin. *Subject Matter: Technology, the Body, and Science on the Anglo-American Frontier, 1500-1676*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001); Kariann Yokota, *Unbecoming British: How Revolutionary America Became a Postcolonial Nation*, (New York: Oxford University, 2011); James Axtell, "Imagining the Other: First Encounters in North America," *Beyond 1492: Encounters in Colonial North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Eve Kornfield, "Encountering the Other: American Intellectuals and Indians in the 1790s," *William and Mary Quarterly* 3d. ser., 52 (April 1995): 287-314; Philip J. Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1998).

captivity narratives from a cultural, ethno-historical, or gendered perspective. Beginning with Roy Harvey Pearce and Richard Slotkin, these scholars argued that Indian captivity narratives perpetuated a mythology of violence including American views of the "savage."¹⁶ For these scholars, captivity narratives offer important insights into "Euro-American character and society." Mid-twentieth century anthropologists, such as William N. Fenton, suggested the utility of captivity narratives in an effort to understand "Indian-white relations."¹⁷ Building on Fenton's suggestion, James Axtell wrote some of the earliest studies on white captives and adoptees from an ethno-historical perspective.¹⁸

Landmark studies of Roy Harvey Pearce and Richard Slotkin may have established the foundation of this historiography, but recent scholarship has used their work as a point of departure. For instance, Laurel Thatcher Ulrich used captivity narratives in her analysis of women's roles in seventeenth-century New England. According to Ulrich, captivity allowed women to assume the role of heroine as those

¹⁶ Roy Harvey Pearce, "The Significance of the Captivity Narrative," *American Literature*, XIX (1947), 1-2-; Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860* (Middletown, Conn., 1973).

¹⁷ William N. Fenton, *American Indian and White Relations to 1830: Needs and Opportunities for Study* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1957), 3-27.

¹⁸ According to Axtell, in colonial New England, the experience of Indian captivity was primarily an experience of women and children, making the roles of women a basic feature of captivity narratives. See James Axtell, "The White Indians of Colonial America," *William and Mary Quarterly*, XXXII (January 1975), 58-59; James Axtell, *The European and the Indian: Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 172-175. See also, Alden T. Vaughan and Daniel K. Richter, "Crossing the Cultural Divide: Indians and New Englanders, 1605-1763," *AAS* 90 (Apr. 16, 1980): 23-99.

described in the narratives were often “an innocent Christian seized by rude savages and subjected to capricious taunts and torments mitigated only by Providential intervention.”

¹⁹ For Ulrich, some women “interpreted their captivity much as the ministers did, as a spiritual quest for courage, while others accepted it as both an opportunity and a trial.”²⁰

Building on the work of Ulrich, scholars such as June Namias, Pauline Strong and Teresea A. Toulouse, have demonstrated the ways in which captivity narratives were a reflection of Euro-American “notions of gender, sexuality and society.” According to these scholars, “white captives were centerpieces in history and literature from the earliest days of European and Native American contact.”²¹ Although these perspectives

¹⁹ Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England*. (New York: Oxford University, 1980, 202-203.

²⁰ Ulrich, 213.

²¹ June Namias, *White Captives: Gender and Ethnicity on the American Frontier* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1995); Pauline Strong, *Captive Selves, Captivating Others: The Politics and Poetics of Colonial American Captivity Narratives*. (Boulder, Colorado, Westview Press, 1999); Teresea A. Toulouse, *The Captive's Position: Female Narrative, Male Identity, and Royal Authority in Colonial New England*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007). See also Alden T. Vaughan and Richard W. Clark, “Cups of Common Calamity: Puritan Captivity Narratives as Literature and History,” in Alden T. Vaughan and Richard W. Clark, ed, *Puritans among the Indians: Accounts of Captivity and Redemption, 1676-1724*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981); Gary L. Ebersole, *Captured by Texts: Puritans to Postmodern Images of Indian Captivity* (Charlottesville, Va., 1995); Jill Lepore, *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origin of American Identity*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998). Lepore argues that we cannot only trace the origins of “American identity” in Puritanism, but more broadly in colonial history.

have produced rich scholarship, their conclusions are heavily drawn from seventeenth and eighteenth century sources, which perpetuates an imbalance indicative of the scholarship of Perry Miller. Miller analyzed seventeenth-century captivity narratives of Puritan women in order to understand the formation of “the self-conscious and self-described American individual.” For Miller, these sources “helped to promote an American discourse” regarding identity.²² Relying too heavily on narratives such as those of Mary Rowlandson or Hannah Duston, has limited the scope of scholarly questions.

"Captivating a Nations" seeks to address this imbalance within the scholarship of Indian captivity. Rather than emphasizing sources drawn from Puritan New England, my source base includes all women's Indian captivity narratives published between 1787 and

²² See Perry Miller, *The New England Mind From Colony to Province*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953); Perry Miller, *The Life and Mind in America From the Revolution to the Civil War*, (New York: Harcourt Press, 1965). For works in support of Miller's conclusions regarding the influence of Puritans on American thought, see Sacvan Bercovitch, *The Puritan Origins of the American Self* (New Haven, Conn., 1975) with a new preface from Bercovitch see the 2011 reissue published by Yale University Press; Bercovitch, *The American Jeremiad* (Madison, Wis., 1978). However, scholars, such as Eliga Gould and Joyce Chaplin, have done much to highlight the limitations of Miller's arguments. For these scholars, Puritan New England cannot serve as a microcosm of early America, nor as a prototype for American national identity. For more on the limitations of Miller's argument see Eliga Gould, "Entangled Atlantic Histories: A Response from the Anglo-American Periphery" in *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 112, No. 5 (December 2007), pp. 1415-1422; Joyce E. Chaplin, "Expansion and Exceptionalism in Early American History," *Journal of American History* 89, no. 4 (2003): 1431-1451. Andrew Delbanco, *The Puritan Ordeal* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989); Jack P. Greene, *Pursuits of Happiness: The Social Development of Early Modern British Colonies and the Formation of American Culture* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1988).

1830. Scholars of the early American republic have largely omitted the study of these sources in connection with broader questions of nation. Rather, most examinations of women's Indian captivity narratives are relegated to the pre-Revolutionary period. Examining the genre from 1787-1830 encourages scholars to abandon the tendency to focus on the narratives from Puritan New England, and also reveals the contradictory and complex ways in which Americans imagined their nation.

Although questions related to nationalism and national identity have been largely ignored by those who study women's Indian captivity narratives, one notable exception comes from the work of British historian Linda Colley.²³ Colley calls for a contextual analysis of captivity narratives not just to understand individuals under stress, but also to understand “changing power relations over time.”²⁴ Colley places American captivity narratives in a larger British imperial frame, arguing that in re-telling their stories captives re-examined definitions of race and nationality and “impacted richly on British culture at home.”²⁵ Through consumption of these captivity narratives, the British were able to frame themselves, the conquerors, as victims in an imperial competition. Thus, Colley argues, captivity narratives facilitated an imperial identity, rather than a national identity.

²³ Linda Colley, *Captives: Britain, Empire, and the World, 1600-1850*, (New York: Random House, 2002), 3.

²⁴ Colley, 93, 98.

²⁵ Colley, 16, 75.

Scholars such as Strong and Toulouse, point to ideas of gender and cultural distinctions as the primary framework of the captivity genre, but such interpretations omit other defining elements of the genre throughout the early Republic. The captivity genre of the early republic continued to reflect cultural constructions of gender and race, but the genre also allowed Americans to grapple with ideas of nation building. Indeed, even those narratives published in the 1790s which detailed events from the Seven Years War framed the accounts as part of an origin story for the nation. The question of how notions of gender and captivity became so inextricably connected with national imagination is an important one.

A foundational principle of this dissertation is an understanding of nationalism. Contemporary scholarship proceeds from the understanding that nations are constructed around ideological systems of difference. According to Benedict Anderson, the process of imagining new nations was one of “awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it *invents* nations where they do not exist.” Nationalism “was less experienced than imagined . . . through visual symbols such as flags, maps, statuary, micro-cosmic ceremonies.”²⁶ Nations are not organic but constructed. They are imagined because the

²⁶ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. (1983), 6, 319. See also, C.J. Hayes, *Essays on Nationalism*, (New York: Macmillan, 1966); John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1982); Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983).

Some theorists argue, "a nation only reproduces itself as a nation to the extent that, through a network of apparatuses and daily practices, the individual is instituted as

“members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.” Like Anderson, “Captivating a Nation” contends that the printed word was central to the construction of national identity.²⁷

Historians have offered many ways to understand the emergence of national identity in the United States, yet they have done so without considering women's Indian captivity narratives. In most cases this literature, beginning with Bernard Bailyn and Gordon Wood, over-privileges institutions along with their supporting discourses as the most salient forms of historical analysis.²⁸ Even scholars such as John Murrin, who

homo nationalis.”²⁶ Balibar, Etienne. “The Nation Form: History and Ideology.” Trans. Immanuel Wallerstein and Chris Turner. Review, Fernand Braudel Center for the Study of Economies, Historical Systems, and Civilizations 13 (1990): 345.

²⁷ Anderson, 15-16. Drawing from this broad understanding of the nation, national identity should also be understood as a construct, which depends on the continuous process of defining itself against a host of “others.” Peter Sahlins, quoted in Lloyd Kramer, “Historical Narratives and the Meaning of Nationalism,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 58, no. 3 (1997): 526.

For more on the nation as a cultural artifact, see Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny, “Introduction: From the Moment of Social History to the Work of Cultural Representation,” in Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny, eds., *Becoming National*, (New York: Oxford University Press), 3-38. This project relies on the analysis of Homi K. Bhabha, ed., *Nation and Narration* (New York: Routledge, 1990) and Dror Wahrman, *The Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004).

²⁸ While other scholars predate the work of Bailyn and Wood, here I am referring to a historiography which begins in the mid-twentieth century. See, Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press,

argued that “American national identity was an unexpected and extremely fragile creation of the Revolution,” nevertheless cited the Constitution as a link for the diverse states of the newly formed nation.²⁹ In contrast to historians who have located the foundation of the American nation with the Declaration of Independence, scholars such as Eliga Gould argued that “far more than liberalism and republicanism, the revolutionaries’ emphasis on peace through treaty-worthiness explains why Americans ultimately opted for a national union” over a confederation of states.³⁰ Yet, such analysis based on politics as governance and law highlights American’s confidence in their political experiment and fulfillment of Enlightenment goals.³¹ Over the past few decades, the understanding of the emergence of American national identity has moved farther and farther away from a strict political and ideological source. David Waldstreicher, working in the tradition of Benedict Anderson, has argued that nationalism was not the creation of an innate concept, but rather was forged from the public celebrations of the late eighteenth and

1967); Gordon S. Wood, *Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1969).

²⁹ John M. Murrin, “A Roof Without Walls: The Constitution and the Dilemma of American National Identity,” *Beyond Confederation: Origins of the Constitution and American National Identity*, edited by Richard Beeman et al. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 333-348, quotation on page 339.

³⁰ Eliga H. Gould, *Among the Powers of the Earth: The American Revolution and the Making of a New World*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2012), 1,2, 10-11.

³¹ Kariann Yokota, “Postcolonialism and Material Culture in the Early United States,” in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, Vol. 64, No. 2 (Apr., 2007), pp. 263-270.

early nineteenth centuries.³² Recent scholarship contends that the construction of national identity can be located in rituals, festivals, and print culture.³³ An inclusion of women's Indian captivity narratives would allow scholars of print culture to understand more fully the contradictory ways in which national identity emerged.

"Captivating a Nation" draws on the scholarship of Indian captivity as well as gender and puts it in conversation with the historians of nationalism and national identity. Analyzing women's Indian captivity narratives is foundational for understanding the emergence of American national identity because it encourages scholars to focus on the vulnerability of the nation rather than its inevitability. The project of American national identity was problematic. How were the citizens of the newly formed United States going to distinguish themselves as something more than Europeans living in America? How were they going to erase the well established European iconography of the "Indian woman" as representative of America? Americans accomplished this by identifying the

³² David Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making of American Nationalism, 1776-1820*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997.

³³ For more on the popular expression of national identity, see Simon P. Newman, *Parades and the Politics of the Street: Festive Culture in the Early American Republic* (Philadelphia, 1997); David Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making of American Nationalism, 1776-1820* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997); Joanne B. Freeman, *Affairs of Honor: National Politics in the New Republic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001); Peter Charles Hoffer, *Sensory Worlds in Early America* (Baltimore: , 2003); Jeffrey L. Pasley, Andrew W. Robertson, and David Waldstreicher, eds., *Beyond the Founders: New Approaches to the Political History of the Early American Republic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); Carol Smith Rosenberg, *This Violent Empire: The Birth of an American National Identity*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

original inhabitants of North America as "Indians," as well as by representing these "Indians" as "inhuman savages." In doing so, they began a long process in which the "burgeoning commercial press produced, reproduced and brought into dialogic interaction a host of diverse, often ideologically antithetical discourses."³⁴ Because the project of American national identity was inherently contradictory and unstable, a "host of negative others worked to solidify the new American subject." Women's Indian captivity narratives were one mechanism through which these others were constructed while simultaneously attempting to offer a coherent American national identity.

"Captivating a Nation" takes an interdisciplinary approach to understanding the past. Several aspects of my approach resonate with postcolonial theory: interrogating binary oppositions between Euro-Americans and Indigenous peoples, reading captivity narratives as texts of contradiction and ambiguities, and interpreting the discursive relationship between white settler and Indigenous peoples as interdependent, albeit asymmetrical.³⁵ Reader response theory provides some framework by which texts can be deciphered "using a set of generic, stylistic, thematic, cultural, ideological and literary expectations that readers bring to texts and that authors play with and in around in the

³⁴ Smith-Rosenberg, "Subject Female: Authorizing American Identity," 484. See also Mikhail Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), especially pages 259-422.

³⁵ See Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper, eds, *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley, Calif., 1997)1-56; Karen Ordahl Kepperman, ed., *America in European Consciousness, 1493-1750* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1995), especially pages 391-408; Lisa Voigt, *Writing Captivity in the Early Modern Atlantic: Circulations of Knowledge and Authority in the Iberian and English Imperial Worlds*, (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2009), 30-32.

creation of texts."³⁶ Yet, unlike the history of the book or novel in America, capturing the reader of captivity narratives is much more complex. Captivity narratives were published in a variety of formats, pamphlets, anthologies, newspapers, almanacs, as well as school primers for children. Therefore, without subscription lists, I am unable to quantify the reader of captivity narratives. This does not preclude me from making some claims about the use and appeal of women's captivity narratives. The ubiquitous nature of captivity narratives seems to indicate that cost would not have been a prohibitive factor as it may have been with other published works. In an effort to determine the appeal of a particular narrative, I consider its publication history, including when and where it was originally published, as well as how many editions were issued. I also trace the format in which captivity narratives appeared to the American reader. For instance, some narratives, such as Jemima Howe's appeared in a variety of formats and ultimately reached innumerable readers as it was included in works by two of the most influential educators of the early Republic, Noah Webster and Caleb Bingham.³⁷ Such assessment, although inconclusive, give us glimpses of how captivity narratives were read in the early Republic.

³⁶ Cathy N. Davidson, *Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in North America*, (New York: Oxford University, 1986), 4.

³⁷ Noah Webster, *An American Selection of Lessons in Reading and Speaking; Calculated to Improve the Minds and Refine the Tastes of Youth; To Which are Prefixed Rules of Elocution and Directions for Expressing the Principal Passions of the Mind* (Philadelphia: Published by David Hogan, 1809); Caleb Bingham, *The America Preceptor: Being a Selection of Lessons for Reading and Speaking, Designed for the Use of Schools*, (Boston: Maning and Loring for Hall, 1794)

While "Captivating a Nation" does not make a historiographical intervention in the New Indian history, it nevertheless draws upon such scholarship. Over a century ago, the historian Frederick Jackson Turner located the source of American identity in settlers' encounter with the wilderness and their transformation of that wilderness into civilization. "The existence of an area of free land, its continuous recession, and the advance of American settlement westward, explain American development," Turner wrote.³⁸ James Merrell, Daniel K. Richter and Philip Deloria, among others have long ago corrected the Turnerian approach of early American history.³⁹ Rather than remaining in the background, these scholars have argued that Indigenous peoples were central to the meta narrative of American history.

³⁸ Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1893* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1894), 199-227. According to Turner, "The existence of an area of free land, its continuous recession, and the advance of American settlement westward explain American development." In settling these frontiers, migrants created a distinctive American outlook.

³⁹ James Merrell, "The Indians New World: The Catawba Experience," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 41 (October 1984), 564; James Merrell, "Some Thoughts on Colonial Historians and American Indians," *William and Mary Quarterly*. (1989), 94-99; Daniel K. Richter, *The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1992); Daniel K. Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001); Philip Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places*, (Lawrence, Kan.: University Press of Kansas, 2004). See also Neal Salisbury, "The Indians' Old World: Native Americans and the coming of Europeans," *William and Mary Quarterly* (1996), 449-453; William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists and the Ecology of New England* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983);

The wide circulation of captivity stories throughout the early republic forces scholars to consider regionally contested borders in a wider context. Part of the aim of "Captivating a Nation" is to encourage further connections between the scholarship of the captivity genre and nation building. Those who wrote of captivity offer historians an opportunity to understand not only the challenges of organizing western settlement, but also how early Americans constructed an understanding of their nation. Because this project is focused on a process of articulation, my main concern was to address the genre of women's Indian captivity across a broad time period. In each of the chapters, certain narratives are highlighted in more detail to demonstrate the ways in which certain political events influenced the discourse used within the genre. My methodology assumes that the ideas and practice of the discourse any discourse will be multiple, inconsistent and at times contradictory.⁴⁰ Therefore, rather than reconcile the inconsistencies, my methodology interrogates the different ways in which ideas of nation were constructed throughout the early republic.

Chapter one covers the era before the War of 1812 with an analysis of women's Indian captivity narratives published between 1787 and 1811. It reveals that women's Indian captivity narratives were more than formulaic expressions of binary differences between white settlers and Indigenous peoples. Rather, editors of these narratives

⁴⁰ This methodology builds on traditional intellectual history and stems largely from Michel Foucault. See Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings*, trans. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon, 1972). For examples of other scholarly uses of this methodology see Thomas Lacquer, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990); Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

emphasized Indigenous attacks on the homes of white settlers in order to share the outrages over the loss of life and property the federal government inadequately guaranteed. In doing so, home became a metaphor for nation. Through the trope of settler victimization, readers were able to identify with the protagonist, her home and family. Consistent descriptions of Indians “plundering the house of all its valuables,” before they took “unfortunate women” as captives, encouraged American readers to perceive grievances against an individual, including both the loss of life and property, as grievances against the nation. Narratives of women’s survival of their ordeals were implicit testimonies to the ability of the nation itself to survive, while their graphic accounts of suffering justified further expansion into native territory. These captivity narratives thus functioned as narratives of nationhood in complex and contradictory ways.

Chapter two continues with an examination of two popular narratives of the 1790s. This chapter focuses primarily on the captivity narratives of Jemima Howe (1792) and Susannah Johnson (1796) because they reflect an interesting development in the publication of captivity narratives. Although both women were taken captive from New Hampshire during the 1750s, their narratives were not published until the 1790s. To Americans in the 1790s, the Seven Years War had become a leading symbol in the creation of an American history, and Howe and Johnson lived long enough to be thought of as some of the last members of this generation. Because both narratives were written and published well after the events occurred, they became part of a collective memory, a national past. Their experiences were intimate accounts of a national discourse in which

knowledge of the outcome, that is, English victory and the virtual elimination of French territory in North America at the conclusion of war in 1763, frames the entire story. Yet, the narratives did not emphasize the English victory, but rather recast the story as part of the U.S. past. The narratives of Howe and Johnson served a broader purpose in constructing an American mythology. Memories of captivity during the Seven Years war played an important role in creating a collective sense of national viability, as Jemima Howe's narrative was included consistently in Caleb Bingham's *American Preceptor* as well as Noah Webster's *An American Selection of Lessons in Reading and Speaking*. Bingham and Webster were prominent educators in the early Republic, who advocated for a uniform curriculum in public schools. Their primers, which were designed to instill knowledge as well as the "ideals of republican duty and patriotism," consistently included the captivity of Jemima Howe.⁴¹ Both of these works were bestsellers in the early Republic.⁴²

I connect the captivity narratives of two women, Mary Smith and Eunice Barber, both published in 1818, with other printed materials, including newspapers, as well as Congressional debates in chapter 3. Such analysis reveals that by 1818 editors of some captivity narratives were not only influencing readers to view individual captivity experiences as grievances against a nation, but also to bind the redemption of these captives with American military action. The captivity narratives of Smith and Barber not only mobilized the image of white women to justify further dispossession of Indigenous

⁴¹ Davidson, 63-65.

⁴² Davidson, 66.

peoples, but also bolstered the image of a burgeoning national figure, Andrew Jackson. Thus, through women's captivity defense of the nation became closely intertwined with defense of normative gender identities, which also rendered them natural and innate. These narratives provided legitimacy to the nation through the normative gendered constructions of masculinity and femininity. By crediting national leaders, such as Andrew Jackson for the redemption of Smith and Barber, captivity narratives reflected the prominence of military nationalism in the era following the War of 1812. As the young nation struggled to establish its sovereignty in European, especially British, eyes, the editors of these narratives used the rhetoric of female vulnerability and militarist sentiment to bolster the ideological project of national identity. That is, women's captivity narratives encouraged the diverse citizens of the young country to accept the role of its military in protecting and securing the boundaries of an expanding nation. In this way, the nation was embodied in Jackson, as well as in the female captives he was credited with redeeming.

The final chapter sketches the ways in which Indian captivity expanded its impact on American culture as it became a central focus of popular literary publications between 1823 and 1827, including James Fenimore Cooper's well-known novel *The Last of the Mohicans* and Catharine Maria Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie; or Early Times in the Massachusetts*. Yet, the popularity of both of these works was eclipsed by an Indian captivity narrative, *Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison*. Examination of these texts in conversation with one another not only reveals how Americans' interest in an origin story was inextricably connected with ideas of Indian captivity, but also the ways

in which this origin story became increasingly racialized. The captivity drama was designed to accentuate difference, and while racialized stereotypes may have been implicit throughout the genre, by the 1820s such difference was more likely to be codified into racial classification supported by science. In many ways the removal policies of the 1830s were a manifestation of the ideas presented in the literary works of Cooper and Sedgwick as well as the narrative of Jemison. That is, Americans increasingly relegated Indigenous peoples to the periphery, whether that be in the form of print culture or legislation. Americans were consistently imagining and creating a nation less likely to include non-white citizens.

Captivity narratives offer a window into discussions of national identity, which emerged out of virulent political struggle. Women's captivity narratives reveal to us exactly what was at stake in the early decades of the young nation, the vulnerability of its borders, populated by "innocent citizens of the frontier." In doing so, they transformed a confederation of states into a nation. Female captives, their editors, and the American readers were all participants in the construction of this identity, which was contradictory, contested and always in process. "Captivating a Nation" explores the role of women's captivity in the production of American national identity in the early republic. The pervasiveness of women's captivity demonstrated that gender, captivity, and nation were inextricably entangled.

CHAPTER 2
A CONTIGUOUS SET OF INDIVIDUAL HOUSEHOLDS: DEFINING THE
OBLIGATIONS OF THE NATION, 1787-1811

Throughout the 1780s and 1790s, the Ohio River valley was a contested space. In November 1790, a coalition of Shawnee, Delaware, and Miami soundly defeated an American expedition led by General Josiah Harmar. In the following months, the Indians' success in present-day Fort Wayne, Indiana, coupled with their anticipation of British military support, encouraged them to more attacks on white settlements.⁴³ The Kinnan family of Randolph County, Virginia, experienced such an attack on their home. According to Mary Kinnan's narrative, on May 13, 1791, three "armed Indians" burst through their door with a "flash of a musket." The chaos continued as Indians "plundered the house of the most valuable articles" while at the same time Kinnan's children and husband laid "scalped and weltering in blood." After they "set the house ablaze," Kinnan "was forced to go" with her captors.⁴⁴

Kinnan's graphic account, published as *A True Narrative of the Sufferings of Mary Kinnan* in 1795, was just one of the countless sensational scenes of Indian captivity

⁴³ Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860*, (Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1973), 220.

⁴⁴ Shepard Kollock, *A True Narrative of the Sufferings of Mary Kinnan*, (Elizabethtown, NJ: Shepard Kollock, 1795), in Kathryn Zabelle Derounian-Stodola, ed., *Women's Indian Captivity Narratives*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1998), 110. "Plundering" settlements was not unique. In fact, in seventeenth century Virginia, Nathaniel Bacon ordered that all "plunder" taken from his well-known raid on Pamunkeys be distributed according to the dictates of the commanders. Kathleen Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996) 108-136.

that filled the pages of late eighteenth-and early nineteenth-century publications. For contemporary readers, these descriptions created a powerful impression of the vulnerability of backcountry settlers in the early republic. The historian Peter Silver identified a similar discourse emerging from the Seven Years' War. According to Silver, stories about the indiscriminate killing and mutilation of white settlers constituted a literary sub-genre, the "anti-Indian sublime." Frontier inhabitants manipulated these stories for political purposes and in the process forged a community of suffering in which members "increasingly identified themselves as white."⁴⁵

Yet captivity narratives in the early republic went beyond what Silver identified as the anti-Indian sublime. In a larger sense, they were narratives of nationhood. Editors of women's Indian captivity narratives published throughout the early republic fashioned such narratives of nationhood by integrating the anti-Indian sublime with other prevailing concerns of white settlers. These narratives, which were some of the most popular publications in the early republic, emerged in the context of two countervailing forces: settlers' pressure upon the federal government to guarantee their security as they asserted their right to both land and their own personal property, beyond the bounds of the prior colonial state; and Indigenous attempts to check that expansion.

Why did the backcountry matter so much to Americans in the early republic that they consumed women's captivity narratives so avidly? After all, the region was populated by only a relative handful of Americans. Yet late eighteenth- and early

⁴⁵ Peter Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors: How Indian War Transformed America* (New York: Norton, 2008), 83–85.

nineteenth-century Americans saw the West as a place where a sense of American nationhood might be realized. Not long after independence, the delegates to the Continental Congress emphasized that western expansion would provide the states with a common cause that outweighed their regional differences. Beginning in 1783, three of the original thirteen states, Virginia, Georgia, and North Carolina, ceded their western land to the national government.⁴⁶ Indeed, by June of 1783, George Washington had proclaimed Americans “the lords and proprietors of a vast tract of continent.”⁴⁷ Washington’s statement reflected the common desire among contemporary Americans regarding the inevitability of continental domination. According to historian Peter S. Onuf, the “ordinances of 1784-1787,” attempted to “create a legal and political framework

⁴⁶ Paul H. Smith et al., eds., *Letters of Delegates to Congress, 1774-1789*, 26 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1976-2000), 1:25; James D. Drake, “Appropriating a Continent: Geographical Categories, Scientific Metaphors, and the Construction of Nationalism in British North America and Mexico” *Journal of World History*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (Sep., 2004), 323; Drake analyzes the relationship between the work of geographers and contemporary political theories. He argues that trends in science allowed Americans to see themselves as part of a natural geographic entity, which shaped their political destiny. For more on continental thinking and its implications, see Martin W. Lewis and Karen Wigen, *The Myth of Continents: A Critique of Metageography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997). pp. 323-357

⁴⁷ George Washington, “A circular Letter from his Excellency General Washington, Commander in chief of the Armies of the United States of America, addressed to the This Governors of the several States, on resigning his Command, and retiring from public Business, June 18, 1783,” *American Museum* 1 (May 1787): 388. One can conclude that the publication of this letter in a periodical suggests wide readership. Thomas Paine also provided support for this collective identity as a continent in his argument for independence. Specifically, Paine argued that it was “absurd to think a continent to be perpetually governed by an island.” Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*, ed. Isaac Kramnick (1776; reprint, New York: Penguin Books, 1976), 91

conducive to both regional and national economic development.”⁴⁸ Specifically, the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 stated that the federal government would hold state-ceded lands until a population of 60,000 was achieved at which time a territory could apply for recognition as a state with representation in Congress.⁴⁹ Federal sale of these lands would eliminate debt as well as also provide systematic white settlement of the West. Thus, land became the vehicle through which America’s federal structure, including national as well as state government, maintained the promises of a republican government.⁵⁰ The

⁴⁸ The literature on the political significance of land in the early republic is vast. See Peter S. Onuf, *Origins of the Federal Republic: Jurisdictional Controversies in the United States, 1775-1787* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983), 170, 181; Andrew R. L. Cayton, *The Frontier Republic: Ideology and Politics in the Ohio Country, 1780-1825* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1986), 12-32; Peter S. Onuf, *Statehood and Union: A History of the Northwest Ordinance* (Bloomington: Indiana University press, 1987), 43; Alan Taylor, “Land and Liberty on the Post-Revolutionary Frontier,” in *Devising Liberty: Preserving and Creating Freedom in the New American Republic*, ed. David Thomas Konig (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995): 81-108; Patrick Griffin, *American Leviathan: Empire, Nation, and Revolutionary Frontier* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007), 197-98; Reeve Huston, “Land Conflict and Land Policy in the United States, 1785-1841,” in *The World of the Revolutionary American Republic: Land, Labor, and the Conflict for a Continent*, ed. Andrew Shankman (New York: Routledge, 2014): 324-45.

⁴⁹ For more on the history of public lands from the close of the Revolutionary War through the 1934 Taylor Grazing Act see especially chapter 1 in Robert H. Nelson, *Public Lands and Private Rights: The Failure of Scientific Management* (Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1995), 6.

⁵⁰ Historians continue to analyze the process of nation building as an ideological as well as an economic event. Scholars who highlight the political significance of land, tend to interpret the settlement of the West as the fulfillment of a republican promise to expand its yeomen citizenry. The literature on the political significance of land in the early republic is too vast to cite here in its entirety. The following works provide entry into this historical dialogue: Reeve Huston, “Land Conflict and Land Policy in the United States, 1785-1841,” in *The World of the Revolutionary American Republic: Land, Labor and the*

Northwest Ordinance of 1787 not only facilitated the settlement of much of this land, it also became integral to the Federalist program of the 1790s.⁵¹

While Washington's statement reflected an assumption that U.S. sovereignty in the West was inevitable, the reality, especially as reflected in captivity narratives, was quite the opposite. According to George Washington, the people of the West had the potential to become a "distinct people," especially if they turned to Britain or Spain for military protection.⁵² In other words, white settlers of the West had the potential to

Conflict for a Continent, ed. Andrew Shankman, (New York: Routledge, 2014): 324-45; Peter S. Onuf, *Statehood and Union: A History of the Northwest Ordinance*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987); Alan Taylor, "Land and Liberty on the Post-Revolutionary Frontier," in *Devising Liberty: Preserving and Creating Freedom in the New American Republic*, ed. David Thomas Konig (Stanford University Press, 1995): 81-108; John Robert Van Atta, *Securing the West: Politics, Public Lands, and the Fate of the Old Republic, 1785-1850* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), 45-67; Other scholars, who emphasize the financial instability of the young nation, interpret plans for western settlement as a way to sustain economic solvency. See Max H. Edling, *A Revolution in Favor of Government: Origins of the U.S. Constitution and the Making of the American State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

For more on the development of national authority in the early Republic see Brian Balogh, *A Government Out of Sight: The Mystery of National Authority in Nineteenth-Century America*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Richard R. John, "Governmental Institutions as Agents of Change: Rethinking American Political Development in the Early Republic," *Studies in American Political Development* 11 (fall 1997): 347-80; William Novack, "The Myth of the 'Weak' American State," *American Historical Review*, vol. 113, no. 3 (June 2008): 752-72.

⁵¹ An important starting point for understanding Federalist ideology and policy see, Linda K. Kerber, *Federalists in Dissent: Imagery and Ideology in Jeffersonian America* (Ithaca 1970); Andrew R. L. Cayton, "The Contours of Power in a Frontier Town: Marietta, Ohio, 1788-1803," *Journal of the Early Republic*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (Summer 1986), pp. 103-126.

⁵² Washington to Henry Knox, Dec. 5, 1784, in John C. Fitzpatrick, ed., *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799*, 39 vols.

undermine the goal of continental dominance, as articulated by leaders such as Washington and Jefferson. Washington had reason for such concerns, especially when a Kentucky resident argued in 1787 that, “[i]f there were any other country...from which we could receive more compleat aid in time of distress,” he would support separation from the “powerful state” of Virginia.⁵³ Notions of separatism were attractive to settlers because from their perspective the states that claimed jurisdiction over them offered little protection for their land claims. For this reason, Kentucky remained a center of political discontent throughout the early republic.⁵⁴ Thomas Jefferson agreed with such concerns and emphasized to James Madison the importance of an orderly settlement of the western lands as these settlers were “a precious part of our strength and of our virtue.”⁵⁵

However, orderly settlement proved to be quite challenging for the federal government. Rufus Putnam, Surveyor General of the United States in 1790, complained that “too many frontiersmen regard not the authority of their own States, nor yet of

(Washington, D.C., 1931-1944), XXVIII, 4. For similar sentiments see John Campbell to Madison, October 23, 1787, in *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, 12: 256, 287-288.

⁵³ *Kentucky Gazette*, September 8, 1787. For similar sentiments see John Brown to Madison, June 7, 1788, in William T. Hutchinson et al., eds., *The Papers of James Madison*, (Chicago and Charlottesville, 1962-), 11:88-90. Congress granted Kentucky statehood in June 1792. However, this process began with the Northwest Ordinance of 1787. See Onuf, *Origins of the Federal Republic: Jurisdictional Controversies in the United States, 1775-1787*, 169.

⁵⁴ Onuf, *The Mind of Thomas Jefferson*, 114.

⁵⁵ “From Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, 20 June 1787,” Founders Online, National Archives (<http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-11-02-0411> [last update: 2015-09-29]). Source: *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 11, *1 January–6 August 1787*, ed. Julian P. Boyd. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955, pp. 480–484.

Congress, more than the Savages themselves.” For Putnam, the viability of the nation relied on the ability of the federal government to adequately protect settlers and their homes from the threat of Indigenous attack.⁵⁶ However, with continued British support, Indigenous resistance to white settlement continued along the Ohio River from 1791 through 1794.⁵⁷ Massy Herbeson and her family occupied land in the hotly contested Ohio Valley, placing her home in close proximity with Indigenous settlements. Herbeson’s testimony included her recollection of a conversation she had with “one of the Indians, that could talk English very well.” He asked her if “a campaign was going out against the Indians this summer.” She denied any knowledge of a campaign and he “called her a liar.” He then boasted that “the Indians would serve them as they did last year” with the aid of the guns and ammunition given to them by the English, who

⁵⁶ Putnam to Fisher Ames, 1790 in *Memoirs of Rufus Putnam*, ed. Rowena Buell (Boston 1903), 243.

⁵⁷ R. David Edmunds, Frederick E. Hoxie, Neal Salisbury, eds, *The People: A History of Native America*, Vol. 1, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2007), 146-149. For a thorough account of the impact on the Revolution’s impact on Native American communities see, Colin G. Calloway, *The American Revolution in Indian Country: Crisis and Diversity in Native American Communities*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995); For more on Indian resistance in eastern North America see Gregory Evans Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745-1815*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1992); For a comparison of French, British and American efforts to colonize Native peoples and lands in Ohio country see Eric Hinderaker, *Elusive Empires: Constructing Colonialism in the Ohio Valley, 1673-1800*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997). Indians inserted themselves in imperial competition on North America. Before the Seven Years War, indigenous societies from the Atlantic to the western Plains manipulated French traders against British and Spanish rivals. With the French defeat Indians needs to modify their strategies as they no longer benefitted from the protection of French. Instead they were now vulnerable to the unrelenting acquisition of their land from white settlers, who the British were unable to enforce their movement. Or their violation to the Proclamation Line 1763.

apparently had given them “plenty last year” as well. Americans, such as Herbeson, knew that the Senecas or Munsees were not their only enemy, as British troops still maintained posts in the region and sometimes incited Indigenous attacks against white settlements.⁵⁸ The details from these narratives reflected the vulnerability of the frontier settlements. The intention of the federal government may have been to “maintain a vast tract of continent,” but as Indigenous attacks continued, Putnam’s concerns that “too many frontiersmen regard[ed] not the authority of their own States, nor yet of Congress” would continue to be the reality. Thus, women’s Indian captivity narratives demonstrated the failure of the newly formed federal government in its ability to protect white settlements.

The exposure of those living along the contested borders was common knowledge, as an article published in Philadelphia’s well-circulated newspaper, *Weekly Aurora*, warned readers of “the carrying off of women and children,” pleading with readers that the “best defense is offence.”⁵⁹ The vulnerability of the American nation also concerned policy makers across the Atlantic. Specifically, Anne Robert Jacques Turgot, the French economist and statesman, warned that America must never become “an image of our Europe, a mass of divided powers contending for territory and commerce.”⁶⁰ If

⁵⁸ See Eric Hinderaker, *Elusive Empires: Constructing Colonialism in the Ohio Valley, 1673-1800*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997). Stephen Aron, *How the West was Lost: The Transformation of Kentucky from Daniel Boone to Henry Clay*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 121-122. Declining support from the British allowed for an American victory against indigenous peoples at Fallen Timbers in 1794.

⁵⁹ *Weekly Aurora*, Philadelphia, 1794.

federal authority could not be maintained in the West, America not only risked losing great wealth, but also became vulnerable to disunion.⁶¹

This chapter argues that women's Indian captivity narratives published between 1787 and 1811 emphasized Indigenous attacks on white settlers in order to share the outrages over the loss of life and property the federal government inadequately guaranteed. These captivity narratives thus functioned as narratives of nationhood in complex and contradictory ways. The figure of woman stands in a metonymic but paradoxical relation to the nation. Many feminist theorists have argued that "the nation" is premised on an inside/outside dichotomy that places women, hearth, and home at the center or foundation and, at the same time, on the periphery of the civil state.⁶² The "nation emerged in those ambivalent spaces between pedagogy and performativity" and women's Indian captivity narratives inhabited that space.⁶³ They narrativize the nation,

⁶⁰ M. Turgot to Dr. Price, Mar. 22, 1778, appendix to Richard Price, *Observations on the Importance of the American Revolution...* Second ed. (London, 1785), in Bernard Peach, ed., *Richard Price and the Ethical Foundations of the American Revolution* (Durham, N.C., 1979), 215-224, quotation on p. 222.

⁶¹ Onuf, "Liberty, Development, and Union: Visions of the West in the 1780s," 184. For more on Indian resistance in eastern North America see Gregory Evans Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745-1815*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1992);

⁶² Irigaray, Luce. 1985a. *This Sex Which Is Not One*, trans. C. Porter with C. Burke. (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1985). Pateman, Carole, *The Sexual Contract*, (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1987). Maureen Molloy, "Death and the Maiden: The Feminine and the Nation in Recent New Zealand Films," *Signs*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (Autumn, 1999), pp. 153-170

drawing on three key tropes of violence, wilderness, and home.⁶⁴ The basic structure of women's captivity narratives rarely varied. First, settlers established a home in the wilderness. The home was not only an extension and solidification of the nation, but, in a literary sense, a microcosm of the nation itself. Second, the inhabitants of the

⁶³ Chatterjee, Partha. 1990. "The Nationalist Resolution of the Woman Question." In *Recasting Women: Essays in Indian Colonial History*, ed. K. Sagari and S. Vaid, (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1990), 233-268. Maureen Molloy, "Death and the Maiden: The Feminine and the Nation in Recent New Zealand Films," *Signs*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (Autumn, 1999), pp. 153-170

⁶⁴ Central to the genre of Indian captivity narratives was also an experience of violence that showed white settlers' sensibility, or rather their "memory" of Indigenous peoples' attempts to terrorize them. The term "memory" requires interrogation. Scholars, such as Christine DeLucia have recently offered a reconsideration of Pilgrim-centric narratives which have long informed the memory of King Philip's War, especially in colonial New England. According to DeLucia, seventeenth century material culture, as well as the narratives attached to such objects, signified "the terrifying savagery of Indigenous opponents, as well as their eventual resounding defeat, opening the way for unfettered colonial growth across land and water." See Christine M. DeLucia, *Memory Lands: King Philip's War and the Place of Violence in the Northeast*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), xi. Just as seventeenth century New Englanders created narratives surrounding the events of 1675-1676, editors and publishers of women's Indian captivity narratives published throughout the early republic also created "useful collective fictions" for anxious early Americans to justify their relentless dispossession of Indigenous peoples. Such stories created a narrative, "a story that a given culture tells itself; that holds that culture together." According to scholars such as Carolyn Merchant, narratives "underlie society" and contain "hidden assumptions" of a culture. See J. Scott Bryson and Carolyn Merchant, "Partnership, Narrative, and Environmental Justice: An Interview with Carolyn Merchant," *Interdisciplinary Literary Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 1, Literary Ecocriticism (Fall 2001), pp. 124-130. Examined collectively, women's Indian captivity narratives published throughout the early republic reveal the narrative of nation. Within this narrative white settlers were victims of "Indian attacks" on their homes and female captives represented a plea to the government, a plea to protect its most vulnerable citizens. In an effort to distinguish my analysis from the rhetoric used by editors' of captivity narratives, I mark the term "Indian" with quotation marks as it is the term employed by editors and publishers, while I employ the term Indigenous throughout my own discussion. Scholars have long acknowledged the importance of the "nuclear family and warm family ties" in the early national period. See Hemphill, 88.

wilderness—the Indians—visited violence upon the settlers and their homes. In a real sense, as the success of the Indian campaigns in 1790 and 1791 demonstrated, Indian attacks posed a threat to the extension of U.S. sovereignty into the West. In a literary sense, the attacks on the settlers' homes demonstrated the vulnerability of the new American nation itself. Third, women captives were redeemed. Narratives of women's survival of their ordeals were implicit testimonies to the ability of the nation itself to survive, while their graphic accounts of suffering justified further expansion into native territory.

Home was an important symbol not only for female work spaces of the eighteenth century, but also for family and child rearing. Part of the cultural work of emphasizing the attack on the home was to imagine the nation as home. According to the critical theorist Homi Bhabha, narratives of nation emerge from the experiences of daily life, which must be “repeatedly turned into the signs of a coherent national culture.” For Bhabha, the figure of woman can often be conflated to represent the private “home” transforming “the recesses of domestic space [into] sites for history's most intricate invasions.”⁶⁵ Historians of the American West such as Richard White and Louis S. Warren agree that the idea of the home has long been “imbued with symbolic meaning.” Specifically, “home conveyed notions of womanhood, domesticity, and family.”⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, (London ; New York: Routledge, 1994), 139-170.

⁶⁶ Louis S. Warren , “Cody's Last Stand: Masculine Anxiety, the Custer Myth, and the Frontier of Domesticity in Buffalo Bill's Wild West,” *Western Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (Spring, 2003), pp. 49-69. Quotation on page 55; Richard White, “Frederick

Women's Indian captivity narratives published throughout 1787-1811 emphasized the attack on the home, a cultural constant, according to Bhabha, in an effort to represent the vulnerability of white settlements, as well as mobilize support for government protection of its borders. Ultimately, these narratives provoked a burgeoning early republican Americanism in which identity was not just tied to race, or independence, but the protection from Indian attack of their fellow countrymen's homes beyond prior colonial bounds.⁶⁷ These narratives destabilized the Jeffersonian ideal of white settlement, which far from being an open landscape awaiting the establishment of an egalitarian yeoman republic, was a vulnerable and contested space. Representations of settler victims, especially women and children, as well as destruction of their homes did more than

Jackson Turner and Buffalo Bill," in *The Frontier in American Culture*, ed. James R. Grossman (Berkeley, 1994), 19-26.

⁶⁷ In addition to Kinnan's narrative, the following narratives are also analyzed in this chapter: Bunker Gay, *A Genuine and Correct Account of the Captivity, Sufferings and Deliverance of Mrs. Jemima Howe, of Hinsdale in New Hampshire* (Boston: Belknap and Young, 1792); *Affecting History of the Dreadful Distresses of Frederick Manheim's Family; To which are Added, An Encounter between a White Man and Two Savages; Adventures of Capt. Isaac Stewart; Deposition of Mercy Herbeson; Adventures and Sufferings of Peter Williamson; Remarkable Adventures of Jackson Johnnot; Account of the Destruction of the Settlements at Wyoming*, (Printed for Chapman Whitcomb, 1793); Mrs. Susannah Willard Johnson Hastings, *A Narrative of the Captivity of Mrs. Johnson, Containing an Account of Her Sufferings During Four Years with the Indians and the French* (Walpole, New Hampshire: Printed by David Carlisle, 1796); J. Weatherwise, *The Connecticut, Rhode-Island, Massachusetts, New-Hampshire & Vermont farmers almanac, for the year of our Lord eighteen hundred three. ... also--containing an affecting account of the death of Miss Polly & Hannah Watts, who were taken prisoners and murdered by the Indians, on the 5th of April, 1802*. (Connecticut, 1803); "A Narrative of the Captivity and Escape of Mrs. Frances Scott, an Inhabitant of Washington County, Virginia," in *A Selection of Some of the Most Interesting Narratives...*, (Carlisle: 1808), 42-44.

underscore the vulnerability of the nation. It stressed the urgency of expanding the power of the federal government to protect and defend its borders.

Stories of Indian captivity appeared in a variety of printed material throughout the early republic. Captivity narratives were frequently included in almanacs—compilations of tidal predictions, lunar calculations, court and market days, and distances between towns—which were among the most popular texts in the British Atlantic world throughout the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries.⁶⁸ In 1787, Benjamin West, a Rhode Island publisher, included *A Surprising Account of the Discovery of a Lady Who Was Taken by the Indians in the Year 1777* in his 1787 edition of *Bickerstaff's Almanack*.⁶⁹ West's inclusion of this account underscored the ubiquitous nature of women's captivity in the early republic, as it was published more than twenty times

⁶⁸ According to Patrick Spero, “the inspiration for West's almanac, was a pseudonym used in 1707 by Jonathan Swift in a famous satire of almanacs, their authors, and their alleged ability to prognosticate. Richard Saunders, the pseudonym for Benjamin Franklin's *Poor Richard's Almanack*, was an actual English almanac-maker.” For more on the history of almanac printing as well as the politicization of the almanac's content see Patrick Spero, “The Revolution in Popular Publications: The Almanac and New England Primer, 1750—1800,” *Early American Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (Winter 2010), pp. 41-74. Quotation can be found on page 46.

⁶⁹ Abraham Panther, *A Surprising Account of the Discovery of a Lady Who Was Taken by the Indians in the Year 1777, and After Making her escape, She Retired to a Lonely Cave, Where She Lived Nine Years*, in Benjamin West, *Bickerstaff's Almanack for the Year of Our Lord 1788*, (Norwich, Connecticut: John Trumball, 1787). The pages are not numbered. However, Panther's letter appears on the last six pages of the text, 19-24. Hereafter referred to as Panther.

between 1787 and 1814.⁷⁰ John Trumball, publisher of *Bickerstaff's Almanack*, also published J. Weatherwise's 1803 edition of *The Connecticut, Rhode-Island, Massachusetts, New-Hampshire & Vermont farmers almanac*, which included [A]ffecting account of the death of Miss Polly & Hannah Watts, who were taken prisoners and murdered by the Indians.⁷¹

Many narratives were also printed as part of anthologies. Massy Herbeson's narrative, which was originally recorded in 1792 as testimony before a Pennsylvania Justice of the Peace, reached a wider audience as part of a 1793 anthology: *Affecting History of the Dreadful Distresses of Frederick Manheim's Family; To which are Added, An Encounter between a White Man and Two Savages; Adventures of Capt. Isaac Stewart; Deposition of Massy Herbeson; Adventures and Sufferings of Peter Williamson; Remarkable Adventures of Jackson Johonnot; Account of the Destruction of the Settlements at Wyoming*.⁷² Subsequent editions of the Manheim anthology included two

⁷⁰ The Panther Captivity was mostly featured in pamphlets published throughout the Northeast, specifically, New York; Norwich, Connecticut; Windsor, Putney, and Rutland Vermont; Boston and Leominster, Massachusetts, and Fryeburgh, Maine. Kathryn Zabelle Derounian-Stodola, *Women's Indian Captivity Narratives*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1998), 83-85.

⁷¹ J. Weatherwise, *The Connecticut, Rhode-Island, Massachusetts, New-Hampshire & Vermont farmers almanac, for the year of our Lord eighteen hundred three. ... also--containing an affecting account of the death of Miss Polly & Hannah Watts, who were taken prisoners and murdered by the Indians, on the 5th of April, 1802*. (Connecticut, 1803). The pages of Watts' account are not numbered. This information can be found on the first page of the narrative.

⁷² *Affecting History of the Dreadful Distresses of Frederick Manheim's Family; To which are Added, An Encounter between a White Man and Two Savages; Adventures of Capt.*

editions by the prominent Philadelphia printer, Matthew Carey in 1794 and 1800. Also, beginning in 1808 and continuing throughout the early nineteenth century, Archibald Loudon, a popular printer from Carlisle, Pennsylvania, included the Manheim anthology and the narrative of Mrs. Francis Scott in his collection, *A Selection of Some of the Most Interesting Narratives of Outrages, Committed by the Indians, In Their Wars, With the White People: Also, an Account of Their Manners, Customs, Traditions, Religious Sentiments, Mode of Warfare, Military Tactics, Discipline And Encampments, Treatment of Prisoners, &c the Whole Compiled by the Best Authorities*.⁷³ It was not until the 1820s that *A narrative of the sufferings of Massy Harbison, from Indian barbarity, giving an account of her captivity, the murder of her two children, her escape, with an infant at her breast, together with some account of the cruelties of the Indians on the Allegheny River* appeared independent of an anthology.⁷⁴

Isaac Stewart; Deposition of Mercy Herbeson; Adventures and Sufferings of Peter Williamson; Remarkable Adventures of Jackson Johonnot; Account of the Destruction of the Settlements at Wyoming. Exeter, Massachusetts: Printed for Chapman Whitcomb, 1793. Other editions with the same title were also published in Boston by H. Ranlet in 1793 as well as in Philadelphia by Matthew Carey in 1800.

⁷³ *A Selection of Some of the Most Interesting Narratives of Outrages, Committed by the Indians, In Their Wars, With the White People: Also, an Account of Their Manners, Customs, Traditions, Religious Sentiments, Mode of Warfare, Military Tactics, Discipline And Encampments, Treatment of Prisoners, &c the Whole Compiled by the Best Authorities*. (Carlisle, Pa: From the press of A. Loudon, 1808)

⁷⁴ *A narrative of the sufferings of Massy Harbison, from Indian barbarity, giving an account of her captivity, the murder of her two children, her escape, with an infant at her breast, together with some account of the cruelties of the Indians on the Allegheny River, &c.* (Pittsburgh: Printed by S. Engles, 1825). In 1828 Pittsburgh publishers, D. and M Maclean published her narrative under the same title.

Although editors took pains to establish veracity, through titles such as “A True Narrative of the Sufferings of Mary Kinnan,” these narratives, according to the historian Christine DeLucia, “excluded as much as they included in deciding which versions of the past shall be perpetuated.”⁷⁵ That is, by conceiving of captivity as an experience faced by white settlers, “particularly women and children,” editors excluded an acknowledgement of the Indigenous context of captivity among Euro-Americans. Indeed, scholars such as Margaret Newell and Lisa Brooks have noted that “we still know more about the relatively few Euro-American captives among the Indians than we do about the thousands of Native Americans who were enslaved.”⁷⁶ The absence of much documentation of Indigenous captivity experiences among Euro-Americans created a skewed understanding of the encounter between natives and whites that has persisted. Yet in an important sense, the unbalanced understanding of real events in the captivity narratives was central to their importance: the events described within them were more important as symbols than as documentation of real events. Ironically, as much as white settlers attempted to write Indigenous people out of their history, the ubiquitous nature of women’s Indian captivity narratives actually demonstrates the endurance of Indigenous communities as well as the ways in which ideas of nation cannot be separated from encounters with Indigenous peoples.

⁷⁵ DeLucia, xv.

⁷⁶ Lisa Brooks, *Our Beloved Kin: A New History of King Philip’s War*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), 5; Margaret Ellen Newell, *Brethren by Nature: New England Indians, Colonists, and the Origins of American Slavery*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015), 4. See also Pauline Turner Strong, *Captives Selves, Captivating Others*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 2000), 12.

Indian violence against settlers' homes was at the core of the narratives. Editors of women's Indian captivity narratives did not use a neutral (albeit complex) term such as "encounter," rather they presented a binary in which white settlers were victims of Indigenous "attacks." Such depictions of a home under attack reflect what historian Louis S. Warren has identified as an important element of William F. Cody's Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show. According to Warren, the "Attack on a Settler's Cabin by Hostile Indians" was the climax of Cody's show and represented the "centrality of domesticity and home-making to frontier mythology of the late-nineteenth-century."⁷⁷ Yet, such mythology had deep roots, as editors of women's Indian captivity narratives also exploited the trope of domesticity through the consistent portrayal of "settlers" under "Indian attack." For example, once the Indians entered Massy Herbeson's home in present-day Pittsburgh, they drew "her out of her bed by her feet" along with her three children. Herbeson called out to the men in the block-house, at which point the Indians "stopped her mouth." Undeterred, some Indians began firing. However, her three-year old son, who resisted capture, met with his death as they "dashed [him] against the house, then stabbed and scalped" him.⁷⁸ Mrs. Scott also witnessed the death of her children, who were asleep in their beds. Just as the Indians "lifted them up and dashed them on the floor

⁷⁷ Louis S. Warren, "Cody's Last Stand: Masculine Anxiety, the Custer Myth, and the Frontier of Domesticity in Buffalo Bill's Wild West," *Western Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (Spring, 2003), pp. 49-69. Quotation on page 51 and 54.

⁷⁸ *Affecting History of the Dreadful Distresses of Frederick Manheim's Family; To which are Added, An Encounter between a White Man and Two Savages; Adventures of Capt. Isaac Stewart; Deposition of Mercy Herbeson; Adventures and Sufferings of Peter Williamson; Remarkable Adventures of Jackson Johonnot; Account of the Destruction of the Settlements at Wyoming*, (Printed for Chapman Whitcomb, 1793), 22.

near the mother,” Scott’s oldest daughter ran to her mother begging to be saved.

Although Mrs. Scott “in the deepest anguish of spirit, and with a flood of tears intreated the savages to spare her child,” her pleas were ignored as they “tomahawked and stabbed her in the mother’s arms.”⁷⁹

Editors also portrayed women’s vulnerability by underscoring a husband’s inability to fulfill his role as protector—a narrative choice that emphasized the vulnerability of the nation as embodied by inadequately protected American women on the frontier. After the attack on Kinnan’s home, her husband lay “weltering in blood,” yet his eyes communicated an “apprehension for [her] safety and sorrow at his inability to assist” her.⁸⁰ According to the historian Ann Little, captivity narratives included “two variations of the attack: men’s narratives usually began by describing an Indian attack in the fields where they worked, and women’s narratives typically began with a description of Indians invading their homes.”⁸¹ Similarly, “painted savages with presented arms” rushed through the door of the Scott family along the frontier in Washington County, Virginia. Mrs. Scott, who was “nearly undressed,” shrieked as Mr. Scott jumped out of his bed only to immediately suffer a gunshot wound. With Mr. Scott wounded just outside of the house, an “Indian seized Mrs. Scott and ordered her to a particular spot,

⁷⁹ “A Narrative of the Captivity and Escape of Mrs. Frances Scott, an Inhabitant of Washington County, Virginia,” in *A Selection of Some of the Most Interesting Narratives...*, (Carlisle: 1808), 42.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 110.

⁸¹ Ann Little, *Abraham in Arms: War and Gender in Colonial New England*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 104.

and not to move.”⁸² Descriptions of these attacks were significant because they highlighted the vulnerability of white settlements in the early republic. Such an emphasis allowed editors and publishers to transform an individual family’s experience into a broader, often highly exaggerated, generalization about the settlements near the contested borders of the young nation.

Editors of women’s captivity narratives took pains in adhering to the distinction of men attacked in fields and women attacked in their home. For example, Jemima Howe’s narrative (1792) began with a description of a Western Abenaki attack on her husband and other men while they were on their way home from “hoeing corn in the meadow” near Hinsdale, New Hampshire, in 1755. Yet, Howe, along with the women and children of two other neighboring families were not at “home.” Growing hostilities had led these families to abandon their homes for the protection of Bridgman’s Fort, where they now resided.⁸³ The editor of her narrative obscured this difference by

⁸² The 1785 ordinance is printed in Worthington Chauncey Ford et al., eds., *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789*, 34 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1904-1937), XXVIII, 375-381. For more on the debate over the terms of western land cessions see Peter S. Onuf, *Origins of the Federal Republic: Jurisdictional Controversies in the United States, 1775-1787*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983), 149-172. For more on legislative history of this ordinance see Onuf, “Liberty, Development, and Union: Visions of the West in the 1780s,” 182-184; Payson Jackson Treat, *The National Land System, 1785-1820*, (New York, 1910), 15-40; William D. Pattison, *Beginnings of the American Rectangular Land Survey System, 1784-1800*, (Chicago, 1957); Paul W. Gates, *History of Public Land Law Development*, (Washington, D.C., 1968), 59-74; Malcolm J. Rohrbough, *The Land Office Business: The Settlement and Administration of American Public Lands, 1789-1837* (New York, 1968), 3-25.

interchanging the terms “fort” and “home” throughout his description of the attack. This slippage is significant because the word “home” carried meaning for American readers.⁸⁴ Such discourse was reflected in the writing of Thomas Jefferson.⁸⁵ Jefferson’s ideal “society embraced female domesticity as part of the natural order of things.”⁸⁶ Jefferson revealed his assumptions about the intersection of national identity and the household arguing that it was “in America alone that women seemed to understand this and put it into practice.”⁸⁷ Jefferson’s statement reflected the notion of the “Republican Mother,” a well-researched and interrogated ideology among historians. Contemporaries, such as Jefferson, articulated this ideology as confining women’s role to raising virtuous citizens. That is, the experiences of middle class white women were often universalized by contemporaries, such as Jefferson, as representative of “female domesticity.” Yet, historians have demonstrated the ways in which the experiences of most women stood in

⁸³ Bunker Gay, *A Genuine and Correct Account of the Captivity, Sufferings and Deliverance of Mrs. Jemima Howe, of Hinsdale in New Hampshire* (Boston: Belknap and Young, 1792) 1.

⁸⁴ A more detailed analysis of Howe’s editors will be discussed in the following chapter. For the purposes of this chapter, I have emphasized the attack on Howe’s family because it relates more directly to the argument of this chapter.

⁸⁵ Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, ed. William Peden (1784; Chapel Hill, 1954), 6

⁸⁶ For more on Jefferson’s understanding of women’s role in the domestic sphere, Brian Steele, “Thomas Jefferson’s Gender Frontier,” *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 95, No. 1 (Jun., 2008), pp. 17-42, quotation found on page 18.

⁸⁷ Jefferson to George Washington, Dec. 4, 1788, in *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, ed. Julian P. Boyd et al. (34 vols., Princeton, 1950-), XIV, 330.

stark contrast.⁸⁸ For Jefferson, America provided the ideal space for such a “natural order” to manifest. In a similar way, the home, as it was conceived in the captivity drama, was more than a structure; it was also employed for the discursive practices of nation building.

For some women, their vulnerability was made worse with the absence of male family members. In the absence of her husband, two men from neighboring families were left to look after Massy Herbeson and her children in May 1792. However, they had departed around sunrise, and “left the door standing wide open.”⁸⁹ Mrs. Watts was also without the companionship her husband, who was “upon a journey to Muskingdom.” The cries of her two daughters awoke Mrs. Watts around midnight. Because she “entertained many fears of an attack by Indians, she did not doubt the cause of their lamentations.” Watts dismissed the possibility of escaping as “the Savages by this time with hideous yells and ghastly looks were peeping into the window.” At this point, the somewhat

⁸⁸ For some helpful starting points see C. Dallett Hemphill, *Bowing to Necessities: A History of Manners in America, 1620-1860*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Rosemarie Zagari, “Morals, Manners and the Republican Mother,” *The American Quarterly* 44, no. 2 (June 1992): 192-215; and Jan Lewis, “The Republican Wife: Virtue and Seduction in the Early Republic,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 44, no. 4 (October 1987): 689-721; Mary Beth Norton, *Founding Mothers and Fathers: Gendered Power and the Forming of American Society*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996); Mary Beth Norton, *Separated by Their Sex: Women in Public and Private in the Colonial Atlantic World*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011).

⁸⁹ *Affecting History of the Dreadful Distresses of Frederick Manheim's Family; To which are Added, An Encounter between a White Man and Two Savages; Adventures of Capt. Isaac Stewart; Deposition of Mercy Herbeson; Adventures and Sufferings of Peter Williamson; Remarkable Adventures of Jackson Johonnot; Account of the Destruction of the Settlements at Wyoming*, (Printed for Chapman Whitcomb, 1793).

familiar plot turned to a detailed account of violence perpetrated by rather than upon the woman.⁹⁰ Arming herself with a “Tomahawk and an old sword,” she secured her bedroom door and waited as the Indians “rummaged the House.” Once the Indians approached her locked bedroom door, they began to “cut the door with their Tomahawks.” Eventually one of them stuck his head through a hole in the door at which point Mrs. Watts “beat his brains out.” Although Watts had defended herself quite effectively, she was out numbered. The remaining Indians broke down the door and led her out of the house.⁹¹

In many narratives, the violence continued throughout the captivity. One of the most violent sketches detailed the captivity of Maria and Christina Manheim, twin daughters of Frederick Manheim, who resided near the Mohawk river in New York. The narrative, which was written from Frederick's perspective and first printed in 1793, consisted of a mere three paragraphs, two of which detailed the “dreadful cruelties exercised by the Indians.” After four days of travel, “the Indians kindled a fire” and pruned two saplings “clear of branches up to the very top.” Others “were splitting pitch pine billets into small splinters about five inches in length, and...sharpening one end and

⁹⁰ Hannah Dustan's narrative is the archetype for this type of violence. Dustan's actions of ruthlessly killing her captors has been interpreted by some as evidence of her strength and resolve and others, such as Thoreau, as evidence of her savagery.

⁹¹ J. Weatherwise, *The Connecticut, Rhode-Island, Massachusetts, New-Hampshire & Vermont farmers almanac, for the year of our Lord eighteen hundred three. ... also--containing an affecting account of the death of Miss Polly & Hannah Watts, who were taken prisoners and murdered by the Indians, on the 5th of April, 1802.* (Connecticut, 1803). The pages of Watts' account are not numbered. This information can be found on the second page of the narrative

dipping the other in melted turpentine.” Two “savages...leaped into the midst of their circle, and dragged those ill-fate maidens, shrieking, from the embraces of their companions.” They “stripped the forlorn girls” and “tied each to a sapling, with their hands as high extended above their heads as possible.” The Indians then “pitched them from their knees to their shoulders, with upwards of six hundred of the sharpened splinters,” which were then set on fire. The screams of the twin girls “echoed and re-echoed through the wilderness,” until after “three hours had elapsed,” “these helpless virgins sunk down in the arms of their deliverer, Death.”⁹² In addition to a graphic description of violence, the editor of Manheim’s narrative also employed gendered language to emphasize the vulnerability of the “helpless virgins,” and by implication, the innocence of the American people.

The mother of Polly and Hannah Watts also witnessed the death of her captive daughters after days of travel through the “wilderness.” According to Watts’ narrative, the Indians dug two holes, six feet in depth, and then ordered her daughters to “strip and prepare for death.” Because both girls immediately fainted, “they were stripped by the Indians and placed in a standing posture in the hole.” Once the girls regained consciousness, the older sister Polly “begged they would liberate her younger sister Hannah,” who at the “same time begged of her mother to make her escape.” Their pleas

⁹² *Affecting History of the Dreadful Distresses of Frederick Manheim's Family; To which are Added, An Encounter between a White Man and Two Savages; Adventures of Capt. Isaac Stewart; Deposition of Massey Herbeson; Adventures and Sufferings of Peter Williamson; Remarkable Adventures of Jackson Johonnot; Account of the Destruction of the Settlements at Wyoming*, (Philadelphia: Printed by Matthew Carey, 1794).

were in vain as an Indian had set fire to the brush surrounding the girls and “went with his knife and scalped both of them.” Mrs. Watts stood by and watched “the horrid scene” until her daughters “were out of their misery, nothing but their ashes remaining.”⁹³ The intention of such graphic descriptions went beyond the shock value of narratives aimed at “the profitable pulp-thriller market.”⁹⁴ Readers were meant to identify with the young female victims, and read the graphic accounts of the atrocities as an assault on the nation itself.⁹⁵

In addition to the attack on the home, women’s captivity narratives were often attuned to the loss of property, including the consumer goods they had used to create a sense of property-bound Americanness. According to Massy Herbeson, the Indians “scrambled about the articles of the house” and “tied up the plunder they got” before

⁹³ J. Weatherwise, *The Connecticut, Rhode-Island, Massachusetts, New-Hampshire & Vermont farmers almanac, for the year of our Lord eighteen hundred three. ... also--containing an affecting account of the death of Miss Polly & Hannah Watts, who were taken prisoners and murdered by the Indians, on the 5th of April, 1802.* (Connecticut, 1803). The pages of Watts’ account are not numbered. This information can be found on the second page of the narrative

⁹⁴ *Held Captive by Indians: Selected Narratives 1642-1836*, edited by Richard VanDerBeets, (Knoxville, The University of Tennessee Press, 1973), 203.

⁹⁵ My analysis supports similar conclusions drawn by historians such as Karen Haltutunen. Although her analysis includes a period chronologically beyond the scope of this chapter, she arrives at a similar conclusion. Specifically, Haltutunen argues that the graphic and sensational descriptions of pain in nineteenth century accounts were aimed at eliciting an emotional response which could be translated into political action. See Karen Haltutunen, "Humanitarianism and the Pornography of Pain in Anglo-American Culture," *American Historical Review*, 100 (April 1995), 303-334.

continuing on their journey.⁹⁶ Similarly, before removing Mrs. Scott from her home, the “Indians loaded themselves with the plunder...a good deal of clothing and furniture.”⁹⁷ According to Mrs. Watts, the Indians “robbed the house of everything valuable” before setting it ablaze.⁹⁸ The Shawnee, who attacked the Kinnan family, plundered “the house of the most valuable articles,” and destroyed the structural boundaries of fences and homes, which had “insulated [her] to the civilized world.”⁹⁹

Why did so many captivity narratives pay such close attention to Indians’ destruction or plundering of consumer items? On its surface, the itemization of lost household goods seems oddly petty, considering that the authors of the narratives had witnessed the killings of their spouses and children. Captives’ reflection on the loss of property highlights an important argument made by other historians, such as Elizabeth

⁹⁶ *Affecting History of the Dreadful Distresses of Frederick Manheim's Family; To which are Added, An Encounter between a White Man and Two Savages; Adventures of Capt. Isaac Stewart; Deposition of Mercy Herbeson; Adventures and Sufferings of Peter Williamson; Remarkable Adventures of Jackson Johonnot; Account of the Destruction of the Settlements at Wyoming.* Exeter, Massachusetts: Printed for Chapman Whitcomb, 1793. Although some publications have also cited her first name as Mercy and last name as Harbison, I use Massy Herbeson as it was the most consistently used by publishers.

⁹⁷ Archibald Loudon, ed., “A Narrative of the Captivity and Escape of Mrs. Frances Scott, an Inhabitant of Washington County, Virginia,” in *A Selection of Some of the Most Interesting Narratives...*, (Carlisle: 1808), 42.

⁹⁸ J. Weatherwise, *The Connecticut, Rhode-Island, Massachusetts, New-Hampshire & Vermont farmers almanac, for the year of our Lord eighteen hundred three. ... also--containing an affecting account of the death of Miss Polly & Hannah Watts, who were taken prisoners and murdered by the Indians, on the 5th of April, 1802.* (Connecticut, 1803). The pages of Watts’ account are not numbered. This information can be found on the second page of the narrative.

⁹⁹ *A True Narrative of the Sufferings of Mary Kinnan*, 110

Perkin and T.H. Breen. Consumerism was rampant in eighteenth-century America.¹⁰⁰ Specifically, Breen concluded that as late eighteenth-century Americans incorporated “manufactured goods into their daily lives,” they “interpreted these artifacts” as “personal items promising beauty, comfort and status.” The consumption of manufactured goods, according to Breen, created a shared sense of American identity in the eighteenth century.¹⁰¹ Consumption of such goods—and the shared identity that such consumption conferred—extended beyond eastern port cities. In her analysis of early Kentucky, Perkin argued that settlers did not rely “completely on their own resources,” as “stores, traders, and consumer goods accompanied” them into the trans-Appalachian west.¹⁰² Consumer life “served as a common unifying force,” as “shopping in a general store brought a wide cross section of the population together in social and commercial exchange.”¹⁰³ Readers of Herbeson or Kinnan’s experiences would have understood the “pillaging” of “the most valuable articles” from both an economic as well as a cultural perspective. Because

¹⁰⁰T.H. Breen, *The Marketplace of Revolution: How Consumer Politics Shaped American Independence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005)

¹⁰¹ Breen, 10.

¹⁰² Elizabeth Perkin, “The Consumer Frontier: Household Consumption in Early Kentucky,” *Journal of American History*, 78 (September 1991), 486-510, quotation found on page 489. For more on the significance of market relations to the early Kentucky frontier see Stephen A. Aron, “Pioneers and Profiteers: Land Speculation and the Homestead Ethic in Frontier Kentucky,” *Western Historical Quarterly*, 23 (May 1992), 179-98.

¹⁰³ Perkin, 494.

consumer goods, such as “clothing and furniture” had cultural and political meaning, they were more than just possessions. They were signs of civilization and of belonging to a larger political and economic unit. Loss of their “most valuable articles” was, therefore, a threat to the shared identity that the common consumption of those goods represented. The property of families, such as the Kinnans, Watts, and Herbesons was intricately connected to their identity and should be understood as an extension of historian Jill Lepore’s argument in which “the idea of property as identity” served to distinguish the English from Indigenous peoples.¹⁰⁴ Narratives of Indigenous attacks on frontier settlements and the destruction of property were thus stories that challenged important political and cultural ideals for Americans.

The origins of such ideals can be seen as early as the seventeenth century. English colonists used Locke’s understanding of property to justify settlement in North America. English settlers viewed fields unfenced and untouched by a plow as “unbroken” and lands cultivated and fenced as “improved.”¹⁰⁵ Improving the land was also God’s will, and white settlers sought to please god in turning “wigwams and huts...into orderly, fair and well-built houses.”¹⁰⁶ Word choice and distinction is significant in this quotation.

¹⁰⁴ Jill Lepore, *The Name of War: King Philip’s War and the Origins of American Identity*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1999), 76. See also Eric Cheyfitz, *The Poetics of Imperialism: Translation and Colonization from The Tempest to Tarzan*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 50-58.

¹⁰⁵ For more on Locke’s influence on American political ideology see Isaac Kramnick, “Republican Revisionism Revisited,” *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 87, No. 3 (Jun., 1982), pp. 629-664.

Specifically, “wigwam” and “house” are set in opposition to one another, when in fact, they are synonyms. Yet, early Americans did not recognize the similarities, but rather highlighted the differences between Indigenous and white homes. Yet, in many ways settler land claims emerged from a myth, which served to justify the contention that although numerous Indigenous societies lived on North American soil, the land remained free and open for settlement.¹⁰⁷

Editors of women’s Indian captivity narratives consistently identified land occupied by Indigenous people as “the wilderness,” or “a landscape that they had not yet reworked to fit their needs and expectations,” while white settlement represented a “civilization.”¹⁰⁸ The emphasis on home and its distinction from “wilderness” reflected a Lockean understanding of land. Captives, such as Jemima Howe and Mrs. Watts, often lamented being escorted away from their home and into “the wilderness.”¹⁰⁹ The

¹⁰⁶ For more on Locke’s influence on American political ideology as it emerged throughout the late eighteenth century see Isaac Kramnick, “Republican Revisionism Revisited,” *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 87, No. 3 (Jun., 1982), pp. 629-664.

¹⁰⁷ For more on Locke’s influence on Jefferson’s ideology regarding land and settlement see Garrett Ward Sheldon, *The Political Philosophy of Thomas Jefferson*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 2-5; Peter S. Onuf, ed., *The Mind of Thomas Jefferson*, (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2007), 109-120.

¹⁰⁸ In contrast to early European settlers, indigenous societies of eastern North America had a more flexible understanding of property rights. See, Carolyn Merchant, *Ecological Revolutions: Nature, Gender, and Science in New England*, Second Edition, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 20-23, 29, 62-63, 92, 100. Most Americans failed to understand Indians’ well-constructed policies regarding land use, consistently identifying them as savages, or people with no nation or state formation. See Cronon, 54-81, 127-156; Alfred W. Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900* (New York, 1986).

historian Francis Jennings referred to such terms as part of “the cant of conquest.” Jennings and the historian James Merrell called terms such as “wilderness” part of “loaded vocabularies.” Although contemporary early Americans used the term “wilderness,” Indigenous peoples had long altered the physical environment to fit their specific cultural needs. Because their use of the land conflicted with Euro-American use of land, white settlers referred to land occupied by Indigenous people as a “wilderness.” It is important to recognize that this was a contemporary perception. Such perceptions matter for historians because they were not only part of the “cant of conquest” used to justify the relentless dispossession of Indigenous land claims, but also part of imagining the nation.¹¹⁰

In fact, the environment, which served mostly as the background of a captive’s “beautifully and romantic” home, was drawn into focus with malevolent description once they entered “the woods.” The relatively common occurrence of “a heavy storm” seemed

¹⁰⁹ J. Weatherwise, *The Connecticut, Rhode-Island, Massachusetts, New-Hampshire & Vermont farmers almanac, for the year of our Lord eighteen hundred three. ... also--containing an affecting account of the death of Miss Polly & Hannah Watts, who were taken prisoners and murdered by the Indians, on the 5th of April, 1802.* (Connecticut, 1803).

¹¹⁰ Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (1975; reprint, New York: 1976); James Axtell, “Forked Tongues: Moral Judgments in Indian History,” in *After Columbus: Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial North America* (New York, 1988), 34–44; James H. Merrell, “Second Thoughts on Colonial Historians and American Indians,” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 69, No. 3 (July 2012), pp. 451-512

to elicit more fear outside of Euro-American settlements.¹¹¹ Jemima Howe recalled how “the sound of rolling thunder was terrible” and “every flash of expansive lightning” seemed to set the “waters ablaze.” According to Kinnan’s narrative, immediately upon departure, “rain descended in torrents; lightnings flashed dreadfully...and the thunder rolled on awfully.” Contemporary Americans observed the “forest’s abundant and diverse plant and animal life as simultaneously alluring and threatening.”¹¹² Common experiences, such as a rainstorm, carried more fear outside of white settlements. In fact, consistent use of the term “wilderness” obscured the diversity of the environments from which these women were taken.

While editors of captivity narratives described the environment as an oppositional force, most of the Indigenous societies of North America viewed the natural environment as vital for the sustainability of the human environment. White settlers drew a sharp distinction between the human and natural world. In this way, they viewed resources such as animals, plants and rocks as commodities, which could be used for mercantile trade.¹¹³ Where settlers sought mastery over their environment, Indigenous people sought cooperation.¹¹⁴ For Kinnan, who personalized every sight and sound, “nature seemed to

¹¹¹ *A Genuine and Correct Account of the Captivity, Suffering and Deliverance of Mrs. Jemima Howe*, 3, 4.

¹¹² Alan Taylor, “‘Wasty Ways’: Stories of American Settlement,” *Environmental History*. (July 1998), pp. 292, 294.

¹¹³ Theodore Steinberg, *Nature Incorporated: Industrialization and the Waters of New England*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Merchant, 47-50.

¹¹⁴ Merchant, 47-50, 259

conspire against her.”¹¹⁵ Such details reminded the reader of the characteristics of the wilderness, which was to be seen as land awaiting the transition to private property.

In the wilderness, under threat of Indian attack, the narratives functioned as oblique (and sometimes explicit) calls for government protection of settlers. This was particularly true of the narratives of Jemima Howe (1792) and Susannah Johnson (1796), which detailed their captivities from their homes along the New Hampshire border in 1755 during the Seven Years’ War.¹¹⁶ Although editors attempted to obscure differences among Indigenous peoples by including highly sensationalized and strikingly similar depictions of violence against white settlers, a careful reading of the captivities of Howe and Johnson reveal some distinctions. Howe and Johnson were both taken captive by Western Abenaki Indians and forced to travel to Canada, where they were eventually sold to the French. None of the other captivity narratives analyzed in this chapter include captivity among Western Abenaki or the French. More importantly, the intention of Howe and Johnson’s narrative, which will be more deeply analyzed in the following chapter, was to mobilize contemporary Americans to understand the vulnerabilities of frontier settlements as a national concern.

¹¹⁵ *A True Narrative of the Sufferings of Mary Kinnan*, 110. In order to provide a smoother narrative, I often ascribe the experiences to Kinnan, rather than consistently citing, Kinnan or her editor Kollock. I have made this choice with the expectation that the reader understands that I cannot verify whether these words were Kinnan’s or Kollock’s.

¹¹⁶ The narratives of Howe and Johnson are the focus of the next chapter for the ways in which they emphasized another concern of American readers. Just as I highlighted the attack on Howe’s home for the purposes of the argument advanced in this chapter, selections from Johnson’s narrative are analyzed here for the same reason.

In fact, in the opening paragraphs of Johnson's narrative, the reader is asked to recall "the infancy of our country," which did not permit an "organized government, to stretch forth its protecting arm, in case of danger."¹¹⁷ Johnson's narrative was first published in 1796 by David Carlisle, a local publisher in New Hampshire. Perhaps this explains why her narrative seems to appeal more to a New England audience, who were less likely to have personal experiences contesting landownership with Indigenous people. For example, in an effort to underscore the significance of her experience, readers, who are "early in life," were asked to recall that the "sufferings of their parents and ancestors" allowed for them to live "in a land of peace, where neither savages, nor neighboring wars embitter life."¹¹⁸ Readers of Herbeson, Kinnan, Watts or Scott would certainly not have associated their experiences as examples of living in "a land of peace." That is, by nature of their publication, these captivity narratives demonstrate that land within the United States was contested, which more often than not included violent acts rather than peaceful negotiations. Nor would readers of these narratives have understood "neighboring wars" with "savages" to be absent from the current reality of these families.

¹¹⁷ Mrs. Susannah Willard Johnson Hastings, *A Narrative of the Captivity of Mrs. Johnson, Containing an Account of Her Sufferings During Four Years with the Indians and the French* (Walpole, New Hampshire: Printed by David Carlisle, 1796). At the time of her captivity, Susannah was married to Mr. Johnson. However, by the time of publication her first husband long deceased she was married to a Mr. Hastings. This narrative is much lengthier than other narratives, totaling one hundred-forty pages. Her narrative is also organized much like Rowlandson's including an introduction and ten chapters. Even in 1796, the North American front of the Seven Years War was yet to be identified as "The French and Indian War." *A Narrative of the Captivity of Mrs. Johnson*, 3.

¹¹⁸ *A Narrative of the Captivity of Mrs. Johnson*, 4, 5, 6, 9.

The reader of Johnson's narrative was once again reminded to "turn his attention to the period when the facts took place" in order to refresh his memory "with the sad tidings of his country's sufferings" which now stood in contrast to the present.¹¹⁹ The unobserved or unacknowledged endurance of Indigenous peoples makes the counterfeit nature of captivity narratives all the more pointed. The assumption of Johnson's publisher reflected an unwillingness to recognize Indigenous continuance across the Northeast.¹²⁰ For readers of Johnson's narrative, who likely lived in the New England area, "defenceless inhabitants" described people living in the past, not contemporary Americans. To recognize the endurance of Indigenous people "threatened to undermine entrenched mythologies essential to Euro-American existence."¹²¹ Specifically, captivity narratives, such as Johnson's, were necessary to the legitimacy (in the eyes of the federal government) of white settler land claims as well as the construction of a national origin story.

Yet, similar to the editors of the other women's Indian captivity narratives published between 1787 and 1811, Johnson's editor was also attempting to expand the relevance and meaning of a regional story. According to the content of Johnson's narrative, the federal government was "organized" and capable of extending its "protecting arm." However, the editors of every other women's Indian captivity narrative

¹¹⁹ *A Narrative of the Captivity of Mrs. Johnson*, 6, 9.

¹²⁰ DeLucia, xii.

¹²¹ DeLucia, xii.

published at this time, took individual stories and recast them in a way to spur a new more expansive “countrymen” to action. Specifically, readers of captivity narratives were meant to understand vulnerability of those living along the borders and the necessity of the federal government to protect these settlements.

Readers abroad also looked to these texts to understand the authentic American experience. In 1805 the narrative of Mrs. Frances Scott appeared in Richard Parkinson’s *A Tour in America, 1798, 1799, 1800*.¹²² According to Parkinson, he included Scott’s narrative in order to show his London readers “how dangerous it was to live in the back settlements.” In an effort to underscore his point, he explicitly stated that he hoped to prevent the “industrious emigrant” from wasting time “on this barren land.”¹²³ In contrast to American editors, whose intention reflected more of a call to action, even if only with regard to readers’ sentiment, Parkinson issued the exact opposite, a recommendation of inaction.

At times, the content of women’s Indian captivity narratives included rhetoric which reflected an explicit appeal to understand the regional concerns of western settlements as national concerns. Throughout her three-year captivity, Kinnan lamented being “separated from [her] beloved country” as she engaged in the “most menial and

¹²² Richard Parkinson, *A Tour in America in 1798, 1799, and 1800: Exhibiting Sketches of Society And Manners, And a Particular Account of the America System of Agriculture, With Its Recent Improvements*, (London: Printed for J. Harding, 1805). Scott’s narrative was first published in 1799.

¹²³ Parkinson, 29, 38, 45

laborious” tasks and witnessed “numerous scalps of [her] unfortunate countrymen.”¹²⁴ Kinnan often recalled that “fear took possession of all [her] faculties,” but nothing seemed to have prepared her for “the numerous scalps of [her] unfortunate countrymen,” which were exhibited for her view. This recollection marked a critical transition not only in Kinnan’s narrative, but in the genre of women’s Indian captivity narratives. For the remaining half of her narrative, Kinnan continued to employ the rhetoric of the nation, often using the phrase “unfortunate countrymen” to identify with other captives. Terms such as “unfortunate countrymen” or “beloved countrymen,” had not appeared in any women’s Indian captivity narratives published between 1787 and 1795, the year of Kinnan’s publication. These terms continued to appear with relative frequency throughout the narratives published between 1795 and 1830. Fear of her “countrymen” motivated the “Indians” to continuously relocate, and “her heart grew more heavy” as she remained “separated from [her] beloved country.”¹²⁵ Kinnan not only highlighted a collective solidarity among her countrymen, she also defended the characteristics, which were constitutive of this nation’s members. She explained that a British agent, who came to speak with her captors, “persuaded them that perfidy was a leading trait in the character of the people of the United States.” She rebuked this criticism in thought accusing the British of being deceitful: “O Britain! How heavy will be the weight of thy crimes at the last great day! Instigated by thee, the Indian murderer plunges his knife into

¹²⁴ Ibid, 113.

¹²⁵ *A True Narrative of the Sufferings of Mary Kinnan*, 112, 113.

the bosom of innocence, piety, and virtue.”¹²⁶ Readers would have understood the implication of such gendered language. Female captives, or “the bosom of innocence, piety, and virtue,” were more than victims of “Indian murderers,” they were also casualties of a broader imperial conflict over North American land.

Many captives, however, challenged contemporary gender expectations with their strength and resourcefulness, especially in securing redemption.¹²⁷ Redemption of captives in many ways tempered the anxieties of early Americans regarding frontier settlements. That is, while captivity narratives included the graphic description of the death of several people, the survival of at least one woman symbolized the viability of the nation.¹²⁸ Some captives, such as Massy Herbeson, waited for their captor to fall asleep.¹²⁹ Once Herbeson escaped, she intentionally took “her course from the Allegany,

¹²⁶ *A True Narrative of the Sufferings of Mary Kinnan*, 113.

¹²⁷ For more on the ways in which gendered expectations were often in conflict with the reality of the early republic see Mary Beth Norton, *Founding Mothers and Fathers: Gendered Power and the Forming of American Society*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996); Mary Beth Norton, *Separated by Their Sex: Women in Public and Private in the Colonial Atlantic World*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011); Rose Weitz, ed *The Politics of Women's Bodies: Sexuality, Appearance, and Behavior*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998). For more on the ways in which women, who were politically disenfranchised, still made indirect, but essential contributions to the body politic see: Gerda Lerner, “Placing Women in History: Definitions and Challenges,” in *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 1/2 (Autumn, 1975), 5.

¹²⁸ Other scholars have argued that captivity narratives have long served to demonstrate the superiority of white civilization. That is, in telling of the captive’s redemption and reintegration into white society, readers were meant to understand this as validation of the superiority of white civilization. For more, see the work of Slotkin and Namias.

in order to deceive the Indians.” She followed the river until she was opposite “Carter’s house,” at which point a man she identified by name assisted her from the river.¹³⁰

Others, such as Mrs. Scott, took advantage of an unforeseen opportunity. After eleven days of captivity, “the four Indians that had her in charge stopped at a place...to hunt” leaving Mrs. Scott under the supervision of “an old man.” Mrs. Scott waited until “her keeper” was busy “graining a deer skin” to request “liberty to go a small distance to a stream of water to wash the blood off her apron that had remained besmeared since the fatal night of the murder of her daughter.” After gaining his permission, Mrs. Scott “proceeded on without delay...until late in the evening.”¹³¹ Mrs. Watts also waited until the Indians were in “a sound sleep” before she made her escape “in as silent a manner as possible.”¹³² Contemporaries may have viewed women as the “weaker sex,” but this perceived vulnerability was also what allowed many men to underestimate their female

¹²⁹ Herbeson’s five-year-old son was inconsolable as the group crossed the Alleghany River, and as a result he suffered a similar fate to his three-year old brother.

¹³⁰ *Affecting History of the Dreadful Distresses of Frederick Manheim's Family; To which are Added, An Encounter between a White Man and Two Savages; Adventures of Capt. Isaac Stewart; Deposition of Mercy Herbeson; Adventures and Sufferings of Peter Williamson; Remarkable Adventures of Jackson Johonnot; Account of the Destruction of the Settlements at Wyoming.* Exeter, Massachusetts: Printed for Chapman Whitcomb, 1793.

¹³¹ Archibald Loudon, ed., “A Narrative of the Captivity and Escape of Mrs. Frances Scott, an Inhabitant of Washington County, Virginia,” in *A Selection of Some of the Most Interesting Narratives...*, (Carlisle: 1808), 44-45.

¹³² J. Weatherwise, *The Connecticut, Rhode-Island, Massachusetts, New-Hampshire & Vermont farmers almanac, for the year of our Lord eighteen hundred three. ... also--containing an affecting account of the death of Miss Polly & Hannah Watts, who were taken prisoners and murdered by the Indians, on the 5th of April, 1802.* (Connecticut, 1803). The pages of Watts’ account are not numbered. This information can be found on the second and third page of the narrative.

captives. While the consequence for such an assumption allowed captives such as Watts to escape, others “took up the hatchet,” and “effectually put an end to [her captor’s] existence while he continued sleeping.”¹³³

For other captives, such as Mary Kinnan, escape also required communication and cooperation with family members. After more than a year in captivity, Kinnan received a letter from her brother in Detroit. They continued to exchange correspondence for six months through “the Indian traders” before agreeing on when he would “ameliorate [her] condition.” The possibility of her redemption brought her comfort, but the “delicious cordial to [her] drooping spirits” was the knowledge that her friends and relatives “still entertained for [her] a warm, impassioned affection.”¹³⁴ For Kinnan, her ability to return to and be accepted within white settlement was of equal importance to her survival. Kinnan waited until her captors had fallen asleep before she “stole out about eleven o’clock” to meet her brother, who then “drest [her] in one of his own suits of clothes and tied a handkerchief over [her] eyes.” With her features disguised, she avoided being “re-claimed by some of the Indians” before boarding the ship, which delivered her from captivity.¹³⁵ Kinnan was “overcome with joy” as she passed into “the United States,” specifically to the home of a family member in New Jersey, marking the end of

¹³³ Panther, 22.

¹³⁴ *A True Narrative of the Sufferings of Mary Kinnan*, 114.

¹³⁵ *A True Narrative of the Sufferings of Mary Kinnan*, (Elizabethtown, NJ: Shepard Kollock, 1795), in Kathryn Zabelle Derounian-Stodola, ed., *Women’s Indian Captivity Narratives*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1998), 109-112. 109-112, 115-116.

her captivity.¹³⁶ Editors highlighted the redemption of captives, often concluding narratives with the woman returning “home” in an effort to underscore the viability of the nation.

The explosion of printed materials throughout the early republic allowed publishers to reach a national audience.¹³⁷ Women’s captivity narratives published between 1787 through 1811 reveal more to us than an account of their captivity, more than a cautionary tale for readers whose only encounter experience would be in their imaginations. Indian captivity narratives simultaneously exposed and tempered the anxieties facing early Americans with regard to national stability. Those who wrote of captivity offer historians an opportunity to understand not only the challenges of organizing western settlement, but also how early Americans constructed an understanding of their nation.

Such understanding was built upon the notion of home and family. In doing so, home became a metaphor for nation. For what was a nation if it could not guarantee the settlements of its citizens? Consistent, often highly sensationalized, depictions of violence perpetrated against white settlers filled the pages of captivity narratives. Editors obscured the differences between Indigenous groups, in order to create a "monolithic

¹³⁶ In 1785 Shepard Kollock established his printshop in Elizabethtown, New Jersey and printed mostly religious texts. Kollock capitalized on the redemption of Kinnan with the 1795 publication of *A True Narrative of the Sufferings of Mary Kinnan*.

¹³⁷ Susan Branson, *These Fiery Frenchified Dames: Women and Political Culture in Early National Philadelphia*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 5.

other." Yet, Indigenous peoples were certainly not the only "other" offered up in contrast to the image of the white settler throughout the early republic, as evidence from the following chapter will demonstrate.

Captivity narratives offer a window into discussions of national identity, which emerged out of virulent political struggle. Women's captivity narratives reveal to us exactly what was at stake in the early decades of the young nation, the vulnerability of its borders, populated by "innocent citizens of the frontier." Through the trope of settler victimization, readers were able to identify with the protagonist, her home and family. Consistent descriptions of Indians "plundering the house of all its valuables," before they took "unfortunate women" as captives, encouraged American readers to perceive grievances against an individual, including both the loss of life and property, as grievances against the nation. In doing so, they transformed a confederation of states into a nation. Female captives, their editors, and the American readers were all participants in the construction of this identity, which was contradictory, contested and always in process.

While white settlers continued to challenge Indigenous land claims with more and more westward settlement, the young nation also needed to address the implication of events across the Atlantic. Specifically, many Americans became preoccupied with the events of the French Revolution and its potential impact on the American nation. After 1795, "as relations between France and the United States deteriorated," the content of

some of the most widely circulated women's Indian captivity narratives also evolved to reflect the anti-French sentiment which came to dominate many public political spaces.¹³⁸

¹³⁸ For more on anti-French sentiment see Branson, especially chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3
CAPTIVITY AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF A COLLECTIVE MEMORY IN THE
1790s

Central to the genre of Indian captivity narratives was white settlers' "memory" of Indigenous peoples as violent perpetrators. Historians have long been skeptical of the reliability of memory. That is, historians generally regard accounts recorded at the time better than those recalled years later. Yet, scholars have also come to agree that "memory is constructed, not reproduced." And, such constructions "occur in the context of community, broader politics, and social dynamics."¹³⁹ Rather than evaluating the accuracy of memory, scholars of the early republic have become interested in understanding the *ways* in which Americans remembered events.¹⁴⁰ Therefore, if memory is constructed and historical context is crucial to our understanding of this process, what can we learn from the 1790s publication of two captivity narratives detailing experiences of the Seven Years War? How did the context of the 1790s affect the way in which the editors constructed the captivity of Jenima Howe and Susannah Johnson? What role did the memory of their captivities play in the emergence of an American national identity?

The 1790s was a turbulent decade for Americans. Not only was the young nation still facing continuous threats to its sovereignty along its western boundaries, but its strongest European ally, France, was embroiled in revolution. By 1793, war between

¹³⁹ Michael Kammen, Introduction to *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York, 1991), citations on pages 9-10.

¹⁴⁰ See Alfred F. Young, *The Shoemaker and the Tea Party: Memory and the American Revolution*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1999).

France, Britain and Spain brought military conflict to the Caribbean, which was of substantially more geographical concern than warring nations across the Atlantic. Moreover, the Caribbean was vital for the Atlantic economy, as sugar, coffee and other cash crops fueled many economies.¹⁴¹ While the French Revolution elicited various responses from contemporary Americans, France of the mid-1790s was "viewed by many in the United States as a bloody, irrational and dangerous republic."¹⁴² Having written and discarded two Constitutions, executed the former monarch, Louis XVI and his wife Marie Antoinette along with thousands of others in Robespierre's "Reign of Terror," France was in turmoil. Many Americans sought to distance themselves from any comparison that linked the American Revolution to the changes occurring in France. It is within this context that the captivity narratives of Jemima Howe and Susannah Johnson were published. Yet, the narratives were not accounts of contemporary events, but rather detailed their experiences as English colonists during the Seven Years War, the last of the imperial wars between Britain and France that affected the American West. Indeed, control of "the West" had become the driving force between Europe's two imperial powers in the mid-eighteenth century.¹⁴³ These narratives became "useful collective

¹⁴¹ Francois Furstenberg, *When the United States Spoke French: Five Refugees who Shaped a Nation*, (New York: Penguin Press, 2014), 42-43.

¹⁴² Carol Smith Rosenberg, *This Violent Empire: The Birth of an American National Identity*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 277.

¹⁴³ For more discussion on this point see Gregory H. Nobles, *American Frontiers: Cultural Encounters and Continental Conquest*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1997), 78.

fictions" in which the memory of such events could be positioned as evidence for the viability of the young nation and in turn a force for American national belonging.¹⁴⁴

This chapter focuses primarily on the captivity narratives of Jemima Howe (1792) and Susannah Johnson (1796).¹⁴⁵ Although both women were taken captive from New Hampshire during the 1750s, their narratives were not published until the 1790s. To Americans in the 1790s, the Seven Years War had become a leading symbol in the creation of an American history, and Howe and Johnson lived long enough to be thought of as some of the last members of this generation. Analysis of these narratives compliments the work of Fred Anderson, who argued that George Washington's recollection of the Seven Years War was the benchmark of meaning by which contemporaries measured America's pursuit for nationhood.¹⁴⁶ Because both narratives

¹⁴⁴ I borrow the term "collective fiction" from Christine M. DeLucia's recent work on Pilgrim centric narratives regarding the memory of King Philip's War. See Christine M. DeLucia, *Memory Lands: King Philip's War and the Place of Violence in the Northeast*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), xi.

¹⁴⁵ Bunker Gay, *A Genuine and Correct Account of the Captivity, Sufferings and Deliverance of Mrs. Jemima Howe, of Hinsdale in New Hampshire* (Boston: Belknap and Young, 1792); Mrs. Susannah Willard Johnson Hastings, *A Narrative of the Captivity of Mrs. Johnson, Containing an Account of Her Sufferings During Four Years with the Indians and the French* (Walpole, New Hampshire: Printed by David Carlisle, 1796).

¹⁴⁶ Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766*, (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 2000); Fred Anderson, *A Short History of the French and Indian War: The War that Made America*, (New York: Viking, 2005), especially page xix. Anderson contends that the French and Indian War "opened the door to the Revolution." *A Short History*, 265. While this dissertation does not address the validity of such a claim, my work supports Anderson in identifying the

were written and published well after the events occurred, they became part of a collective memory, a national past. Their experiences were intimate accounts of a national discourse in which knowledge of the outcome, that is, English victory and the virtual elimination of French territory in North America at the conclusion of war in 1763, frames the entire story. Yet, the narratives did not emphasize the English victory, but rather recast the story as part of the U.S. past. Memories of captivity during the Seven Years War included "frontier miseries" as well as examples of triumph and survival that shaped Americans' sense of themselves as a nation. The colonists may have been subjects of British empire, but this was also the generation of George Washington, military hero of the Seven Years War as well as one of the nation's founders. What also emerged, especially by the publication of Johnson's narrative, was not only an emphasis on the perfidy of the French, specifically the way they were cast in the narratives as the puppet-masters of the Indians, but also a message about the stability and viability of the American nation. As a point of contrast, I also include analysis of Elizabeth Hanson's 1728 narrative. Like Howe and Johnson, Hanson was living in New Hampshire when she was taken captive by group of Western Abenaki men and later sold to the French in Canada. Yet, anti-French rhetoric was virtually absent throughout Hanson's much earlier narrative.

Aside from an implied interest in recording events for posterity, not all editors of captivity narratives included an explicit purpose for publication. Indeed, the purpose for

importance of remembering the French and Indian war for Americans' understanding of nation in the late eighteenth century.

publication varied among the narratives of Hanson, Howe and Johnson, with the latter two constructing a narrative more closely tied with ideas of national belonging. Hanson's narrative, which was originally published in Philadelphia by Samuel Keimer in 1728, was popular on both sides of the Atlantic. The title, *God's Mercy Surmounting Man's Cruelty, Exemplified in the Captivity and Redemption of Elizabeth Hanson wife of John Hanson, of Knoxmarsh at Kecheachy, in Dover township, who was taken captive with her children, and maid-servant, by the Indians in New-England, in the year 1724*, reflected the allegorical interpretation of God's working on behalf of the captive.¹⁴⁷ The title page

¹⁴⁷ *God's Mercy Surmounting Man's Cruelty, Exemplified in the Captivity and Redemption of Elizabeth Hanson wife of John Hanson, of Knoxmarsh at Kecheachy, in Dover township, who was taken captive with her children, and maid-servant, by the Indians in New-England, in the year 1724; In which are inserted, sundry remarkable preservations, deliverances, and marks of the care and kindness of Providence over her and her children, worthy to be remembered. The substance of which was taken from her own mouth, and now published for general service.* (Philadelphia: Samuel Keimer, 1728); (Philadelphia, 1754).

The religious rhetoric of the title was excised in the London publications. Elizabeth Hanson, *An Account Of The Captivity Of Elizabeth Hanson, Late Of Kacheky In New England, Who With Four Of Her Children, And Servant-Maid Was Taken Captive By The Indians And Carried Into Canada: Setting Forth The Various Remarkable Occurrences, Sore Trials And Wonderful Deliverances Which Befell Them After Their Departure To The Time Of Their Redemption.* (London, 1760, 1787, 1791). The title pages of all London editions edited by Samuel Bowmas claimed to be the result of his interview with Hanson in 1727. Yet, the content and structure are nearly identical in the London and American editions, scholars agree they could not have been taken down on separate occasions. That is, the editor of the London edition "worked directly from a copy of the American edition." See Richard Van DerBeets, *Held Captive by Indians: Selected Narratives 1642-1846*, (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1973), 131. For more on publication history of Hanson see R.W.G. Vail, *The Voice of the Old Frontier*, (New York: Octagon, 1970) and Kathryn Zabelle Derounian-Stodola and James Arthur Levernier, *The Indian Captivity Narrative, 1550-1900*, (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1993), 8.

indicated that the "substance" of Hanson's story "was taken from her own mouth," but it did not indicate by whom. According to the final sentence of Hanson's narrative, the purpose for recording her account was so "that the reader hereof provoked with more care and fear to serve him in Righteousness and Humility and then my designed End and Purpose will be answered."¹⁴⁸ Similar to captivity narratives of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the reader was meant to view Hanson's captivity through a Christian lens in which her redemption was evidence of God's mercy and subsequently the reader's gratitude. However, the editors of Howe's narrative do not include such explicit intentions for the reader. Given the publication history of Howe's narrative, purpose for publication can be identified. David Humphrey, prominent New England publisher, included Jemima Howe's captivity experiences as part of his larger biography of a notable figure from the Revolutionary War, *An Essay on the Life of Israel Putnam* in 1788. Putnam and Howe were acquaintances, as Putnam had escorted Howe from Canada after Col. Schuyler secured her redemption.¹⁴⁹ Two years after Putnam's biography reached audiences, historian and writer Jeremy Belknap sent out a broadside request for "verifiable incidents" he could use in a history of New Hampshire that he was compiling.

For more on captivity narratives as a demonstration of divine deliverance see Greg Sieminski, "The Puritan Captivity Narrative and the Politics of the American Revolution," *American Quarterly*, 42 (March 1990), 35-56; Pauline Turner Strong, *Captive Selves, Captivating Others: The Politics and Poetics of Colonial American Captivity Narratives* (Boulder, Co: Westview Press, 1999).

¹⁴⁸ *God's Mercy Surmounting Man's Cruelty*, 52.

¹⁴⁹ Col. Schuyler redeemed both Howe and Putnam from the French during the Seven Years' War.

Bunker Gay, minister of Hinsdale, New Hampshire, responded to Belknap's request with a first person account of Jemima Howe's captivity framed by his comments. In 1792 Belknap gave permission for Gay's manuscript letter to be extracted from *The History of New Hampshire* and issued as a separate pamphlet. Thus, in 1792 Bunker Gay published *A Genuine and Correct Account of the Captivity, Suffering and Deliverance of Mrs. Jemima Howe*. Similar to Howe's narrative, an explicitly religious intention was also absent from the narrative of Susannah Johnson. In 1796, New Hampshire publisher, David Carlisle, published *A Narrative of the Captivity of Mrs. Johnson Containing an Account of Her Sufferings, During Four Years, with the Indians and French*. Although credited to Susannah Johnson as a first person account, scholars have confirmed that the details of her captivity were primarily shaped by her editor as well as local lawyer, John C. Chamberlain. New England of the 1790s was not only the political base of the Federalists but, also maintained a political culture long imbued with anti-Catholic and anti-French sentiment.¹⁵⁰ Therefore, initial publication of Howe and Johnson's narratives, which recalled events of captivity among the French and their Indigenous allies is not surprising.

Although the publication of narratives such as those detailing Howe and Johnson was long after the events reportedly occurred, many American readers would have been familiar with the captivity of these women. Readers of Putnam's biography would have learned about Howe four years prior to her narrative being published as an independent pamphlet. Details of Johnson's captivity were also included in one of the most popular

¹⁵⁰ Furstenberg, 42.

captivity narratives of the eighteenth century, *A Faithful Narrative, of the many Dangers and Sufferings, as well as wonderful Deliverances of Robert Eastburn*. According to Eastburn's narrative, the Johnson family "were taken in a Time of Peace and made prisoners between three and four Years...and his wife delivered [their fourth child] on the road to Canada."¹⁵¹ Similarly, the Johnson narrative included details about the arrival of the Howe family in Montreal. According to Johnson's narrative, "a scout of savages brought a number of prisoners into Montreal." Among those prisoners were two children belonging to "Mrs. Howe, the fair captive celebrated in Humphrey's life of Putnam."¹⁵² Such observations are significant. Including the names of other captives or in the case of Johnson, including a detailed bibliographic reference, demonstrated the pervasiveness of women's captivity within American publications. The pervasiveness of women's captivity facilitated a shared memory as well as a sense of national belonging.

The pervasiveness of women's captivity demonstrated the role such stories played in the emergence of an American national identity. For example, Johnson's narrative was also published in 1797 and subsequently circulated throughout the Philadelphia area.¹⁵³ Scholars may have initially overlooked this publication as another edition of Johnson's narrative because publisher, J. Mitchell, cited Susannah Willard as the author. Willard

¹⁵¹ Robert Eastburn, *A Faithful Narrative of the Many Dangers and Sufferings as Well as Wonderful Deliverances of Robert Eastburn*, (Philadelphia: William Dunlap, 1758), 39.

¹⁵² *A Narrative of the Captivity of Mrs. Johnson*, 121.

¹⁵³ For more on the circulation of this edition see Gary L. Ebersole, *Captured by Texts: Puritan to Postmodern Images of Indian Captivity*, (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1995); Smith Rosenberg, *This Violent Empire*, especially page 224.

and Johnson were indeed the same woman, as she remarried after the death of her first husband. This edition of Johnson's narrative also included a variation in title, *The Captive American; or, A Narrative of the Sufferings of Mrs. Johnson, during Four Years Captivity with the Indians and French*.¹⁵⁴ Although only three words accounted for the difference, the meaning is quite significant, especially since the body of the narrative remained unchanged. Johnson's narrative not only placed her experiences within "the infancy of our country," but they also identified her experiences as American. Such a title allowed readers to universalize Johnson's experiences as indicative of an American experience. This edition was also unique for the advertisement page, which was not included in any of the other editions of Johnson's narrative. The editor used this space to provide the reader with the purpose for publication. According to the editor, the "following narrative...contains an event which a few years ago was unfortunately too frequently experienced by the inhabitants of the western frontier of North America—that is captivity by the Indians." Furthermore, according to the editor, the narrative offered "a contrast to the tranquil situation which the present inhabitants enjoy."¹⁵⁵ Consistent with the body of the narrative, readers were encouraged to draw two important conclusions related to their nation. First, Johnson's experience represented the resiliency of white settlers, who endured "captivity by the Indians." Second, her experience was meant to evoke a sense of gratitude for the current generation of Americans, who enjoy a "tranquil" existence.

¹⁵⁴ Susannah Willard, *The Captive American; or, A Narrative of the Sufferings of Mrs. Johnson, during Four Years Captivity with the Indians and French*, (Carlisle: Printed by J. Mitchell, 1797)

¹⁵⁵ *The Captive American*, 2.

Howe's narrative, which arguably reached the widest audience among the three narratives, was included in a variety of instructional materials for teachers. Placed in the hands of young American readers, captivity narratives held the power to influence the construction of national memory as well as national identity. Howe's narrative appeared in Caleb Bingham's 1794 publication of *The American Preceptor: Being a Selection of Lessons for Reading and Speaking, Designed for the Use of Schools*. In 1809 Noah Webster included Howe's narrative in his rival text, *An American Selection of Lessons in Reading and Speaking; Calculated to Improve the Minds and Refine the Tastes of Youth; To Which are Prefixed Rules of Elocution and Directions for Expressing the Principal Passions of the Mind*.¹⁵⁶ Her narrative continued to appear in the annual editions of both works throughout the nineteenth century. Thus for decades, schoolchildren read Howe's account alongside speeches from Cicero and George Washington, short stories, advice for parents, and historical accounts of Christopher Columbus and Pocahontas. Howe's was the *only* captivity narrative published in either text. Similar to the accounts of Columbus and Pocahontas, Howe's captivity narrative provided readers with more than a lesson in history. It created a collective memory, a shared past for young American students, and a sense of national belonging, in which the French were cast not as the deciding factor for an American victory in its War for Independence, but rather as the ally of the "savage

¹⁵⁶Caleb Bingham, *The American Preceptor: Being a Selection of Lessons for Reading and Speaking, Designed for the Use of Schools*, (Boston: Maning and Loring for Hall, 1794), 176-185; Noah Webster, *An American Selection of Lessons in Reading and Speaking; Calculated to Improve the Minds and Refine the Tastes of Youth; To Which are Prefixed Rules of Elocution and Directions for Expressing the Principal Passions of the Mind* (Philadelphia: Published by David Hogan, 1809), 76-85.

Indian,” who threatened the stability of English settlement in North America. Yet, similar to accounts of Columbus and Pocahontas, Howe's captivity represented the past, while at the same time it endorsed the viability of the young nation. Young readers could categorize these stories as part of the challenges of conquest and also reasonably conclude that they were part of the inevitable trajectory of American continental domination.

Of the three narratives, Johnson's included an explicitly didactic tone. The editors used her memory of the Seven Years War in order that readers would "be directed to a politicized reading of their present."¹⁵⁷ The reader was often addressed directly throughout Johnson's narrative. A few examples illustrate this point. The narrative began with a broad generalization about how "our country has so long been exposed to Indian wars, that recitals of exploits and sufferings, escapes and deliverances, have become both numerous and trite." Yet, Johnson's narrative also claimed that "[a] detail of the miseries of a 'frontier man,' must excite pity of everyone who claims humanity." Such miseries included "gloominess of the rude forest, the distance from friends and competent defense, and the daily inroads and nocturnal yells of hostile Indians." Her narrative presented a

¹⁵⁷ For Carroll, the 1796 edition reflected the Federalist politics of Carlisle and Chamberlain. Similarly, according to Eustace, the 1814 edition carried urgent political value in the midst of the War of 1812. Lorraine Carroll, "'Affecting History': Impersonating Women in the Early Republic," *Early American Literature* 39, no. 3 (2004): 511-552, quotation on page 521, 546; Nicole Eustace, *1812: War and the Passions of Patriotism*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), especially chapter 4. For more on the emerging political party system of the early republic see Andrew W. Robertson, "Afterword: Reconceptualizing Jeffersonian Democracy," in *Journal of the Early Republic*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (Summer 2013), pp. 317-334.

shared memory for the readers, “who can recollect the war that existed between France and England fifty years ago,” but also a tale of caution, to remain vigilant. Similar to other narratives, white settlers were described as victims, whose main objective was the “employment of husbandry,” yet they often still had to carry “weapons of war” to the “sacred house of prayer” on Sundays. Not only were white settlers unsafe within their places of worship, Johnson's narrative asserted, their homes offered little comfort from the “daily reports of captured families and slaughtered friends.” Evocative phrases such as the “fears of lisping children” were included in an effort to incite gratitude among “readers early in life.” The final paragraphs of the narrative recalled the many “valuable lessons” learned throughout captivity, such as “the value of patience” and “gratitude.” Readers “early in life” were once again addressed to recognize that “their lives fell in a land of peace, where neither savages nor neighboring wars embitter life, unlike the suffering which their parents and ancestors endured.”¹⁵⁸ The erasure of Indigenous peoples perpetuated a myth and also reinforced a notion among American readers that continental dominance was inevitable.

Consistent with other women's Indian captivity narratives, the narratives of Hanson, Howe and Johnson cast Indigenous peoples in opposition to white settlers. Editors of these narratives also employed similar rhetoric in their descriptions of Indigenous peoples. For example, readers would have been familiar with descriptions of “menacing frowns from the savages, [which] soon imposed silence” among even the youngest of captives, “meagre fare,” “war dances,” “infernally yelling,” as well as the

¹⁵⁸ *A Narrative of the Captivity of Mrs. Johnson*, 8-9

“unwelcome and unpleasant lodgings of the wigwam,” which could “not be thought of as a pleasing residence to one accustomed to civilized life.”¹⁵⁹ Readers would also have been familiar with what editors identified as “national practice” among Indigenous societies that whomever “first laid hands on a prisoner considered him as his property,” and often times this “prisoner” was adopted.¹⁶⁰

Most familiar to readers would have been the opening scene of attack on the homes of white settlers. Each of these narratives described the women's communities as “frontier towns” of New Hampshire in “imminent danger.” They also began with a familiar and stereotypically violent attack. According to Hanson's narrative, in August 1725 a group of “eleven Indians, armed with tomahawks and guns...came furiously into the house.”¹⁶¹ According to Howe's narrative, in late July 1755 before the men could reach the safety of the fort, they “were fired upon by twelve Indians.” Having heard the gunfire, the three women anxiously opened the gate only to be surprised by “a number of hideous Indians,” who took the women and their children captive. According to Howe, the Indians “plundered and put fire to the Fort” before leading them “into the woods.”¹⁶² In 1754, according to Johnson's narrative, she “boasted with exultation” upon her husband's return from a fur trading expedition in Connecticut, but her relief would be

¹⁵⁹ *A Narrative of the Captivity of Mrs. Johnson*, 26, 59, 60, 61.

¹⁶⁰ *A Narrative of the Captivity of Mrs. Johnson*, 25, 66; *A Genuine and Correct Account of the Captivity, Suffering and Deliverance of Mrs. Jemima Howe*, 21.

¹⁶¹ *God's Mercy Surmounting Man's Cruelty*, 2.

¹⁶² *A Genuine and Correct Account of the Captivity, Suffering and Deliverance of Mrs. Jemima Howe*, 11.

short lived. A repeated knocking on their door roused her husband from bed. As he opened the door, the neighbor warned, "Indians!" Johnson's husband "sprang to his guns," but amidst the chaos, their neighbor failed to close the door, which allowed "a crowd of savages, fixed horribly for war, [to rush] furiously in." With her husband immediately bound, she, "in the last days of pregnancy," and her children were led nearly naked from their beds. The Indians then "confidently bundled up" what "little plunder their hurry would allow" before they set "fire to the buildings."¹⁶³

Although largely consistent throughout the body of the narratives, these texts offered some variation with regard to the captive's cultural perspective of Indigenous people. That is, while each narrative identified Indigenous peoples as "savage," the editors also included examples of Indigenous "Humanity and Civility." Drawing attention to such evidence is significant for the early American reader, as well as for contemporary scholars. Evidence of Indigenous civility provided contemporary readers with a benchmark against which commentary regarding interactions with the French could be judged. And for contemporary scholars, such evidence offers an alternative conclusion to the scholarship, which only emphasizes the negative representations of Indigenous peoples found within captivity narratives.¹⁶⁴ For example, according to Hanson's narrative, she was surprised that her captor frequently assisted her, at times even carrying

¹⁶³ A Narrative of the Captivity of Mrs. Johnson, 14-18, 24.

¹⁶⁴ For one example of this generalization see especially page 227 of Smith Rosenberg, *This Violent Empire*, in which she argues "Native Americans are represented as the antithesis of the pious and civilized European American...no native nobility shines forth."

her infant daughter. Such actions were "more than [she] could have expected." According to Hanson's narrative, the Indians "were very civil toward captive women, not offering any incivility by any indecent carriage."¹⁶⁵ Perhaps most surprising to Hanson was her interactions with the "Indian squaws," who having observed her "uneasiness" at learning that her "milk was intirely dried up," advised her to make milk from boiling crushed walnuts, water, and corn meal. Soon, her infant "began to thrive and look well."¹⁶⁶

Although she criticized Indigenous peoples for living "for the most part, either in riot or excess," she only used the term "barbarous" twice throughout her entire narrative. The narrative of Jemima Howe also included some positive interactions with her Indigenous captors. Similar to other captives, the members of Howe's family were separated, and when she was permitted to see her two year old son, she was delighted that he was "in tolerable health and circumstances, under the protection of a fine Indian mother."¹⁶⁷

Likewise, Susannah Johnson's narrative recognized "humanity" from her Indigenous captors when they "busied themselves in making a fire to warm her" after she waded

¹⁶⁵ *God's Mercy Surmounting Man's Cruelty, Exemplified in the Captivity and Redemption of Elizabeth Hanson wife of John Hanson, of Knoxmarsh at Kecheachy, in Dover township, who was taken captive with her children, and maid-servant, by the Indians in New-England, in the year 1724; In which are inserted, sundry remarkable preservations, deliverances, and marks of the care and kindness of Providence over her and her children, worthy to be remembered. The substance of which was taken from her own mouth, and now published for general service.* (Philadelphia: Samuel Keimer, 1728), 5, 9, 36; (Philadelphia, 1754).

¹⁶⁶ *God's Mercy Surmounting Man's Cruelty*, 13, 15

¹⁶⁷ *A Genuine and Correct Account of the Captivity, Suffering and Deliverance of Mrs. Jemima Howe*, 11

across a creek.¹⁶⁸ According to Johnson's narrative, her Indigenous captors showed her a great deal of consideration, treating her "with the same attention that they did their natural kindred."¹⁶⁹ Inclusion of these observations is significant as they demonstrate some variation among Indian captivity narratives. As the analysis from the previous chapter demonstrates, most captivity narratives portrayed Indigenous people in a monolithic way in an effort to draw "stark contrasts of white and red."¹⁷⁰ Yet, not all observations of Indigenous "sympathy to their captives" were "explained away" through editorial commentary. That is, the narratives of Johnson and Howe demonstrate that Indigenous peoples were not the only "contrasting Other" utilized in the construction of a sense of national belonging. In fact, narratives detailing the Seven Years War emphasize the perfidy of the French in an effort to distinguish the early American republic from the perceived excesses and failures of Revolutionary France.

In fact, Indigenous peoples were not the only subjects cited for lack of humanity, as the French were also included in varying degrees throughout the narratives of Hanson, Howe and Johnson. The overall tone of Hanson's narrative, regardless of whether it was published in 1728 or 1754, was substantially less vitriolic regarding the French than narratives published in America throughout the 1790s. Hanson spent the final month of her captivity among the French. According to her narrative, she expressed gratitude for

¹⁶⁸ *A Narrative of the Captivity of Mrs. Johnson*, 39.

¹⁶⁹ *A Narrative of the Captivity of Mrs. Johnson*, 54.

¹⁷⁰ Smith Rosenberg, *This Violent Empire*, 227-229.

"having changed my Landlord, my Table and Diet" and concluded the French were civil beyond what [she] could have expected." For Hanson, like other captives, civility was judged by specific markers, which included human subjects as well as material objects. In both eighteenth-century American editions, Hanson's narrative also included a graphic, yet familiar scene for readers of Indian captivity. According to the narrative, after "having killed two of my children, they scalped them, a practice common with these people, which is whenever they kill any English people, they cut the skin from the crown of their heads and carry it with them." Such scalps were kept "for a testimony and evidence that they have killed so many, receiving sometimes a reward of a sum of money for every scalp."¹⁷¹ In the American editions, the individual or group providing "reward of a sum of money for every scalp" remained unidentified. For American readers of 1728 or 1754 editions, the French, who were likely providing pecuniary reward "for every scalp," were not portrayed as major actors in these events. In fact, explicit criticism of the French was limited to one phrase throughout Hanson's narrative. Specifically, Hanson reportedly lamented as a "Romish priest" baptized her infant soon after their arrival at a French settlement.¹⁷²

Yet, the French factored more prominently in the narratives of both Howe and Johnson, both of whom endured much longer captivity experiences. Although Howe and Johnson were held captive in the same French territories of Canada, their experiences

¹⁷¹ *God's Mercy Surmounting Man's Cruelty*, 7

¹⁷² *God's Mercy Surmounting Man's Cruelty*, 17.

were not entirely identical. According to both narratives, the women initially viewed the alliance between their Indigenous captors and the French as an advantage. That is, both Howe and Johnson reportedly requested transfer from Indigenous settlement in order that they “might be disposed of among some of the French inhabitants of Canada.” Eventually Howe's “repeated and earnest solicitations,” convinced her Indigenous captor to accompany Howe and her infant to Montreal “in hopes of finding a market” for her there. Yet, Howe's relief was short lived as the wife “a certain French gentleman” refused to “buy a woman that has a child.” Although Howe returned to St. Francis, where she remained for several months, she would eventually be sold to an officer in the French army.¹⁷³ According to Howe's narrative, she was relieved to be separated from “the barbarous Indians,” as Governor de Vauderuil ordered the officer to make her “situation and service to the French family as easy and delightful as possible.”¹⁷⁴ Similarly, Johnson was reportedly pleased to learn she and her two children were purchased by the DuQuesnes, a family of “respectability.”¹⁷⁵ According to the narratives of Howe and Johnson, both advocated for placement with the French, where they assumed their circumstances would improve.

Although these assumptions were implied throughout Howe's narrative, Johnson's narrative provided much more explicit detail. Upon their arrival near Lake Champlain,

¹⁷³ *A Genuine and Correct Account of the Captivity, Suffering and Deliverance of Mrs. Jemima Howe*, 7, 8, 9

¹⁷⁴ *A Genuine and Correct Account of the Captivity, Suffering and Deliverance of Mrs. Jemima Howe*, 16.

¹⁷⁵ *A Narrative of the Captivity of Mrs. Johnson*, 56, 72.

Johnson reportedly expressed relief in “being delivered from savage captivity” into the settlement of “civilized Frenchmen.” Specifically, the material possessions of the French were then contrasted with those of with Indigenous peoples, as indicators of civilization as well as that which “characterized the best part of a nation.” Rather than having to eat meals “upon their knees” or sleep “in a manner that more resembled cows in a shed, than human beings in a house,” Johnson’s narrative cited “change of linen,” “bowls of brandy,” chairs and beds as indicators of civilization. Based on these observations, she concluded that her experiences while under the command of the French would be more hospitable than they had been under her Indigenous captors because “they had no claim to the benefits of civilization.”¹⁷⁶

Yet, the details of Howe and Johnsons experiences undermined this initial assumption. Indicative of the long history of religious tensions between Protestants and Catholics, both narratives placed blame firmly with the French as they attributed the captives’ “affliction” to the “blind superstition which is inculcated by their [Catholic] monks and friars.”¹⁷⁷ According to Howe’s narrative, both of her daughters were “conveyed to the same nunnery” upon their arrival in Quebec. Although she wrote directly to Governor de Vauderuil for the release of her daughters, she lamented that they

¹⁷⁶ *A Narrative of the Captivity of Mrs. Johnson*, 39-49, 52-54, 62-64

¹⁷⁷ For another example of the role religion played in the captivity experience of those English settlers sold to the French or to their converted Indian allies, see John Demos, *The Unredeemed Captive: A Family Story from Early America*, (New York: Random House, 1994). For Demos’ reference to a “Protestant New England” in contrast to a “Catholic Canada” see pages 228-230.

remained “in this school of superstition and bigotry” for the duration of the war.¹⁷⁸ In fact, Howe would not be able to secure their release from the convent until months after her own redemption. Although Governor de Vauderuil facilitated Howe's transfer from her captivity in St. Francis to the home of a French officer in Quebec, he was unable or unwilling to facilitate her daughter's release from the convent. Yet, his decision is not surprising given that he was the one who initially sent Howe's daughters to the convent. Although Johnson's narrative included disdain for Catholicism, her narrative also included several more explicit criticisms regarding the French more broadly for its failure as a "civilized" nation. These comparisons were included specifically as a frame of reference for the readers with regard to their own sense of national identity, as the editors framed the captivity stories within the context of nation. That is, by specifically calling attention to "our organized government" or "infancy of our country," editors foregrounded the readers' perspective in the rhetoric of nation.

According to Johnson's narrative, the civility of the French waned considerably when her husband failed to “procure oath for the redemption of his family.”¹⁷⁹ Her husband's failure to return from New England within the allotted time led Mr. Duquesne

¹⁷⁸ *A Genuine and Correct Account of the Captivity, Suffering and Deliverance of Mrs. Jemima Howe*, 15, 16, 17, 18

Although some captivity narratives contain substantial details regarding the redemption, including who provided the financial assistance, Howe included this information briefly near the end of her narrative. Howe's focus seemed to be much more on her challenges in redeeming her daughter, than of acknowledging the individuals who contributed to the 2700 livres needed to ransom herself along with her three children.

¹⁷⁹ *A Narrative of the Captivity of Mrs. Johnson*, 73-74.

to terminate any assistance of Johnson and her family. Although Johnson had reportedly been “treated with great attention,” which not only included dinners, but also “parties of pleasure” with the DuQuesne family, Mr. Duquesne’s treatment of her weakened from coldness to contempt. During Mr. Johnson’s seven-month absence “various maneuvers in politics had taken place, which were very injurious to him.” Specifically, his breach of parole was not pardoned by Governor de Vaudrieul. Unable to pay for their release and with Montreal being a “scene of busy confusion” in preparation for war, the Johnsons were confined to prison. Johnson would soon learn that the trappings of civilization were not extended throughout all spaces of French settlement. Although Johnson stated that the “jail was a place too shocking for description,” she complained of food being brought to them “in a pail that swine would run from,” “wooden blocks for seats,” and “lousy blankets.” Johnson and her husband consistently attempted to communicate with members of their family about their condition, but because Governor de Vaudrieul had placed them under special order, they were told that no one except the Governor had authority to release them. After nearly three years in prison, Johnson learned of a ship that would soon arrive to carry prisoners to England for exchange.¹⁸⁰

The editors of Johnson’s narrative then used her voyage across the Atlantic as an opportunity to offer another comparison between Indigenous and French societies. Johnson’s Indigenous captors were referred to as “the children of nature,” a label which carried the same effect for the reader as labeling any space outside of white settlement as

¹⁸⁰ *A Narrative of the Captivity of Mrs. Johnson*, 77-80, 82, 83, 84, 85, 97, 98, 105, 106, 113, 114, 116, 117.

“wilderness” or “open woods.” The reader would have interpreted terms such as “nature” or “wilderness” as indicators of an uncivilized space and people. Johnson's narrative then cautioned those “who have profited by refinement and education” yet still “look with an eye of censure on this untutored race.” Given the language of the following sentences, the reader would have read those “who have profited by refinement and education” to include the French. According her narrative Johnson, could “pardon the Indians for their vindictive spirit because they had no claim to the benefits for civilization.” But, as Johnson concluded, the same pardon should not be extended to the French, “who gave lessons of politeness to the rest of the world, and thus can derive no advantage from the plea of ignorance.”¹⁸¹

Yet, such anti-French rhetoric was not new to late-eighteenth century American readers, but rather was a return to previous sentiment. Specifically, at the height of the Seven Years War, an escalation of anti-French rhetoric occurred throughout many captivity narratives published in America. According to one mid-eighteenth century narrative, “contrary to the Laws of War among civilized nations and ...even in times of Peace, the French Governor of Canada gives Indians great Encouragement to Murder and Captivate the poor Inhabitants of our Frontiers.”¹⁸² In addition to encouragement, another narrative claimed that “the French gave the Indians a certain sum per scalp and for

¹⁸¹ *A Narrative of the Captivity of Mrs. Johnson*, 120.

¹⁸² Robert Eastburn, *A Faithful Narrative of the Many Dangers and Sufferings as Well as Wonderful Deliverances of Robert Eastburn*, (Philadelphia: William Dunlap, 1758), 34, 38.

prisoners if they were young and fit."¹⁸³ Some narratives went so far as to speculate, "had the French not tempted the Indians with the alluring bait of all powerful gold, myself as well as hundreds of others might still have lived most happily in our Station." Such excerpts reflect the political and cultural implications of captivity narratives. That is, narratives published in the mid-eighteenth century were meant to galvanize contemporary readers in support of British imperial domination in North America. And, in the 1790s memory of the same conflict was constructed for another purpose, to connect such domination to the history of the nation as well as demonstrate the viability and sovereignty of the United States as well as to distinguish the early American republic.

The proliferation of captivity narratives such as Howe and Johnson begs the question of the significance of such tales in the 1790s and beyond. The narratives of Howe and Johnson served a broader purpose in constructing an American mythology. Memories of captivity during the Seven Years war played an important role in creating a collective sense of national viability. The narratives of Howe and Johnson also demonstrated a popular sentiment among many Americans that the viability and sovereignty of the nation did not rely on or include Indigenous peoples. Rather,

¹⁸³ William and Elizabeth Fleming, *A Narrative of the Sufferings and Surprizing Deliverance of William and Elizabeth Fleming*, (Philadelphia, by the authors 1756), 21. Peter Williamson, *French and Indian Cruelty Exemplified in the Life and various Vicissitudes of Fortune of Peter Williamson*, (London, 1759) (New York, 1796), 16. For a recent analysis of the impact of Williamson's narrative on the racial and cultural landscape of the British Atlantic world see Timothy Shannon, *Indian Captive, Indian King: Peter Williamson in America and Britain*, (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2018).

Indigenous peoples were cast far in the background. Drawing on the imagery set forth in the opening pages, Johnson's narrative reminded readers that families who once spent their Sunday "guarding a fort" were now "quietly devoted to worship" and "prosperous husbandry now thrives where the terrors of death once chilled us with fear." In a final effort to erase Indigenous peoples from the landscape, her narrative reminded "the present rising generation" that "the savages" have been "driven beyond the Lakes" and the "gloomy wilderness that forty years ago secreted the Indian" had vanished away.¹⁸⁴ Thus, the purpose of these narratives was more about creating a memory than it was about documenting contemporary challenges of frontier families. In fact, Johnson's narrative stood in stark contrast to many of the narratives published throughout the mid-Atlantic region during this same period. According to Johnson's narrative the American government of the 1790s was "organized" and could "stretch forth its protecting arm." Yet, numerous captivity narratives published throughout this period indicated just the opposite for those families living along the Ohio River. In fact, a few years prior to the publication of Johnson's narrative, armed conflict between Indigenous peoples and white settlers continued unabated along the northern Ohio. Although General Anthony Wayne had finally defeated the western confederacy at the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794, the memory of such carnage were not remote abstractions for those families along the western borders.¹⁸⁵ But, for the editors of Howe and Johnson's narratives, Indigenous peoples were cast as part of the nation's past, "driven beyond the Lakes."

¹⁸⁴ *A Narrative of the Captivity of Mrs. Johnson*, 141-143.

Although the inaccurate erasure of Indigenous peoples seems to contradict the reality for many Americans living along the Ohio, the desired effect was still achieved. Readers of captivity narratives were consistently reminded of the survival of white settler families in the face of "atrocities" perpetrated by "savage Indians." The pervasiveness of these narratives helped to construct a memory of strength and resiliency, which would ultimately inform contemporary perspectives. That is, as readers of Howe and Johnson's narrative recalled "the infancy of our country," they also envisioned a future, in which the United States achieved continental domination through the removal of Indigenous peoples. Through the construction of memory, these narratives sought to unite Americans across regional and class differences even if only for a moment as readers. The final paragraph of Johnson's narrative claimed that "our country has no enemies," yet Americans would not only continue to engage in military conflict with Indigenous peoples throughout the nineteenth century, they would once again face Britain in the War of 1812. The consistent publication of women's Indian captivity narratives undermines the illusion of peace, as stated in Johnson's narrative. As white settlers continued their westward expansion into Indigenous lands, stories of women's captivity continued to attract readers. Editors continued to use the captivity drama not only as evidence of national viability, but also to emphasize the resiliency of American leaders, such as Andrew Jackson.

¹⁸⁵ Eric Hinderaker, *Elusive Empires: Constructing Colonialism in the Ohio Valley, 1673-1800*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 258-259; Smith Rosenberg, *This Violent Empire*, 219-220; Alan Taylor, *The Divided Ground: Indians, Settlers, and the Northern Borderland of the American Revolution*, (New York: Random House, 2006), 84-100.

CHAPTER 4
GENDER, CAPTIVITY AND MARTIAL NATIONALISM IN THE EARLY
NINETEENTH CENTURY

In the second decade of the nineteenth century, the captivity narratives of two women, Mary Smith and Eunice Barber, reached wide circulation. Unlike Howe and Johnson, whose narratives recalled a distant memory, these narratives detailed contemporary events. The intention of these narratives was not only to influence American readers regarding the vulnerability of white settlers in the southeastern portion of the United States, but also to construct the sentiment surrounding a burgeoning American figure, Andrew Jackson. Specifically, “the brave General Jackson” was cited in the titles of these two popular captivity narratives.¹⁸⁶ Citing Jackson in the title was distinctive. None of the women’s captivity narratives published between 1787 and 1830 identified the individual responsible for the captive’s redemption, nor did any other

¹⁸⁶ Although the 1818 edition of Smith’s narrative was the third edition, having first been published in 1815, the Barber narrative was in its first edition. *An affecting narrative of the captivity and sufferings of Mrs. Mary Smith, who with her husband, and three daughters, were taken prisoners by the Indians in August last (1814) and after enduring the most cruel hardships and torture of mind for sixty days, in which time she witnessed the tragical death of her husband and helpless children, was fortunately rescued from the merciless hands of the savages by a detached party of the army of the brave General Jackson, then commanding at New Orleans*, (Providence: L. Scott, 1815). *An affecting narrative of the captivity and sufferings of Mrs. Mary Smith, who with her husband, and three daughters, were taken prisoners by the Indians in August 1814 and after enduring the most cruel hardships and torture of mind for sixty days, in which time she witnessed the tragical death of her husband and helpless children, was rescued from the merciless savages by a detached party of the army of the brave General Jackson, then commanding at New Orleans*, (Williamsburgh, Massachusetts: Ephraim Whitman, 1818).

narratives attach themselves to a commanding general of the army. This chapter supports conclusions of scholars such as Laurel Clark Shire, who have identified the ways in which the symbol of vulnerable white women living along the Florida frontier provided justification for violent territorial expansion in the early nineteenth century.¹⁸⁷ The captivity narratives of Smith and Barber not only mobilized the image of white women to justify further dispossession of Indigenous peoples, but also bolstered the image of a burgeoning national figure, Andrew Jackson.¹⁸⁸ As other scholars have noted, narratives, such as these played at least as important a role as did political speeches in persuading people of Indigenous "savagery" and building support for territorial expansion.¹⁸⁹

This chapter offers an analysis of the cultural reproduction and meaning of the nation as it emerged through women's captivity. This chapter highlights the ways in which women's captivity in the southeastern portion of what becomes the United States was central to the construction of Jackson as a national icon as well as the emergence of a collective American identity. Thus, through women's captivity defense of the nation became closely intertwined with defense of normative gender identities, which also

¹⁸⁷ Laurel Clark Shire, *The Threshold of Manifest Destiny: Gender and National Expansion in Florida*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016).

¹⁸⁸ The scholarship on Jackson is vast. As a starting point, many scholars still refer to John William Ward's seminal work, *Andrew Jackson: Symbol for an Age*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955).

¹⁸⁹ Deborah Rosen, *Border Law: The First Seminole War and American Nationhood*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), 133.

rendered them natural and innate. These narratives provided legitimacy to the nation through the normative gendered constructions of masculinity and femininity.¹⁹⁰

The context for both narratives was the American conflicts with Indigenous peoples of southeastern United States, including the Creek War of 1813-1814 and the First Seminole War of 1816-1818. Editors of these narratives explicitly used these contemporary events to frame the narratives. Specifically, the editor of Smith's narrative used the opening sentence to contextualize her captivity as part of the United States effort to "exterminate the Indians of the Creek nations."¹⁹¹ Although the title page of Barber's narrative lacked specific tribal identification, citing "the Indians in Camden County Georgia" as her captors, the body of her narrative included her having identified "many of the Creek Nation among those who held her in captivity."¹⁹² Since Barber was reportedly taken captive in January of 1818, historians have included her narrative within their discussion of the First Seminole War. Yet, the First Seminole War was in many ways part of a much longer conflict even as early as the Creek War of 1813-1814, at which time many of the surviving Creeks fled to Florida, which until 1819 belonged to Spain, and aligned themselves with the Seminoles resisting American encroachment on their land.¹⁹³

¹⁹⁰ Scholarship in the area of gender in nation is vast. Some helpful starting points are Ida Blom, Karen Hagemann, and Catherine Hall, eds., *Gendered Nations: Nationalisms and Gender Order in the Long Nineteenth Century* (New York: Berg, 2000); Tamar Mayer, ed., *Gender Ironies of Nationalism* (New York: Routledge, 2000), see especially page 5.

¹⁹¹ Smith, 3.

¹⁹² Barber, title page, unnumbered, 18.

¹⁹³ For more on the Seminole War see John K. Mahon, "The First Seminole War, November 21, 1817-May 24, 1818," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 77 (Summer 1998):

In the spring of 1817, Americans across the nation were aware of such conflict as newspapers included details of "Indian violence against citizens living on the border of Camden County." In fact, the same article, which first appeared in an April edition of *Daily National Intelligencer*, was reprinted in a wide range of newspapers including those from Kentucky to Massachusetts. According to the article, "the Seminole Indians have brought on our citizens the horrors of the tomahawk and the scalping knife." In order to "secure peaceful citizens against violence from savages," the article added that "our government will station troops" nearby.¹⁹⁴ By July, newspapers began reporting that "the Brave General Jackson and his soldiers," who recently fought "the Creek Indians" were taking up such station.¹⁹⁵ Therefore, in the months leading up to Secretary of War

62-67; Robert V. Remini, *Andrew Jackson and His Indian Wars*, vol. I, *The Course of American Empire, 1767-1821*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1977; repr. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), chap. 23; David S. Heidler and Jeanne T. Heidler, *Old Hickory's War: Andrew Jackson and the Quest for Empire*, rev. ed. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2003), esp. 64-75; Andrew R.L. Cayton, *The Dominion of War: Empire and Liberty in North America, 1500-2000*, (New York: Viking, 2005), chap. 5; Daniel Feller, "The Seminole Controversy Revisited: A New Look at Andrew Jackson's 1818 Florida Campaign," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 88, no. 3 (2010): 309-325. For works which specifically address the role of the Seminole War and the construction of nation see especially the concluding chapter of Eliga H. Gould, *Among the Powers of the Earth: The American Revolution and the Making of a New World Empire*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012); Deborah Rosen, *Border Law: The First Seminole War and American Nationhood*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015).

¹⁹⁴ *Daily National Intelligencer*, Washington DC April 1817; *American Beacon and Commercial Diary*, Virginia, April 1817; *The Eagle*, Maysville, KY, May 1817; *The Yankee Boston* Massachusetts, July 1817

¹⁹⁵ *Rhode Island American and General Advertiser*, September 1817, page 3; *Berks and Schuylkill Journal*, Reading, Pennsylvania, July 1817; *Franklin Herald*, Greenfield, Massachusetts, September 1817, page 3.

Calhoun's orders to relocate General Jackson to Fort Scott, American newspapers had consistently been reporting on the conflict between Indigenous peoples and white settlers near southwestern Georgia.

In January 1818, Jackson wrote to President Monroe advocating American invasion of Florida as the only way to subdue the Seminoles and "secure the frontier." At the same time, newspapers began printing, in its entirety, *General Order from General Jackson to Volunteers of West Tennessee*. According to Jackson's order, "The savages of your border have once again raised the tomahawk against our unoffending citizens." Jackson's orders adhered to the same gendered framework as the narratives of Smith and Barber as he called on "brave men who will endure the hardships of warfare without murmuring or complaining." Americans as far north as Vermont read Jackson's appeal to the "brave men...to come forth at the call of their country."¹⁹⁶

Although Monroe did not respond in writing to Jackson, Calhoun had already given Jackson's predecessor, General Gaines, orders to proceed into Florida in order to achieve "a speedy and effectual termination" of the Seminoles. Yet, Monroe's administration claimed to have ordered Jackson "not to enter Florida, unless it be in pursuit of the enemy, and in that case , to respect the Spanish authority wherever it is maintained."¹⁹⁷ Nevertheless, Jackson arrived at Fort Scott in March of 1818 and

¹⁹⁶ *The National Advocate*, New York, February 1818; *Baltimore Patriot*, Maryland, February 1818; *Vermont Republican*, Vermont, March 1818; *Columbian Gazette*, Utica, New York, March 1818; *New Jersey Journal*, Elizabethtown, New Jersey, March 1818.

proceeded into Florida toward the Spanish post at St. Marks. Within the same month, readers of the *Connecticut Journal* learned that "the Government has supplied the state of Georgia with necessary funds" as well as "a thousand men from Tennessee... to aid the operations of the forces against the Indians."¹⁹⁸ On April 7 Jackson's forces captured the Spanish fort and in his communication with Washington justified his actions as response to Indigenous "instigators of this war." Jackson then executed two British nationals, Alexander Arbuthnot and Robert Ambrister, whom he accused of inciting the Seminoles. While he gave the British nationals "the formality of a trial, Jackson had Hillis Hadjo and another Red Stick leader, Homathle Mico, summarily executed and dragged off to unmarked graves."¹⁹⁹ On June 2, Jackson declared an end to the Seminole War with a dispatch to Calhoun.

The press began covering Jackson's invasion of Florida in April 1818 and northern reprints of southern articles appeared within a few weeks. Throughout the summer of 1818 and continuing into 1819, details of Jackson's invasion, the executions, and the congressional debate related to these events received regular coverage in the press throughout the country.²⁰⁰ Given that a Congressional report from the Committee

¹⁹⁷ Monroe's special message prior to Jackson's invasion was published as *Message from the President... Transmitting Information in Relation to the War with the Seminoles*, March 25, 1818 (Washington: E. De Krafft, 1818)

¹⁹⁸ *Connecticut Journal*, New Haven, March 1818.

¹⁹⁹ Richter, *Facing East*, 233

²⁰⁰ For more on the Seminole War see, Fred Anderson and Andrew R.L. Cayton, *The Dominion of War: Empire and Liberty in North America, 1500-2000* (New York:

on Military Affairs was too lengthy to print in its entirety, newspapers often included excerpts for interested readers. With overwhelming consistency, newspapers included excerpts from the debate regarding Jackson's "power to exercise the right of retaliation" in executing two British nationals, Alexander Arbuthnot and Robert C. Ambrister. Although Congress issued a resolution in which they explicitly "disapproved of the proceedings in the trial and execution" of Arbuthnot and Ambrister," some representatives expressed concern that the Committee "had not gone far enough" to censure Jackson. According to Representative Cobb of Georgia, the "power to exercise the right of retaliation" lay with the "*nation*," as it was "accountable to all other nations for the *manner* in which they conducted their wars."²⁰¹ Cobb's distinction between nation and individual is significant. Cobb attempted to demonstrate the ways in which General Jackson acted in defiance of the nation, and therefore deserved consequences for "exceeding his authority." Yet, other Representatives framed their defense of Jackson in the context of frontier vulnerability, specifically women's captivity among Indigenous people. For some, Jackson's actions should be understood as an example of the nation's "protection" of frontier families, who were "surrounded by savage beast and savage men...of the wilderness." Representatives called on one another to "ask the mothers of

Viking, 2005), chap. 5; Daniel Feller, "The Seminole Controversy Revisited: A New Look at Andrew Jackson's 1818 Florida Campaign," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 88, no. 3 (2010): 309-325; Deborah Rosen, *Border Law: The First Seminole War and American Nationhood*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015).

²⁰¹ *Debate in House of Representatives of the United States on the Seminole War, January and February 1819*, (Washington: Printed at the Office of the National Intelligence, 1819), 5-6.

[this] country if they consent to be surrendered with their children" in captivity.²⁰² While some Representatives conceded that Jackson "exceeded his authority," the responsibility of the nation to offer "protection to its citizens," stood paramount. In this way, Representatives mobilized the image of a vulnerable "mother" in the same way as editors of Indian captivity narratives. While the editors were more explicit in crediting Jackson with the redemption of female captives, Representatives implied the same sentiment, as they agreed to take no further action against Jackson.

Although these excerpts reflected the ways in which Jackson was a polarizing figure, the press also included numerous other articles which were more consistent with the rhetoric offered in the narratives of Smith and Barber. That is, Jackson was consistently glorified as a national hero. For instance, the selected toasts published in Philadelphia's *Weekly Aurora* cited "General Jackson one of the ablest advocates of the rights and glory of this country." An article in *The New York Columbian* praised Jackson and his Tennessee volunteers for aiding a failed Georgia militia in defending its borders. Similar to the narratives of Smith and Barber, the article explained that "the intrepid cast of his [Jackson's] character marched through the wilderness for ten days." The article, which credited Jackson's "purest of patriotism," was reprinted throughout some of the nation's most popular newspapers transforming regional concerns from Georgia into national concerns in which General Jackson "was bound to protect our citizens from

²⁰² *Debate in House of Representatives of the United States on the Seminole War, January and February 1819*, (Washington: Printed at the Office of the National Intelligence, 1819), 33, 59.

savages."²⁰³ These excerpts from newspapers as well as the publication of Smith and Barber's narratives indicate the makings of an imagined community or the seeds of national consciousness.

Both narratives contained lengthy titles in which the editors credited Andrew Jackson with the redemption of the captives. For Barber's narrative, it was the "*Brave and Intrepid General Jackson, and the Troops under his command*" while for Smith's narrative it was "*a detached party of the army of the brave General Jackson, then commanding at New Orleans.*"²⁰⁴ The editors not only cited Jackson in the title, but also used a larger font to distinguish his name from the rest of the title. The title page of both narratives also included some additional commentary which revealed the ways in which the language of gender was employed as a framework for organizing the narrative. The editors of Smith's narrative included the following within the title page: "As the proceeding pages will be found to contain a particular account of the engagement between the handful of Jackson's brave boys, and the party of Savages, above alluded to—the reader may judge of what materials the hardy sons of Tennessee and Ohio are composed." Similarly, David Hazen, editor of Barber's narrative included the following:

²⁰³ Reprinted in the August 1818 editions *Albany Argus*, New York; *New England Galaxy*, Connecticut; *Spirit of the Times and Carlisle Gazette*, Pennsylvania; *The Reflector*, Milledgeville, Georgia.

²⁰⁴ The full title for Barber's narrative is as follows: *Narrative of the Tragical Death of Mr. Darius Barber and his Seven Children Who Were Inhumanly Butchered by the Indians in Camden County, Georgia, January 26, 1818; To Which is Added an Account of the Captivity and Sufferings of Mrs. Barber, who was Carried Away a Captive by the Savages, and from whom She Fortunately Made Her Escape Six Weeks Afterwards*, (Boston: David Hazen), 1818.

“It may be a gratification to the reader to learn that the said tribe of SAVAGES have been exterminated by the Brave and Intrepid Gen. Jackson.” Jackson and the soldiers under his command factored prominently throughout both narratives. Moreover, the rhetoric highlighted the widely held assumption regarding gender roles. Editors further emphasized the victimization of women as adjectives such as "brave," "hardy," and "intrepid" were reserved more commonly to describe actions of men. Similar to other captives, Smith was the only member of her family to survive the captivity among the Kickapoo. However, rather than highlighting her survival, which was more the result of her actions, the title of her narrative reflects the prevailing discourse regarding gender and emphasizes her suffering and eventual rescue at the hands of a detachment of General Jackson's army.²⁰⁵ In contrast to the title, the details within Smith's narrative expose the ways in which she did not conform to such gender roles. Smith experienced more than “cruel hardships” and witnessed more than “the tragical death of her husband and helpless children.” In fact, Smith most likely would not have been rescued “by the army of the brave General Jackson,” if she had not brutally murdered her Indian captor and independently navigated the wilderness. It was not as though there was not enough space to include Smith's independence and bravery in the title, as many captivity narratives had lengthy and sensational titles to attract readers. By choosing this title, some expectations

²⁰⁵ Scholars have distinguished between absent editors, those who pretend the narrative is entirely the informants, and self-conscious editors, who acknowledge their own shaping of the story while trying to reserve the female captive's perspective and narrative style. Hertha D. Wong. “Native American Life Writing,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Native American Literature*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 2005), pp. 125-144.

regarding gender roles remained intact. Women did not save themselves; men rescued them. At first glance this may appear to be a continuation from the expectations regarding gender roles found in the narratives discussed in the first two chapters. Yet, an important distinction developed. In fact, unlike the narratives discussed in the two previous chapters discussed events during wartime, but they did not emphasize military action or a military figure, such as Jackson. Women escaped or were redeemed, but not rescued by a dispatch of soldiers. This change is significant because it reflects the new martial American nationalism that emerged during the war of 1812.

Martial nationalism, "driven by outrage and a desire for vengeance" was often expressed through militarist rhetoric. The War of 1812 was a turning point not only in the "growing power of American nationalism," but also its connection to "expansionist objectives" in the southeastern portion of the United States. More importantly, it "legitimized national and political solidarity with the force of armed conflict."²⁰⁶ The narratives of Smith and Barber were literary expressions of martial nationalism. By 1818 the iconographic representations of violence indicative of women's Indian captivity narratives became inextricably bound with the ideological project of national identity. The narratives of Smith and Barber demonstrated the ways in which martial nationalism was not limited to political speeches, but rather became a literary expression in which aggression was justified in the name of national freedom.

²⁰⁶ For more on the relationship between martial nationalism and the War of 1812 see especially chapter 5 from Padraig Riley, *Slavery and the Democratic Conscience: Political Life in Jeffersonian America*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 160, 172.

The gendered framework of martial nationalism continued throughout the body of both narratives. For instance, Smith's editors used nearly a third of the narrative to foreground her captivity in the broader contest for American control of the southeastern interior. The text began with another sweeping generalization about "the intrepid and brave Gen. Jackson," who "exterminat[ed] the Indians of the Creek Nations as to compel the surviving few to sue for peace." More than elevating the status of Jackson, the editors used this sentence to obscure American involvement in exacerbating a civil war among the Creeks. By the early nineteenth century, the cumulative impact of European influence divided the Creeks into two factions. The Upper Creeks, or Red Sticks, inhabited areas further away from European settlements and adhered more closely to many of the traditional Creek customs, while the Lower Creeks, began to embrace more European notions of wealth accumulation and property ownership. Many of these Lower Creeks joined American forces in the "slaughtering of nearly eight hundred Red Stick men, women and children" as Jackson marched through sacred Creek territory in the spring of 1814. The narrative continued to detail the ways in which Jackson reportedly "forced the Creeks to yield 22 million acres to the United States."²⁰⁷ In response to the "wandering hordes of Indians" who "committed many depredations on the white inhabitants residing near Florida...a little but brave handful of men" was ordered to protect these "defenceless inhabitants." According to the narrative, a detachment of American soldiers observed more than "one hundred Indians...armed with bows and arrows," as well as "three or four whites lying bound in their centre, one of whom appeared to be a female!" Gender

²⁰⁷ Richter, *Facing East* 232.

factored prominently in the editor's framing of this scene. The American soldiers were more than brave, once they learned that a female was among the captives, as "the whole company begged to be led on...an attack that would insure the release of their unfortunate countrymen." The editor went on to describe the soldiers as "a little band of invincibles," "brave lads," and even "brave and hardy sons of the western world." After detailing a victory, which reportedly took under a half an hour, and concluded without the loss of "a single man on their part," the editor finally introduced the reader to Mary Smith, the female captive whose circumstances encouraged these soldiers to throw caution to the wind to "insure the release of their unfortunate countrymen."²⁰⁸ Although the opening pages of Barber's narrative did not include such a lengthy discussion of the broader contest over the American southeast, the body of both narratives maintain strong similarities.

The narratives of Smith and Barber included the now-familiar discussions of property loss and wilderness, which were indicative of the genre of Indian captivity. According to Smith's narrative, after they were "loaded with the spoils of Mr. Smith's property" a small group of Indians "were left to pillage and fire the house."²⁰⁹ Similarly,

²⁰⁸ *An affecting narrative of the captivity and sufferings of Mrs. Mary Smith* (1818), 3-7.

²⁰⁹ *An affecting narrative of the captivity and sufferings of Mrs. Mary Smith*, (1818), 10. Consistent with other captivity narratives, Smith depicts her family as victims of the "hostile" Kickapoos. In doing so she fails to acknowledge the ways in which Kickapoos, like other North American Indians, were in fact reacting to years of white encroachment on their land. Kickapoos were one of the many Algonquian Indians that lived near the Indiana-Illinois border in the Old Northwest region of North America. These hunter and gatherers and horticulturalists lived in villages and planted crops during the spring and summer months. Throughout the rest of the year, smaller bands of Kickapoos would hunt

according to Barber's narrative, her captors "proceeded to pillage the house...and loaded themselves with the most valuable contents of the house." In her six weeks of captivity, according to Barber's narrative she witnessed more than fifty captives, "stolen horses and other property to a very great amount."²¹⁰ After detailing the "pillage" both narratives went on to describe the captive's journey "travelling through a wild wilderness." The editors of both narratives reserved their lengthiest description of the wilderness when they detailed the captives' escape. According to Smith's narrative, her "ears were assailed by the dreadful howlings of the wild beasts...[who] had been gathered together to terrify [her]!"²¹¹ Such details indicate more than the formulaic structure indicative of captivity narratives. For example, the details included in Barber's narrative bear a striking resemblance to the details included in the narrative of Mrs. Frances Scott, published more than a decade prior to Barber's narrative. Although reportedly taken captive from different geographical regions of the United States, both narratives described the women "ascending a mountain" in order to avoid "a prodigious water-fall and numerous high craggy cliffs along the water edge." Both Scott and Barber reportedly "jumped off...the

game, at times even hundreds of miles from their semi-permanent villages. In the face of persistent influx of white settlers, late eighteenth century Kickapoos either attempted to appease the invaders by adopting white customs, use violence to drive the whites from the land, or surrender their homes and move beyond the Mississippi. By the time of Smith's captivity, Kickapoos had endured decades of white settlers invading their land. Thus, it is not surprising that a group of Kickapoo sought captives to replenish their diminishing families from as far south as Tennessee. Joseph B. Herring, *Kenekuk, the Kickapoo Prophet*, (Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1988), 7-9.

²¹⁰ *Narrative of the Tragical Death of Mr. Darius Barber*, 6, 13.

²¹¹ *An affecting narrative of the captivity and sufferings of Mrs. Mary Smith*, 16, 19, 21.

edge of a precipice...15 or 20 feet high," and although "exceedingly stunned with the fall" avoided fracturing a single bone.²¹² This demonstrates not only the widespread circulation of women's Indian captivity narratives in the early nineteenth century but also the development of a common captivity experience. That is, editors were likely aware that in order to secure a narrative as a lucrative investment for the publisher, certain details must be included. Beyond the descriptions of various indigenous practices, such as adoption ceremonies or war-dances, readers were interested in the captive's survival. That is, readers expected the women to have endured significant challenges in their effort to escape. Such challenges always included the natural environment, the untamed wilderness. Smith, Barber, as well as Frances Scott, navigated the wilderness alone. While the editors of all three narratives credited men with the captive's rescue, each of the women endured the wilderness alone.

Adhering to another standard trope of the captivity drama, both narratives also included a violent attack on the home. According to Smith's narrative, on the night of August 1, 1814, the Smith family, consisting of Mary, her husband, John and their three daughters, "were not without their apprehensions of being at some unexpected moment surprised by the hostile Indians, who had been frequently observed skulking about in the woods."²¹³ A "loud and repeated knocking" alarmed the whole family and reportedly

²¹² *Narrative of the Tragical Death of Mr. Darius Barber*, 22-23; Scott, 12.

²¹³ L.Scott. *An affecting narrative of the captivity and sufferings of Mrs. Mary Smith, who with her husband, and three daughters, were taken prisoners by the Indians in August 1814 and after enduring the most cruel hardships and torture of mind for sixty days, in*

convinced Mr. Smith "that a party of Indians surrounded his house." Similar to the attacks detailed in other captivity narratives, "the hellish tribe rushed in" striking "Mr. Smith upon the head with a tomahawk rendering him senseless on the floor" after which the remainder of the family was dragged from their home and "bound with cords."²¹⁴ Similarly, the editor of Barber's narrative also described her husband as unable to defend his family. Not only had Mr. Barber "retired to bed, without taking the precaution to secure the doors of the house, a dozen tomahawks...brought him lifeless to the floor."²¹⁵ The image of Mr. Barber as an impotent guardian of the home stood in contrast with the emphasis on male resiliency and strength offered in the title of the narratives as well as in the discussion of Jackson throughout the body of both narratives. The death of these husbands supports the conclusion which Smith Rosenberg has made regarding the effectiveness of Indian captivity narratives to construct an image of the nation. For Smith Rosenberg, evidence such as that presented in Smith and Barber's narrative undermined the notion of a sovereign nation and thus could not have had the desired effect of unifying the country. However, as the narratives of Smith and Barber reveal, the impotent husband was eclipsed by the role of Jackson and the unnamed "hardy boys" of Tennessee and Ohio. The rhetoric of male resiliency stood paramount to the notion of male impotence. In other words, Jackson and his "brave men" could stand in as the resilient nation, even if

which time she witnessed the tragical death of her husband and helpless children, was rescued from the merciless savages by a detached party of the army of the brave General Jackson, then commanding at New Orleans. (Providence, Rhode Island: 1815).

²¹⁴ *An affecting narrative of the captivity and sufferings of Mrs. Mary Smith, 9.*

²¹⁵ *Narrative of the Tragical Death of Mr. Darius Barber, 5-6.*

individual husbands failed on a personal level. Editors represented Smith and Barber as innocents whose homes and families were long-standing residents, where Creeks destroyed their domestic lives. This attention to the scene of attack reinforced the perception that whites were "home" defending themselves whether in Camden County Georgia or Mississippi. Their significance reached well beyond the role as victims of Indian captivity.

Narratives not only bolstered the image of Jackson, they also used the text to express Indigenous fears of Jackson. The editors were quite clear about what they wanted to say regarding Jackson and by extension male authority, but also what they wished they could make Indigenous peoples say. For example, the editors of Barber's narrative including a lengthy description of a "Council of War" in which Barber attended with her "Indian master." According to Barber's narrative, her captors harbored "great inveteracy against the American troops for depriving them of their lands, particularly their Commander in Chief, Gen. Jackson." The purpose of the Council seemed primarily to motivate those in attendance to "fight the white people," as one leader asked, "Who among you will go and fight the white men? Who among you will bring captives from their settlements to replace our deceased friends?"²¹⁶

Leaders of the War Council viewed Jackson as their primary enemy, and according to the narrative the purpose was "inflict the most excruciating torture" upon Jackson by dividing his heart into "as many detached pieces as there should be tribes

²¹⁶ *Narrative of the Tragical Death of Mr. Darius Barber*, 19-20.

engaged in the war.” Therefore, decimation of his body was to serve as total victory for all neighboring Indigenous peoples at war with America. The editors seemed to include these details mostly in an effort to undermine the strength of Indigenous people, as the following sentence described Jackson as a “distinguished Commander” who “march[ed] fearlessly into the very heart of their village, lay their wigwams to ashes, and compel[ed] them to sue for peace.”²¹⁷ The purpose of such rhetoric was much more than mere recollection of events. Rather, the purpose was to create a common memory, a common understanding of the nation, especially its leadership. Barber’s narrative positioned the Indigenous societies in a war “against the whites,” in which defeat of Jackson represented decisive victory. These details not only established an appropriate gender dynamic of men saving women, but also helped to facilitate Jackson’s status as a national icon. Editors co-opted the voices of Indigenous peoples in an effort to mythologize Jackson as a national hero as well as collapse the political and military agenda of a nation into the actions of one man.

Women’s vulnerability was so essential to the captivity genre, at times, editors lifted descriptions verbatim from other texts. The graphic description of the death of Smith’s two daughters was taken verbatim from the 1793 Manheim anthology. In fact, Smith’s editor was not the first to duplicate the details from the Manheim narrative, as same details were included in a narrative from an 1805 edition of the *Connecticut*

²¹⁷ *Narrative of the Tragical Death of Mr. Darius Barber*, 18.

Centinel. The major difference between what originally appeared in the Manheim text and that which appeared in both of the nineteenth century narratives was the appeal to readers' emotions. Captivity narratives of the nineteenth century, like so many other printed works, employed highly sensational language with the intention to evoke emotional responses of their readers.²¹⁸ In general, directly addressing the reader only became prevalent by the mid-nineteenth century. For instance, a reader may have been warned, "if thou hast tears to shed, prepare to shed them now!" or even admonished "For if thou art a mother! If thou art a parent! Hard must be thy heart if thou can read unmoved the proceeding tale." In each of the narratives, the captors were part of unnamed Indigenous groups of various locations, including New York, Louisiana and Mississippi. Collapsing the identity of all Indigenous peoples into one monolithic "other" served a greater purpose, the constructing ideas of national belonging and difference. The scene detailed in each of the narratives included "forlorn girls" who were "tied each to a sapling, with their hands as high extended above their heads as possible and then pitched them from their knees to their shoulders, with upwards of six hundred sharpened splinters." The captors then reportedly set fire to "the splinters all standing erect on the bleeding victims" in order "to complete the infernal tragedy." After their "screams of distress...echoed and reechoed through the wilderness" having "these helpless virgins sunk down in the arms of their deliverer, Death."²¹⁹ The final sentence is significant for

Comment [AC1]: contrast this with your discussion of the "other" in ch 1 and ch 2. Be consistent

²¹⁸ For a recent work on the history of emotion, especially as it relates to the nineteenth century see Nicole Eustace, *1812: War and the Passions of Patriotism*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).

more than its sensational rhetoric; it also demonstrates the popularity of such a literary device.²²⁰ As “helpless virgins,” their physical and sexual vulnerability seems to have transformed them into martyrs. Scenes in which “helpless virgins” perished at the hands of “savage” Indians were another way in which captivity narratives perpetuated the theme of white victimization. The publication of captivity narratives transformed conquering settlers into victims forced to defend their families and property, including the land, any structures built on the land as well as the contents within those structures, from Indian assailants. While the theme of white victimization was consistent throughout the genre of Indian captivity narratives, the redemption of white settler families such as the Smiths and the Barbers were inextricably connected with the nation's military leadership.

Thus, editors of captivity narratives consistently perpetuated and reinforced the theme of white victimization through the discourse of gender and directed the reader to the appropriate interpretation of the attack and capture.²²¹ That is, the content of captivity

²¹⁹ *Affecting History of the Dreadful Distresses of Frederick Manheim's Family*, (1793), 4; Mary Smith, “Savage Barbarism,” *Connecticut Centinel*, v. 32, Nov. 12, 1805, p. 4. reprinted in *The Garland Library of Narratives of North American Indian Captivities*, Wilcomb E. Washburn, ed. Vol. 27 (New York: Garland Publishing, 1978) unnumbered insert included after the title page; *An affecting narrative of the captivity and sufferings of Mrs. Mary Smith*, 17-19.

²²⁰ My research demonstrates that secular language replaced religious rhetoric which is then replicated throughout the early republic. Although the language collapses the numerous indigenous people into a monolithic “other,” it helps us to better understand the ways in which Americans understood themselves, their association to the nation, in opposition to the other.

²²¹ Richard White and Patricia Nelson Limerick, eds. *The Frontier in American Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 27-29. Western stories have also perpetuated the notion of white victimization. See, Leslie A. Fiedler, *The Return of the*

narratives reflected the growing distinctions nineteenth-century Americans made between genders. For instance, men were described as brave members of a broader context, “the western world.”²²² Their lives revolved around public concerns and with duty to their nation; they bravely rescued those confined in captivity. Editors consistently acknowledged the actions of men as brave. Yet, the content of both Smith and Barber's narratives demonstrated the tension between the expectations of the prevailing gender ideology and the reality of her captivity. In contrast to the prevailing discourse, Smith's actions reflect violence as she murdered her sleeping captor in order to escape. This murder did not happen impulsively, but rather was premeditated. She waited until the Indian was asleep and she stabbed him with a knife and repeatedly gave him “severe

Vanishing American, (New York: Stein and Day, 1968). For more on the ways in which the myth of western frontier relies on notions of the domestic see Louis S. Warren “Cody's Last Stand: Masculine Anxiety, the Custer Myth, and the Frontier of Domesticity in Buffalo Bill's Wild West,” *The Western Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (Spring, 2003), 49-69.

²²² *An affecting narrative of the captivity and sufferings of Mrs. Mary Smith*, Pg. 5-7. Christopher Castiglia argues that while many women's captivity narratives challenged ideologies about white womanhood, male editors used a framework which reaffirmed female submission by undermining their agency and determination. Nevertheless, as Castiglia points out, women's agency is not totally erased and the genre remains helpful in understanding notions of gender, race, and nation. Christopher Castiglia, *Bound and Determined: Captivity, Culture Crossing, and White Womanhood from Mary Rowlandson to Patty Hearst* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 3, 8, 14. Ruth Ann Denaci also draws on Castiglia's interpretation and offers an interpretation similar to my analysis. For more on male editors' appropriation of women's voices see, Ruth Ann Denaci, “The Penn's Creek Massacre and the Captivity Of Marie Le Roy And Barbara Leininger,” *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies*, Vol. 74, No. 3 (Summer 2007), pp. 307-332. For more on the ways in which male editors standardized models of femaleness in women's captivity narratives, see Lorraine Carroll, *Rhetorical Drag: Gender Impersonation, Captivity and the Writing of History*. (Kent: Kent State University Press, 2007), 6-7.

blows to the head” with his tomahawk until she was sure he was dead.²²³ Without wasting any time, Smith gathered materials from the chief’s living quarters and began her journey to independence. After spending several pages detailing her escape and days journeying independently through “the forest,” Smith quickly mentions that she was once again taken captive by “the Savages, from the nation, which she so recently escaped.”²²⁴ In the very next, and final sentence of her narrative, she states that she was “fortunately rescued from their merciless hands by Lieut. Brown, and his brave little company of soldiers.”²²⁵

Smith, however, did not represent the nineteenth century popularized image of a docile wife on the frontier. Rather, her actions, which demonstrate independence and resourcefulness, support conclusions drawn from historians such as Louis Warren.²²⁶ Even though she murdered her Indian captor and traveled through the unfamiliar forest, which brought her close enough to be rescued by Jackson’s forces, at no point in the narrative does Smith’s editor describe her as anything other than a victim. Although he uses his voice to relate her experiences throughout most of the narrative, he abruptly states, “I cannot better describe the feelings of Mrs. Smith on this trying occasion, then to make use of her own words.” The “trying occasion” to which he refers is when “the old chief concluded to adopt her to take the place of his squaw, who with his two children

²²³ *An affecting narrative of the captivity and sufferings of Mrs. Mary Smith*, Pg. 18.

²²⁴ *An affecting narrative of the captivity and sufferings of Mrs. Mary Smith*, Pg. 24.

²²⁵ *An affecting narrative of the captivity and sufferings of Mrs. Mary Smith*, Pg. 24.

²²⁶ Louis S. Warren, *Buffalo Bill’s America: William Cody and the Wild West Show*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005).

had been killed by the whites in one of their former expeditions.” But, as explained by Smith’s editor, the Indians presented Smith with a choice, “to succeed to the proposals of the chief or resign herself up as a victim to savage barbarity.”²²⁷ Before revealing her choice, the editor removes himself and shifts to the first person voice of Smith. The editor was comfortable to describe Smith’s feelings during what seem to be considerably more “trying” situations, such as when Indians attacked her home, murdered her husband, or when she watched her only children burn to death. Yet, for the editor the most “trying” moment was when Smith contemplated the chief’s proposal. According to Smith, in accepting the chief’s proposal and preventing a “most cruel death,” she became “a prostitute.” Smith then quickly justified this choice as a result of her having “little time to reflect.” She does this because her readers demand it. Smith needed to reassure members of her community as well as anyone who might read her narrative that she too rejected Indian culture. Yet, Smith was never treated as a prostitute. After entering the chief’s “wigwam” she asked him to allow her time “to recover her health and spirits.” In contrast to her expectations, the chief “acceded this request.”²²⁸ Even though popular discourse described Indians as uncivilized and violent, this example rebuked such stereotypes.

Similar to other narratives, the perceived vulnerability of the female captives allowed them to be easily underestimated. This assumption not only allowed for Smith and Barber to escape captivity, but also allowed them to take up arms. Unlike other

²²⁷ *An affecting narrative of the captivity and sufferings of Mrs. Mary Smith*, Pg. 17.

²²⁸ *An affecting narrative of the captivity and sufferings of Mrs. Mary Smith*, Pg. 23-24.

captives, Barber accompanied her male captor “on one of his hunting excursions,” which quickly turned into a pursuit of their enemy. Barber’s “master” gave her a tomahawk and ordered her to conceal herself and kill any of “the wounded enemy...attempting to make their escape.” The first wounded man she confronted was not an enemy of her captors, but ironically was “he who in the most barbarous manner deprived [her] of [her] innocent husband and children.” Because “he did not shew mercy to the defenseless...[he]could not expect to receive it.” Barber “aimed a blow at his head and continued to repeat them until [she] was sure he was quite dead.” While Smith quickly escaped after killing her captor, Barber retreated into the thicket until “victory [was] decided in favor of [her] captors.” She was correct in assuming that “no one would think she did it” nor “dreamed of his having fallen by any other hand than that of his Indian enemies.”²²⁹ From their perspective, Barber could have had nothing to do with his murder.

Both Smith and Barber deceived their captors into redemption. After Smith consented to “take the place of her captor's squaw” and reside with him, she premediated his murder as “hut wherein I dwelt was entirely deserted by all other Indians than its owner”²³⁰ Having been sent “very late one evening for some water,” she quickly realized that this was likely her “most favorable opportunity” to escape. After seven days of travel, with limited “nourishment,” she heard “the pleasing sound of the woodman’s ax” and concluded that “this must be some friendly inhabitant employed in falling timber.”²³¹

²²⁹ *Narrative of the Tragical Death of Mr. Darius Barber*, 9-12.

²³⁰ *An affecting narrative of the captivity and sufferings of Mrs. Mary Smith*, 24.

Both narratives concluded with Smith and Barber's relief that they encountered men, who ultimately facilitated their redemption. In fact, Smith's narrative abruptly ends with the following "fortunately rescued from their merciless hands by Lieut. Brown, and his brave little company of soldiers."²³² After pages of detailed description including her escape from captivity and trials throughout the "wilderness," one sentence explained her fate.

Unlike other sources of print culture in which scholars can use subscription lists to quantify consumption, the popularity of women's Indian captivity narratives must be measured in other ways. For instance, the narrative of Mary Smith remained popular enough to warrant multiple editions from publishers in Rhode Island and Massachusetts. And, although Barber's narrative appears to have only one edition from a Boston printer, an advertisement from Maine's *Hallowell Gazette* confirmed her narrative was among a shipment of materials to the local bookstore in April 1819. The popularity of the captivity drama was also evident in the replication of language, images and tropes. For instance, both narratives examined in this chapter included substantial passages lifted verbatim from a previously published narrative. In Smith's case, the description of her daughters' death was taken verbatim from the narrative of Frederick Manheim, while Barber's mastery and survival through the wilderness was taken verbatim from the narrative of Mrs. Frances Scott.

²³¹ *Narrative of the Tragical Death of Mr. Darius Barber*, 23-24.

²³² *An affecting narrative of the captivity and sufferings of Mrs. Mary Smith*, 24.

Women's vulnerability was the cornerstone of the genre of Indian captivity narratives. Yet, by 1818 editors of some captivity narratives were not only influencing readers to view individual captivity experiences as grievances against a nation, but also to bind the redemption of these captives with American military action. By crediting national leaders, such as Andrew Jackson, for the redemption of Smith and Barber, captivity narratives reflected the prominence of military nationalism in the era following the War of 1812. As the young nation struggled to establish its sovereignty in European, especially British, eyes, the editors of these narratives used the rhetoric of female vulnerability and militarist sentiment to bolster the ideological project of national identity. That is, women's captivity narratives encouraged the diverse citizens of the young country to accept the role of its military in protecting and securing the boundaries of an expanding nation. Other printed materials, including newspapers, as well as Congressional debates, cited feminine weakness and victimization as justification for making war with Indians, often times under the leadership of men such as Andrew Jackson. In this way, the nation was embodied in Jackson, as well as in the female captives he was credited with redeeming.

CHAPTER 5
 CONCEPTUALIZING AN ORIGIN MYTH: RACE AND CAPTIVITY IN THE
 1820s

In 1824 James Everett Seaver, a retired physician living in Genesee County, New York, published *A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison*. Seaver's publication detailed the experiences of Jemison, a white woman who, after being captured at age fifteen, spent most of her life among Seneca Indians. A familiar genre to American readers, Indian captivity expanded its impact on American culture as it became a central focus of popular literary publications between 1823 and 1827, including James Fenimore Cooper's well-known novel *The Last of the Mohicans*. Yet in the 1820s, sales of Seaver's tale of Jemison surpassed the works of Cooper and other novelists. Between 1823 and 1827 only four works sold over one hundred thousand copies: three novels by Cooper and Seaver's Jemison narrative. The similarity among these works was the desire to create an origin story with female captives playing a central role. Initially issued by a small publishing house in central New York, Seaver's work was quickly reprinted in London and throughout the United States.²³³

²³³ James Everett Seaver, *A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison*, (Canandaigua, NY: J.D. Bemis, 1824). Unless otherwise noted, all excerpts are from Seaver's 1824 edition of Jemison's narrative. Daniel W. Banister Esq. employed Seaver to meet with Jemison and record her account. See also James Everett Seaver, *A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison*, 22d ed., rev. (C. D. Vail. New York: American Scenic & Historic Preservation Society, 1925). Jemison was further memorialized in 1910 with a bronze statue in New York's Letchworth State Park. Her story also became the basis of a popular

As the success of Seaver's account of Jemison's captivity shows, captivity narratives remained popular in the early republic. Some scholars, such as Roy Harvey Pearce, have argued that captivity narratives declined in popularity. Pearce argues that three out of four best-sellers published between 1680-1720 were captivity narratives, whereas between 1823-1827 only Jemison's narrative was a best-seller. One might just as easily argue, from the same evidence, that captivity narratives endured in popularity. Jemison's narrative remained popular for more than a century as it went through twenty-three editions.²³⁴

Why were Americans still interested in stories of female captivity? Many nineteenth-century Americans desired an origin myth upon which they could build a national identity that predated the Declaration of Independence. While the Revolution, as an origin story for the United States, was in most respects entirely serviceable, it nonetheless bound American identity to an imperial relationship to Britain. Captivity narratives, by contrast, centered on conflicts with Indigenous people over land rights. By

children's book, Lois Lenski, *Indian Captive: The Story of Mary Jemison*, (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1941).

For an understanding of book sales as well as even the term "best-seller," scholars continue to rely on Frank Luther Mott, *Golden Multitudes: The Story of Best Sellers in the United States*, (New York: Macmillan, 1947), 20, 305-306. Susan Scheckel, *The Insistence of the Indian: Race and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century American Culture*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 70.

²³⁴ See Roy Harvey Pearce, "The Significances of the Captivity Narrative," *American Literature*, (Vol 19: 1947, 1-20); Pearce, *The Savages of America: A Study of the Indian and the Idea of Civilization*, (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1953); Pearce, *Savagism and Civilization: A Study of the Indian and the American Mind* (Baltimore Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, Revised edition 1967).

asserting those land rights, captivity narratives implicitly asserted American sovereignty over lands originally inhabited by Indigenous peoples. The narratives not only allowed for American readers to locate an origin of their nation on American soil, but through the trope of the captive woman, to imagine that however weak and fragile the nation might seem relative to nineteenth-century European powers such as Britain or France, the nation would triumph, just as its most vulnerable citizens, women and children, had eventually triumphed over their captors.

Intricately connected with Americans' desire to create an origin story was also an assertion of their connection to the continent and its original inhabitants. Yet, such an assertion was complicated by the growing political tension surrounding racial and cultural categories. In the first half of the nineteenth century, racial categories were re-conceptualized "as an increasingly 'scientific' approach replaced more mutable climate theories with immutable racial categories that brought with them a strongly hierarchal structure."²³⁵ Before 1815 American political leaders thought all mankind was capable of improvement. For example, John Drayton, governor of South Carolina, wrote in 1802 that "that all mankind have originally descended from one pair; and that a difference of complexion is only produced by change of situation, and a combination of other

²³⁵ For more on how the belief in the superiority of Anglo institutions evolved into a belief in the innate superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race of Caucasian race see Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny* (Harvard University Press, 1981). According to Horsman, prior to 1850, the emphasis was on institutional difference, not racial difference.

circumstances."²³⁶ This view was also reflected in Jefferson's 1808 conclusion that Indigenous peoples "will unite yourselves with us, and we shall all be Americans."²³⁷

However, by the mid-nineteenth century, popular press, periodicals and American politicians sought scientific proof of racial distinctions. American science confirmed what Americans had long identified as innately savage characteristics of non-white settlers.²³⁸ According to historian Theda Purdue, "racism intensified throughout the nineteenth century, and while African Americans were the primary victims of the violence that it engendered, Indian societies suffered almost irreparable harm."²³⁹ Such a sentiment was reflected in Georgia Senator John Forsyth's conclusion that "Indians were a race not admitted to be equal to the rest of the community."²⁴⁰ Removal policy and subsequent expulsion of Indigenous groups reflected such ideology. In many ways

²³⁶ John Drayton, *A View of South Carolina, as Respects her Natural and Civil Concerns*, (Charleston: W.P. Young, 1802).

²³⁷ From Thomas Jefferson to Hendrick Aupaumut, 21 December 1808, *Founders Online*, National Archives, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/99-01-02-9358>.

²³⁸ For more on how the belief in the superiority of Anglo institutions evolved into a belief in the innate superiority of the Anglo-Saxon ranch of Caucasian race see Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny* (Harvard University Press, 1981). According to Horsman, prior to 1850, the emphasis was on institutional difference, not racial difference.

²³⁹ Theda Purdue, *Mixed Blood Indians: Racial Construction in the Early South*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2003), 97-98.

²⁴⁰ John Forsyth cited in Harry L. Watson, *Liberty and Power: The Politics of Jacksonian America* (New York: Noontday Press, 1990), 110.

removal policies demonstrated the ways in which race was a determining factor, creating an image of nation less likely to include non-white citizens.

The genre of the Indian captivity narrative once again reflected this evolution in ideology. While racialized stereotypes may have been implicit throughout earlier narratives, *Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison* explicitly addressed these issues. American readers continued to have an appetite for Indian captivity narratives, but they were also increasingly drawn to ideas regarding race and nation. This interest is evident not only because of the popularity of Jemison's narrative, but also in two other popular publications, including Cooper's novel *The Last of the Mohicans* and a novel equally as popular as Cooper's in the 1820s, Catharine Maria Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie; or Early Times in the Massachusetts*. Analyzed together, these texts reveal the ways in which ideas of national belonging continued to be drawn from contradictory elements. Americans asserted an origin story which intricately connected them with Indigenous people as well as the North American continent. Yet, in doing so they needed to reconcile the issue of Indigenous peoples as original inhabitants of the continent. This resolution was made largely through assertion of land titles and while its roots began in the seventeenth century, nineteenth century Supreme Court cases such as *Johnson v. McIntosh* (1823) indicated that this issue continued to need clarification.

As previously discussed, Euro-American understandings of landed property, which emerged from Locke and other theorists of early modern international law, were intricately connected to ideas of improvement and individualized possession. Yet, the

security of such land titles confounded early settlers of North America, who disagreed on whether a king's title or a title from Indigenous people gave them sovereignty over their settlements. A solution was finally reached in the late seventeenth century, when William Penn and his contemporaries forged a distinctly North American link between "royal and Indigenous titles."²⁴¹ Yet, Chief Justice Marshall faced a similar dilemma in deciding the case of *Johnson v. McIntosh* (1823).²⁴² The plaintiffs of the case were heirs of Thomas Johnson, a Virginian who purchased land from the Piankeshaw people in the 1770s. Even though the Johnson family never occupied the land, which eventually became the state of Illinois, they claimed ownership with titles issued from its original Indigenous inhabitants. The defendant, William McIntosh, argued that his title purchased from the government of the United States in 1818 was more valid. According to the defense, the United States acquired this land when Great Britain relinquished it in the treaty following the War of Independence, thus the United States maintained the right to "sell, grant, and convey" the land. This case raised questions beyond individual land ownership, calling into question the legitimacy of the nation's land sales.²⁴³ Thus, the court needed to

²⁴¹ Daniel K. Richter, "'To 'Clear the King's and Indians' Title' Seventeenth Century Origins of North American and Cession Treaties," in Saliha Belmessous, ed., *Empire by Treaty: Negotiating European Expansion, 1600-1900* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 45-77. Citation found on page 69.

²⁴² *Johnson v. McIntosh*, 21 U.S. 543 (1823), *Correspondence, Papers and Selected Judicial Opinions, January 1820-December 1823*, vol. 9 of *The Papers of John Marshall*, Ed. Herbert A. Johnson et al, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 285, 298.

determine “the power of Indians to give, and of private individuals to receive, a title which can be sustained in the Courts of this country.”²⁴⁴ In rendering his opinion Chief Justice Marshall broadly examined the status and rights of Indians in the United States, including the basis for Euro-American claims to the land. In doing so, Marshall not only confirmed a late seventeenth-century connection between Indigenous and sovereign land claims, but also asserted the authority of the American nation in issuing land titles.

Marshall's decision is important because it reflected a critical connection also found within the captivity narratives as well as the literary texts analyzed within this chapter. That is, the inextricable connection between the Indigenous people and American nation. Marshall reflected the underlying assumption of captivity narratives when he concluded Indians as “fierce savages, whose occupation was war, and whose subsistence was drawn chiefly from the forest. To leave them in possession of their country was to leave the country a wilderness.”²⁴⁵ Yet, Marshall did not declare Indigenous land titles irrelevant to claims of the federal government. Instead, Marshall explained that “[i]t has never been contended that the Indian title amounted to nothing.” The issue was not Indigenous right of possession, but whether “the claim of government extends to the complete ultimate title, charged with this right of possession and to the

²⁴³ John Marshall, *Johnson and Graham's Lessee v. McIntosh*, in *Cases Argued and Decided in the Supreme Court of the United States*, book 5, Lawyer's ed. (Rochester Lawyers Co-Operative Publishing Company, 1882), 685.

²⁴⁴ E. Wilcomb Washburn, *The American Indian and the United States: A Documentary History*, vol.4. (New York: Random House, 1973), 2537.

²⁴⁵ E. Wilcomb Washburn, *The American Indian and the United States: A Documentary History*, vol.4. (New York: Random House, 1973), 692.

exclusive power of acquiring that right."²⁴⁶ Thus, the Court determined that Indigenous peoples owned "the right of occupancy."²⁴⁷ In doing so, Marshall also asserted the supremacy of the United States as sovereign body.

In the same year that the Supreme Court decided in favor of McIntosh, James Fenimore Cooper wrote the first of his *Leatherstocking Tales*, *The Pioneers; or The Sources of the Susquehanna*.²⁴⁸ American readers were first introduced to the character of Natty Bumppo, the primary Anglo-American character of Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales*, including *The Last of the Mohicans*. Drawing on "his own recollections," Cooper

²⁴⁶ *Johnson and Graham's Lessee v. McIntosh*, 21 U.S. 588.

²⁴⁷ Eliga H. Gould, *Among the Powers of the Earth: The American Revolution and the Making of a New World*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2012), see especially pages 205-206; Michelle Burnham, "The Periphery Within: Internal Colonialism and the Rhetoric of U.S. Nation Building," in *Messy Beginnings: Postcoloniality and Early American Studies*, Malini Johar Schueller and Edward Watts, eds. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 139-154. Eric Cheyfitz, *The Poetics of Imperialism: Translation and Colonization from The Tempest to Tarzan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991). Cheyfitz's argument is underdeveloped. He recognizes that Marshall's opinion rests on the translation of Indians and their use of land into the assumptions of Euro-American settlers, but he fails to analyze the foundation of these assumptions. His argument rests on exposing the paradox of Indian possession of land without title to the land; Priscilla Wald, *Constituting Americans: Cultural Anxiety and Narrative Form* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995).

²⁴⁸ James Fenimore Cooper, *The Pioneers; or The Sources of the Susquehanna*, (1823), Reprint edited by James F. Beard, (Albany: SUNY Press, 1980), 22. *The Pioneers* is the first of the five novels published in the series. However, when considering the chronology of the content, this text is the fourth novel. Historians have acknowledged that the fictional Judge Temple serves to represent Cooper's father and Templeton represents Cooperstown. See Alan Taylor, *William Cooper's Town: Power and Persuasion on the Frontier of the Early American Republic*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995).

sets the novel in Otsego, which was included in the county of Albany, New York.

Although at the time of Cooper's publication, Otsego was one of the most "populous districts of New York," economically prosperous in industry and manufacturing, Cooper recalled an earlier period, when "the whole country was then a wilderness."²⁴⁹ In fact, Cooper based the character of Judge Temple on his father, William Cooper, a frontier entrepreneur and town builder. Cooper describes Natty as "a melodious synopsis of man and nature in the West" and often relies on Natty to question the legitimacy of American land claims. Like Marshall, Cooper's characters must resolve competing claims to land.

Although Seaver's narrative of Jemison does not explicitly address the legitimacy of land claims, Seaver may never have had the opportunity to interview Jemison had she not succeeded in resolving a competing land claim in her favor. In 1797, Jemison's Indian brother attended a "great Council" during which he secured a piece of land chosen by Jemison. Because her land required more labor than she and her immediate family could provide, she leased parts of it to white settlers, who, like numerous landless settlers in the backcountry, paid for the lease with shares of the crops they raised." This arrangement continued undisturbed until 1816 when local attorney, Micah Brooks,

²⁴⁹ Indeed, the historian Alan Taylor states that Cooper's novels are the "antithesis" of actual history. Alan Taylor, *William Cooper's Town: Power and Persuasion on the Frontier of the Early American Republic*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995), 421. According to Taylor, Cooper acquired the Otsego tract of 40,000 acres in 1786. Taylor contrasts William Cooper's *A Guide in the Wilderness: Or the History of the First Settlement in the Western Counties of New York* (Dublin: Gilbert and Hodges, 1810) to the realities of eighteenth century New York, which was in fact not a wilderness, but rather was once the well populated land of the Iroquois.

warned Jemison that the current title to her land “held little value” unless he “procured a legislative act that would invest [her] with full power.” Jemison agreed to sign a petition to Congress “for her naturalization and for the confirmation of the title of [her] land.” Brooks presented it to the Legislature of New York in 1817, at which time an “act was passed for [her] naturalization, and ratifying and confirming the title of [her] land.” Although Jemison went on to lease a portion of her land to Brooks, he would spend the next five years pressuring Jemison to relinquish more of her land. Jemison refused to meet until a council consisting of “a great number of Chiefs” and a United States Commissioner of Indian Lands met in Livingston county, New York. With all parties present in September 1823, Jemison sold all of her land with the exception of a tract, “two miles long and one mile wide” along the Genesee River.²⁵⁰ Interest in Jemison continued throughout the autumn of 1823 when Daniel W. Banister, Esq., “prompted by his own ambition to add something to the accumulating fund of useful knowledge,” employed Seaver in collecting and preparing “an accurate account” of Jemison’s life.

One year after Marshall issued his decision and Cooper published the first of his *Leatherstocking Tales*, Seaver published *A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison*. Jemison’s narrative maintains many of conventions of the captivity drama, including Indigenous attackers, destruction of Anglo property, as well as the killing of some members of the settler family. Yet, her experiences contradict some of the key structures of the captivity genre, specifically the narrative’s resolution, which generally detailed the

²⁵⁰ Seaver, 147.

safe return of the female captive to Anglo-American settlement.²⁵¹ Although, Jemison was taken captive in 1758 by a group of Shawnee and French men, she was adopted by a Seneca family and chose to spend the remainder of her life as an Indian woman, dying well into her nineties in 1833. Jemison's experiences deviated from most captivity narratives, not only in her refusal to return to white society, but also in her positive presentation of Seneca family and culture. According to Jemison's narrative she feared that her relatives would "despise her Indian children" and treat them as enemies, a fate which she "could not endure."²⁵² Therefore, without the implied validation of the superiority of white culture inherent in a captive's reincorporation, Seaver needed to construct meaning explicitly for the reader. Not only did Seaver attempt to force Jemison's story into the conventional structure of a captivity narrative, he also embraced the emerging rigidly defined racial categories of the nineteenth century. In his introduction, Seaver emphasized the enduring quality of Jemison's whiteness. He acknowledged that she spoke English well and "her complexion is very white."²⁵³ Beginning with the second edition, her appellation as "The White Woman" appeared on the title page, which reflected the emerging role of race as a category for identifying national belonging.

²⁵¹ For more on the scholarly debate regarding the categorization of Jemison's narrative see Hilary E. Wyss, "Captivity and Conversion: William Apess, Mary Jemison, and Narratives of Racial Identity," in *American Indian Quarterly*, Vol. 23., No. 3 &4, (Summer-Autumn, 1999), pp. 63-82.

²⁵² Seaver, 101-102.

²⁵³ Seaver, x.

Although Jemison was taken captive during the same imperial conflict as Jemima Howe and Susannah Willard Johnson, many of Jemison's experiences stood in stark contrast to those of Howe and Johnson. First, Jemison was a young girl when she was captured, unlike Howe and Johnson, both of whom were adult women. Second, Jemison remained for the rest of her life with her adoptive Indian family. Third, Jemison's narrative was published in 1824, when the historical context differed greatly from the 1790s. Therefore, Jemison's narrative lacks the anti-French rhetoric found in the narratives of Howe and Johnson.²⁵⁴

In the preface of Jemison's narrative, Seaver frames the work like an advice manual, "for by others' faults, wise men correct their own." Specifically, Seaver concluded the preface with his purpose that "the lessons of distress that are portrayed may have a direct tendency to increase our love of liberty; to enlarge our views of the blessings that are derived from our liberal institutions."²⁵⁵ Similar to the editor of Johnson's 1796 narrative, Seaver also encouraged readers to contrast their present circumstances with those of more distressing times of Indian conflict. In this context,

²⁵⁴ Previous historiography has identified the early decades after the War of 1812 as the "era of good feelings." Like the War for Independence and the Louisiana Purchase, the War of 1812 "revitalized national strength" and validated "the national fantasy of providential destiny to inherit the continent." As settlers flooded into the territories after the War of 1812, Indiana (1816), Illinois (1818), Michigan (1837), Iowa (1846), and Wisconsin (1848) joined Ohio (1803), Tennessee (1796) and Kentucky (1792) in expanding the federal union. Steven Watt, *The Republic Reborn: War and the Making of Liberal America, 1790-1820* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 283; Walter L. Hixson, *American Settler Colonialism: A History* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2013), 73.

²⁵⁵ Seaver, xiii.

Jemison's captivity narrative served not only "to add something to the accumulating fund of useful knowledge," but also as a way to express American exceptionalism, as bearers of liberty and civil institutions. Memories of the Indian captivity shaped Americans' sense of a national identity.

Seaver explained that although Jemison's story had been known for some time by locals, this would be the first opportunity for it to be read by the public. Yet, Seaver intended to document more than the events of Jemison's life. Just as Caleb Bingham and Noah Webster had included the narrative of Jemima Howe in their widely popular school primers, Seaver suggested the utility of his book in improving the abilities of children "in the art of reading."²⁵⁶ Yet he intended the narrative as more than a mere primer. He used Jemison's personal narrative as an opportunity to contribute to a national history. In fact, he begins with a reference to "The Peace of 1783," an event which bears much more importance to American national history than to the events recounted throughout Jemison's story.

Orienting the reader to the setting of western New York, Seaver explained that those who "settled down and commenced improvements in the country which had recently been the property of aborigines" soon became acquainted with Jemison, "whose history they anxiously sought." He noted the appearance of Jemison, who at the time of her interview was over eighty years old, was the result of her "not having enjoyed the blessings of civilization." Yet, he acknowledged that her "plain dress" was a matter of

²⁵⁶ No copy of Seaver's original notes survives, so we are left only his published words to understand the intention for telling Jemison's story.

choice and comfort, rather than necessity because as indicated by her property she could “dress in the best fashion and allow every comfort of life.” Although Jemison could speak “English plainly and distinctly,” which precluded the need for an interpreter, her narrative was still mediated through Seaver.²⁵⁷

The genre of captivity narratives had evolved by 1824 and reflected the efforts similar to literary figures interested in establishing an origin myth, a national story. Thus, rather than beginning with details of an Indigenous attack on a settler home, Jemison's narrative began with her aboard a ship destined for Philadelphia.²⁵⁸ Jemison's family farm was ten miles north of what is now Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. The morning of April 5, 1758 began like any other with her “father shaving an axe-helve,” her “mother making preparations for breakfast; two older brothers at work near the barn” leaving Mary, her siblings as well as a female neighbor and her three children in the home. A “discharge of a number of guns” alarmed everyone. As Jemison “trembled with fear,” a group of “six Indians and four Frenchmen...rushed into the house.” After “plundering” the house, they “set out with their prisoners in great haste, for fear of detection, and soon entered the woods.” They made prisoners of everyone, except her two brothers, who “being at the barn, escaped.”²⁵⁹ After two days of travel “an Indian took off [Jemison's] shoes and stockings and put a pair of moccasins” on her feet. Believing this to be a sign that her

²⁵⁷ Seaver, xi-xix.

²⁵⁸ Seaver, 25.

²⁵⁹ Jemison's brothers eventually ended up with their maternal grandparents in Virginia. Allen W. Trelase, “Mary Jemison,” in *Notable American Women, 1607-1950*, 3 vols., ed. Edward T. James, et al (Cambridge : Harvard University Press, 1971), Vol. 2; 271-274.

daughter's life would be spared, Jemison's mother warned her "not to forget her English tongue" or prayers. More importantly, she warned her daughter not to escape from the Indians, as they would eventually find and destroy her. Shortly after Jemison left, the remaining members of her family as well as the accompanying woman and children "were killed and scalped...and mangled in the most shocking manner." Her captors explained that "they should not have killed the family if the whites had not pursued them." Her captors referred to her neighbors, who upon learning of Jemison's capture, "turned out in pursuit of the enemy."²⁶⁰

At this point in the text, the form of the captivity narrative imposed by Seaver became increasingly more inadequate. Once Jemison arrived at Fort Duquesne, which at the time was occupied by the French and their Indigenous allies, she was adopted by two Seneca women to replace a recently deceased family member. Unlike previous narratives, such as Mary Smith's (1818), in which the adoption ceremony is described as a moment of tribulation, Jemison's narrative reflects the perspective of a cultural insider. That is, the words used within Jemison's narrative are not laden with prejudice, but rather pride. Jemison described the women as "pleasant looking squaws of the Seneca tribe"²⁶¹ Because women were authorities on how family relationships were created they played central roles in captive adoption in their communities. Jemison described her adoption as an event only attended by women. Dressed in "Indian style," Jemison was surrounded by

²⁶⁰ Seaver, 25-35.

²⁶¹ Seaver, 36.

“all the Squaws in the town” who “set up a most dismal owling, crying bitterly, and wringing their hands in all the agonies of grief for a deceased relative.” For Jemison, the ceremony demonstrated an emotional connection, especially regarding familial bonds. According to her narrative, her new Seneca family “welcomed her as a long lost child...and treated [her] as a real sister, the same as though [she] had been born of their mother.”²⁶² Although Seaver attempted to include this event as unconditionally tragic, description of the celebration of community and family make it nearly impossible for the reader to focus on this event as a moment of suffering.

In 1826, two years after the publication of Jemison’s narrative, Cooper published another seminal work, *The Last of the Mohicans: A Narrative of 1757*. Cooper established an American national origin story that predated the Revolution: the final Anglo-French conflict of the mid-eighteenth century, when British and colonial victory effectively eliminated the French presence in North America east of the Mississippi.²⁶³ Yet, centralizing this imperial conflict within the origin story of America was not a novel concept. In fact, as previously discussed, the captivity narratives of Jemima Howe and Susannah Johnson, both of which detail events from the Seven Years War, were first published in the 1790s.

²⁶² Seaver, 46-47.

²⁶³ Fred Anderson, *A People's Army: Massachusetts Soldiers and Society in the Seven Years' War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984). According to Anderson the French and Indian War created a distinctive American identity among provincials as well as provided a training ground for Washington and his contemporaries.

With *The Last of the Mohicans: A Narrative of 1757*, Cooper offers a familiar story of feminine vulnerability in the wilderness. Cooper centers his story on two sisters, Cora and Alice Munro, living in New York during the Seven Years War. Through these characters Cooper offers two separate captivity narratives. The first captivity occurred while the two sisters were being escorted from Fort Edward to reconnect with their father, a British general, stationed at Fort William Henry. Although the sisters are briefly abducted by a Magua, a Mohawk guide, Cooper ended the first captivity with Natty Bumppo safely escorting the sisters to Fort William Henry. Thus, Cooper concludes the first captivity in the tradition of redemption and reincorporation. However, the second captivity begins with a massacre at Fort William Henry. Although both sisters endured captivity, Cora developed a romantic relationship with Uncas, the youngest member of the Mohican tribe, who attempts to protect her from Magua, and never returns to white society.

Race is central to Cooper's story, just as it is to Seaver's framing of Jemison. Natty Bumppo not only describes Magua as a member of a "thievish race" with "knavish features," but he also draws racial distinctions as he advises Duncan Heyward, a British army major "that it is lawful to practice things that may not be naturally the gifts of white skin...in order to outwit the knaves."²⁶⁴ Cooper also uses the Munro sisters, Alice and Cora, to offer a commentary on race. Specifically, the reader learns that Cora's mother was of African descent, while Alice's mother was from Scotland. Alice reflects the

²⁶⁴ Cooper, *Last of the Mohicans*, 37, 229.

typical white sentimental heroine of nineteenth century American literature, often described as "tender blossoms" and "harmless things." In contrast, Cooper rejects the possibility of marriage between Heyward and Cora and presents her exclusively as the object of Indigenous desire. The death of both Cora and Uncas reflect the common assumption among many Americans regarding the superiority of white culture.²⁶⁵

While Cooper's *Last of the Mohicans* is well known, fewer people remember Catharine Maria Sedgwick 1827 novel, *Hope Leslie; or Early Times in the Massachusetts*. The influence of Jemison's narrative on Sedgwick is undeniable, yet quite different from its relationship with Cooper's *Last of the Mohicans*. Drawing upon seventeenth-century Puritan histories by John Winthrop, William Bradford, and William Hubbard, Sedgwick offered an alternative history of the Puritan victory over the Pequots in 1637. The story centers on the Fletcher household. The Pequot chief Mononotto attacks the Fletcher household in order to rescue his children, Magawisca and Oneco, who were being held as slaves. In doing so, he also kills Mrs. Fletcher and her younger children and also takes Everell Fletcher and Faith Leslie, daughter from Mr. Fletcher's previous marriage, into captivity. Mr. Fletcher and Hope Leslie evaded the attack as they were on a trip to Boston. Although Everell escapes, Faith remains with Mononotto and eventually marries Oneco. Similar to Jemison, she embraces Indian culture and is unwilling to rejoin her family.

²⁶⁵ For more see David T. Haberly, "Women and Indians: The Last of the Mohicans and the Captivity Tradition," in *American Quarterly*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (Autumn, 1976), pp. 431-444.

Although her contemporary popularity was significantly less than Cooper, scholars now identify her as a preeminent nineteenth-century writer in which her work stands in contrast to prevailing notions of gender roles presented in works such as those by Cooper. Sedgwick's work invited readers to reconsider the role of women's writing in the making of American literature, as well as the prevailing assumption that women's writing largely focused on domesticity and marriage. Written in counterpoint to Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans*, Sedgwick's work, like his, focuses on two female heroines, but their characteristics undermine the stock gender roles exhibited by female characters of Cooper's novels. Like Jemison's narrative, Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie* places a woman at the center of an American origin story. Sedgwick placed a strong female protagonist into a historical reimagining of Massachusetts Bay Colony amidst the social, political and religious, turbulence that followed the Pequot War 1636-1638. Sedgwick explained to the reader in the preface of the first edition that her novel is the result of her "patient investigation of ...the copious, and authentic" accounts that "our ancestors" left behind.²⁶⁶

Sedgwick not only offers an alternative to Cooper's female characters, she also reinvents the captivity drama. Inverting the usual moral of the captivity narrative, the Pequots attack the white settlement in order to redeem their children, who have been captured and are held in servitude. Mononotto, Pequot chief, recalls how "he has seen his people slaughtered, or driven from their homes and hunting grounds, into shameful

²⁶⁶ Catharine Maria Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie; or Early Times in the Massachusetts*, ed. Carolyn L. Karcher (New York: Penguin Group, 1998), 3.

exile.” After his wife died in captivity, Mononotto was determined to rescue his children from “servile dependence in the house of his enemies.”²⁶⁷ Whereas in the tradition of captivity narratives, the Indians attack a settlers home in order to take a settler or members of the family captive, Mononotto is there to rescue his children.

Situating her setting for the contemporary reader, Sedgwick states, “where there are now contiguous rows of shops filled with the merchandise of the east...stately halls of justice...and all the symbols of a rich and populous community-- were, at the early period of our history, a few log-houses, planted around a fort.” Here Sedgwick places the Fletcher home and describes it as “the habitation of civilized man” standing on the edge of “savage howling wilderness.”²⁶⁸ This domestic scene and description would have been quite familiar to American readers as they had been reading captivity narratives for quite some time. In this setting, “Indian warrriors darted from the forest and pealed on the air their horrible yells.” Yet, unlike captivity narratives in which the scene continues in a violent death, Sedgwick immediately humanizes the attackers as Magawisca and Oneco call out, “My father! My Father.” Magawisca entreats her father not to kill Mrs. Fletcher and her children, who “clung fast to their mother.” Mononotto stood motionless, as one of his companions advanced toward Mrs. Fletcher “with an uplifted hatchet.” Magawisca, who begged “they are all good-our benefactors-...spare them,” used her body as a shield to protect Mrs. Fletcher from the impending attack. Although both Mrs. Fletcher and her

²⁶⁷ Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie*, 59

²⁶⁸ Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie*, 16, 17

infant are eventually killed, Sedgwick describes this scene from Mononotto's perspective, which stands in stark contrast to most captivity narratives. Mononotto's "heart melted" as he attempted to save the infant. Although Mononotto failed to prevent the infant's death, he cried "We have has enough blood," and demanded that his children Oneco and Magawisca follow him out of the home.

Once again Sedgwick offers an alternative to the standard events of the captivity narrative. In contrast to the captivity drama in which the captive is eventually dressed in typical indigenous clothing, Mononotto wasted no time in tearing "from Oneco his English dress, and casting it from him." In so doing Mononotto intended to destroy "every mark of the captivity of my children." He then "wrapped a skin around" his children as he explained, "Thou shalt return to our forests with the badge of thy people."²⁶⁹ Clothing has cultural meaning for Indigenous as well as Euro-Americans. Just as Jemison described her captors replacing her shoes with a pair of moccasins, Mononotto must also dress his children in "the badge of thy people" before returning to the forest.

Through the character of Mononotto, Sedgwick offers an interesting contrast to Seaver's portrayal of Jemison's husband, Hiokatoo. Because Jemison will not speak ill of her family, Seaver, consulted Jemison's first cousin to learn more about Hiokatoo, Jemison's second husband. Seaver then goes on for several pages presenting Hiokatoo as

²⁶⁹ Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie*, 59

a barbaric man, who showed early signs of a “thirst for blood,” from a barbaric society, which initiated him “into scenes of carnage.”²⁷⁰

Sedgwick offered a purpose for her readers just as Seaver had. In contrast to Seaver’s work, Sedgwick explained that her work was not intended as “a historical narrative.” Even though “real characters and events are alluded to,” Sedgwick explained that her intention was to “illustrate not the history, but the character of the times.”²⁷¹ Yet, Sedgwick, like Seaver, Cooper and many of the captivity narratives published throughout the early republic, intended to offer an origin story, an insight into America’s past. Another difference between Seaver and Sedgwick is their explicit treatment of Indians. Seaver reminds the reader that part of his intention is for readers to recall the “savage barbarities of Indians.” Seaver cannot reconcile Jemison’s choice to “take pride in extolling their [Indians] virtues.” Sedgwick takes a full paragraph to explain her intention which stands in opposition to Seaver. Writing just three years after Seaver, Sedgwick explained that her representation “supposes that the elements of virtue and intellect are not withheld from any branch of the human family.” Moreover, she calls on the “enlightened and accurate observer of human nature” to acknowledge that “the difference of character among the various races of the earth arises mainly from difference of condition.” Through characters such as Magawisca and Mononotto, Sedgwick creates a representation of indigenous people who are fully realized with their own complex set of

²⁷⁰ Seaver, 105.

²⁷¹ Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie*, 3.

motivations, whereas Seaver uses Jemison's experience to represent Indigenous people as monolithic savages, with little to no depth in understanding their humanity. For Sedgwick, she begins "not from the actual, but the possible" as she constructs her indigenous characters.

Yet, Jemison's sentiment is more akin to Sedgwick's as she, like the character of Faith Leslie, chooses to remain among indigenous people. Although Seaver in many ways frames Jemison's narrative in his framework, Jemison attempts to offer a more complicated view of Indians. Sedgwick acknowledges what Seaver silences in Jemison, that given the opportunity, indigenous "historians or poets... would have extolled their high-souled courage and patriotism."²⁷² Like Seaver, Sedgwick also sees her work as performing a larger purpose in the construct of national identity. In the final paragraph of her preface, she hopes her work would encourage "our young countrymen... to investigate the early history of their native land." Seaver calls on his readers to use Jemison's narrative to gain an appreciation of "our liberal and civic institutions." Both Seaver and Sedgwick intend to educate young Americans, create and pass on an American origin story which centers on the conflict between whites and Indians.

Scholars of reading acknowledge that reading socializes the reader. Reading has been seen as a tool for collective formation throughout history in which reading creates "the constitution of some 'us'."²⁷³ When editors of captivity narratives or authors such as

²⁷² Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie*, 4

²⁷³ Andrew Piper, *Book Was There: Reading in Electronic Times* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 84.

Sedgwick address a collective "you" or "citizens" it projects a communal understanding. Similar to Jemison's narrative, Sedgwick uses the narrator to speak directly to the reader. Her consistent reference to "our young readers," invited the readers to consider their relationship with other members of the novel's audience. Nineteenth century writers theorized that reading was more than an individual experience, rather, could affect one's perception of the world around them.

Jemison's narrative must be analyzed within its historical, social and cultural context, bearing in mind its relation to other works, such as that of Cooper and Sedgwick. Cooper and Sedgwick offer alternative views for the vision of American history. For Cooper, a patriarchal ideology shaped the frontier romance, whereas for Sedgwick a proto-feminist ideology influenced her work. For Cooper, the history of the nation, and perhaps the fate of the country, were in the hands of white male settlers, whereas Sedgwick and Jemison offer an alternative in which the origin and destiny of a nation is shared with white women.

Captivity narratives were premised on extenuating difference. Eventually difference was codified into racial classification supported by science. In the early republic it was the captivity drama that facilitated a consistent discussion of difference, a justification for expansion and eventually removal. By the mid-nineteenth century, popular press, periodicals and American politicians sought scientific proof of racial distinctions, drawn supposedly from observations with indigenous and those of African descent. American science confirmed what Americans had long identified as innately

savage characteristics of non-white settlers. Residence in America was a primary point of distinction from their European ancestors, and perhaps even a claim to their superiority. The desired absence of Indians was combined with feared presence. Americans needed Indigenous people as part of their national imagination otherwise they would simply be seen as displaced Europeans.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

As Americans anticipated the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, the accounts of two women taken captive in the mid-eighteenth century widely circulated among American readers. At a time when so many took this anniversary as an opportunity to imagine the future, why were Americans still interested in reading accounts of Indian captivity from the eighteenth-century? Why was Noah Webster still including the captivity of Jemima Howe in his popular school primer? Why were sales of *A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison* exceeding those of popular American writers, such as James Fenimore Cooper? Americans of the early republic sought an origin story, which would not only create a collective memory but further legitimize the sovereignty of the young nation. Yet, the reality of the past, which included the relentless dispossession of indigenous peoples, conflicted with contemporary efforts to project a national image foregrounded in Enlightenment values of liberty and equality. To that end, women's Indian captivity narratives provided a continuous repository of settlers as victims in an untamed wilderness, which served to legitimize American sovereignty as well as create a sense of national belonging.

Throughout the early republic women's Indian captivity narratives performed the cultural work of imagining a nation. It galvanized support for continuous war with Indigenous peoples through the framework of female captivity. Unlike Americans of the early republic, who faced concerns over the sovereignty and stability of the continental

United States, post 9/11 Americans faced concerns over the image of a "cowering superpower." By sensationalizing their plight in captivity, the American media highlighted the victimization of white women and galvanized support for military action, just as women's Indian captivity narratives did in the early republic. The "barbaric" Muslims may have replaced the "savage Indians" of the early republic and U.S. Special Forces may have replaced "the brave and hardy sons of the western world," yet the victim remained a white woman. Securing the rescue (redemption) of Jessica Lynch, like Mary Kinnan, Jemima Howe and Mary Smith, allowed Americans to view grievances against an individual as grievances against a nation. Thus, captivity narratives consistently perpetuated and reinforced the theme of white victimization through the discourse of gender and directed the reader to the appropriate interpretation of the attack and capture.

Just as Americans across the nation read General Jackson's 1818 call to "the brave men" of Tennessee "to endure hardships of warfare without murmuring or complaining," so too did Americans read of Theodore Roosevelt's 1898 volunteer cavalry regiment, who "boldly faced the life of strife" and "the hardy virtues of the nation."²⁷⁴ Embedded in this rhetoric is a sense of American exceptionalism. Indeed, Roosevelt identified his "Rough

²⁷⁴ Roosevelt resigned as assistant secretary of the navy and enlisted to fight in the just declared war on Spain. The press labeled this group "Roosevelt's Rough Riders." Theodore Roosevelt, *The Strenuous Life: Essays and Addresses* (1901; St. Clair Shores, Mich.: Scholarly Press, 1970)

Riders" as "peculiarly American."²⁷⁵ Political discourse has continued embrace the national identity of the "brave and hardy sons of the western world," who shirk "oversentimentality" and "beg to be led on to the unequal combat!"²⁷⁶

Those Americans, who lived on "the extreme frontiers" throughout the early republic could easily "recount a dear wife or child...carried off or massacred by the hands of these blood thirsty nations in their houses and fields." Whether in the form of a petition to Congress, an order from a commanding officer of the military or a captivity narrative, Americans of the early republic were reminded that all citizens "were as entitled to be protected in their lives, their families, and their property as those who were in luxury, ease and affluence in the great and opulent eastern cities."²⁷⁷ The image of a white woman in captivity underscored Americans' fears while at the same time asserted a sense of national strength and viability in her redemption.

²⁷⁵ Quoted in Edmund Morris, *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt*, (New York: Ballantine, 1979), 673. See also, Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), especially 170-215.

²⁷⁶ *An affecting narrative of the captivity and sufferings of Mrs. Mary Smith, who with her husband, and three daughters, were taken prisoners by the Indians in August 1814 and after enduring the most cruel hardships and torture of mind for sixty days, in which time she witnessed the tragical death of her husband and helpless children, was rescued from the merciless savages by a detached party of the army of the brave General Jackson, then commanding at New Orlean*, (Williamsburgh, Massachusetts: Ephraim Whitman, 1818), 4.

²⁷⁷ Quoted in Alfred F. Young, *Liberty Tree: Ordinary People and the American Revolution*, (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 246.

In moments of national identity formation, the nation looks outward. That is, in order to galvanize support for federal troops on the southeastern border of the United States in 1818 or Theodore Roosevelt's "Rough Riders" during the 1898 Spanish-American-Philippine War, or "The War on Terror" in 2003, the rhetoric was the same. Before the United States was a global imperial power, it was a continental empire. Analyzing the formation of nation building as articulated by captivity narratives is foundational for understanding the imperial discourse of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Just as US imperial strategies of the late nineteenth century, including economic growth and US claims to humanitarianism may have originated in Indian Country, so too did the language and ideas of twentieth and twenty-first century American nationalism.²⁷⁸

It is important to understand how gender assumptions frame notions of security because discursive constructions have consequences. By foregrounding the vulnerability of white, female captives, editors of women's Indian captivity narratives, as well as members of the twenty-first century media invite Americans to embrace a sense of martial nationalism. In doing so, the nation is conceptualized as a family in which the

²⁷⁸ For more see, Lori J. Daggar, "Cultivating Empire: Indians, Quakers, and the Negotiation of American Imperialism, 1754-1846" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 2016). According to Daggar, "Indian Country was the formative ground upon which those paradigms of American imperialism emerged." See also, Brian Rouleau, "Maritime Destiny as Manifest Destiny: American Commercial Expansion and the Idea of the Indian," *Journal of the Early Republic*, Vol. 30, No. 3 (Fall 2010), 377-411.

most vulnerable members (i.e. women and child) are in need of masculine protection in the form of military action.

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