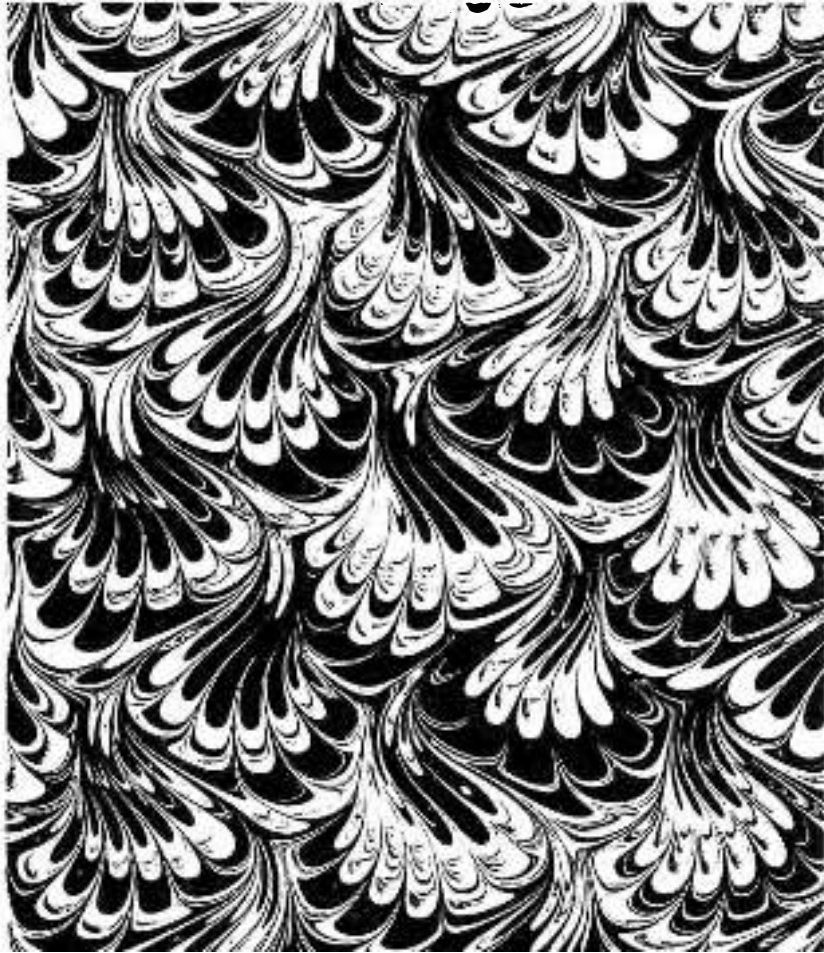


---

Gender and Ethnicity on the American Frontier

*White*  
**CAPTIVES**  
**JUNE NAMIAS**



Library of Congress  
Cataloging-in-Publication Data  
Namias, June.

White captives : gender and  
ethnicity on the American  
frontier / by June Namias.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical  
references and index.

ISBN 0-8078-2079-2 (cloth:  
alk. paper).

— ISBN 0-8078-4408-x (pbk.:  
alk. paper)

1. Indians of North America—  
Captivities. 2. Ethnicity—  
United States—History.  
3. Indians of North America—  
Sexual behavior. 4. McCrea,  
Jane, 1753-1777. 5. Jemison,  
Mary, 1743-1833. 6. Wakefield,  
Sarah F. I. Title.

E85.N34 1993

305.8'00973—dc20 92-31235

CIP

99 98 97 96 95

6 5 4 3 2

© 1993 June Namias

All rights reserved

Manufactured in the United  
States of America

The paper in this book meets the  
guidelines for permanence and  
durability of the Committee on  
Production Guidelines for Book  
Longevity of the Council on  
Library Resources.

**2010**  
**BA**  
**1255**

*To My Parents,*

*Foster and Helen,*

*and for Barbara*





# Contents

Preface, xiii

White Captives: An Introduction, 1

Part One White Actors on a Field of Red

1. *White Women Held Captive*, 21

2. *White Men Held Captive*, 49

3. *Exploring Sexual Boundaries*, 84

Part Two Women in Times of Change, 113

4. *Jane McCrea and the American Revolution*, 117

5. *Mary Jemison: The Evolution of One Captive's Story*, 145

6. *Sarah Wakefield and the Dakota War*, 204

Conclusion Women and Children First, 262

Appendix Guide to Captives, 275

Notes, 281

Index, 367





## *Illustrations and Maps*

- Illustrations    Title page from *A True History of the Captivity & Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson* (1682), 10
- Mrs. Bozarth defending her Dwelling, from John Frost, *Thrilling Adventures among the Indians* (1850), 32
- Frontispiece and title page from Mrs. Caroline Harris, *History of the Captivity and Providential Release Therefrom of Mrs. Caroline Harris* (1838), 38
- Frontispiece from Clarissa Plummer, *Narrative of the Captivity and Extreme Sufferings of Mrs. Clarissa Plummer* (1838), 40
- Cover from Miss Mary Barber, *Five Years of Terrible Suffering among the Indians* (1872), 44

Attempt to Escape. My Capture, and Cruel Treatment, from Miss Mary Barber, *Five Years of Terrible Suffering among the Indians* (1872), 45

C. Smith bound to a tree to be shott to death (1607), 60

C. Smith taketh the king of Pamavnkee prisoner (1607), 61

Daniel Boone rescuing his daughter Jemima, from the frontispiece from John Frost, *Pioneer Mothers of the West* (1869), 65

Cover from Edward Ellis, *Seth Jones* (ca. 1878), 69

Frontispiece of John Dunn Hunter from his *Memoirs of a Captivity among the Indians of North America* (1824), 74

Frontispiece of John Tanner from Edwin James, *A Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner* (1830), 77

Squaws Dunking Col. Smith from Joseph Pritts, *Mirror of Olden Time Border Life* (1849), 93

Miss Lockhart carried away by the Camanche Chief from John Frost, *Thrilling Adventures among the Indians* (1850), 100

The Rescue, from John Frost, *Thrilling Adventures among the Indians* (1850), 101

Cover from Mrs. Ann S. Stephens, *Malaeska: The Indian Wife of the White Hunter* (1861), 105

Charles Wimar, *The Abduction of Daniel Boone's Daughter* (ca. 1850), 108

John Vanderlyn, *Death of Jane McCrea* (ca. 1804), 134



Title page from James E. Seaver, *A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison* (1824), 153

H. K. Bush-Brown's statue of Mary Jemison, 164

H. K. Bush-Brown's statue of Mary Jemison, 165

Frontispiece from Lois Lenski, *Indian Captive: The Story of Mary Jemison* (1941), 170

Photograph of Sarah F. Wakefield from the *St. Paul Pioneer Press Dispatch* (date unknown), 252

John Mix Stanley, *Osage Scalp Dance* (1845), 266

---

...  
**xi**  
*Illustrations*  
*and*  
*Maps*

Maps

New York and Indian Country, 1755–1780, 146

Minnesota in 1862, 206



---



## Preface

*Waterdrinker, priest of the Sioux, dreamed that outlandish creatures were weaving a huge spider web around his people. He awoke knowing that was how it was going to be and said to his people, When this happens, you shall live in square gray houses, in a barren land, and beside these square gray houses, you shall starve.*

—Peter Nabokov, *Native American Testimony*

*Thus humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him; she is not regarded as an autonomous being.*

—Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*

*As experience, the world belongs to the primary word I-It.*

*The primary word I-Thou establishes the world of relation. . . .*

*The primary word I-Thou can be spoken only with the whole being. . . . I become through my relation to the Thou. As I become I, I say Thou.*

*All real living is meeting.*

—Martin Buber, *I and Thou*

The meeting of cultures is the greatest of the world's stories. These histories and the stories cultures produce of them contain amazement, recognition, pain, sorrow, hate, and, occasionally, love.

...

xiv

Preface

Two questions are often asked of me about this study. The first is, How did you ever get interested in this captivity business? and the second, What do you hope to accomplish? From the moment I read the first paragraph of the narrative of Mary Rowlandson, I felt a sense of amazement, recognition, pain, and sorrow. As a daughter of New England I should have been taught this story as a child, but nearly accidentally I fell across it in a Chicago archive, long after I had my own child. I continued through these English and American stories and histories of contact and meeting written in the first decades of English settlement by New Englanders. They brought me into a world I now see as deliberately forgotten but one which was central and well known to the first European settlers of North America. Those men and women were not my ancestors in any way; my grandparents did not set foot on American soil for some two hundred years and more after Rowlandson wrote her narrative. But I was something of an "other" in my native Massachusetts, and the power of these stories moved me to further inquiry as to their meaning. I noticed immediately that there was a playful aspect to this material (albeit at the expense of "others"), as well as a brutal side. As my mother put it when I showed her some of the illustrations I had uncovered, "Where did you ever find *this*?" and "It looks like you're going back to your childhood." As I moved from captivity literature through government documents, paintings, and beaded moccasins, I defined what I was doing as a personal quest to uncover a part of my own and America's history that had been denied me in my long trail of study through public school and university.

It is hard to say what I hope to accomplish even after ten years of traveling through this material and through Minnesota, western New York State, Colorado, and innumerable archives and museums. In the 1970s I worked on a collection of oral histories of twentieth-century immigrants. When I finished, I realized that I was interested in two questions involved in the migration process. First, what happens when people from one culture move and come in contact with those of a very differ-

ent culture? Second, what part does the relationship of men and women play in this question of “what happens,” especially when the men and women are from different cultures? I knew that this was a very old and enduring American problem. How enduring came to my attention in the mid-1970s in the living room of a Japanese-American woman who talked about having to ward off sexual advances while working in the home of a white family in California. Later, in talks with a Filipino farm worker in Delano, I became aware that the laws in California did not allow “Orientals” to marry whites until after World War II, with the result that this man and other Asian men with whom I spoke were fatherless and virtually without families.

Of course I knew about sexual taboos between blacks and whites, and cases like Scottsboro. But I was also interested in the Leo Frank case in which a Jew, who was accused in the early twentieth-century South of raping and murdering an Irish girl, was lynched. I perused graduate programs in history with the hope of finding a person or a place that could direct me toward understanding some of the root problems in these diverse cases and most troubling matters. I happily found both. In the summer of 1982 at the Newberry Library, the 1682 edition of *A True History of the Captivity & Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson* was placed on my desk. I gently opened the small book, looked at the brittle title page, and read the first paragraph.

North America is a land of encounters. It is my hope that this work will shed some light on the myths and realities of cross cultural encounters. We are a migrating people and always have been—both the indigenous peoples and the many immigrant groups who chose to come here, as well as the African Americans who did not so choose. The more we know about our early migrations and the meeting of people along the cultural boundaries that made up the earliest frontiers, the better chance we have to know the origins of our hopes and fears and perhaps deal with each other more humanely.

Like many another researcher, I never realized a major book would take a decade to write. The process was well worth it, because in that time and in the pursuit of information and clarity, I met many people who changed my life. Ten years is a long time, and I have incurred many debts. Virginia Woolf ad-

---

...

xv

*Preface*

vised a woman who wanted to write that she needed financial support and a room of her own. Besides those basics, to do historical work one needs great libraries, museums, and historical societies to help you along, other scholars to read your work and offer needed criticism, and friends and family to urge you on.

John Demos became the first of these treasured friends. His advice and confidence, so important in the early years of this project, helped in the later years as well. Laurel Thatcher Ulrich and Neal Salisbury gave a close reading and clear directions for reshaping the final manuscript. I thank Joyce Antler, Pauline Maier, Elizabeth Pleck, Daniel Asher Cohen, Donald Worster, Jill K. Conway, Dorothy Gonson, Mary Moore, and Tona Hangen for reading all or large parts of the manuscript at earlier stages of its development.

Certain chapters were read and commented on by the History of American Civilization seminar and the Humanities Dissertation Group at Brandeis University, as well as by Theda Perdue, Carol Karlsen, Elise Marienstras, David Hackett Fischer, Estelle B. Freedman, Christine L. Heyrman, Allen R. Grossman, David D. Hall, Julie Roy Jeffrey, Daria Donnelly, Lissa Gifford, Carol Zemel, Rayna Green, Tom Cook, Arthur Kaledin, Wendy Gamber, Gary Clayton Anderson, William N. Fenton, Mimi Grosser, David Palmer, Adria Steinberg, Marisha Hyde- man, and Anita Safran. Of course, any problems that still exist are my own responsibility.

I thank the Crown Fellowship and the History of American Civilization program at Brandeis University, which provided research assistance; the American Antiquarian Society for its support at the seminar of the History of the Book in American Culture; the National Museum of American History at the Smithsonian Institution for a short-term fellowship under the generous supervision of Rayna Green; the Newberry Library for a summer fellowship during which John Aubrey first handed me Mary Rowlandson's narrative and continued to provide good leads. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology and its History Faculty, Dianne Brooks and Mabel Chin, along with the Kelly Fund and the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program and research assistant Tona Hangen deserve many thanks. Wheaton College also provided funds for copying, maps, and travel. The Millay Colony for the Arts and the

Blue Mountain Center provided me not only with rooms of my own for one and, in the case of Blue Mountain, two summers, but also gave me time in Iroquois country in the presence of great beauty and in the company of other writers and artists. Mimi and George Grosser helped assure the needed summer solace over the decade by allowing me to use their Little House in Vermont. Marisha and Lee Hydeman generously offered me the use of their home and garden in the Northeast Kingdom to work on the final draft.

At the Newberry Library, Tom Willcockson produced the maps of the New York and Minnesota frontiers. Ken Cain carefully reproduced most of the illustrations. Mary Porter Wyly helped arrange for their use. Of great assistance were Judith Humphreys and the staff of Brandeis's Goldfarb Library and Victor Berch, formerly of Special Collections; Kathleen Green of the Dewey Library at MIT; Peter Love at the Hilles Library at Harvard; James P. Roan at the National Museum of American History and Kathleen Baxter at the Anthropological Archives at the National Museum of Natural History at the Smithsonian; Barbara Taylor and Eric Grundset at the Genealogical Library, National Society, Daughters of the American Revolution, Washington, D.C.; Karl Kabelac of the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections at the University of Rochester Library; Peter J. Knapp, at the Library of Trinity College, Hartford; Jocquelyn Foy at Litchfield Historical Society in Litchfield, Connecticut; and Jerald Pepper at the Adirondack Museum in Blue Mountain Lake, New York. Papers from the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions are used by permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, and the United Church Board for World Ministries. Manuscripts from Yale University are used by permission of the Beinecke Library's Western Americana Collection and the Yale Medical School, Historical Library, in New Haven. Other libraries and institutions that provided assistance include, at the Harvard Libraries, the Tozzer, Schlesinger, Widener, and Houghton libraries; at Yale, the Western Americana Collection at the Beinecke Library; in Hartford, the library at the Wadsworth Atheneum; in New York, the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society and the New York Public Library; in Boston, the Boston Public Library and the New

---

...

**xvii**

*Preface*

England Historic Genealogical Society; in Buffalo, the Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society; in Geneseo, New York, the staff at the College Libraries, State University of New York at Geneseo.

...  
xviii  
*Preface*

For work on Jane McCrea, Mary Jemison, and the Iroquois people, I thank the Fort Edward Historical Society, Fort Edward, New York; Tom Cook at the Pioneer and Indian Museum at Letchworth State Park in Castile, New York; Richard Rose, formerly of the Rochester Museum and Science Center; Ray and John Fadden at the Six Nations Indian Museum, Onchiota, New York; Kathy Skelly of the Collections Department of the Peabody Museum at Harvard University; and Susan Crawford at the National Museum of Natural History.

Research on Sarah Wakefield and the Dakota War was greatly assisted by the Minnesota Historical Society. Alan R. Woolworth was especially generous. I also thank Darla Schnurrer at Brown County Historical Society, New Ulm, Minnesota; the Blue Earth Historical Society, Mankato, Minnesota; the Faribault County Historical Society, Blue Earth, Minnesota; Marilyn Lass at the Mankato State University Library; and Carol Scott, court administrator at the Scott County Court House, Shakopee, Minnesota. At the National Archives, Robert Kvasnicka of the Scientific, Economic, and Natural Resources Bureau introduced me to the complexities and riches of those archives, and at the National Archives Records Office in Waltham, Helen Engle assisted me with census data.

It is a humbling experience to try to “do” Indian and white history. I thank Calvin Martin for urging me to take my own path and Pauline Turner Strong for handing me many key primary sources. I also owe a debt to Seneca and Mdewakanton people who spoke with me, especially G. Peter Jemison, Theresa Morrison, and Chris Cavender. Many scholars were generous with their thoughts on this project. They included Julie Roy Jeffrey, Susan Armitage, James T. Kloppenberg, Allan MacDougall, Janice L. Reiff, Herbert T. Hoover, R. H. Ives Goddard, Wilcomb E. Washburn, Frederick E. Hoxie, and John Lawrence. To Natasha Anisimov, Joan Brigham, Adria Steinberg, Carol Zemel, Ron Boucher, Will Stewart, Elizabeth MacMahon, Sonia Dettmann, and Dorothy Gonson, I can only say



that without your friendship and encouragement there would hardly be a book at all.

Seeing a book through from an idea to a draft to a finished work takes tremendous faith and patience, especially when it isn't your own. The University of Alaska Anchorage generously provided funds for the last stages of the manuscript, and the College of Arts and Sciences and the Department of History and Geography assisted my move and warmly welcomed me to Alaska. Charlotte Cecil Raymond became the editor for my first book. She has since become a fine agent and great friend. She has helped me more than I can say. Trudie Calvert took great care with the copyediting. Lewis Bateman at the University of North Carolina Press saw the value in this work. I thank him, Sandra Eisdorfer, and others at the University of North Carolina Press for taking on this task.

Finally, my family has offered love and support. My mother, Helen (Needle) Namias, did not live to see this book completed, but she always had faith in my ability to do most anything. To the extent that she was right, it is because I inherited a small amount of her enthusiasm, energy, and warmth. My father, Foster Namias, has always been a model of excellence. He was most kind in donating funds for a new computer system. My son, Robert Victor Slavin, lived with the first years of this project; later he read and then proofread many pages, ran the printer often, dredged up last-minute citations, and gave me good advice. Finally, I thank my sister Barbara Meltzer for her great support and love, and Philip, Stephen, Beth, Jeffrey, and Faith Meltzer for their affection and good humor.

June Namias  
Cambridge, Massachusetts  
June 1992

---

...

**xix**

*Preface*



---

# *White Captives*



---

10



## *White Captives: An Introduction*

From conventional literature and history we are used to a frontier of Indian fighters and war whoops—men clashing on horseback, surrounded by shooting arrows and firing rifles. This is the West as depicted in adventure novels, military accounts, movies, and television westerns. Reexamination finds this picture wanting—it is an exaggerated, one-dimensional, melodramatic view of America’s frontier history. Recent studies of white migration and settlement in North America reveal a different picture, one less filled with critical battles, more involved with encounters across cultural lines, and including women and children as opposed to an all-male cast. Studying white captives verifies the coexistence of men, women, and children of a variety of cultures as the norm in American frontier life, a situation well recognized by earlier generations as at the heart of the American migratory experience. As Europeans and their descendants moved onto successive frontiers, they confronted their own gender and sexuality in new ways. Gender had to be viewed in the context of a competing culture. What can we tell about the way Euro-Americans think when confronted by danger from a group they consider “other”?

---

... To earlier generations, the stories and depictions of white captives and the legends that grew up around them were well known. These stories had tremendous power and resonance.

**2** Why was this so? Why were the exploits and the hardships of a relatively few whites captured by a relatively few Indians so popular in political and local histories, literature, high and low art? This book explores the histories of European and American captives in the continental United States and the way these stories have been incorporated into American history. The experiences of early American white captives are not familiar in the culture at large. Among historians and students of literature, if known at all, they are read as “captivity narratives.” An occasional name such as Hannah Dustan or Mary Jemison may be recognized, but a systematic analysis of these captives and some wider placement of their experiences in the context of American politics, society, and culture has been attempted by only a few scholars.<sup>1</sup>

*White  
Captives*

What was the captivity experience about? What is the captivity literature? Why study it to learn more about gender and ethnicity on the frontier? Far from being an occasional act of a barbarous foe, the taking of captives was a centuries-old practice around the world. In the Americas before the arrival of Columbus it was a part of intertribal warfare; with the coming of Europeans it was used as a tactic of warfare between Indians and Euro-Americans for over 250 years. In the successive struggles for dominance on the North American continent, priests, soldiers, women, and children were held for ransom, adopted, or otherwise incorporated into the tribal life of an enemy. North American Indians were taken prisoner, enslaved, or forcibly taken on voyages to the other side of the Atlantic, where they were put on public display as showpieces of victory and novelty.<sup>2</sup>

Capture as seen by most whites in North America was an act of brutality and savagery against an innocent, civilized, and superior foe, one aspect of what was labeled “savage war.” It employed elements not found in European warfare in the early modern or modern periods—a forced, prolonged imprisonment with the enemy, a fearful contamination, a separation from one’s community, a loss of spouse and children, and a communion with or at least relentless exposure to representatives of the

devil. But captivity was a complex enterprise. Its history predated the European invasion of the Americas. Before investigating “white captives” these two earlier traditions of European capture of Indians and capture as a tactic, regardless of the race or culture of the enemy, need further explication.

---

...

3

*White*

*Captives*

## **Indian Ways of War**

Why did North American Indian groups employ capture? Capture was a widely used tactic of warfare in both the Northeast and the Southwest before European arrival in the Americas. In the Northeast in particular, adoption and ransom were the two major motives of Indian capture in the period from approximately 1500 through the American Revolution. The sex and age of the victim were important in determining the survival of the captive. Terror frequently accompanied the arrival of male captives (white or Indian) at the village of their captors. In many tribes east of the Mississippi to the southwest, males who got that far were greeted by grieving and angry Indians of all ages and both sexes mourning the loss of relatives. Male captives were usually forced to run the gauntlet, attempting to avoid attack. Lewis Henry Morgan wrote that among the Iroquois, “adoption or torture were the alternative chances of the captive.” Only males were required to run the gauntlet. During the ordeal, they were pointed toward their future house, and if they made it through the “long avenue of whips” running naked to the waist they would be “treated with the utmost affection and kindness.” Those who did not pass the test were “led away to torture, and to death.” On the one hand, when a member of the Iroquois nations or a rival northeastern group went to war he knew such a fate was possible and that if captured he must prove “his courage was equal to any trial and above the power of death itself.” On the other hand, adoption was so common that one scholar goes so far as to say that the Iroquois would have died out had they not taken captives. From colonial times we have accounts by survivors verifying that comrades were beaten, tortured, and sometimes burned to death and others that describe their lives as accepted members of tribal groups.<sup>3</sup>

... Adoption was part of a wider social and cultural practice and, in the case of the many northeastern Indians, indicates the importance of women in the system of warfare. In the colonial  
4 Northeast, especially among the Iroquois, Hurons, and Dela-  
*White* wares, for those who made it through the ordeal, a new family  
*Captives* was often waiting. The choice of captives was left to the women of the village. To assuage their loss of a brother, husband, or son, they could choose among male or female captives to adopt. Either sex was considered a desirable substitute for a lost relative. In the late 1750s, Mary Jemison became a sister to women who had lost their brother. The elderly and those less able might be killed in a raid or on a forced march, but northeastern Indians knew enough about what we call acculturation to understand that a child could more readily learn and accept a new language and culture than could an adult, and they favored children for adoption. James Axtell's work demonstrates that young children took to Indian life better than did adults.<sup>4</sup>

In Daniel K. Richter's analysis, adoption is a cultural and political system. "Mourning war" was a complicated set of rituals for assuring that the family of deceased warriors were compensated for their loss both physically and psychologically. It was also a cultural system of bestowing power to avenge loss. Through their political power the women of the family, as leading older women in the clan, could call upon kin to make war on those who had killed a son, brother, or husband. After battle, the ceremonies of bringing the captives into the village and running the gauntlet enabled the family to express anger and loss as well as victory and dominance. The ritual mourning could then be transformed into new life with the adoption of a captive.<sup>5</sup> In the Northeast, especially among the Iroquois, adoption was common, but it was also common in other parts of the country, as in the Southeast among the Cherokees and Catawbas.<sup>6</sup>

Besides serving as a way to mourn and replenish population, in the early Indian wars in New England white captives were used to get ransom money from the French or English at the end of wars.<sup>7</sup> Mary Rowlandson was ransomed at the end of King Philip's War. Finally, the use of capture, or what we call the holding of prisoners of war (which sounds less "savage"), was a form of psychological warfare well known in the Americas. In an age in which the Carter administration fell because



---

sample content of White Captives: Gender and Ethnicity on the American Frontier (English Language and Literature; 140)

- [download Doce cuentos peregrinos book](#)
- [read Kukai and His Major Works: Kukai: Major Works](#)
- **[Fundamentals of Heat and Mass Transfer here](#)**
- [click Papa Hemingway: A Personal Memoir](#)
- [download online Microscripts pdf, azw \(kindle\), epub, doc, mobi](#)
- [download Middle Ground \(Awaken, Book 2\) pdf, azw \(kindle\), epub, doc, mobi](#)
  
- <http://xn--d1aboelcb1f.xn--p1ai/lib/Design-Research-Through-Practice--From-the-Lab--Field--and-Showroom.pdf>
- <http://dadhoc.com/lib/Kukai-and-His-Major-Works--Kukai--Major-Works.pdf>
- <http://fortune-touko.com/library/Murder--Stanley-Hastings-Mystery--Book-2-.pdf>
- <http://conexdx.com/library/Hacking-Video-Game-Consoles--Turn-your-old-video-game-systems-into-awesome-new-portables--ExtremeTech-.pdf>
- <http://korplast.gr/lib/Microscripts.pdf>
- <http://nexson.arzamashev.com/library/Merry-Christmas--Alex-Cross--Alex-Cross--Book-19-.pdf>