

**“AMAZONIAN DAMES”: NEW ENGLAND PURITAN WOMEN’S ACTS OF  
VIOLENCE AGAINST NATIVE AMERICANS, 1675 - 1700**

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Undergraduate Thesis Project

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Spring 2015

## PROLOGUE

As he looked out on the shimmering Massachusetts Bay from the prow of a sturdy ship, Robert Roules could not help but recount his most perilous hour. As a familiar ocean spray speckled his reddened face, he rightly presumed he had just survived the most terrifying experience of his life. That day he and the rest of his crew were captured by a group of Abenaki warriors as they fished off the Massachusetts coast. Through their bold actions the fishermen had saved themselves from what they assumed to be a horrific death. They had even managed to take two of the Indians captive in the process who would surely represent a valuable bargaining chip later on. Roules could not have fathomed, however, that later that day his life would once again be in jeopardy, though not at the hands of Indians. For now, they sailed with the captives to the small town of Marblehead to be received by what was sure to be a stunned and joyful crowd, blissfully unaware that the rest of that balmy afternoon would descent into an even darker nightmare. By the end of that day, Roules and the crew had been forced to flee from their captives who were then beaten to death, mutilated, and decapitated by a group of women of the town of Marblehead.

Ten years later, one dark night in 1697, three hatchets moved swiftly and silently through the night air, glinting in the moonlight as they went. An imposing-looking woman wielded the foremost hatchet while the woman's nurse and a youth followed closely behind. Upon each visage was a graven single-mindedness. Their breath appeared before them as they clasped closed their coats, trying as they might to stave off the March air still clinging to winter's chill. They stopped. Before them lay seven children, two men, and three women—their captors—sound asleep on the hard earth. Each of the three

stooped over their selected targets, knuckles white as they gripped the handles of their weapons tighter and tighter. In the pale moonlight the nurse and the youth looked to the foremost woman with anticipation, waiting for her command. Finally, she gave it. Down went each furious hatchet, then up, then down again. In the chaos of that horrific, bloody tempest only a woman, badly injured, and a child managed escape, but tragically, the rest lay dead. The former captives were now free, though there was one more business to which Hannah Dustin, the group's acknowledged leader, needed to attend. Drawing forth one of their captors' blades they removed the scalps of the dead, knowing full well the bounty they would bring. Thus they piled into a canoe, bounty in hand, and affected their escape, one dark night in 1697.



Piecing together the daily lives of seventeenth-century Puritan women is often a great challenge. Thanks to the paucity of sources that could be termed “women’s literature” in seventeenth-century New England, historians have often looked to incidents in which women stepped out of the roles traditionally ascribed to them by their societies to get at the heart of what it meant to be a Puritan woman. Women’s own voices during this period are audible primarily through the voices of Puritan *men* in muffled, distorted forms. Though the Puritans of New England praised women’s passivity, modesty, and meekness and officially proscribed behavior to the contrary, the mothers, wives, and sisters of seventeenth-century Puritan New England were also traders, farmers, lawyers (of a sort), criminals, and, most importantly for the purposes of this study, occasional perpetrators of violence. More than any other behavior traditionally deemed unwomanly, through acts of violence Puritan women pushed the boundaries of what their society

considered acceptable female behavior, and in doing so helped to reshape its conceptions of the ideal woman.

A close examination of these women's acts of violence is an excellent means to evaluate Puritan society's true expectations of women and illuminate the identities and lives of the women themselves. In recent years, historians have said much of women's relationship to the law and commented on Puritan women and violence in general. Women's violence against *Native Americans* in the seventeenth century, however, has not been evaluated on its own terms as a valuable means to examine the realities of life for Puritan women, the expectations placed on them by their society, the nature of female captivity, and even Puritan society's conception of Native Americans.

This paper will argue that two such incidents of female violence against Native Americans—Hannah Dustin's killing of ten of her Indian captors in 1697 and the murder of two Indian captives in the town of Marblehead, Massachusetts, by a mob of women in 1677—helped push the boundaries of what was considered acceptable female behavior. Further, I will argue that the Marblehead killings are representative of frustration with the male-dominated Puritan hierarchy of power and its inefficacy in the aftermath of King Philip's War. The incidents will be considered in the context of what Puritan society considered to be appropriate female behavior. Mary Rowlandson's famed narrative of her captivity, *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* (written after her return to Puritan society in 1676 and first published in 1682), will be compared and contrasted with Dustin's captivity in an effort to gauge Puritan society's differing reactions to each captivity.

Marblehead in particular is a lesser-known case whose importance to the history of Puritan women in the seventeenth century has not yet been fully realized. This incident will be examined in order to understand the true nature of Puritan authorities' reactions to a shocking act of female violence and, more importantly, a blatant disregard for authority. Resistance to authority—both knowingly and unknowingly—is intrinsic to this paper, and this incident is one of the most shocking manifestations of female resistance to authority in the seventeenth century, as the women's proclamations after the murder demonstrate.

This paper will use these incidents further to suggest that the chaos and hardship of the war helped to disrupt the traditionally rigid hierarchy of power and was thus an excellent incubator in which women could more readily exhibit behavior traditionally deemed unfeminine. In times of great duress societal norms often fall by the wayside, and King Philip's War was the most destructive seventeenth-century New England had seen. With many men either engaged in combat, dead, or injured, women were both forced to fulfill certain roles considered to be men's and were less subject to the scrutiny of their communities. In this climate and in its aftermath, Rowlandson and Dustin were taken captive, and the women of Marblehead butchered two Indian captives.

Finally, these incidents offer a glimpse of Puritans' conceptions of Native Americans—principally regarding their humanity. Rowlandson's narrative is significant for its contribution to Anglo-Americans shifting means of distinguishing themselves from non-Europeans from one based primarily on religion and culture to what would be called, in the nineteenth century, race.<sup>1</sup> In turn, it is possible to examine if and how, by the time

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<sup>1</sup> Rowlandson, Mary. *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God, Together with the Faithfulness of His Promises Displayed*. Ed. Neal Salisbury. Boston/New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1997. 48

Dustin and the women of Marblehead committed their acts of violence, Puritan society's conception of Native Americans had changed.



In the mid-twentieth century, historians such as Perry Miller and Edmund Morgan attempted to address the experiences of Puritan women, though these attempts were largely within the context of either the Puritan family or relative to the lives of Puritan men. Since then, starting around 1980, historians such as Mary Beth Norton, Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, Elizabeth Reis, and others have begun to fill the void of knowledge of seventeenth-century Puritan women.

The fact that many historians studying women in early American history have ignored the seventeenth century in favor of the eighteenth is in large part due to the relative lack of sources detailing the daily lives of women in the period. No women's diaries, for example, exist before 1750,<sup>2</sup> making insight into the minds of seventeenth-century Puritan women possible (with the notable exceptions of Anne Bradstreet and Mary Rowlandson) only through sources from the perspective of Puritan *men*. This bias has meant that there has long existed the common misconception that women's actions were completely domestic and thus unimportant to events of the period. While their roles were mainly domestic, they were far from irrelevant to the history of New England.

In *Good Wives*, Ulrich (incidentally, author of the ubiquitous quote: "Well-behaved women seldom make history") was one of the first to consider the lives of women independently of men's and to challenge deep-seated misconceptions of the roles

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<sup>2</sup> Ulrich, Laurel Thatcher. *Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England, 1650-1750*. New York, NY: Knopf, 1982. 280.

women played in early American society. This paper will draw heavily on the insights, ideas, and evidence presented by Ulrich. Of this book's three sections, this paper draws most heavily on the third, entitled: "Jael", in which the author discusses women who committed acts of violence. This diverges somewhat in the author's interpretation of the Marblehead incident, arguing the women's actions were not simply a manifestation of the crowd's sentiment, but were initiated on the part of the women. Most historians have assumed that Anglo-American society restricted the ability of colonial women to take on male duties.<sup>3</sup> Ulrich's book, however, "reverses the base of the argument, suggesting that even in America ideology was more permissive than reality."<sup>4</sup> This paper borrows her use of one seventeenth-century commentator's phrase: "deputy-husbands", referring to women's sanctioned role as essentially acting-husbands when their husbands were absent or otherwise unable to fulfill their duties.

Mary Beth Norton's *Founding Mothers & Fathers* addresses the gendered nature of power and how gender shaped society from 1620-1670 in early America. The book gives evidence to support the notion that the political ideology of the period was shifting from a primarily Filmerian one, in which the family and the state were parallel institutions, "linked symbiotically through their similar historical origins, aims, and functions," to a Lockean one in which the connection between the family and state were severed. An understanding of Puritan society as one firmly rooted in Filmerian ideology is essential to understanding their conceptions of the roles of men and women.

Though the region of interest here was far from homogenous, made up of bustling cities, quiet farming villages, and Native American settlements, and was populated by

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<sup>3</sup> *Good Wives*, 38.

<sup>4</sup> *Good Wives*, 38.

Quakers and various Native American peoples in addition to the Puritans, “New England” here refers to Puritan New England, that is Massachusetts as far north as Maine.

### **PRESCRIBED PURITAN GENDER ROLES**

Before moving to the cases of Rowlandson, Dustin, and the women of Marblehead specifically, it is useful to first examine formal Puritan thought regarding the appropriate behaviors and roles of women and men in their societies.

When the first English Puritans made the cold, dreary passage to New England early in the seventeenth century, they brought with them conflicting notions of the ideal woman’s place in the community.<sup>5</sup> On one hand, women were expected to defer to their husbands in all matters while on the other, there were expectations of what women must do for themselves, including placing herself on the path to salvation and having an appropriate knowledge of God and the Bible.<sup>6</sup> Instead of being completely rigid, oppressive, and static, Puritan notions of gender roles were more complex and sometimes apparently contradictory. Women could farm, inherit estates, slaughter livestock, engage in market interactions, and other activities if their husbands sanctioned them and they were useful to the family.<sup>7</sup> Colonial Puritan society was much less concerned with abstract notions such as “femininity” and more concerned with roles such as “wife” or

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<sup>5</sup> Kerber, Linda. "Can a Woman Be an Individual? The Limits of Puritan Tradition in the Early Republic." *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* Vol. 25. No. 1 (Spring 1983): 167.

<sup>6</sup> *Limits of Puritan Tradition in the Early Republic*, 167.

<sup>7</sup> *Good Wives*, 38.

“neighbor”. This, Ulrich explains, “allowed for varied behavior without really challenging the patriarchal order of society.”<sup>8</sup>

Indeed, Puritan society allowed and actually *required* women to act as men in certain capacities under certain circumstances. “The first of these cases” explains William Gouge, an early seventeenth-century English Puritan minister “declareth an impotencie in the husband: the other an impossibilitie for him to order matters: wherefore the wife being next to the husband, the power of ordering things is divolved on her: she is not bound to have his consent.”<sup>9</sup> Here Gouge divulges two important aspects of the relationship between husband and wife: that wives are “next” to their husbands in importance and responsibility and that if men—who are themselves tasked with many duties—should fail in their capacities (display “impotencie”), then a wife can and must act on his behalf; his duties are “divolved” on her. “This is no part of disobedience” he continues “but a point wherein she may shew her selfe a great good helpe vnto her husband; [Note: Gen. 2. 18.] for which end a wife was first made.” Gouge outlines some of men’s duties as “Ambassadour, Souldier, [and] Mariner”; ironically men would be called upon to fulfill these roles during King Philip’s War and at times, fail in exercising them.

William Secker, a New England Puritan minister, echoes Gouge, stressing the reciprocal duties of husband and wife (founded on female submission) and women’s roles as “deputy husbands”: “[men and women are] like the sun and the moon” he says: “when the greater light goes down, the lesser light gets up...The wife may be a sovereign in her

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<sup>8</sup> *Good Wives*, 37-38.

<sup>9</sup> Gouge, William. *Of domesticall duties eight treatises* (1622). Early English Books Online. 288

husband's absence, but she must be a subject in her husband's presence."<sup>10</sup>

In Cotton Mather's account of Dustin's captivity he, too, mentions this important aspect of women's role in society while describing her actions:

While they were yet, it may be about an Hundred and Fifty Miles from the Indian Town, a little before Break of Day, when the whole Crew was in a Dead Sleep; (Reader, see if it prove not So!) one of these Women [Dustin] took up a Resolution, to imitate the Action of Jael upon Sisera; and being where she had not her own Life secured by any Law unto her, she thought she was not Forbidden by any Law to take away the Life of the Murderers, by whom her Child had been butchered.<sup>11</sup>

Mather makes clear that no laws forbade Dustin to take away the lives of her captors since her own life was not "secured by any Law". Neither husband, nor any man, was there to protect her, after all.

Interestingly, for all the detail in Gouge's treatise and the prescriptions for the behaviors of the sexes in Puritan society more generally, there is ample room for interpretation in the role of "deputy husband". "Impotencie" is a difficult thing to prove; a husband may not even agree he is ineffectual in his duties, but as Gouge states, the wife is not subject to his will in this situation. This will have major implications, as we will see, for our understanding of the case of Marblehead, which I argue is an incident that can be classified as a judgment call on the part of the women to correct the impotency of their town's men.

Additionally, the relationship between men and women represents one component of the hierarchy of superior-inferior relationships that formed the basis in Puritan society.

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<sup>10</sup> Secker, William. *A Wedding Ring, Fit for the Finger; or the Salve of Divinity on the Sore of Humanity. With Directions to Those Men That Want Wives, How to Choose Them, and to Those Women That Have Husbands, How to Use Them*, 10<sup>th</sup> ed. (Portland: John McKown, 1806). In: *The Limits of Puritan Tradition in the Early Republic*, page 169.

<sup>11</sup> Mather, Cotton. *Decennium Luctuosum in The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* (ed. Salisbury), page 165-166.

The husband's dominion and superiority over his wife, the parents' over their children, and the master's superiority over his servants represented these relationships in the family structure, while ministers' and elders' superiority over their congregations, and a ruler's superiority over subjects in the state, formed the basis of society as a whole.<sup>12</sup> Thus, society functioned, according to the Puritans, only when all members within these relationships adhered to their roles. Puritans justified this concept by linking it directly to the Fifth Commandment: "Honour thy father and mother", which in effect represented all of these relationships. When Anne Hutchinson, for example, was convicted of sedition for claiming she could hear the voice of God, and claiming the ministers of New England were corrupt, she was charged with breaking this Commandment. Rather than fulfilling her womanly roles, she was playing the part of "a Husband than a Wife, and a preacher than a Hearer; and a Magistrate than a Subject."<sup>13</sup>

The absence of men in the family structure was troubling for Puritan authorities as well because they conceived of families in a Filmerian sense: as "the root whence church and Commonwealth cometh."<sup>14</sup> According to Morgan, the biggest problem for the state was to ensure that family governors (husbands and fathers) governed their dependents (servants, wives, and children).<sup>15</sup> Without this governance, women, who were inferior in both body and mind, would go astray and fall into sin and other deviant behaviors, as Gouge reminded his readers: "...and a law too, for triall of her obedience, which if it be not obserued, her nature will be more depraved, and her fault more increased."

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<sup>12</sup> Morgan, Edmund S. *The Puritan Family; Religion & Domestic Relations in Seventeenth-century New England*. New ed. New York: Harper & Row, 1966. 19.

<sup>13</sup> *The Puritan Family*, 19.

<sup>14</sup> Weisberg, Kelly. "'Under Greet Temptations Heer' Women and Divorce in Puritan Massachusetts" *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 2/3 (1975), 186.

<sup>15</sup> *The Puritan Family*, 143.

## ROWLANDSON, DUSTIN, AND THE IDEAL PURITAN WOMAN

To understand the definition of the ideal Puritan woman, we need look no further than Hannah Moody's gravestone. Almost nothing is known of Moody's life (and, as we will see, her epitaph is of little help) but she, according to her gravestone, was "Eminent for Holiness, Prayerfulness, Watchfulness, Zeal, Prudence, Sincerity, Humility, Meekness, Patience, Weanedness From ye World, Self-denial, Publick-Spiritnedness, Diligence, Faithfulness & Charity".<sup>16</sup>

Godly, humble, and diligent to her husband and to God, this woman helped to keep society functioning. Essentially Moody, like any good Puritan woman, was anonymous; she did not behave in a manner which drew attention to herself as diverging from the female Puritan ideal.<sup>17</sup> Even the life of a woman such as Mary Rowlandson, author of the most well-known piece of writing by either sex to come out of New England in the seventeenth century, is almost completely unknown to us save for the three months of her captivity. Rowlandson's epitaph could well have been identical to Moody's. She herself was emblematic of the kind of woman Puritan society esteemed. Though she did, in some ways, stray from the Puritan ideal, she also existed very much within the bounds of acceptable female behavior.

For New England, the final decades of the seventeenth century in which the episodes of Dustin, Rowlandson, and Marblehead occurred were intensely violent, destructive, and chaotic. In 1675, tension between many of the region's Native American

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<sup>16</sup> Hannah Moody gravestone, Old Burying Ground, York Village, Me. Died Jan. 29, 1727/8. (In Ulrich's *Good Wives*). 3.

<sup>17</sup> *Good Wives*, 3.

peoples and English colonists erupted in a conflict known as Metacom's War, or King Philip's War, which would forever reshape New England and the lives of its inhabitants. In 1669, Increase Mather, one of the most prominent ministers in New England made the ominous prediction: "I am persuaded that whoever liveth a while longer will hear that the stars are falling down from heaven, like untimely figs from a shaken tree."<sup>18</sup> Though he had before made many such predictions, this time he was right. Though the war lasted a little more than a year and was confined to a small geographic area, it would take the lives of around five thousand Native Americans and around two thousand five hundred of the English; forty and five percent of each group's populations in the region, respectively.<sup>19</sup> Relative to population, the war was the deadliest in American history and importantly (and tragically) saw the deaths of many non-combatants on both sides. Not only was the war financially and demographically destructive, it was also deeply personal, felt by every member of Puritan society.

When she was taken, then, amidst the blood and flames of that cold February morning in 1676, Rowlandson's life became something drastically different from the existence she had known. Sleeping on bare earth, eating bear meat, stealing a boiled horse knuckle from the mouth of a child, and witnessing the death of her young daughter, her captivity was a most rigorous trial from God. With her captors, which included Narragansett, Wampanoag, and Nipmuc Indians loyal to Metacomet (known to the English as King Philip), the acknowledged leader of the Indian war effort, she lived and traveled for three months, gradually becoming part of their society. In 1682, a narrative of her experience she had written following her return in 1676, entitled: *The Sovereignty*

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<sup>18</sup> Mather, Increase. *The mystery of Israel's salvation* (1669). Early American Imprints. 162.

<sup>19</sup> *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* (introduction by Salisbury). 1.

*and Goodness of God* was published and quickly gained popularity in New and old England alike. As we will see, Rowlandson's captivity was very different than Dustin's and the reaction to each by Puritan society equally so. The work represents an extremely rare and singular document to emerge from the seventeenth century, combining a reluctant non-combatant's commentary on battles, an ethnography (albeit significantly biased and racist) of southern New England Indians and, most significantly, a female captive's account of her physical and spiritual ordeals<sup>20</sup>

Though Rowlandson, as a woman, was unique for having a piece of writing published (or even writing at all) and therefore could be seen as pushing the bounds of acceptable female behavior, she was also well within such bounds in the ways in which she portrays herself and her captivity. The content of her narrative and the circumstances around its publication reflect Puritan society's attitudes towards women engaging in what were traditionally considered to be men's roles, in this case writing and publishing. In her narrative, we see the beginnings of a seemingly more relaxed attitude toward women stepping outside their traditional roles—this time cautiously—but by Dustin's day more nonchalantly.

The success of Rowlandson's narrative attracted Puritan ministers' interest in the genre for its use as a metaphor for the vulnerability of human beings before God.<sup>21</sup> Thus, even though the narrative's ministerial imprimatur seems to suggest a tolerance and even acceptance of this autonomy, this is not completely the case. In reality, though it was significant that a woman published at all, the work was well within the bounds of proper female behavior and reflects a conscious effort to remain in them. The captivity's

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<sup>20</sup> Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/24220>.

<sup>21</sup> *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God*, 164.

publication was possible only with the permission and endorsement of Puritan authorities and with an extensive emphasis on Rowlandson's good character, piousness, humility, and her marriage to Joseph Rowlandson, himself a minister.<sup>22</sup> Without these endorsements, as well as the fact that Mather had probably written the preface and possibly edited the narrative himself, *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* would have been a tough sell indeed. The contents of the narrative and these conditions for its publication seem to reflect a woman tentatively and not altogether enthusiastically entering the male-dominated sphere of literature.

One aspect of the work indicative of this kind of repression of assertive female behavior is the fact that in her narrative (consciously or no), Rowlandson refuses to explicitly state a desire for vengeance and the destruction of her captors. Unlike Dustin or the women of Marblehead, these impulses are hidden from plain view. Rowlandson's captivity itself, unlike Dustin's, does not involve her injuring or killing anyone. Hers is a captivity in which the female captive plays the part of the submissive, bride-like woman who makes no objection to the male hegemony of Puritan society and exhibits all the qualities of the ideal Puritan woman.<sup>23</sup> Rowlandson's only means to express the kinds of feelings of vengeance or rage that would be unbecoming of the ideal Puritan woman is through her selection of certain scripture quotations. The first of these is to be found in the fourth of twenty "removes" (points at which she and her captors moved from one location to another):

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<sup>22</sup> *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God*, 41.

<sup>23</sup> Davis, Margaret. "Mary White Rowlandson's Self-Fashioning as Puritan Goodwife." *Early American Literature* 27, no. 1 (1992): 50.

There was mercy promised again, if we would return to him by repentance; and though we were scattered from one end of the Earth to the other, yet the Lord would gather us together, and turn all those curses upon our Enemies.<sup>24</sup>

Though subtle, language like “turning curses upon” enemies is never stated in any way except through the power of God. In the next remove, Rowlandson again quotes a scripture passage: “Oh, that my People had hearkened to me, and *Israel* had walked in my ways, I should soon have subdued their Enemies, and turned my hand against their Adversaries.”<sup>25</sup>

At first blush, these passages appear to be a kind of boilerplate material; they were potentially useful scripture passages her contemporaries would have recognized that helped to illustrate the parallels between themselves and those afflicted in the Bible. These vengeful quotations, however, seem to be the only acceptable means for Rowlandson to express these unwomanly feelings (vengeance, rage, a desire to harm) in a public way. She seeks neither vengeance nor a desire to free herself as Dustin does, but instead trusts in God’s judgment, again in contrast with Dustin. She makes no attempt to free herself during her captivity, even when presented with the opportunity to do so. In the twelfth remove she recounts an incident in which she comes closest to violence, but still retains her composure saying: “My Spirit was upon this, I confess, very impatient, and almost outrageous.”<sup>26</sup> Even when faced with the frustration of being tantalizingly close to escape, Rowlandson “confesses” that she experienced impatience and *almost* acted in an “outrageous” manner. It seems almost impossible that Rowlandson never felt a desire to harm her captors even if she would never actually do so. She, like Dustin, had

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<sup>24</sup> *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God*, 77

<sup>25</sup> *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God*, 80.

<sup>26</sup> *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God*, 86.

had a child die at the hands of her captors. She apparently never feels comfortable relating a more realistic description of these feelings, however. This stands in sharp contrast with the women of Marblehead, as their radical proclamations (described below) following the murders illustrate.

### **DUSTIN: IMPETUOUS “VIRAGOE”**

In 1697, after the worst of King Philip’s War was over and Philip himself killed (by a praying Indian, no less), Hannah Dustin was taken from her home in the rugged settlement of Haverhill, Massachusetts along with her nurse Mary Neff and her young daughter. As blood pooled in the streets and houses collapsed in flames, Dustin’s captors killed her young daughter; already the captivity was a brutal one. Thus they marched into the “howling wilderness”, told they would be forced to run the gauntlet and then be killed once they had arrived at their destination. As the story goes, one night, Dustin roused Neff and an “English Youth” named Samuel Leonardson to action. Under the cover of night as the family slept, they approached their captors and, with hatchets and without mercy, killed ten of the twelve members of the Indian family: two men, two women, and six children. One badly wounded woman, and a child were the only ones to escape. They newly freed captives did not stop there, however. Dustin made sure they had taken the scalps of the dead for the financial reward and, perhaps, the prestige that they would receive upon their return before escaping down river in one of their captor’s canoes. Upon her return to Boston, she was greeted by Cotton Mather who recorded the

incredible (and almost unbelievable story),<sup>27</sup> adding it to his ever-expanding collection of stories of divine providence. For her actions, Dustin received twenty-five pounds from the General Assembly of Boston and an engraved pewter tankard from Colonel Francis Nicholson, governor of Maryland, while twelve and half pounds each went to Neff and Leonardson.<sup>28</sup>

Dustin's shocking and disturbing captivity was in many ways the opposite of Rowlandson's. While Rowlandson waited patiently on God to free her from her captivity, Dustin took matters into her own hands and freed herself. While Rowlandson adopted aspects of her captors' society in order to survive, Dustin refused to do so, ending her captivity before it had truly begun. Dustin was not afraid to relate her story—one of rage, and brazen violence—to one of New England's most esteemed ministers. Conceivably she could have omitted the fact that she murdered the Indians, or, if she really wanted (and expected) the monetary reward for proof of the killings, have concocted some story in which she did not have to slay ten Indians to acquire them. Instead, Dustin plainly and seemingly proudly describes her actions.

Dustin's life prior to captivity, like her captivity itself, was equally different from Rowlandson's. Rowlandson would have enjoyed the title of "Mistress", thanks to her elevated status in society as wife of a minister. As the wife of a farmer living in what Puritan society would have considered a more dangerous, less civilized area, Dustin would have been referred to as "goodwife". As a goodwife, Dustin engaged in activities

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<sup>27</sup> Though our knowledge of Dustin's captivity comes from few sources, was related by Dustin and corroborated only by the other two captives involved, and may have been altered or parts even fabricated by Mather, the consensus of scholars is that the incident transpired as described. The same issues arise in the cases of Marblehead, Rowlandson, and particularly Tompson's poem (described below), though scholars do not often question the veracity of the documents.

<sup>28</sup> Cutter, Barbara. *The Female Indian Killer Memorialized: Hannah Duston and the Nineteenth-Century Feminization of American Violence*. *Journal of Women's History*, Volume 20, Number 2, Summer 2008. 13.

very different from those of Rowlandson, such as assisting with farming, slaughtering livestock, etc.

Cotton Mather first included Dustin's remarkable captivity in a sermon, and then as a chapter in his *Decennium Luctuosum (Sorrowful Decade)*, entitled: "A Notable Exploit; wherein Dux Foemina Facti". "Dux Foemina Facti" translates as "a woman the leader in the achievement", and interestingly is included as the "epigraph" of the poem by Tompson described below. In his account, when he compares Dustin to the biblical figure Jael, who was justified in her killings, Mather likewise justifies Dustin's actions by classifying them as within a deputy husband's duties. In this case, however, Mather is expanding that designation considerably by the inclusion of financially motivated dismemberment of the murdered. Whereas Gouge's and Secker's deputy husband was mainly domestic—ensuring the proper functioning of the household—Mather's includes actions that were motivated by self-interest, namely the scalping of her captors.

### **MARBLEHEAD, MALE "IMPOTENCIE", AND KING PHILIP'S WAR**

Though the direct cause of the spark that ignited King Philip's War was Indian outrage at the execution of several Indians suspected of killing a Christian Indian loyal to the English, tension had been building over decades of English proselytization and purchase of Indian lands. Both groups had learned something of each other's cultures over the previous decades. As such, the war was not one fought between strangers—of

two fundamentally incompatible peoples as has previously been postulated—but one fought between neighbors.<sup>29</sup>

The war stunted territorial expansion and economic growth for a generation, ended Native American autonomy in the region and, importantly, the trauma of the war left a psychological scar that would shape future interactions between the two groups. Though they would no longer fear being run into the Atlantic by their Indian neighbors, the English Puritans conception of themselves, their neighbors, and the continent were forever changed.<sup>30</sup>

On a balmy Sunday afternoon in the year 1677, roughly a year after the end of the war, Marblehead, a small fishing settlement on the Massachusetts coast, was witness to one of the bloodiest and most shocking eruptions of violence in the wake of King Philip's War. What should have been the triumphant return of a fishing vessel and its crew escaped from their Indian captors became a scene of bloody mob violence committed by a group of women against two helpless captive Indians the crew had captured. The incident, though a blatant disregard for authority (as will be demonstrated) went by largely unnoticed and figures interestingly into our understanding of expectations of Puritan women during this period.

During the war many of Marblehead's fishing vessels had been captured by various Native American groups still fighting following the death of Philip and the fledgling war effort. "Every person" once commentator noted, "had lost a relation or near

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<sup>29</sup> Leach's *Flintlock and Tomahawk: New England in King Philip's War*. New York: Macmillan, 1958, is emblematic of the outdated conceptions of King Philip's War.

<sup>30</sup> For more on the war and its effects on New England and the minds of its inhabitants, see Jill Lepore's: *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity*. New York: Knopf, 1998.

friend, and the people in general were exasperated.”<sup>31</sup> Thus, as one such vessel sailed triumphantly into the harbor, a crowd of excited townspeople gathered to greet them. As soon as the gangplank had clattered to the dock they swarmed aboard. Instead of a welcome return, though, Robert Roules and his fellow crewmembers were assailed with questions from the townspeople as soon as they laid eyes on two captive Indian warriors: why had the crew not killed the Indians outright, they demanded? The crew explained they had been lost their valuables in the attack, and intended to ransom the captives in exchange for them. This answer temporarily appeased the increasingly discontented crowd, for the crew was able to disembark the ship and enter the town.

As their reached the town center, though, tensions mounted. The crowd had grown in size and began to grow “clamorous”, encircling the Indians and hurling insults. Suddenly, a group of women emerged from the faceless crowd. The women, supposedly just emerged from the town’s meeting house, peppered Roules and the rest of the crew with stones and so intimidated them with their demeanor that the crew was forced to abandon their terrified captives. Then, “with stones, billets of wood, and what else they might” the women “made an end of [the] Indians”. When Roules and the crew finally dared approached the victims, they found them “with their heads off and gone, and their flesh in a manner pulled from their bones.”

The brutality and rage of the incident and the fact that it was committed in broad daylight by the women of the town would be enough to make it stand out from any other act of violence during the period of King Philip’s War. The most important aspect of interest to this study, however, are the proclamations the women made following the killings. Roules remembers:

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<sup>31</sup> Hutchinson, Thomas, *The History of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay...* (Boston, 1764), 307.

“[The women] cried out and said, if the Indians had been carried to Boston, that would have been the end of it, and they would have been set at liberty; but said they, if there had been forty of the best Indians in the country here, they would have killed them all, though they should be hanged for it.”<sup>32</sup>

Ulrich contends that the men of the town sanctioned the women’s acts of violence; that they agreed with the sentiments of the women and did nothing to impede them. As she explains, men sometimes used female outrage as a means to showcase their anger, since women were supposedly less prone to violence.<sup>33</sup> If women were so angered, it meant the situation was outrageous indeed. This interpretation does not seem to completely fit in this instance, however. While it is likely, as Ulrich says, that the women acted as surrogates for the community, the fact that Roules makes no mention of men during the attack and that the women “suffered neither constable nor mandrake, nor any other person to come near them, until they had finished their bloody purpose” suggests that men were in no way involved in the planning of the attack. Even if the men had not wanted to stop the attacks, one would reasonably expect that the mutilation of the corpses would have been extreme for an attack meant to simply send a message. The women’s proclamations, too, are highly unusual. Even if the men shared the desire to exact a bloody revenge on the Indians, the women took the initiative on their own part. The act was brazen; the women seemed not to suppose they would receive leniency based on their sex, and indeed, if anyone had been willing to identify the group, they would have faced punishment. Instead, the women refused to let the Indians face trial. The potential gains that would result from their ransom was not worth the opportunity to bring them to justice in their own way.

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<sup>32</sup> *Deposition of Robert Roules, (1677)* in: Axtell, James. "The Vengeful Women of Marblehead: Robert Roules's Deposition of 1677." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 31, no. 4 (1974): 647-52.)

<sup>33</sup> *Good Wives*, 164.

Puritan women experienced King Philip's War very different from their male counterparts. The frustration evident in the women's proclamations seems to stem from the fact that they were largely powerless to change the course of the war. They could not have made the decision to condemn the Indians in court, for they were barred from serving as magistrates (though they could have testified, if the Indians stood trial). They could not serve as soldiers to prevent the ships from being captured in the first place. The way that Rowles and his crew wanted to handle the situation and Puritan men's handling of King Philip's War more broadly did not satisfy the women of Marblehead. This is not to say that this disillusionment was of a collectively conscious nature or that women were banding together in opposition to the hegemony of Puritan society, but does suggest some type of coherency in sentiment. The only justice these women deemed appropriate was death, and the only ones who could deliver the sentence to the Indians were themselves. Rowlandson, Dustin, and the townswomen of Marblehead: had all, in some way, witnessed their husbands and Puritan society's inability to protect them. In Rowlandson's case it was numerous shortcomings in the strategy of the English army which several times delayed her rescue. For Dustin and the women of Marblehead the duties of the men of the town and the magistrates in Boston were thus "divolved" on them.

It is worth noting that the townspeople of Marblehead had been traumatized by recent events (namely, King Philip's War), psychological trauma being one of the few triggers for such violence. The women's actions, though, seem to be more than a manifestation of blind rage; rather, they appear surprisingly organized. Their address to the crowd, which can hardly be termed a rant on account of its coherency, and the fact that the rest of the crowd did not simply join the small group of women, suggests that

they may not have been completely blinded by rage. We know too that the women fully expected repercussions for their actions, thanks again to their proclamation. This seems to suggest that in no way were the killings sanctioned by anyone besides those directly involved in them.

Unfortunately, our knowledge of the Marblehead incident is based on just three texts: the deposition itself and two very brief descriptions by Increase Mather and William Hubbard. The lack of descriptions of the killings and the lack of judgment found in both Hubbard and Mather's texts, however, is significant in that it is potential evidence of the fact that it went by without much attention (despite the fact that two of the most prominent men in New England knew of it). Historians do not significantly address this aspect of the event. A week after Marblehead, Mather made a brief mention of the incident:

The women at Marblehead, as they came out of the meeting-house, fell upon two Indians that were brought in as captives, and in a tumultuous way, very barbarously murdered them. Doubtless, if the Indians hear of it, the captives among them will be served accordingly.<sup>34</sup>

Mather's commentary is significant for two reasons. For one, he does not condemn the women's actions on any grounds other than the fact that it was impractical for the survival of English captives still among the Indians. Secondly, he does not mention the women's proclamations after the murder that directly challenged the authority of the courts. Certainly the women's proclamations were just that: proclamations. They were meant to send a message and were certainly not soliloquys. We can only speculate what the women might have heard in the meetinghouse from which they had just emerged.

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<sup>34</sup> *The Vengeful Women of Marblehead*, 648.

Hubbard's mention of the incident is equally significant and surprising; he paraphrases Roules's account of the murder scene but at the moment of the Indians' deaths he abruptly ends with "made an End of them" and concludes, "In short, they literally tore them in Pieces."<sup>35</sup> Hubbard does not condemn the act on theological grounds and like Mather omits the women's discourse following the murders. It is alarming to both men, certainly, but not for the reasons we might expect. None of this elicits words warning of this blatant disregard for authority as a sign of impending doom, which these two men were wont to do. Flagrantly flouting the authority of the townsmen of Marblehead and the magistrates of Boston, these women should have been condemned as the ultimate source of discord and immorality in all of New England. For their actions, though, they received little but passing mention.

William Hubbard, while describing the incident, described the five- and six-man crews who manned many of the fishing vessels off the coast of Salem as: "a dull and heavy-moulded sort of People, that had not either Skill or Courage to kill any thing but Fish, were easily taken, and had not Heart enough either to make Resistance when first attacked, nor after ward to make any Attempt for an Escape to free themselves..."<sup>36</sup>

Such lack of "Courage", even in the face of a fearsome enemy, was as unbecoming of a man as a lack of "meekness" was of a woman. Men were expected to protect their families and communities, as Gouge explains: "That the husband by vertue of his office is a protector of his wife (and he is the sauieur of the body.)"<sup>37</sup> Men and women experienced captivity very differently for that reason. Men were expected to

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<sup>35</sup> *The Vengeful Women of Marblehead*, 649.

<sup>36</sup> William Hubbard, *The History of the Indian Wars in New England from the First Settlement to the Termination of the War with King Phillip in 1677*, ed. Samuel G. Drake, II (Roxbury, Mass., 1865), 236-237.

<sup>37</sup> *Of domesticall duties*, 288.

resist their captors vehemently and sacrifice themselves for their families and communities whereas women were not. Men were more susceptible to suspicion if there was any hint they may have gone along too willingly with their captors.<sup>38</sup> Though fishermen such as Roules can hardly be faulted for their lack of resistance in these cases, their society judged them harshly for it. To the women of Marblehead, it seems possible, too, that this condescension and shame at their townspeople's actions may have influenced their decision to take matters into their own hands. With large numbers of towns razed and women and children killed or taken captive, this fact that Puritan men had failed, in some regard, to fulfill their protector duties was plain to see; their "impotence" was hard to ignore. Even when they had won the war, Puritans did not fancy themselves completely responsible for their victory, admitting that Philip had been fighting many wars with neighboring tribes and that Indian populations as a whole had been decimated by disease.<sup>39</sup>

In 1676, upon hearing rumors of an imminent attack by Indians, a group of women in Boston displayed similar initiative to the women of Marblehead, although in a much less horrific fashion, when they began erecting a fortification around their city. While the men of the town went about their business, these women took it upon themselves to help defend their communities.

Benjamin Tompson describes the event in his collection of poems: *New Englands crisis, or, A brief narrative of New-Englands lamentable estate at present* (1676). His poem, entitled: "On a FORTIFICATION At Boston *begun by Women*", with the epigraph (the same as Mather's in his account of Dustin's captivity): "Dux Foemina Facti", is one

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<sup>38</sup> Lepore, Jill. *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity*. New York: Knopf, 1998. 132.

<sup>39</sup> *The Name of War*, 176.

of the view accounts of the incident. The poem is the final, comical installment of the collection and represents a world turned upside down by the war in which women, not men, build barricades. In the poem, Tompson describes women suspending their domestic duties, such as making clothes and preparing food in favor of constructing a fortification around Boston. In the poem, the women are described as having “manly hearts”, testament to the ideas of femininity and masculinity in Puritan society. However, the women are still womanly in Tompson’s eyes; “Their undulating silks they closely furle” as they “forsake at home their pastry-crust and tarts”. Tompson’s poetry is unique in several respects. In many of his poems he breaks tradition by not mentioning individual heroes by name.<sup>40</sup> *On a Fortification* breaks from tradition again by detailing women’s role in the conflict. The most notable aspect of this poem for the purpose of this paper is the emphasis Tompson places on the initiative of the women who set to work on the task. He makes plain the women were not following the examples or orders of men and instead that men followed the women’s example. While Tompson’s tone is certainly mocking and patronizing, there is still a sense of admiration.

A question that needs further exploration is why the “Amazonian Dames” (as Tompson refers to them in the poem) who began construction of the fortification chose to do so when it was so clearly a violation of the role of their gender? Like the women of Marblehead, it is not unlikely that these women could have experienced a sense of frustration when they heard of hostile Indians nearing Boston and they could take no other action but wait. Like the women of Marblehead who affected their own sort of

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<sup>40</sup> Eberwein, Jane Donahue. "'Harvardine Quil': Benjamin Tompson's Poems on King Philip's War." *Early American Literature* 28, no. 1 (1993). 6.

justice, the women of Boston were taking the defense of their city into their own “nimble hands”.

The poem draws attention to the important point that while the women were in the trenches, their household duties necessarily fell by the wayside. In the poem, Tompson compares the women’s efforts to the duties they would ordinarily be completing, comparing the raising of the fortification to the rising of a pastry. Women and men’s roles were thus affected by the onset of the war. He emphasizes, too, the femininity of the women, with “female hands, but manly hearts”. The necessity of women fulfilling roles typically not their own while their husbands were away at war, or even dead, similarly existed throughout New England during King Philip’s War

Tompson also comments on the silence of Puritan writers during King Philip’s War—yet another means by which the war helped create an environment in which the boundaries of acceptable female behavior could expand: “What means this silence of *Harvardine* quilts/ While *Mars* triumphant thunders on our hills.” This fact meant that the ubiquitous jeremiad texts warning against immoral behavior regularly published by individuals such as Increase Mather and William Hubbard were at least temporarily absent, evident in the lack of mention of Dustin and Marblehead.

Finally, in the face of these rigidly defined conceptions of the relationship between men and women, we must examine what it meant for a Puritan woman to resist authority. With all of the aforementioned superior-inferior relationships solidly affirmed as sanctioned by God, any resistance to them was potentially grounds for damnation, or at least punishment.<sup>41</sup> Puritan society relentlessly hammered home the idea that resistance to authority equaled resistance to God, which in turn could equate to eternal damnation.

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<sup>41</sup> *Mary White Rowlandson's Self-Fashioning as Puritan Goodwife*, 52

Certainly, it is difficult to know to what extent Puritans accepted the idea that if they mouthed off to their parents, went against the will of their husbands, were unfaithful to their wives or husbands, etc. they would face hellfire, but there is good reason to believe that most Puritans felt they would face judgment for their actions (or that those actions reflected, in keeping with Calvinist ideology, whether or not they would be saved).

If the women involved in these incidents had internalized the message of eternal damnation for the usurpation of divine hierarchy, then it is most likely that they did not view themselves as being in the wrong. Mather and Dustin herself were convinced that her actions fell into the category of acceptable unwomanly behavior at least—“deputy husband” material at its best. It was thus not usurping the system of divine hierarchies and as such she would not be damned for it. There are no other contemporary commentaries on Dustin’s case that object to this analysis, but it is not unreasonable to say that the line between Dustin as a heroine and as a heretical usurper of the boundaries of her sex is a thin one indeed. Only in the nineteenth century did anyone question the justification of Dustin’s actions and whether or not the killings made her less feminine.<sup>42</sup> The fact that Dustin’s acts were in part motivated by money and not solely on her own self-defense also did not affect Mather’s classification of her actions as heroic and praiseworthy, further confounding our understanding of the striking differences between hers and Rowlandson’s captivities; Rowlandson’s narrative claims to have been published only at the request of others, even though it was wildly popular and sold out

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<sup>42</sup> Cutter, Barbara. *The Female Indian Killer Memorialized: Hannah Duston and the Nineteenth-Century Feminization of American Violence*. *Journal of Women's History*, Volume 20, Number 2, Summer 2008.18-19.

many printings. Dustin could claim that she did in part kill the Indians for the money she would earn by delivering their scalps with apparently no repercussions.

### **“RAGING DRAGONS”: PURITAN CONCEPTIONS OF NATIVE AMERICANS**

Dustin’s captivity and the killings at Marblehead are valuable not only for what they can tell us about Puritan society’s conception of women, but also for what they can tell us about Puritan society’s conception of Native Americans in the wake of King Philip’s War. To the Puritans, their “barbarous” neighbors were “perfect children of the devil”,<sup>43</sup> and oftentimes considered as much a part of the untamed wilderness as the trees, deer, and bear that inhabited it. Still, they were human, capable of accepting Christ and adopting English ways. The colonists’ compassion for those Indians ravaged by the “popish” Spaniards was, as Lepore notes, “predicated on acknowledging the Indians as human.”<sup>44</sup> The fact that they did not have a written language, wore less clothing, and maintained differing religious beliefs may have contributed to the colonists’ conception of Indians as inferior, but it certainly did not preclude them from recognizing their humanity. The fact that Puritans did view Indians as human makes their lack of condemnation of the killings committed by Dustin and the women of Marblehead more striking, since it seems reasonable to assume that the murder of six children in Dustin’s case, and two defenseless captives in Marblehead’s might have been condemned as at least morally questionable.

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<sup>43</sup> *The Name of War*, 12.

<sup>44</sup> *The Name of War*, 16.

In her narrative, Rowlandson concedes the humanity of Native Americans by differentiating among them as individuals and by acknowledging acts of kindness and compassion.<sup>45</sup> She apparently does not want to admit that fact to herself, however, since she generally attributes those acts of kindness to God rather than goodness within the individuals themselves. Rowlandson, however, was neither a “white Indian” nor a completely unchanged English Puritan.<sup>46</sup> Rather, she took on characteristics of the society in which she lived during her captivity while retaining aspects of the society from which she was taken, thus proving that Puritan conceptions of themselves as well as their Indian neighbors could overlap.

“Praying Indians” figured prominently in the conflict, acting as translators, diplomats, and spies. Distrusted on both sides, these converts to Christianity suffered worse than any other group during the war and in its aftermath—at times subject to attacks by vigilantes.<sup>47</sup> During Rowlandson’s nineteenth remove she endeavors to showcase the treachery of Praying Indians:

There was another Praying-*Indian*, who when he had done all the mischief that he could, betrayed his own Father into the *English* hands, thereby to purchase his own life. Another Praying-*Indian* was at *Sudbury-fight*, though, as he deserved, he was afterward hanged for it. There was another Praying *Indian*, so wicked and cruel, as to wear a string about his neck, strung with *Christians* fingers. Another Praying-*Indian*, when they went to *Sudbury-fight*, went with them, and his *Squaw* also with him, with her *Papoos* at her back.<sup>48</sup>

Thus according to Rowlandson there was ample evidence that no kind of Indian, Christian or not, who could be trusted. Unlike Rowlandson’s captivity, however, Dustin’s

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<sup>45</sup> *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* (introduction by Salisbury), 28.

<sup>46</sup> *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* (introduction by Salisbury), 32.

<sup>47</sup> *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* (introduction by Salisbury), 23.

<sup>48</sup> *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God*, 99-100.

captors were Catholics rather than Puritans or adherents to native religious traditions.<sup>49</sup> This further complicates our understanding of how Puritan society reacted to the killings because Catholics, according to Puritans, were followers of the Pope who they viewed as the anti-Christ. This fact represented a second blow to their moral character. If it were known that Hannah Dustin's victims had been Catholic Praying Indians, their sympathy for them would have been reduced. In the case of Marblehead, it is not known whether the crowd was aware of the captives' religion, or if they would have cared. In the face of this evidence, it seems that a distrust and hatred for Christian Indians had persevered into the last decade of the seventeenth century as well.

The killing and mutilation of Native Americans described in the cases of Dustin and Marblehead did not elicit condemnation from any seventeenth-century observer on ethical grounds. Surely both incidents could have reasonably evoked such a response even in the seventeenth century, in spite of the fact war was used as a justification for the killings; Dustin and her fellow captives had slain and scalped six children and at Marblehead the murdered captives' bodies were horribly mutilated. One would expect that the mutilation aspect itself could have elicited concerns from observers, since Puritans fancied themselves on a higher moral ground in terms of their treatment of captives. Though seventeenth-century Puritan society had a different conception of children, it is difficult to believe they could feel no sympathy for the slain Indian children as well. Thus, if one accepts the assertion that under normal, pre-war circumstances Puritans may have condemned certain aspects of the killings, it is no small leap to attribute the lack of condemnation to the still potent memory of King Philip's War. By

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<sup>49</sup> Forward by Neal Salisbury to excerpt of Cotton Mather's *Decennium Luctuosum* (in: *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God, Together with the Faithfulness of His Promises Displayed*. Ed. Neal Salisbury. Boston/New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1997). 164.

1676, it seems that there were almost no acts of violence too extreme for an English person to commit against Native Americans.



The cases of Hannah Dustin and the women of Marblehead are by no means representative of the typical Puritan woman's experience. They do, however, help shed light on what were considered to be the acceptable boundaries of women's behavior in seventeenth-century New England. A closer examination of each incident suggests an expansion of these boundaries, in large part thanks to the climate of fear, chaos, and disillusionment created by King Philip's War. Puritan authorities' reactions to both Dustin and the women of Marblehead's actions were brief and without mention of the obvious challenge to the status quo that the two incidents embodied.

Mather's justification of Dustin's actions suggests an expansion of what was considered acceptable female behavior in the absence of protection by men. Rowlandson's narrative, which represents a more tentative step into a traditionally male-dominated vocation in which feelings of violence are largely omitted, stands in sharp contrast to the brazen acts of Hannah Dustin.

#### **AFTERWARD**

Over the course of the following centuries, Hannah Dustin and Mary Rowlandson enjoyed the fame and admiration of many. The eighteenth century became Rowlandson's

narrative's heyday, with images of its author holding a rifle and fending off Indian attackers on the cover of subsequent printings. She would largely be forgotten in the nineteenth century, however. Dustin's story, ironically, largely faded from memory during the eighteenth century, but was revived as a heroic parallel to what the United States' considered its noble struggle against Native Americans in the nineteenth.<sup>50</sup> Her actions represented what the Republic regarded as their self-defensive and guiltless fight against their violent, "savage" neighbors. There were a considerable number of prominent writers, including Hawthorne, who alluded to the incident. Hawthorne's commentary, however, was not altogether one of admiration, but one in which he questioned the justification of the murder of children. The actions of the women of Marblehead, by contrast, were quickly lost to time, rediscovered among some papers in the late nineteenth century by a historian named Samuel G. Drake. Even Drake's rediscovery of the event was scarcely known until James Axtell published the deposition in an article in 1974.

While it may be true that "well-behaved women seldom make history", those "well-behaved" women are in fact far more numerous and important overall than those who were not. Though these women may not have "made" history, they are intrinsic to it. The lives of the "well-behaved" are also, of course, the most difficult to understand. Through identification of atypical female behavior, however, it is possible to understand the bounds of *acceptable* behavior. From there, we can begin to piece together the elusive and often complex lives of ordinary seventeenth-century Puritan women.

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<sup>50</sup> For a more thorough examination of the legacy of Dustin's actions, see Barbara Cutter's: *The Female Indian Killer Memorialized: Hannah Duston and the Nineteenth-Century Feminization of American Violence*. *Journal of Women's History*, Volume 20, Number 2, Summer 2008.

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While Native Americans and English settlers in the New England territories first attempted a mutual relationship based on trade and a shared dedication to spirituality, soon disease and other conflicts led to a deteriorated relationship and, eventually, the First Indian War. Grades. 3 - 12+. The primary religion of the New England colonies was the strict Puritan Christianity originally brought to the Massachusetts Bay colony by ships like the Mayflower, but as the colonies grew and changed, some of the colonists began to move away from that base. So too did views on the Native Americans who shared their land. A famous example of this is Roger Williams, whose rebellion against the religious powers-that-be led him to create the colony of Rhode Island. Although Native Americans benefitted from access to new technology and trade, the disease and thirst for land which the early settlers also brought posed a serious challenge to the Indian's long-established way of life. At first, trade with the European settlers brought advantages: knives, axes, weapons, cooking utensils, fish hooks and a host of other goods. Those Indians who traded initially had significant advantage over rivals who did not. In 1675 Phillip, the son of the chief who had made the original peace with the Pilgrims in 1621, attempted to unite the tribes of southern New England against further European encroachment of their lands. In the struggle, however, Phillip lost his life and many Indians were sold into servitude. Native American History. American Revolution. America Moves Westward. September 9: The New England Confederation declares war on King Philip and each colony is required to provide men for a combined force. September 12: King Philip achieves a decisive victory against the forces of the Massachusetts Bay Colony and their Nipmuc allies at Bloody Brook. 1676. February: The Mohawk launch a surprise assault against Metacomet, a turning point in King Philip's War. March: King Philip's War continues as Metacom's forces attack Plymouth, Massachusetts, and Providence, Rhode Island. The Wool Act, one of the Acts of Trade and Navigation, is passed by Parliament to protect the British wool industry. It forbids the export of wool from the American colonies. 1700. Rather, American Puritans - especially their political and religious leaders - sought peaceful and equitable relations as the first step in molding the Indians into neo-Englishmen. When accumulated Indian resentments culminated in the war of 1675, however, the relatively benign intercultural contact of the preceding fifty-five-year period rapidly declined. New England Frontier tells the story of the Puritan and Indian relations in the first years of 1620-1675. Contrary to modern anti-Puritan view points, this book explains the relationship between the English and the Indians before King Philip's war by looking at the primary sources. This book shows that the New England frontier wasn't as simple as modern textbooks claim it was.