

The unredeemed captive essay sample

[Government](#), [Colonialism](#)



Finding out who you are, through hardships and ease, is the main focus of this book. John Demos wanted to write a story, and in this story the main focus is figuring out how to adapt to your surroundings and the circumstances that you have cannot control to best survive. With this he weaved a tale about a colonial town that was not prepared for what happens to it, and its residents.

The story starts in Deerfield, in October of 1703 with a time of trouble. The town is in danger of being ransacked and taken over by Indians. The townspeople contemplate reinforcing their stockade but before any decisions can be made or building begin, a couple of young men in a field are ambushed and dragged to Canada. After this incident the town leader, Reverend John Williams, pleaded for the taxes put on the town to be relieved temporarily during the war that is breaking out. The governor allows for taxes to be abated and adds sixteen soldiers to guard the town; the townspeople start to build more into their fortification and begin to feel better about their safety. After a couple of months the soldiers are withdrawn and some of the families housed in the fort return back to their original homes. By February of 1704 there have been reports of Indian attacks near to Connecticut Valley, alarming Deerfield that attacks may be coming nearer to them. The garrison soldiers' return and the townspeople move back into the fort to protect themselves from any attacks that may occur.

The book's setting then switches to Montreal, Canada in October of 1703, where the French are preparing for war using domiciled Indians as their soldiers. These Indians, joined with small parts of the French army go attack

the English colonies in New England, loot their villages, and capture their people. The French and Indians travel to Deerfield and wait for an opening in their defenses, at about four in the morning on February 29, 1704, they sneak into the village, and break into houses, breaking windows and doors to gain access. The townspeople will try to escape, some succeeding, others captured or killed in the process, others hide in cellars to escape the attack. The minister's house, the house of Reverend John Williams was specifically targeted as he was a precious character to the town's function and acted as a leader for the community. The Indians bound him and left him for an hour while killing two of his children and his slave, insulting him, and threatening to burn all he owns (Demos 19).

They then transported John Williams and the rest of his family with them, to Canada. Some of the townspeople attempt to take back their neighbors but end up barely escaping. On the way to Canada John's wife dies, and he and his children separated into different tribes and different parts of the country. Eventually John ends up going back to New England and getting most of his family back. The Indians refuse to give his daughter, Eunice Williams, back and "that the Indians would rather cut out their hearts than part with their adoptive captives." He bribes the Indians and after many years of arguing and bribing they finally let him visit Eunice. By this time she is sixteen and married, she goes by either her Mohawk name, Kanenstehawi or her Catholic name, Marguerite. She dresses as an Indian and only speaks Mohawk. Her husband, possibly a spy in 1709, is with her, he is also an outsider to the Mohawk community as he was not born into it and did not live

with the Mohawks most of the time. They sit through the meeting with her father, although she never speaks.

In 1720 she has a son, although he is barely recorded. In 1729 John Williams dies and Eunice inherits part of his estate, though she was not aware of either his death or her inheritance. After her father's death her brother, Stephen Williams began visiting her and trying to convince her to move back to New England. This was to no avail; however, she, her husband, and her children would now visit her family in New England and stay with them for a week. They did this twice before staying a whole winter in 1743. After that Indian attacks began again in the colonies and Eunice's husband went off to fight and raid. In 1760 she visits her English family one last time. Her husband dies a few years later and she lives with her two daughters and her grandson. In 1771 she had a letter written to Stephen stating that she was well and hoped that he and his family were fine. She died in 1785 at the age of eighty-nine.

This book adds a different take on the colonial period in America that I was never taught in school. I was always taught that the settlers in America were the ones that killed and berated the Indians. I never learned that the Indians in Canada had attacked the colonial settlers and brought them to Canada. The French and the English fighting is not a surprise, as everyone wants the best land they can find and will fight over it. I would not have thought that the French would go so far as to captivate New England citizens and ransom them off. With this piece of information it makes much more sense that the colonists would be mean to the Indians, as the Indians had caused their

families to die and they had to pay large amounts of money to get their family back. Some may not have been able to get family members back, or even see them. If you were to be kidnapped, your family taken, and ransomed off and you were not able to ever see your family again it would make sense that you would want to punish those like your captors. We really cannot blame the American colonists for pushing away the Indians, whose ancestors killed and captured their ancestors.

I was also unaware that Indian life was so much better than colonial life. Those baby carriers were always presented to me as a dirty thing that would marinate a baby in its own waste, but the books says they were quite comfy and relaxing for children. Children in tribes were allowed to do whatever they pleased, while colonial children went to school and had chores. Native American children knew not of discipline, while it was a regular thing in colonial; households. As adults Indian women gathered crop in fields, colonial women were housewives and taught their children if there were no schools. The men in tribes would hunt, or stay at their mother's longhouse and colonial men would do various jobs in their community, depending on the person. The Indians were much more relaxed than the colonial settlers.

I was unaware that the Indians were Catholic in some parts of Canada; I was surprised to read that most of the Indians had both Catholic and Mohawk names. Although it was clear that Mohawk Catholicism was very different from French Catholicism, they still had the same basic beliefs and principles of the religion. I would not have thought that French culture would leave such a big impact on the daily life of the Indians.

I thought it odd that Eunice would forget all the English she had learned and just switch to Mohawk. She was eight when she was captured, old enough to know basic English and remember it if she used it. She had plenty of chances to use it, there were other captives with her, they would know English and they would be the people she would most relate to.

Indian's adopted their captives into their communities, even into their families as their own. This could be thought of as cradle snatching, them stealing young children and keeping them as their own. It cannot really be called adoption, as the adoptee gets a choice in a normal adoption process. This would be more of a kidnapping to a comfortable place.

This book was a summary of what living in northern New England would have been like in the early colonial years. It took a single incident and showed how life at that time could have been in that area. This type of thing probably happened for a lot of families less famous than this one and was never recorded. The whole point of the book was to show that you must find out who you are through different situations using adaptation and growth as a person. This book had a lot of strengths, it was historically accurate, well researched, it had a good plot, and it told a story. The biggest reason John Demos wanted to write this book was to tell a story, and tell a story he did. Although the language was an obstacle for me I eventually adapted to it and found a wonderful story underneath of a girl lost and trying to figure out who she is, through trials and tribulations. The plot was well thought out and had good order, it mostly made sense and it all fit into the evidence presented to the reader.

The author obviously researched this book very well, it is full of facts and real characters and documented events, he missed nothing that was needed to construct the story well. Since this book was well researched it is also historically accurate, all of his information fit on a timeline that would be correct for that time period, from the war in Europe to the Indian attacks in America. This book, although very strong, also had some weaknesses, such as; language, odd switching between places, and large gaps. The language in this book was an obstacle; it is worded oddly and in a boring way.

The spelling of words is also odd, I understand that many of them are from original sources, however, there are multiple spellings of the names of towns and people and combined with the boring language it makes it quite difficult to read and understand everything. This book also changes settings, apparently on a whim; I would be reading about colonial life and all of a sudden be in a Mohawk camp, it also made the book hard to read because it was confusing sometimes as to where the characters were in the story. This story also had large gaps in the timeline which were not all the author's fault, as he could find no information from that time, however, it made the book somewhat choppy and dispersed because there would be years in between meetings or even diary mentions of Eunice and her family.