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Evan Haefeli and Kevin Sweeney, Eds., *Captive Histories: English, French, and Native Narratives of the 1704 Deerfield Raid*. Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006. xxii + 298 pp. Maps, illustrations, tables, notes, bibliography, and index. \$80.00 U.S. (cl). ISBN 1-55849-542-8; \$22.95 U.S. (pb). ISBN 1-55849-543-6.

Review by Dale Miquelon, University of Saskatchewan.

Captive Histories brings us to the margin of H-France's mandate: just beyond the frontier of a French frontier colony. It is a collection of accounts, many never before published, about the 1704 raid by Canadians and allied Indians against the Massachusetts frontier village of Deerfield.

Captivity narratives, the stories of American colonials captured by Indians or by the French of Canada, emerged in the later seventeenth century and became a cornerstone of an emerging American literature, maintaining their popularity well into the nineteenth century. These were stories of Protestantism versus Catholicism, Savagery versus Civilization, or, in the largest terms, Us versus Other. They exemplified a way of seeing the world that spoke to Anglo-Americans of the colonial era and emerging republic. The editors of this welcome collection go beyond the traditional captivity narrative to include other relevant material, some of it from the other side: the reports of the Canadian governor, the governor of Montreal, a French Jesuit, a Canadian officer, and orally-transmitted accounts of Mohawk and Abenakis spokespersons of much later periods. This enlargement beyond New England memoirs and memories adds to the relevance of the volume for students of French colonial history. The editors suggest by their clever title that all of these narratives are not only about captivity but are also captive to the world views and the interests of the individuals and societies that created and preserved them. Their comments on this process of shaping are imaginative and subtle in their analysis of individual cases.

With its careful footnotes and editing, *Captive Histories* is a collection that can be used by professional historians. They will welcome the general and sectional introductions that also make the collection user-friendly to the senior undergraduate. This volume, as Haefeli and Sweeney write, "is an outgrowth of the research that produced *Captors and Captives: the 1704 French and Indian Raid on Deerfield*, which was published in 2003" (p. xvii). Like *Captors and Captives*, *Captive Histories* is exemplary in its rejection of New England self-absorption, of which traditional captivity narratives are an instance. It transcends borders to probe life and motive in Quebec, Montreal and, among other towns, Abenaki Odenak and Mohawk Kanawake. In this, the book is not unique. The history of New England itself is being transformed by the rediscovery of its Native past as, for example, in Michael K. Foster and William Cowan, eds., *In Search of New England's Native Past: Selected Essays by Gordon M. Day* or Frederick Matthew Wiseman, *Reclaiming the Ancestors: Decolonizing a Taken Prehistory of the Far Northeast*.^[1]

The delineation of the French colony of Canada is historiographically up-to-date and sympathetically achieved in the introductions to documents. But the French documentation on the Deerfield raid is disappointingly thin. The included dispatch of Governor Rigaud de Vaudreuil gives some sense of his general strategy but includes only nine lines on the Deerfield raid. The passage on Deerfield in a report critical of Vaudreuil penned by his rival and subordinate, Claude de Ramesay, the governor of Montreal, is only slightly longer. Given the brevity of the material, the editors might have given us a clearer idea of this debate over strategy by following up references in the two letters to earlier dispatches giving fuller accounts of the reasons for (Vaudreuil, p. 81) and against (Ramesay, p. 85) the strategy of border

raids. Nevertheless, no substantial French narrative of the Deerfield raid is there to be found. The raid did not exercise the Canadian imagination as it did the New England mind; it constituted just a raid amongst raids in a war amongst wars. There are no elaborate battle plans, no extensive exchanges of correspondence for us to read. There was apparently no need (as there evidently was in New England) to cogitate *ex post facto* over its meaning. Much depends upon whether one is the attacker or attacked. The Phips (1690) and Walker (1711) expeditions against Quebec, both of which were abject failures, cast a long shadow in French Canada, perhaps because they came to be emotional counterweights to the British conquest of Canada in 1759-63. The eighteenth century community saw a religious dimension in both failed invasions—the intercession on Canada’s behalf of the Virgin Mary—just as New England ministers saw in punishing border raids God’s judgment on New England’s spiritual “falling away” or “declension.”

Native material is of a different order. In the Mohawk or Kanewake tradition, the raid and the taking of captives was transmuted into a quest to take from Deerfield a bell that rightfully belonged to Kanewake. The editors explain well how the story of the bell incorporates the essentials of the traditional “mourning war” (loss and recovery) in a way palatable to nineteenth-century people. While the Kanewake community was aware of the captives taken and the family lines descended from them, these individual identities became subsumed under the bell in what one Kanewake contributor, Taiiaike Alfred, describes as “a collective history” (p. 251). The Abenaki stories, on the other hand, emphasize descent from a single captive, Eunice Williams, who was in fact carried off to Mohawk Kanewake. The stories use this flesh and blood link—possibly fictive, possibly real—through a descendant of Eunice Williams as a connection to the Deerfield region, the land of their ancestors from which they had been exiled.

There are in this volume three narratives that provide “The Setting,” six on the raid itself (four from New England and two described above from Canada), five classic New England captivity narratives, two Canadian narratives (or rather documents with brief mentions), two later Mohawk narratives, and two later Abenaki narratives. Of the captivity narratives, the most important is the well-known *The Redeemed Captive Returning to Zion* (1707), comprising some sixty-five pages, written by the most celebrated captive, Deerfield’s minister John Williams. The text presented is based on the original edition as compared with three modern editions and has 153 explanatory footnotes. “What befell Stephen Williams in his captivity,” written by John Williamses’ teenage son, provides a youthful perspective unvarnished by Puritan pieties. John Kellogg’s “When I was carried to Canada,” written circa 1740, is a tale of high-handed Jesuit methods of conversion by a convert who, having returned to New England and to Congregationalism, may or may not have exaggerated.

“The Fair Captive,” a version of the story of Eunice Williams attributed to one Charles B. de Saileville, who appears to have been fictional, and presumably written by Eunice’s great-grandson, Kanewake-born Eleazer Williams, is included here amongst the Mohawk narratives. The editors consider it, as in the case of the story of the bell, which they venture Eleazer may also have invented, as having “cultural truth” rather than “historical accuracy” (p. 226). Perhaps its real value is that, romanticized as it is and turned into an ecumenical tract, it is part of the author’s search for self and acceptance. Eleazer had been sent from Kanewake to Longmeadow, Massachusetts, for an education. He renounced Catholicism and became a Congregationalist with a view to becoming a minister. Finding that on racist grounds he would be denied a congregation, he then became an Episcopalian deacon and missionary to Oneidas relocated to Wisconsin. At some point he fell out with the both the Oneidas and the Church. His next gambit was to pass himself off as the lost dauphin of France, having grown to manhood safely on an obscure Canadian Indian reserve.

On the European imperial frontier in North America, French and English not only vied with each other. They also entered into relations with aboriginal populations. In the end, European colonial societies expanded; native societies were obliterated by disease, military action, and cultural disturbance. Group

identities were lost or transformed. Englishmen became Americans. Frenchmen became *Canadiens*. Some Europeans became Indians. For mixed-blood people like Eleazer Williams, the search for a place in society could be long, bewildering, and bitter.

As in their superb monograph, *Captors and Captive*, Haefeli and Sweeney here present a work of relevance to the historian of empire and of its legacy.

NOTES

[1] Michael K. Foster and William Cowan, eds., *In Search of New England's Native Past: Selected Essays by Gordon M. Day* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998); Frederick Matthew Wiseman, *Reclaiming the Ancestors: Decolonizing a Taken Prehistory of the Far Northeast* (Hanover, Mass.: University Press of New England, 2005).

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