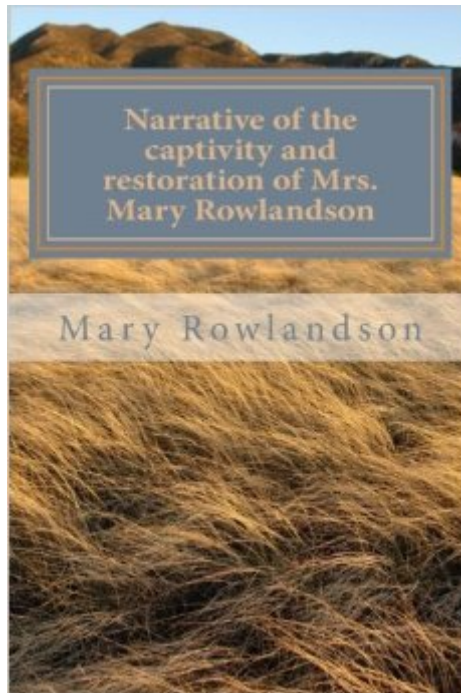


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Narrative Of The Captivity And Restoration Of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson



Synopsis

On February 10, 1676, the settlement of Lancaster, in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, was attacked by Native Americans. The Native Americans burn houses down and open fire on the British settlers, killing several of them and wounding more. They take many of the survivors captive, including Mary Rowlandson and her three children. Mary and her youngest child are among the injured, while others of her family, including her brother-in-law, are killed. The Native Americans lead the captured survivors from their settlement into the wilderness. Rowlandson and her youngest, Sarah are allowed to stay together, but her two oldest, Joseph and Mary, are separated. After spending a night in a nearby town, the Native Americans and the captives head further into the wilderness. Being injured, the journey is difficult for Rowlandson and her daughter. They reach an Indian settlement called Wenimesset, where Rowlandson meets another captive named Robert Pepper who tries to help the new captives. After staying in Wenimesset for about a week, Rowlandson's injured daughter, Sarah, dies. Rowlandson is sold to another Indian who is related to King Philip by marriage. They bury Rowlandson's dead daughter, and she is allowed to visit her oldest daughter Mary who is also being held in Wenimesset, and her oldest son who is allowed to visit from a nearby Indian settlement. The Indians give Rowlandson a Bible in which she finds a great deal of hope. After attacking another town the Native Americans decide to head north and Rowlandson is again separated from her family and the friends she has made. The Native Americans Rowlandson is with begin to move quickly through the forest, and she suspects the British army must be close by. They come to the Baquaug River and cross it with the British soldiers close behind. However the British are not able to cross and Rowlandson and the Indians continue northwest. They reach the Connecticut River and plan on meeting King Philip, but English scouts are present so they must scatter and hide. Rowlandson and the Indians soon cross the river and meet King Philip. At this settlement, Rowlandson sews for the Indians in return for food. Rowlandson wants to go to Albany in hopes of being sold for gunpowder, but the Indians take her northward and cross the river again. Rowlandson starts hoping she will be returned home, but now the Indians turn south continuing along the Connecticut River instead of heading east towards civilization. The Indians continue their attacks, and Thomas Read joins Rowlandson's group. Read tells Rowlandson that her husband is alive and well, which gives her hope and comfort. Rowlandson and her group finally start to move east. They cross the Baquaug River again where they meet messengers telling Rowlandson she must go to Wachuset where the Indians will discuss her possibility of returning to freedom. Rowlandson eagerly heads toward Wachuset, but the journey wears her down and she is disheartened by the sight of an injured colonist from a previous Indian

attack. She reaches Wachuset and speaks to King Philip, who guarantees she will be free in two weeks. The council asks how much her husband would pay for her ransom and they send a letter to Boston saying she will be freed for twenty pounds. After many more Indian attacks and victories, Rowlandson is allowed to travel back to Lancaster, then to Concord and finally to Boston. She is reunited with her husband after 11 long weeks. They stay with a friend in Concord for a while until Rowlandson's sister, son, and daughter are returned. Now back together, the family builds a house in Boston where they live until 1677.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Mary Rowlandson was the first American bestselling author. Her book was a memoir of her captivity among the New England Native Americans during King Philip's War. While it is entitled *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God*, part of that goodness is God's use of the Natives to punish the Puritans for religious backsliding. She says that by 1675, just a generation after the Mayflower, the Puritans were "perverse and evil...in the sight of the Lord". God "feeds and nourishes" the Native Americans to "be a scourge to the whole land". Not your idea of Christianity? Well, you should read this short book to see how the colonists in New England understood the world they lived in. Mary went through hell and lived to write about it. Enraged at the expansion of the Puritans, large numbers of Native Americans rose up in what the English called King Philip's War. They raided Mary's town and took her and her three children captive. Mary's youngest daughter was shot through the bowels and died a slow and agonized death. Mary found comfort in sleeping next to the corpse of her beloved child, but then had to give her body up to the forest. Everything, and I mean everything, that happens to Mary is interpreted by her through the verses of scripture. She sees God's hand in her

suffering and in her redemption. The book is worth reading in itself, but it also has significant wider importance. Mary Rowlandson helped create a literary genre, the captivity narrative, that was one of the commonest early American literary forms. These were "true" stories of, typically, women who were captured during Indian raids and who struggled to maintain a European Christian life in the midst of "savages".

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