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"ALL THE WOMEN…WERE VIOLATED IN THIS WAY;" RHETORIC, RAPE, AND MEMORY IN THE DAKOTA WAR

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“ALL THE WOMEN…WERE VIOLATED IN THIS WAY:” RHETORIC, RAPE, AND MEMORY IN THE DAKOTA WAR

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

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For my parents

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Abstract

Over the course of the six weeks of fighting during the Dakota War of 1862, Dakota warriors held more than 200 white women and children captive. In the aftermath of the war, the rhetoric of reporters, policymakers, military leaders, and private citizens created a powerfully racist stereotype of the Dakota. In both the public narrative of the war and the growing debates over how to best handle Minnesota's "Indian problem," politicians and pundits used white women as a powerful and potent symbol to advance a particular agenda—the expulsion of all Indians from the state. Drawing on literature on war, race, gender, and memory, this dissertation seeks to provide an understanding of the processes by which women's stories are embellished and appropriated during war for political purposes. Using the narratives of female former captives, I demonstrate the importance of reinserting women into war stories, not merely as symbols, but as important historical actors. Taken collectively, the narratives of the Dakota War provide insight into the way public memory is created, challenge stereotypes of nineteenth century women, and underscore the important, yet imperfect role memory plays in the creation of history.

Introduction

In August 1862, as the Civil War raged in the East, the Minnesota frontier erupted in a violent conflict between white Minnesotans and their Dakota neighbors.[1] Though the Indian attacks on white settlements were swift and came seemingly without warning, the cause of the violence had deep roots. Prior to the outbreak of hostilities in 1862, Indian/white relations in southern Minnesota were strained. In 1851 and again in 1858, the Mdewakanton and Wahpekute Dakota signed treaties ceding their territory in Minnesota, thereby confining themselves to a strip of land in the southwestern part of the state. Reservation life forced the Dakota to become increasingly dependent on federal annuities that they used to purchase food. Crop failures made the winter of 1861-1862 especially difficult for the Dakota, forcing them to become even more reliant on their annuity payments from the federal government. When the Civil War caused their June annuities to be delayed, the Indians were left teetering on the verge of starvation.[2]

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[1] Gary Clayton Anderson and Alan R. Woolworth, eds.,*Through Dakota Eyes: Narrative Accounts of the Minnesota Indian War of 1862* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1988), 1.

[2] Mrs. N. D. White, "Captivity among the Sioux, August 18 to September 26, 1862," *Minnesota Historical Society Collections* 9 (1901), 396-7; The Minnesota Indian War and its causes have been the subject of several book length treatments including: Anderson and Woolworth eds.,*Through Dakota Eyes* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1988); Scott W. Berg, *38 Nooses: Lincoln, Little Crow, and the Beginning of the Frontier's* End (New York: Pantheon Books, 2012); Kenneth Carley, *The Dakota War of 1862: Minnesota's Other Civil War* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1976); Michael Clodfelter, *The Dakota War: The United States Army Versus the Sioux, 1862-5* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 1998); Kathryn ZabelleDerounian-Stodola*The War in Words: Reading the Dakota Conflict Through the Captivity Literature* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009); Jerry Keenan, *The Great Sioux Uprising: Rebellion on the Plains, August-September, 1862* (Cambridge, MA: DeCapo Press, 2003); Duane Shultz, *Over the Earth I Come: The Great Sioux Uprising of 1862* (New York: St. Martin's, 1992).

This highlycharged atmosphere led to the first outbreak of violence on August 17, 1862, in Acton Township, when four Dakota warriors shot and murdered a white farmer, his wife, and three guests. The hostilities escalated the following day when a group of two to three hundred Dakota warriors attacked the Upper and Lower Sioux Agencies. In the days that followed, the Dakota mounted attacks on Fort Ridgely, New Ulm, and several settlements along the Minnesota River Valley.[3] Lasting six weeks, the Minnesota Indian War, or "Great Sioux Uprising" as it was often called at that time, caused thousands of dollars in property damage and left nearly five hundred white and "mixed-blood" people and an unknown number of Indians dead.[4]

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[3] Keenan, *The Great Sioux Uprising: Rebellion on the Plains, August-September 1862,* 29-36. Carley, *The Sioux Uprising of 1862,* 7-14.

[4] Throughout the dissertation, I use the term "mixed-blood" to refer to individuals who had both Dakota and white ancestry. Often these were the children or grandchildren of unions between white men and Native women. This is an imperfect term and the use of "blood" itself to designate a person's status within their tribe or community is fraught with historical and contemporary social issues. As anthropologist Pauline Turner Strong has noted "Indian identity is fixed, quantified, and delimited through an elaborate calculus operating on 'blood.'" Historically, blood stood as a metaphor for ancestry and purity. While, Native people were not classified under the "one drop" rule, individuals with Native ancestry historically faced severe prejudice. In the past, both tribes and the American government have used blood to determine who was an Indian and who was not. Trying to clarify the government's system of classification and the repercussions of that system in 1862 Frell M. Owl, an Eastern Cherokee and longtime Bureau of Indian Affairs employee explained that a "mixed-blood' was an individual with "one-quarter, one-half, or three-quarters tribal blood. The United States endeavors to restrict its guardianship services to enrolled Indians possessing one-fourth or more tribal blood." Blood therefore could, and historically has been, used to deny an individual tribal membership and services. Native identity is bound up in culture, not blood. In Canada, a person with mixed Euro-American and Native ancestry was (and still is) known as métis. Currently, the United States a lacks an equivalent designation. Since I am writing about the past and about individuals who often referred to themselves as "mixed bloods," I have chosen to use the term, despite its problems. Pauline Turner Strong, "'Indian Blood': Reflections on the Reckoning and Refiguring of Native North American Identity," *Cultural Anthropology* 11, no. 4 (November 1996): 551.;Frell M.

The war had dramatic consequences for the Dakota. Only two days after formally surrendering to the Army and handing over those whites held as captives during the War, General Henry Hastings Sibley convened a military commission. This commission immediately set to work collecting testimony from the now-freed captives and conducting trials for those Dakota accused of participating in the outbreak. In a matter of weeks, the commission heard 392 trials and sentenced 303 Dakota to hang for their part in the war.

But the punishment of the Dakota did not end there. White hostility was so great that the Dakota were ultimately banished from the state and relocated to the Crow Creek reservation in the Dakota Territory. Essential to the Dakotas' removal was white Minnesotans' creation of a stereotype of the Dakota as a savage and dangerous people. This process of conceptualizing the Dakota as a hostile impediment towards westward "civilization" began immediately after the initial outbreak of violence. Wartime journalism emphasized the violence perpetrated by the Dakota against white Minnesotans, especially women and children. Oftentimes reporting in the most explicit detail, newspaper reports and editorials throughout the summer and fall of 1862 sought to paint the Dakota as butchers of innocent non-combatants. These graphic stories sought, with varying success, to grab the Nation's attention, sympathy, and support during the Civil War. Stories emphasizing the Dakotas' treatment of women and children became especially powerful rallying

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Owl, "Who and What is an American Indian?," *Ethnohistory* 9, no. 3 (Summer 1962): 274.

points around which white Minnesotans began to call for the expulsion of the Dakota from the state.

In the aftermath of the War, the rhetoric of reporters, policymakers, military leaders, and private citizens created a powerfully racist stereotype of the Dakota. During, but especially after the War, characterizations of the Dakota as sub-human and a threat to "civilization" spread rapidly. As the public's calls for "vengeance" grew even louder, so did the attempts of white Minnesotans to convince the American government of its need to displace the Dakota. In both the public narrative of the war and the growing debates over how best to handle Minnesota's "Indian problem," white women became a potent symbol employed by politicians and pundits in order to advance a particular agenda—the expulsion of all Indians from the state.

While employing the trope of the raped white female captive to highlight the contrasts between white and Dakota societies, texts generated by a small number of white men effectively papered over the enormous variety of women's testimony regarding their captivity. In the process, these authors simultaneously constructed a stereotype of white female identity. Based more on nineteenth century ideals than realities, this constructed identity of the "white female former captive" projected a narrowly defined view of white women as bourgeois wives and mothers and as helpless victims of Indian savagery.

Although historically, war has been the domain of men—war offered a means for men of various cultures to prove themselves, to assert their masculinity, and to acquire land or power through the defeat of an enemy—it was women who often suffered the consequences of war. Captured, massacred, raped, and tortured, women

have, throughout history, been subject to and scarred by men's wars. The rape of enemy women in wartime has been a constant among nearly every human society in history. Protecting women has been the pretext for wars, women have been used as symbols in war, and women's violation during war has been repeatedly employed to demonize the enemy and to justify punishment of vanquished foes. Women's own voices however, remain largely absent from the narratives of war.

During the Dakota War, a relatively small group of (mostly) men created and employed stereotypes of white women and Dakota men to justify the removal of the Dakota people from the state of Minnesota. In the process of creating a public narrative of the war, these newspapermen, politicians, and historians papered over the enormous variety of women's testimony regarding their captivity experiences. The few women who refused to corroborate the public narrative faced harsh censure—they were effectively ostracized from polite society and their narratives deleted from public memory. However decades later, when the wounds from the war were far less raw, some captives began to write their own narratives of the war and their captivity. The addition of women's stories *in their own words* served several important purposes. Women's narratives frequently complicated the simple racial and gender stereotypes found in the public narrative of the War—that Dakota men were all "savage" defilers of helpless white women. These narratives also revealed the permanent scars that the Dakota War left female non-combatants, and reflected a conscious attempt by these women to deal with the trauma they experienced during captivity.

The Dakota War is unique due largely to the sheer number of women's stories that survive. Whether authored by women themselves or included in anthologies of the war, more than two-dozen accounts to women's wartime experiences exist. The number of sources is matched only by the variety of women's commentary. While some women's stories reaffirmed the stereotypes of the Dakota and women found in the public narrative, many more complicated and challenged them. Engaging literature on war, race, gender, and memory, this dissertation seeks to provide understanding of the processes by which women's stories are embellished and appropriated during war for political purposes. It also examines the importance of reinserting women in war stories as not merely symbols, but as important historical actors. When women are free to tell their own stories, a far more detailed and accurate understanding of war is achieved.

Chapter one attempts to show the simultaneous construction of race, gender, and identity during and in the wake of the Minnesota conflict. In the days and weeks that followed the initial onset of violence on August 18, 1862, newspapers throughout Minnesota began to publish horrific accounts of atrocities allegedly perpetrated by the Dakota. The authors infused their articles with nineteenth-century racism, comparing the Dakota to animals, remarking upon the inherent "savagery" of Native people, and casting all Dakota men as rapists of young, innocent white women. Though "publicly silent" in the debates regarding the fate of the Dakota, white women served as potent symbols for and were intrinsically linked with the discussions regarding race, gender, and expansion in Minnesota. The suppression of female captives' stories resulted in a

public narrative that stressed the victimization and violation of white women at the hands of their Dakota captors.

Chapter two examines the early histories of the Dakota War. Published in the years immediately following the war's end, these chronicles sought to provide readers with a comprehensive and definitive history of the Minnesota Indian War, its causes, and its aftermath. The authors of early histories often included women's accounts of their captivity in order to lend an air of authenticity to their work. Sometimes these stories were genuine. But frequently what appeared as "a true account" was, in fact, a heavily edited story that perpetuated the racial and gender stereotypes created by wartime reporters. The public narrative of the Dakota War, centered as it was, on the violated female captive, drew heavily from nineteenth century "sensation" literature that sought to titillate and horrify the American public. In the weeks and years following the war, the symbol of the white woman, raped by her Indian captors, became a central theme of the war's earliest histories.

Chapter three investigates the issue of rape during the war. The rhetoric of rape positively permeated the public narrative of the Dakota War with politicians, reporters, and military officials insisting that every female captive had suffered "the fate worse than death" during her ordeal. Yet despite the claims of universal rape, only two of the 392 Dakota tried by the Military Commission at Camp Release were charged with the crime. Relying on a variety of sources including, early histories, narratives produced by the captives themselves, interviews that former captives gave decades after their release, and photographs, compelling evidence suggests that, while most female captives emerged unharmed from their six weeks in captivity, several did

not. Examining specific rape claims from the Dakota War reveals the complex relationships between race, gender, authority, and power that female captives had to negotiate during and following their release.

While wartime reports and the earlier histories of the Dakota War emphasized the "barbarism" of the Dakota and bemoaned the fate of captured white women, at least two captives refused to corroborate the war's public narrative. Chapter four analyzes the narratives of Mary Butler Renville and Sarah Wakefield two women who, shortly after their release, wrote and published accounts of their captivity. Both Renville and Wakefield's narratives provided a far more complex version of the war and their captivity and a more nuanced view of the Dakota people. These women's stories—especially their impassioned defense of "good" Dakota men and women—provided a powerful counter-narrative to public narrative of mass destruction, violation, and victimization. However, in 1863 and 1864, the wounds from the Dakota War were still too fresh in the minds of the region's white population. Because of their unwillingness to "tow the line" in regards to the public narrative of the war both Renville and Wakefield were branded "Indian lovers," shunned by polite society, and their narratives relegated to the dustbin of history.

Chapter five tackles the issues of memory and the Dakota War. As the years passed, the war began to disappear from the collective memory of white Minnesotans. Yet many former captives continued to live with the effects of the trauma they had endured during the war. For years, their personal experiences and suffering remained private affairs but, as they entered their twilight years, many women were compelled—by friends, family, members of the public, or for personal reasons—to

record *their* captivity stories. Writing thirty or even forty years after the fact, these female-authored accounts repudiated the public narrative of the War, a version of events in which (mostly) male authors had appropriated women's captivity stories, relied on racist stereotypes to describe the Dakota, and reduced women to symbols of violated virtue. These women's narratives revealed the complex and contradictory emotions they still felt regarding their captors and their captivity. For many of these captives, penning their narratives proved to be a cathartic endeavor, serving as means by which to reclaim agency and authority over *their* history.

The public narrative of the Dakota War, centered on the rape of white women and the destruction of homes and families by "cruel" and "bloodthirsty" Dakota, had an enduring legacy. This version of events created and promoted by men, effectively helped to convince the government to remove the Dakota from Minnesota. Women's stories were integral to the war, but only if they reaffirmed the master narrative of rape, destruction, victimization, and violence. As time passed and the war began to fade from the public's memory, new stories emerged. These female-authored narratives provided a far more complex view of the war, their captivity, and their captors. In addition to challenging the stereotypes of the "savage" Dakota and the helpless white captive, the writing of these narratives provided female authors with a vehicle to promote their ideas and their politics.

Rhetoric, Racism, and Wartime Reporting in the Dakota War

On September 16, 1862, a writer for the *Hokah Chief* published a blistering editorial about the ongoing Dakota War. Located in the southeast corner of the state, hundreds of miles away from the fighting, the reporter in Hokah summed up what was, by then, the view of nearly every white man, woman, and child in the state of Minnesota. Calling the Dakota "murderous fiends," he urged his readers to "hunt the bastard as you would a hyena…In a word, kill the devils whenever and wherever you find them. Let the word be DEATH! To every d—d Sioux living this side of—well, reader, you can add the rest."[5] On September 28, Major General John Pope echoed these sentiments in a message sent to Colonel Henry Sibley, the man tasked with leading the state militia in their campaign to subdue the Dakota. Of the Dakota, Pope wrote, "they are to be treated as maniacs or wild beasts, & by no means as people."[6] The message was clear—in the eyes of white Minnesotans, the Dakota were an inherently "ferocious" people whose days in Minnesota were numbered.

Although largely overshadowed by the Civil War, the violence in Minnesota did eventually garner national attention. Dispatches from Minnesota appeared in East Coast and national newspapers within a week after the initial attacks. Bearing titles such as " The Indian Massacre in Minnesota," "Indian Murders in Minnesota," and "The Minnesota Indian War." The majority of these stories detailed the atrocities taking place in Minnesota with very little (if any) explanation for the outbreak of

[5]*Hokah Chief* (Hokah, MN), September 16, 1862.
[6]John Pope to Henry Hastings Sibley, September 28, 1862, Record Group 393, LS, NW Department, National Archives, Washington, DC.

violence.[7] Instead, newspapers reported on "the number of bodies discovered strewn along the road and…[the] trails of blood" that witnesses reported seeing throughout the Minnesota countryside.[8]

Early reporting on the war emphasized the brutality of Indian attacks on women and children. On Monday August 25, the Washington, D.C.-based *Daily National Intelligencer* ran a [dispatch] dated at St. Paul on the 22d" reporting how

> escaped citizens came into the fort [Ridgely] during the night giving accounts of horror too terrible for imagination to conceive. Mothers came in rags, barefooted, whose husbands and children were slaughtered before their eyes. Children came who witnessed the murder of their parents or the burning of their homes. The roads, in all directions to New Ulm, [were] lined with murdered men, women, and children.[9]

The brutalization of women and children, forced to watch as Indians destroyed their homes and their families was a theme often stressed in both local and national reporting on the violence in Minnesota. That is, if they survived at all. Reports coming out of Minnesota frequently detailed the gruesome murder of non-combatants, particularly women and children. *The New Hampshire Statesman* printed a piece, based on a dispatch from St. Paul that included an interview with a former

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[7] "Indian Massacres in Minnesota" *Daily National Intelligencer* August 25, 1862; Issue 15, 609; col. C; "Indian Murders in Minnesota," *Daily National Intelligencer* August 26, 1862; Issue 15, 609; col. C; "The Minnesota Indian War," *Chicago Tribune* August 30 1862, 1.

[8] Indian Murders in Minnesota," *Daily National Intelligencer* August 26, 1862; Issue 15, 609; col. C.

[9] "Indian Massacres in Minnesota" *Daily National Intelligencer* August 25, 1862; Issue 15, 609; col. C; "General Intelligence," *Christian Advocate and Journal* Chicago: August 28, 1862. Vol. 37, Iss. 35; p. 227; "Indian Outbreak in Minnesota: A Record of Horrors," *Saturday Evening Post* Philadelphia: August 30, 1862, p. 6; "The Indian Insurrection in Minnesota—The Massacre of the Whites," *The Ripley Bee* (Ripley, OH) August 28, 1862; Issue 11, col. E; "Indian Atrocities in Minnesota," *The New Hampshire Statesman* August 30, 1862; Issue 2152, col. G; "Indian Massacre in Minnesota," *Newark Advocate* (Newark, OH) August 29, 1862; Issue 5, Col. A

member of the Minnesota legislature, J.J. Porter. He reported finding the "horribly mutilated" corpses of women and children when searching for survivors. He claimed to have seen "four persons who had been wounded in one room, cut with hatchets on their heads and arms. A little girl was cut across the face, breast and side. A little boy was dreadfully cut up, also a middle-aged woman in the adjoining room. He saw a child with its head cut off, and 27 others mutilated with gashes."[10] On September 14, 1862, *The New York Times* ran a piece entitled "Incidents of the Minnesota Indian War." Reprinted from an account given by A.J. Ebell in the August 31st edition of the *St. Paul Press*, the story detailed the violence perpetrated on the family and friends of Mr. Edward Paumier. In this account, Dakota Indians attacked and tomahawked Paumier's seven-year-old son, nearly taking off the boy's scalp. Although the Indians had left the boy for dead, Paumier managed to rescue his son and bring him to safety. But the Indians' attack on Edward's Paumier's family and friends did not end there.

> Mrs. P was shot in the breast. Mrs. Harrington was running for her life, when a musket ball pierced the hand of an infant she was carrying…and passed into her back. The savages hamstringed one woman and separated her feet with a stick, and so dragged her over the grass until she died. Others they have nailed to fences and pierced to death; some they have disemboweled, and, cutting off their hands and feet inserted them in place.[11]

While many white civilians were killed, and in brutal fashion, the stories often were created by reporters and editors to grab headlines and shock readers.

Even for East Coast readers, many of whom were experiencing the Civil War firsthand, these lurid accounts of torture and dismemberment likely shocked their sensibilities. Most Civil War engagements featured combatants and their soldier

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[10] "Indian Atrocities in Minnesota," *The New Hampshire Statesman* August 30, 1862; Issue 2152, col. G

[11] "The Indian War" *New York Times* September 14 1862; 2.

adversaries, not women and children. These gruesome "first-hand accounts" of the torture and mutilation of innocent non-combatants by the Dakota in Minnesota repulsed the American public. Overshadowed by the national conflict between North and South, the reports out of Minnesota (when they appeared at all) emphasized the grisly details of the Dakota attacks in order to guarantee "front page" space in eastern newspapers. In doing so, these reports helped to reinforce anti-Indian sentiment, directly challenged proponents of "civilization," and blatantly rejected any notion of a "vanishing" Indian.

Unlike Easterners, for Minnesotans, the Dakota Uprising dominated their lives and subsequently, their media throughout the summer and fall of 1862. Details of the Indian War appeared daily in Minnesota papers. And whereas eastern and national papers devoted a few hundred words to the conflict every few days, Minnesota papers devoted several columns to covering the conflict, posting details of each individual massacre, listing the names of those killed by the Indians, and later, printing interviews with survivors and those who had escaped Indian captivity.

While national newspapers re-ran the same dispatches from the *St. Paul Pioneer* that discussed the horrors witnessed by survivors of the Dakota attacks on Ft. Ridgely and New Ulm, local newspapers printed even more shocking claims of Indian brutality. In a section titled "Indian Cruelties" in the September 27 edition of the *Mankato Semi-Weekly Record*, a reporter wrote a scathing critique of the formal, on-going investigation into crimes perpetrated by the Dakota during the. The reporter specifically charged a Dr. Williams, one of the men tasked with investigating "the

perpetration of cruelties by the Sioux Indians" with a dereliction of duty. Dr. Williams, the reporter wrote,

> has not been very energetic in persecuting his inquiries, or he might have heard of outrages such as only a Sioux Indian could perpetrate. A number of instances have occurred where females have been brutally ravished after death. We have it on good authority that two children found in Brown County, with their feet tied together and strung across the fence. Also one instance where a body was found nailed to a wall.[12]

While the torture and murder of women and children made headlines back East, the *Mankato Semi-Weekly* went even further, claiming that wild Dakota warriors had not only murdered several women but then proceeded to ravish their corpses. These acts, *Weekly* reports claimed, were so heinous that "only a Sioux" could have committed them.[13]

Depictions of the Dakota or Sioux as especially war-like, heinous, and capable of the murder, torture, mutilation, and rape of women and children became the central theme of reporting both during and after the Minnesota Indian War. As the true cost of the War, in terms of human life and property damage began to add up, public outrage grew. Only two weeks in to the War, newspapers began to run editorials that proposed a "Remedy" for the "Indian problem" in Minnesota. Wrote the *Mankato Semi-Weekly,*

> The cruelties perpetrated by the Sioux nation in the past two weeks demand that our Government shall treat them as outlaws, who have forfeited all right to property and life. They must cease to be wards of the Government, and their whole possessions and annuities converted into a fund to remunerate, so far as money will do so, for the depredations already committed. Nothing short of this policy will appease our treaties. We want no more treaties or compromise. Minnesota must either be a Christian land or a savage hunting

[12] "Indian Cruelties," *Mankato Semi-Weekly Record,* September 27, 1862, Vol. 4, no. 26 (accessed on microfilm at the MN State Historical Society).
[13] Ibid.

> ground—either the white man must emphasize undisputed sway—or the Indian—the two races can never live peacefully and prosperously together again.[14]

Only weeks in to the War, the editors of local newspapers were proposing plans for the future of post-War Minnesota. The state, argued the editors of the paper, was at a crossroads—the "new" Minnesota would either be an all-Indian or all-white land.

Although the editors of the *Mankato Semi-Weekly* offered up the idea of an all-Indian Minnesota, there is little evidence that white Minnesotans seriously considered this an option. While the war was still ongoing, newspapers, citizens, and local officials alike called for federal troops to either exterminate or relocate the Dakota.

That the government had been far too indulgent in its past dealings with the Indians was a view held not only by Minnesotans. Criticism of the federal government's failure to solve the region's "Indian problem" prior to the Indian attacks of August 17 was widespread throughout the West. In its September 14 edition, the *New York Times* published "an appeal" written by a "gentleman" from Spirit Lake, Iowa. Site of the infamous Spirit Lake Massacre of 1857, the people of Spirit Lake also held a great deal of contempt for the government's "lenient" treatment of "hostile" Indians. The author, "a gentleman" expressed outrage over the Dakota attacks on white Minnesotans, but saw the violence as the natural outcome of the federal government's inability to deal with the "savage" Sioux. He asked,

> But how long can we endure this constant state of alarm before we, too shall conclude to leave? The answer to this question depends upon the policy now adopted by the government towards the Sioux nation. They *must* be

[14]"The Remedy" *Mankato Semi-Weekly Record*,August 30, 1862, vol. 4, no.18 (microfilm, MHS).

> exterminated or driven so far as to leave no room for apprehension that they will return. The Sioux are almost as bad as the rebels, and their allies, and must be dealt with in the same manner. The rose-water policy is not less out of place here than on the Potomac. It has cost already the lives of hundreds of women and children. The Sioux must be followed up, hunted out, destroyed, or driven to the far North or West, where their return will become impossible.[15]

Possibly hoping to appeal to pro-Union Eastern readers by comparing the Dakota to the Confederate rebels, the "gentleman" author of this appeal made clear his opinion that the federal government's constant appeasement of the Dakota should and must change as a result of events in Minnesota. Hunting out and destroying the Dakota altogether seemed a preferable alternative to relocating them to some distant western territory where they could possibly carry out future attacks on white women and children. These characterizations of the Dakota as inherently cruel people intent on causing chaos, capturing, torturing, and murdering white women and children were widely held by those living in the region of southern Minnesota/ northern Iowa. While easterners tended to take a far more sympathetic view towards Indians, those living in close proximity to Native peoples did not.

From the first days of the outbreak on, newspapers in Minnesota began calling for the "extermination" of the Dakota. Spewing vitriol, the authors of these columns frequently employed overtly racist rhetoric and name-calling. Compared to animals, devils, and, in one article, slaveholders, these attempts at dehumanizing the Dakota ultimately proved effective in garnering public support for the eventual removal of all Indians from the state.

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[15] "Appeal from Northwestern Iowa," *New York Times,* September 14, 1862; 2.

Only five days into the fighting, the *St. Paul Press* published an article titled, "A War of Extermination Against the Sioux Savages." Calling the Dakota "Sepoy devils that are desolating our borders and indiscriminately butchering in cold blood women and children," the author argued that the Dakota must be eliminated as a threat, whether by extermination or expulsion. Strangely, he referred to the Dakota as "sepoys," a term for Indian solider (in India) who served under the British. Only in 1857, the Sepoys had staged their own ill-fated rebellion against the British. Terminology issues notwithstanding, the author continued, "every warrior that can be overtaken should be killed, and the whole tribe driven beyond the western border of the State. Never let one of these devils incarnate set foot on the soil of Minnesota again."[16] One writer for the *St. Cloud Democrat* proposed what he believed was a quick and relatively inexpensive way to exterminate Dakota. His suggestion was to "let our Legislature offer a bounty of $10 for every Sioux scalp, outlaw the tribe, and so let the matter rest."[17] Offering a bounty on Dakota scalps would not only rid Minnesota of its Native population he argued, but save the government from having to fight a long and costly war.

On August 27, *The Faribault Central Republican* echoed the calls for extermination. Writing that the Dakota were "inhuman barbarians that have wrongly been permitted to occupy a large portion of the most beautiful part of our state" the author "trust[ed] and pray[ed] that this may be a war of extermination" against the

[16] "A War of Extermination Against the Sioux Savages," *St. Paul Press,* August 22, 1862, Minnesota Historical Society.
[17] "Scalps," *St. Cloud Democrat* (St. Cloud, Minnesota), September 11, 1862.

"accursed vipers."[18] While the August 28th edition of the *St. Paul Journal* called only for the "extermin[ation] of the guilty parties," the August 29th edition of the *Mankato Independent* made no such distinction.[19] In a piece titled "The Remedy," the newspaper forcefully declared, "Extermination is the word! No more treaty stipulations with the Sioux…no more talk of civilization or Christianization! …bloody, relentless war, until the last of the Sioux race is exterminated or driven beyond the borders of the States, is the universal demand of the people."[20] These calls for extermination were only the beginning. As the war continued and in the months and years that followed, male politicians, military officials, and citizens would reiterate the "savagery" of the Dakota and the necessity of their extermination or, at the very least, removal from Minnesota.

With the mobilization of an army, led by newly made "colonel" Henry Hastings Sibley,the hostilities between Indians and whites began to wind down. On September 26, the Dakota, save those that fled following their defeat at the Battle of Wood Lake, met with Sibley's troops at Camp Release to officially surrender to Colonel Sibley and the Army and return their white captives. On October 4, *The Mankato Semi-Weekly* reported that the majority of the white captives held by the Dakota had been released.[21] A few renegade Dakota, including their leader Little Crow, had fled Minnesota but the Army was in pursuit. White Minnesotans could

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[18] "Horrible Massacres," *Faribault Central Republican,* August 27, 1862, Minnesota Historical Society.
[19] "The Indian War," *St. Paul Journal,* August 28, 1862. Minnesota Historical Society.
[20] "The Remedy," *Mankato Independent,* August 29, 1862. Minnesota Historical Society.
[21] "Release of Prisoners," *Mankato Semi-Weekly Record,* October 4, 1862, vol. 4, No. 28 (microfilm, MNHS).

finally breathe a sigh of relief. For now, the immediate threat of another Dakota attack seemed unlikely.[22]

However, the white citizens of Minnesota and the victims of the outbreak were unwilling to simply "forgive and forget." The war had wrought considerable devastation on their lives. The murder of over 500 whites and "mixed-blood" men, women, and children had destroyed families. Survivors of the Uprising told stories of watching helplessly as Dakota warriors destroyed their property and demolished their homes. In the aftermath of the War, the calls for the extermination or relocation of the Sioux grew even louder and more insistent.

On September 28, two days after the Dakota officially surrendered 269 of their white and mixed-blood captives (mostly women and children), Colonel Sibley convened a military commission "'to try summarily the mulatto, mixed bloods, and Indians engaged in the Sioux raids and massacres.'"[23] Consisting of Col. William Crooks, Lt. Col. William Marshall (later replaced by Maj. Bradley), Capts. Hiram Grant and Hiram Bailey, and Lt. Rollin Olin, the commission tried 392 cases in a matter of weeks. The commission held an average of 13 trials a day. On one day they tried nearly 40 men. In the weeks that followed some critics noted the "swiftness" with which justice was administered. Other criticisms of the military trials included the lack of a competent interpreter and incomplete recording of the testimony or

[22] Gary Clayton Anderson, *Little Crow: Spokesman for the Sioux* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1986).
[23]Isaac V.D. Heard *History of the Sioux War and Massacres of 1862 and 1863* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1864), 251.

proceedings.[24] Of the nearly 400 Dakota tried, the commission convicted all but seventy and handed down death sentences to 303 of the defendants.

On November 7, 1862, Major General John Pope telegrammed the names of the 303 convicted Dakota to President Lincoln. Unnerved by the sheer number of condemned, Lincoln immediately requested that Pope send him the trial transcripts. Pope did, but the transcripts took nearly a month to reach Lincoln. In the interim, Pope sent several telegraphs to Lincoln, apprising him of the volatile situation in Minnesota and urging the President to simply sign off on the mass execution. In a telegraph dated November 11, Pope wrote that "I fear that as soon as it is known that the Criminals ~~th~~ are not at once to be executed that there will be an indiscriminate massacre of the whole[.] The troops are entirely new & raw & are in full sympathy with the people on this subject. I will do the best I can but fear a terrible result."[25]Pope expressed a genuine concern about his ability to maintain order in such a highly charged environment. Even his soldiers, those tasked with maintaining law and order, showed an obvious sympathy towards the white victims of the outbreak.

Further complicating Pope's ability to maintain control in Minnesota were the constant reminders of the devastation wrought by the war. As Pope explained in one of his many letters to the President, "the poor women & young girls are distributed about among the towns bearing the marks of the horrible outrages Committed upon

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[24] Marion Satterlee, *The Court Proceedings In The Trial of Dakota Indians Following the Massacre in Minnesota in August 1862* (Minneapolis: Satterlee Printing Co., 1927), 78-9. For a critical examination of the Dakota War trials from a legal perspective see, Carol Chomsky, "The United States-Dakota War Trials: A Study in Military Injustice," *Stanford Law Review*, Vol. 43, No. 1 (1990): 13-98.
[25] John Pope to Lincoln November 11, 1862 (Telegram Concerning 300 Sioux to be executed) Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress

them while daily there are funerals of those massacred men women & children whose bodies are being daily found. These things inflame the public mind to a fearful degree."[26] Like the newspaper reports generated during the war, Pope's pleading telegram to Lincoln emphasized the degree to which women and children had been affected by the violence in Minnesota. By now, it was widely rumored that Dakota men had violated all of the female captives. These women and their current pitiful state—their clothes in rags, their husbands dead, and often with children in tow—served as a constant reminder of the devastation caused by the war. The presence of these women and children in cities like St. Paul, where they often had to subsist on charity for food, lodging, or a set of clothing only served to inflame the public's desire for "vengeance" against the Dakota prisoners. As white Minnesotans' anger and outrage over the alleged treatment of the captives grew, the state became a powder keg, waiting to explode.

But Pope would have to wait a month for Lincoln's reply. In the meantime, he and other prominent Minnesotans sent the President several more telegrams and letters. Throughout the fall of 1862, the President received scores of unsolicited letters describing the violence that had taken place in Minnesota. Emphasizing the suffering of white citizens at the hands of the Dakota, these letters reveal the region's anti-Indian sentiment and the hardening of white Minnesotans' racist rhetoric. The writers of these missives urged the President to hurry up and approve the execution of

[26] Pope to Lincoln November 11, 1862.

the condemned prisoners, citing the growing frustration of white Minnesotans who were waiting for "justice" to be served.[27]

The letters Lincoln received throughout November 1862 revealed the growing hostility of the public towards both the Dakota and those tasked with protecting the condemned until Lincoln handed down his final recommendations. Stephen Riggs, a long-time missionary among the Dakota and member of the military commission, implored the President "to execute the great majority of those who have been condemned by the military commission."[28]Though Riggs did request clemency for a few cases, he overwhelmingly supported the execution of those condemned if for no other reason than to satisfy "the demands of public justice…[and provide] a guaranty of safety to the women and children."[29] Despite his long tenure living and working among the Dakota, Riggs believed that the majority of the condemned should die for their alleged crimes. While Riggs justified his argument for a mass execution by citing the importance of protecting women and children, he may also have had a secondary, more sinister motive. The majority of his Dakota converts were women

[27]John Pope to Abraham Lincoln, November 24, 1862 (Telegram concerning the 300 Sioux condemned to death), Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress; Alexander Ramsey to Abraham Lincoln, August 26, 1862 (Telegram Concerning Indian Troubles) Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress; Stephen R. Riggs to Abraham Lincoln, November 17, 1862 (Sioux uprising in Minnesota) Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress; Senate December 5, 1862 (Resolution Concerning the Sioux Uprising in Minnesota) Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress; Thaddeus Williams to Abraham Lincoln, November 22, 1862 (Opposes the pardoning of Sioux sentenced to death) Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress.
[28] Stephen R. Riggs to Abraham Lincoln November 17, 1862
[29] Ibid.

and children. Once 303 Dakota men were gone, Riggs was likely to have more success in converting their wives and children to his church.

Minnesota citizen Thaddeus Williams was not so measured in his remarks. His eight page letter to the President was a tirade against the Dakota; both for the outrages they had committed against the white settlers of Minnesota and their inherently violent nature. Beginning with a "protest against the pardon of the murderers" (Lincoln still had not reached a decision at this point), Williams then launched into an attack on the Dakota depicting them as an impediment to the westward expansion of civilization. Writing that, "in the march of civilized humanity across the New World, the lurking savage, with lust and vengeance in his heart has ever lurked by the pathway" Williams directly refuted the popular nineteenth century Eastern stereotypes of the "noble savage" or "vanishing Indian."[30] Arguing that the Dakota were not fading away or dying out as nineteenth century theorists had worried, Williams wrote that the Dakota posed very real threat to the daily existence of white Minnesotans. Lurking just off the pathway of civilization, Williams believed that western tribes like the Dakota threatened to destroy not only Minnesotans but also all westward migrants.

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[30] For more on the stereotypes of the "noble savage" and "vanishing Indian stereotypes see: Robert Berkhoffer, *The White Man's Indian: Images of American Indians from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978); Rebecca Blevins-Faery, *Cartographies of Desire: Captivity, Race, and Sex in the Shaping of an American Nation* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999); Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975); Susan Scheckel, *The Insistence of the Indian: Race and Nationalism in Nineteenth Century American* Culture (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998); John Wood Sweet, *Bodies Politic: Negotiating Race in the American North, 1730-1830* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003).

Williams next wrote of the events of August of 1862, emphasizing the brutality of the Dakota attacks on women and children. Casting the Dakota as "demons" whose hands had been "dyed in the blood of helpless women and children," Williams continued with his characterization of the Dakota as violent monsters who had not only murdered "400 human beings" but had mutilated and tortured their white victims.The whites killed during the Minnesota Uprising had been

> butchered, their entrails torn out, & their heads cut off & put between their lifeless thighs, or hoisted on a pole; their bodies gashed & cut to strips, & nailed or hung to trees; mothers with sharp fence rails passed through them & their unborn babes; children with hooks stuck through their backs & hung to limbs of trees.[31]

Whether Williams was merely repeating the rumors and hyperbole that appeared in local papers or whether these events actually took place was unclear. However Williams, like many other Minnesotans, repeated these gruesome stories as gospel to demonize the Dakota and to depict the Indians as brutal and barbaric murderers.

Although reports of the mutilation and violation of white victims had appeared in national and eastern newspapers, Williams stressed that; only those who had actually lived through the outbreak could truly understand the depths of Indian depravity. Criticizing "those who sit in opulent homes, with their wives & daughters around them [as] more disposed to pardon savage barbarity than those who have had a wife or daughter ravished, a son slain, or a child dashed against a stone," Williams responded directly to Eastern critics who argued that the Military Commission and the people of Minnesota were being too heavy-handed in their decision to execute

[31]Thaddeus Williams to Abraham Lincoln, November 22, 1862. Williams's underlining

over 300 Dakota.[32] Williams's sentiments, that only those living in Minnesota could truly understand the devastation wrought by the Dakota echoed those previously expressed by of Minnesota Governor Alexander Ramsey. In the midst of the outbreak, Ramsey had sent Lincoln a telegram explaining, "no one not here can conceive the panic in this state."[33] This theme, that only white Minnesota residents could truly understand the horrors perpetrated by the Dakota would be echoed again and again in the debates regarding the fate of the condemned Dakota and in the early histories of the Dakota War. [34]

Americans' thinking about Indians was often convoluted, contradictory, and differed regionally. Throughout the nineteenth century, general perceptions about Indians, whether or not there existed an "Indian problem" in America, and how the American government and its people should best deal with the country's native inhabitants varied greatly. Early nineteenth century popular literature often depicted Indian characters as "noble savages" or "doomed figure[s] about to succumb 'before the spirit of civilization.'"[35] Consequently, many Americans living on the East Coast had come to view western Indians as, at most, a minor bump in the road of westward expansion.

By the 1860s however, Americans' thinking about "the Indian problem" had become far more complicated. Reports of Indian attacks on western white communities problematized Americans' earlier, more sympathetic, and one-

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[32] Ibid.
[33] Alexander Ramsey to Abraham Lincoln, August 26, 1862.
[34] See Janet Dean, "Nameless Outrages: Narrative Authority, Rape Rhetoric, and the Dakota Conflict of 1862" *American Literature* Vol. 77, No. 1 (March 2005), 96.
[35] Brian W. Dippie, *The Vanishing American: White Attitudes and U.S. Indian Policy* (Middletown, Conn: Wesleyan University Press, 1982), 19, 21.

dimensional views of Indians. While eastern reformers and western missionaries held out great hope for "civilizing" and "Christianizing" Indian peoples, very few Americans actually believed that Indians could achieve even a rough equality with whites. The supposed superiority of Anglo-Saxons had been at the forefront of western expansion from the beginning of the nineteenth century. As historian Reginald Horseman concluded "[b]y the early 1850s, the inherent inequality of races was simply accepted as a scientific fact," and this sentiment was employed repeatedly as justification for the taking of Indian lands and the extermination of Native peoples as white Americans moved west across the continent.[36]

Despite the confidence most white Americans had in their own racial superiority, there still existed a regional division in terms of how those in the East and those in the West viewed Indians. Eastern cities such as "Boston and Philadelphia…were hives of pro-Indian activity; from them emanated a potent, philanthropic pressure that westerners dismissed as naïve sentimentalism."[37] The superiority of regional opinions regarding the "true" nature of native peoples and what should/could be done about them varied greatly. While the federal government and many prominent American thinkers held out hope that western tribes could be "saved" from extinction and "civilized," many of those whites that lived in close proximity to Indians did not.[38]

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[36] Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism*(Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 134. See also, Elliott West, "Reconstructing Race," *Western Historical Quarterly* Vol. 34, no. 1 (2003), 6-26.

[37]Dippie, *The Vanishing American,* 132-3.

[38]Dippie, *The Vanishing American* 97,133. The view of Indians as "naturally savage" was widespread among American anthropologists in the nineteenth century. Other

For Thaddeus Williams and many other Minnesotans, the Dakota were neither "noble" nor "vanishing." Instead, these Dakota, with their "eyes gleaming with a thirst of blood" had awoken sleeping white settlers in the middle of the night, forced them to flee for their lives, watch as their homes were destroyed, their families hunted down and killed, and their wives and young daughters "ravished."[39] Unlike the "noble savages" of nineteenth century novels, doomed to fade away in the face of white western expansion, Williams presented the Dakota as bloodthirsty fiends. These Indians, Williams argued, were not passively accepting the westward march of white civilization; rather, they presented a very real and dangerous threat to the safety and security of white Minnesotans.

To further prove to the President that the Dakota were indeed vicious and brutal people who posed an immediate danger to all westward migrants, Williams related some specific instances of violence perpetrated against Minnesotans. Intended to lend credibility to his claims of Indian depredations Williams used these specific instances to buttress his claims of the suffering endured by whites Minnesotans at the hands of the Dakota.As would become the case with many of the telegrams and appeals to the President both before and after his decision regarding the fate of the 303 Dakota sentenced to death, Williams began with a case of a female being gang-raped by Dakota braves. He wrote,

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nineteenth century thinkers believed native people capable of being "civilized." For more on these competing views see: Robert E. Bieder, "The Representations of Indian Bodies in the Nineteenth Century," *American Indian Quarterly* 20, no. 2 (Spring 1996): 165-79;

[39] Thaddeus Williams to Abraham Lincoln, November 22, 1862.

> a settlement was depopulated & several of the young girls taken into captivity; one of these, a maiden of sixteen had her clothes cut off in front below her breast, so as to expose her person; for three days & night 23 painted savages satiated their lust on her, keeping her in a wood, tied to a log; she finally escaped. Numbers of such instances occurred.[40]

Williams's next example was no less graphic. He described the travels of a messenger from Ft. Ridgely who reported finding piles of dead and decaying bodies littering the Minnesota prairie. The messenger reported "the only living thing among them was a little babe vainly endeavoring to draw nourishment from the breast of its murdered & outraged mother!"[41] This woman, according to the messenger, had been raped either prior to or after her murder. In the wake of the Minnesota Uprising, the symbol of the sexually abused white woman moved to the center of the debates about the fate of the Dakota. Every white woman, whether she admitted to it or not, was assumed to have been raped during the outbreak. This "obsession" with interracial rape would surface again and again in the months following the outbreak. Ultimately, it would be employed as justification for the execution of all Indians involved in the outbreak and the displacement of Dakota from their lands.

Williams continued the theme of portraying all Dakota as rapists and wanton destroyers of property when he appealed to the President to put a bounty on Indian scalps. Noting that the state of Minnesota currently offered a $4 bounty for every wolf head, Williams reasoned that a similar reward should be offered for Dakota heads. Asking "[s]hall we not kill these savages who not only kill our sheep, but kill & steal <u>all</u> our stock, murder &rape our mothers, wives & daughters, depopulate counties, burn towns…," Williams's message embodied the anger, fear, and desire for

[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid.

revenge that many Minnesotans demanded in the wake to the outbreak.[42] Comparing the Indians to wolves, Williams placed the Dakota on the level of nuisance animals, which should be shot on sight because of the potential devastation they posed to the safety and security of white families and property.

Apprising the President of the tinderbox atmosphere that currently existed in the state, Williams cautioned Lincoln that failing to uphold the death sentences of all 303 of the convicted Dakota could have dire consequences. Echoing Major General John Pope's fears that the white settlers of Minnesota could erupt in a violent outburst at any moment, Williams warned the President that, unless he upheld the execution orders, "every man will become an avenger…every man who has lost a home, friend, or relation, has bared his right arm, & sworn eternal vengeance, to [will] shoot every Indian he meets henceforth as he would a bear or wolf."[43] Failing to punish the Dakota for their crimes against whites, Williams argued, would have a two-pronged effect. If the Dakota were not sufficiently punished, white Minnesotans would forsake law and order and turn law-abiding white citizens into vigilantes who hunted Indians for sport. Any leniency shown on behalf of the federal government towards the prisoners would embolden the Dakota to again attack white settlements, murder white families, and rape white women and girls.

Only two days after receiving Thaddeus Williams's unsolicited, eight-page tirade against the Sioux, another telegram from Major General Pope arrived. Again imploring the President to act quickly to resolve the case of the condemned Dakota, Pope cited the growing desire among white Minnesotans to "[massacre] these

[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid.

Indians" and the impracticability of "protect[ing] so large a body of troops and Indians from the weather."[44] Despite Pope's pleas, Lincoln would wait more than two weeks before finally rendering a decision.

Major General Pope was not the only Minnesota official who worried about the atmosphere that existed in the state. In a telegram sent to Lincoln on November 28, 1862 Minnesota Governor Alexander Ramsey urged the President to hurry up and approved the execution of the 303 accused. Warning the President that, "[n]othing but the Speedy execution of the tried and convicted Sioux Indians will save us here from Scenes of outrage" Ramsey offered to order the execution himself, absolving the President of having to make a decision regarding the guilt or innocence of the 303 convicted.[45]Pope and Ramesy's telegrams revealed local officials' fears about maintaining control of the population in the months following the War. White Minnesotans, confronted daily with the reminders of the violence caused during the outbreak posed a very real threat to law and order.

Still, the President waited for almost two more weeks before making a decision. It took a Resolution issued by the United States Senate on December 5 "to furnish the Senate with all information in his possession touching the late Indian barbarities in the state of Minnesota," that finally elicited a response from the President.[46] Six days later, on December 11, 1862, the President delivered his findings on the Military Commission and decisions regarding the fate of the

[44] John Pope to Abraham Lincoln, November 24, 1862.
[45] Alexander Ramsey to Abraham Lincoln, November 28, 1862.
[46]Senate Resolution December 5, 1862 (Resolution Concerning the Sioux Uprising in Minnesota) Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress.

condemned Dakota warriors in a report to the Senate. Lincoln blamed his inability to come to a judgment earlier on the delay in receiving the trial transcripts, the barrage of "appeals on behalf of the condemned--appeals for their execution, and expressions of opinion as to proper policy" he had received, and his personal wish to vigilantly pour over the records.[47]

For Lincoln, trying to render a fair decision in the midst of competing interests proved especially challenging. White Minnesotans had clearly articulated their desire for "justice" to be served. However, Lincoln remained skeptical of the Military Commission's handling of the trials and the sheer number of Dakota they had condemned to death. Torn between the demands for a mass execution, while retaining real doubts about the trial process, Lincoln sought outside counsel from Joseph Holt, Judge Advocate General of the Union Army. In a letter sent December 1, 1862, Lincoln sought Holt's legal opinion as to whether he "should conclude to execute only a part of [the 300 condemned Dakota]…or could I leave the designation to some officer on the ground?"[48] Holt's response arrived later that same day. It was an emphatic "No." Once Lincoln received word from Holt that only he could determine which Dakota would hang and which would have their death sentence commuted to prison terms, he and his team went back to work. In his letter to the Senate, Lincoln expressed his desire to carefully view each case based on its evidence and to avoid rendering a decision based upon public or political pressures.

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[47] Abraham Lincoln to the United States Senate, December 11, 1862 Ex. Doc. No. 7 (accessed on Dakota Trial Transcripts Microfilm, roll 1), Minnesota Historical Society.

[48] Abraham Lincoln to Joseph Holt, December 1, 1862 *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln,* vol. 5, 538.

In the attempts to convince the President to uphold the executions and removal of the Dakota, the figure of the captive woman took center stage. Politicians used the figure of the violated white female captive as a way to demonstrate that the Dakota were not only inherently savage, but a danger to Minnesotans. In a long letter to Lincoln dated December 11, Minnesota Congressmen Morton Wilkinson, Cyrus Aldrich, and William Windom made the violation of white women and girls as justification for their argument that the Sioux should be expelled from Minnesota. Claiming that nearly every white female captive taken by the Dakota had been raped, Wilkinson, Aldrich, and Windom sought to oppose any act of clemency on behalf the 303 condemned**.** Insisting on the "near-universal rape of captive white women and girls," these representatives' " universalizing of rape support[ed] the notion that western indigenes would continue to pose a threat to settlers until they were eliminated from white occupied territories."[49] Providing graphic descriptions of the supposed outrages committed on unnamed white women and girls, Wilkinson, Aldrich, and Windom placed the symbol of the violated white female captive at the center of national debates regarding race, gender, and westward expansion.

Strongly opposed to the President's decision to pardon any of the 303 Dakota prisoners, these men argued that the majority of the condemned were convicted on testimony given by female former captives.[50] But this was not the case. While women had testified in 11 of the trials conducted by the Military Commission, the state's star witness had been David Fairlbault Sr., a white man whose "mixed blood"

[49] Dean, "Nameless Outrages," 95, 97.
[50] Wilkinson, Aldrich and Windom to Abraham Lincoln (accessed on Dakota Trial Transcripts Microfilm,roll 1)

son David Jr. was eventually pardoned for his participation in the outbreak. Yet another star of the trials was the controversial Joe Godfrey, a black man who claimed that Dakota warriors had forced him to participate in their murderous rampage. Godfrey married a Dakota woman and lived among the Indian as a member of their tribe.[51] His testimony, given in what a later observer would call his "nigger braggadocio," helped to convict many of the Dakota tried by the Military Commission, including his own father-in-law Wahpaduta (identified as Wah-pay-du-ta or Wa-pay-doo-ta in the trial transcripts). Convicted by Godfrey's testimony Wahpaduta was one of the few Indians whose death sentence Lincoln did not commute to a prison term. He was one of the 38 Dakota eventually hung at Mankato.[52]

Godfrey's testimony saved his life. Despite the evidence of several eyewitnesses who testified that Godfrey willingly participated in the events of August 1862, on November 5, 1862, the Military Commission petitioned that Godfrey's original sentence, death by hanging, be commuted to a brief prison term. Citing his "invaluable" testimony on behalf of the state the commission concluded, "without it a very large number of men of the very worst character would have gone unpunished," Godfrey spent over three years in prison before being pardoned in 1866.[53]

Although the Congressmen claimed that the majority of the Dakota were convicted as result of women's testimony, it was men like Fairbault Sr. and Godfrey

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[51]Satterlee, *The Court Proceedings,* 8.
[52] Ibid. Godfrey's testimony against his father-in-law appears in case number 11. The name is alternately spelled Wah-pay-du-ta/ Wa-pay-doo-ta but the case numbers match up, both in Lincoln's list of those Dakota sentenced to hang and in Satterlee's typed transcript of the trial testimony. *Sattlerlee*, 15-6.
[53]Satterlee, *The Court Proceedings,* 7.

who provided the key testimony that proved most valuable in convicting the Dakota prisoners. Undeterred by this fact, Wilkinson, Aldrich, and Windom continued to place women at the center of their calls for the execution of the condemned and the expulsion of the Dakota from the state of Minnesota. Stressing women's purity, innocence, and motherhood, the Congressmen crafted a symbol—an idealized version of the white female victim.

Invested in proving their claims of Dakota savagery and barbarity, the Congressmen's letter depicted the female captives as helpless and innocent victims of the Dakota. Emphasizing their connection to the "nearly ninety" female captives, the Congressmen wrote that these women "were the wives and daughters of our neighbors and friends."[54] Claiming to serve as the voice for these female former captives, Wilkinson, Aldrich, and Windom wrested control over the "official" story from the female victims, reassigning it to themselves—government officials and agents of the state.[55] The shift in narrative authority, from the testimony of female victims to reports generated by male state officials such as Pope, Ramsey, and the Congressmen served a variety of important functions. Positioning themselves as the "true authorities" of "what really happened," allowed Wilkinson, Aldrich, and Windom the ability to construct aversion of events in which all the white female captives were vulnerable and powerless. And such female captives, in the mid-nineteenth century were not expected to challenge or even create their own narratives. Hijacking narrative authority provided these men with the opportunity to stereotype

[54] M.S. Wilkinson, Cyrus Alrich, and WM Windom to Abraham Lincoln. December 11, 1862, 3.
[55] See Dean, "Nameless Outrages," 107.

Dakota men as sub-human beings, intent on raping and defiling both the women and the state of Minnesota. These manufactured stereotypes soon held sway everywhere even, to some extent, in Washington D.C.

In crafting their appeal to the President, Wilkinson, Aldrich, and Windom created a gender identity for the nearly ninety nameless female captives. Depicting the female captives as "intelligent and virtuous women; some of them were wives and mothers, others were young and interesting girls," the Congressmen attempted to positioned these women in the most sympathetic light.[56] By extolling the "virtue" of these women and their status as wives and mothers previous to the Dakota attack, these women's eventual violation by Dakota warriors was, they argued, rendered even more tragic.

Often called *the fate worse than death*, Indian captivity usually implied the rape of female captives. The "fate worse than death" became a common theme—often denied by women—in captivity narratives, a fascinating genre of American literature. Captivity narratives were immensely popular because of their ability to titillate and their allusions to sexual contact across racial lines. As Brian Dippie explains in *The Vanishing American*, "the white obsession with interracial rape was a durable one; it assumed that the darker races spent their time lusting after white women—so desirable, yet so unattainable."[57] White women and girls, depicted as naturally alluring but unattainable to Indians, became attainable once Indians killed their male protectors—fathers, husbands, and sons. Rendered defenseless by the

[56] M.S. Wilkinson, Cyrus Alrich, and WM Windom to Abraham Lincoln 11 December 1862 (accessed on Dakota Trial Transcripts Microfilm,roll 1), 3.
[57]Dippie, *The Vanishing* American, 258.

murder of their male protectors, white women became the helpless and unwilling victims of the Indians' predatory lust.

White fears regarding the "dark rapist" usually arose when white power structures seemed shaky or uncertain.[58] The Dakota War had shaken Minnesota and its residents to their very core. Despite the numerous underlying tensions that existed between the Dakota, the federal government, and the white residents of Minnesota, most settlers claimed to have been caught completely unaware by the outbreak of violence. The tremendous costs of the war, both in terms of loss of life and property damage left many whites uncertain about their future. Politicians like Ramsey, Wilkinson, Aldrich, and Windom, unsettled by the thousands of refugees flooding cities like St. Peter and St. Paul, expressed great concern over the future of the state. Pope, worried constantly about his ability to maintain law and order in the area.

In this uncertain time, white policymaker's fears regarding their own ability to maintain control of the state manifested themselves in growing concerns over the supposed Indian rapist. In the minds of these men and many other proponents of Anglo-Saxon superiority, the figure of the "dark rapist" presented not only a threat to white power structures, but to the "white race." White Anglo-Saxon superiority had been used throughout the nineteenth century to justify westward expansion and the seizure of Indian lands by "superior" white people. The only possible threat to the deterioration of the white race was if "males of the lower race cohabitated with

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[58] See Estelle B. Freedman, *Redefining Rape: Sexual Violence in the Era of Suffrage and Segregation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), 12-32; Jenny Sharp, *Allegories of Empire: The Figure of Woman in the Colonial Text* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 7; Vron Ware, *Beyond the Pale: White Women, Racism, and History* (New York: Verso, 1992).

females of the higher—"'the ovum of the latter being thus tainted.'"[59] Thus, according to Horseman the "dark rapist" not only posed a threat to white women, but his cohabitation with these women could be seen as a real threat to Anglo-Saxons' supposed superiority.

The Congressmen played on this racist assumption of white women as objects of desire for dark men when composing their letter to Lincoln. Arguing that the Dakota treated "nearly one hundred" (note the increase in alleged victims from "nearly ninety") women and girls "with the most fiendish brutality," Wilkinson, Aldrich, and Windom moved then from generalities to specific instances of white women raped and abused by the Dakota.[60] After murdering a "worthy" and "honest" farmer, a group of Dakota warriors entered the farmer's home and killed two of his young children in front of his invalid wife. The Dakota then took the farmer's wife, suffering from consumption, and her "beautiful" 13-year-old daughter captive and forced her to watch as they tied her daughter to the ground and one-by-one "violated her person, unmoved by her cries and unchecked by the evident signs of her approaching dissolution. This work continued until her Heavenly Father relieved [the girl] from her suffering."[61] Rendered utterly defenseless by the death of her husband and her own illness, this unnamed woman had allegedly been compelled to watch as the Dakota killed her two youngest children and raped her daughter to death. The Congressmen used this woman's story (the origins of which the writers never make clear) to demonize all the Dakota participants in the outbreak, combat any public

[59]Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny,* 295-6.
[60]Wilkinson, Alrich, and Windom to Abraham Lincoln 11 December 1862, 3.
[61]Ibid.

protests for clemency, and provide justification for the removal of the Dakota from Minnesota.

And if the previous account did not convince the President of their claims, the Congressman provided another shocking tale of Indian cruelty. The second example concerned an 18 year old who the authors claimed to know personally. Describing the young woman "as refined and beautiful a girl as we had in the state. None had more or better friends; no one was more worthy of them than she," the Congressmen portrayed the victim as the ideal middle-class lady.[62] Demonstrating that the violence perpetrated by the Dakota knew no social or economic bounds, this young woman was not simply a recent immigrant to the state or a "worthy" farmer's wife or daughter. This victim epitomized the most sophisticated citizens in the state. But even her status one of the most "refined and beautiful girl[s]" in the state and her many important friends (including the Congressmen themselves) could not save her from a "fate worse than death." Once captured, "her arms were tied behind her, she was made fast to the ground, and ravished by some eight or ten of these convicts before the cords were loosened from her limbs."[63] However, unlike the farmer's daughter, this young woman escaped and, the Congressman claimed, later testified against the "wretches" who raped her. This claim, that the young woman later went on to testify against her many attackers cannot be substantiated by any of the trial proceedings.[64]

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[62]Ibid.
[63]Ibid.
[64] It is surprising that Wilkinson, Aldrich, and Windom claim that this unnamed woman testified against the all of the eight to ten men who they accuse of raping her. No such testimony can be found in any of the copies of the trial transcripts

Ignoring this glaring inconsistency, the Congressmen continued to insist that, "nearly all the women who were captured were violated."[65] The Congressmen oftentimes appeared to conflate the Dakota's violation of the virginal, pure, and honorable white female captives with the Dakota's "rape" of the Minnesota frontier, the many homes, families, and livestock destroyed by the Dakota during the conflict. Literary scholar Janet Dean explains that, "especially in the race discourse of the [mid nineteenth century], sexual violence performs a metonymic shift from a specific incidence to the figurative peril of racial and national integrity."[66] In a metaphoric fashion, the congressmen depicted and fused the rape of white women and girls with the destruction of virginal, pure land and farms, the hallmarks of American "civilization." Citing that whites and the Dakota "cannot live together" Wilkinson, Aldrich, and Windom warned that the only way to protect the land and avoid "mob rule" in Minnesota was to banish the Dakota. Removal of the Dakota was the only way to make the state safe for white inhabitants.[67]

Perhaps concerned that the President would dismiss their letter as unrepresentative of the general public's opinions, the Congressmen's letter included an attached "Memorial." Unsigned, but purportedly written by "the citizens of St. Paul," the attachment expressed distress that Lincoln might consider pardoning some of the Dakota convicted by the military commission.[68] Citing the outbreak of

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(handwritten or typed). See Heard, *History of the Sioux War*, 279. Also, Satterlee, *The Court Proceedings*, 9-11.

[65]Wilkinson, Alrich, and Windom to Lincoln 11 December 1862, 3.

[66] Dean, "Nameless Outrages," 96.

[67]Wilkinson, Alrich, and Windom to Lincoln 11 December 1862, 4.

[68]M.S. Wilkinson, Cyrus Alrich, and WM Windom to Abraham Lincoln 11 December 1862, 5.

violence by the Dakota as "wanton, unprovoked, fiendish cruelty," the authors of the letter firmly protested against any possible clemency for the perpetrators of the violence. Completely ignoring the many problems facing the Dakota—the late annuity payments, the duplicity and corruption of the local traders, the violation of treaties—all of which contributed to the outbreak of violence in August 1862, the "citizens of St. Paul" claimed that the Dakota simply turned on their white "friends" without any provocation. The letter-writers insisted that the outbreak was a deliberate attempt by the Sioux to exterminate all the white residents of Minnesota. Intent on the annihilation of white settlers, the Dakotas' "bloody scheme…spared neither age nor sex, only reserving for the gratification of their brutal lusts the few white women whom the rifle, the tomahawk, and the scalping knife spared."[69] Spared from death only to suffer "the fate worse than death," white women became a potent symbol of the devastation wrought by the war.

Claiming that the Dakota had embarked on a systematic plan of murder, rape, and torture to force whites from their land, the authors of the Memorial argued that all Dakota people living in the state must be punished for the outbreak. The unnamed "citizens of St. Paul" used the Bible as support that their claims for "vengeance" as divinely sanctioned and morally justified. However, vengeance was not their only motive. "Demand[ing] security for the future," the letter writers urged Lincoln to hang all 303 of the condemned prisoners.[70] A mass hanging, they argued, would serve as an example to any Dakota who still harbored notions of another attack on white Minnesotans. But, like Thaddeus William, Wilkinson, Aldrich, and Windom

[69]Ibid.
[70]Ibid.

the "citizens of St. Paul" also called for the total expulsion of the Dakota from Minnesota.

Basing their calls for the complete removal of the Sioux from Minnesota on the natural savagery and unpredictability of all Indians, the St. Paul citizens (like Thaddeus Williams) compared the character of the Dakota to that of wolves. Writing "the Indian's nature can no more be trusted than the wolf's," the authors compared the Dakota to wild animals, insisting that the Indians were unpredictable, sub-human, and naturally wild.[71] Perhaps anticipating criticisms from eastern proponents of "civilization," the authors continued, "tame him, cultivate him, strive to Christianize him as you will, and the sight of blood will in an instant call out the savage, wolfish, devilish instincts of the race."[72] Any and all attempts at "civilizing" the Indians, they argued would be futile. Like wild animals, the Dakotas' "natural" predatory instincts would be aroused by any future outbreak of violence. Even the so-called "civilized" farmer Dakotas were merely wolves in sheep's clothing. The true nature of Indians, they argued could never be changed, despite the efforts of well intentioned but misguided white reformers.

Located in St. Paul and removed from the immediate effects of the violence on the frontier, the letter writers nevertheless expressed deep concern for the future of the state if the Dakota were allowed to continue living side-by-side whites. Failure to exorcise the Dakota from the state, they argued, would have disastrous effects on Minnesota's population and economic future. For "what immigrant will bring his family to a land where the savages are in such close proximity that he is liable any

[71]Ibid.
[72]Ibid.

day to be shot an ambushed foe in his own door-yard or on his return home from his day's labor to find his family outraged an murdered [?]"[73] Indian removal was, therefore, an essential measure needed to ensure a continuous flow of white immigrants in to the state. The majority of those immigrants they assumed would take up farming since the state's "natural advantages of soil, climate and position" rendered it "the best farming state in the Union.[74] Should these immigrants decide not to farm, they could take jobs in the Minnesota's developing manufacturing sector. However, developing Minnesota's agriculture and manufacturing required a large pool of new immigrant labor that would refuse to live in communities where the potential for violent Indian outbreak loomed. Only the federal government's removal of the Indians could guarantee the safety of Minnesota's white residents and future economic prosperity.

By now well apprised of the volatile situation in Minnesota, Lincoln stressed that his goal was to ensure that justice was administered fairly and impartially. Writing to the Senate that he was "anxious to not act with so much clemency as to encourage another outbreak on the one hand, nor with so much severity as to be real cruelty, on the other" Lincoln first focused on the cases of those Dakota convicted of rape.[75] Believing these individuals to be the most deserving of death, Lincoln reaffirmed the centrality of that the symbol of the violated white female played to public perceptions of and reporting on the war. In his letter to the Senate, Lincoln expressed his surprise that only two of the 303 Dakota sentenced to death "had

[73]Ibid.
[74]Ibid.
[75]Lincoln to the United States Senate, December 11, 1862 Ex. Doc.No.7, 1.

proved guilty of violating females."[76]The near-universal rape of white female captives however, remained a constant theme in post-war reporting and later, in the early histories of the war.[77]

Delivered to Congress on December 6, 1862, Lincoln's report approved death sentences for only 39 of the 303 condemned. Among those 39 were Te-he-hdo-ne-cha and Ta-zoo, the two Dakota charged with rape. Realizing the public outcry his decision would elicit from both sides—those in Minnesota and Eastern "Indian sympathizers"—Lincoln ordered that the execution should take place quickly, on December 19. However, as preparations for the mass execution began in Mankato, it quickly became obvious to those in charge that they would need more time. On December 15, now-General Henry H. Sibley, sent the President a telegram asking for Lincoln's permission to postpone the execution. Citing the need for more time to prepare for the execution and the need for more troops "to protect the other Indians & preserve the peace," Sibley requested that the executions be postponed one week.[78] In his telegram, Sibley also alluded to a plot among thousands of angry Minnesotans who planned to storm the jail and execute all the Indians. Fearing a violent confrontation between white citizens and U.S. troops, Sibley assured the President that the plans for the execution would be "managed with much discretion & as much

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[76] Ibid.
[77] The two Dakota convicted of rape were Te-he-hdo-ne-cha and Ta-zoo. Marion Satterlee, *The Court Proceedings*.
[78]Henry H. Sibley to Abraham Lincoln, December 16, 1862 (Telegram concerning execution of Sioux in Minnesota) Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress.

secrecy as possible."[79] Lincoln approved Sibley's request for postponement and the execution was rescheduled for December 26.

While one of the condemned received a late pardon, at 10 am on the day after Christmas 1862, 38 Dakota prisoners, their shackles gone but their arms bound, climbed up on to the specially-designed scaffold. According to Isaac Heard, who witnessed the execution, "the scaffold fell at a quarter past ten o'clock."[80] The man chosen to cut the rope was William Duley, who had been wounded during the Lake Shetek attack but escaped. The Dakota murdered three of Duley's children at Lake Shetek and took Duley's wife and surviving children captive. However, Duley's wife and children were not among the prisoners at Camp Release, causing everyone to assume that the Indians had murdered them. "For his losses…the authorities gave William Duley the dubious honor of cutting the trip rope," simultaneously hanging all 38 Dakota.[81] Despite the heightened tensions among white Minnesotans, Sibley's fears of the hangings provoking a riot proved unfounded. Although the spectators outnumbered the 1,400 U.S. troops, many brought in to ensure the peace; witnesses described the scene as calm and orderly. Heard described the hanging as a mixture of sadness and subdued celebration. He wrote that "[a]s the platform fell, there was one, not loud, but prolonged cheer from the soldiery and citizens who were spectators, and then all were quite and earnest witnesses of the scene."[82]

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[79] Sibley to Lincoln, December 16, 1862.
[80]Heard *History of the SiouxWar,* 293.
[81]KathyrynZabelleDerounian-Stodola*The War in Words: Reading the Dakota Conflict Through the Captivity Literature* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 143.
[82]Heard *History of the Sioux War,* 293.

Although it still retains the title of the largest mass execution in American history, the hanging at Mankato was not the culmination in Minnesotans' war against the Dakota. By the time the mass hanging took place, the wheels were already in motion for the expulsion of all Indians from the state. On December 16, 1862 Senator Wilkinson and Representative Morton, obviously unhappy with Lincoln's decision to pardon so many of the condemned Dakota, had introduced bills in both houses of Congress calling for the expulsion of both the Dakota and Winnebago from the state of Minnesota. These bills, which became laws on February 21, 1863 and March 3, 1863, set in motion the removal of all Indians from the state to reservations in the Dakota Territory.[83]

The removal of the Dakota was the culmination of a process that had begun during the war. By emphasizing the violent attacks of Dakota warriors on women and children, newspaper reporters had helped to fan public outrage. Casting the Dakota as especially dangerous and prone to the most abhorrent acts of violence, including the rape of white women and girls, newspaper reports challenged long-held, contradictory views of Indians. Disputing nineteenth-century depictions of Indians as "vanishing" "noble savages," these wartime reports attempted to show that the Dakota posed a real and tangible threat to the safety and survival of white Minnesotans. Minnesotans, reading these reports, readily assumed the role as helpless victims of the "savage" Dakota.

In the wake of the Dakota conflict, politicians and citizens alike employed the symbol of the violated white woman to highlight Indian barbarity. Although only two

[83]*Congressional Globe,* 37 Congress, 3 session, 100, 104; United States, Statutes at Large, 12:658-660,819, 784, 785.

Dakota were ever charged with rape, policymakers and private citizens alike continued to insist that nearly every captive women had suffered "the fate worse than death." The symbol of the white woman raped by her Indian captors became a powerful rallying point for whites in the state and led to the instability of the region in the weeks following the War. Congressmen Wilkinson, Aldrich, and Windom put forth gruesome assertions of white women raped by Dakota warriors during the outbreak as a way to persuade President Lincoln to uphold the death sentences of the over 300 Dakota convicted during the military trials.

Largely silent, their testimony overshadowed by the louder and much more public claims made by men, female captives nevertheless became a powerful symbol in the public narrative of the war. Stripped of their own voices, these women served as symbols of Indian brutality and barbarity and their rape became synonymous with the Dakotas' violation of white families, property, and Minnesota's land. The hanging at Mankato and the eventual expulsion of the Dakota from Minnesota did not cause the events of the summer of 1862 to fade from the public's memory. Additionally, removal did little to appease the state's white residents. The following chapter will address the ways in which the female captive, her story oftentimes filtered through an editor, took on a new significance in the years immediately following the Dakota War.

A Story Perpetuated: Early Histories of the Dakota War

Within a year of the mass hanging at Mankato, at least two popular histories of the Dakota War appeared in print. In 1863, Harriet Bishop McConkey published *Dakota War Whoop; or, Indian Massacres and the War in Minnesota* and Isaac V.D. Heard published his *History of the Sioux Warand Massacres of 1862 and 1863*.[84]These three early histories sought to provide readers with a comprehensive and definitive history of the Minnesota Indian War, its causes, and its aftermath. Despite the at-times lengthy discussions of battle minutia, these early war histories included chapters devoted to the narratives of individuals' wartime experiences. The majority of these recorded experiences were the stories of women held as captives by the Dakota during the War. Included to humanize the history of the war, to provide readers with individual accounts of human suffering, and to excite the reading public who clamored for lurid details of "what really happened" inside the Dakota camp, the narratives contained in these early histories not only helped to sell books but also reaffirmed the recently-rendered decision of the U.S. Congress to remove the Dakota from the state of Minnesota.

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[84]While McConkey published her first edition locally and her second edition privately, national presses picked up and published Heard's book. Harper and Brothers Publishers in New York published both editions of Heard's*History of the Sioux War*. Both Heard and McConkey's books had been revised and reprinted by 1864 when a third book, Charles S. Bryant and Able B. Murch's, *A History of the Great Massacre By the Sioux Indians, in Minnesota: Including the Personal Narratives of Many who Escaped* joined the growing number of Dakota War histories.The Cincinnati-based firm of Rickey and Carroll picked up Bryant and Murch's*A History of the Great Massacre by the Sioux Indians*, printing eight thousand copies of the first edition. Kathryn ZabelleDerouian-Stodola, *The War in Words: Reading the Dakota Conflict Through the Captivity Literature* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 77-8. See also, Janet Dean, "Nameless Outrages: Narrative Authority, Rape Rhetoric, and the Dakota Conflict of 1862," *American Literature,* Vol. 77, no. 1 (March 2005), 116-7, endnote 4.

A long tradition of captivity stories and the growing popularity of scientific racism had conditioned Americans to believe that white women and girls, naturally desirable but unattainable to non-white men, became the vulnerable victims of Indians' predatory lust once Indians killed their male protectors. Capitalizing on the nineteenth century American public's fascination with "sensation" literature and playing on what historian Brian Dippie calls "the white obsession with interracial rape," the public narrative of the Dakota War, centered as it was, on the violated female captive, sought to titillate and horrify the American public.[85] In the weeks and years following the war, the symbol of the white woman, raped by her Indian captors, became a central theme of the war's earliest histories.

An examination of these early histories not only reveals the tensions between sensation and sentiment, but also provides vital insights in to the simultaneous construction and contested nature of race, gender, and empire in the mid-nineteenth century. In *Dakota War Whoop*, Harriet Bishop McConkey unabashedly advocated for the expulsion of the Dakota from Minnesota by constructing a portrait of the Dakota grounded in western nineteenth-century racial ideology; ideology that demonized and dehumanized native peoples. Bishop McConkey's work demonstrates the pivotal role that white women played in the processes of expansion and empire building in the nineteenth century West by authoring pro-empire propaganda. Furthermore, her writing also reveals the centrality of white women in constructing

[85] Shelley Streeby, *American Sensations Class, Empire, and the Production of Popular Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press 2002), 12, 27, 32. Brian W. Dippie, *The Vanishing American*: White Attitudes and U.S. Indian Policy (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1991), 258.

and reinforcing racial and gender identities, both for themselves and the "dark others" upon whose lands they encroached.

Isaac Heard's*Histoy of the Sioux War* shared many of the sentiments expressed by Bishop McConkey in *Dakota War Whoop*. Within these histories the struggle over nineteenth-century gender roles, performance, and ideologies is revealed. Containing the supposedly verbatim testimony of white female captives what literary scholar Janet Dean has called, a "contest for narrative authority," is clearly evident in these works. Examining these histories reveals the tensions between expected gendered norms and racial ideologies and actual behavior that existed for female survivors of the Dakota War.

Harriet Bishop McConkey: Advocate for Empire

By the time she began to write*Dakota War Whoop,* Harriet Bishop McConkey had lived in Minnesota for more than a decade. Born in the village of Panton, Vermont in 1817, Bishop grew up a devout Baptist and eventually became a schoolteacher in Essex County, New York. The series of religious revivals collectively known as the Second Great Awakening, and the subsequent reform movements that these revivals spawned, profoundly influenced Bishop's life and personal beliefs.[86] Internalizing many of the characteristics of the Second Great Awakening—optimism, religious fervor, and a desire for social reform—Bishop

[86]On the Great Awakening and women's roles see: Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1998); Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989); Paul E. Johnson, *A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1978); Paul E. Johnson and Sean Wilentz, *The Kingdom of Matthias: A Story of Sex and Salvation in 19th-Century America*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

enrolled in a program sponsored by the National Board of Popular Education in the Spring of 1847. Led by noted reformer Catharine Beecher, this month-long course aimed at preparing and training teachers to establish schools in frontier communities.[87]

While in the midst of Beecher's training course, a letter written by missionary doctor Thomas Williamson arrived at the National Board of Popular Education. "Grieved to see so many children growing up entirely ignorant of God, and unable to read his Word, with no one to teach them" Williamson's letter begged the Board to send one of their teachers to "the utmost verge of civilization," in this case St. Paul, Minnesota to establish a school for the local children.[88] Warning that the woman who accepted this assignment would have "to forego not only many of the religious privileges and elegances of New England towns, but some of the neatness also," Williamson hoped that the teacher sent to St. Paul by the Board would rely on her faith in the Lord to overcome the obstacles that lay ahead of her.[89]

In the 1840s, St. Paul Minnesota was a popular trading post and town inhabited by only a few hundred individuals. Like many frontier towns, the population was overwhelmingly male, consisting mostly of "soldiers, Indians, fur

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[87] Winifred D. Wandersee Bolin, "Harriet E. Bishop: Moralist and Reformer," in Barbara Stuhler and Gretchen Kreutereds. *Women of Minnesota: Selected Biographical Essays* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1977), 7-19.; Norma Sommerdorf, "No Grass Beneath Her Feet: Harriet Bishop and Her Life in Minnesota," *Ramsey County History* vol. 32, issue 2, 1997, 16-21.
[88] Harriet E. Bishop, *Floral Home, or, First years of Minnesota: early sketches, later settlements, and further developments* (New York: Sheldon, Blakeman& Co., 1857), 53, 52.;Sommerdorf, "No Grass Beneath Her Feet," 16.
[89]Bishop, *Floral Home,* 53-4; Sommerdorf, "No Grass Beneath Her Feet," 16.

traders, land speculators, and merchants."[90] Despite this largely male environment, Williamson wrote that the few white families living in St. Paul desired a teacher for their children. Williamson, a missionary and doctor for the area, expressed his hope that a female teacher would act as a "civilizing" force for the local inhabitants, regardless of their race or color. Acknowledging the diversity of St. Paul's population, he wrote that the woman who accepted this position "should be entirely free from prejudice on account of color, for among her scholars he might find not only English, French, and Swiss, but Sioux and Chippewa, with some claiming kindred with the African stock."[91]

When Catherine Beecher finished reading Williamson's letter aloud to the group, she asked her frontier teachers-in-training if any of them would be willing to volunteer for the assignment. The then-thirty-year-old Bishop was the first and only woman to raise her hand. Remembering the moment in 1857, Bishop recalled her motivations for volunteering for such a daunting task. Acknowledging that she was well aware of the deprivations and hardships she would face, Bishop wrote that, "I came because I was more needed here [in St. Paul] than at any other spot on earth, and because there was no other one of my class who felt it a duty to come."[92]

Desirous to improve the lives of those out west through education and undeterred by her friends' warnings about the potential hardships that awaited a single woman in a frontier town, Bishop arrived in Minnesota in July 1847. She first landed at Kapsoia or "Little Crow's Village" on July 10, 1847. It took another six

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[90] Bolin, "Harriet E. Bishop," 7.
[91] Bishop, *Floral Home*, 54; Sommerdorf, "No Grass Beneath Her Feet," 16.
[92] Bishop, *Floral Home*, 54.

days for Bishop to reach St. Paul.[93] Bishop immediately set to work establishing her school and, on Sunday July 25 1847, conducted the town's first ever Sunday school.[94]

Harriet Bishop's decision to move to Minnesota stemmed, in part, from her own religious upbringing and the growing roles for women in the 1840s. But her teacher-training course, run by Catherine Beecher, undoubtedly influenced Bishop as well. The oldest of Presbyterian Rev. Lyman Beecher's 13 children, Catherine Beecher worked tirelessly for educational reform and devoted herself to empowering women to make the most out of their roles as wives and mothers. Frequently touting the importance of women's domestic role, Beecher viewed "the home as an integral part of the life of the nation, reflecting and promoting American values" both within the home but also in the community at large.[95] Women's status as guardians of the home, morality, and American values sometimes necessitated that they leave the domestic sphere in order impose these standards and bring order to the world outside the home. To Beecher, female teachers were a natural "extension of women's domestic role. Teachers in the classroom, like wives and mothers in the home, would

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[93]Bishop, *Floral Home*, 60; Sommerdorf, "No Grass Beneath Her Feet," 17.
[94] Bishop, *Floral Home*, 82, 86.
[95] Bolin, "Harriet E. Bishop," 9. For more on Catherine Beecher and her philosophy see: Catherine Esther Beecher, *A treatise on Domestic Economy: For the Use of Young Ladies at Home and at School*(New York: Harper), 1846; Beecher, *The Duty of American Women to their Country* (New York: Harper & Brothers), 1845; Jeanne Boydston, *The Limits of Sisterhood: The Beecher Sisters on Women's Rights and Woman's Sphere* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), especially chapters 2, 5, and 8; Mae Elizabeth Harveson, "Catharine Esther Beecher, pioneer educator" (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1932); Kathyrn Kish Sklar, *Catharine Beecher: A Study in American Domesticity*(New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973); Barbara Anne White, *The Beecher Sisters* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003).

be the guardians of morality, the purveyors of moral uplift."[96] Internalizing Beecher's belief in women's civilizing power and moral superiority, Bishop became, over the next few years, a minor celebrity in St. Paul.

Consciously involved in the project of "domesticating" St. Paul and its inhabitants, Bishop was perhaps less conscious of the ways in which her activities were essential to the building and maintenance of the growing American empire. Numerous historians and literary scholars have written about the centrality of women to the imperial projects of both Britain and the United States.[97]As noted scholar of American literature Amy Kaplan explains in her book *The Anarchy of Empire and the Making of U.S. Culture*, the mid-nineteenth century discourses of domesticity and Manifest Destiny were inherently intertwined. The home, the center of power for bourgeouiswomen in the nineteenth century, served as a "base" from which women could transform conquered lands into the "domestic sphere of family and nation."[98] Domesticity, writes Kaplan, not only referred to the home but also to process "related to the imperial project of civilizing, and the conditions of domesticity often become

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[96] Ibid.

[97] For examples of works that discuss the important role women played both in the production and maintenance of the British and American empires in the nineteenth century see, Sarah Carter, *Capturing Women: The Manipulation of Cultural Imagery in Canada's Prairie West* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997); Amy Kaplan, *The Anarchy of Empire and the Making of U.S. Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002); Adele Perry, *On the Edge of Empire: Gender, Race, and the Making of British Columbia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001); Jenny Sharp, *Allegories of Empire: The Figure of Woman in the Colonial Text* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993); Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, *This Violent Empire: The Birth of an American National Identity* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010); Margaret Strobel, *European Women and the Second British Empire* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991); Vron Ware, *Beyond the Pale: White Women, Racism, and History* (London: Verso, 1992).

[98]Kaplan, *The Anarchy of Empire and the Making of U.S. Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 24-5.

markers that distinguish civilization from savagery."[99] With this concept of domesticity in mind, Harriet Bishop's move to Minnesota and her work educating the children in and around St. Paul were part of a larger colonial undertaking. Bishop's mission, when viewed as part of the American imperial project of the mid-nineteenth century was one part of a larger national plan to "civilize" the wild landscapes and people of American West.

Fraught with controversy, the process of "domesticating" savage landscapes, spaces and people was oftentimes an uneasy and incomplete task. For many middle class women, the move from Eastern cities and towns to Western lands resulted in a dramatic restructuring of life. Learning to make due with limited resources, adjusting to drastically different work roles, communities, and living situations presented challenges to even the most eager and idealistic female migrant. The inability to completely recreate the standards and practices of their previous life often frustrated and tested the resolve of many women who left the familiarity and the relative comfort of their lives back East when they moved west.[100]

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[99]Kaplan, *The Anarchy of Empire*, 25.

[100] The field of western women's history has exploded in recent years. THe first scholars to challenge the dominant view of women as simply "gentle tamers" of western lands and people were Joan M. Jensen and Darlis A. Miller in the 1980 article, "The Gentle Tamers Revisited: New Approaches to the History of Women in the American West." In the 35 years since Jensen and Miller's article, scholars of western women's history have sought to conceptualize the "women's west" as a multicultural, multiethnic space. For examples see: Susan H. Armitage, "Revisiting 'The Gentle Tamers Revisited': The Problems and Possibilities of Western Women's History," *Pacific Historical Review* 61, no. 4 (November 1992): 459-62; Elizabeth Jameson and Susan H. Armitage, eds., *Writing the Range: Race, Class, and Culture in the Women's West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997); Elizabeth Jameson and Sheila McManus, eds., *One Step over the Line: Toward a History of Women in the North American Wests* (Edmonton: Athabasca University Press,

Harriet Bishop successfully weathered many of the challenges she faced during her early years in St. Paul. In 1857, Bishop published her first book titled *Floral Home, or, First years of Minnesota: early sketches, later settlements, and further developments*. In it, Bishop wrote with pride about her ability to transform her school building, "that mud-walled log hovel, a primitive blacksmith's shop," into a "bright and joyous" learning space for her pupils.[101] Making do with limited resources, Bishop wrote with delight about the transformative effect a thorough cleaning and the addition of some evergreen branches and pitchers of wildflowers had on both the schoolroom and her students. By then, Bishop clearly saw her assignment in St. Paul as essential to improving, domesticating, and civilizing the area and its inhabitants. Writing, "why should I pine for halls of science and literature when such glorious privileges were mine—when to my weak hand was accorded the work of rearing the fabric of educational interests in the unorganized territory,"Bishop clearly internalized and subsequently articulated her belief that her mission was to improve, domesticate, and civilize St. Paul and its inhabitants.[102]

Despite her expressed satisfaction in transforming her run-down schoolhouse, in educating her students, and in conducting the first-ever Sunday school in St. Paul, Harriet Bishop expressed a great deal of anxiety about how the community viewed her actions. She constantly worried that her activities would be seen as overstepping the bounds of proper female behavior. Bishop articulated this fear when she wrote about her attempts to establish a Sunday school. Writing in the third person Bishop

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2008); Lillian Schlissel, Vicki L. Ruiz, and Janice Monk, eds., *Western Women: Their Land, Their Lives* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988),
[101] Bishop, *Floral Home*, 82, 83.
[102] Bishop, *Floral Home,* 84.

reflected, "for a single-handed and lone female to occupy a distinct and decided position in such a community, was no trifling work. Her actions would be misunderstood, her words misinterpreted, and the devices of Satan would beset her on every hand."[103] Although worried that the citizens of St. Paul might react unfavorably to a woman assuming such an active and public role, Harriet Bishop persevered with her plans to domesticate St. Paul and its inhabitants. Active in both education and social outreach, Bishop successfully organized women to agitate for a new school building, became an advocate of the temperance movement in St. Paul, and helped to organize the First Baptist Church.[104]

By the time she published *Floral Home* in 1857, Harriet Bishop had spent a decade in Minnesota. Bishop's reminiscences suggest that, in spite of her earlier worries, she felt a great deal of personal satisfaction about what she had been able to accomplish. She wrote with pride about her ability to improve the lives of so many of St. Paul's citizens, adjust to the hardships of life on the frontier, and personally thrive without many material comforts. However, the years Bishop spent living nearby and interacting with the local Indians had tempered much of the enthusiasm that had compelled her volunteer to answer Dr. Williamson's letter a decade earlier. No longer the idealistic, "entirely free from prejudice on account of color" teacher-in-training, Bishop's frequent interactions with the local Indians had radically transformed her views.[105] Instead of fostering sympathy and understanding, living in

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[103] Bishop, *Floral Home,* 85.
[104] Bishop, *Floral Home*; Bolin, "Harriet E. Bishop," 12-4.;Sommerdorf, "No Grass Beneath Her Feet," 18-20.
[105]Bishop, *Floral Home*, 54; Sommerdorf, "No Grass Beneath Her Feet," 16.

close proximity with the local Indians had caused Bishop to become convinced of the inherent superiority of whites to Indians.

In *Floral Home*,Bishop dismissed almost any hope of "civilizing" the local Indian population. Having lived among Indians for some time, Bishop judged herself to be an accurate observer of their "true" nature. She explained that, "I now found that all my book knowledge of Indian character was cursory, and, for the most part, incorrect."[106] Dismissing the popular nineteenth century Eastern view of Indians as possessing "noble traits" and "manly bearing[s]," Bishop warned her readers that the true nature of Indian character was far less impressive. Appalled by the Indians' hygiene, she referred to native people as "disgustingly filthy" and their dress as "extremely unchaste."[107]

While the Indians' failure to abide by nineteenth century white standards of dress and personal hygiene bothered Bishop, her assessment of Indian character inclined her to believe that they were a people ruled by "instinct, [rather] than reason," who "repudiadte[d] improvement and despise[d] manual effort."[108] Considering Indians to live in a degraded state of existence, Bishop believed them to be naturally lazy, preferring to subsist on government rations and whatever they could beg from local whites as opposed to farming their own land. Worse, Indians seemed to prefer their traditional means of dress, subsistence, religion, and culture despite their frequent exposure to the obviously superior culture of whites.

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[106] Bishop, *Floral Home*, 71.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Bishop, *Floral Home*, 71, 254, 259.

A booster for the then-territory of Minnesota, Bishop wrote favorably of the land's beauty and developing industry already present in the soon-to-be-state. The recent construction of schools, bridges, factories, and churches had, Bishop wrote, elevated St. Paul to the level of many Eastern cities. The city's success, she argued, was a direct result of the ingenuity and education of its white citizens. In stark contrast to the enterprising white population in Minnesota, wrote Bishop, were the Indians who as a whole, retained their traditional dress, appearance, religious beliefs and an aversion to hard work.[109] Notwithstanding her condemnation of Indian character, Bishop claimed to hold out hope for the eventual "civilization" of the Winnebago, Sioux, and Chippewa Indians. Writing that "[when] these tribes shall abandon the chase, lay aside the blanket, and devote themselves to agriculture...[then] these tribes shall rank among the civilized and redeemed nations of the earth" Bishop anticipated the eventual "civilization" of the Indians in Minnesota but acknowledged that "many generations may pass" before this transformation took place.[110]

The outbreak of violence in August 1862 and the resulting war between the Dakota and the U.S. Military effectively erased any hope Harriet Bishop McConkey held towards the eventual "civilization" of her Indian neighbors.[111] The wartime

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[109] Bishop, *Floral Home*, 259.
[110] Bishop, *Floral Home*, 280.
[111] In 1858 Harriet Bishop, by then 41 years old, married John McConkey, a harness maker. "The marriage was unhappy and after nine years it was legally dissolved in March 1867, on the grounds that McConkey was a habitual drunkard who treated his wife inhumanely." Bishop petitioned the Minnesota legislature to have her maiden name restored and, following a special legislative act, was henceforth known by the name Mrs. Harriet E. Bishop. Bolin, "Harriet E. Bishop," 17. See also Sommerdorf, "No Grass Beneath Her Feet," 20. I have chosen to refer to Harriet E. Bishop as Harriet McConkey when referring to her as the author of *Dakota War Whoop* since

news reports alleging that the Dakota murdered, tortured, and mutilated white settlers profoundly affected McConkey's views towards Indians. McConkey's history of the Dakota War, *Dakota War Whoop: Or, Indian Massacres and War in Minnesota, of 1862-3*, reflected her altered views about the "true" nature of Indians. The war caused McConkey's old prejudices to harden in to fiercely racist rhetoric about the character and conduct of Indians. Echoing the sentiments of other white Minnesotans, McConkey believed that not only were Indians incapable of being "civilized," they posed a real threat to the existence of white civilization in the state. Having already internalized the interrelated rhetoric of domesticity and Manifest Destiny, McConkey used her history of the Dakota War to unabashedly profess her belief in the inferiority of Indians and advocate for their removal from Minnesota.[112]

Despite dedicating *Dakota War Whoop* to Brigadier General Henry Hastings Sibley, Sibley refused both ofMcConkey's requests to endorse her revised edition. Return Holcombe, former Union Solider and later, eminent Minnesota historian whose many duties included archiving the Sibley Papers for the Minnesota Historical Society, left a hand-written notation on one of McConkey's letters to Sibley providing the General's reasons for ignoring her requests. According to Holcombe's

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that was her legal married name in 1863 and 1864 when both editions of *Dakota War Whoop* appeared in print.

[112] Both scholars of American literature and historians have written about the shared rhetoric of nineteenth century domesticity and empire. Amy Kaplan writes that Manifest Destiny and domesticity "share a vocabulary that turns imperial conquest into spiritual regeneration in order to efface internal conflict or external resistance in visions of geopolitical harmony." Kaplan, *The Anarchy of Empire*, 31. Historian Amy S. Greenberg also notes this shared rhetoric, writing, "Domesticity was employed to justify national expansion, while Manifest Destiny also supported domesticity." Amy S. Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 201.

note, “”There are so many errors in Mrs. McConkey’s book that Gen. Sibley refused to introduce it by writing a preface or recommending it in any manner.’”[113] Unable to procure an endorsement or recommendation of her book from the former Minnesota Governor-turned- war hero, Bishop’s revised edition still sung Sibley’s praises. Writing that she prayed “that the laurel wreath which encircles his brow may not fade till exchanged by the Divine Hand for a crown of immoral glory,”Sibely’s failure to endorse McConkey’s revised edition of *Dakota War Whoop* did not dampen her admiration of the man.[114] In one of *Dakota War Whoop’s* final chapters, she wrote that, “if we look to historic facts, we find no more successful campaigns against the Indian than have been those of Gen. Sibley” and that “the name of Henry H. Sibley will live on history’s unsullied page.”[115] Sibley’s political affiliation as a Democrat didn’t even seem to bother McConkey, a self-proclaimed “wool-dyed Republican.”[116]

Harriet Bishop McConkey not only considered herself a member (albeit an unenfranchised one) of the national body politic, she also revealed herself to be an ardent supporter of “woman’s rights.” In 1863, she believed that female suffrage would soon be a reality and eagerly anticipated the day when she could “vote [the Republican ticket], *strong*.”[117] In many ways, Harriet Bishop McConkey bucked traditional stereotypes for white women in the mid-nineteenth century. She was a

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[113] Return I. Holcombe, at bottom of letter from McConkey to Sibley, 19 and 20 October, 1864, Sibley Papers, Minnesota Historical Society. Quoted in Derouian-Stodola, *The War in Words: Reading the Dakota Conflict Through the Captivity Literature* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press), 81.
[114] Harriet Bishop, *Dakota War Whoop: Or, Indian Massacres and War in Minnesota, Of 1862-3* (St. Paul: Merrill, 1863) reprinted by (Charleston, S.C.: Nabu Press, 2010).
[115]Bishop, *Dakota War Whoop*, 377.
[116]Bishop, *Dakota War Whoop*, 378.
[117]Ibid.

published author, a noted social reformer, an outspoken supporter of the Republican party, and an ardent advocate of women's rights. However, this enlightened, liberal outlook failed to transfer to her feelings and writings about the Dakota and the1862 War.

Though riddled with factual errors, *Dakota War Whoop* became a valuable piece of pro-empire and anti-Indian propaganda. McConkey's book demonstrates the important role of women to the production and maintenance of racial stereotypes in the mid-nineteenth century and serves as an example of the ways in which white women actively sought to reinforce and justify America's continued westward expansion. Like other accounts of the war, Harriet Bishop McConkey's workfocused the tolls that the War took on women and children. Although she often portrayed white women as victims—of mutilation, torture, rape, and Indian savagery—she sometimes acknowledged women's perseverance and ability to survive despite their seemingly hopeless position as captives.

Dakota War Whoop opened with McConkey's acknowledgment of the ongoing Civil War. Citing women's roles as "revolutionary mothers," McConkey praised women's roles in encouraging their husbands, fathers, uncles, and sons to join in the fight to preserve the Union.[118] However, the patriotism demonstrated by these "Revolutionary mothers" inadvertently left the Minnesota frontier depleted of the troops needed to put down the Indian outbreak that began in August 1862. Overlooking this connection, McConkey lauded the quick response of the military in subduing the violent outbreak. Without the efforts of General Sibley and his troops,

[118]Bishop, *Dakota War Whoop*, 17.

"the savage hordes might have carried out their design; swept through the land, killed or driven off the inhabitants, and re-possessed the soil...thereafter to revel amid their blood-gained spoils."[119]

Despite her graphic depictions of wartime violence, McConkey spent the entire war in St. Paul, far away from the fighting.McConkey acquiredmost of her information from newspaper clippings, military reports, and magazine articles. With the exception of the story of ex-captive George Spencer, the captivity narratives contained in *Dakota War Whoop* appeared written in the third person, cobbled together from published sources and "authenticated" by Spencer.

Despite her removal from any of the actual fighting and her dubious source material, McConkey felt confident that her bookoffered an accurate portrayal of the War. Any sympathy Harriet Bishop McConkey may have had towards the Indians in Minnesota completely disappeared with the outbreak of the Dakota War. The events of the summer and fall of 1862 only seemed to reaffirm McConkey's earlier sentiments regarding the "true" nature of the Indians. In *Dakota War Whoop*, McConkey thoroughly condemned the Dakota people, reaffirming the existing prejudices of most white Minnesotans. Marketed for a national audience (though it never achieved the distribution and success McConkey had hoped due in part to its many factual errors and limited distribution), *Dakota War Whoop* sought to erase existing eastern sympathies for the Dakota. Refuting the popular eastern depiction of Indians as "noble savages," McConkey instead cast the Dakota as the perpetrators of unspeakable acts of violence against innocent white women and children.

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[119]Bishop, *Dakota War Whoop*, 19.

Portraying the Dakota as indolent wards of the government, McConkey wrote that prior to the outbreak, the Dakota "had no idea of seeking any laudable or remunerative employment."[120] Instead of farming or engaging in some form of industry, the Indians preferred to beg or steal food from local whites or simply rely on their annuities from the government. She reiterated her point two chapters later writing, "sloth is [the Dakotas'] own worst and most powerful enemy."[121] Dakota men, she charged, did little except hunt game and wage war. Most of the time, she claimed, these men merely hung around camp "lounging and smoking, while the women perform all the labor."[122]

McConkey was hardly the first white person to make such claims. The perception of Indian men as lazy and Indian women as overworked drudges had it roots in the seventeenth century. European newcomers to the American continent frequently wrote about what they perceived to be the laziness of Indian men and the drudgery of Indian women.[123] In his article titled "The Squaw Drudge: Prime Index of Savagism," historian David Smits examined the persistence of "white views of Indian women as overworked and exploited by indolent Indian men."[124] Often failing

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[120]Bishop, *Dakota War Whoop*, 21.
[121]Bishop, *Dakota War Whoop*, 38.
[122]Bishop, *Dakota War Whoop*, 39.
[123] For examples see, Alan Greer, *The Jesuit Relations: Natives and Missionaries in Seventeenth Century North America* (New York: Bedford/ St. Martin's: 2000); Peter C. Mancall ed. *Envisioning America: English Plan for the Colonization of North America, 1580-1640* (New York: Bedford/ St. Martin's: 1995); Nancy Shoemaker ed., *Negotiators of Change: Historical Perspectives on Native American Women* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Nancy Shoemaker, *A Strange Likeness: Becoming Red and White in Eighteenth Century North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); David D. Smits, "'The Squaw Drudge': Prime Index of Savagism," *Ethnohistory*29, 4, 1982: 281-306.
[124] Smits, "'The Squaw Drudge': Prime Index of Savagism," 281.

to understand the gendered division of labor that existed in different Indian societies, European observers had, since the seventeenth century, used the supposed exploitation of native women by native men as "proof" of Indian "savagery." Smits further argued that "the Euro-American concept of savagism…served as the grand rational for imperialism;" the seizure of Indian lands that began in the seventeenth and continued well in to the nineteenth century.[125]

Much like the European explorers of the seventeenth century, Harriet McConkey expressed her distain for the Dakotas' gendered divisions of labor. Dakota men, she claimed, were slothful and the women overworked. The "civilization" programs of the government and of white missionaries had largely failed, she argued, not because of a lack of trying but rather because Dakota men were inherently lazy, either uninterested in or incapable of "civilization." Lamenting "how would the souls of poor white men expand with ambition, was the same kindly governmental care extended to them! There would be far less poverty and wretchedness in our large cities than now," McConkey firmly expressed her conviction in the inherent superiority of white character over that of the Dakota.[126] White men, McConkey reasoned, made the most of the opportunity to establish farms in Minnesota, thereby "improving" their social and economic conditions. However the Dakota, because of their lack of ambition and inherent inferiority, simply languished in poverty.

In 1862, the majority of Dakota did live in poverty. Dakota men on the whole, remained resistant to the government's standing offer of land, a home, and

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[125] Ibid.
[126]Bishop, *Dakota War Whoop*, 39.

farming implements. Unwilling to settle permanently in one place, eschew hunting for farming, native dress for white men's clothes, and their ancestral religious beliefs for Christianity, most Dakota at the time of the Outbreak retained their "traditional" culture. McConkey, like many Minnesotans, believed that the Dakotas' reticence to give up their traditional dress, beliefs, and lifestyle served as proof of their inherent inferiority. Alleging that that Dakota despised any of its members "who thus sells his tribal birthright (his blanket), and goes to work like a white man," McConkey claimed that pressure from tribal leaders and other members instead encouraged Dakota to continued with their "degraded" lifestyle of hunting and making war.[127] Since, in McConkey's opinion, the only thing Indian men *did* do was lounge about, smoke, hunt, and fight, an Indian attack against white settlers was, in hindsight, inevitable.

In conjunction with her scathing assessment of Dakota character,McConkey reiterated a theme common in newspaper accounts, captivity narratives, and other early histories regarding the war. Like most white Minnesotans, she believed that the Dakota Uprising had caught the white residents of Minnesota completely by surprise. "The Indians we all thought, would never dare molest a settler; not that they were too good to do it, but fear of the powers to whom they were amenable would prevent" such an attack.[128] The Dakota attacks, she wrote, came as complete shock to white settlers who had been lulled into false sense of security. McConkey further claimed that the Dakota exploited white Minnesotans' belief in their own safety. When the Dakota commenced their assault, "the [white] people, as [the Dakota] had presumed, rushed to their doors to ascertain the cause of the strange alarm, with no apprehension

[127] Ibid.
[128]Bishop, *Dakota War Whoop*, 201.

of evil."[129] To McConkey, the stealth with which the Indians planned their attack on the unsuspecting white settlers served as further proof of the Dakotas' treacherous nature.

If the readers of *Dakota War Whoop* remained unconvinced that the "true" character of the Dakota was evil, McConkey sought to erase any doubt from their mind. Her subsequent chapters dealt extensively with the victimization of whites, mainly women and children, at the hands of the bloodthirsty and brutal Dakota. Scenes of "women butchered or dragged into captivity, children screaming till their brains are dashed out against a tree," played out in home after home as the Dakota commenced their brutal assault on white homes across western Minnesota.[130]

Like the sensational newspaper accounts published during the War, *Dakota War Whoop* emphasized the claims of widespread torture, rape, and mutilation of numerous nameless white women by Indian men. McConkey filled the pages of her book with "true" stories of the horrors perpetrated against innocent white women by Dakota warriors. Writing that, "women were tortured in every imaginable manner" McConkey relayed graphic scenes of white women, "some with infants in their arms," tortured, mutilated, and murdered by the Indians.[131] She described Dakota men cutting off the breasts and toes of helpless women, tomahawking entire families, and then leaving the wounded to die. In once instance, McConkey claimed that Indian warriors ripped an infant from its mother, fastened the baby to a tree, "and

[129]Bishop, *Dakota War Whoop*, 41.
[130]Bishop, *Dakota War Whoop*, 45.
[131]Bishop, *Dakota War Whoop*, 47.

holding the mother before it, compelled the woman to witness its dying agonies."[132] After forcing the woman to watch her infant die in such a gruesome and horrific manner McConkey claimed that the Indians "then chopped her legs and arms, and left her to bleed to death" on the prairie.[133] Although McConkey never mentioned her sources for this account or identified any of the victims by name, her willingness to print such stories reflected her desire to dehumanize the Dakota and cast white Minnesotans as the innocent victims of Indian savagery.

While McConkey intended for *Dakota War Whoop* to be "a reliable historical work, detailing facts in their time and order" her version of the Dakota War shared many similarities with the popular nineteenth century genre of "sensation" literature.[134] Part of a larger culture of sensation in the nineteenth century that emerged from the rapid industrialization and urbanization in Eastern cities, sensation literature sought to thrill, titillate, and even horrify readers.[135] The most popular examples of nineteenth century sensation literature were the mass-marketed dime novels and story papers, for consumption by the lower classes of American society.

In her book *American Sensations: Class, Empire, and the Production of Popular Culture*, literary scholar Shelley Streeby examines the relationship between mid-nineteenth century empire building and the "histories of race, nativism, labor, politics, and popular and mass culture in the United States."[136]Streeby argues that authors of sensationalist literature gave voice to Americans' enthusiasm for the rapid

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[132]Bishop, *Dakota War Whoop*, 47-8.
[133]Bishop, *Dakota War Whoop*, 48.
[134]Bishop, *Dakota War Whoop*, 5.
[135]Streeby, *American Sensations,* 12, 27, 32.
[136]Streeby, *American Sensations*, xi.

expansion of the United States beginning with the U.S.-Mexican War in 1846. However, public anxiety about the incorporation of non-white people into the ever-expanding American nation tempered many white Americans' zeal for territorial expansion. Americans began to question how (or even should) non-whites be integrated into the rapidly changing American society? Sensation literature in the mid-nineteenth century was one of several outlets that not only articulated national apprehensions about empire-building but also the changing nature of racial hierarchies and gender norms. As Streeby explains, in the mid-nineteenth century, the "narratives of gender and sexuality were crucial vehicles for the reconstruction of racial boundaries."[137]

Dime novels, story papers, and captivity stories, with their lurid depictions of Indian men raping, torturing, mutilating and murdering whites (but especially women and children), sought to promote solidarity among ethnically and economically diverse white populations by demonizing Indians.[138] Published when the nation itself was divided by the Civil War, McConkey's*Dakota War Whoop* incorporated many elements of sensation literature. Filled with scenes of violence and prurience, McConkey's book expressed her enthusiasm for the American imperial project, sought to promote white solidarity by depicting Indians as bloodthirsty barbarians,

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[137]Streeby, *American Sensations*, 103.

[138]Streeby, *American Sensations*, 216. In the mid-nineteenth century, whiteness was not a completely fixed concept. For examples of the ways in which whiteness was a constructed and contested identity in the mid-nineteenth century see Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge, 1996); Eric Lott, *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (New York: Verso, 2007).

and argued for the displacement of the Dakota by white settlers and their superior social, economic, and cultural institutions.

Central to constructing the stereotype of the Dakota as dangerous impediments to white civilization was the assertion that, during the outbreak, Dakota men wantonly raped every white woman who they did not kill outright. Like the wartime news reports and the letters sent to President Lincoln directly after the War, McConkey reiterated the widespread belief that the Dakota saved some white women from death only to abuse them sexually. She claimed that the Dakota only spared "some of the younger women" from death "to serve their base passions."[139] That the "fate worse than death" awaited all white female captives was a common theme in nineteenth century dime novels, captivity literature, and the reports published during and after the Dakota outbreak.

McConkey further buttressed her claim that the Dakota raped nearly all of their captives by including testimony from George Spencer, the only white man held as a captive by the Dakota during the war. While Spencer claimed to have suffered from "mental anxiety" while captive, he testified that "friendly" Indians, especially a Dakota named Chaska, "guarded me faithfully," and kept him safe from bodily harm.[140] The same could not be said for female captives. Quoting Spencer, McConkey wrote, "the female captives were, with very few exceptions, subjected to the most horrible treatment. In some cases, a woman would be taken out into the

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[139]Bishop, *Dakota War Whoop*, 48.
[140]Bishop, *Dakota War Whoop*, 235, 234. Chaska was a popular name among Dakota men. Sarah Wakefield, one of the subjects in chapter four, wrote extensively about a Dakota man named Chaska who, she claimed, saved her life. The Chaska mentioned by George Spencer is not the same man.

woods, and her person violated by six, seven, and as many as ten or twelve of these fiends at one time."[141]McConkey incorporated Spencer's testimony to add authority to the widespread claim that nearly all the captive white women and girls had been subjected to aggressive acts of sexual violence at the hands of their captors.

Allusions to rape appeared again in McConkey's work when she wrote about the Dakotas' release of over 200 white captives. Although she had not been present at the scene, McConkey confidently explained the hand over of captives to the Army at Camp Release to her readers. Having lived for six weeks among the Indians, the captives, she wrote, were a pitiful lot. "To what brutal indignities they had been obliged to submit! How the heart revolted at the loathsome retrospect!—wives, mothers, young ladies, and young girls, almost children, had met the same fate."[142] While McConkey did not explicitly refer to rape, her implications were clear. The "brutal indignities" suffered by this large group of females was a veiled reference to their rape by Indian men.

McConkey's frequent allusion to Dakota men as rapists was central to her argument that the Indians posed a very real danger to the people of Minnesota. Constructing a dichotomy in which nearly every Dakota man was a potential rapist and every white female captive was a victim of Indian men's predatory lust, McConkey was, whether she realized it or not, engaging in the work of empire. According to literary scholars and historians of empire, "rape scares," specifically the violation of white women by non-white men played an important role in justifying the oppression of native inhabitants and, in the case of Minnesota, the seizing of their

[141]Bishop, *Dakota War Whoop*, 235.
[142]Bishop, *Dakota War Whoop*, 240.

lands by whites. These rape scares usually "surfaced at strategic moments," times when native "uprisings" posed a threat the existing white power structures.[143]

Noted literary scholar Jenny Sharpe wrote about this phenomenon in her book *Allegories of Empire: The Figure of Woman in the Colonial Text.* Focusing specifically on the British imperialism in India, Sharpe investigates the links between race, gender, and empire that arose in the midst of the Sepoy Rebellion in 1857. Sharpe examined the reasons why, "during the 1857 revolt the idea of rebellion was so closely imbricated with the violation of English womanhood that the Mutiny was remembered as a barbaric attack on innocent white women."[144] Despite any evidence that Indian men had raped a single Englishwoman, the violation of Englishwomen by Indian men remained central to the way in which Britons remembered the Rebellion. The "rape scares" that took place during the Sepoy Rebellion appeared in literature, news reports, and increased racism in the immediate aftermath of the events of 1857.

Following the Sepoy Rebellion, the "dark rapist" became a standard character in Anglo-Indian fiction and British thinking about India. Supported by "scientific" theories of race, the rape scares of the 1857 helped to solidify the English sense of racial superiority. The rape scares that surfaced both during and after the 1857 Rebellion were a part of British "defensive strategy that emerged in response to attacks on the moral and ethical grounds of colonialism," allowing Englishmen to justify their increasingly hostile treatment of India's native population.[145]

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[143]Jenny Sharpe, *Allegories of Empire: The Figure of Woman in the Colonial Text* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993),2,4.
[144]Sharpe, *Allegories of Empire*, 2.
[145] Sharpe, *Allegories of Empire*, 6.

In her book *Capturing Women* Sarah Carter explains, "rape scares were a common phenomenon in racially divided societies and they emerged when there was a fear of a loss of colonial power, authority, or prestige."[146]In nineteenth century America, "rape scares" likewise surfaced when non-white people openly challenged the existing white power structures. These challenges to white authority included slave uprisings, Indian uprisings like the Dakota Conflict, and the capture of white women by Indian men. In the wake of such events, claims of the widespread rape of white women by non-white men were commonplace. White men often used these supposed rape scares to justify their violent retaliation against non-whites, arguing that draconian measures against non-whites were both necessary and warranted to protect white women from further violation. Furthermore, rape scares helped to foster racism towards non-whites and allowed white authorities the means by which to re-entrench their badly shaken power structures.

Rape, or more specifically, the rape of white women by non-white men helped to perform a variety of functions in American history. In her book *Reading Rape: The Rhetoric of Sexual Violence in American Literature and Culture, 1790-1990*, Sabine Silke explains that when "transposed into discourse, rape become a rhetorical device, an insistent figure for other social, political, and economic concerns and conflicts."[147] In *Dakota War Whoop* Harriet Bishop McConkey acted as an agent of empire by

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[146]Carter, *Capturing Women,* 17. For other sources on the role of rape and rape scares in colonial societies see, Kate Higginson, "Feminine Vulnerability, (neo)Colonial Captivities, and Rape Scares" in Jennifer Bliar, Daniel Coleman, Kate Higginson, and Lorriane York *ReCalling Early Canada: Reading the Political in Literary and Cultural Production* (Alberta: University of Alberta Press, 2005), 35-72; Sharpe, *Allegories of Empire*.

[147] Sabine Silke, *Reading Rape: The Rhetoric of Sexual Violence in American Literature and Culture, 1790-1990* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 2.

perpetuating the widespread fear that all white women captured by the Dakota were inevitably raped.

Although she had made no secret of her contempt for the Indians in *Floral Home* published nearly five years before the Dakota Outbreak, McConkey saved her most caustic remarks about Indians for the pages of *Dakota War Whoop*. Asking "What is an Indian?," McConkey implied that those involved in Indian affairs—government officials in Washington, Eastern pro-Indian groups, and the like—did not realize the "true" nature of Indians and the threat they posed to white civilization. Only those whites (like her) who lived in close contact with Indians could understand their truly degraded nature. Unwilling to even categorize Indians as fully human, McConkey wrote, "the Indian is a connecting link between the wild beast and the human species. In shape he is human, and has the gift of speech…[but] [i]n almost all his actions he seems to be guided by instinct, rather than reason."[148] And while McConkey conceded that prolonged interaction with whites "has developed, in some of them…reasoning faculties, and shown them to be possessed of some little intelligence" this limited intelligence, she argued, did not mean that Indians could eventually be "civilized" as so many (misinformed) government and church officials had hoped.[149]

For the "poets" and "romancers" who continued to depict Indians as 'noble savage[s]' and whose works lauded "the 'dignified and majestic bearing of nature's nobelm[e]n'," McConkey had harsh words.[150] Misinformed about the true character

[148]Bishop, *Dakota War Whoop*, 125.
[149]Bishop, *Dakota War Whoop*, 125-6.
[150]Bishop, *Dakota War Whoop*, 126.

of the Dakota, McConkey charged defenders of the "noble savage" with perpetuating a false stereotype of Indians. The perpetuation of the myth of the noble savage had, she believed, dangerous consequences for those living in close proximity to native peoples. The majority of these "poets" and "romancers" were Easterners who, McConkey claimed, had never actually encountered an Indian. Using her own life experiences as evidence, McConkey wrote that "having been, more or less, intimately associated with [the Dakota], for the last ten years, I have been unable to perceive but a very few of those noble attributes which have been so plentifully ascribed to them."[151] Only an individual who had never lived among Indians, she believed, could write about them with so much misplaced sympathy.

McConkey acknowledged that these sympathetic portrayals of Indians as "noble savages" had profoundly affected many Eastern Americans' views about the Dakota conflict. Responding to Easterners who might still view the Dakota as "noble" or the outbreak of violence against whites as justified, McConkey made clear that the real victims of the violence in Minnesota were whites, not Indians. To further prove her point that the Dakota (like all Indians) were inherently savage, bestial, and a threat to white civilization that *had* to be removed, McConkey again relied on the image of Indians as perpetrators of wanton violence against white women and children. It was, she claimed, the Indians' nature to "wreak their vengeance upon defenseless, helpless women and children" in response to any perceived wrongdoing on the part of the government or white individual.[152] By claiming that Indians responded to any perceived injustice by attacking innocent women and children,

[151]Bishop, *Dakota War Whoop*, 126-7.
[152]Bishop, *Dakota War Whoop*, 127.

McConkey hoped to quash any lingering thoughts her audience might have regarding the supposed "nobility" of the Dakota. Truly "noble" people McConkeyreasoned, would never inflict violence on such helpless and defenseless individuals.

In *Dakota War Whoop*, race and gender were intimately linked concepts. Central to McConkey's argument that the Dakota were intrinsically savage and inferior rested largely on their supposed cruel treatment of white women during the Outbreak of 1862. By casting Dakota warriors as the perpetrators of heinous crimes against white women—rape, torture, and murder—McConkey relied on the stereotype of white women as helpless and passive in order to emphasize the Indians' depravity. *Dakota War Whoop* did include some specific instances of "woman's heroism and endurance."[153] However, the majority of women who McConkey referenced in her book appeared completely traumatized by their interactions with the Dakota.

Nearly all of the personal accounts she printed came from her informant, Mr. George Spencer and McConkey unquestionably printed Spencer's words as truth. In addition to his claims that the Dakota abused nearly every white woman they captured, Spencer recounted conversations he claimed to have had with individual

[153]Bishop, *Dakota War Whoop*, 137. Here, McConkey referred to the sufferings of AlominaHurd. When the Dakota attacked the Hurd household, warriors murdered Mr. Voight, the family's hired hand and destroyed the family's property but allowed Mrs. Hurd, her three-year-old son Willie, and her infant to escape. Mrs. Hurd and her children wandered the prairie for several days without shelter, food, or supplies. Eventually, Willie became ill and was no longer able to walk on his own. Unable to carry both her children at once, Almonia spent the next day carrying one child half a mile then returning to spot where she had left the second child and carrying it to where she had laid the first, traveling one and a half miles for each half mile of forward progress. Finally, she reached an abandoned cabin where she "was…joined by some of her refugee neighbors." Bishop, *Dakota War Whoop*, 133-8.

women in the Dakota camp. Treated with "utter neglect [which] was almost as unendurable as the surplus of attention to others" Mrs. DeCamp "was claimed by no one in particular, and consequently, often went to bed hungry."[154] According to George Spencer and repeated by McConkeyDeCamp and her children rarely even had a blanket on which to sleep.

Even those women who managed to escape from their captors came across as frail, bumbling, and helpless women. McConkey wrote of a Mrs. Caruthers who, with the help of an Indian woman, escaped the Indian camp with her children. After two days of wandering, she finally reached the Minnesota River. As luck would have it, Mrs. Caruthers found an abandoned canoe on the riverbank and tried to paddle across the river to safety. Wrote McConkey, "but 'white squaw' having not yet learned 'the light canoe to guide,' found her frail craft playing funny antics, and resigning herself to its pranks, she laid down 'the paddle' and floating…five or six miles, was providently thrown on shore near the Fort."[155] Although Mrs. Caruthers had managed to escape from captivity, survive for two days on the prairie, and avoid detection, all with two young children in tow, she was apparently incapable of navigating a canoe across a river.

Ideas about race and gender, particularly white womanhood and Indian masculinity were essential of constructing one another both during Dakota War and in the early histories published thereafter. McConkey's presentation of white women as either helpless, traumatized victims of Dakota abuses, served to highlight the differences between whites and the Dakota. In McConkey's telling of the War,

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[154]Bishop, *Dakota War Whoop*, 180.
[155]Bishop, *Dakota War Whoop*, 191-2.

whites (especially women and children) were the victims and the Dakota were the perpetrators of unspeakable violence.

Through her publication of *Dakota War Whoop*, Harriet McConkey contributed to the building of an American Empire in the nineteenth century West. Her depictions and editorializing of the events of 1862 reflected the hardening of racial ideologies and the growing belief that white civilization should fulfill its divinely-sanction push westward. In order for white civilization to flourish, the native population would have to be displaced. As the events of 1862 demonstrated, Indians stood in the way of white "progress." When viewed through the lens of imperialism, the brutal atrocities perpetrated by the Dakota against white women and children were an attack on white civilization itself. As the "mothers" of empire, the vehicles by which the West became a more domesticated space and the wombs that produced new American citizens, white women became an increasingly important and salient symbol of expansion. Therefore, the supposed violation of these mothers of empire by dark and ferocious Indians was not only an attack on women but also an attack on American expansion.

Though riddled with errors, *Dakota War Whoop* remains a significant text for understanding the relationship between race, gender, and empire in the mid-nineteenth century. Harriet McConkey's fiercely racist rhetoric, engendered from the years she spent among the Dakota, stands in stark contrast to many frontier women's writings that stressed cooperation and understanding between women and Indians.[156] Although her book never achieved the nationwide and financial success as other

[156] For example see, Glenda Riley, *Women and Indians on the Frontier, 1825-1915* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984).

histories of the Dakota War, her outspoken support of white westward expansion, at the expense of native peoples, demonstrated the active role that some women played in promoting empire.

Isaac V.D. Heard and the Inconsistencies of Empire

Isaac V.D. Heard's*History of the Sioux War and the Massacres of 1862 and 1863* appeared at nearly the same time as Harriet McConkey's*Dakota War Whoop.* Butunlike McConkey, who struggled to get her book on the Dakota War published, Heard's*History of the Sioux War easily* found a home with a national printing press. The New York printing house of Harper & Brothers published the first edition of Heard's history in 1863 and a revised edition in 1865. Heard's book not only reached a national audience but reviews of the book appeared prominently in national periodicals including *Harper's Magazine* and *The New York Times*, and *The North American Review*.[157]

Born in 1834 in New York State, Isaac Heard "received an academical education, studied law, was admitted to practice."[158] He arrived in St. Paul in 1852 and quickly rose to a position of local prominence. Throughout the 1850s and 1860s Heard worked in various capacities as a lawyer, City Attorney, and County Attorney. He later served one term in the Minnesota State Senate. According to his good friend,

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[157] "History of the Sioux War," review of *History of the Sioux War and the Massacres of 1862 and 1863* by Isaac V.D. Heard. *The North American Review,* 98 no. 202 (1864): 266-270. "Literary Notices." Review of *The Sioux War*, by Isaac Heard.*Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, 27, no. 162 (November 1863): 851. "New Publications," *New York Times*, December 23, 1863, 4. "Report of Commissioner of Indian Affairs: History of the Sioux War," review of *History of the Sioux War* by I.V.D. Heard. *The North American Review*, 99, no. 205 (1864): 449-64.

[158]T.M. Newson, *Pen Pictures of St. Paul, Minnesota, and Biographical Sketches of Old Settlers,* (St. Paul: By the Author, 1886), 346.

newspaper editor and author Thomas McLean Newson, Isaac V.D. Heard was a man of talent and ambition; an "earnest, sincere, [and] honest" man who possessed both a warm heart and "the delicate sympathy of a woman."[159]

In the preface of *History of the Sioux War*, Harper & Brothers endeavored to establish the book's authenticity by outlining Heard's credentials as an accurate recorder of the events of 1862. Unlike McConkey, who spent the entirety of the Outbreak in St. Paul, Heard experienced the War firsthand. Serving as both "a member of General Sibley's expedition against the savages in 1862" and as Recorder for the Military Commission that tried the Dakota accused of crimes, Heard was privy to far more information than the average Minnesota citizen.[160]Heard's publishers further sought to establish his qualifications as an author the authority of his version of the events of 1862 writing that, "he devoted particular attention to obtaining from Indians, half-breeds, traders, white captives, fugitives from massacres, and others, particulars of the various outrages and causes of the massacre."[161] In addition to these oral accounts, Harper & Brothers also claimed that Heard "carefully read" and consulted various printed sources in order to construct "a connected and reliable history" of the Dakota War.[162]

For the most part, reviewers of the book agreed that the book was a faithful and accurate history of the War. An anonymous review in *The New York Times* praised *History of the Sioux War*, calling it a "calm and candid history" and remarked

[159]Newson, *Pen Pictures of St. Paul*, 348.
[160] Heard, *History of the Sioux War*, v
[161] Ibid.
[162] Ibid.

favorably on the "official character" of the book.[163] Although the reviewer for *Harper's Monthly* claimed that Heard's description of the post-War trials and punishment of the Indians moved a bit too "sluggishly" for his taste, he nevertheless offered commended the book as a "faithful history of the terrible massacres of 1862."[164]

Even the anonymous, pro-Indian reviewer in the January 1864 edition of *North American Review* gave the book a mostly favorable endorsement. Claiming, "the book itself is written with decided ability" and admiring Heard's "clear and vigorous style," the reviewer however took issue not with the facts of the book, but with its conclusions about how to avoid future problems with the Indians.[165] An obvious sympathizer with the Dakota, the reviewer devoted nearly four full pages to lambasting federal Indian policies, crooked Indian traders, and the "debauching" of Indian women by white men. Expressing an extreme sympathy for the Indians, the reviewers placed the blame for the Outbreak squarely on the shoulders of federal and Minnesota officials. Arguing that the events of August 1862 were merely the inevitable result the "massacre…perpetrated *on* the Sioux" by the government, corrupt Indian agents, and rapacious whites, the reviewer suggested, "the more appropriate title for this book would have been simply 'The Sioux Massacres.'"[166] Despite the lengthy condemnation of the state of Indian affairs in Minnesota, the

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[163] "Literary Notices." Review of *The Sioux War*, by Isaac Heard.*Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, June-November 1863, 851.
[164]Review of *The Sioux War*, by Isaac Heard.*Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, 27, no. 162 (November 1863): 851.
[165]"History of the Sioux War," review of *History of the Sioux War and the Massacres of 1862 and 1863* by Isaac V.D. Heard. *The North American Review,* 98 no. 202 (1864), 267. Heard, *History of the Sioux War*, 340-2.
[166]"History of the Sioux War," 269, 266.

reviewer offered only comparatively minor criticisms of Heard'sbook and praised Heard for his straightforward writing style, mostly factual content, and general lack of editorializing.

Isaac Heard's service, as both a soldier during the War and the Recorder for the Military Commission, provided him with a unique perspective from which to construct his *History*. Although reviewers praised the book for its straightforward and even-handed treatment of the Dakota Conflict, Heard's personal views did, at times, slip through. Among these were, a professed belief in the inevitable superiority and triumph white "civilization" over Indian "savagery." However unlike McConkey, who made her contempt for the Dakota quite clear, Heard retained a more ambivalent view of Indians and their future in Minnesota. While, like McConkey, Heard frequently depicted the Dakota as brutal rapists of white women, Heard also acknowledged that the causes of the war were the result of more than just the Indians' "predispo[sition] to hostility toward the whites."[167] Furthermore, he argued that the Dakota treated the majority of their captives well. And, despite his personal belief that Indians stood in the way of white civilization, Heard concluded his book with a series of pragmatic suggestions for improving future Indian-US relations. Vacillating between competing images of the Dakota as rapists, gracious hosts, and victims, Heard's*History of the Sioux War* demonstrates both the interconnectedness and inconsistency of ideas surrounding race, gender, and empire in the mid-nineteenth century.

[167] Heard, *History of the Sioux War*, 32.

Like many nineteenth-century Americans, Isaac Heard believed in Manifest Destiny and the inevitably of white America's westward expansion. Though convinced of the superiority of white social, cultural, economic and political institutions, Heard acknowledged that this push West would be not be an easy or seamless task. Describing the events of August 1862 as part of "the bloody drama which attends the advance of the white race across the continent," Heard viewed the Dakota War as part of the ongoing project of westward expansion.[168] Lamenting that the "massacre" of whites by the Dakota was indeed a tragedy, Heard viewed the Dakota War as part of a history of animosity between whites and Indians and in the larger context of westward expansion, this sort of violent conflict was unavoidable. Heard later explained that the destruction of property, murder of white families, and rape of white women were "the horrors of the fiendish protest of the savage Sioux against Civilization's irresistible march."[169] From his perspective, the events in Minnesota, while horrific, were also an inevitable consequence of white civilization's push West.

In the rhetoric surrounding the quest for empire in the nineteenth century, many thinkers believed that Indians presented a dangerous but predictable impediment to civilization. Heard's discussion of the causes of the Dakota War revealed that his own beliefs differed slightly from this sentiment. The superiority of white culture to Indian "savagery;" a characteristic that Heard believed was both innate and culturally determined, certainly played a major role. However, whereas popular opinion in Minnesota placed the blame for the Outbreak squarely on the

[168] Heard, *History of the Sioux War*, 13.
[169] Heard, *History of the Sioux War*, 116.

shoulders of the Dakota, Isaac Heard acknowledged that the government's failure to honor the terms of its treaties with the Dakota also contributed to the outbreak of violence.

Heard clearly viewed Dakota culture as inferior to whites. Writing about the "weird religion of the savage, his mad, his antique traditions, [and] his strange attire," Heard expressed his belief that the cultural practices of the Indians were distinct from and inferior to those of white Americans.[170] He further explained that Indian animosity towards the "superior" white race was innate and had existed since the Indians' first contact with explorers back in the seventeenth century. However, "[t]he inborn feeling was increased by the enormous prices charged by the traders for goods, by their debauchery of their women, and the sale of liquors…Death to the whites would have followed years ago had not the commercial dealings with them…become a matter of necessity."[171] While the hatred of whites by Indians may have been inherent, Heard presented several reasons why this animosity was, at least in some way justified. Increased interactions with white explorers traders, and missionaries only heightened the Indians' initial feelings of suspicious and distrust.

By the nineteenth century, the increased immigration of white settlers and the cession of thousands of acres of land to the U.S. government further heightened the already strained relationship between whites and the Dakota. Acknowledging these tensions Heard explained, "the cession of their territory is necessarily enforced upon the Indians by the advance of the white race. Hunting and farming can not exist together, and the Indian cannot and will not change his mode of life in a day, if

[170] Heard, *History of the Sioux War*, 27.
[171] Heard, *History of the Sioux War*, 31.

ever."[172] The Dakota, Heard believed, were either unwilling or unable to abandon their traditional dress, customs, and means of survival to adopt farming and Christianity. The Dakota's failure to become "civilized" was one reason for their violent outburst in August of 1862. But, at least in Heard's view, this was only one of several factors that contributed to the War. Past actions taken by government, traders, and individual settlers had, he argued, been at least partially responsible for causing the war.

Heard described to his readers the various ways that white settlement in Minnesota had dramatically altered the Indians' lives. White settlers had destroyed the Indians' primary means of subsistence by altering the landscape of the Dakotas' traditional hunting grounds. Settlers' need for wood depleted huge tracts of forest land and the increase in human traffic "frighten[d] the beaver and the water-fowl" and "[drove] the deer and the buffalo far to the west," thereby robbing the Dakota of hunting, their traditional means of survival.[173]In 1851 and again in 1858, Mdewakanton and Wahpekute Dakotas had signed treaties ceding much of their land in Minnesota, effectively confining their tribe to a strip of land in the southwestern part of the state. In return for the Dakotas' land, the government promised to provide the tribes with annuities, school buildings, and farming implements. As many of the government's promised went unfulfilled, the Dakotas' collective anger towards whites grew.

No longer able to subsist by their traditional means of hunting, the Dakota increasingly relied on their annuities. Food became even more essential to Indian

[172] Heard, *History of the Sioux War*, 33.
[173] Heard, *History of the Sioux War*, 33.

survival when their crops failed, as they did in 1862. By the summer of 1862, the majority of the Dakota suffered from severe hunger and all anxiously awaited the arrival of their annual annuities. Tribe members began to gather at the Upper and Lower Sioux agencies in June, the month when their annuities traditionally arrived.

The Civil War delayed the arrival of the annuities, forcing the Dakota to wait. Refused credit by white traders, the Dakota languished, many teetering on the verge of starvation. Without their annuity money, traders refused to sell the Indians anything from the agencies' fully stocked warehouses. According to Heard, it was the Dakotas' increasingly desperate situation that ultimately led to the outbreak of violence. Wrote Heard, "Thus, on the 17th day of August, 1862, we find the instinctive hatred of this savage and ferocious people…fanned to a burning heat by many years of actual and of fancied wrong, and intensified by fears of hunger and cold."[174] Though he believed that the Dakotas' inherently cruel nature certainly contributed to the outbreak of the war, Heard broke with other Minnesotans who believed that this was the only cause. Recognizing the stress white settlement imposed on the Dakotas' means for survival, the repeated failings of the federal government to live up to the terms of its own treaties, and the heartlessness of the traders by refusing to offer the starving Indians' credit, Heard presented a far more complicated picture of Indian-white relations in Minnesota. Alluding to the repeated injustices suffered by the Dakota, Heard presented a far more complex scenario of the events that ultimately led the Dakota to attack white settlements along the Minnesota frontier.

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[174] Heard, *History of the Sioux War*, 50.

Heard's*History of the Sioux War* described a far more nuanced and complicated view of Indian-white relations that precipitated the massive assault on white settlements. However, in the chapters that dealt with the war, Heard's words mirrored the opinions of other Minnesotans. Relying on the popular trope of the Indian man as a rapist, Heard's sections on the War emphasized Dakota brutality,focusing mainly on the supposed rape and torture of women and young girls.

Many of the stories printed in Heard's*History* had already appeared in other forms. In chapter four, he included the same story that Congressmen Wilkinson, Aldrich, and Windom provided in their December 11, 1862 letter to President Lincoln, that of the 13 year old girl, reportedly violated by Dakota warriors until she died. In chapter six, titled "Farther Outrages During the First Week of the Outbreak," Heard wrote about the Dakota assault on the settlement at Lake Shetek.

Heard's accusations undoubtedly shocked his already-horrified readers. He wrote that an already-wounded ten-year-old girl "was held prostrate on the ground by four of her captors, and violated by more than twenty young men of the tribe at a time."[175] Even the most stalwart defenders of the Dakota could hardly offer justification for such a purportedly heinous act. But he did not stop there. Writing of an even more atrocious attack on a nine-year-old girl, Heard claimed that, "in consequence of her tender years, the savages resorted to horrid mutilations of her person to enable them to gratify their lustful desires."[176]

Although he claimed that Dakota men of all ages perpetrated acts of violence against defenseless white women and children, Heard believed that the younger

[175] Heard, *History of the Sioux War*, 100.
[176] Heard, *History of the Sioux War*, 101.

Indians were far more brutal in their attacks. "The savage practices of the younger Indians" he wrote "far surpassed in atrocity that of the older members."[177] In his later chapters Heard reiterated this belief. His willingness to distinguish between young warriors their elders marked another small but significant departure from popular sentiments. Most white Minnesotans viewed the Dakota as universally monstrous individuals. Heard's distinction between the violent actions of young men and the more benign behavior old older Dakota suggested that his own feelings regarding the Dakota were far more ambivalent than those of his contemporaries.

Heard's chapter, "Farther outrages during the first week of the Outbreak" contained one more graphic instance of rape and murder. At the Norwegian Grove settlement, more than a dozen Dakota warriors violated a woman of indeterminate age. In the midst of violating her, the Dakota "sharpened a rail and drove it into her person…end[ing] her life with the most horrible of tortures."[178] Already widely reported in the newspaper articles printed during the War, the supposed mutilation of white, men, and children was repeatedly employed to demonstrate the victimization of white settlers at the hand of the bestial and vile Indians. Heard's story of the Dakota sexually mutilating and then violating a young girl added an even more horrifying component to the widespread stereotype of Dakota men as "dark rapists" whose unchecked lust posed a threat not only to white females but to the stability of America's western empire.

The construction of the "dark rapist" and its importance to the imperial project has long been a central theme of literary scholarsexamining the history of empire and

[177]Ibid.
[178] Heard, *History of the Sioux War*, 111.

its racial and gendered components. Often found in colonial or imperial literature, the figure of the "dark rapist" surfaced at strategic moments in history. The "dark rapist" stereotype most frequently appeared in times of real or imagined crises, when white settlers believed theirtheirexisingpower structures to be in danger of subversion. Likewise, the figure of the "dark rapist" played an essential role in the construction of racial and gender identities. Throughout history, creation of "others" has been essential to manufacturing a sense of unity among whites.[179]

However, the categorization of Indian men as dark rapists was not one-sided. White men predicated the construction of this stereotype upon the idea of white women as vulnerable and in need of protection. The depictions the Indian men as dark rapists then, also helped to create and sustain the idea of whiteness as a distinct racial category. During after the Dakota War, the labeling of Indian men as brutal murderers, rapists, and destroyers of white homes and farms simultaneously constructed white femininity and masculinity as racial and gender categories directly in opposition to Indian savagery. These concepts of white femininity and masculinity as distinct racial and gendered categories became intimately linked to the concepts of empire building in the West.

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[179] In her book *This Violent Empire: The Birth of An American National Identity,* historian Carroll Smith-Rosenberg argues that Americans' national sense of self has always been unstable owing to diversity of the nations' inhabitants. The creation of an American national identity based on the "virility, whiteness, and social respectability" of its inhabitants came about as a direct result of the creation of "others." Furthermore, she argues the concept of American identify came about as result of westward expansion. "Whiteness" did not become a coherent concept until contrast with "redness." While most of Smith-Rosenberg's book deals with eighteenth and early nineteenth century America, her findings can also be applied to Minnesota in the mind-nineteenth century. Smith-Rosenberg, *This Violent Empire*, Preface, Introduction especially pages 21-31, and chapter four.

In *Capturing Women,* historian Sarah Carter investigates the connections between race, gender, and empire. Arguing that white femininity was essential to the construction of racial difference and the maintenance of empire she writes, "ideas about the vulnerability of white women helped to create and sustain concepts of racial and cultural difference, to legitimize tough action against indigenous people, and to convey the message of the necessary policing of boundaries of different people."[180] The violent outburst in Minnesota deeply unsettled white men. The mass hangings at Mankato—thirty-eight Indians were simultaneously executed on a specially constructed gallows—and eventual removal of the Indians from Minnesota helped white men reassert their masculine authority.

The Dakota War profoundly shook white men's beliefs in the inherent superiority of their social and cultural institutions. Lulled into a false sense of security, the outbreak of violence on August 17 clearly demonstrated the ineffectiveness of existing government policies to "civilize" and control the local Indian population. The lack of adequate military forces to immediately put down the uprising revealed yet another failing on the part of state and federal officials. And the inability of state and federal polices to both adequately control the Dakota and to quickly put down the violent outbreak called in to question the effectiveness of these policies and the officials tasked with implementing them.[181]

While shaking white men's belief in their own superiority at an institutional level, the War provoked for many men, an individual "crisis of masculinity." Central

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[180]Carter, *Capturing Women,* xvi.
[181] Francis Paul Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indian* (Lincoln: The University of Nebraska Press, 1986).

to the concept of white masculinity was the ability of men to protect their home and family. While some men died trying to protect their property, others watched helplessly or simply turned and ran as Indians murdered their families, set fire to their farms, or carried off their wives and children in to captivity. Rendered impotent by their inability to protect their homes and families, white men in Minnesota sought to shift attention away from their own "unmanly" behavior by emphasizing the vulnerability of white women and the savagery of Dakota men. Casting the War as an attack on white femininity by brutal and barbaric Indians allowed white men to shift the focus away from their own failure to protect their homes and families. The widespread claims of the violation of white women, coupled with sheer number of Dakota tried, convicted, and sentenced to death for their participation in the War reflected the degree to which white men sought to reassert their authority at both a personal and institutional level.

Despite his attempt to write an objective history of the War, Heard's own ambivalence regarding the true character of Indians appeared throughout his *History*.Without questioning their authenticity, Heard printed several gruesome stories that detailed the acts of violence Dakota men purportedly perpetrated on white women and children. However, his book's later chapters somewhat challenged this harsh assessment of Dakota behavior. Subsequent chapters in *History of the Sioux War* directly contradicted the widely circulated claims regarding the universal rape of female captives.[182] Present at Camp Release, Heard observed the Dakotas' surrender

[182]Wilkinson, Aldrich, and Windom to Lincoln 11 December 1862, 3. None of these three men were present at Camp Release. McConkey repeated this claim in both

of their captives first hand on September 26. For the next ten days, the captives lived among the soldiers at Camp Release for, as former captive Mrs. N.D. White remembered, "the purpose of giving our testimony against the Indians."[183] Privy to this testimony, Heard asserted that most of the captives had been treated well. "The apprehensions of the captives after the first rage of their captors was over were greater than their sufferings…[and] they fared as well as the Indians on the main."[184] Heard based this assessment of the Dakotas' relatively kind treatment of their captives on the official testimony former captives gave to the Military Commission as well as the conversations he overheard around Camp Release. Only one white captive died during the six weeks among the Dakota. And despite the claims of the Congressmen, the public, and McConkey regarding the abuse of captives, Heard never mentioned that a single woman had been raped after being captured and taken to the Dakota camp.

Heard's discussion of the release of the white captives revealed his own contradictory and complicated views about race. Again distinguishing between the actions of younger and older Dakota men, Heard reiterated his belief that "the grosser outrages were mostly committed by the younger portion of the tribe."[185] His next sentences directly challenged the view expressed by McConkey and other Indian-hating Minnesotans; that all Indians were inhuman brutes. Asserting, "Indians are not

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editions of *Dakota War Whoop*. Bishop, *Dakota War Whoop*, 235, 240, 281-6 (reprint of Wilkinson, Aldrich, and Windom's letter).

[183]Mrs. N.D. White, *Captivity Among the Sioux, August 18 to September 26, 1862* (in Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society, Volume IX, St. Paul, Minn.: Published by the Society, April 1901), 422.

[184] Heard, *History of Sioux War,* 186.

[185] Heard, *History of Sioux War,* 186.

all lost to humanity" Heard listed the names of several Indians who, he claimed, "risked their lives in behalf of their white friends."[186]Heard's willingness to distinguish between "good" and "bad" Dakotas revealed inconsistencies in his own thinking about Indians. He went so far as to compare those Dakota who had helped white captives to other "noble savages" in history. He claimed that Lorenzo Lawrence, Other Day, and other "good" Indians were akin to Pocahontas and Philip of Pokanoket who "wept with sorrow when he heard of the death of the first Englishman who was killed" by an Indian.[187] Though he remained convinced of the inferiority of Dakota culture and society to that of whites, Heard appeared to believe that some of the Dakota could and did act nobly during the War.

Popular belief in Minnesota was that the majority of captives endured a great deal of suffering while among the Dakota. Newspaper articles, appeals to the President, the letter signed by Minnesota's Congressmen, and early histories of the war seemed to unquestioningly accept the routine abuse of captives. Heard's assessment of the relatively good treatment of most captives signaled a break with the public narrative of the war. Harriet McConkey based her assessment of the horrors of camp life from her informant George Spencer and second-hand accounts, not interviews. Containing few direct quotes (except those from Spencer) McConkey wrote mostly about specific individuals in the third person.[188] Likewise,

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[186] Heard, *History of Sioux War,* 187.
[187] Ibid.
[188]McConkey included the stories of several captives including AlominaHurd, LavinaEastlick, Almira Harrington, Sophia Huggins, Mr. Brackett, and John Julien in *Dakota War Whoop*. However, she wrote about these individuals in the third person, suggesting that her information came from either George Spencer or secondary

Congressmen Wilkinson, Aldrich, and Windom wrote only about the violation of certain "young women," never mentioning a single individual by name. Rather than simply reprinting these horrible, yet vague accounts from suspect sources, Heard provided readers of his *History* with the statements from some of the actual captives. Among these first person narratives was the story of Sophia Josephine Huggins. Huggins's story not only affirmed Heard's assertion that the majority of the captives received kind treatment, but her narrative also revealed the complicated and complex dynamics of Indian-white relationships on the Minnesota frontier.

Introducing Sophia Huggins's story to his readers, Heard explained that Huggins and her children were not a part of the large group of captives formerly surrendered by the Dakota at Camp Release but rather, arrived "several days" later.[189] Remarking that, the narrative "is interesting for the minuteness of the details of her captivity," Heard then dispensed with his editorial remarks, reprinting Mrs. Huggins's story in full.[190] In 1856, Sophia Josephine Marsh married missionary Amos Williamson Huggins. At the time of the Outbreak in 1862, the couple resided at Lac qui Parle with their two young children and Julia LaFramboise, the "mixed-blood" daughter of trader Joseph LaFrambiose.[191] Though the Dakota War began on August 17 with the murder of white settlers in Acton Township, the violence did not reach the Huggins' home in Lac qui Parle until two days later. Unaware of events at Acton or the Dakotas' coordinated attack on the Lower Sioux Agency on August 18th,

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sources, not from the captives themselves. See Bishop, *Dakota War Whoop*, 133-144, 190-3, 201-5, 252-6, 352-63.

[189] Heard, *History of Sioux War,* 209.

[190] Ibid.

[191] "Overview of the Collection." Alexander G. Huggins and Family Papers. Minnesota Historical Society.

Huggins wrote that the Indian attacks on her home the following day came as a complete shock. The 19th was Sophia's 24th birthday and she recalled that the day "dawned on me full of hope and happiness...but before its close it proved to be the saddest day of my life."[192]

When three warriors from Red Iron's village entered her home on the afternoon of the 19th, Mrs. Huggins seemed unconcerned. Having spent several years among the Indians with her missionary husband Amos, Sophia Huggins felt quite comfortable with these men in her home. She described the Indians as "quite friendly and talkative, [and] seeming very much interested in the sewing machine Julia was using."[193] Huggins admitted that she was so comfortable with her Indian neighbors and their presence in her home that, when the warriors left her house and she heard the report of two guns, "my first thought was that the Chippeways[sic] were upon [the Dakota]."[194]It was only when the warriors forced Julia, Sophia, and her children from their home that she realized that the victim of the gunshots was not a Chippewa but rather, her husband Amos. Describing her shock at seeing Julia crying over her husband's murdered body, Huggins at first refused to believe it was the Dakota who killed him. Even confronted with the lifeless body of her husband, Huggins continued to linger around her home. Sophia Huggins's narrative clearly articulated the complex and contradictory relationship between some whites and their Indian neighbors prior to the War's outbreak. Unfazed by the appearance of the warriors in her home, Huggins suggested that, prior to the Outbreak her dealings with

[192] Heard, *History of Sioux War,* 209.
[193] Ibid.
[194] Ibid.

the local natives were regular and pleasant. She was so comfortable around and trusting of her Indian neighbors, that she at first refused believe that the warriors in her home were the same individuals who murdered her husband. And even when the Dakota warriors told her to leave or else they would kill her, she wrote that "I staid [sic] behind until I saw they were really going to shoot me," suggesting her disbelief that the Indians would actually follow through with their threats.[195] Finally convinced that her own life was, in fact, in danger, she covered her husband's body, grabbed her children, and fled, along with Julia, to her neighbors', the DeCota's, home.

Upon reaching the DeCota's home, Mrs. Huggins asked Mr. DeCota to take her and her children to Yellow Medicine or one of the other nearby white settlements. Mr. DeCota thought that trying to escape at this point would be unwise, fearful of encountering an ambush along the road. Although just having witnessed the murder of Mr. Huggins Julia, the Huggins' domestic helper, returned to the Huggins home in order to try to salvage some of the family's belongings. When Julia returned, she informed Sophia that the Huggins' house was full of Indians, both "good" and bad." The "good" Indians, including Walking Sprit and others had buried her husband and expressed deep sorrow over his death. Wrote Huggins, "the old chief was full of sorrow, and said if he had been there they should have killed him before they could have killed Mr. Huggins."[196] Still in shock over her husband's murder, Huggins was grateful for "good" Indians like Walking Spirit and the other Dakota who had buried her husband.

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[195]Heard, *History of Sioux War,* 210.
[196] Ibid.

Whereas other captives described being violently seized by Dakota warriors and forced into captivity at gunpoint, Sophia Huggins willingly sought out her captor and her resulting "captivity." Deciding "we would be safer at Walking Spirit's than at De Cota's,' Sophia, her children, and Julia left the DeCota's home and traveled to a nearby Dakota village.[197] Though only a few hours priorDakota warriors had murdered her husband, Mrs. Huggins felt safe among the Dakota in their camp. Rather than trying to escape the Dakota, Sophia Huggins sought out safety in their village. Her willingness to seek shelter and safety among the Indians was due, in part, to her belief that Walking Spirit was a "good" Indian who would treat her kindly and protect her and her children. Additionally, Huggins' close friendship with the "mixed-blood" Julia (whose grandfather was the Dakota chief Sleepy Eye) likely influenced her decision to seek out "captivity" among the Dakota for the duration of the War.

Unlike standard captivity narratives where women recounted the brutality of their captors and wrote of fearing constantly for their lives, Sophia Huggins described her stay with Walking Spirit's family as comfortable. She recalled that, while a "captive" among the Dakota, Walking Spirit's family gave her "the most honorable place" to sit in the tepee, she dined on beef, and slept on pillows every night.[198] It was only when Sophia, Julia, and the children left Walking Spirit's tepee and went to stay with Mr. John Longee, a white man, that she began to fear for her safety. While at Mr. Longee's, Julia's brother came for her, leaving Sophia and the children with Longee. Without Julia who "had been my comforter, my adviser, my help in all my

[197] Heard, *History of Sioux War,* 211.
[198] Heard, *History of Sioux War,* 211-12.

troubles," Huggins began to fear for her safety.[199] Deciding that they wouldbe safer back with the Indians than on their own, Sophia, Longee, and her children began the journey back to Walking Spirit's village. Though she never spoke of fearing for her life while in the custody of Walking Spirit's family, the ride from Longee's back to the Indian camp filled her with fear. Of the journey she wrote that she "suffered with fear as we trotted through the woods. It seemed as if every tree hid some skulking foe, ready to spring and murder us."[200]

Sophia Huggins's feelings of safety and security among the Dakota, compared to the insecurity she felt while not with them must have raised a few eyebrows among the whites whoread her narrative. Surely aware of how strange her decision to seek out protection among the Indians must seem to those reading her narrative, Sophia Huggins justified her feelings by portraying Walking Spirit and his wife as "good" Indians. Kind and accommodating to a recently widowed woman and her children, Huggins wrote that if any of the many visitors to Walking Spirit's home "spoke to me at all, it was with kindness and respect."[201] Despite her conscious decision to seek out refuge *twice* in an Indian village in the middle of a War between whites and Indians, Huggins still proclaimed herself as a "captive" of the Dakota. She articulated this inconsistent and complicated view of her time among the Indians for her audience writing that, "for the next six weeks I found a home in Walking Spirit's family. True, I was a captive in an enemy's country, longing for deliverance—subject to many inconveniences, many hardships; but the chief and his wife were very

[199] Heard, *History of Sioux War*, 213.
[200] Ibid.
[201] Ibid.

kind to me, and made my life as light as possible."[202] Unlike many of the female captives ransomed at Camp Release, Huggins wore her own clothes throughout the duration of her captivity and had no restrictions placed on her movements in and out of Walking Spirit's village. She even thanked the old chief for protecting her honor when a "bad" Indian named Good Day tried to purchase her for his wife.

Whether or not Sophia Huggins was actually a "captive" of the Dakota was debatable. *She* was the one who decided to return to Walking Spirit's camp and her account of the kind treatment she received from her "captors" differed drastically from the standard tale of women undergoing "cruel and violent torment from the fiendish Indians."[203] Despite the relative ease of her six weeks among the Dakota, Mrs. Huggins identified herself as 'a captive in an enemy's country'perhaps to allay any of her readers' suspicions that she preferred her life in the Dakota camp to life among whites. The fact that some white women actually adopted Indian customs and abandoned their white families to subsume identities as Indian women was a well-known fact and constant source of anxiety for whites since the seventeenth century.[204]

Although desirous to prove to her audience that she did not prefer life with the Indians to life among whites, Huggins did express a great deal of gratitude for her

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[202] Heard, *History of Sioux War*, 215.
[203] Julie Roy Jeffrey, *Frontier Women: The Trans-Mississippi West, 1840-1880* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1979), 20.
[204] See John Demos, *The Unredeemed Captive: A Family Story from Early America* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1994); Gary L. Ebersol, *Captured By Texts: Puritans to Postmodern images of Indian Captivity* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995); Rebecca Blevins Faery, *Cartographies of Desire: Captivity, Race, and Sex in the Shaping of an American Nation* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999); Laura L. Mielke, *Moving Encounters: Sympathy and The Indian Question in Antebellum Literature* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2008); Pauline Turner Strong, *Captive Selves, Captivating Others: The Politics and Poetics of Colonial American Captivity Narratives* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1999).

captors' protection. Anxious to repay Walking Spirit for his kindness and protection she spent the hours before her official release from captivity "mend[ing] the chief's clothes, so that he might appear as respectably as possible" when he appeared before General Sibley, his troops, and the others at Camp Release.[205]

Sophia Josephine Huggins's narrative of her captivity among the Dakota revealed the tensions and inconsistencies present in many captives' stories. Like Isaac Heard, Huggins expressed inconsistencies regarding her feelings about the Indians. So acquainted with the Dakota around Lac qui Parle, Huggins accepted them in her home as guests on the afternoon of August 19. And so convinced was she of her family's good standing among the Indians, Huggins had difficulty believing that they had murdered her husband. Even after Dakota warriors had murdered her husband, she sought refuge among the Dakota for the duration of the War. Although Huggins clearly acknowledged the relative ease of her time with Walking Spirit and his family, and the fact that she had sought out his protection on two separate occasions, she still referred to herself as "a captive in an enemy's country longing for deliverance." However, when the time of her deliverance arrived, she took great pains to ensure that her "captor" looked "respectable."

The ambivalence Huggins expressed in her narrative both in regards to her captors and "captivity" resulted, in part, from her own anxieties regarding her audiences' reaction to her story. In her narrative, Huggins appeared torn between her desire to appear as a sympathetic young mother, widow, and victim of Indian brutality and the reality of the relative comfort and safety she experienced in the

[205] Heard, *History of Sioux War*, 227.

Dakota village. Her attempts to negotiate the tension between nineteenth century gender norms and expectations and the reality of her experience as a captive among the Dakota resulted in a narrative filled with contradictions and inconsistent views about her captivity experience.

The final chapters of Isaac Heard's*History of the Sioux War* further revealed his inconsistent views on race and gender. Writing in great detail about the Military Commission's trials, Heard defended them as a fair and impartial rendering of justice. Heard also sought to justify Minnesotans' outrage at President Lincoln's decision to pardon all but 38 of the 303 Dakota sentenced to death to his readers. Responding directly to "the presses in the East [that] condemned the demands of the people of Minnesota for their execution as barbarous in the extreme," Heard recounted for those in the East "a few instances from the history of their own ancestors."[206] He then recounted for his readers the massacre of 600 Pequod [sic] men, women, and children by Connecticut soldiers on June 5, 1637 and the New England Army's destruction of over 500 wigwams and their inhabitants in 1675. Reminding those in the East of their region's own troubled history with Indians; Heard implied that those critics in the East had no right to judge the (comparatively minor) execution of the 38 Dakota at Mankato.

His final chapter, simply titled "The Future" moreover demonstrated Heard's contradictory feelings regarding Indians. Writing that, despite their defeat by the U.S. Army the Dakotas' "warriors are numerous and by no means cowed," Heard reiterated his belief that Indians' continued presence on the Minnesota frontier

[206] Heard, *History of Sioux War*, 270.

presented an impediment to white civilization in the region. But unlike McConkey and other Minnesotans who advocated the immediate removal of all Indians from the state, Heard offered a series of suggestions for improving Indian-white relations in the region. Among these suggestions were: increased protection for white settlers by establishing a standing army of volunteer soldiers, for the government to pay the Indians all "their due in full," remove all traders from Indian reservations, and "make a *genuine attempt* to have [the Indians] adapt [themselves] to [their] altered condition."[207] On this last point, Heard was emphatic. Claiming that, "such an attempt has never yet been *made*, although the treaties contemplate it, and the officials pretend it has been done," Heard expressed his conviction that Indians could be "civilized" and live peacefully among white settlers. If the government actively sought to live up to and firmly enforce the terms of its treaties with the Dakota Minnesota could, Heard believed, reach its full potential and become "the resort of the emigrant from every clime."[208]

As two of the first books published on the Dakota War, Bishop and Heard's histories reveal the ambiguities and tensions that Americans wrestled with in the mid-nineteenth century. Though pseudo-science and a history of colonialism in the East had convinced most Americans of their own racial superiority and their destiny to expand west, events like the Dakota War demonstrated that this westward march of "civilization" would not be an easy or automatic process. Creating an empire in the American west would, these authors argued, frequently be a brutal and bloody endeavor. White Americans would be challenged to confront an enemy who they

[207] Heard, *History of Sioux War*, 340-1.
[208] Heard, *History of Sioux War*, 342.

deemed inhuman but whose humanity was often impossible to ignore. And while white women would serve as a potent symbol for expansion, this image was one that was purposefully constructed and manipulated. When allowed to speak unfettered by an editorial pen, women's stories revealed both the variety of their testimony and their ambivalence towards empire building.

"The Fate Worse than Death:" Rape and the Dakota War

The rape of white female captives was a near universal theme in the rhetoric following the Dakota War. As historian Ann Laura Stoler has shown, in colonial settings "the proliferation of discourse about sexual assault…had virtually no correlation with actual incidences of rape of European women by men of color…Sexual assaults may have occurred, but their incidence had little to do with the fluctuations in anxiety about them."[209] In Minnesota, politicians and citizens used the allegations of rape as evidence of Dakota "savagery" and as justification for the removal of the native people from the state. That the rhetoric of rape became so prevalent in the aftermath of the war and in its retelling was, in many ways, surprising. Despite the wealth of titillating visual and literary sources that eroticized white women's captivity, before the Dakota War, most white Americans believed that Indian men did not rape captive women. Of the more than 300 Dakota tried by the Military Commission, only two were charged with rape. Evidence suggests that, while most female captives emerged from their six-week ordeal unharmed and unmolested, some did not. Examining specific rape claims from the Dakota War reveals the complex relationships between race, gender, authority, and power that female captives had to negotiate during and following their release.

The rape of women had long been used as a weapon of war. Rape during war serves multiple functions.[210] The sexual assault of conquered women by men

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[209] Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 58.

[210] For selected works on the history of rape, sexual violence, and its use during war see: Sharon Block, *Rape and Sexual Power in Early America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), Susan Browmiller, *Against Our Will: Men,*

reinforced patriarchy and allowed the conquering group to assert the superiority of their culture over the conquered.[211] Traditional Dakota culture celebrated war as the epitome of masculine behavior. From childhood, Dakota boys learned that bravery, success on the battlefield, and protecting one's family were important cultural values. Throughout the war, Dakota braves often remarked on the cowardice of white men. One warrior declared "that it was such fun to kill white men [because] they were such cowards…[T]hey all ran away and left their squaws to be killed…[O]ne Indian could kill ten white men without trying."[212] Lake Shetek resident LaviniaEastlick seemed to affirm that at least some men did run when confronted by the Dakota. When a group of Dakota ambushed her party Eastlick remarked "two men made their escapewithout a scratch."[213] For Eastlick, whose husband died while defending his family and who herself suffered several gunshot wounds before being left for dead on

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Women, and Rape (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1975), Estelle F. Freedman, *Redefining Rape: Sexual Violence in the Era of Suffrage and Segregation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), Jonathan Gottschall, "Expaining Wartime Rape," *Journal of Sex Research* 41 (May 2004): 129-36, (Elizabeth D. Hineman ed., *Sexual Violence in Conflict Zones: From the Ancient World to the Era of Human Rights* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), Martha Hodes, *White Women, Black Men: Illicit Sex in the Nineteenth Century South* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), Seifert, Ruth. "War and Rape: A Preliminary Analysis." In *Mass Rape: The War Against Women in Bosnia-Herzegovina.* Edited by Alexandra Stiglmayer, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 54-72, Sabine Silke, *Reading Rape: The Rhetoric of Sexual Violence in American Literature and Culture, 1790-1990* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002). IngerSkjelsbaek, "Sexual Violence and War: Mapping Out a Complex Relationship," *European Journal of International Relations* 7 (2001): 211-37.

[211] While numerous works of Indian history agree that rape was not normally a war tactic employed by Native people in the East, scholars have not reached such a definitive consensus regarding western tribes.

[212]JannetteDeCamp Sweet, "Mrs. J. E. DeCamp Sweet's Narrative of Her Captivity in the Sioux Outbreak of 1862," in *Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society vol. 6* (St. Paul: The Pioneer Press Company, 1894), 362.

[213]Mrs. John Eastlick "The Lake Shetek Indian Massacre in 1862" 1890, 4.Dakota Conflict of 1862 Manuscripts Collection. Reel 1. Minnesota Historical Society.

the prairie, these men's desertion of women and children was unconscionable. To the Dakota, any man who ran from conflict, especially one who abandoned his family in the process was not a "real" man at all.

While those Dakota who participated in the outbreak of violence may have expressed contempt for white men and culture, this hatred did not necessarily or naturally translate into abuse against white women. The claims of rape that surfaced after the war represented an aberration from conventional Dakota war practices. While armies in the western world had a long history of using rape as a combat instrument, non-western groups, including the Dakota, often had strict taboos against sexual contact during war.[214] Philander Prescott, a trader who lived among the Dakota from 1819 to 1862, affirmed this. Dakota men "must keep themselves from women all the time they are out at war," he wrote, lest they risk retribution from the spirit world. Should Dakota men "displease the spirits…[they] would be made to suffer for their incontinency."[215] While instances of rape did occur, historically, Dakota men did not rape the women they captured. Captives were far more likely to be adopted into a family, sold to another individual or tribe, or ransomed back to their own community.

In the seventeenth century, British colonists feared that Indians might sexually violate female prisoners. By the eighteenth century, most white Americans believed "Indians no longer appeared to be likely rapists" and, by the nineteenth century, the

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[214] See Gary Clayton Anderson, *Kinsmen of Another Kind: Dakota-white Relations in the Upper Mississippi Valley, 1650-1862* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1997), 268.
[215] Philander Prescott, *The Recollections of Philander Prescott: Frontiersman of the Old Northwest, 1819-1862* ed. Donald Parker (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), 63.

"dark rapist" of white America's fears and fantasies had overwhelmingly shifted from Indians to African Americans.[216] Through most nineteenth century Americans held the conviction that Indian men would not violate a white woman in their custody however, the "lusty" Indian and sexually vulnerable female captive nevertheless remained stock characters in fictionalized captivity tales, dime novels, and the arts.

Allusions to the sexual vulnerability of white women were frequent and popular themes in nineteenth-century American art and literature.[217] Despite their restrictive ideals concerning women, sex, and sexuality, these subjects fascinated men and women in the mid-nineteenth century. Between November 1859 and October 1860, New Yorkers flocked to the William Schaus Gallery, paying a quarter each to see Erastus Dow Palmer's famous statue, *The White Captive*. Carved from white marble and perched atop a specially made pedestal that rotated 360 degrees, Palmer's life-size statue depicted a young woman captured by "savages."[218] Naked and with hands bound, *The White Captive* appeared to stare anxiously yet defiantly into the

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[216] Block, *Rape and Sexual Power in Early America,* 212, 221-230. Most scholars agree that Eastern Indians did not rape captives taken during war. For examples see: Thomas S. Abler, "Scalping, Torture, Cannibalism, and Rape: An Ethnohistorical Analysis of Conflicting Cultural Values in War: *Anthropologica*, vol. 34 , 1 (1992): 13-15., James Axtell, *The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 304-5., Albert Hurtado, *Intimate Frontiers: Sex, Gender, and Culture in Old California* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1999), 57. Alice Nash, "'None of the Women were abused': Indigenous Contexts for the Treatment of Women Captives in the Northeast," in Merrill Smith ed., *Sex Without Consent: Rape and Sexual Coercion in America* (New York: New York University Press, 2001). Freedman, *Redefining Rape,* especially chapter 1and Silke, *Reading Rape*, chapter 2.

[217] James R. Lewis, "Images of Captives Rape in the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of American Culture* 15, (1992): 69.

[218] "Erastus Dow Palmer: The White Captive" (94.9.3) In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000–. http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/94.9.3. (October 2006)

distance. To those who viewed her, *The White Captive'*s fate was clear: rape, followed by an agonizing death at the hands of her Indian captors.[219]

Unlike the predetermined fate of *The White Captive*, the providence of captive white women in nineteenth literature varied tremendously. Oftentimes, sexual assault appeared imminent but, at the last moment, the male hero arrived saving the female victim from "the fate worse than death." However, authors of dime novels and "real" captivity stories were just as likely to embellish their work with "lurid sexual elements not only to attract readers, but to ensure that the narratives performed their assigned work, enforcing racial differences and generating racial animosity, with the eroticized bodies of white women as dramatic set pieces."[220] The white Americans who eagerly lined up to view *The White Captive* and read tales of female violation by "savage" Indians did so comforted by the idea that they were only indulging in a fantasy, not reality. Most Americans then were shocked (and some even skeptical) when reports of rape began to filter back East from Minnesota in the months and years following the Dakota War.

Throughout August and into the September of 1862, nearly all newspaper reports stressed the barbarity and cruelty of the Dakota. Printed stories at first

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[219] "Palmer's 'White Captive'," *Atlantic Monthly* 5 (January 1860): 108-109. Lewis, "Captive Rape," 70-2.

[220] Blevins Faery, *Cartographies of Desire,* 190. For depictions of Indians in literature and history see: Louise K. Barnett, *The Ignoble Savage: American Literary Racism 1790-1890* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1975), Robert Berkhofer, *The White Man's Indian*: *Images of American Indians from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978),S. Elizabeth Bird, ed. *Dressing in Feathers: The Construction of the Indian in American Popular Culture* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), Brian W. Dippie, "American Indians: The Image of the Indian," Nature Transformed, TeacherServe. National Humanities Center. July 1, 2014. http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/nattrans/ntecoindian/essays/indimage.htm,

stressed torture, death, and mutilation; rape was never mentioned explicitly until the war drew to a close. Henry Sibley was the first public official to claim that the captive women had been violated. In a letter to his wife on September 17, Sibley announced that Mrs. JannetteDeCamp and her children had recently arrived in his camp. DeCamp, who had escaped from the Dakota with the help of "civilized Indian" Lorenzo Lawrence, "report[ed] that the brutes in human shape have fearfully abused their white captives, especially the young women, and girls of tender age."[221] Prior to DeCamp's arrival, Sibley believed that the captives were being well treated. On September 8, he even wrote to a fellow officer claiming he had, on good authority, evidence that "no violence has been offered the [women]…they are well taken care of by the farming Indians."[222] However, routing the Dakota and securing the return of the captives took longer than Sibley thought it would. DeCamp's words, coupled with the frustration of an extended campaign against Little Crow, weighed heavily on Sibley. By the time the Dakota finally handed over their prisoners at Camp Release, Sibley had changed his mind. He now believed that "all of the

[221]September 17 1862 Henry Sibley to his wife.Henry H. Sibley Papers.Minnesota Historical Society. The accuracy of DeCamp's statements to Sibley is debatable. DeCamp told fellow captive Mary Butler Renville that she personally knew three young women who had been raped. Renville described DeCamp as weepy, spoiled, but also "reliable." Mary Butler Renville, *A Thrilling Narrativeof Indian Captivity,* (Minneapolis: Atlas Company's Book and Job Printing Office, 1863), 19. Sarah Wakefield, another Dakota captive, claimed in her narrative that she spoke often with DeCamp during their ordeal. Wakefield claimed she knew of only two women who were raped. Wakefield, *Six Weeks*, 117. In her own 1894 narrative, DeCamp never directly mentioned that any of the captives had been raped.

[222] September 8, 1862. Henry Sibley to Adj. General O. Malinross. Henry H. Sibley Papers.Minnesota Historical Society.

younger" women captives and girls had suffered sexual trauma at the hands of their captors.[223]

Although most white Minnesotans assumed the Dakota sexually abused every female captive, only two Dakota were ever officially tried for rape.[224] One of the first cases heard by the Military Commission was the case of Te-he-hdo-ne-cha, charged with raping Margaret Cardinal [sic] (Cardenelle). Testifying at Te-he-hdo-ne-cha's trial Margaret Cardinal (Cardenelle) swore, "the prisoner has slept with me. He has raped me against my will." Te-he-hdo-ne-cha corroborated Cardenelle's story, admitting that he "slept with this woman once" and "did bad towards her once."[225] The Military Commission at Camp Release immediately found Te-he-hdo-ne-cha guilty and sentenced him to death. Upon review, President Lincoln upheld Te-he-hdo-ne-cha's conviction and he became one of the 38 hanged at Mankato on December 26.

The only other Dakota officially convicted of rape was Ta-zoo, alias Plan-doo-ta. The commission charged and convicted Ta-zoo with participating in the murders of Mr. Patoille (Patville) and Mary Anderson, and the rape of Mattie

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[223]September 27, 1862, Sibley to his wife.Henry H. Sibley Papers.Minnesota Historical Society.

[224] The lack of rape charges is surprising given the prevalence of alleged rapes and various avenues for redress that existed. The Civil War was unique in that nearly 400 soldiers were prosecuted by the military for violent sexual crimes. Historians E. Susan Barber and Charles Ritter have pointed to the number of female complainants and high rate of conviction as evidence of the military court's attempts "to provide female victims with sexual justice." E. Susan Barber and Charles F. Ritter, "'Unlawfully and Against Her Consent': Sexual Violence and the Military During the American Civil War," in Heineman ed., *Sexual Violence in Conflict Zones*, 202-214, 214.

[225] Marion Satterlee, *The Court Proceedings In The Trial of Dakota Indians Following the Massacre in Minnesota in August 1862* (Minneapolis: Satterlee Printing Co., 1927), 9.

Williams. In the trial notes, Ta-zoo admitted that he "ravished" Miss Williams but said "she was not willing and I desisted. I tried to sleep with her twice, but she was too young."[226] Williams vehemently denied Ta-zoo's assertion that he held off raping her because of her age, testifying that Ta-zoo forced himself on her on at least two separate occasions. Insisting he was innocent, Ta-zoo claimed that he had actually saved the lives of Mattie Williams and one of her fellow captives, listed in the trial records as Mary Swan (her actual name being Schwandt).[227] He went to the gallows on December 26 proclaiming his innocence.[228]

The best documented of all the rape claims, the story of Mattie Williams, was told and retold in the months and years following the end of the Dakota War.[229] When the Dakota attacks began on August 18, Williams had been in Minnesota only

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[226]Satterlee, *The Court Proceedings*, 11. While the trial transcripts charge Ta-zoo with killing a "Mr. Patoille," the final list of Dakota condemned to death by President Lincoln lists Ta-zoo as the murder of "Mr. Patville." Abraham Lincoln to the United States Senate, December 11, 1862 Ex. Doc. No. 7, section E. (accessed on Dakota Trial Transcripts Microfilm, roll 1) It is unclear exactly how old Mattie Williams was at the time of the attack. She was described as a "girl" in several sources. See: Franklyn Curtiss-Wedge, *The History of Redwood Country Minnesota* (Chicago: H.C. Cooper Jr. & Co., 1916), 161; Oscar Garrett Wall, *Recollections of the Sioux Massacre: An Authentic History of the Yellow Medicine Incident, of the Fate of Marsh and His Men, of the Siege and Battles of Fort Ridgeley, and of Other Important Battles and Experiences, Together with a Historical Sketch of the Sibely Expedition of 1863* (Lake City, Minn.; Home Printery, 1908), 197.

[227] Actually, the captive's name was Mary Schwandt. Her name is consistently misspelled as Swan throughout the trial transcripts.

[228] According to Isaac Heard's*History of the Sioux War*, Ta-zoo maintained that he never raped Mattie Williams in his final statement before his execution. Heard also wrote that Ta-zoo "said he would have violated the women, but they resisted." 279.

[229] Sibley discussed Williams's rape in a letter to his wife dated September 27. That same day, Reverend Stephen R. Riggs mentioned Williams's ordeal in a letter to his daughter Martha. Major General Pope alluded to Williams's treatment in an October 6 letter to Sibley. In addition to the brief notes regarding Williams's trial testimony, an embellished version of her story appeared in McConkey's*Dakota War Whoop*. Bryant and Murch reference the rape in their *History of the Great Massacre*. Heard too mentioned the rape in his book, but did not name any of the alleged victims.

a few weeks. An Ohio native, Williams lived with her uncle, Joseph Renyolds, and his family at their home along the Red Wood River. Upon learning of the outbreak Williams fled with Mary Anderson, Mary Schwandt, and a "Mr. Patoile."[230] When a group of drunken Dakota warriors tracked the party down, the warriors murdered Patoile, seized the young women, and set off for the Dakota camp where Williams and the others suffered from hunger, physical abuse, exhaustion, and "the fate worse than death." Williams spent six weeks as a captive until September 27, when most Dakota surrendered themselves and their captives at Camp Release.

Upon the captives' release, a group of army officials and Reverend Stephen Riggs questioned each woman about her treatment. It was in her interview that Williams first recounted her violation. Two of the camp officials even mentioned it in letters they wrote that same evening. Sibley reported to his wife that Williams "has been very much abused," and Reverend Stephen R. Riggs lamented to his daughter, Martha, that "[p]oor Mattie Williams,…has been wonderfully abused. She grieves over it. "[231] Notably absent from these reports and the ones that followed, was Mattie Williams's voice. She testified at Ta-zoo's trial but, for unknown reasons, the court

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[230] Bishop, *Dakota War Whoop*, 241, Bryant and Murch, *History of the Great Massacre*, 99-103, See also: Mary Schwandt-Schmidt Papers. Minnesota Historical Society. The wagon driver's name is spelled differently in each of these sources. Bryant and Murch and Satterlee called him Patoile, but in McConkey's book he was "Mr. Patwell." Mary Schwandt, Heard, and President Lincoln all referred to his as "Patville." For various spellings of Patoille/ Patoile see Marion Satterlee, *The Court Proceedings In The Trial*, 11 and Bryant and Murch, *A History of the Great Massacre by the Sioux Indians, In Minnesota*, 326. For Lincoln's report in which he sentenced Ta-zoo to death for the murder of "Mr. Patville" see Abraham Lincoln to the United States Senate, December 11, 1862 Ex. Doc. No. 7, section E. (accessed on Dakota Trial Transcripts Microfilm, roll 1).

[231] September 27, 1862. Sibley to his wife. Sibley Papers. MNHS. September 27, 186, Stephen R. Riggs to Martha Riggs.Riggs Family Papers. MNHS.

reporter chose not to write down her words verbatim.[232] Abused in captivity, Mattie Williams's violation continued long after her Dakota captors surrendered at Camp Release. Compelled to disclose the circumstances of her rape first to the all-male Military Commission, and again at Ta-zoo's trial, Mattie Williams's story was later repeated, embellished, and repackaged for public consumption in such books as McConkey's*Dakota War Whoop* andHeard's*A History of the Great Massacre*. As her personal trauma became public, Mattie Williams lost the ability to control *her* story. Instead, she became merely a character in the larger public narrative of the Dakota War.

Everyone who wrote about Mattie Williams characterized her as the epitome of refinement and womanly virtue. Henry Sibley described Williams as "a young lady, very respectable and of fine personal appearance."[233] Harriet Bishop McConkeywent even further, proclaiming Williams "the fairest, most cultivated, and most attractive of the youthful women," captured by the Dakota.[234] Depicted as possessing youth, beauty, respectability, and refinement, Williams presented a sharp contrast to her "brutal" and "savage" captors. In her study of Theresa Gowanock and Theresa Delaney's captivity narratives, Kate Higginson found that in the nineteenth century "only 'respectable' women were seen to be rapeable, because they, unlike other classes of women, were assumed to possess a defensible purity. A raped woman had to meet a stringent set of (racialized and classed) conditions in order to be

[232] The only direct quote attributed to Williams was that Ta-zoo "tied my arms when we were taken." Satterlee, *Court Proceedings*, 11.
[233]Sibley to his wife. September 27 1862. Henry H. Sibley Papers.Minnesota Historical Society.
[234]Bishop, *Dakota War Whoop*, 240.

deemed innocent and worth re-*patria*-tion into a *pater*nally-defined…society."[235] In the Dakota War's master narrative, Mattie Williams ceased to be an individual, becoming instead, a symbol of Minnesota and its white citizens whose homes and families the Dakota had destroyed.

Though Mattie Williams's rape remains memorialized in the rhetoric and early histories of the Dakota War she, like most nineteenth-century women, left little else in the historical record. What historians know of Mattie Williams comes entirely from the pens of others. Such was not the case with Mary Schwandt. Publicly silent regarding her captivity for more 30 years, Schwandt began to speak and write about her experiences as a Dakota captive in 1894. Fourteen at the time of her captivity, Mary Schwandt was 46 years old when she first published an account of her captivity among the Dakota. She spent the remaining 45 years of her life giving speeches and interviews, collecting newspaper clippings on the war, and writing multiple versions of her story. It was in one of these narratives that Schwandt directly refuted a claim made in print nearly 50 years prior, that she had been raped while held as a captive among the Dakota.

The "Narrative of Mary Schwandt" first appeared in Charles S. Bryant and Able B. Murch's 1864 *The History of the Great Massacre*. In this first-person narrative, Schwandt recounted the events of August 18; her flight from her employer's (Joseph and Valencia Reynolds) home, her party's ambush by a group of

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[235]Emphasis in original. Kate Higginson, "Feminine Vulnerability, (neo) Colonial Captivities, and Rape Scares" in Blair et.al eds.,*ReCalling Early Canada*, 44. For the importance of a woman's reputation when assessing the validity of rape claims see: Block, *Rape and Sexual Power*, Faery, *Cartographies of Desire*, Heineman, *Sexual Violence in Conflict Zones*, Martha Hodes, *White Women, Black Men: Illicit Sex in the 19th-Century South.*

intoxicated Dakota, and her trip to the Dakota camp. It was in the Dakota camp, wrote Bryant and Murch, that Mary Schwandt, like Mattie Williams, first experienced the true horrors of her captivity.

Within moments of her arrival in the camp, Dakota men surrounded Mary Schwandt.

> …[A]fter annoying me with their loathsome attentions…one of them laid hands forcibly upon me,…I screamed, and one of the fiends struck me on my mouth with his hand…They then took me out by force, to an unoccupied tepee,…and perpetrated the most horrible and nameless outrages upon my person. These outrages were repeated, at different times during my captivity.[236]

Any reader in 1864 would have clearly understood the implications of the term "nameless outrages." In the nineteenth century, the term was just one of many metaphors for rape. Directly following this section of the narrative, Bryant and Murch inserted an editor's note. They claimed to possess "the details of this poor girl's awful treatment" but deemed them "too revolting for publication."[237] The authors instead left their readers to imagine the most graphic and horrific scenarios.

For over 30 years Bryant and Murch's account stood as one of the most popular, accurate, and reliable accounts of the Dakota War. But beginning in 1894 Mary Schwant began to write. Between 1894 and her death in 1939, Mary Schwandt produced no fewer than six versions of her captivity story. Some of these narratives were personal, written for herself and her family. Others, such as the 1913 *Reminiscences of Mary Schwandt*, were obviously intended for publication. In this

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[236] Bryant and Murch, *A History of the Great Massacre by the Sioux Indians in Minnesota* (Cincinnati: Rickey & Carroll Publishers, 1864), 339-40.
[237] Bryant and Murch, *A History of the Great Massacre by the Sioux Indians in Minnesota*, 340.

55-page narrative, Schwandt wrote about her family, her captivity, and her release. She also took aim at those who she felt had wronged her. Surprisingly, Schwandt reserved her harshest words not for the Dakota, but for the white authors of early histories.

> In closing, I cannot refrain from referring to a matter which is indeed exceedingly distasteful to me. A number of early writers disposed of their books on the merit (or demerit) of the amount of 'blood and thunder' personal references, which they delighted in making. My name has been freely used in this manner by some, ignorant of the real facts, at a period when I was too young to refute such statements even had I known of them, which I did not. Not many years ago I personally caused to be suppressed the repetition of a former edition which fairly reeked with personalities which might better have been left unsaid considering that those women, afterward became mothers of families. In my own case, those statements are utterly untrue, not that the same fate which overtook others could not have overtaken me, but which it seemed was not my destiny, so why acknowledge by silence, events which never occurred. I owe it to my children to set down in these pages a stand-refutation of those misstatements.[238]

Mary Schwandt leveled two somewhat contradictory accusations at the authors of early war histories. She condemned the writers for embellishing their work with "blood and thunder" but also for knowingly and unscrupulously printing information capable of causing pain or embarrassment to the subjects, now wives and mothers. Meant to chastise the authors of such books, Schwandt's words also seemed to confirm that some of the reported rapes did, in fact, take place. However, Schwandt expressly denied that *she* had been raped in captivity, accusing men like Bryant and Murch of fabricating her rape and manipulating her story for financial gain. By then a 65-year-old woman, Schwandt still felt compelled to repudiate these rumors. Remaining silent on the issue was, in her mind, tantamount to admission.

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[238] Mary Schwandt and Edna Ward, "Reminiscences of Mary Schwandt-Schmidt as told to Mrs. Edna Sanford Ward, St. Paul, Minn" (ca. 1913), 55. Mary Schwandt-Schmidt Papers.Minnesota Historical Society.

Schwandt couched her angry words in the themes of maternal love and family obligations, claiming she felt a responsibility to her (by then adult) children to put to rest any unsavory rumors about their mother's past.

Schwandt may have also been contemplating her public image and legacy when she vehemently denied the claims made in Bryant and Murch. By 1913, Mary Schwandt was a minor celebrity in Minnesota specifically because of her status as a former captive. Between 1894 and 1939, she participated in celebrations marking the anniversaries of the Dakota War and gave several talks on the subject of her captivity. Whether or not Mary Schwandt was raped in captivity is unclear. Whatever the truth, Schwandt consciously sought to distance herself from the inevitable rumors, innuendos, and prejudices that even alleged victims of rape faced. Mary Schwandt's long life, numerous public speeches, and prolific writing afforded her the unique opportunity to craft and promote *her* version of her captivity, a version in which she denied ever having been sexually assaulted.

Unlike Mary Schwandt who had the "final say" on the subject of her treatment in captivity, the captives from Lake Shetek lived with the stigma, rumors, and innuendo surrounding rape for the rest of their lives. Of the three women and seven children seized by the Dakota, five allegedly suffered the "fate worse than death." Speculation about the treatment experienced by Mrs. Laura Duley, Mrs. Mariah Koch, Mrs. Julia Wright and Roseanne and Ellen Ireland appeared in various printed sources including *History of the Sioux War*, *A History of the Great Massacre*,and *Dakota War Whoop*. Then, in 1894, Harper Workman, a Brown county resident, physician, and amateur historian began collecting information about the early history

of Lake Shetek. His book, *Early History of Lake Shetek County* contained biographical sketches about each of the lake's early pioneer families and a lengthy discussion of the Dakota War. Assisted by his associate Neil Currie, Workman interviewed more than 15 of the survivors of the Dakota attack, including Mariah Koch and Laura Duley. Comparing the accounts of the Shetek women's captivity contained in the early Dakota War histories with the material in Workman reveals the variety of ways each woman dealt with the allegations made about (or against) her and how each woman bore the trauma of her captivity differently.

On August 20, a group of Dakota led by Lean Bear, White Lodge, and Sleepy Eyes attacked the settlement at Lake Shetek. An isolated settlement consisting of only about 50 people, the Dakota attacks caught the men, women, and children of Lake Shetek completely off-guard. When the violence began, those individuals not killed outright gathered at the home of John and Julia Wright to decide their next move.[239] The Shetek settlers quickly realized they were outnumbered and, desiring a peaceful end to the situation, asked a Dakota named "Old Pawn" to help them negotiate. Eventually, both sides came to an agreement. The Dakota would let the whites escape as long as the whites promised to leave peacefully. Relieved that they would be able to escape with their lives, a group of 34 men, women, and children set off toward Fort Ridgley.

The tenuous agreement between the Dakota and the Shetek settlers quickly collapsed. As the wagons carrying the escapees passed through a swamp, the Dakota

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[239] Heard,*The Sioux War*, 99., Mrs. John Eastlick, *The Lake Shetek Indian Massacre in 1862*, 1890. According to witness LaviniaEastlick, John Wright was away at Mankato. Eastlick later wrote that she was part of a group of 34 men, women, and children who were ambushed by the Dakota.

opened fire. The area was eventually renamed "Slaughter Slough" because of the carnage. A least a dozen people died during the shootout at the slough. A few men and boys managed to escape during the attack, abandoning the women and children. Those who remained faced one of three fates: death, escape, or capture. Only a few individuals avoided capture by playing dead, lying for hours in the tall grass. After an hours-long siege, the Dakota seized the surviving women and children and carried them off into captivity.[240] Some were held for months, but only two of the captives taken at Lake Shetek, 28-year-old Mariah Koch and John Wright Jr., the three-year-old son of John and Julia Wright, appeared on the list of "white prisoners at Camp Release."

Sometime in either 1857 or 1858, Mariah Koch and her husband Andreas immigrated to the United States from Germany. In 1859, the couple moved to Shetek, built a cabin, and began to farm the land. Andreas Koch was one of the first killed on August 20, allegedly shot in the back by a group of Dakota who had asked Koch to fetch them a drink of water. Once she became aware of her husband's murder, Mariah Koch fled to the Wright's home. She was a part of the group captured at Slaughter Slough. Unlike the other Shetek captives, Koch escaped from her captor Wakeaska (White Lodge) after only ten days. She escaped with the help of an "Indian squaw," joined the "friendly" Dakota camp, and ended up as part of the larger group of white women and children "redeemed" at Camp Release.[241] Despite

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[240] The three women held as captives were Laura Duley, Julia Wright, and Mariah Koch. The captured children included Roseanne and Ellen Ireland, Emma and Jefferson Duley, Eldora and John Wright Jr., and Lillian Everett.

[241] "Andreas Koch" in Harper Workman, *A History of the Early Settlers near Tepeeotah and Surrounding County which may interest my son and future lot owners*

the relatively short duration of her captivity, Mariah Koch remained deeply affected by her ordeal. What actually occurred during Koch's time in bondage however, was an issue of some debate.

At least three different versions of Mariah Koch's captivity experience exist. The first of these accounts appeared in Bryant and Murch's 1864 *History of the Great Massacre* and the second was the result of an interview Mariah Koch gave in 1894 to Harper Workman. The third account, given by fellow captive Laura Duley, also came from Workman's book but told a far different story than either Koch or Bryant and Murch. These three vastly different interpretations of Mariah Koch's captivity underscore the difficulty in discovering "the truth" about the past.

The same Bryant and Murch, who included allusions to the brutal and depraved details of Mary Schwandt's rape, had comparatively little to say about Mariah Koch. Bryant and Murch's*History* depicted Koch as a plucky heroine who successfully tricked her captor into believing that she possessed supernatural abilities. While forced to carry her captor White Lodge's gun, Koch surreptitiously wet the power, rendering the weapon inoperable. She then refused to follow White Lodge any further. When he threatened her, Koch "instantly bared her bosom, and dared him to shoot." The gun failed to go off and "the superstitious savage believed she bore a charmed life…and asked her which way she wished to go."[242] In this rendering of events, carrying White Lodge's gun and, at one point, being compelled to drive a wagon were the extent of the indignities Koch suffered.

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in the Association. Nd. Dakota Conflict of 1862 Manuscripts Collection. Reel 4. Minnesota Historical Society, Bryant and Murch, *A History of the Great Massacre*, 156.

[242] Bryant and Murch, *History of the Great Massacre,* 156.

Mariah Koch's own version of her time in captivity contained few details and no mention of the "powder story." On December 4, 1894, Harper Workman interviewed Koch(then Mrs. Hohnmuth) about the events of August 20, her captivity, and her escape. Koch spoke freely and at length about her neighbors and the circumstances surrounding her husband's death. When it came to discussing her captive experience she hesitated, explaining to Workman, "I never speak of my treatment while in captivity, but the way Mrs. Duley and I were treated, cannot be told, and from what Mrs. Wright told me afterwards, she fared no better." Koch declined to elaborate or comment further. Then, perhaps worried what Workman might assume if left to his own devices, Koch added, "[m]any of the terrible reports are not true. I was NOT outraged."[243] On this last point Koch was emphatic, evidenced by Workman's capitalization of the word "not" in his manuscript.

Although Koch insisted she had not been raped, Workman expressed his doubts about the "strong stocky, German woman."[244] Koch's statement, "I have thanked God that I have always been childless," contrasted sharply with nineteenth-century gender ideals that placed motherhood as the ultimate aspiration of all women.[245]However, the most compelling evidence that Mariah Koch lied about her rape came from her fellow captives. Wrote Workman, "survivors say that one night during her captivity, she was taken to a tepee and forty bucks, one after another, outraged her. Mrs. Duley says it is true."[246] In her own interview with Workman,

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[243] "Andreas Koch" in Workman, *A History of the Early Settlers,*24.
[244]"Andreas Koch" in Workman, *A History of the Early Settlers,* 25, 26.
[245]"Andreas Koch" in Workman, *A History of the Early Settlers*, 24.
[246] "Andreas Koch" in Workman, *A History of the Early Settlers near Tepeeotah and Surrounding County* , 25.

Laura Duley claimed that both she and Mariah Koch were raped on this first night of their captivity. Duley claimed Koch tried first to fight off her attackers and "injured [Old Pawn] so seriously that for many days he was forced to ride on a travois."[247] But neither of the two women could save themselves from "the fate worse than death." According to Duley, the Dakota bound "their wrists and ankles together and accomplished their purpose, other squaws holding their knees apart."[248] These accounts differed dramatically from the one printed in Bryant and Murch's book and sharply contradicted Koch's own claims that she had not been abused. Realizing that her story could potentially embarrass or harm her former neighbor and friend, Laura Duley chose not to contradict Koch's version of events publicly. Duley only divulged the graphic details of Mariah Koch's rape to Workman on the condition that he not publish or repeat any part of the story until after Koch's death.

The majority women and children captured during the Dakota war spent no more than six weeks in captivity. Some women escaped within hours, others managed to slip away after a few days. Mariah Koch spent only ten days in captivity, but the remaining Lake Shetek captives, Mrs. Julia Wright and her daughter Eldora, Mrs. Laura Duley and her children Emma and Jefferson, Roseanne and Ellen Ireland, and Lillian Everett, were not so fortunate. Rather than surrender to Sibley their captors fled, heading northwest into the Dakota Territory. For three months the group evaded capture. Then, on November 20 a group of Lakota known as the "Fool

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[247] "William J. Duley" in Harper Workman, *A History of the Early Settlers near Tepeeotah and Surrounding County* , 43A. The 43A is not a typo. Workman accidentally included two page forty-threes in his manuscript so, to differentiate, he added an "A" to the second page 43.
[248]Ibid.

Soldiers" caught up with White Lodge's band. After a great deal of negotiation, the Fool Soldiers successfully secured the captives' release, trading their own horses, blankets, and guns for the two women and six children.[249] It took another nine days for the group to reach Fort Randall, the nearest outpost, where the captives spent several weeks recovering. Four and a half months after their capture, the final Shetek captives arrived back in Minnesota on New Year's Day. Rumors immediately surfaced about what had taken place during their extended time in captivity. Soon thereafter, authors began to preserve these allegations in their books about the war.

Long before Laura Duley and Mariah Koch told their narratives to Harper Workman, stories of the abuse suffered by the captives taken from Lake Shetek appeared in print. Some of the most gruesome and disturbing allegations of rape came from the stories about the Lake Shetek captives. In *History of the Sioux War*, Isaac Heard described the rape of two women, one of whom was pregnant, along with the mutilation and rape of two young girls captured at Lake Shetek. Heard's accounts read almost identically to those written by Minnesota infantryman George Doud. In his diary, Doud claimed that he received this information from Dr. Walter A. Burleigh, government agent to the Yankton.[250] Neither Heard nor Doud's accounts included alleged victims' names. Whether the men simply did not know the women's

[249]Doane Robinson, "A Side Light of the Sioux," *McClure's Magazine* 21 (1903): 426-31.
[250] Heard, *History of the Sioux War*, 100-1. September 25. George W. Doud Diaries.Minnesota Historical Society.

names or chose not to print them to avoid exposing these individuals as rape victims is unknown.[251]

On the other hand, Harriet McConkey had no such qualms about printing the names of the two women allegedly raped and tortured by the Dakota. She identified the women as Laura Duley and Julia Wright. Alleging "both the women were *enciente*when taken captive," McConkey wrote that Duley and Wright, "were obliged to submit to the vile embraces, one of five and the other of three of these brutal monsters, till abortion followed; and even then there was scarce a suspension of suffering in this regard."[252] Describing rapes so brutal that they forced the women to miscarry, McConkey sought to horrify her readers and respond to any Eastern sympathizers who might still view the Dakota as "noble" people. And while they differed over the details, Heard and Doud's accounts both corroborated the basic story of Mrs. Duley and Mrs. Wright's abuse. For Laura Duley and Julia Wright, their experiences in captivity produced lasting effects on their relationships and lives.

Laura and her husband William Duley were one the first white families to settle permanently at Lake Shetek.[253] William farmed while Laura tended to the home and watched over the couple's children. By 1862, the Duley brood numbered

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[251] Though their ages vary in each of the different accounts, it is widely believed that Roseanne and Ellen Ireland were the two girls raped in captivity. In addition to Heard and Doud, see "Incidents of the Indian Massacre as told by Mrs. Kock [sic]." Neil Currie Papers.Dakota Conflict of 1862 Manuscripts Collection.Minnesota Historical Society.

[252] Harriet Bishop McConkey, *Dakota War Whoop*, 326-7.

[253] In an interview with Workman Duley claimed that he moved his family to Minnesota in 1858. Workman however, believed Duley was confused and placed the family's arrival closer to 1856. Workman's estimate seems more accurate since William Duley was a member to the Minnesota Constitutional Convention in 1857. See "William Duley" in Workman, 41-3.

five and ranged in age from 10 years to six months. Like Koch, the Duleys were a part of the group ambushed at Slaughter Slough. When the Dakota opened fire on their group, Laura watched helplessly as Dakota soldiers killed her son William Jr. Four of the Duley children survived the initial battle, but only three survived the day. Four-year-old Belle Duley died when, according to Mariah Koch, "an Indian squaw tied her to a bush and threw her knife at her[,] striking her till she was dead."[254] Further compounding Mrs. Duley's anguish was that her husband William, a solider in the Union Army, allegedly abandoned her and their children in the midst of the firefight. For the remainder of his life Mr. Duley claimed to have fought valiantly against the Dakota. He even bragged that he had fired the shot that killed Lean Bear. Several eyewitnesses, however, recalled a much different version of events. Harper Workman recorded that, "[William] Everett, [Charles] Hatch, and Mrs. [Mariah] Kock [sic] say Duley was a coward, that he was running when they entered the Slough, and never stopped."[255] Unaware of Duley's apparent cowardice, the military officials at Mankato awarded him the dubious honor of cutting the rope that simultaneously hanged the 38 Dakota at Mankato.

The brutal rape that Laura Duley claimed she and Mariah Koch endured on their first night of captivity was allegedly just the first of many terrible events Duley experienced during her three months among the Dakota. Of the three Duley children captured, only eight-year-old Emma and six year old Jefferson survived their ordeal. Mrs. Duley never discussed the circumstances surrounding the death of six-month-old Francis, but both Heard and Doud claimed that an infant belonging to one of the

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[254]"Andreas Koch" in Workman, *A History of the Early Settlers*, 25.
[255] "William J. Duley," in Workman, *A History of the Early Settlers*, 42.

Shetek captives "had its brains dashed out against the wagon [its mother] was driving."[256] Francis Duley was the only infant captured at Slaughter Slough and the only member of the Shetek group to die in captivity. For Laura Duley, freedom from captivity meant returning a family, house, and community destroyed by war.

The Duley family, like so many other Minnesotans, spent the post-war years trying to rebuild their homes and lives. William finished his army service in 1865 and returned to farming, this time in Blue Earth, Minnesota. Sometime in the 1870s the Duleys left Minnesota and moved to Beeson, in Colbert County Alabama. By 1885 William and Laura Duley had apparently fallen on hard times. Complaining that he was "66 years old and feeble and have never had any remuneration from the Government," William Duley tried to parlay his role in the mass hanging into a government pension.[257] Should that plan fail, Duleyhad another plan: to try and make money by capitalizing on the deaths of three of his children, the trauma his wife experienced in captivity, and his own minor "celebrity" status as the man who "cut the rope," at Mankato. In a letter to a friend, Mr. Duley wrote that he and his wife had created a "historacal [sic] skitch [sic] of the deeds and depredations of the [S]ioux outbreak." Reasoning that "good money could be made by going east" promoting such a book, Duley even contemplated joining the lecture circuit since he was "a prety [sic] good talker in public."[258] The Duleys' plans to publish a book and

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[256] Heard, *History*, 100. Doud Diary, September 25.
[257]William J. Duley to Mr. Arnold, July 27, 1885, Dakota Conflict of 1862 Manuscripts Collection.Minnesota Historical Society.
[258]William J. Duley to Mr. Arnold, July 27, 1885, Dakota Conflict of 1862 Manuscripts Collection, Roll 1.Minnesota Historical Society.

promote it never materialized, but the couple did eventually find an audience for their story—Harper Workman.

William and Laura Duley's increasingly desperate financial situation undoubtedly influenced the stories they told Workman.[259] If Workman successfully published his account, they reasoned, it might generate interest for the couple's own book-in-progress. The Duleys thus had financial incentive to provide Workman with a "good story," even if it contained embellishments or outright lies. Harper Workman made clear that he did not consider William Duley an altogether trustworthy source. On several occasions, Workman expressed skepticism of Duley's claims of bravery and heroism during the war. He even provided testimony from William Duley's fellow captives that directly contradicted Duley's words. But despite his distrust of William Duley, Workman had no such reservations about the veracity of Laura Duley's statements. When Mrs. Duley followed her lurid description of the sexual abuse she and Mrs. Koch suffered with the allegation that, during captivity, a Dakota woman had attempted to have a dog rape her, Workman printed the story verbatim.[260] That Workman, who was so suspicious of William Duley's claims, printed even the most obscene and preposterous portions of Mrs. Duley's story as gospel attests to the persistence of the master narrative of the Dakota war. Although more than twenty years had passed, many white Minnesotans still believed the public narrative of the

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[259] Although Harper Workman did not record exactly when he interviewed the Duleys, it had to be before 1890. Workman claimed the Duleys lived in Beeson, Alabama when he corresponded with them. The Duleys moved to Beeson in the 1870s but left in 1890 and moved to Tacoma Washington. http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=59962077

[260] "William J. Duley," in Harper Workman, *A History of the Early Settlers near Tepeeotah and Surrounding County*, 43.

Dakota War, a version of events which claimed that the overwhelming majority of women had been brutally abused during their captivity.

Harper Workman's willingness to believe even the most outrageous claims about the Dakota reflected the pervasiveness of anti-Indian sentiment that still existed in Minnesota. Unfortunately for the Duleys, Workman never published his book. The couple's financial situation finally improved in 1889 however, after Congress granted William Duley a pension. In 1890, the couple moved to Tacoma, Washington, where their son, Jefferson, was the chief of police. Throughout various hardships including the murder of three of their children, William's desertion at Slaughter Slough, Laura's four-and-a-half-month captivity and rape, and financial hardship, the Duley marriage endured. Only William's death in 1898 brought their 50-year partnership to an end.

The same could not be said of John and Julia Wright. Their marriage fell apart almost immediately following Mrs. Wright's return from captivity. John Wright's abhorrent treatment and eventual abandonment of his wife demonstrated an extreme case of the degree to which racism and misogyny were entrenched in the minds of many nineteenth-century Americans. By all accounts, the Wrights were a mismatched pair. Everyone Workman interviewed spoke "very highly" of Julia Wright, claiming she was a "good and kind" woman. The same could not be said of her husband John. According to Workman "all say he was disreputable."[261] John Wright was absent at the time of the outbreak, having left his farm and family in the care of his neighbor Thomas Ireland. Mrs. Wright and her two children survived the

[261] "Wright," in Workman, *A History of the Early Settlers*, 52.

massacre at Slaughter Slough on August 20 and became captives of the Dakota. She may or may not have been pregnant at the time of the attack. What seems more certain and of far greater consequence were the claims that, after four and half months, Julia Wright returned home pregnant and eventually gave birth to a dark-skinned child.

Julia Wright was the final captive to be ransomed back to the Fool Soldiers. While the other captors eagerly traded their captives for the guns, blankets, and ponies the Fool Soldiers offered, White Lodge "absolutely refused to surrender Mrs. Wright on any terms."[262] It was only after a long and heated discussion with his sons that White Lodge agreed to relinquish Wright. Perhaps White Lodge had grown fond of his captive. Apparently Mrs. Wright "could speak a little Indian," a trait that distinguished her from many of the other women captured during the outbreak.[263] Or, perhaps White Lodge's reluctance to surrender his captive had more to do with fear. Without his captive, White Lodge had nothing to bargain with in the event of his capture by the U.S. Army. And, if White Lodge knew that Wright was in fact pregnant, he may have worried about the safety and the future of their unborn child.

On New Years Day 1863, Julia Wright and her six-year-old daughter Eldora arrived in Minnesota. Here, Mrs. Wright reunited with her husband John and her son John Jr., who had been separated from his mother and sister only days into their captivity. For the next few months the family lived together. Julia may have told her husband about the abuse she endured, but as his wife's belly began to grow, so did

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[262]Doane Robinson, "A Side Light on the Sioux," *McClure's Magazine* 21 (1903): 430.
[263]Mrs. John Eastlick "The Lake Shetek Indian Massacre in 1862" 1890, 5.

John Wright's suspicions that the child his wife was carrying might not be his. According to Workman, "Wright lived with his wife until she was confined and then when he saw the child was part Indian, he left her."[264] Several sources confirm that Julia Wright suffered terribly while in captivity. According to one account, the captives "were…naked and in a condition so pitiable that even the [Fool Soldiers who came to rescue them] were moved by their grief."[265] And while most Minnesotans pitied the alleged rape victims, John Wright blamed his wife for surviving. After abandoning his wife and children John Wright "secured a divorce saying he did not care to have a woman occupy his bed who would not die rather than submit to the treatment she did from the Indians."[266] For Wright, a dead wife would have been preferable to one who had survived "the fate worse than death."

Or maybe Wright believed that his wife's pregnancy was not even the result of rape at all. At least some nineteenth-century medical professionals believed that pregnancy could only result in a relationship between consenting parties. In November 1862, less than two months before Julia Wright's return, a Dr. Edmund Arnold published a piece in the A*merican Medical Times* that asked "Can Pregnancy Follow Defloration in Rape When Force Simply is Used?" His answer was that it was "very improbable," explaining "in truly forcible violations…the uterine organs cannot well be in a condition favorable to impregnation." It was nearly impossible, he concluded, for a woman to become pregnant via a "legitimate rape." Arnold did,

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[264] "Wright," in Harper Workman, *A History of the Early Settlers near Tepeeotah and Surrounding County*, 53.
[265]Robinson, "A Side Light on the Sioux," 430.
[266] "Wright," in Harper Workman, *A History of the Early Settlers near Tepeeotah and Surrounding County*, 53.

however, concede "that a woman of virtuous impulses may be so overcome by passion excited in resisting a sudden assault that…[she] may subside into passive submission, and that impregnation may result, but then she became a consenting party in the eye of the law. It is not rape."[267] That Julia Wright was a prisoner when she became pregnant and was therefore incapable of entering into a consensual sexual relationship with any of the men who held her captive was irrelevant to men like Dr. Arnold and John Wright. According to Dr. Arnold, a medical "professional," pregnancy could only result from either active or passive consent, meaning a woman like Julia Wright had not fought back "hard enough."[268] John Wright used a similar logic to argue that his wife violated her purity and her marriage vows. Workman tried to follow up and interview both John and Julia Wright. John Wright refused to speak to Workman's associate Neil Currie.Workman tried but was unable to locate Mrs. Wright. Following her divorce, she moved to Nebraska, remarried, and was never heard from again. Likewise, Workman was never able to determine the fate of the child at the center of the controversy.

Despite the ubiquity of rape allegations in the months and years following the end of the Dakota War, very few women actually admitted to experiencing sexual abuse in captivity. Only two, Margaret Cardenelle and Mattie Williams publicly charged their captors with rape. Mary Schwant and Mariah Koch both vehemently

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[267] Edmund S. Arnold, M.D., "Can Pregnancy Follow Defloration in Rape, When Force Simply Is Used?" *American Medical Times* 22 (November 29, 1862): 297-8. For recent proponents of this theory see: Todd Aiken (R-MO).

[268] Estelle Freedmen discusses the emphasis nineteenth century courts placed on whether or not a woman had "fought back sufficiently" during her rape. If a victim could not prove that she had seriously maimed or injured her attacker, courts assumed she had consented and thus found in favor of the accused. Estelle B. Freedmen, *Redefining Rape*, 25.

denied the claims that they had suffered "the fate worse than death" and Laura Duley's decision to share her experience with Workman was influenced in part by her husband and their financial woes. Julia Wright never expressly confirmed or denied her abuse. But not every captive's story made its way into the public record. Some women, like Theresa Eisenreich, managed to keep the circumstances and outcomes of their captivity largely private affairs.

Tucked away in the Brown County Historical Society Archives is a striking photograph and letter that, when viewed together, present compelling evidence of captive Theresa Eisenreich's rape. The photo dates from sometime between 1893 and 1902, when photographer A.H. Anderson operated his studio in Hallock, Minnesota, and depicts a Native woman wearing a typical turn-of-the century dress. The subject of the photo is LiasaDagen "Theresa's Daughter while held captive by the Indians." On the back of the picture is scrawled, "it was said she went crazy."[269] Although mother and daughter bore little resemblance to one another, Liasa's relatives claimed her as a part of their family. Because of her clothing, it is not unreasonable to assume that Theresa raised Liasa instead of sending her back to the Dakota. The letter accompanying her photo says nothing about LiasaDagen or why she "went crazy." However, it does shed light on the circumstances surrounding Theresa's background, captivity experience, and post-captivity life.

Originally from Germany, Theresa and her husband Balthazar Eisenriech immigrated to America in 1854. Four years later, the couple settled in Minnesota

[269]Andrew H. Anderson, photographer. "[LiasaDagen," undated.]" Photograph. Brown County Historical Society. Brown Country Historical Society Archives to Gary C. Anderson email. May 23, 2014.

where they lived with their children Sophie, Peter, Mary, and Joseph until the outbreak of violence in August 1862. According to family legend, "after Balthazar was killed, Theresa defended herself and the…children with a tomahawk she took from one of them."[270] At first glance, the tomahawk-wielding Theresa seemed to conform to the stereotype of the American Amazon, a category created by historian June Namias after her careful assessment of dozens of captivity narratives. After examining a range of captivity narratives from the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries, Namias ultimately concluded that captive white women fell in to one of three main categories: Survivors, American Amazons, or Frail Flowers. Amazons, according to Namias were women who fought back physically when Indians threatened their homes and families.[271] However, in all of Namias's examples, the American Amazon successfully fought off their Indian attackers. Such was not the case with Theresa who spent six weeks among the Dakota before gaining her freedom along with the other captives at Camp Release.

Allegedly Theresa Eisenriech's fierce defense of her own life and the lives of her children impressed her Dakota attackers. Family correspondences reported that "the Indians thought she was too brave to burn at the stake" and so they decided to

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[270]Aubrey ElainVomchka to Alvin [?]. July 15, 1982. Brown Country Historical Society Archives.

[271] June Namias, White Captives: *Gender and Ethnicity on the American Frontier* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 33. Melvin J. Thorne argued that women in captivity narratives fall in to one of two categories; fainters, who passively accept their captivity or fighters, who remain "strong and resolute" throughout their ordeal. Melvin J. Thorne, "Fainters and Fighters: Images of Women in the Indian Captivity Narratives," *Midwest Quarterly* 23 (Summer 1982): 426-36, 428.

spare Thersea's life and the lives of her children.[272] It is hard to imagine that, after Dakota soldiers killed her husband and her own desperate attempts to fight the same men with a tomahawk, Theresa Eisenriech would consent to sex with any Indian. She may have been compelled to however, for the sake of her children. Gerda Lerner explained that when the lives of their children were in danger, "women would submit to whatever condition her captors imposed to secure the survival of her children."[273] In TherseaEisenreich's case, this may have meant submitting to rape by one or more men.

Widowed with four young children and pregnant with the child she would name Liasa, TherseaEisenriech must have been terrified following her release from captivity. Peter Dagen's marriage proposal late in 1862 likely brought about a tremendous sense of relief. The couple married in Kittson County, Minnesota in the north part of the state, far away from Theresa's former friends and neighbors in Renville County. This move may have been necessary to escape the prying eyes of her neighbors because Thersea would have been visibly pregnant by late 1862.[274] That Peter Dagen wanted to marry a pregnant Theresa and take on the responsibility of four young children set him apart from many of the men of his era. And whereas John Wright abandoned his wife after he realized the child she gave birth to was not

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[272]Aubrey ElainVomchka to Alvin [?]. July 15, 1982. Brown Country Historical Society Archives.
[273]Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy,* 78.
[274] Brian Eisenrich, "The BalthasarEisenrich (Eisenriech) Family," Family and Friends of the Dakota Uprising Victims, accessed August 18, 2014. http://www.dakotavictims1862.com/descendants-stories-of/descendants-stories-of/index.html .Familiy histories differ as to where the couple married. Aubrey ElainVomchka believes the couple married in Renville County and moved to Kittson immediately after. I will need to investigate the marriage records in both Renville and Kittson counties at a future date to confirm these facts.

his, Dagen most likely adopted Liasa since she used *his* surname for the rest of her life. Little else is known about Theresa except that she had five more children with Peter Dagen and died in 1909. It is unknown whether or not the trauma of her captivity manifested itself later in her life, if it influenced her relationships with Liasa, her husband Peter, or any of her other children or if it played any role in Liasa's eventual insanity.

During the Dakota War, some rapes did occur. While the rape of female captives certainly was not as ubiquitous as military officers, congressmen, and historians reported, evidence suggests that, despite Dakota provisions against rape, more than two white women experienced "the fate worse than death." Compelling evidence exists that Dakota soldiers abused at least ten females: eight women and two young girls. Only Margaret Cardinal (Cardenelle) and Mattie Williams testified to their abuse during the Dakota trials. However, it is not unreasonable to believe that Mary Anderson, who died in captivity, and Mary Schwandt, despite her protests to the contrary, may have also been abused. Decades after the fact, Laura Duley confessed to Harper Workman that she and Mariah Koch had both been the victims of brutal sexual assaults. Heard and Doud also believed that Roseanne and Ellen Ireland had been raped as well. And both Julia Wright and Theresa Eiesnreich returned from their captivity pregnant, later giving birth to "dark skinned" children.

In 1862, just as today, sexual abuse was underreported. The unwillingness of victims to report their abuse was due, in large part, to the potential stigma they faced. In addition to rejection by their family and friends, captive women who had allegedly been raped often lost their right to privacy. When stories of alleged rapes entered the

larger canon of Dakota War literature, the victims lost control of the ability to refute claims made about them or the details of their story. Raped women ceased to be individuals and instead became symbols of the heinous acts of violation perpetrated by "hostile and savage" Dakota. Yet some women attempted to challenge the master narrative. Ultimately unsuccessful, these women's narratives reveal the difficulties faced by those who attempted to challenge the status quo.

In their Own Words: The Narratives of Mary Butler Renville and Sarah Wakefield

By the time Sarah Wakefield sat down to write *Six Weeks in the Sioux Tepees*, sometime between the spring and the fall of 1863, she was angry. Immediately following her release from captivity Wakefield became a social pariah. On April 25, 1863, the once-respected wife of doctor John Wakefield, physician for the Yellow Medicine (Upper Sioux) Agency lamented to Reverend Stephen R. Riggs, "Gods Church closed their doors against me, even refusing to give my children Baptism."[275] Almost six months after her release from captivity, Wakefield still found herself unwelcome in nearly every circle of Minnesota society. Sarah Wakefield's exclusion from polite society was a result of the gossip surrounding her behavior while in captivity. Rumors that Wakefield had carried on an illicit relationship with her Dakota captor Chaska began almost immediately upon her release. Her unusual decision to testify on Chaska's behalf at his trial before the Military Commission only served to compound her by then scandalous reputation. Hounded by rumors that she was an "Indian lover," Wakefield embarked on a campaign to try and repair her shattered public image.

Like Sarah Wakefield, Mary Butler Renville constantly faced rumors that she was an "Indian lover." However this was hardly a claim that Renville could have denied. At the time of the outbreak, Mary Butler had been married to her "mixed-blood" Dakota husband John Renville for nearly three years. Unlike Wakefield, Mary Renville was used to such public attacks on her character. Rumors began to fly

[275] Sarah F. Wakefield to Stephen R. Riggs. April 25, 1863. Stephen R. Riggs and Family Papers. Minnesota Historical Society.

the moment she became engaged to John Renville who, despite his education and acculturation was still, in the eyes of white Minnesotans, an Indian.

In contrast to the standard stories of destruction, violation, and victimization that composed the traditional narrative of the Dakota War—a version of events that first surfaced in local newspapers, soon found its way to the halls of Congress and later appeared in the war's early histories—the narratives of Mary Butler Renville and Sarah Wakefield provide a far more complex story of their experiences as Dakota captives. Rather than simply reiterating the dominant themes of victimization and suffering at the hands of inherently "savage and bloodthirsty" Indians, both Renville and Wakefield expressed a far more nuanced view of the Dakota people and the War. In their narratives, both women attempted to humanize the Dakota. All Dakota were not brutal, innately sub-human, or inherently evil, they argued. Rather, there were "good" Indians and "bad" Indians. Although each woman experienced several traumatic incidents during the outbreak, both Renville and Wakefield credited their survival to the actions taken by "good" Dakota men and women.

Despite their rather scandalous reputations, both women employed the rhetoric of nineteenth century domesticity in their narratives to try to incite compassion and sympathy for themselves and the Dakota. Their narratives also stressed the gendered nature of captivity and contained several allusions to their identity as white middle class women. Renville used her experiences as a teacher to argue that, with time, the Dakota could become "civilized." Sarah Wakefield's assertion of her white middle class identity was far more overt. She consistently justified what others termed her bizarre behavior by saying it was necessary to protect

her children and, to some degree, simply a manifestation of the stresses brought on by her captivity experience. Both women hoped that by emphasizing their white, middle class backgrounds they could gain some sort of social currency and legitimacy for their stories. Looking for sympathy for themselves and the Dakota, Renville and Wakefield found little. In 1863 and 1864, the wounds from the Dakota War were still too fresh for white Minnesotans.

The years that followed the Dakota War witnessed a flurry of publication. Amateur historians like Harriet Bishop McConkey quickly penned her "authentic" history of the War, issuing a revised copy in 1863. Isaac V.D. Heard's*History of the Sioux War and Massacres of 1862 and 1863* and Charles Byant and Able Murch's*A History of the Great Massacre by the Sioux Indians in Minnesota* both purported to provide "eye witness" testimony of the tragedies that had befallen Minnesota's white residents. These histories emphasized the devastation wrought by the Dakota against the unsuspecting settlers. Reiterating the dominant themes of Indian "barbarity," suffering, and the victimization of white Minnesotans, early histories of the Dakota War sought to appeal to a wide reading public. Titillating the imagination of its prospective audience, these early histories played on white Americans' fears regarding Indians—their "natural" proclivity towards violence, their seemingly insatiable lust for white women young and old, and their inherently debased and savage nature. The graphic descriptions of violence, the lurid allusions to wide scale rape, murder, and the horrors of captivity only served to underscore the need for a complete "extermination" (or, at the very least, removal) of all of Minnesota's native inhabitants of the state, a process that, by 1863, was already well underway.

Many of these earliest histories of the Dakota War contained the narratives of female captives; women who had endured six weeks among the Indians before their "liberation" at Camp Release. Included to both sell books and lend an air of "authenticity" to the authors' claims, women's captivity stories became a major selling point for books like Brant and Murch's*History.* Bryant and Murch's book contained the largest collection of personal narratives and statements from white Minnesotans who had survived the Dakota War. Allegedly an accurate reflection of these women's lives before the August outbreak and the horrific conditions endured by the "poor sufferers" during their captivity, many of these narratives contained at least some degree of editing or alteration by male authors.[276] Some of the editorializing was innocuous, such as in the "Narrative of JustinaBoelter," who Bryant and Murch claimed was so "happy in the paradise of her enchanting new home" on the Minnesota frontier that she "scarcely thought of" her parents who she had left behind in Prussia over a decade ago.[277] In other cases however, the authors' editorial asides were far more insinuating. One example was their claim to posses intimate details of captive Mary Schwandt's alleged violation by several Indian men. However, Bryant and Murch withheld these details, deeming these details "too revolting for publication."[278]

Whether merely providing background information about the women whose narratives they included or inserting their own value judgments regarding the lives of

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[276] Charles S. Bryant and Able B. Murch*A History of the Great Massacre of the Sioux Indians, In Minnesota: Including the Personal Narratives of Many Who Escaped* (Cincinnati: Rickey & Carroll, 1864), 274.
[277] Bryant and Murch, *History*, 324.
[278] Bryant and Murch, *History*, 240.

the captives and the treatment they received at the hands of the Dakota, authors of early histories largely reiterated the dominant themes of the Dakota War—the violation of white women's' homes, families, and bodies by "savage" Dakota. The vision of women presented by these (mostly male) authors of early histories was a limited one. Whether happy homemakers ambushed by Dakota hell-bent on destruction and devastation, or fortunate survivors who managed to elude capture by the Dakota, the authors intimated that these women were clearly victims caught totally unaware by "savage" Dakota. Furthermore, these female victims were "true" women—women who delighted in domestic tasks, were virtuous and loving wives, mothers, and daughters, and who conformed to white middle class social norms and behaviors, even while living on the Minnesota frontier. The message was clear: these were women whose characters and behavior were beyond reproach. The authors of these histories urged their readers to pity these former captives but also to embrace them back into their communities with open arms.

By the time Renville and Wakefield penned their respective narratives, they were already "outcasts" from polite society, oddities who, although pitiable, were so for all the wrong reasons. Mary Butler Renville's decision to marry her "mixed blood" husband John,and Sarah Wakefield's uncompromising defense of her captor Chaska, set them apart from the other white captives. At a time when American attitudes about race were extremely raw and incredibly contentious, the ideas advocated by Renville and Wakefield seemed incomprehensible and even downright traitorous to most white Minnesotans.

Mary Butler Renville's *A Thrilling Narrative of Indian Captivity* and Sarah Wakefield's *Six Weeks in the Sioux Tepees* were substantially longer than any of the narratives that appeared in McConkey, Heard, or Bryant and Murch. These two female-authored narratives, published within two years after the end of the Dakota War, provided an in-depth, first person account of the each woman's experiences as a captive among the Dakota. Renville and Wakefield's stories were authored by the women themselves and far less mediated than the narratives included in early histories; stories told by women but written down and editited by male authors and editors.[279] Attesting to the variety of women's experiences during the Dakota outbreak, Renville and Wakefield's personal stories poignantly illustrated the problems created for women who attempted to challenge social conventions of race, class, and gender in the mid-nineteenth century.

Mary Butler Renville

At the time of the outbreak, Mary Butler Renville and her husband John lived "just a few rods from the Mission at Hazlewood," five miles north of the Upper Sioux Agency.[280] Though in the preface of her narrative Mary claimed that in 1859 the couple "left Galesburg, Ill., for Minnesota, where we have been in the employ of [the] Government as Teachers among the Indians," other evidence places the couple's

[279] Mary Butler Renville's *Thrilling Narrative* spanned 47 pages while Sarah Wakefield's 1863 version came to 54 pages. Over the next year, Wakefield added nine more pages of printed material, bringing the second edition of her book to 63 total pages.

[280] Mary Butler Renville, *A Thrilling Narrative of Indian Captivity* (Minneapolis: Atlas, 1863), 3.

arrival a bit earlier, in September of 1858.[281] For John, the journey to Minnesota was a return home. For Mary, following her then fiancé to the Minnesota frontier undoubtedly filled her with some apprehension. However, it was a journey she was eager and willing to undertake.

Like many other American families in the 1830s and 1840s, the Butlers were on the move. Born in East Plattsburg, Clinton Country, New York on October 17, 1830, Mary Butler grew up in what it today the Midwest. Mary's father James Butler moved his family to Deep River, Indiana in 1836. Sometime after 1840, James moved a bit further east, to Steuben Country, Indiana in order to be closer to his brothers. By 1850, the then-twenty year old Mary resided in Dundee, Illinois with her sister Adelia Parsons. It was around this time that Mary first began teaching. In the years that followed, she taught in schools in both Wisconsin and Illinois.

According to popular lore, it was through her role as a teacher that Mary Butler first met her future husband, John Renville. By April of 1857 both Mary and John resided in the town of Galesburg, Illinois. The couple "are said to have met at Knox College where (the story goes) he was a student and she, his teacher."[282] Within a year, Mary and John became engaged and began making plans to move to Minnesota and work as teachers among the Dakota. Sometime during the winter of

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[281]Renville, *A Thrilling Narrative,* 3. John and Mary married on January 1, 1859. Prior to their marriage, Mary boarded with the family of Stephen Riggs for about four months, placing her arrival sometime in September of the previous year. See Carrie ReberZeman, "Historical Perspectives on *A Thrilling Narrative of Indian Captivity*," in *A Thrilling Narrative of Indian Captivity: Dispatches From the Dakota War* by Mary Butler Renville, ed. Carrie ReberZeman and Kathryn ZabelleDerounian-Stodola. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2012), 28. Carrie ReberZeman's "Historical Perspectives" provides an excellent biography of Mary Butler Renville.
[282]Zeman, "Historical Perspectives," 25. However, Zeman points out, none of Knox College's records show either John as a student or Mary as a member of the faculty.

1857-8, John Renville wrote a letter to Hazelwood missionary Rev. Stephen Riggs, informing Riggs of his engagement to Mary and of the couple's intention to return to Minnesota. In a letter to S. B. Treat of the ABCFM Stephen Riggs referenced Renville's letter, writing that the news "rather surprised us at first, but I hope it will work good."[283] By nineteenth century standards, the unmarried 27-year-old Butler would have been considered an "old maid" and thus more willing to take the chance of marrying across the color line. Optimistic about the match, Riggs's reaction was about as progressive a response as the couple could have hoped to receive. Many of the other white residents living on or near the Dakota Reservation would not be so accepting of the union.

From the moment she arrived at the Hazelwood mission in September of 1858 Mary Butler became a popular subject of gossip and speculation. Highly educated and fashionable, Mary Butler was "a gifted vocalist and organist, could paint and draw, was an accomplished seamstress, and studied the Bible."[284] Few of her white neighbors, particularly the wives and daughters of the missionaries with whom she worked, could boast such an impressive pedigree. That such an accomplished woman would willingly leave behind her family and friends to marry a Dakota man and live the life of a teacher on the Minnesota frontier seemed inconceivable. Accomplished but also opinionated and outspoken, Mary Butler seemed out of place at Hazelwood. However, Butler was also still unmarried at 28 years old and engaged to a Dakota man. She was either desperate for a husband or, her neighbors whispered, there must be something "off" about Mary Butler.

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[283] Stephen Riggs to S.B. Treat. 1 March 1858. Quoted in Zeman, 25.
[284] Zeman, "Historical Perspectives," 32.

Intermarriage between Indians and whites had at one time been common and even encouraged. Viewed as a way to establish friendly relations with Native people, cement trade relationships, and ultimately gain access to Indian land through their "mixed-blood" children, many whites viewed intermarriage as a natural and essential component to establishing a successful life on the frontier. White men stationed in the Minnesota territory as traders or soldiers had, for decades, married Dakota women. However, by the 1850s the popularity of interracial marriages declined. As immigration to the Minnesota territory increased, white men became increasingly inclined to seek marriage partners among the territory's growing population of white women. Some white men even cast aside their Dakota wives in order to marry a white woman.[285]

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[285] There has been a great deal published on the significance of intermarriage between Indians and whites however, it usually falls into two distinct time periods, the first spanning from the seventeenth through early nineteenth centuries or from the late ninetieth century through the twentieth. For examples of books that deal with intermarriage in the early period see Jennifer Brown, *Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Company Families in Indian Country* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1979); and Sylvia Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur Trade Society 1670-1870* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980). For more recent work see Kathleen Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Anne Marie Plane, *Colonial Intimacies: Indian Marriage in Early New England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002); and Susan Sleeper-Smith, *Indian Women and French Men: Rethinking Cultural Encounter in the Western Great Lakes* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001). For examples of recent work dealing with Indian-white intermarriage in the post-Civil War era see, Cathleen D. Cahill, "Native Men, White Women, and Marriage in the Indian Service," *Frontiers: a Journal of Women's Studies* 29 (2008): 106-45; C. Joseph Gentin-Pilawa, "'All Intent on Seeing the White Woman Married to a Red Man': The Parker/ Sackett Affair and the Public Spectacle of Intermarriage," *Journal of Women's History* 20, (2008): 57-85; Margaret D. Jacobs, "The Eastmans and the Luhans: Interracial Marriage between White Women and Native Men, 1875-1935" *Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies* 23, (2002): 29-54; and David D. Smits, "'Squaw Men,' 'Half breeds,' and Amalgamators: Late Nineteenth-Century Anglo-American Attitudes

Yet even before the 1850s, there existed a double standard regarding intermarriage between Indians and whites. Although white men's marriages to Indian women had long been tolerated and even encouraged, a white woman who chose to marry a non-white man was likely to face severe social repercussions. Mary Renville's decision to marry across the color line at a time when American science increasingly sought to "prove" the superiority of some races to others, even asserting that different races had evolved separately from one another (polygenesis) seemed incomprehensible.[286]

If Mary Butler felt any apprehension about marrying her husband, she did not write it down. Her future husband was educated, a schoolteacher, a Christian and, in the eyes of the state of Minnesota, a citizen. In May 1858, seven months before their marriage, the Minnesota State Constitution granted citizenship to "persons of mixed white and Indian blood, who have adopted the habits of civilization," a definition which by all accounts, included John Renville.[287] On January 1, 1859, John and Mary wed in the chapel at the Hazlewood mission. Reverend Riggs conducted the ceremony, giving his tacit approval to the couple's union. But as Mary soon discovered, her marriage to John would not be so easily accepted by all of Minnesota society.

On May 25 1860, more than two years before the Dakota War, an anonymous reporter for the *St. Peter Tribune* took a very public dig at Mary Renville. Having

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toward Indian-White Race Mixing" *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 15 (1991): 29-61.

[286] Robert E. Beider, *Science Encounters the Indian, 1820-1880: The Early Years of American Ethnology* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986).

[287] Minnesota State Constitution, Article 7, Section 1.

recently returned from a visit to the Upper Agency, the author spoke approvingly of "civilizing" work done by missionaries and teachers working at the Agency, Mary Renville included. The author then followed this praise with a personal insult writing, "Mr. Renville, it appears, was for some time a pupil of Mrs. Renville in Illinois, and she came up some 18 months since for the purpose of marrying him. At first he seemed but little disposed to form such unnatural an alliance; but she persevered until the Indian yielded…Her pretext for pressing the alliance was her desire to elevate the race…we do not fancy her style of 'elevation.'"[288] Claiming that Mary had pursued John while he was her student, the reporter implied that she had assumed the male role of aggressor and taken advantage the unequal power relationship between student and teacher. By ultimately luring John into an "unnatural alliance," Mary had, in the view of the reporter, transgressed both gender and racial boundaries. In her pursuit of John Renville, Mary Butler had forfeited all claims to respectability. Surprisingly, the author failed to mention the product of this "unnatural alliance." On March 20, 1860, just over two months before the *Tribune* article, Mary Renville had given birth to a daughter named Ella.[289]

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[288] Quoted in Zeman, "Historical Perspectives on *A Thrilling Narrative of Indian Captivity*," in *A Thrilling Narrative of Indian Captivity: Dispatches From the Dakota War* by Mary Butler Renville, ed. Zeman and Derounian-Stodola, 28.

[289] Although Ella was the Renvilles' only biological child, the couple's home was already full of children at the time of Ella's birth. "Within a few months of their wedding, John and Mary had two Dakota children living with them: Anne Renville, the daughter of John's brother Joseph, and Isabella Renville Martin ("Belle"), daughter of John's sister Madeline. They also took in Lillie, the mixed-blood daughter of Nathaniel Brown, as a boarder." At the time of the outbreak, all of these children, except for Isabella who was away at school in St. Anthony, Minnesota, were still living at the Renville home. Zeman, "Historical Introduction," 33, 87.

Although derided in print as a woman of questionable mores, Mary Renville remained deeply committed to her new family and their home in Minnesota. Like many of the female captives, Mary Renville began her narrative with a description the landscape of her adopted home. She described the area around Hazlewood as "beautiful; being diversified with hills and valleys…the scenery is grand almost to sublimity."[290] And while Renville published her narrative at first anonymously as a serial and then in book form as only "Mrs. Mary Butler Renville," it was clear that her narrative was a collaborative effort. Though only "Mrs. Renville's" name appeared on the cover, the initials "J.B. and M.[B] Reville" appeared at the end of her book, *A Thrilling Narrative*.[291] Throughout her text, Renville used the term "we" to demonstrate that she and her husband had suffered through captivity together, as partners.

Willing to share the hardships and deprivations she suffered while captive, one thing Mary Renville did not disclose to her readers was her husband's identity as a "mixed-blood" Dakota. Whether a deliberate attempt at subterfuge or not, Renville referred to her husband, her constant companion and fellow captive, only as "Mr. R" or "Mr. Renville," never John. In contrast, she referred to all of the Dakota she encountered, including her similarly acculturated Christian Dakota "friends" by their first names. Trying to cloak her husband's identity in the language of the middle and

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[290]Mary Butler Renville, *A Thrilling Narrative of Indian Captivity,* (Minneapolis: Atlas, 1863), 4.

[291] Actually, the initials "J.B. and M.A. Renville" appear at the end of the book. This was an obvious mistake, a product of a careless editor or printer at the Atlas Printing Company. Sarah Wakefield, who published her first edition of *Six Weeks* with Atlas, was so unimpressed with their production of her narrative that she refused to publish her second, expanded narrative with them.

upper classes, Mary Renville sought to establish herself and her husband as compassionate figures, a loving (white) couple who stood by one another during their tribulation. Throughout her captivity, Mary kept a journal, recording the events of her ordeal as they unfolded. This journal later formed the core of her narrative.

Mary Renville wrote her first journal entry on August 21, 1862. Noting that, "this is the first opportunity we have had to note down anything since the terrible massacre commenced, which was August, Monday 18th," she recounted the circumstances of the past three days that had led to her current position as a captive in the Dakota camp.[292] Renville wrote that she and her husband had learned of the outbreak shortly after dinner on the evening of August 18. Mary and her husband first ignored the warnings, believing them to be nothing more than exaggeration.

Threats of impending Indian attacks were a constant in the lives of white settlers on the Minnesota frontier. As Mary explained, "people became so accustomed to Indian stories that they are not willing to believe any reports…so it was with us."[293] It was only when her friends returned "and with authoritive [sic] tones told us to hasten away or we would certainly be massacred" that the Renvilles began making preparations to flee their home.[294] Mary never mentioned whether the "friends" who warned her family of the impending danger were Dakota, white, or "mixed-blood." While living at Hazlewood, the Renvilles had friends among each group. It is reasonable then to assume that those who warned them to escape were likely either full or "mixed-blood" Dakota.

[292]Renville, *A Thrilling Narrative,* 6.
[293]Ibid
[294] Ibid.

Sufficiently convinced that their lives were in danger, the couple fled. Rather than trying to navigate the road to the Upper Agency, where they would likely encounter "Rebel Indians," the couple "hurried on to a camp of friendly Indians for protection."[295] But even among friends, the couple learned that their lives were still in danger. By the following day, "Rebel" Dakota had surrounded the "friendly" camp, rendering everyone within a captive. Throughout her narrative, Mary remained adamant that the "good" "friendly" Dakota were also captives of the "blood-thirsty savage[s]."[296]

Though freer to move about the camp than the white captives, "friendly Dakotas" Renville explained, still faced frequent threats from the "Rebels." These "good Indians" often jeopardized their own safety to aid the white captives in their midst. Mary recounted the stories of John Otherday whose "efficient aid" had helped "the department people" escape to safety.[297] She then related a story told to her by Reverend Thomas Williamson. Williamson arrived at the friendly camp on August 19th. During his visit, he informed the Renvilles that, upon learning of the outbreak, Dakota Robert Hopkins "who is now in prison, told [Reverend Williamson and his family] if they chose to remain with his family, he and others would protect them as long as their own lives were spared." [298]Theactions taken by Otherday and Hopkins were, Renville argued, a testament to the "civilization" efforts of the missionaries. "Had it not been for the gospel which had been planted by these true worthies," Renville wrote, " the massacre would have been more terrible and awful than it

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[295] Ibid.
[296]Renville, *A Thrilling Narrative*, 8.
[297]Renville, *A Thrilling Narrative,* 11.
[298]Renville,*A Thrilling Narrative*, 10-11.

was."[299] This statement and Mary's reference to Robert Hopkins as "now in prison," were obviously added later, as the couple prepared Mary's narrative for publication. Her reference to Hopkins hinted at the injustice suffered by several innocent Dakota men and women following the end of the War. At the time Mary was preparing *A Thrilling Narrative*, hundreds of Dakota were currently being held at Fort Snelling, awaiting their forced removal to the Dakota territory.

Reverend Williamson did not come to the friendly camp simply to pay the Renvilles a social call. His purpose was to collect the other missionaries and try to escape. "[D]etermined to leave camp with our friends," The Renville's plans were thwarted when they received word that "should we attempt to leave we would certainly be pursued, and thus endanger the lives of our whole party."[300] At this point, Mary Renville could have abandoned her husband and fled with Williamson and the white missionaries. However, the thought never seemed to have crossed her mind. Her place, like any dutiful wife's, was by her husband's side.

On August 20 Williamson and the missionaries departed, leaving the Renvilles alone with the Dakota. Recalling his departure from the friendly camp in a letter to Reverend S.B. Treat, Williamson spoke of the relative ease with which he and the other missionaries escaped. Although they passed by several Dakota men, women, and children on their journey, Williamson wrote, "none of them manifested any disposition to molest me."[301] That Williamson and the other missionaries escaped the Friday Camp unharmed demonstrated the relative lack of real danger for

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[299]Renville, *A Thrilling Narrative,* 11.
[300]Renville, *A Thrilling Narrative,* 12.
[301] T.S. Williamson to S.B. Treat, September 8, 1862. ABCFM Papers.

the Renvilles and even the white missionaries. Despite Williamson's invitation that the Renvilles leave with him and the other missionaries, Mary and John chose to stay with the Dakota.

Hopeful that "friendly"Indians would protect them, Mary and John sought out their friend Dakota Paul Mazakutemani. Warning the Renvilles to stay inside "for so many were stealthily watching us, there was danger of our being shot," Paul left to confer with some other friendly Dakota.[302] After deliberating for some time, the friendly Dakota concluded "it was…best to move where they could defend themselves better."[303] That evening, the Renvilles, Paul and several other "friendlies" moved out of their camp and into the nearby Mission buildings.[304] The short trip from the Dakota camp to the Mission was, for all of the travelers, a nerve-wracking endeavor. "Fearing that every rustle of the leaves as we went through the woods…was some savage about to spring on us," the stress of captivity began to manifest itself as paranoia.[305]

For the next two weeks, the group remained at the mission. Though ostensibly safer than the Dakota camp, the sense of peril still remained. Mary's journal entries reflected the feelings of constant fear experienced by many of the captives. Often unable to sleep and constantly besieged by reports of "great depredations" Mary and her fellow captives frequently had to "secret [them]selves several times during the day, for strangers are passing to and fro all the time, and the

[302]Renville, *A Thrilling Narrative,* 12.
[303] Ibid.
[304] Ibid.
[305] Ibid.

sight of a white person may cause them to yield to the *wicked one* and devour us."[306] While the "wicked one" Mary referred to was almost certainly the devil, she also alluded to what she believed were some of the more earthly causes of the violence. Renville blamed alcohol for contributing to the outbreal. She singled out the German town of New Ulm for special mention, claiming its residents "furnished its share" of alcohol to the Dakota.[307] Renville even hinted that the Dakota attacks on New Ulm may have been divine retribution; punishment from God for their citizens' wicked ways.

In addition to hiding from danger, Mary spent much of her time at the mission writing in her journal, visiting with the increasing number of captives rescued by the "friendly Indians," and drafting letters on behalf of the "Peace Party." Among the leaders of the Peace Party were Paul, Lorenzo Lawrence, Simon Anawangmani, and Wasbasha.[308] Opposed to the War from its inception, Peace Party members formed a rival faction within the Upper Dakota camp. Throughout the War, they rescued white captives and endeavored to protect those already in their care. Members of the Peace Party also reached out to white authorities. In their letters, the Peace Party professed their friendship and offered information about the atmosphere in the Dakota camp, Little Crow the assumed leader of the rebellion, and the status of the captive women and children. Much of their communication with white officials, including Governor

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[306]Renville, *A Thrilling Narrative,* 14.
[307] Ibid.
[308] Other members of the Peace Coalition included Taopi, Gabriel and Victor Renville, Samuel J. Brown, and Thomas A. Robertson. See Anderson and Woolworth ed., *Through Dakota Eyes*; Elden Lawrence, *The Peace Seekers: The Indian Christians and the Dakota Conflict* (Sioux Falls, S.D.: Pine Hill Press, 2005); Zeman, "Historical Introduction," 54.

Alexander Ramsey and General Sibley was by letter.[309] Believing that the readers of her narrative "might be interested in [the] contents" of the letters sent by Peace Party members, Mary Renville incorporated several of these letters in *A Thrilling Narrative* and possibly even helped draft a few.[310]

While it is unclear how many of these letters actually reached Minnesota authorities, the themes of the Peace Party's letters to white authorities shared many similarities to the sentiments Mary Renville expressed in her narrative. These sentiments included the distinction between "friendly" and "Rebel" Dakota, the fact that many of the "friendly" Dakota risked their lives to help protect the captives, and that these Dakota were also captives among the "Rebels." The first communication Mary included was Paul Mazakutemani's September 2 letter to Governor Ramsey. The official spokesman for the Peace Party, Mazakutemani opened his letter to Ramsey promising to give the governor "a statement of all the facts I have been able to glean from the Chiefs concerned" but, he confessed, "it is difficult to give correct information from a distance."[311] The distance Mazakutemani referred to was cultural and intellectual rather than physical. Little Crow's followers constantly rode through the friendly camp at the mission. Paul even admitted that he had already held several councils with the Rebels to try and persuade them to release the captive white women and children. Surrounded by the Rebels, the peace party members saw themselves as distinctly different from the hostile Dakota. Most (but not all) of the Peace Party

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[309] For selected letters exchanged between the Dakota camps and white authorities see Zeman and Derounian-Stodola eds., "Correspondences between the Dakota Camps and Authorities, September-October 1862," in *A Thrilling Narrative of Indian Captivity,* 199-216.
[310] Renville, *A Thrilling Narrative,*15.
[311] See Anderson and Woolworth, *Through Dakota Eyes,* 194-5; Renville, 15.

members were fairly acculturated. Prior to the outbreak they had been farmers, wore white clothing, had cut their hair, spoke English, and adopted Christianity. According to Renville, because of their adoption of white clothing, language, and religion, the Rebels viewed Peace Party members with suspicion and did not allow these outsiders to be privy to their war councils.

Mary Butler Renville continually painted the captives' situation as desperate. She also criticized the Rebels for failing to listen to or treat with the "friendly" Dakota. However, comparing Renville's stories with other reminiscences of the Dakota War reveals that her interpretation of events may have been slightly dramatized in an attempt to elicit sympathy from her readers. According to the narrative of Gabriel Renville another Peace Party member and a relative of Mary's (his father was the great uncle of Mary's husband John), while the white captives may have suffered, for most of the war, "mixed bloods" were free to come and go as they pleased. Gabriel Renville's story also contradicted other key points of Mary Renville's narrative. Renville explained that members of the peace party formed their own camp and, over time, more and more Dakota joined their side. Finally, Peace Party members frequently entered the Rebel camp to attend war councils, argue for the release of the captives, and gather information to send to Sibley.[312]

Conceding the general anger among the Dakota on account of their late annuity payments, Paul placed the bulk of the blame for the outbreak on Little Crow, describing the chief as "one of the most active and cruel" participants and "a wicked

[312] "Gabriel Renville, "A Sioux Narrative" in Anderson and Woolworth, *Through Dakota Eyes*, 186-192.

deceiver."[313]Mazakutemi then recounted how he and other "Christian Indians" had helped the missionaries escape and that he was actively trying to persuade the Rebels to release the captives. Professing his loyalty to the whites, Paul claimed that he was "willing to lose my life, if by so doing I could send these poor suffering captives safe to St. Paul."[314] Despite his repeated attempts to reason with the Rebels Paul, according to Mary, had only been successful in securing the release of one white woman and her children.

Hindering his ability to do more on behalf of the white captives Paul explained was the fact that he and the other "Christian" Dakotas were also captives of the Rebels. Describing the delicate and dangerous situation he and the other friendly Dakota faced Paul wrote, "but, my Father, we are all captives; a small band of Christians surrounded by our persecuting neighbors, and whither, oh wither shall we flee?"[315] Begging Ramsey to send help, not only for the white captives but also for the Dakota captives like himself, Paul ended his letter reiterating that, "I am a friend to the whites, to civilization, and Christianity."[316]

Attached to Mazakutemani's letter to Ramsey was a statement from Simon Anawangmani and Lorenzo Lawrence, two other Peace Party members. Although brief, their words reaffirmed many of the sentiments expressed in Paul's "epistle."[317] The two men expressed their sorrow over the recent violence and described the dangers they and their families faced for protecting the white captives and speaking

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[313]Renville, *A Thrilling Narrative,* 16.
[314]Ibid.
[315] Ibid.
[316] Ibid.
[317]Renville, *A Thrilling Narrative,* 17.

out against the war. Writing that, "our lives are threatened if we attempt to leave," Simon and Lorenzo claimed that they too, were captives of the Rebels.[318] Completely disavowing any relation to the "Rebels," Paul and Lorenzo boldly claimed, "if…we are not permitted to go among our white friends, we have resolved to die on Mission ground, rather than go among the idolatrous and wicked Indians."[319] Convinced that death would be a favorable alternative to life among the "wicked Indians," Simon and Lorenzo's note reflected the deep fault lines that existed within the Upper Dakota camp. Still, both men remained deeply committed to their adopted Christian faith. As conditions at the mission deteriorated and the "friendly" Dakota began to fear an attack by the Rebels, Mary Renville wrote that Simon and Lorenzo helped "Mr. Renville…[bury] the church bell" proving that these individuals' faith was more important to them than their safety.

By September 4, life at the mission had become too dangerous. The previous day, Mary recorded that an "Indian ha[d] been breaking windows, blinds, and everything else his strength was able to accommodate, preparatory to setting fire to the building" that the Renville had made their temporary home for the past two weeks.[320] Fearful of being burned alive while they slept, the Renvilles abandoned the building and moved into a tent. The transition from living in a house to living in a tent was not the only change forced on Renvilles that day. As Mary lamented in her journal, "we have been obliged to lay aside civilized costumes."[321] While John had probably worn traditional Dakota dress earlier in his life, Mary never alluded to this

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[318] Ibid.
[319] Ibid.
[320] Renville,*A Thrilling Narrative,* 21.
[321] Renville, *A Thrilling Narrative,* 22.

in her writing. Her use of the word "we" suggested that both Mary and her husband were experiencing this forced transition from white to Indian clothing for the first time. Whether or not Mary was deliberately attempting to "whitewash" her husband for the benefit of her audience was uncertain. This emphasis on identity, specifically a "civilized," white middle class identity became especially important to Mary as her captivity wore on.

Mary Renville made clear to her readers that abandoning her bonnet for buckskin and her room in the mission for life in a tent were unwelcome transitions. The only reason she and John had discarded their house and clothing she claimed, was due to the increasing danger of their situation. Mary took great pains to demonstrate to her readers that, in spite of these changes, she was, at her core, still a white woman. That same evening, Mary "went with Mr. R to take a last look at the Mission buildings" and to pick up "some boards, for making a shed over our cooking stove near the test, determined to keep this vestige of civilization as long as possible."[322] Committed to trying to maintain the trappings of "civilization" while living in a tent, Mary hoped to convince her readers that she and her family had made every effort to cling to any remnant of their (previously-implied) white middle class identity.

Despite their situation, the Renvilles and their friends remained strong in their faith. In an entry dated "*Sabbath September 7*"Mary wrote that nearly 40 people, including white and Dakota captives, attended a church service outside their tent

[322] Ibid.

conducted by a "friendly" Dakota, Lorenzo Lawrence.[323] In the midst of the service, nearly one hundred "Rebel" Dakota soldiers appeared, "firing off their guns into the air and singing triumphant songs" to mark their return from Forest City.[324] The appearance of these soldiers caused a great deal of anxiety for some of the white captives, who "tried to secret themselves in tent."[325] But, as Mary reported proudly, "not a Dakota left their seats."[326] That same day, "as if to show as much disregard as possible to all sacred rights of Christians," the Rebels set fire to the church.[327] Mary recounted how Paul had tried to save the church, explaining to the rebels that this act of arson "would only add vengeance to justice to their final retribution."[328] Paul, Mary claimed, warned the Rebels that eventually they would suffer the consequences for the "terrible deeds" they had committed.[329] The Rebels however, seemed more concerned with their immediate future. Some of Little Crow's warriors returned with a "small day-book" that "stated that General Sibely was marching forward with a large force."[330] In light of this new information, the Rebels decided to move their camp the following morning to Red Iron village, at the mouth of the Chippewa River.

When Mary and John Renville learned of the plans to move camp, the couple originally declared their intention to stay behind and escape in the confusion. As word of the Renville's decision made its way around the camp, the couple realized that trying to escape would be a death sentence not only for them, but for dozens of

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[323]Renville, *A Thrilling Narrative,* 23-4.
[324]Renville, *A Thrilling Narrative,* 24.
[325] Ibid.
[326]Ibid.
[327]Ibid.
[328]Ibid.
[329]Ibid.
[330]Ibid.

other captives. Upon learning that the Renvilles planned to remain at the mission, several of their friends declared that they too would "remain and die with us." Unwilling to sacrifice the lives of their friends, the couple spent the night in "a kind of stupor" before rising and packing their belongings.[331]

As the couple moved along with the rest of the camp, Mary entered a state of despair. Lorenzo Lawrence had escaped the previous evening, taking with him Mrs. Jannette De Camp and her children. Simon resolutely refused to move, declaring that death would be preferable to life with the "idolatrous Indians."[332] Asking her readers to place themselves in her position, Mary wrote that only her faith sustained her through this journey, one of the darkest periods of her captivity.

> To realize in the least what our feelings were, place yourselves in imagination of the same condition. Leaving behind the last vestige of civilization, not even daring to wear a bonnet or hat to protect your eyes from the blazing sun as you rode across the broad prairie. It being contrary to our nature to remain long on the hill of difficulty, or in the Slough of Despond, we whipped up the horse, and looked around to see what nature offered to assist us in raising our thoughts to the Creator, who wisely orders all things.[333]

Resigned to put her faith in God to see her through this ordeal, Mary Renville credited the help she received from the growing number of "friendly Indians" as essential to her survival.

By mid afternoon, the march of Rebels and their captives finally reached their destination, Red Iron Village. Here, according to Gabriel Renville, "the commotion of Red Iron's village had the effect of breaking up the soldier's lodge, and to some extent the influence that it had exercised over its own people," splitting up the Rebels

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[331]Renville, *A Thrilling Narrative,* 25.
[332] Ibid. Though he declared his intention to die at the mission, Simon used the confusion created during the move to escape to safety.
[333]Ibid.

as more and more Dakota poured into the friendly camp.[334] Describing the layout of the camps, Renville sought to illustrate to her readers that many of the people in the Dakota camp were either captives or innocent victims of the Rebels. "First…was Little Crow's camp. Second, all the lower bands connected with him in crime. Third, those forced to join his camp, not daring to separate themselves for fear of bringing on a civil war. Fourth, the Hazlewood band. Fifth and last, Red Iron band."[335] Renville explained that only the Dakota in first two camps were actively pro-war. While some individuals in the third camp may have been involved in the raids on white settlements, Renville claimed that they only had participated out of fear. Those in the fourth and fifth camps were actively both anti-war and captives of the Rebels. White captives were disbursed throughout all five camps, their location dependent upon the politics of their captors.

As if to further underscore the divisions within the Dakota camp, Renville wrote "some of the lower bands entirely innocent of the massacre, and who were anxious to separate from Little Crow" seized the move as opportunity to leave the Rebel camps and join the Hazlewood band.[336] At the same time newspapers across the state were calling for the "extermination of the blasted and besotted race," Mary Renville witnessed the ranks of the friendly, anti-war camp swell.[337]

In Red Iron's Village, Mary settled into some semblance of a routine. "Everything moves on in about the same way," she began chapter eight of her

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[334] Anderson and Woolworth, *Through Dakota Eyes*, 191-2.
[335]Renville, *A Thrilling Narrative,* 26.
[336]Renville, 2*A Thrilling Narrative,*27.
[337] "The Poor Indian," *Chatfield (MN) Democrat,* September 6, 1862.

narrative.[338] While the rebels continued to wage war against the white soldiers, an ever-increasing number of Dakota joined the ranks of the "friendly Indians." Mary expressed her growing concern for the "friendly" Dakota whose actions increasingly placed them in conflict with the rebels. Worried "the friendly Indians will doubtless get killed or make themselves trouble in the future," for taking horses and other items from the "deserted [white] settlements," Renville provided the rationale for what appeared to be simple acts of theft.[339] The friendly Indians, she claimed only wanted to protect their families from the rebels, whose threats against the friendly Dakota became progressively more hostile. Justifying the actions of the "friendly" Dakota Mary mused,

> it seems to us they act much the same as white people would in the same circumstances. Their love for the aged ones and helpless children is very strong, and to plunder for these objects to their care, they do not believe to be wrong; for say they, we are driven to it by the rebels, who threatened our aged parents and helpless children with death, if they cannot keep pace on a march with the able-bodied men.[340]

Any apparent acts of theft by the friendly Dakota, Renville reasoned, could be excused. Comparing the friendly Dakota to whites, Mary attempted to rationalize this behavior and humanize the friendly Dakota for her intended (white) audience. Tellingly, she used the term "us" in comparing the friendly Dakota to whites. The passage served as a way for Renville to reassert her own whiteness and imply that identity for her husband, Mr. R.

Over the following weeks, Mary Renville's white middle class identity came to the forefront in several of her journal entries. On September 11, she wrote of

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[338]Renville, *A Thrilling Narrative,* 27.
[339]Renville, *A Thrilling Narrative,* 28.
[340] Ibid.

having to wash her own laundry for the first time since her arrival in Minnesota, "for we are too poor to hire a Dakota woman."[341] Alluding to her middle class upbringing Renville hinted that doing her own laundry was a chore she was not accustomed to performing in her pre-captivity life. Middle class white women in the mid-nineteenth century relied on someone else, usually a woman of color or a poor Irish woman to wash their clothing for them. Labor intensive and deemed potentially hazardous to a woman's health, Mary Renville wrote that, in the past, she "[had] been forbidden by friends and medical advisers to attempt such labor when we were living in civilized life."[342] But allowing her family to continue to wear dirty clothes was also not an option and so Mary, "Mr. R," Ella, and a friend, also named Mary, trekked eight miles round trip to complete the laborious and unfamiliar task.[343] Forced to wash their clothes in cold water, Mary seemed to find at least some humor in the situation writing, "our clothes did not look white, but were cleaner."[344] Though they traveled quite a ways from camp, Mary recounted that her party was never truly alone. Their party encountered at least three different groups of Dakota; all of whom Mary viewed with distrust and anxiety. Her message was clear—the captives were always under surveillance.

Closely watched by their captors, a few of the friendly Dakota still managed to secretly send letters to Henry Sibley. Mary Renville included the text of Wabasha's September 10 and Paul Mazakutemani's September 15 letters to Sibley in

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[341]Ibid.
[342]Ibid.
[343] Carrie Rebar Zeman believes that the "Mary" referred to here in Renville's story may have been John and Mary's niece, Mary Martin. See Zeman and Derounian-Stodola, 305, n. 127;318-9, n.19. Renville, 29.
[344]Renville, 29.

her narrative. In each communication, the authors professed their friendship and urged Sibley and his army to hurry and rescue them, along with the white captives. By the time Paul wrote his final letter, Sibley had received several troubling reports regarding the treatment of the white captives. Originally, Sibley believed that the white captives were safe and well cared for in the Dakota camp. On September 8, Sibley reported to Adjunct General Malinross that he had "questioned two men very closely with reference to the prisoners" and believed that the captives were faring well, despite their circumstances.[345]

> They say the white women and children number 100 or more, that no violence has been offered to the former, that they are well taken care of by the farming Indians…that they are allowed full liberty during the day but are guarded at night…[and] the other half-breeds are kept as prisoners although ungraded, it is announced to them that if they attempt to escape they and their families will be killed.[346]

However, Sibley soon grew troubled by the reports coming in from escaped captives JannetteDeCamp and Lorenzo Lawrence. Having escaped on the evening of September 7, Lawrence, Mrs. DeCamp, and her three children reached Fort Ridgely on September 11.[347] In a September 17 letter to his wife, Sibley confessed "the fugitives [De Camp and Lawrence]…report that the brutes in human shape have fearfully abused their white captives, especially the young women and girls of tender age."[348] No longer confident in the ability of the friendly Dakota to protect the white

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[345]September 8, 1862, Sibley to Adj. Gen. O. Malinross.Henry H. Sibley Papers.Minnesota Historical Society.
[346] September 8, 1862, Sibley to Adj. Gen. O. Malinross
[347] In 1894, JannetteDeCamp (by then, JannetteDeCamp Sweet) wrote her story of captivity and escape from the Dakota camp. Her story will be discussed in detail in chapter five.
[348]September 17, 1862, Sibley to his wife.Henry H. Sibley Papers.Minnesota Historical Society.

captives, Sibley became increasingly concerned for their safety. By the time the Dakota finally handed over their prisoners at Camp Release, Sibley had come to believe that "all the younger" women and girls had suffered sexual trauma at the hands of their captors.[349]

Mary Renville had certainly heard reports regarding the abuse of female captives. While frequently threatened, Renville never wrote of witnessing any acts of rape or murder while a captive. All of her stories regarding these most heinous crimes came to her second-hand, usually by way of other captives. The source of most of these stories was Mrs. DeCamp. From September 3 until the time of her escape with Lawrence on the evening of the 7th, JannetteDeCamp and her children had been guests in the Renville's tent.[350] Renville spent most of her time in Red Iron Village trying to adjust to "tent life," taking care of her family, and anxiously awaiting release. She apologized to her readers for "not being able to keep dates better."[351] The loss of the family's almanac and the tedium of camp life made it difficult to keep track of the passage of time.

One date that Renville recalled with certainty was September 21. The camp had moved "about five miles above Red Iron Village" to a location Mary and the other captives had nicknamed Camp Hope, "for we have a faint hope that Gen. Sibley will reach here soon, probably this week."[352] With little to do except wait for Sibley and the army to arrive, Renville recounted the stories of several of captive women. Some stories, like that of Mrs. Crothers, Renville repeated second-hand. Having

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[349]September 27, 1862, Sibley to his wife.Henry H. Sibley Papers.
[350] See Renville, 18-20.
[351]Renville, *A Thrilling Narrative,* 34.
[352]Renville, *A Thrilling Narrative,* 36.

escaped from the rebel camp, Crothers spent days wandering the prairie with her two young children before finally arriving at Fort Ridgely.[353] At Camp Hope, Mary encountered several captives who had apparently suffered far worse than she and her husband. Though she "always maintained a cheerful, quiet spirit, at least to observers" Mrs. White, wrote Mary "could scarcely refrain from weeping" when the two women first met.[354] Another captive, Mrs. Harriet Adams "threw her arms around our necks and wept bitterly" when invited into the Renville's tent.[355] Adams then recounted how, while in the midst of trying to escape the Indian attacks, she and her child had become separated from her husband. Though her husband managed to escape, Harriet Adams was captured and forced to watch as Dakota warriors brutally murdered her child. Mrs. Adams then spoke of her desire for revenge against the Indians, assuring the Renvilles that her husband undoubtedly felt the same way. The desire for revenge wrote Renville, "pervades the minds of the majority of the people of Minnesota."[356] Although sympathetic to the tremendous loss of life and property suffered by Minnesota's white residents, Mary counseled caution. Here, Renville alluded to a subject that she would deal with in more detail at the end of her narrative; the future of white and Dakota relations in the state of Minnesota.

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[353] "Mrs. Crothers" refers to Helen Carrothers. Her story of captivity and her subsequent escape first appeared as "Narrative of Mrs. Helen Carrothers of Beaver Creek" in Bryant and Murch, *History of the Great Massacre*, 283-97. In 1904 she published her own account as Helen Mar Tarble, *The Story of My Capture and Escape during the Minnesota Indian Massacre of 1862* (St. Paul, Minn: The Abbott Printing Company, 1904).

[354]Renville, 37. Mrs. White later went on to publish her own captivity story as Urania S. Frazer White, "Captivity Among the Sioux August 18 to September 26, 1862." In *Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society 9:* 395-426. (St. Paul: Pioneer Press, 1901).

[355]Renville, *A Thrilling Narrative,* 37.

[356]Renville, *A Thrilling Narrative,* 38.

By late September, the fighting in Minnesota began to draw to a close. Sibley's forces eventually caught up to the rebels and their captives. On September 23, Little Crow and his followers fled, headed towards Canada. The Dakota who refused to surrender took with them a half-dozen captives. When Little Crow absconded, the size of the "friendly" camp swelled, its ranks bolstered by the addition of dozens of Dakota who, until Little Crow's flight, had remained supportive of their chief. With the Little Crow and Rebels gone, the attitudes and atmosphere of the camp changed dramatically. Recalling the day of their release Mary wrote, "the air vibrated with the emotions of the camp."[357] At two o'clock in the afternoon on September 26, "the captives were formally delivered" over to Colonel Sibley.[358]

Mary Renville wrote nothing more of her time at Camp Release. Counted with her husband "on the mixed-blood section of the roster of freed captives, [the Renvilles and their daughter Ella] were afforded the privileges of white ones."[359] First among those privileges was the ability of the Renvilles to leave Camp Release, which they did sometime in early October. Their home destroyed by the war, Mary, John, and Ella were now refugees. After collecting their adopted daughter Belle from school, and possibly staying with John's sister in Mendota, the couple moved to Berlin, Wisconsin in November of 1862. For five months, the couple lived in a rented house near Mary's brother Russell Butler and tried to return to a normal life. They kept abreast of the developments in Minnesota by reading the papers and

[357]Renville, *A Thrilling Narrative*, 42.
[358]Renville, *A Thrilling Narrative*, 43.
[359]Zeman, "Historical Introduction," 87.

exchanging letters with Rev. Stephen Riggs. It was also during this time that the couple began to turn Mary's journal into a narrative.

Before publishing her narrative as a book, Mary Butler Renville's captivity story first appeared as a 13-part serial titled, "The Indian Captives: Leaves from a Journal" in the *Berlin (WI) City Courant.* The first installment appeared on December 25, 1862, the day before the mass execution in Mankato and ran through April 9, 1862 with only two breaks. Described by the editors as only "an intelligent lady who was two months a captive among the Indians during the past season," Mary Butler's identity remained anonymous.[360]Renville employed her identity as an "intelligent lady," to speak with authority regarding her experiences during the conflict. It was only at the end of the last installment, that the "intelligent lady" divulged her identity as "J.B. and M.A. Renville."

"The Indian Captives" appeared during a tumultuous time for the people of Minnesota, a conflict with which Renville's readers in Wisconsin were quite familiar. Editorials in Minnesota newspapers called for the extermination of the Dakota and, in February 1863, Congress confiscated Dakota reservation lands and passed bills calling for the removal of both the Dakota and Hochunk people from the state.[361] At a time when most of the Dakota suffered under deplorable conditions at Fort Snelling awaiting their eventual removal, Mary Renville wrote to inspire compassion for the Dakota and urge Minnesotans not to punish the entire Dakota people for the actions of a few. Recalling that many of the Dakota "manifested much happiness" upon the

[360]*Berlin City (WI) Courant*, "Life among the Indians," December 25, 1862, 3.
[361]Act of February 16, 1863, Statutes at Large 12; 652-653.

meeting the army at Camp Release, this happiness soon disappeared.[362] Within a day of the white captives' release, the Military Commission began to try and convict those Dakota who had surrendered. To Renville, the trials were a miscarriage of justice. Calling the Dakota who fled with Little Crow "Satan's emissaries," Renville argued that Little Crow's warriors were the individuals responsible for the majority of the depredations. While those guilty of perpetrating the most heinous acts of violence had not yet been brought to justice, she wrote "those who delivered themselves up as prisoners of war, the most of whom are not as guilty in crime, are condemned."[363] The trials and the mass execution in Mankato had not been acts of justice,rather they had been acts of vengeance.

Just as terrible as the trials and the hangings was the fate that awaited the Dakota then imprisoned at Fort Snelling. Gabriel Renville, one of the Dakota interred at Fort Snelling later wrote about his experiences. He complained of overcrowding, and the theft of three of his horses. He also explained how the overcrowding and poor living conditions resulted in an epidemic that killed dozens of the prisoners. Describing the atmosphere of Fort Snelling Gabriel Renville wrote, "it seemed doubtful at night whether a person would be alive in the morning. We had no land, no homes, no means of support, and the outlook was most dreary and discouraging."[364] After suffering for months at Fort Snelling, Renville eventually became a scout for the military and received several accolades for his service.

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[362]Renville, *A Thrilling Narrative,* 43.
[363] Ibid.
[364]Gabriel Renville, "A Sioux Narrative of the Outbreak in 1862, And of Sibley's Expedition in 1803" in *Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society 10* (St. Paul: The Pioneer Press Company, 1905), 610-1.

Removal, Mary Renville believed, was an unusually cruel punishment, particularly for the "friendly Indians." Lamenting that "[t]he friends even that protected the suffering ones, are doomed to an exile almost as cruel as that which the captives suffered," Renville compared the removal of hundreds of innocent Dakota to the captivity that she and other white captives had endured.[365] She ended her narrative with one last plea to the whites in Minnesota. Acknowledging the anger and suffering caused by the outbreak, Renville asked "God [to] guide the people of Minnesota…to act wisely in the present instance, and not drive even the friendly Indians to homeless desperation by driving or sending them among the warlike tribes," located in the West.[366] Advising white Minnesotans to consider that the potential repercussions of such an unfair punishment might be "a war more terrible than has yet been recorded in history," Renville probably realized that her pleas fell on deaf ears.[367] For months, newspaper editors across the state of Minnesota had been printing tracts calling "the extermination" of the Dakota a "sacred duty."[368] To her readers in Wisconsin Renville's cautions to the people of Minnesota must have seemed a bit strange. But by the spring of 1863, the residents of Berlin were dealing with their own "Indian problem,"—the presence Mary's husband John and their daughters.

On April 2, 1863, Mary Renville missed the deadline for the final installment of her serial at the *Berlin Courant*. The *Courant's* editors offered no explanation, but

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[365]Renville, *A Thrilling Narrative,* 43.
[366]Renville, *A Thrilling Narrative,* 44.
[367] Ibid.
[368] "Resolution adopted Nov. 23 at New Ulm," *St. Paul Press,* November 29, 1862.

the "Local Matters" section of the paper included a brief editorial, likely directed toward the family of the "intelligent lady" penning the popular serial. It read:

> 'Lo! The poor Indian,' and several of his dusky friends, may be seen daily traversing the streets of this city. None of them look very savage, or offer menace or insult to citizens, still there are many who, since the revolting butcheries in Minnesota last year, the repetition of which are now seriously threatened, look with suspicion on all red skins, and feel uneasy in the presence of even those who profess the greatest friendship.'[369]

The writer's remarks regarding the "dusky" Indians in Berlin's midst may have precipitated Mary Renville's forceful defense of the Dakota in her final installment. However, the publication of such nasty comments may have also caused Mary Renville to realize that whatever she wrote was unlikely to change the deeply held prejudices of her readers. The appearance of this editorial also likely influenced the Renville's to leave town. It was obvious that not everyone in Berlin welcomed the Renville's presence. Within a few weeks of the publication of the final installment of "The Indian Captives," the Renville family left Wisconsin for St. Anthony, Minnesota.

The Minnesota that the Renvilles returned to in the spring of 1863 was far different than the one they had left less than a year ago. By this time, the forcible removal of the Dakota, as approved by Congress, was well underway. That spring, Governor Ramsey ordered the Dakota imprisoned at Mankato moved to a prison at Camp McClellan near Davenport, Iowa. The Dakota at Fort Snelling, including many of the couple's friends and John's relatives, were forced to board steamboats bound for the Crow Creek Reservation in the Dakota Territory. In St. Anthony, Mary and

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[369]*Berlin City (WI) Courant*, "Local Matters," April 2, 1863. Zeman, "Historical Introduction," 90.

John purchased a home, "took four other Dakota children from the internment camp at Fort Snelling into their family," and attempted to rebuild their lives.[370] It was also during this time that Mary Renville began to prepare a book-length version of her captivity, *A Thrilling Narrative of Indian Captivity* for publication in Minnesota. Reprinted in narrative form, Mary Renville's journal made very little impact on the white reading public of Minnesota. Her claims for leniency and compassion on behalf of the friendly Dakota were moot points. The Dakota had already been removed.

In November 1864, John Renville took a position doing missionary work for the ABCFM. His new job required John to travel frequently to minister "to Dakotas scattered in the 1862-63 exile."[371] Mary remained at their home in St. Anthony where continued to teach and to take in Dakota children as boarders. In 1866, the United States Congress recognized John Renville as a "friendly Indian" and awarded him $100.[372] That same year, the couple moved to Beaver Creek in Renville County where John continued his travels and missionary work. Between 1866 and 1869, John Renville increasingly grew convinced that his future lay in ministering to "his people," the Dakota. In the summer of 1869, Mary accompanied her husband on one of his trips to the Lake Traverse (Sisseton) Reservation in South Dakota. At the reservation, the couple reunited with several of their former friends. Seeing her old friends "poor in spirit as well as in temporal things," convinced Mary Renville that

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[370] ABCFM is an acronym for the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Zeman, "Historical Introduction," 92.
[371] Zeman, "Historical Introduction," 93.
[372] United States Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs,* 1866, 238.

her future, as well as her husband's, lay with the Dakota.[373] The couple returned from their journey intent on relocating to the reservation where they could live among and minister to the Dakota. John moved to the Sisseton Reservation in 1870 and, after recovering from an illness, Mary followed in 1871. From 1871 until her death in December 1895, Mary Butler Renville lived among and devoted her life to the Dakota at Sisseton.

Mary may have been simply playing the role of dutiful missionary's wife when she followed her husband west to live among the Dakota however, Renville may have been eager to move away from Minnesota. Mary Renville's fierce and public defense of the Dakota certainly must have made life in Minnesota difficult. Marked forever as an "Indian lover," Mary likely encountered overt hostility from white Minnesotans whose homes and families had been destroyed during the war. While her white middle class upbringing granted her the status of an "intelligent lady," allowing her the opportunity to publish a counter-narrative of the war that emphasized the essential humanity and kindness of the "peaceful Dakota," once her identity was revealed, she was marked as an "outsider," and her narrative all but disappeared from the annals of the Dakota War.

Sarah Wakefield

Unlike Mary Butler Renville, whose captivity story and later defense the Dakota appeared first as an anonymous serial in an out-of-state newspaper, Sarah Wakefield was, from the moment of her release, eager to share her story. In the months following her release from captivity, Sarah Wakefield recounted the story of

[373] Mary Renville, "Reminiscences," *IapiOaye*, April 1881, 38.

her six weeks among the Dakota to anyone who would listen. She first recalled her captivity experience to the unofficial "court of inquiry" established at Camp Release on September 27, 1862, the day after the Dakota surrendered their white and "mixed-blood" captives.[374] A few days later, at the trial of her captor Chaska, Sarah Wakefieldagain repeated her story. Unofficially, she told and retold the story of her captivity dozens of times, in what ultimately became a futile attempt to combat the rumors, innuendo, and alleged scandal concerning the six weeks Wakefield spent among the Dakota. In the months following her release,Sarah Wakefield became consumed with defending both her reputation and that of her captor. Ultimately, Wakefield's desire to vindicate herself and her captor's reputation became the driving force behind the publication of her captivity narrative.

Like many captives, few records of Sarah Wakefield's life prior to the outbreak in Minnesota exist. Further complicating the process of reconstructing Wakefield's early life is that the available documents (her family Bible, marriage license, and census records) all seem to contradict one another in terms of dates, location, and even names. Scholars generally agree that Sarah Wakefield was born in North Kingstown, Rhode Island on September 29, 1829, the youngest of William and Sarah Brown's three children.[375] Any information about Sarah's early life, her family

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[374] Sarah F. Wakefield. *Six Weeks in the Sioux Tepees: A Narrative of Indian Captivity*, ed. June Namias (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), 113.
[375] See Namias, *White Captives*, 208*;* Wakefield, ed. Namias, *Six Weeks*, 25; Kathryn ZabelleDerounian-Stodola,"'Many Persons Say I am a Mono Maniac," *Prospects* 29 (October 2005): 3; Sarah F. Wakefield, "Six Weeks in the Sioux Tepees" in Kathryn Derounian-Stodola, *Women's Indian Captivity Narratives,*(New York: Penguin Classics, 1998),255. Though scholars generally agree on this date, there are several obvious errors and contradictions in the documents surrounding Wakefield's early life. According to Namias, Sarah Wakefield's grandson Orin, claimed the Wakefield

background, her education, how and when she met her husband, and even the date and circumstances that caused her to leave Rhode Island for the Minnesota territory, remain a mystery. In one of Wakefield's few existing personal letters, Sarah revealed that she had "no Father." Of her mother, Sarah wrote, "I have not spoken with her in eight years[,] she has caused me all my trouble."[376] Wakefield failed to comment further on the issue but her timetable dated her estrangement from her family circa1855, shortly before her move to Minnesota. It is not unreasonable then to assume that the two events may have been connected.

Detailed information regarding Sarah Wakefield's life in Minnesota prior to the Dakota War is equally difficult to discern. A certificate of marriage from the Scott County Department of Vital Records reveals that Sarah and Dr. John Lumen Wakefield "were joined in marriage…agreeably" in Jordan, Minnesota on September 27, 1856. However, the couple's marriage certificate contains a glaring mistake—on

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family Bible lists Sarah Wakefield's birthday as June 2, 1830. The Rhode Island census records lists the birth of Sarah F. Brown as September 29,1829. However, her birthplace is listed as North Kingstown, not Kingston as scholars have previously written. See Family Search Online Genealogical Database, https://familysearch.org/search/record/results#count=20&query=%2Bgivenname%3Asarah~%20%2Bsurname%3Abrown~%20%2Bbirth_place%3A%22Rhode%20Island%22~%20%2Bbirth_year%3A1828-1832~ (accessed March 6, 2013). These inconstancies in names, dates, and locations are at least, in part, due to the problems of record keeping in the nineteenth century. Curiously, Sarah Wakefield was privy to these documents and their inconstancies; however, she seemed unconcerned about correcting the inconstancies regarding her personal information.

[376] Sarah F. Wakefield to Stephen R. Riggs. April 9, 1863. Stephen R. Riggs and Family Papers. Minnesota Historical Society. The limited available source material further complicates the process of reconstructing Sarah Wakefield's life and thoughts. According to June Namias, Sarah Wakefield's daughter Lucy Bourke purposefully set fire to her parents' letters. Whether an act of catharsis, vengeance, or subterfuge, Bourke's reasons for destroying the family letters remain unknown. Namias, *White Captives*, 247.

it, Sarah's last name is listed as Butts, not Brown.[377] The couple lived in Shakopee until June 1861 when John Wakefield accepted an appointment as "physician for the Upper Sioux Indians, at Pajutzee, or Yellow Medicine."[378] Then 31 years old and the mother of two young children James Orin (b. 1858) and Lucy "Nellie" Elizabeth (b.1860), Sarah Wakefield dutifully followed her husband further west onto the Minnesota prairie. As she revealed to the readers of her narrative, it was a journey she undertook with a great deal of apprehension. When her steamboat first landed in "Indian country," the Rhode Island-bred Wakefield wrote of her revulsion towards the "six hundred filthy, nasty, greasy Indians" who greeted her at the dock.[379] Already feeling "as if I had really got out of civilization," Wakefield's anxiety only intensified when she learned that her family had merely reached Redwood, a waypoint in their journey.[380] Reaching Yellow Medicine still required a 30-mile wagon ride across the prairie.

Despite the isolation of the Yellow Medicine'sagency, Sarah Wakefield endeavored to retain as many trappings of a middle class life as possible in her new

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[377] JL Wakefield and Sarah F Butts Certificate of Marriage, Scott County Department of Vital Records. In the territorial census records for 1857, both Sarah and John Wakefield are listed as residents of Shakopee, they are listed as living in separate households. Sarah F. Wakefield is listed the as a member of family 38, a 27 white female from Rhode Island. Her husband John is listed as a member of the Clark household, family 37 on the census. John's age (34) and place of birth (Connecticut) all match the identity of Dr. John Lumen Wakefield, Sarah's husband however; in the census he is listed as John C. Wakefield. "Minnesota, Territorial Census, 1857," index and images, FamilySearch (https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/3DQJ-VZM : accessed 28 Mar 2013), Sarah F Wakefield, 1857. "Minnesota, Territorial Census, 1857," index and images, FamilySearch (https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/3DQX-MZM : accessed 28 Mar 2013), John C Wakefield in entry for Miles P Clark, 1857.

[378] Wakefield, *Six Weeks in the Sioux Tepees*, 55.

[379] Ibid.

[380] Ibid.

home. Her five-room home at the Agency contained books, several pieces of fine furniture, various dishes and serving sets, and a fully stocked pantry. In addition to establishing a typical middle class home, Wakefield also retained a love of fashion. John Wakefield's claims for remuneration after the War attested to his wife's extensive wardrobe, which contained silk, cashmere, chenille, linen, lace, velvet, and fur-trimmed clothing as well as various accessories. Along with her love of eastern fashion, Sarah Wakefield's retained subscriptions to several of the nineteenth century's leading periodicals including *Eclectic, Godey's, Harper's Weekly, Mother's,* and *Peterson's.*[381] And, like other nineteenth century middle class women, Wakefield depended upon the labor of other women to assist her in the running of her home. She quickly found capable helpers among the more acculturated Dakota women at the Agency later writing, "I have employed women educated by the missionaries who could sew or cook much better than girls of the present generation."[382] Wakefield's employees were likely graduates from John and Mary Renville's school at the nearby Hazelwood mission.

Employing Dakota women to handle the day-to-day running of her home, Sarah Wakefield enjoyed a great deal more leisure time than the average white woman on the Minnesota frontier. She spent much of her free time horseback riding on the prairie, an activity that inevitably brought her into contact with her Dakota neighbors. Originally frightened by the landscape and its Native inhabitants, Wakefield's initial fear soon subsided. Within weeks of her arrival, Wakefield felt comfortable enough to ride for hours without an escort. "After the first few weeks,

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[381]Namias, *White Captives*, 208.Namias, ed. Introduction, *Six Weeks*, 26-7.
[382] Wakefield, *Six Weeks,* 57.

[I] went with my little boy, alone, to Hazelwood, often returning long after the sun was down, and very often passing through the Indian camp, which…consisted of about five thousand Indians."[383] Wakefield's frequent contact with the Dakota caused her feelings towards them to change dramatically. The same women who, upon her arrival in Minnesota, called Indians "filthy, nasty, [and] greasy," quickly developed an affinity for her Dakota neighbors. Over time, Wakefield claimed that she "began to love and respect [the Dakota] as if they were whites."[384] Wakefield later credited her relationship with the Dakota as essential to her survival during the war and the kind treatment she received while a captive among the Dakota. "I became so accustomed to them and their ways, that when I was thrown into their hands as a prisoner, I felt more easy and contented than any other white person among them, for I knew that not one of the Yellow Medicine Indians would see me and my children suffer as long as they could protect us."[385] Wakefield would later claim that many of the rumors surrounding her behavior in captivity were the result of other captives' jealously and bitterness over the special treatment she and her children received while in the Dakota camp.

On the afternoon of August 18, 1862, Sarah Wakefield became aware of the violence sweeping across the Minnesota frontier. Worried for the safety of his wife and their two young children, James and Nellie, Sarah's husband John encouraged his wife to take their children and seek shelter at Fort Ridgley. John, chose to stay behind, entrusting Sarah and his children's safety to Mr. Gleason, a clerk at the

[383] Wakefield, *Six Weeks in the Sioux Tepees,* 58.
[384] Wakefield,*Six Weeks in the Sioux Tepees,* 61.
[385] Ibid.

Lower Agency. They had only traveled a short distance when Wakefield began to feel uneasy and begged Gleason to turn back. Gleason refused, dismissing Wakefield's "strong feelings of evil" as nothing more than "nevous[ness]" and female hysterics.[386] During a particularly heated exchange, Wakefield recalled uttering these words: "very well, I said, go on; they will not kill me; they will shoot you, and take me prisoner."[387] Whether Wakefield actually uttered these words, or added them later to heighten the drama of her narrative, Gleason ignored them and continued on towards the fort.

Only moments after Wakefield made her pronouncement, two Dakota warriors appeared. One of the men opened fire on the wagon, wounding Gleason. Watching Gleason writhe in agony and fearing she would be next, Wakefield begged "the…Indian loading his gun…to spare me for my children's sake, and promised to sew, wash, cook, cut wood, or anything rather than die and leave my children." Wakefield's pleas seemed to have little effect on the group's leader, a Dakota named Hapa. Hapa turned, shot Gleason again and was about to shoot Wakefield when Chaska, Hapa's bother-in-law, intervened knocking the gun leveled at Wakefield's head out of Hapa's hands. For the next hour, the two men argued over Wakefield's fate. Eventually Chaska convinced Hapa to spare Wakefield's life. Recounting this incident, Wakefield indirectly addressed those who criticized her for defending Chaska following her release by way of an appeal to God. "Father in heaven, I pray thee impress upon the minds of an ungenerous world, who blame me for trying to

[386] Wakefield, *Six Weeks in the Sioux Tepees,*66-67.
[387] Wakefield, *Six Weeks in the Sioux Tepees,* 67.

save the man who rescued me from death…?"[388] Hoping to deflect the criticism levied at her for defending her captor, Wakefield claimed that her actions were motivated by fear, maternal love, and later, and sense of Christian duty to defend the man who had saved her life.

Upon reaching the Indian camp, Wakefield encountered dozens of friendly faces, Dakota who her husband had treated years earlier, during a war with the Chippewa/ Ojibwa. "Many of the old squaws cried like children. They spread down carpets…, gave me a pillow,…prepared my supper, and tried every possible way to make me comfortable."[389] Although the Dakota women in camp tried to make Wakefield as comfortable as possible, she remained nervous. Frequent threats made against her life forced Wakefield and her children to go into hiding on several occasions. Like many the other white captives, Wakefield traded in her and her children's white clothing for Dakota clothes. Describing the transition "from a white woman to a squaw" as "humiliating," Wakefield nevertheless complied.[390] When forced to hide, Wakefield endeavored to make herself "useful" around the camp, assuming the tasks of a typical Indian woman. She prepared meat, painted blankets, washed clothes, hauled water, and even helped with the cooking.[391] Despite the kindness shown to her by several Dakota and her attempts to ingratiate herself to her captors, Wakefield's position in camp remained precarious.

While Wakefield spoke kindly about Chaska, Chaska's mother, and a woman called Mother Friend, she reserved harsh words for many of the Dakota. Employing

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[388] Wakefield, *Six Weeks in the Sioux Tepees*, 68.
[389] Wakefield, *Six Weeks in the Sioux Tepees,* 69.
[390] Wakefield, *Six Weeks in the Sioux Tepees,* 71.
[391] Wakefield, *Six Weeks in the Sioux Tepees*, 70, 103.

the stereotype of Indians as inherently savage, Wakefield claimed that the original outbreak of violence had "aroused" the Dakota's "savage natures," causing them to revert to "blood-thirsty…wild beasts."[392] Comparing the Dakota to wild animals, Wakefield used a then-popular stereotype of Indians in order to dehumanize them to her readers. However, Wakefield's criticism of the Dakota was not limited only to men. Though many of the Dakota women in the camp had treated her kindly, Wakefield accused Hapa's wife Winona of stealing her clothing, earrings, and trying "every way to make me unhappy when Chaska was absent."[393] Chaska's presence, Wakefield argued, not only brought her respite from Winona's cruelty, he saved her multiple times from the cruel intentions of "bad" Indians like Hapa.

Over the course of her narrative, Wakefield claimed that Chaska and several other "good" Indians had protected her and her children throughout the duration of their captivity. In addition to hiding her when "bad" Indians threatened her life, Wakefield insisted that, on at least two occasions, her Dakota friends had saved her from "the fate worse than death." While Wakefield repeatedly denied that she had ever been sexually assaulted while in captivity, the threat of violation was always a possibility. Warned that her life was in danger Wakefield, at the urging of Mother Friend, spent an entire day and night on the prairie with her infant daughter Nellie. The Dakota searching for her "concluded to wait till morning to put their threats into execution, which appears was not death, but what would have been worse."[394] Having escaped this attack on her honor, Wakefield again justified her defense of the

[392] Wakefield, *Six Weeks in the Sioux Tepees*, 65.
[393] Wakefield, *Six Weeks in the Sioux Tepees*, 75-6.
[394] Wakefield, *Six Weeks in the Sioux Tepees*, 81.

"friendly" Dakota to her readers and reiterated her belief that only God could judge her. Wakefield alleged that this was the first attack on her virtue, but it was not the last.

On Saturday August 23rd, Wakefield wrote that a drunk Hapa returned to the tent he shared with Winona, Chaska, Chaska's mother, Wakefield, and her two young children. Believing that Hapa wouldn't dare "to molest me in the tepee in the presence of all the family" Wakefield "pretended to be asleep."[395] According to Wakefield, Hapa instead began yelling, drew his knife, and commanded Wakefield to 'be my wife or die!'[396] Again, Chaska interceded. After arguing for several minutes, Chaska convinced Hapa to leave Wakefield and her children alone by agreeing to take Wakefield as *his* wife. He then lay down beside Wakefield. Once convinced that Hapa was asleep, Chaska left Wakefield's side and returned to his original bed. Defending Chaska's actions that night Wakefield wrote:

> My father could not have done differently, or acted more respectful or honorable; and if there was ever an upright man, Chaska was one…Very few Indians, or *even white men*, would have treated me in the manner he did.[397]

Wakefield not only applauded Chaska's behavior, but provided a sharp reproach against white men most of whom, wouldn't have acted in such an honorable fashion. By privileging the actions of Dakota man over men of her own race, Wakefield provided a damning assessment of white manhood. Other captives' narratives stressed the heroism and bravery of white men however; Wakefield would challenge this assessment throughout her captivity and especially after her release.

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[395] Wakefield, *Six Weeks in the Sioux Tepees*, 84.
[396] Ibid.
[397] Ibid.

News of Sarah and Chaska's alleged marriage quickly traveled around the Dakota camp. The following day, a group of white women approached Wakefield, asking her if the rumor were true. Rather than contradicting the rumors, Wakefield "encouraged everyone to believe" them, fearing what Hapa would do if he found out about her deception.[398] At the time, Wakefield seemed completely unaware of how her acknowledgment of this rumor would be employed to discredit her story and destroy her reputation.

Though Wakefield's captivity experience shared many of the same elements as other women's stories—a traumatic capture, trouble adjusting to life in the Dakota camp, constant fear of death or dishonor—Wakefield found few friends among her fellow captives. Instead of showing her compassion and understanding, Wakefield claimed that the other captives openly gossiped and spread vicious rumors about her while in the camp. Admitting that she had affirmed the rumor of her marriage to Chaska and she had promised among other things "to kill my own people," Wakefield maintained that she was "nearly crazy" throughout the duration of her captivity.[399] Rather than understanding or sympathizing with Wakefield, her fellow captives used her own words against her and "published it to the world, causing people to believe I really meant all I said."[400]

For the duration of her captvitiy, Wakefield remained alienated from her fellow captives. Instead of bonding together in solidarity, Wakefield found herself ostracized from the larger captive group. Forced to suffer alone, Wakefield

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[398] Wakefield, *Six Weeks in the Sioux Tepees,* 84-5.
[399] Wakefield, *Six Weeks in the Sioux Tepees,* 87.
[400] Ibid.

nevertheless claimed she "felt the change from civilized to savage life as much as any one."[401] Despite her physical transformation (during her six weeks as a captive Wakefield lost nearly 40 pounds) and her protests, none of Wakefield's fellow captives believed that her suffering was as real as theirs. In reality, Wakefield had several advantages over most of the other female captives. Sarah Wakefield's prior relationships with many of the Indians, her ability to speak Dakota, and her understanding of Dakota social customs undoubtedly ensured her some preferential treatment compared to other captives.[402] It was Wakefield's willingness to do whatever was necessary—assume the traditional tasks of a Dakota woman, perpetuate lies about herself, or maintain an air of contentedness despite her suffering—that seemed to garner the most disapproval from the other captives.

As word spread of the Army's approach Wakefield, like many of the other captives, waited anxiously for their arrival. For days, the "friendly" Indians waited with their captives, but Sibley never arrived. During this time, Mary Butler Renville invited Wakefield to come and stay with her family in their tepee. After some consideration, Wakefield refused, preferring to remain with Chaska and his family. According to Wakefield, Renville became "quite angry because I left, and said I must

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[401] Wakefield, *Six Weeks in the Sioux Tepees*, 95.

[402] Wakefield wrote that throughout her captivity "The Indians were very kind to me." In addition to saving her life on multiple occasions "they brought me books and papers to read," helped her with her chores. Chaska and his mother even lent Wakefield their blankets so that she wouldn't be cold when the temperature dropped. JannetteDeCamp , expressed her jealously regarding the "special treatment" Wakefield received, telling the doctor's wife "that should would be as thankful if she was as comfortable as I was." Wakefield, *Six Weeks in the Sioux Tepees*, 103, 104, 96.

be crazy" when Wakefield decided to stay with Chaska.[403] While waiting for the Army to arrive, Chaska became nervous and considered fleeing with the rest of the Rebels. Wakefield convinced him to stay, a decision that soon came back to haunt her. As she soon discovered, "liberation" from captivity brought with it an entirely new set of problems to navigate.

On September 26, 1862, Wakefield and her children were some of the 200-plus hostages handed over to the U.S. Army at Camp Release. Describing the scene to General Pope, Col. Sibley wrote "for the most part, poor creatures…and some of the younger women freed from the loathsome attention to which they had been subjected to by their brutal captors were freely overwhelmed with joy."[404] Glad to be free, Wakefield found the accommodations at Camp Release severely lacking. "I did not wish myself back in a tepee, I only wanted the comforts of one, for I was a vast deal more comfortable with the Indians in every respect than I was during my stay in the soldiers camp."[405] She complained about overcrowding, a lack of supplies, having to cook her own food, and feeling uncomfortable as a result the solders' lingering gazes. But Wakefield soon found herself subjected to more than just stares. As the details of her time in captivity emerged, Wakefield increasingly became a subject of public ridicule and scorn.

The day after her release, Wakefield was "the first one questioned" by the makeshift "sort of court of inquiry," consisting of "Col. Crooks and Marshall, J.V.D.

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[403] Wakefield, *Six Weeks in the Sioux Tepees*, 107.
[404] Henry Sibley to John Pope. September 27, 1862. National Archives Records Group 393, Department of the Northwest, LS.
[405] Wakefield, *Six Weeks in the Sioux Tepees*, 112.

Hurd, S.R. Riggs and others."[406]It was during this initial encounter at Camp Release that Wakefield received her first taste of the skepticism and criticism that would haunt her in the years to come. Fully expecting to hear a tale filled with suffering and possibly abuse at the hands of brutal, rapacious, and bloodthirsty captors, Wakefield's storyseemed unbelievable to the men hearing her testimony. She explained to the court that the Dakota, especially Chaska, had protected her and her children and treated them kindly throughout their captivity. In fact, she claimed that Chaska and his mother had put their own lives in peril several times in order to protect both her and her children.

Convinced that Sarah Wakefield must be holding back the gruesome details of her captivity for the sake of propriety, the men on the court urged Wakefield to share any of the more unpleasant or personal details of her captivity with the Reverend Stephen Riggs. Recalling the incident later in her narrative Sarah wrote, "I was the first one questioned…after which, Col. Marshall said, 'If you have anything of a more private nature to relate, you can communicate it to Mr. Riggs.'"[407] Unsure at first what Col. Marshall meant, Wakefield soon realized that he had expected her to testify that she had been physically or sexually abused during her captivity. When Wakefield stuck to story and refused to incriminate Chaska, the commission allowed her to leave. Noting this awkward exchange, Wakefield wrote, "they thought it very

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[406] Wakefield, *Six Weeks in the Sioux Tepees*, 113. Colonels William Crooks and William Marshall would later serve on the Military Commission that heard Chaska's case and sentenced him to death for participating in the murder of George Gleason. J.V.D. Hurd likely refers to Isaac V.D. Heard, a member of Sibley's staff who served as the recorder during the trial. S.R. Riggs was missionary Stephen R. Riggs.
[407] Ibid.

strange I had no complaints to make, but did not appear to believe me."[408] Despite the commission's doubts, Wakefield continued to stick to her story. Chaska, she argued, was her protector. It was Chaska who her safe throughout her captivity.

To the men who heard Sarah Wakefield's testimony, her story truly seemed unbelievable. On September 27, 1862, the same day as Wakefield's interview before the Court of Inquiry, Rev. Riggs wrote to his daughter Martha a letter recounting the day's events. Mentioning Wakefield's case, he referred to it only as "curious" but, as he explained, "I can't tell you about it now."[409] Wakefield's lack of complaints regarding her captor or her time in captivity quickly became a hot topic of gossip throughout the camp. Emboldened by their release from captivity, several women asserted that Wakefield seemed to enjoy her time in the Dakota camp a bit too much. Years later, another former captive wrote that she had seen Wakefield "fully garbed in squaw's attire, hair braided and tallowed, cheeks painted a vermillion hue, laughing and happy, albeit she was a married woman."[410]

Even Sibley alluded to the rumors surrounding Wakefield in a letter to his wife, dated September 27; the same day Wakefield gave her testimony before the court of inquiry. While most of the female captives, "cried for joy at their deliverance from the loathsome bondage in which they had been kept for weeks," Wakefield seemed indifferent to her "liberation." As Sibley explained, "one rather handsome woman among them had become so infatuated with the redskin who had

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[408] Wakefield, *Six Weeks in the Sioux Tepees*, 114.
[409]September 27, 1862 Stephen Riggs to daughter Martha f/ Camp Release. Stephen R. Riggs and Family Papers. Minnesota Historical Society.
[410] Mary Schwandt-Schmidt, *Reminiscences of Mary Schwandt-Schmidt as told to Mrs. Edna Sanford Ward, St. Paul Minnesota* (ca. 1913), 45. Mary Schwadt-Schmidt Papers.Minnesota Historical Society.

taken her for a wife, that although her white husband was still living…she declared that, were it not for her children, she would not leave her dusky paramour."[411] Within a day of her release from captivity, Sarah Wakefield's supposed infatuation with her captor had reached the ears of Col. Sibley, the highest authority at Camp Release.

Despite the growing innuendo surrounding her relationship to Chaska, Wakefield remained resolute in her defense. Insistent that Chaska saved her life, and that their alleged marriage had been nothing more than a fabrication to protect Wakefield and her children from Hapa. Still, the rumors flying around Camp Release began to cause Wakefield a great deal of anxiety. Her behavior became increasingly erratic. When one of Sibley's soldiers threatened to hang Chaska on September 28, Wakefield threatened, 'Capt. Grant, if you hang that man, I will shoot you."[412] Immediately realizing the implications of her words, Wakefield tried to dismiss her comment as a joke. But the damage had already been done. Sibley described the event in a letter to his wife writing, "The woman I wrote you of yesterday, threatens that if her Indian…should be hung, she will shoot those of us who have been instrumental in bringing him to the scaffold, and then go back among the Indians. A pretty specimen of a white woman she is truly!"[413]

In the minds of those at Camp Release, Wakefield's impassioned insistence of Chaska's innocence ultimately served as proof of his (and her) guilt. On October 4, the *Mankato Semi-Weekly Record*reported"the wife of Dr. Wakefield was brought in

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[411]September 27, 1862, H.H. Sibley to his wife Sarah. Sibley Papers. Minnesota Historical Society.
[412] Wakefield, *Six Weeks in the Sioux Tepees*, 114.
[413]September 28, 1862, H.H. Sibley to his wife Sarah.Henry H. Sibley Papers.Minnesota Historical Society.

by the Indian who killed Geo. Gleason, and she is interceding strongly to save his life—even threatening to kill the man who would shoot the Indian."[414] Sarah Wakefield's radical defense of her captor was now public knowledge.

Further complicating Wakefield's reputation was her decision to testify before the Military Commission. One of only a handful of women to testify at the trials of the Dakota prisoners, Wakefield was the only female captive to testify on her captor's behalf. Recalling that the members of Military Commission "though it very strange I could speak in favor of an Indian," Wakefield swore that not only was Chaska innocent of murdering George Gleason, but that he saved the lives of both her and her children several times over the course of her captivity.[415] Despite, or perhaps because of Wakefield's public protestations of Chaska's innocence, the Military Commission found Chaska guilty of being an accomplice to Gleason's murder and sentenced him to death.

When Wakefield learned of the verdict, she unleashed a torrent of criticism against the members of the Military Commission. Pointing out the double standard that existed in regards to men's and women's testimony Wakefield wrote "the Indian

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[414] *Mankato Semi-Weekly Record.* "Release of Prisoners." October 4, 1862. Minnesota Historical Society.

[415] Wakefield, *Six Weeks in the Sioux Tepees*, 115. Isaac V.D. Heard was the recorder for the military commission. His notes regarding Wakefield's testimony in Chaska's case stated: "Sarah Wakefield sworn: Self and two children were with Gleason when he was murdered. Two Indians came up from Lower Agency. The other shot; this man tended the horses. This Indian snapped his gun while Gleason was in his death agony. Saw this Indian endeavor to prevent the other one from firing at me. Jo Reynolds knows him and believes him a fine man. Since then he has saved my life three times. He prevented Indians from killing my children. Expressed great feeling for Whites. His mother took me in the woods and kept me when my life was threatened. Saved my life when Shakopee tried to kill me. Has no plunder. Is poor and generous." Satterlee, *The Court Proceedings*, 10.

who saved George Spencer's life was lauded to the skies…but the Indian that saved me must be imprisoned."[416]Wakefield considered the celebration of George Spencer's captor particularly vexing because, she claimed, it was well-known that he had murdered several whites. Although the overwhelming majority of the captives taken by the Dakota were women and children, most of the testimony given during the Military Commission's trials came from men. Women's testimony was valuable only if it affirmed the dominant stereotypes and prejudices white Minnesotans had against Indians—that the Dakota were cruel, violent, and bloodthirsty. Because Sarah Wakefield's defense of her captor was such a radical departure from the standard story of captivity, the Military Commission simply ignored her testimony, favoring instead witnesses whose stories affirmed the dominant narrative of the war.

Sarah Wakefield refused to silently accept what she considered to be a great miscarriage of justice. Rather than bear the aspersions made against her silently, or try to privately appeal to the members of the Military Commission, Wakefield publicly voiced her displeasure to anyone at Camp Release who would listen, "The more angry I got, the more I talked, making matters worse for Chaska as well as myself."[417] Having already voiced her displeasure of the conditions at Camp Release and the dismissal of her testimony, Wakefield's accusations that "the Commission was not acting according to justice, but by favor" only compounded the growing hostility towards her.[418] The majority of her fellow captives believed the rumor that Wakefield herself had perpetuated during her captivity: that she had married Chaska.

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[416] Wakefield, *Six Weeks in the Sioux Tepees,* 116.
[417] Ibid.
[418] Ibid.

The rumors, coupled with Wakefield's at-times hysterical defense of Chaska and her complaints about the conditions at Camp Release had already made her somewhat of an oddity among the soldiers and military officials at the camp. But the charges of corruption Wakefield levied against the Military Commission were, she later claimed, a fatal mistake.

Eventually Wakefield, like the other white captives, left Camp Release. Worried about Chaska's fate, Wakefield wrote of her relief when "I heard from Capt. Grant that Chaska would not be executed, but would be imprisoned for five years."[419] Unable to convince the Commission of Chaska's innocence, Wakefield declared her relief that at least Chaska's life would be spared.

In the weeks and months that followed, Wakefield and her children were extremely busy. After a tearful reunion with her husband at Fort Ridgeley, the family moved to Shakopee and began rebuilding their lives. Although removed from her captivity ordeal, Wakefield remained interested in the outcome of the Dakota prisoners. Comforted by the knowledge that Chaska would not be executed; Wakefield continued to check the papers for news regarding the prisoners. Originally alarmed when noticing the name Chaskadon on the President's list, Wakefield's fear soon subsided when she realized that the Chaskadon's prisoner number and list of crimes did not match her Chaska's.

Although Chaska's name was not one of the 39 that appeared on Abraham Lincoln's list, a mysterious set of clerical errors led to Chaska being one of the 38 Dakota executed at Mankato on December 26, 1862. Upon learning of the "mix-up,"

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[419] Wakefield, *Six Weeks in the Sioux Tepees*, 118.

Wakefield became enraged. She confronted Reverend Stephen Riggs on the streets of St. Paul, demanding to know what had happened. Riggs claimed Chaska's hanging was a mistake, a sentiment he reiterated to Wakefield in a letter she later reprinted in *Six Weeks in the Sioux Tepees*. Wakefield was unwilling to accept Riggs's explanation for Chaska's execution believing "it was done intentionally" to punish *her*.[420]Declining to name the person she believed was responsible for Chaska's death, Wakefield expressed her hope that this individual would ultimately have to answer to God for his crime.

The "accident" surrounding Chaska's death was, according to Wakefield, only one of several shady dealings that took place during and after the Dakota War. Most of her fellow captives, Wakefield claimed, lied during their testimony at Camp Release. Writing "many persons told entirely different stories respecting their treatment, after Sibley came, than they did before," Wakefield alleged that the majority of her fellow captives had fabricated stories of privation and mistreatment in order to gain sympathy from the soldiers.[421] Wakefield's accusations further suggested that the dominant narrative of captivity, the version constructed immediately after the outbreak and perpetuated in the contemporary histories was not only false, but a deliberate fabrication of events. Directly challenging the stories of mass rape and abuse Wakefield wrote, "I do not know of but two females that were abused by the Indians…[though] it is true that there were many persons there that I

[420] Wakefield, *Six Weeks in the Sioux Tepees*, 122.
[421] Wakefield, *Six Weeks in the Sioux Tepees*, 124.

never saw."[422] Despite Wakefield's position as an eyewitness to the happenings in the Dakota camp, her testimony was largely ignored.

In the final pages of *Six Weeks in the Sioux Tepees*, Wakefield returned to many of the common themes of her narrative—the deception of her fellow captives, the incompetence of government agents and military leaders, and the unjust suffering endured by the Dakota. The Dakota's new reservation was, she claimed, plagued by poor soil and poisoned water and surrounded by hostile Indians. She wrote, "this poor down trodden race is in a dreadful state"—one final appeal on behalf of her Dakota friends.[423]

An advocate for the Dakota and critic of government dealings with the Indians, Wakefield's outspokenness created problems. In contrast to the standard accounts of the Dakota War that portrayed white Minnesotans as innocent victims of Indian savagery, Wakefield argued that the War was instead the tragic but inevitable culmination of the years of abuse perpetrated against the Dakota by white officials. Some of the worst offenders, she argued were the local traders who, for years, exploited the Dakota for personal gain. "[T]here were…four trading houses, where were kept groceries and dry goods for the Indians, cheating the creatures very much."[424] In addition to cheating the Dakota out of their annuities, Wakefield claimed the traders had committed a series of offenses against the Dakota; they supplied them with alcohol, married Dakota women and then simply abandoned their wives and children, and taught the Dakota foul language. For years, she claimed, the

[422] Wakefield, *Six Weeks in the Sioux Tepees*, 117.
[423] Wakefield, *Six Weeks in the Sioux Tepees*, 127.
[424] Wakefield, *Six Weeks in the Sioux Tepees*, 60-1.

Dakota had bore these repeated injustices "without retaliation; but it came in all in God's own time, for at the Trader's was the first death-blow given in the awful massacres of August, 1862."[425] Casting the Dakota as long-suffering victims of injustice, Wakefield sought to humanize the Dakota to her audience and more fully explain the circumstances that led to massive destruction and loss of life in Minnesota.

Though the Dakota had suffered for years at the mercy of duplicitous traders, Wakefield attributed the immediate cause of the outbreak to the desperate circumstances in the summer of 1862 and the ineffectiveness of Agency officials to prevent the outbreak. She explained that every June, the Dakota arrived at the Agency to receive their annuities but in 1862, the annuities were delayed. Within a few weeks, the Dakota had exhausted their supplies. Forced to subsist on green fruit, prairie grass, and wild turnips, Wakefield claimed that between June and August, "many [Dakota] died from starvation and disease caused by eating improper food."[426] To compound their suffering, Agency officials denied the Dakotas' repeated requests for access to the warehouses stuffed with food. Wakefield asked her readers to put themselves in the same position as the Dakota. Claiming that whites in a similar desperate situation would have eventually snapped, she marveled at the Dakota's ability to suffer for so long before reacting with violence. Running counter to the newspaper reports and early histories of the Minnesota War that described the outbreak as a spontaneous event, Wakefield suggested that the violence in Minnesota had deep roots. Even more shocking was Wakefield's insinuation that the entire

[425] Wakefield, *Six Weeks in the Sioux Tepees*, 61.
[426] Wakefield, *Six Weeks in the Sioux Tepees*, 64.

outbreak could have been avoided if only the white Agency officials had behaved a bit more compassionately and humanely.

In *Six Weeks in the Sioux Tepees*, Sarah Wakefield simultaneously upheld and contradicted the standard tale of white suffering at the hands of brutal and savage Dakota. The result was an often disjointed story but one that presented a far more nuanced view of the causes of the outbreak, a more sympathetic view of the Dakota as a people, and a scathing critique of government policy towards the Dakota. Wakefield's continued defiance—her protestations of Chaska's innocence, her expressed sympathy for the Dakota, and her failure to corroborate the dominant narrative of the Dakota War—ultimately destroyed her reputation. Already a social outcast when she wrote her narrative, Wakefield hoped that sharing her story with the public outside of Minnesota would provide her some measure of vindication from the aspersions cast against her character. Since her release from captivity, Wakefield had been on a heretofore-unsuccessful campaign to repair her marriage and her reputation among the white citizens Minnesota who had branded her an "Indian lover," a liar, and even a "Mono-Maniac."

The spring of 1863 was an especially troubling time for Sarah Wakefield. On March 23, 1863, Wakefield wrote to President Abraham Lincoln, imploring him to investigate the mass hanging in Mankato. Chaska's hanging she claimed, was no accident—it was a deliberate miscarriage of justice that had been done first and foremost to punish her for defending her Dakota captor. Writing to the President that,

"I am abased already by the World as I am a Friend of the Indian," Wakefield hinted at the troubles she currently faced.[427]

Wakefield's letters to Reverend Stephen Riggs, dated April 9 and 25 also provide some insight into the troubles she faced in her personal life. In her letter dated April 9, Wakefield confessed to Riggs that her circumstances had become so unbearable that she contemplated leaving white society behind in order to go and live among the Dakota. Declaring, "I care not for remuneration," Wakefield wrote "I need employment so I will not have as much time to think as I now have…I am alone without Friends or Relatives."[428]

She also hinted at the strain that her outspoken defense of Chaska had placed on her marriage. Wakefield explained that it had been her husband John who, she claimed, had been the one to suggest that she write to Riggs about obtaining employment working among the Indians. That Dr. Wakefield apparently supported Sarah's declaration to live among the Dakota, even if it meant abandoning him and their children, spoke to the strain in their relationship. "I could willingly devote the few remaining years of an unhappy life to the Indians for what they done for me," Wakefield declared, expounding on her gratitude towards Chaska for the kindness he had shown her while she was a captive. She then reiterated her claim that her continued search for vindication for Chaska was born from her sense of appreciation and guilt. Chaska, Wakefield claimed, had saved her from "many evils worse than

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[427] Sarah F. Wakefield to Abraham Lincoln. March 23, 1863. Available at *Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress,* Manuscript Division (Washington, D.C.: American Memory Project, 2000-1).
[428] Sarah F. Wakefield to Stephen R. Riggs. April 9, 1863. Stephen R. Riggs and Family Papers. Minnesota Historical Society.

death." Had she only "told all at the time of my release," Wakefield lamented, she could have saved her own reputation and likely, Chaska's life. She clearly felt a deep sense of responsibility for the tragedy that had befallen her captor. Though Wakefield clearly wanted to posthumously exonerate Chaska, her attempts thus far had been a complete failure. "Many persons say I am a 'Mono Maniac'" she wrote, recounting the aspersions that had been cast upon her by Minnesota society.[429]Shunned by friends and acquaintances and with her marriage on the rocks, Wakefield believed that life among the Dakota would be preferable to remaining among the whites in Minnesota.

When Sarah Wakefield wrote her final letter to Riggs, on August 26 1863 she was still plagued by the social repercussions of her defense of Chaska. She recounted to Riggs a particularly distressing encounter she had experienced in the capital city of St. Paul. While in town, she had met the rector of Christ Church in St. Paul, Dr. Dubois. The two talked for some time, during which Wakefield mentioned her desire to be baptized and become a church member. Reverend Dubois at first seemed receptive and eager to add Wakefield to his church's flock. He even called upon her at home and, after a lengthy discussion, "left [her] a tract and said he would call again and was anxious that I should attend church."[430] For the next several weeks Wakefield faithfully attended Christ Church and waited for the reverned to return. But Dubois did not visit her again. Even worse, he failed to acknowledge Wakefield's presence despite her weekly attendance at his church services.

[429] Sarah F. Wakefield to Stephen R. Riggs. April 9, 1863. Stephen R. Riggs and Family Papers. Minnesota Historical Society.
[430] Sarah F. Wakefield to Stephen R. Riggs. April 25, 1863. Stephen R. Riggs and Family Papers. Minnesota Historical Society.

Although he had promised to call on her again, Wakefield wrote that Dubois returned only once, "when he asked for the Tract and left[,] never alluding to my being baptized." At first Wakefield had not understood the reverend's change in disposition towards her. However, it soon became clear. Sarah explained to Riggs that she had encountered the reverend again in several different social situations and, each time, "he did not recognize me." Writing, "I presume Mr. Dubois heard the vile reports in circulation about me," Wakefield became convinced that Dubois's withdrawal from their originally genial relationship was deliberate.[431] The rumors surrounding Sarah Wakefield that began at Camp Release in September of 1862 had, by April of 1863, followed her all the way to the state capitol. By this time accustomed to the gossip from her neighbors in Shakopee, Dubois's cold behavior and public snub appeared to cause Wakefield special pain. That even a man of God refused to acknowledge her in public bespoke the degree to which Sarah Wakefield had fallen in Minnesota society.

Completely debased in the eyes of white men and women from Shakopee to St. Paul, Wakefield remained hopeful that Rigs would take pity on her. Reiterating her earlier desire to "go with the Indians and become as one of them," Wakefield ultimately conceded that this plan was ultimately impossible. Writing to Riggs that, "to stay here is like being buried alive," Wakefield explained that it was only her role as a mother and love for her children that kept her bound to her family and their home in Minnesota. Maternal love, Wakefield claimed, was the driving force in her life. This sense of domesticity and maternal love not only explained her actions in

[431] Sarah F. Wakefield to Stephen R. Riggs. April 25, 1863.

captivity but her impassioned defense of Chaska following her release. The failure of others (including her own husband) to understand the depths of motherly love lay at the root of her predicament. Of her husband's growing coldness towards her Wakefield wrote

> he cannot realize how a woman could try to save an Indian who had held her captive[. H]e thinks he would have killed himself before he would [have] remained therein a Tipi, but he little knows a Mother['s] feelings[. T]hat Indian saved my children and what Mother could forget it and not only my Children['s] lives were spared but I was saved from dishonor, but my anxiety to save him just cursed me and killed the Man.[432]

To Sarah Wakefield, her seemingly strange behavior among the Dakota and her impassioned defense of Chaska at Camp Release were merely the result of stress and the overwhelming sense of gratitude she felt towards Chaska. Explaining, "I am very sensitive and impulsive," Wakefield conceded that in hindsight, she now realized how some of her former captives and the soldiers might have misinterpreted her words and behavior. Admitting her own missteps, Wakefield nevertheless remained defiant that the traders, agency officials, and the government bore the blame for the outbreak. Unlike most of the majority of white Minnesotans, Wakefield considered the Dakota to be the true victims of the war. "I never shall feel as if the Indians were the guilty party. I know they done wrong but white men in the same situation…would done much worse."[433] Still unable to comprehend the grave injustice perpetrated against Chaska, Wakefield claimed that Chaska's mother haunted her dreams. Troubled by guilty conscience, Wakefield ended her final letter

[432] Ibid.
[433] Ibid.

to Riggs with a request, to "pray for me that I may be able to at last reach Heaven."[434] Wakefield seemed resigned to the fact that the reverend would not be an ally in her quest to repair her damaged reputation.

Sarah Wakefield's private pleas for vindication ultimately produced few results. Riggs remained coolly aloof to Wakefield's letters. Lincoln, believing that the execution in Mankato had settled Minnesota's "Indian problem," had his hands full with the Civil War and a series of draft riots in New York City. Finding no relief forthcoming, Wakefield finally resolved to publish "a *true* statement" of her captivity.[435] Since her release from captivity, soldiers and citizens alike had questioned Wakefield's words and actions. In essence, Wakefield's narrative was both her endeavor to squelch the rumors and misconceptions about her time in captivity and her final, desperate attempt redeem both herself and her captor in the court of public opinion.

In many ways, Sarah Wakefield's narrative was a radical departure from the "official" version of the War—the story created during the war and perpetuated in the earlier histories that followed. Historian June Namias, the first scholar to present Wakefield's story for a contemporary audience, argued that Wakefield's narrative was "an act of conscience…blend[ing] the genre of captivity with a Christian message of compassion." Reading Wakefield's narrative as part of a larger movement of "sentimental" works by female authors, Namias drew parallels between Wakefield's *Six Weeks* and Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin.* Steeped in

[434] Ibid.
[435] Wakefield, *Six Weeks in the Sioux Tepees*, 53.

social justice, Wakefield, like Stowe, "saw the lie behind white dealings with people of color," and used her captivity story to incite sympathy for the Dakota.[436]

Literary scholar Kathryn ZabelleDerounian-Stodola has also viewed *Six Weeks in the Sioux Tepees* as a social justice tract. In *The War in Words*, Derounian-Stodola wrote that in publishing her narrative, "Sarah Wakefield was practicing the popular nineteenth-century religious trend of 'liberal theology'…anticipating the related twentieth-century movement of 'liberation theology.'"[437] Writing "Wakefield identified with the downtrodden Dakotas," Derounian-Stodola views Wakefield's narrative as an attempt "to lay the groundwork for more idealized social interactions based on applied Christian values."[438]

A more recent interpretation of Wakefield's narrative challenges the claims of scholars like Namias and Derouian-Stodola. Rather than viewing Wakefield's narrative as an "act of conscience" steeped in the tradition of sentimental literature or social justice, Sophia Betsworth Hunt argues "Sarah Wakefield intended her narrative to be primarily a tool of self-preservation" and that Wakefield was, above all else, a "pragmatist" who wrote her narrative "mainly out of self-interest."[439] Hunt's assessment of Wakefield's motivations certainly makes sense in light of the equally

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[436] Jane Namias, *White Captives: Gender and Ethnicity on the American Frontier* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993), 259.
[437] Kathryn ZabelleDerounian-Stodola, *The War in Words: Reading the Dakota Conflict through the Captivity Literature* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press), 74. See also, Kathryn ZabelleDerounian-Stodola, "'Many Persons Say I Am A Mono-Maniac,'" Three Letters from Dakota Conflict Captive to Stephen R. Riggs," *Prospects: An Annual of American Cultural Studies* 29 (Cambridge University Press) 2005, 1-24.
[438] Derounian-Stodola, *The War in Words*, 74.
[439] Sophia Betsworth Hunt, "Captive in the American Woods" (master's thesis, The University of Tenessee, Knoxville, 2009), 4,5.

scathing critiques Wakefield levied on the government, the military, her fellow captives, and even the Dakota. Yet, by the time Wakefield published her narrative, she must have had little hope that her narrative could bring her any of the vindication she sought by publishing her story.

At the heart of Wakefield's dilemma lay the mid-nineteenth century anxieties over gender, race, and sex. Though she often espoused the racist rhetoric of her contemporaries when writing generally about the Dakota or about certain "bad Indians," she frequently wrote of the kindness and protection she received from "good Indians." Throughout *Six Weeks*, Wakefield frequently reserved her harshest words for white Minnesotans—soldiers, government officials, members of the Military Commission, and her fellow captives. When Sarah Wakefield refused to testify that she had been abused while in captivity, she challenged the existing racial and gendered hierarchy. Her failure to corroborate the dominant narrative of the war resulted serious repercussions for both her and her captor. What made Wakefield particularly dangerous, however, was her refusal to remain silent in the days and months following her release.

The wife of a prominent doctor, Wakefield felt empowered by her social status to publicly accuse members of the all-male Military Commission of multiple miscarriages of justice. Wakefield's allegations brought about swift and dramatic consequences. She quickly realized that her middle class status did little to insulate her from rumors that she had transgressed the rigidly policed sexual boundaries between white women and non-white men. Even after Chaska's "accidental" hanging, Wakefield persisted with her story. Eventually though, the rumors and

innuendos began to take their toll on Wakefield, her marriage, and her family. Concluding her narrative with the line, "and now I shall bid this subject farewell forever," Wakefield proclaimed what she hoped would finally be the end of her captivity "ordeal."[440] *Six Weeks in the Sioux Tepees* was Sarah Wakefield's final attempt to deal with her emotions surrounding the Dakota War.

The degree to which Wakefield succeeded in moving past the events of the summer of 1862 are, frankly, impossible to know. Like most of her fellow captives, Wakefield's life outside of her captivity was unremarkable, at least historically-speaking. Notations on census records and city directories reveal that Sarah and John Wakefield had two more children, a daughter Julia born in 1866 and a son, John born two years later. Though plagued by rumors, gossip, and innuendo in the months following her release from captivity, the family remained in Minnesota, settling in Shakopee. John's death in 1874, rumored to be the result of either an accidental or deliberate drug overdoses, left Sarah a widow with four children ranging in age from six to sixteen. Further complicating matters was the fact that John died without a notarized will, leaving Sarah to negotiate his affairs, settle his debts, and collect debts owed to him. Describing the decent of creditors on the Wakefield estate as "vulturelike," June Namias argues that this attack may have been an act of "delayed retribution" against Sarah, another way to punish her for her outspoken defense of Chaska and the publication of her narrative.[441]

In 1876, Wakefield moved to St. Paul, where she died in 1899. Her obituary, which appeared in the May 29 edition of the *Pioneer Press* mentioned Wakefield had

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[440] Wakefield, *Six Weeks in the Sioux Tepees,* 127.
[441] Namias, *White Captives,* 248-51.

been a "prisoner of the Sioux."[442] Although the author of the piece made no mention of Wakefield's notorious defense of Chaska, it also made no mention of Wakefield "as a witness or author."[443] If Wakefield's reputation as an "Indian lover" had by this time faded from public memory, so too had her version of events regarding her captivity and the Dakota War. Between 1863 and her death in 1899, Wakefield never appeared in newspaper reports or at commemorative events marking the anniversaries of the War. And when the Minnesota Historical Society began collecting reminiscences from "old settlers," her story was not one they solicited. As with Mary Renville's narrative, Wakefield's story was not a version of events white Minnesotans were ready to remember.

Both Mary Butler Renville and Sarah Wakefield suffered consequences for the narratives they wrote. Because Renville spent the duration of her captivity with her husband she, unlike Wakefield, remained untainted by allegations of an affair with her captor. Though she tried to hide it in her narrative, Mary Renville had already transgressed a major social boundary by marrying a Dakota man. When the citizens of Berlin, Wisconsin discovered this fact, they effectively ran Mary Renville and her family out of town. Sarah Wakefield too, remained haunted by the charges that she had engaged in sexual relationship with Chaska. Although Renville and Wakefield's narratives differed, both women wrote with a common goal—of speaking to the goodness of some Indians. It was precisely because Renville and Wakefield's stories failed to affirm the public narrative of the War that Renville's *A*

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[442] "Sarah Wakefield: Prisoner of the Sioux," *Pioneer Press* St. Paul, Minnesota, May 29, 1899.
[443] Janet Dean, "Nameless Outrages: Narrative Authority, Rape Rhetoric, and the Dakota Conflict of 1862," 115.

Thrilling Narrative of Indian Captivity and Wakefield's *Six Weeks in the Sioux Tepees* effectively disappeared from the public's memory.

Memory and the Dakota War

On August 18, 1915, fifty-three years after the opening shots of the Dakota War, 63-year-old Mary Schwandt attended the dedication of the Schwandt Monument, a memorial to her family members murdered during the Dakota outbreak. According to reports, the dedication was a solemn affair attended by "many of the state's most distinguished men," among them Dr. Warren Upham, archeologist for the Minnesota State Historical Society. In his speech dedicating the Schwandt monument Upham bemoaned "the awful tragedy of race hatred and massacre which befell a German family of pioneers" and called on those in attendance to "not forget the bright flower of a life long friendship which blossomed above their graves, gladdening the life of a rescued survivor of that family and the life of the kind Dakota woman, Snahnah, her rescuer."[444] Inscribed with the names of the deceased, Mary Schwandt's parents Johann and Christina, her brothers Fredrik and Christian, her sister Karolina Schwandt-Walz and brother-in-law John Walz, and John Frass, the erection and dedication of the stone obelisk marked a personal victory for Mary Schwandt. Since 1894 she had been written letters, given speeches, and lobbied state officials for a monument honoring her murdered kin.

The construction of the Schwandt memorial was just one of the many ways white Minnesotans remembered and memorialized the events of 1862. In the years immediately following the War, authors published several "definitive" histories of the events that had taken place in Minnesota. But over time the trauma of the Dakota

[444]Franklyn Curtiss-Wedge, *The History of Renville County, Volume 2* (Chicago: H.C. Cooper, Jr. & Co., 1916), 1346. Mrs. Mary E. Schmidt, "Recollections of the Indian Massacre of 1862," 1915 reel 1 Mary Schwandt Schmidt Papers. Microfilm edition. Minnesota Historical Society.

War began to fade in the collective memory of the state's white inhabitants. Newspapers still marked major anniversaries of the War with articles about the attack and, from time-to-time, "old pioneer" festivals commemorated the victims of the war. These stories and public celebrations mostly reiterated the public narrative of violent Indians murdering innocent families and perpetrating heinous acts on the white women and children they captured. But for those women who experienced the Dakota War firsthand, time did little to dull their wounds. For many former captives, coming to terms with the trauma they experienced during the war was often a life-long endeavor.

At least half a dozen former captives sought catharsis through the publication of their own narratives later in life. These narratives often stood in stark contrast to the public narrative of the Dakota War, a version of events in which male authors frequently appropriated and embellished women's captivity stories. While some women reiterated the helplessness and victimization they experienced during the War, they also highlighted their survival. And while former captives sometimes stereotyped all Indians as brutal, violent, and cruel, they also remembered specific acts of kindness shown to them by their Dakota "friends." For all these women, recalling the events of 1862 allowed them the opportunity to distinguish *their* stories from the public narrative of the war and to craft an identity for themselves outside of their captivity.[445] Produced decades after their ordeal, women's stories not only revealed the complex and contradictory emotions they still felt regarding their

[445] Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 60-96.

captivity but also reflected their desire to reclaim agency and authority over *their* history and lives.

JannetteDeCamp Sweet

Whereas many of the women who wrote about their captivity gave their stories willingly, Jannette De Camp Sweet had to be coerced into providing her story. She began her narrative, which appeared in the 1894 version of the *Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society* by acknowledging that although more than thirty years had passed, recounting the events of her captivity and escape still filled her with "feelings of the utmost horror."[446] Seemingly unaware of the dozens of captivity stories published after the war, or perhaps doubting their accuracy, De Camp Sweet wrote "many things have been written concerning the tragedies of that dreadful period; but, as far as I know, none who were eye-witnesses have attempted to narrate what passed in the Indian camp during the dreadful weeks."[447] Despite the painful memories, her story, she claimed, would be above all, an accurate depiction of the events of August and September 1862.

Like many white Americans in the mid-nineteenth century, the DeCamps had journeyed to Minnesota in search of employment and adventure. Born in New York in 1833, Jannette Sykes met and married her husband Joseph DeCamp in Ohio in 1852. Three years later, in 1855, the couple moved to Shakopee, Minnesota. Eventually they settled at the Red Wood Agency in 1861, where Joseph operated the agency's saw mill. While acknowledging the "great amount of suffering" the Dakota

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[446]Mrs. J.E. De C. Sweet, "Mrs. J. E. De Camp Sweet's Narrative of Her Captivity in the Sioux Outbreak of 1862," *Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society, Vol. 6* (St. Paul, Minn.: The Pioneer Press Company), 1894, 354.
[447]Sweet, "Mrs. J. E. De Camp Sweet's Narrative of Her Captivity," 355, 354.

endured during the summer of 1862, DeCamp Sweet wrote that she and her husband had lived "among [the Dakota] on terms of friendly intimacy" for over a year and had been caught completely off-guard by the outbreak of violence.[448]

For JannetteDeCamp, Monday, August 18, 1862 began like any other day. It was not until late morning that she received news of the outbreak. Her husband was away on business, leaving DeCamp to care for their three children. When news of the violence finally reached their home, DeCamp wrote that she was dumbstruck, so paralyzed with fear that she was unable to move. It was then that a Dakota woman stepped in to save her and her children's lives. "[W]hile I stood there motionless…an old squaw, Chief Wacouta's mother, came running past. As she came up she cried…'Fly! Fly! They will kill you white squaw!'"[449] The woman picked up De Camp's four year old and carried the child for over a mile toward Chief Wabasha's village. DeCamp, her infant, and her nine-year child trailed behind. When the group finally arrived at Wabasha's village, DeCamp prostrated herself before the chief, reminded him of their once friendly relationship, and begged him to spare her and her children's lives. Wabasha then replied, "that I was a good squaw, and called [the Dakota perpetrating the violence] cowards and squaws for wanting to kill women and children."[450] In only a few hours, friendly Dakota had twice saved DeCamp and her children. However, Wabasha's pledge of protection did little to calm DeCamp's nerves.

[448]Sweet, "Mrs. J. E. De Camp Sweet's Narrative," 355.
[449]Sweet, "Mrs. J. E. De Camp Sweet's Narrative," 358.
[450]Sweet, "Mrs. J. E. De Camp Sweet's Narrative," 359.

Throughout her ordeal, DeCamp wrestled with the physical and emotional stresses of her captivity. DeCamp suffered from the cold, a lack of food, and sleepless nights. Several days into her captivity DeCamp lost her shoes, forcing her to go barefoot. However, the physical hardships seemed to pale compared to the emotional trauma DeCamp endured. Like other captives, DeCamp recounted the constant state of terror under which she suffered. Central to DeCamp's narrative was the sense of betrayal she felt by several of the Dakota who she considered her friends. Despite Wabasha's promise of protection, his camp remained a hostile environment for DeCamp and her children. Feeling betrayed by those she had considered friends, Angered by her situation, DeCamp parroted the racist sentiments of reporters and early historians about the innate "savagery" of the Dakota writing, "I looked in vain…to find one friendly face upon whom I could rely in my present extremity. The instinct of savage had been fully aroused and blood and plunder was their only desire."[451] Even 30 years later, DeCamp still held a great deal of resentment towards any Dakota who had not actively interceded on her or her children's behalf. But even those who did help De Camp were not immune from her criticisms.

Unlike most of the female captives, who spent a month and a half in captivity until their eventual liberation at Camp Release, DeCamp Sweet escaped after only three weeks in captivity. By this time, DeCamp and her children had left Wabasha's camp and made their way to the "friendly" camp.[452] Although she felt safer among the "friendly," Christian Dakota, DeCamp still feared for her life. When rumors that

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[451]Sweet, "Mrs. J. E. De Camp Sweet's Narrative," 360.
[452] According to Mary Butler Renville's *A Thrilling Narrative of Indian Captivity*, De Camp and her children arrived in the friendly camp on September 3 and escaped with Lorenzo Lawrence on September 7.

Little Crow planned to murder all the white captives reached the friendly camp, DeCamp escaped, aided by a "good" Christian Dakota named Lorenzo Lawrence.

It took over a week for the escapees to finally reach their destination, Fort Ridgely. DeCamp and Lawrence often butted heads throughout the journey but eventually the party made it to safety. Arriving barefoot and with her clothing in rags, DeCamp nevertheless was overjoyed to finally be free. Her happiness though, was short-lived. The Reverend Joshua Sweet met her just outside the garrison where he informed DeCamp of her husband's death. After spending several days recovering at the garrison, DeCamp went to live with her father. In 1866, she eventually returned to Fort Ridgely but this time as the wife of Reverend Joshua Sweet.

The closing pages of DeCamp's narrative revealed the struggles that she encountered when trying to place the events of the past in perspective. Recalling memories she had "striven to forget" brought up many complicated and contradictory emotions.[453] Recalling the devastation that the war had wrought on her life and on her family, DeCamp blamed the Dakota for the outbreak. Yet she freely acknowledged the kind acts of specific Dakota such as Chief Wacouta's mother, Wabasha, and especially Lorenzo Lawrence. Of Lawrence she wrote, "I shall never cease to remember him as a true friend, albeit an Indian."[454] Praising Lawrence for his kindness and willingness to endanger his own life to help her escape, DeCamp's "albeit an Indian" barb revealed her deep seeded ambivalence towards even the "friendliest" of the Dakota.

[453]Sweet, "Mrs. J. E. De Camp Sweet's Narrative," 380.
[454] Ibid.

Wilhelmina ZitzlaffIenefeld Grosse

Not every female captive wrote down her captivity experiences. Some, like Wilhelmina Ienefeld, simply passed their story down orally. Ienefeld's story made its way into the Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society via her granddaughter, Mrs. Dorothy Kuske. Although only nine pages, the undated manuscript adds yet another woman's story of her captivity experience to the canon of Dakota War captivity literature.

At the time of the outbreak, 18-year-old Wilhelmina Ienefeld, her husband William, and their four month daughter lived in Renville County, Minnesota in a cluster of four homes that included Wilhelmina's father Michael Zitzlaff, her brother Michael Jr. and his family, her two sisters, Mrs. John Meier and Mrs. John Seig and their families. Of this extended family group, Wilhelmina and her daughter were the only ones who survived the outbreak. On the 18th of August, Wilhelmina and her brother Michael went to the Redwood Agency "to trade butter and eggs for groceries."[455] Here they learned of the attack on the white settlements and quickly returned home to warn their families. Refusing to believe his wife, William Ienefeld left to investigate while the rest of the family packed their belongings. As the party loaded their wagons at her brother's house, Wilhelmina returned home to look for her husband. She discovered her home ransacked. The only sign of her husband was a bloody piece of his scalp left on the doorstep. Horrified by these discoveries, Ienefeld raced back to her brother's house, grabbed her daughter, and insisted they leave at once.

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[455]Dorothy Kuske, "Account of the Sioux Uprising," Dakota Conflict of 1862 Manuscripts Collections.Minnesota Historical Society. Microfilm roll 1, 3.

The extended family group had only traveled a short distance before the Dakota attacked, first shooting the driver of the wagon. At that point, the family decided to abandon the wagon and run on foot. The remaining family members scattered, leaving the slower runners like Wilhelmina behind. However, speed did not ensure safety since, according to what Ienefeld told her granddaughter, "the fastest runners were the first to be killed."[456] Wanting to die with the rest of her family, Wilhelmina stopped and resigned herself and her child to death. However, her would-be murderer's gun misfired three times in a row. Interpreting this as a sign, the warrior decided to take mother and child captive instead.

Throughout the duration of her captivity, Wilhelmina literally begged to join her family in death. She went days without food or fresh water and marched across the hot prairie without shoes or a bonnet. Describing the effects these privations had on her grandmother, Kuske wrote, the once "robust mother soon grew pale and poor."[457] The lack of food severally hampered Ienefeld's ability to nurse her daughter, causing the child to cry often. The child's cries aggravated many of the Dakota and Kuske recounted that, on three separate occasions, Dakota women had tried to murder her child to keep it quiet.[458] Each time Ienefeld managed to save her daughter's life but suffered severely for it. When she finally gained her freedom at Camp Release, she was so overcome with emotion that, for the first time since the outbreak, she wept.

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[456]Kuske, "Account of the Sioux Uprising,"4.
[457]Kuske, "Account of the Sioux Uprising," 5.
[458] According to Kuske A Dakota woman had tried to drown Ienefeld's daughter (Kuske's aunt) in a river. Another time, "they tried to choke her with a potato." At yet a different time, a Dakota woman had threatened to cut the baby's throat with a knife. Kuske, "Account of the Sioux Uprising," 5,6.

While Kuske's version of her grandmother's story lacks the breadth and level of detail of other captivity stories, it nevertheless remains a testimony to the loss many female captives sustained. Wilhelmina Ienfeld began the morning of August 18 as part of a large, close-knit family. By the end of the day, she and her infant were the only surviving members of that family. Furthermore, Ienfeld's story revealed the important role that oral histories played in relaying information from one generation to another. Ienefled may not have seen her story as important or historically significant outside her family circle but her granddaughter did. By preserving her grandmother's story within the Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society, Kuske in some small way made sure that her grandmother's memories would live on.

Nancy McClure Huggan

Appearing in the same volume of the *Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society* as Jeanette DeCamp Sweet's "Sioux Outbreak of 1862" was Nancy McClure FairbaultHuggan's "The Story of Nancy McClure."[459] When solicited by the Minnesota Historical Society to write her story in 1894, the then 58-year –old McClure lived on a farm near Flandreau, South Dakota with her second husband Charles Huggan. The more than thirty years that had elapsed since the war did little to dull McClure's enthusiasm for the opportunity to pen her own version of events. Nancy McClure was a "mixed-blood," the only child of a Dakota woman named

[459] Nancy Huggan, "The Story of Nancy McClure: Captivity Among the Sioux." *Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society, Vol. 6* (St. Paul, Minn.: The Pioneer Press Company), 1894, 439-460. A note about the names: While the narrative is titled "The Story of Nancy McClure," the author signed her work Nancy Huggan. At the time of the Dakota War, McClure was married to David Fairbault a mixed-blood trader and so would have been known as Mrs. Fairbault at this time. For the sake of clarity, I will simply try and refer to her as McClure, her maiden name.

Winona and Lieutenant James McClure, a white army officer stationed at Fort Snelling in the 1830s. Months after Nancy's birth in 1836, the army reassigned McClure to a post in Florida. He died in Florida in 1838 without ever again having the chance to see his Dakota wife and their daughter.

Although Nancy McClure had no memories of her father, she described him as "a brave, gallant, and noble man, and had he lived…my life would have been far different from what it has been."[460] Identity lay at the center of Nancy McClure's narrative. During the conflict, both Dakotas and whites were suspicious of the loyalties of bicultural individuals like McClure. Though most "mixed-blood" people claimed they too had been captives of the Dakota, at least 112 of these individuals were sent to the internment camp at Fort Snelling following their surrender at Camp Release.[461] Acutely aware of the prejudice and distrust that some Minnesotans still had towards "mixed-bloods," McClure used her narrative as a vehicle by which to articulate that her loyalty and sympathy lay with the whites and also to try and emphasize her own "white femininity" while acknowledging her bicultural identity.

Nancy McClure grew up caught between two very different worlds. Writing "I had a pretty good start in the world for a poor little half-blood 'chincha,'" McClure explained to her readers that before his death, James McClure had sent Henry Sibley (then head trader at Mendota) "money to provide for mother and me."[462] Until the age of eight McClure lived among the Dakota, alternating between the homes of her

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[460]Huggan, "The Story of Nancy McClure: Captivity Among the Sioux," 439.
[461] R.C. Olin, Census of Dakota Indians Interned at Fort Snelling After the Dakota War in 1862. Report no. 156 in the Report of the [U.S.] Commissioner of Indian Affairs, for the year 1863. http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/History.AnnRep63
[462]Huggan, "The Story of Nancy McClure," 441.

grandmother and her mother and stepfather, Antoine Renville. At her mother's insistence, she received an education, attending two different schools in Lac qui Parle. Recalling her early years, McClure consciously sought to distance herself from "the Indians" who lived nearby. Though half-Dakota, McClure wrote of the terror she felt when "I had my first Indian scare." She went on to describe the numerous bad deeds of "the Indians who were still in heathenism" against the whites settlers.[463] Upon recounting these events, which included killing livestock, getting drunk, and harassing children at the mission school, McClure clearly placed herself outside of and apart from the "Indians" perpetrating these acts of hostility and violence.

When Nancy McClure was just 14, her mother died, leaving the young teenager grief-stricken and wrestling with her identity. Recalling the turmoil her mother's death produced, McClure wrote,

> [N]ow I was left alone in the world…with no one to care for me but my Indian relatives, and though they were kind enough, I did not wish to live with them. How much I longed to be with some of my father's people then, I cannot tell you. I was always more white than Indian in my tastes and sympathies, though I never had cause to blush for my Indian blood on account of the character of my family.[464]

Though not embarrassed by her Indian family, Nancy McClure consciously attempted to align herself and her behavior during her captivity with bourgeois feminine ideals. At the time of the outbreak, Nancy McClure had been married to her husband, "mixed-blood" trader David Faribault for 11 years. The couple had an eight-year-old daughter. When the Faribaults learned of Dakota attacks, they gathered what they could and prepared to flee. Recalling that day McClure wrote, "woman-like, I tried

[463]Huggan, "The Story of Nancy McClure," 444.
[464]Huggan, "The Story of Nancy McClure," 445.

First to save my jewelry."[465] She was about to take an axe to the swollen drawer where she kept her jewelry when David Faribault intervened and explained to his nearly hysterical wife that they had to leave that moment. David, Nancy, and their child fled, along with another "mixed-blood" couple the Brisboises, and their children. It did not take long for a group of Dakota to discover the party. The warriors took McClure, her husband, and their child captive but threatened to kill the Brisboises. Just as the Dakota were about to carry out the murder, two wagons filled with fleeing whites appeared and "all the Indians left us and ran yelling and whooping to kill them."[466] In the ensuing commotion, McClure helped the Brisbois family escape into a cornfield and eventually to safety.

In addition to helping the Brisbois family escape, Nancy McClure recalled saving the lives of two more people that day. The first was that of an Irish woman named Hayden who was part of the group in the wagons under attack. She had somehow managed to escape but according to McClure, was being pursued by "a young Indian that had once worked for us."[467] McClure yelled out to the young man to let the woman go. Amazingly, he did. The other life she saved was that of a German man who she convinced to give the Dakota his horse and run into the woods. Claiming to have endangered her own life to save the lives of others, among them two white settlers, McClure tacitly reaffirmed that her loyalty and sympathy during the outbreak lay with the whites rather than the Dakota.

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[465]Huggan, "The Story of Nancy McClure," 449.
[466] Ibid.
[467] Ibid.

Though McClure and her husband's Dakota heritage undoubtedly spared their lives, in captivity, their "mixed-blood" status became both an asset and a liability. On just their second evening in Little Crow's camp, rumors that "half-breeds" were all going to be killed began to circulate. Upon hearing this, McClure grabbed her child and walked seven miles with a Dakota woman to Shakopee's camp. Of her decision she wrote "It…was the best I could do, and I had some distant relatives in that camp, and I would rather trust myself there than with Little Crow's drunken and infuriated warriors."[468] After passing the night with her relatives in Shakopee's camp, McClure and the unnamed Dakota woman who accompanied her returned to search for her husband. "To our surprise we found my husband in the camp, and my companion's husband sitting over him very drunk, and with a butcher knife in his hand!"[469] According to McClure's husband, the man had been threatening him in that manner since the previous night, underscoring the very real danger bicultural individuals like the Fairbaults faced within the "hostile" Dakota camp.

Nancy McClure and her family's "mixed-blood" status again proved valuable when, after a few days, McClure's uncle Rday-a-mannee and her cousins arrived to claim the couple and take them away from Little Crow's camp. Even surrounded by family, McClure's status as a "mixed-blood" rendered her vulnerable to insults and death threats from other full-blood Dakota. She attempted to explain the roots and lasting repercussions of this animosity between "full-bloods" and "mixed-bloods" to her readers writing, "you know that only a very few half-breeds took part in the outbreak. The Indians have always bitterly hated the half breeds for their conduct in

[468]Huggan, "The Story of Nancy McClure," 452.
[469]Huggan, "The Story of Nancy McClure," 452-3.

favor of the white in that and in others wars…It seems [the Dakota] can forgive everybody but us."[470] Setting up a clear "us v. them" dichotomy, McClure firmly placed herself in the pro-white, anti-war camp.

Her Dakota ancestry and family connections guaranteed McClure a certain degree of protection throughout the duration of the war. But even surrounded by her extended family, McClure wrote that she, her husband, and their child, often feared for their lives because of the threats made by the Dakota against the "mixed-bloods." After weeks of what amounted to constant harassment, McClure reached her breaking point. Following yet another rumor that all the captives were to be killed, a Dakota woman began taunting McClure and making derogatory remarks about the cowardice of the "half-breeds." Unable to suffer quietly any longer McClure explained "I flew at that woman and routed her so completely that she bore the marks for some time, and I am sure she remembered the lesson a great deal longer!" Apologizing to her readers for this lapse in decorum, McClure wrote, "perhaps it was not a very ladylike thing to do but I was dreadfully provoked."[471] Had McClure been a white woman, she likely would have faced severe punishment for striking a Dakota. Yet, because she was part Dakota, not a single Indian stepped in to break up the fight.

Protected by her family connections during most of her captivity, Nancy McClure nevertheless expressed a great deal of relief when she and her family were turned over to General Sibley and his soldiers at Camp Release. After spending several days with the soldiers, McClure and her child were permitted to leave with the other white women. Following her release, she traveled on to Faribault, Minnesota to

[470]Huggan, "The Story of Nancy McClure," 454-5.
[471]Huggan, "The Story of Nancy McClure: Captivity Among the Sioux," 455.

live with her sister and brother-in-law until the Army finally allowed her husband to join them. Like many Minnesotans, Nancy and David Faribault returned home to find that their "property had all been taken or destroyed by the Indians."[472] McClure estimated their losses totaled more than $3,000. The removal of the Dakota meant that Faribault, a once prosperous trader, lost his customer base. Over the intervening years, the couple moved frequently. In 1867 McClure, her husband, and their child relocated to Fort Ransom in North Dakota where David Faribault accepted a job as head of the scouts for the fort. Though David Faribault died in 1886, McClure claimed that between 1868 and 1894, her life was "hardly worth writing about."[473] Sometime between 1886 and 1894 when McClure her narrative, Nancy McClure married Charles Huggan and became a grandmother to six grandchildren.

For Nancy McClure, writing her narrative provided her with a chance to both tell her story and publicly reaffirm her (primarily white) identity. Her narrative revealed the very real ways in which the war affected the lives of bicultural or "mixed-blood" individuals. The war tested the loyalty of these men and women and exposed them to harassment, death, treats, and ridicule from their captors. While McClure freely acknowledged the role kinship connections played in keeping her alive throughout the conflict, her story also underscored the animosity that existed between the perpetrators of the conflict and those with Dakota ancestry who sympathized with the whites.

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[472]Huggan, "The Story of Nancy McClure: Captivity Among the Sioux," 459.
[473] Ibid.

Urania S. Frazer (Mrs. N.D. White)

In 1901, the Minnesota Historical Society published yet another woman's narrative of her captivity among the Dakota. Mrs. N.D. White's "Captivity Among the Sioux" appeared in volume nine of the *Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society*. White's narrative had apparently been in the possession of the Historical Society for some time. A notation at the bottom of the first page indicated that her narrative was first read before the Executive Council on November 14, 1898. Urania White opened her narrative calling the Dakota War "the most terrible Indian massacre that was ever known in our fair country," and referred to the Dakota as "the savages" who "indiscriminately butchered" men, women, and children.[474] Notably absent from White's work was the self-deprecation that marked many of the other women's captivity narratives. Assured and confident in her memory, White recalled that, "[e]ven now after thirty-six years, I look back and shudder, and my heart nearly stops beating" when dwelling on the particulars of her captivity.[475] While writing her narrative offered White an opportunity to "come to terms" with her experience as a captive, penning her story also forced her to confront her past—dredging up a series of contradictory and confusing feelings that played out over the course of her often disjointed narrative.

Originally from Wisconsin, at the time of the outbreak, White and her husband had only lived in Renville County Minnesota since June 1862. Although new to the area, White quickly grasped that the local Dakota were in dire straits.

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[474]Mrs. N. D. White, "Captivity Among the Sioux, August 18 to September 26, 1862," *Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society, Vol. 6* (St. Paul, Minn.: The Pioneer Press Company), 1901, 395.
[475]White, "Captivity Among the Sioux," 407.

Unable to purchase food from the stores without their yearly annuity payment, White appeared somewhat sympathetic to the Dakotas' plight explaining how "the Indians were compelled to ward off starvation by digging roots for food" and trading their guns for provisions.[476] Though she acknowledged the Dakotas' suffering, White failed to connect this as a cause for the outbreak. Rather, she blamed the violence on Little Crow who kept his warriors "excited and bloodthirsty," "the treachery of the Indians," and the Confederacy who, she claimed, had sent an emissary among the Dakota "encouraging them to their fierce outbreak and warfare against innocent settlers."[477] White seemed willing to give credence to nearly any explanation for the outbreak—as long as it did not implicate the government or her fellow white Minnesotans.

In words that echoed the sentiments of other white Minnesotans, White wrote that the violence on August 18th caught her completely off-guard. At the time of the attack, White's husband was away in Blue Earth, Minnesota. White was alone with their four children who ranged in age from 16 to five months. Upon learning of the Dakota attacks, White and her children fled to the home of their neighbor Mr. Earle. Earle's house had become a meeting point for many fleeing settlers. From the Earle's home, the party set off for the nearest garrison. Of her flight White wrote "we had gone only a short distance when we were made fully aware of the treachery that predominates the Indian character."[478] A group of Dakota ambushed the settlers and, in the ensuing melee, Dakota warriors murdered White's 16-year-old son Eugene and

[476]White, "Captivity Among the Sioux," 396, 397.
[477]White, "Captivity Among the Sioux," 396, 397, 404.
[478]White, "Captivity Among the Sioux," 399.

several others in her party. White, her 14-year-old daughter, and her five-month-old child were taken captive and 12-year-old Millard White somehow managed to escape. White's animosity toward the Dakota was at least due, in part, to the murder of her oldest son and eight of her neighbors.

Seemingly intent on adding insult to injury, the Dakota then took the captives back to Mr. Earle's house and forced them to watch as they "delighted in themselves by breaking stoves and furniture of various kinds and throwing crockery through the windows."[479] Apparently enjoying destroying every trapping of white "civilization" that they did not taken as spoils of war, White's Dakota captors stopped to repeat the process at every home they passed along the way. Adding to their cruelty, the Dakota separated White and her daughter, taking them to different camps and leaving White to agonize over her daughter's fate.

After a grueling journey marked by hunger, thirst, and distress at being separated from yet another one of her children, White and her infant reached Little Crow's camp. At the camp, White and her child, along with Mrs. J.W. Earle, her daughter, and Mrs. Carrothers (Helen Mar Tarbel) were sent to the home of Little Crow. Her pen dripping with a mixture of sarcasm and contempt, White described Little Crow for her readers as a "large, tall Indian, walking the floor in a very haughty manner, as much as to say, 'I am great!' However, his majesty condescended to salute

[479]White, "Captivity Among the Sioux," 403. In chapter three of her book *The Name of War*, historian Jill Lepore makes a compelling argument that the destruction of property by Indians during King Philip's War was akin to violence against persons. Viewed through this lens, the Dakota forcing the captives to watch as they plundered home after home could be viewed as akin to forcing the captives to witness a rape. Jill Lepore, *In the Names of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1999), 74-83.

us with a 'ho,' that being their usual word of greeting."[480] Believing Little Crow to have been responsible for whipping his warriors into a "bloodthirsty" frenzy, White expressed nothing but contempt for the Dakota leader. Her generally low opinion of the Dakota people however, would be challenged throughout her stay in captivity by the kindness shown to her by her own captor.

Content to reduce the great majority of Dakota people to "bloodthirsty" and "uncivilized savages," White's own captors contradicted her blanket assessment of the Dakota people. On her second day in Little Crow's camp, White and her daughter became the captives of a Dakota by the name of "Too-kan-we-chasta (meaning the 'Stone Man')" and his wife. The couple immediately accepted White and her child, referring to White as their 'big papoose.' Wrote White,

> their owning me in this manner saved me from a worse fate than death; and although more than a third of a century has elapsed since that event, strange is it may appear to some, I cherish with kindest feelings the friendship of my Indian father and mother.[481]

By alluding to the "fate worse than death," White acknowledged that some women had in fact, been raped. She had been spared, thanks in part to the efforts of her captors.

Grateful for the kindness shown to her by Stone Man and his wife, White remained critical of the Dakota in general. She spent pages detailing everything in the camp from cooking to clothing, ultimately deeming it all inferior to white "civilization." When White's Dakota mother insisted she dress in "squaw clothes" to better blend in around camp, White obliged but declared she looked "extremely

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[480]White, "Captivity Among the Sioux," 404.
[481]White, "Captivity Among the Sioux," 405.

ludicrous."[482] She also had few kind words to say about her Dakota mother's cooking. Later in her narrative, White claimed she had only pretended to be happy throughout her ordeal so as not to arouse the suspicions or anger of her captors. "In order to make myself as agreeable as possible to [the Dakota], I feigned cheerfulness, and took particular notice of their papooses, hoping that by doing so I would receive better treatment from them, which I think had the desired effect."[483] Obviously conflicted about her captivity, White vacillated between extremes—one moment praising the Dakota for their "ingenious" manner of moving camp and detailing the special favoritism bestowed upon her by Dakota women, the next, detailing the "horrors" of her captivity.[484] Her mood seemed to change with every paragraph.

Kept safe and well fed by the Stone Man and his wife, White was nevertheless grateful for her release from captivity and her return to "civilization" thirty-nine days later. Once turned over to General Sibley and his troops, White recalled, "we stayed with the soldiers ten days for the purpose of giving our testimony against the Indians. The soldiers were very kind to us…and seemed at all times to take delight in making us feel at home, or at least among civilized people."[485]And despite her expressed appreciation of the kindness shown to her by her Indian family, White characterized the mass hanging as "the day…retributive justice came to some of the blood-thirsty savages."[486]

For Urania White, writing her captivity story seemed to stir-up a mix of

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[482] Ibid.
[483]White, "Captivity Among the Sioux," 414.
[484]White, "Captivity Among the Sioux," 409, 418.
[485]White, "Captivity Among the Sioux," 423-4.
[486]White, "Captivity Among the Sioux," 426.

complex, conflicting, and contradictory emotions. Reliving the trauma of the loss she and had her family had suffered—the murder of her son Eugene, the deaths of countless friends and neighbors, and the loss of her family's home and sense of safety—all of these emotions bubbled to the surface of her narrative. After three years away, the White family returned to their home in Renville Country to try and begin anew. The Whites however, were never truly about to find a sense of closure. The destruction of their home and family weighed heavily on their minds. Further compounding their grief was the fact that her son Eugene's body was never found.

Helen Mar Tarbel (Mrs. James Carrothers)

By the time Uriana White's former neighbor Helen Tarbel published her narrative in 1904, the Dakota War had largely faded from the collective memory of white Minnesotans. Calling the Dakota War "the most appalling exhibition of Indian treachery and ferocity ever perpetrated," Tarbel lamented the fact that "thousands of people now living in [Minnesota] have never heard of it."[487] Spanning 65 pages, Tarbel's book contained not only the story of her captivity, but also a history of the region, descriptions of battles that took place during the War, a section detailing the mass hanging at Mankato, and another detailing the removal of the Dakota from the state.

Prior to recording her own story, Tarbel provided a detailed history of Dakota-white relations in the region. She detailed the government's repeated attempts to "civilize" the Dakota through building them homes, teaching them to farm, and

[487] Mrs. Helen Mar Tarbel, *The Story of My Capture and Escape during the MinnesotaIndian Massacre of 1862*, (St. Paul: The Abbott Printing Company, 1904), 3.

encouraging them to adopt the dress and customs of white men and women. In Tarbel's estimation, the Dakota War proved that the government's attempts had been a complete failure. "If the old-time Sioux Indians possessed any noble traits…I utterly failed to discover them, after residing among them for years. They were cunning, deceitful, and treacherous."[488] Blaming the outbreak on what she termed "the savagery and barbarism existing in every Sioux Indian," Tarbel cloaked her assessment of the Dakota people in the racist rhetoric of the late nineteenth century.[489] Like animals, the blood spilled at Acton on August 17, awoke the Dakotas' "tiger-like dispositions…[and] inflamed them to madness."[490]Tarbel claimed that, like animals, the Dakota became "wild" when they smelled blood.

After so thoroughly criticizing the Dakota for their "inherent savagery," Tarbel's own story about her life prior to the outbreak seemed to contradict many of her harsh assessments about the Dakota. At the age of 13, Helen Paddock married 26-year-old James Carrothers and moved with him to Minnesota to begin their married life. In 1857, the couple became "the first white family that took up a homestead" in Beaver Creek, settling on land recently ceded by the Dakota to the federal government.[491] James's work as a carpenter at the Redwood Indian Agency kept him away for long periods of time, leaving his wife alone in their home. Although originally terrified of the local Dakota, young Helen soon "became well acquainted with the Indians, who were very kind and friendly towards me."[492] As

[488]Tarbel, *The Story of My Capture and Escape*, 7.
[489]Tarbel, *The Story of My Capture and Escape*, 12.
[490]Tarbel, *The Story of My Capture and Escape*, 13.
[491]Tarbel, *The Story of My Capture and Escape*, 17.
[492]Tarbel, *The Story of My Capture and Escape*, 18.

time passed, Tarbel became even more accustomed to her neighbors, learning their language and picking up many of their customs. When, at the age of 15, she gave birth to her first child, two Dakota women assisted her with her labor. In the years leading up to the outbreak, Tarbel grew especially close to her Dakota neighbors. She even befriended a local medicine man who taught her "the mysteries of how to select and how to use the herbs…and how to compound the remedies he used…which certainly were wondrously effective."[493] In language similar to several of the captives, Tarbel grew so comfortable with the Dakota that she first refused to believe the reports of the violent uprising. The Dakota, Tarbel thought, were incapable of violence against the whites.

At the root of Helen Tarbel's anger seemed to be a sense of betrayal by people she once considered her friends. Part of the same group that included Mrs. N.D. White, Tarbel watched helplessly as Dakota warriors ambushed, then fired upon the fleeing settlers. She alluded to the rape of her friend Mrs. Henderson and described in graphic detail the murder of children by a group of Dakota that included her old friend, the medicine man. Of the medicine man she wrote, "The tiger's nature, which slumbered in his breast, was aroused and the cruelty and treacherous, blood-thirsty destructiveness of his race manifested itself."[494] Her former friend had become an enemy.

As a captive in Little Crow's camp, Helen Tarbel's familiarity with Dakota customs and ability to speak the language soon became a liability. Tarbel soon heard rumors that at least four different men wanted her as their wife. The warriors had

[493]Tarbel, *The Story of My Capture and Escape*, 20.
[494]Tarbel, *The Story of My Capture and Escape*, 28-9.

referred the matter to Little Crow but "he could not settle it or satisfy them, and so had ordered that I should be killed, for he would not have trouble among his best warriors on account of a white woman."[495] Now fearing for her life, Tarbel resolved to escape with her children. That night, a Dakota woman led Tarbel and her children into a cornfield and left them. Realizing that this was her chance, Tarbel grabbed her children and ran. Over the next several days, Tarbel and her children battled fatigue, hunger, thirst, and swarms of mosquitoes. After eight days of carrying her children across the prairie Tarbel finally reached Fort Ridgely. She arrived barefoot, covered in cuts and bruises, and nearly naked, with only "the band of the skirt buttoned about my waist."[496] The soldiers gave Tarbel a blanket, took her and her children into the Fort, and fed them. Almost immediately after eating their first meal, she and the children fell seriously ill. Within three days Tarbel had mostly recovered. Her daughter however, continued to suffer. When none the remedies prescribed by the Fort's physician seemed to be working, Tarbel used the skills taught to her by the medicine man to create a treatment for herself and her daughter. Both mother and child recovered from the physical ailments within days but "it took months to recover from the fearful mental strain which I had undergone."[497] In the months and years that followed, the emotional strains of Tarbel's ordeal would lead to the break-up of her marriage and a festering hatred of the Dakota as a people.

From Fort Ridgely, Tarbel and her children traveled to St. Peter and then on to St. Paul. At some point during this journey, she reunited with her husband James and

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[495]Tarbel, *The Story of My Capture and Escape*, 34.
[496]Tarbel, *The Story of My Capture and Escape*, 42.
[497]Tarbel, *The Story of My Capture and Escape*, 44.

the couple decided to go and stay with Tarbel's parents in LaCrosse, Wisconsin. In April of 1863, the couple returned to Minnesota where their relationship quickly deteriorated. "After my capture by the Indians," Tarbel wrote, "there was discord between me and my husband, and at St. Pater we 'agreed to disagree.' I went to work for Mr. and Mrs. Reynolds, who kept the Northwestern Hotel in St. Peter, and he returned to Wisconsin and that fall enlisted with a cavalry regiment from that State and went South."[498]Tarbel failed to elaborate what had actually caused the rift with her husband but contributed the break up of their marriage to her stint in captivity. Over the next few years, Tarbel remarried twice and held a series of odd jobs. At the writing of her narrative in 1904, she had been married to her husband L. H. Tarbel and living on a farm in Dodge, Minnesota for seven years.

Betrayed by Dakota that she considered her friends, threatened with death by Little Crow, and forced to survive on the prairie for more than a week, Helen Tarbel clearly suffered a great deal during the Dakota War. The 42 years that passed between Tarbel's ordeal and the writing of her narrative did little to dull the hatred and resentment she felt towards the perpetrators of the violence. Far too many Dakota, she wrote, had escaped their rightful death sentences because "the martyr President's kindly nature was worked upon by the members of the 'Indian Rights Association' and others, and he had been made to believe that the commission had been too severe in its findings."[499] While the Indian Rights Association did not exist in 1862, for Helen Tarbel, writing her narrative allowed her to publicly voice both her racism and her politics.

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[498]Tarbel, *The Story of My Capture and Escape*, 49.
[499]Tarbel, *The Story of My Capture and Escape*, 61.

Mary Schwandt-Schmidt/ Maggie Brass (Snana)

For former captive Mary Schwandt, coming to terms with the trauma she experienced during the Dakota War was a life-long endeavor. Mary Schwandt was publicly silent regarding the particulars of her captivity for over 30 years. However, details published later in her narratives provide a glimpse into Mary Schwandt's life during those decades. Following her release from captivity, 14-year-old Mary traveled to St. Paul where she stayed for five weeks until she could secure passage to her uncle's home in Wisconsin. Orphaned by the Dakota, Mary was overjoyed to discover that one of her brothers; 11-year-old August Schwandt had survived the Dakota attack. In 1863 she traveled back to St. Paul and then to New Ulm to testify about the value of her family's property that had been lost during the War. She spent the summer of that year with her former employers Mr. Joseph and Mrs. Valencia Renyolds, but when the couple expressed their desire to adopt her Mary, "would not consent" and returned to Wisconsin.[500] Two years later, while accompanying her uncle Christian on a visit to St. Paul, she met William Schmidt. The couple married in January of 1867 and, over the next 27 years Mary kept house for her husband and raised the couple's three children. But despite her happy marriage to a "loving husband," her wonderful children, and her many friends, Mary Schwandt-Schmidt remained haunted by the murder of nearly her entire family and her six weeks as a Dakota captive.[501]

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[500] Mary Schwandt and Edna Ward, "Reminiscences of Mary Schwandt-Schmidt as told to Mrs. Edna Sanford Ward, St. Paul, Minn" (ca. 1913), 49-50. Mary Schwandt Schmidt Papers.Minnesota Historical Society.

[501]Schwandt and Ward, "Reminiscences of Mary Schwandt-Schmidt," 51. In another narrative, Mary Schwandt wrote that she had six children but only two were living.

Up until 1894, the only version of Mary Schwandt's captivity in existence was "The Narrative of Mary Schwandt," found in Charles Bryant and Able B. Murch's*A History of the Great Massacre by the Sioux Indians, In Minnesota.* Purportedly a first person account of her captivity, Bryant and Murch wrote their book to appeal to a national audience that hungered for "sensation" stories, causing them to editorialize, embellish, and make claims that Schwandt vehemently denied in her later narratives.[502] The two most significant were that she had been raped in captivity and that her captor Maggie had treated her cruelly.

In Bryant and Murch's version, Mary Schwandt was little more than a helpless victim of Dakota savagery. Forced to flee from her employer's home Schwandt, along with Mattie Williams and Mary Anderson were captured, taken to the Dakota camp, and raped. Following her assault, Schwandt, the authors alleged, spent the remainder of her captivity suffering under two Indian "masters," a woman named "*Wenona*," (who "the whites called…Maggie") and her husband, Good Thunder.[503] Claiming she "was forced to call them father and mother," Schwandt admitted that, initially, her Dakota "parents" treated her well "…but this lasted only about two weeks, when they took off my clothes, and dressed me in squaw garments."[504] This version of Mary Schwandt's captivity story went uncontested

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Mrs. Mary E. Schmidt, "Recollections of the Indian Massacre of 1862," 1915, 64. reel 1 Mary Schwandt Schmidt Papers. Microflim edition. Minnesota Historical Society.

[502] Shelley Streeby, *American Sensations Class, Empire, and the Production of Popular Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press) 2002, 12, 27, 32.

[503] Bryant and Murch, 341.

[504] Bryant and Murch, 342.;Examples (from missing piece of quotation): "in some respects waking me up at breakfast, and bringing me soap, water, and a towel, to wash myself,"

until 1894. Then Schwandt began to author her own, unedited narratives. Schwandt's writings not only challenged the public narrative of the War, but also revealed her conscious and continual struggle to reclaim *her* story.

Mary Schwandt remained publicly silent about the particulars of her captivity until July 26, 1894 when, at the urging of family and friends, she submitted her narrative for publication in volume 6 of the *Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society*. Convinced "by kind friends [who] have assured me that my experience is a part of a leading incident in the history of Minnesota…that ought be given to the world," Schwandt reluctantly put forward her "plain and imperfect story."[505] By 1894, Schwandt's account of her captivity differed substantially from the story published 30 years earlier by Bryant and Murch. Rather than stress her victimization at the hands of Dakota men, Schwandt emphasized her affection for and her kind treatment from her Dakota "mother," Snana (Maggie, *not* Wenona).

Even after thirty-two years, remembering the Dakota War produced painful emotions for Mary Schwandt. She claimed to be unable to recall her flight from the Reynolds, the murder of her male companions, her capture, or much of her time in the Dakota camp explaining to her readers, "I have often honestly and earnestly tried hard to forget all about that dreadful time, and only those recollections that I cannot put away, or that are not painful in their nature, remain in my memory."[506] Having worked to suppress the memories of her captivity for the previous 32 years, Schwandt

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[505] Mary Schwandt, "The Story of Mary Schwandt." *Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society, Vol. 6* (St. Paul, Minn.: The Pioneer Press Company), 1894, 474.
[506]Schwandt, "The Story of Mary Schwandt," 465.She had only a "faint recollection" of Mr. Patoile's murder but she "could never forget the incidents of [Mary Anderson's] death." Schwandt, "The Story of Mary Schwandt," 467-8.

seemed ambivalent about being asked—by reporters, her friends, and the Minnesota Historical Society—not only to recall and relive her painful memories but to make them public. Of one thing however, Mary Schwandt remained certain; her Dakota "mother" Snana/Maggie was a "good" woman who treated her with kindness and affection for the duration of her captivity.

Describing her Indian mother to her readers Schwandt insisted, "Maggie could not have treated me more tenderly if I had been her daughter."[507] And apparently, Schwandt felt a similar affection for the woman who, according to Bryant and Murch, she was "forced" to call "mother." In an interview with the *St. Paul Pioneer* PressSchwandtpublicly declared her admiration and love for Maggie, saying, "…wherever you are Maggie, I want you to know that the little captive German girl you so often befriended and shielded from harm loves you still for your kindness and care."[508] Grateful for her Indian "mother's" love and protection while captive, Schwandt nevertheless struggled to come to terms with the murder of her family and her time in captivity. Recalling the war, she wrote"The memory of that period, with all its hideous features, often rises before me, but I put it down."[509] Hoping that her story would "inform the present and future generations [of] what some of the pioneers of Minnesota underwent in their efforts to settle and civilize this great state,"

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[507] "The Story of Mary Schwandt" Her Captivity During the Sioux 'Outbreak;'" *St. Paul Pioneer Press,* St. Paul, Minnesota, July 26, 1894; reel 1: 337; Schwandt, "The Story of Mary Schwandt," 470.
[508] The Story of Mary Schwandt" Her Captivity During the Sioux "Outbreak"; *St. Paul Pioneer Press,* St. Paul, Minnesota, July 26, 1894; reel 1: 337. Mary Schwandt-Schmidt Papers.Minnesota Historical Society.Mary Schwandt, "The Story of Mary Schwandt," 471.
[509]Schwandt, "The Story of Mary Schwandt," 474.

Schwandt concluded her narrative by expressing her desire to build a memorial to her murdered family.

Although Mary Schwandt had to wait until 1915 for the Schwandt monument to be erected, the publication of her 1894 narrative had some immediate effects. The most dramatic was her reunion with her "Indian mother." The *St. PaulPioneer Press* newspaper published an excerpt of Schwandt's narrative and, within a week, Schwandt received a letter from Maggie who was then living on the Santee Sioux Reservation in Nebraska.A month later, Schwandt's Indian "mother" arrived, intent on staying with her "daughter" forever. But after six weeks, Maggie grew homesick and returned to Nebraska. The women remained close; exchanging letters that Maggie addressed to her "dear adopted daughter" and signed, "your mother."[510] Between 1894 and her death in 1908, Maggie regularly visited her adopted daughter's family.[511] Reflecting on these visits in a later version of her narrative Schwandt wrote, "I gave [Maggie] the best I had [when] she visited…my husband was kind to her and she called him her son[,] my children called her grandmother."[512] However, Maggie's visits often brought back painful memories, which produced a great deal of guilt for Schwandt. She explained, "may the dear Lord forgive me but I could not get used to her again[. I]t brought all those terrible days back…so I could not have her

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[510] Mary Brass to Mary Schwandt-Schmidt, August 3, 1895-1907, reel 1, 88-130. Mary Schwandt-Schmidt Papers.Minnesota Historical Society. Maggie Brass frequently signed her letters to Mary in the following ways: "your mother," "your poor adopted mother," or "your poor Indian mother."
[511]Schwandt Schmidt, "Recollections of My Captivity among the Sioux the Year 1862" 48-50.
[512]Schwandt Schmidt, "Recollections of My Captivity" 44-5.

live with me always, but I did what I could for her."[513] Still grateful for Maggie's past kindness, Schwandt struggled with the painful, contradictory emotions that resurfaced during her Indian mother's visits.

Seven years after her initial reunion with Mary Schwandt, it was Maggie Brass's turn to tell her story. In 1901, the Minnesota Historical Society published the then 65-year-old Brass's (formerly Snana Good Thunder) version of the events of 1862. Unlike the narratives published by white captives, "Narration of a Friendly Sioux" included lengthy footnotes complied by amateur historian Robert I. Holcolmbe. Instead of referring to the author by her Christian name Maggie Brass, the narrative was credited as having been written by "Snana, the rescuer of Mary Schwandt." [514]Snana eagerly seized the opportunity to tell her version of events, beginning her narrative with a lengthy discussion her life prior to the outbreak. Although a full-blood Dakota, Snana emphasized her connections to whites—their people, religion, and culture. She began her second paragraph stating, "my mother's aunt was married to a white man" and then went on to detail both her kinship connections to the children of this union. One of those relations was Mary Brown, sister-in-law to former Indian agent Joseph R. Brown. She then switched to discussing her education; where she stressed her relationship to noted missionary Dr. Thomas R. Williamson and his family. After spending two years at a local day school, Snana began attending Williamson's school. There, she received instruction from Williamson's sister Jane and boarded in the doctor's home.

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[513]Schwandt Schmidt, "Recollections of My Captivity," 51.
[514]Snana, The Rescuer of Mary Schwandt, "Narration of a Friendly Sioux," in *Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society vol. 9* St. Paul: The Pioneer Printing Press, 1901): 427-30.

After three years with the Williamsons, Snana's mother Wamnuka removed her daughter from school and returned to their village. For Snana, her return to her people and her village was a difficult adjustment. Even wearing traditional clothing produced a great deal of anxiety for the young teenager. "[A]s I had been living among white people mostly I was bashful to go out in the Indian style, and for some days stayed inside the tent." "Although dressed in Indian costume, I though of myself as a white lady in my mind and in my thoughts."[515] Shortly after she returned to her village, 15 year oldSnana received a marriage offer from a Dakota named Good Thunder. Recalling the event she wrote, "Good Thunder…offered some special things to my mother for me to be his wife…which was legal marriage among the Indians." However for Snana, a legal Indian marriage was not sufficient. She consented to the marriage with the caveat that they "marry legally in the eyes of the church."[516] In 1861, Snana and Good Thunder both became confirmed members in their local Episcopal church.

Eight days before the Dakota War began, tragedy stuck the Good Thunder family when their seven-year-old daughter died. Snana was still aching from the loss of her eldest child (she had two younger daughters), when she learned that another Dakota man had captured a "nice looking girl."[517] She immediately sent her mother to trade her pony for the child. The child that Snana traded her pony for turned out to be the 14-year-old Mary Schwandt. Snana claimed that she immediately pitied and loved the frightened Schwandt. Writing that Mary "was just as dear to me as my own

[515]Snana, "Narration of a Friendly Sioux," 428.
[516]Snana, "Narration of a Friendly Sioux," 429.
[517] Ibid.

daughter," Snana recalled taking several precautions to keep Schwandt safe during her captivity. These precautions included hiding Mary when other Dakota threatened to kill the captives, dressing her new daughter "Indian style" so that she would better blend in around camp, and accompanying Schwandt whenever she ventured outside Snana's tepee. "I though to myself that if they would kill my girl they must kill me first," Snana made clear that she was willing to lay down her life in order to protect her new daughter Mary. When she and Mary parted ways at Camp Release, Snana wrote that her She wrote that her "heart ached" but that reconnecting with Mary in 1984 had made her extremely happy.[518]

By consciously highlighting education, her Christianity, and her connections to prominent white Minnesotans such as Joseph Brown and Thomas Williamson, Snana sought to distinguish herself from the Dakota who perpetrated the heinous acts of 1862. For, although Snana had protected Mary Schwandt and had been counted as a "friendly" Indian at Camp Release, in the aftermath of the war she, and hundreds of other innocent Dakota, had suffered along with the guilty parties. The war took away not only Snana's family and her land, but also, her future in Minnesota. Snana and her family were part of the nearly 1,600 Dakota forcibly interned at Fort Snelling during the winter of 1862-1863. Echoing the sentiment expressed by Gabriel Renville, Snana described how food shortages, deteriorating conditions, and epidemic disease plagued the prisoners at the Fort. Snana and Good Thunder survived, but their two daughters were among the 105 Dakota who died that winter.[519] One of the

[518] Ibid.
[519] See the Provost's Report, National Archives Record Group 393, District of Minnesota Papers.

few Dakota families permitted to remain in Minnesota after their release, the couple moved to a plot of land in Faribault, Minnesota. However, Snana's days in her homeland were numbered. Within a few years, the couple "removed" to the Santee Reservation in Nebraska where, with the exception of her visits to Schwandt-Schmidt, Snana remained until her death in 1908.[520]

While Maggie Brass/ Snana Good Thunder composed her narrative in part to distinguish herself from the perpetrators of the events of 1862, for Mary Schwandt-Schmidt, writing about her captivity seemed to provide an outlet to deal with the complex and contradictory emotions she still felt regarding her experience during the Dakota War. Though Mary Schwandt spent over thirty years trying to suppress the memories of 1862, after 1894, she devoted the remainder of her life to remembering both the Dakota War and her captivity. Her papers, located at the Minnesota Historical Society, reveal a woman consciously trying to come to terms with her past.

Although Schwandt expressed ambivalence at recalling her captivity, she appeared to enjoy the notoriety that came with being labeled an "authority" on the Dakota War. Between 1895 and her death in 1939, Mary Schwandt collected scores of newspaper articles about the war and her fellow captives. She made frequent visits to the sites of her capture and release, and gave over twenty public talks regarding her captivity, sharing her story with church groups, school children, ancestral organizations, and even a group of 25 blind people.[521] Over the next 44 years Mary

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[520]The removal of the Dakota was accomplished by Samuel D. Hinman, the minister who had married Snana and Good Thunder at the agency. See The Hinman Papers. Minnesota Historical Society 1869.

[521] Mary Schwandt-Schmidt, "List of Talks Given (1910-1920), reel 1, frame 246. Mary Schwandt Schmidt Papers. Microfilm edition. Minnesota Historical Society.

Schwandt produced at least five additional versions of her narrative, writing and redrafting the story of her family, her life, and her time as a Dakota captive.

Although Schwandt never successfully published any subsequent versions of her narratives, she wrote them with a potential audience in mind. All five narratives written after 1894 included substantial information about Schwandt, her murdered family, and her life after captivity. To heighten the drama of her stories, Schwandtexoticized her Indian mother, referring to Maggie only by her "Indian name," Snana. Schwandt rendered the kind treatment she received as a captive even more extraordinary, contrasting her "good" Indian mother with the "naked," "hideous," "savage," and "cruel," Dakota.[522] And lest any of her potential audiences misinterpret her love for Maggie as evidence that she enjoyed her time in captivity, Schwandt frequently emphasized her dislike of Indians and their lifestyle.

In her talks and in her narratives, Mary Schwandt subtly crafted her public persona as a loving mother and an authority on the Dakota War. She wrote extensively about the duties and responsibilities of motherhood, including her own "angel mother," her "mamma" Snana, and her duty to her own children to "set the record straight" regarding the circumstances of her captivity.[523] In the undated and unfinished *Story of Mary Schwandt* she wrote "I hope my own angel mother will forgive me for calling [Snana] 'mother' for what fate would have befallen her child

[522] Mrs. Mary E. Schmidt, "Recollections of the Indian Massacre of 1862."
[523] Mary Schwandt-Schmidt, "Story of Mary Schwandt-Schmidt" (n.d), and "Reminiscences of Mary Schwandt-Schmidt as told to Mrs. Edna Sanford Ward, St. Paul, Minn" (ca. 1913). Mary Schwandt Schmidt Papers.Minnesota Historical Society.

had Snana not stepped in to save it from a sure death and maybe worse."[524] For a white woman, there was only one fate "worse" than death, and Schwandt's insistence that Snana had "saved" her from it, offered an indirect refutation of the graphic sexual assault that appeared in Bryant and Murch's 1864 "Narrative of Mary Schwandt." Schwandt assured her readers that, while her love for Snana was birthed from gratitude, her loyalties and sympathies lay with whites. Admitting, "I could not help loving her," Schwandt assured her readers that she was unhappy during her time among the Dakota.[525] She referred to Dakota warriors as "half naked demons" and of Indian life wrote, "I think the Indian life did not agree with me[;] it was so different from what I had been used to."[526]

In the final three versions of her narrative, written in 1915, ca. 1929, and 1935 Mary Schwandt made serious attempts to reconcile her contradictory views regarding the Dakota and to find a limited sense of peace regarding her captivity. Like her other narratives, in these accounts Schwandt reiterated her love for Maggie and emphasized the themes of motherhood. However, unlike her other post-1894 narratives, these later versions included several ethnographic observations about Dakota life and far more details about her time in captivity than any of her previous narratives. The same woman who, in 1894 claimed that she "[could]not remember the incidents" of her captivity, after 1915 wrote with authority about the habits of the Dakota, her experiences as a captive, and the benefits that "civilization" had brought

[524]Schwandt-Schmidt, "Story of Mary Schwandt-Schmidt," 23-4.
[525]Schwandt and Ward, "Reminiscences of Mary Schwandt-Schmidt," 36.
[526]Schwandt-Schmidt, "Story of Mary Schwandt-Schmidt," 36.

to the Dakota.[527]Schwandt's struggle to come to terms with her captivity and her conflicting emotions regarding the Dakota was clearly evident on the pages of her later narratives. Vacillating between ethnocentrism, sympathy, and praise, Mary Schwandt's descriptions of the Dakota changed, becoming more sympathetic over time and clearly distinguishing between the Dakota of past and present day.

When writing about the Dakota of 1862, Schwandt reiterated the popular stereotypes of Indian women as "squaw drudges," overworked, ugly, and too "clumsy and fat" to fit into the women's dresses that Dakota warriors had pillaged from white homes.[528]Schwandt routinely exempted Snana from this characterization, describing her Indian "mother" as "having light skin, very pretty features…and the prettiest white teeth."[529] Dakota men, she wrote, were even worse than the women. They were, "greasy," "ugly," and "shiftless."[530] However, Schwandt routinely contradicted herself regarding the Dakota. In 1915, within the same paragraph, Shwandt claimed, "of course I hate the Indians. I can hardly bear to speak of them."[531] But just three sentences later, she defended the Dakota writing, "…the Indians were wronged. The

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[527] Mary Schwandt, "The Story of Mary Schwandt." *Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society, Vol. 6* (St. Paul, Minn.: The Pioneer Press Company), 1894, 465.
[528] Mrs. Mary E. Schmidt, "Recollections of the Indian Massacre of 1862," 1915, 4. reel 1 Mary Schwandt Schmidt Papers. Microflim edition. Minnesota Historical Society; Mary Schwandt Schmidt, "Recollections of My Captivity among the Sioux the Year of 1862," ca. 1929 (n.d.), Mary Schwandt Schmidt Papers, Minnesota Historical Society, 17. Mary EmeliaSchwandt Schmidt, "The Story of My Captivity by the Sioux Indians in 1862" October 30 1935, Mary Schwandt Schmidt Papers, Minnesota Historical Society, 5.
[529] For a discussion of the "squaw drudge" stereotype see, Greer, *The Jesuit Relations;*Mancall ed. *Envisioning America;* Shoemaker ed., *Negotiators of Change;* Nancy Shoemaker, *A Strange Likeness: Becoming Red and White in Eighteenth Century North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Smits, "'The Squaw Drudge': 281-306.
[530]. Schmidt, "Recollections of the Indian Massacre of 1862," 1915, 3.
[531] Schmidt, "Recollections of the Indian Massacre of 1862," 1915, 12.

Indians I speak of are not the Indians of today."[532] Although a continual and at times painful process, Schwandt's multiple narratives suggested that, over time, she increasingly developed a more sympathetic view towards the Dakota. Adopting a far more genial tone in her later narratives, Schwandt praised the government's efforts to "civilize" the Indians. Over time, she was able to joke about how much she loved Snana's "Indian cakes" and the time she inadvertently ate dog stew. She seemed far more comfortable describing life in the Dakota camp as not a wholly terrible experience.[533]

Coming to terms with the events of 1862 was a life-long endeavor for Mary Schwandt. The continuous writing and rewriting of her narratives served a variety of different and important functions. Written at the behest of family and friends, Schwandt's1894 narrative became the impetus for her decades long undertaking to remember the Dakota War, memorialize her murdered family, and come to terms with her oftentimes painful and contradictory feelings regarding the Dakota and her captivity. In her later narratives, Mary Schwandt sought to reclaim agency over *her* own story, adamantly denying Bryant and Murch's claims that she had been raped in captivity and mistreated by her Dakota "masters." In doing so, she challenged the public narrative of the Dakota War, a version of events that reduced white women to merely symbols of violated virtue by "savage and brutal Indians."

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[532] Ibid.

[533] Schmidt, "Recollections of the Indian Massacre of 1862," 1915, 10; Schwandt Schmidt, "Recollections of My Captivity among the Sioux the Year of 1862," 40. Mary EmeliaSchwandt Schmidt, "The Story of My Captivity by the Sioux Indians in 1862" October 30 1935, Mary Schwandt Schmidt Papers, Minnesota Historical Society, 10.

In an undated version of her narrative, Mary Schwandt recopied part of the address given by Dr. Warren Upham at the dedication of her family's memorial. Dr. Upham had asked those in attendance,

> Can we learn from this? Does it even shed forth a ray of hope that when the present direful world war [World War I] is over with treaties of peace it may be the beginning of trust and helpfulness, of mutual respect and friendship between all the now warring nations; Till the war drum throbs no longer and the battle flags are furled, in the parliament of men, the federation of the world.[534]

By now an old woman, that Mary Schwandt decided to close this version of her narrative with Upham's speech could reflect her coming to terms with the ordeal of her captivity. Upham's words were cautiously optimismistic about the future of human society. In the aftermath of war, former enemies could create lasting relationships based on "mutual respect and friendship." Earlier in this same version of her narrative Schwandt echoed a similar sentiment. Speaking about the present-day Dakota she wrote, "civilization…and religion has done much for them to make them more human."[535] While still cloaked in ethnocentric language, Schwandt's sentiments pointed to a softening of her feelings towards the Dakota. The last line of Upham's remarks comes from the poem "Locksley Hall" by Alfred Lord Tennyson. Composed of 97 rhyming couplets, "Locksley Hall" tackles a variety of themes including unrequited love, war and human society, technology, and memory. The speaker of the poem is a soldier searching for catharsis through remembering and

[534]Schmidt, "Recollections of My Captivity," 67. This version of Schwandt's Captivity narrative is usually abbreviated "Ca. 1929," making Schwandt 80 or 81 years old.
[535]Schmidt, "Recollections of My Captivity," 34.

then moving on from his past.[536] Perhaps Schwandt, like the protagonist of Tennyson's poem, felt ready to finally move beyond her past experiences.

For the remainder of her life, Schwandt sought to recall and refine her memories of the Dakota war and her captivity by collecting newspaper clippings, making several visits to the sites of her captivity and release, and speaking publicly about her captivity to a wide variety of audiences. These activities, coupled with the dedication of Schwandt monument in 1915 seemed to provide Schwandt with a sense of authority, a more sympathetic view towards the Dakota and perhaps, even a limited sense of peace.

Recorded decades after the war, the narratives in this chapter reveal that women remembered their captivity in a variety of different ways. JannetteDeCamp Sweet, Wilhelmina Ienefeld, Helen Tarbel and Urania (Mrs. N.D.) White, remained steadfast in their belief that the Dakota were, for the most part, "savage" people who had attacked innocent white families without provocation. While DeCamp and White may have acknowledged the kindness of individual Dakota, that did not keep them from echoing the racism found in wartime reporting or the early histories of the war. At least one reason for DeCamp, Ienefeld, and White's continued hatred of the Dakota may have related to loss. DeCamp's husband Joseph was killed by Dakota at the battle of Birch Coulee on September 2, only a few days before his wife and children arrived at Fort Ridgley. On August 18, 1862, Wilhelmina Ienefeld not only discovered the body of her murdered husband but also watched helplessly as a group of Dakota soldiers murdered her entire family. She and her infant child were the only

[536] E.C. Bufkin, "Imagery in 'Locksley Hall,'" *Victorian Poetry, vol. 2, no. 1 (Winter 1964): 23.*

members of the party who survived the Dakota attack. Dakota warriors also ambushed and killed Urania White's oldest son Eugene. Because his body was never found, White was unable to every properly bury her son. None of Helen Tarbel's family members died during the Dakota attacks but the war nevertheless had a profound effect on the young mother. To Tarbel, the outbreak felt like a personal betrayal by her Dakota friends. She also blamed the war and her captivity for leading to the breakup of her marriage with James Carrothers. For all four of these women, the Dakota left deep wounds that time proved impossible to heal.

Neither Mary Schwandt nor Nancy McClure Huggan fully forgave the Dakota for the devastation wrought by the outbreak of 1862. However, both of these women offered at least some, albeit contradictory sympathy for the Dakota. Schwandt was not only fiercely defensive of her "Indian mother" Snana, but lauded the efforts of missionaries and schoolteachers claiming that they had succeeded in "civilizing" the Dakota. Her renewed relationship with Snana/Maggie Brass in 1894 and the success of her efforts to have a memorial built to honor her family likely helped to increase her sympathy of the Dakota people. For Nancy McClure, the publication of her narrative provided her the opportunity to distinguish herself from the Dakota who perpetrated the attacks. Because McClure was part Dakota and her heritage and family connections played such an important role in protecting her throughout the war, she had a vested interest in showing at least some sympathy towards the Dakota. After all, their blood did ran through her veins.

As these narratives reveal, the old expression "time heals all wounds" did not hold true for captives of the Dakota War. Often filled with intensely personal

feelings, judgments, and contradictions, these women's narratives reveal that personal memories are often influenced by emotion and circumstance. Clearly, sometimes memories change and prejudices soften over time but just as often, they do not. Relying on memory to create history is often an imperfect task, but careful analysis can result in the story fabrications separated from the reality.

Conclusion

Examined collectively, the narratives of the Dakota War provide insight into the way that public memory is created, challenge stereotypes of nineteenth century women, and underscore the important, yet imperfect role memory plays in the creation of history. As the stories in chapter five illustrate, sometimes memories change and sometimes they do not. Although these women expressed a range of varying responses to the circumstances surrounding their captivity, female former captives shared several traits. Unlike the image of the female captive—frail, helpless, and victimized— actual captives were strong and resilient women. The Dakota War and their subsequent captivity were traumatic events that caused enormous upheaval in these women's lives. For hundreds of women, the war destroyed their homes, their families and, as was the case of Sarah Wakefield, their reputations. And while their wartime experiences remained forever etched in their memories, these female former captives persevered, with many going on to lead full and productive lives.

The themes of the Dakota War—the creation of a "savage," "dark rapist," the appropriation and embellishment of women's captivity stories for political purposes, and the disconnect between the public narrative of events and women's own stories—are still very much present and at work in American culture. Take for instance, the story of Jessica Lynch during the Second Iraq War. On March 23, 2003, 19-year-old Army Private Jessica Lynch was part of a convoy ambushed and attacked by Iraqi forces during the Battle of Nasiriyah. Iraqi soldiers then took the badly injured Lynch captive, holding her first at a military hospital before moving her to a civilian one.

On April 1, a group of American Special Forces soldiers staged an elaborate

rescue of Lynch. Upon her return to the United States, Lynch quickly became the "face" of the Iraq War; her photo appeared on the covers of *Newsweek, Time,* and *People*. Both the military and the media portrayed Lynch as a hero with simple dreams—to raise a family and be a kindergarten teacher.[537] Just eight months later, in November 2003, an authorized biography *I Am a Soldier Too*, written by Pulitzer Prize winner Rick Bragg, appeared in bookstores across the country. In the book, Bragg claimed that Lynch's wounds were consistent with sexual trauma—Lynch's dark captors had raped the petite, blonde, soldier from West Virginia.

Jessica Lynch's story echoed so many themes prevalent in the early reporting and histories of the Dakota War. She was a white woman captured, victimized, and violated by dark-skinned men. Rick Bragg, the author of her biography, appropriated Lynch's story, claiming that she had been raped in captivity. The military too used the symbol of the fresh-faced teen to help "sell the War" to a divided American public. Lynch's story captivated the Americans and her rescue by Special Forces seemed to provide the public hope that America would emerge victorious from the Iraq War. However, when Jessica Lynch finally spoke publically about her captivity,

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[537]Sarah Buttsworth, "WHO'S AFRAID OF JESSICA LYNCH? OR ONE GIRL IN ALL THE WORLD? GENDERED HEROISM AND THE IRAQ WAR," *Australasian Journal of American Studies* 24, no. 2 (December 2005): 45-6. Several scholars have argued that both the media and the military emphasized Lynch's "femininity" in order to make her a more sympathetic figure. Race, like gender, played a huge role in reporting on the Jessica Lynch story. Lynch's photos graced the covers of several popular magazines, and her story was turned into both a book and a made-for-TV movie. The stories of Lynch's fellow soldiers Shoshana Jackson, an African American woman also captured during the fight and Lori Piestwa, the first Native American service woman to die in combat, received only a fraction of the attention as Lynch's did. Joane Nagel and Lindsey Feitz, "Deploying Race, Gender, Class, and Sexuality in the Iraq War," *Race, Gender & Class* 14, no. 3/4 (2007): 34.

a far different story emerged. She expressed her discomfort with the way the military had represented her, her captivity, and her story. Lynch not only described the Iraqi doctors as kind and helpful, she distanced herself from Bragg's claim that she had been raped.

But Lynch, much like the female captives of the Dakota War, still carries physical and emotional scars as a result of her ordeal. In a 2011 piece she wrote for *Newsweek*, Lynch revealed that since her release from captivity, she has undergone 21 surgeries. "I have metal parts in my spine, a rod in my right arm, and metal in my left femur and fibula…I have no feeling in my left leg from the knee down, and I wear a brace every day."[538] Additionally, Lynch admitted that she still suffers from reoccurring nightmares and survivor's guilt. Despite her scars, she was thankful to have survived her ordeal and eager to move with her life. In 2013 interview with the TODAY Show, Lynch reiterated these sentiments, telling interviewer Savannah Guthrie that, she was "happy…[to] put Iraq in the past" but that the Iraq War "will always be with me."[539]

America's fascination with captivity stories remains as real today as it was in the nineteenth century. Captivity narratives, especially those focusing on women, still titillate the public and remain capable of stirring up powerful emotions that are often manipulated for political ends. However today, as was the case in the Dakota War, women are often rendered as passive objects of male brutality. Women's stories

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[538] Jessica Lynch, "Jessica Lynch's New Life," *Newsweek*, December 18, 2001. Accessed March 15, 2014 http://www.newsweek.com/jessica-lynchs-new-life-65987.
[539] Scott Stump, Jessica Lynch: Iraq Still Haunts my Dreams 10 years after rescue," *TODAY News*, April 1, 2013. http://www.today.com/news/jessica-lynch-iraq-still-haunts-my-dreams-10-years-after-1C9160653

are frequently co-opted and manipulated by politicians and pundits to elicit sympathy, incite xenophobia or racism, or to simply make money. When allowed to write and to tell their own stories, women often present a very different and more complicated, yet far more interesting and accurate narrative.

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