



The Many Captivities of Esther Wheelwright (The Lewis Walpole Series in Eighteenth-Century Culture and History)

By Ann M. Little

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Born and raised in a New England garrison town, Esther Wheelwright (1696–1780) was captured by Wabanaki Indians at age seven. Among them, she became a Catholic and lived like any other young girl in the tribe. At age twelve, she was enrolled at a French-Canadian Ursuline convent, where she would spend the rest of her life, eventually becoming the order's only foreign-born mother superior. Among these three major cultures of colonial North America, Wheelwright's life was exceptional: border-crossing, multilingual, and multicultural. This meticulously researched book discovers her life through the communities of girls and women around her: the free and enslaved women who raised her in Wells, Maine; the Wabanaki women who cared for her, catechized her, and taught her to work as an Indian girl; the French-Canadian and Native girls who were her classmates in the Ursuline school; and the Ursuline nuns who led her to a religious life.

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Editorial Review

Review

“In Little’s hands, *Wheelwright* becomes a vehicle for discussions of any number of subjects, from comparative imperialism to gender, authority and aging in colonial North America. The biographical lens makes it possible to convey important but comparatively abstract historiographical analysis through tangible life experiences.”—Marla R. Miller, author of *Betsy Ross and the Making of America*
(Marla R. Miller)

“An utterly absorbing, brilliantly told analysis of a singular life. Little offers us a fresh way to think about early America by foregrounding a female subject and a rich body of primary sources produced by women, and by challenging our gendered notions of appropriate biographical subjects.”—Sophie White, author of *Wild Frenchmen and Frenchified Indians: Material Culture and Race in Colonial Louisiana*
(Sophie White)

“Esther Wheelwright’s journey—from Puritan girl, to Wabanaki captive, to mother superior of the largest Catholic convent in French Canada—is one of the most fascinating personal stories in the annals of what we call ‘colonial history.’ And now, as recounted by Ann Little, it offers something more. Deeply researched, and wonderfully contextualized, *The Many Captivities of Esther Wheelwright* opens a wide window on three major cultural venues, whose interplay defined and shaped a whole era.”—John Demos, author of *The Unredeemed Captive: A Family Story from Early America*
(John Demos)

“Ann Little has produced a stunning biography. From fragments she has woven a compelling tapestry, restoring the life of an eighteenth-century North American woman with depth and sensitivity, not only to her subject but to the ways of recreating past lives.”—Peter C. Mancall, author of *Fatal Journey: The Final Expedition of Henry Hudson—A Tale of Mutiny and Murder in the Arctic*
(Peter C. Mancall)

“Little has produced a fascinating biography of an extraordinary woman. . . . A must-read.”—*Library Journal*, starred review
(*Library Journal*)

“The story of *Wheelwright* is unique in its details, but ends up telling a larger story about the lives of women in the region, as well as religion, warfare, status, human nature and rivalry on a local and world stage. This is a book that deserves a permanent place on any bookshelf dedicated to the history of Maine.”—*Portland Press Herald*
(*Portland Press Herald*)

About the Author

Ann Little is professor of history at Colorado State University and the author of *Abraham in Arms: War and Gender in Colonial New England*. She lives in Greeley, CO.

Users Review

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Lourdes Williams:

Information is provisions for folks to get better life, information nowadays can get by anyone at everywhere. The information can be a expertise or any news even a concern. What people must be consider if those information which is inside the former life are hard to be find than now could be taking seriously which one is appropriate to believe or which one the resource are convinced. If you have the unstable resource then you have it as your main information you will have huge disadvantage for you. All of those possibilities will not happen throughout you if you take *The Many Captivities of Esther Wheelwright (The Lewis Walpole Series in Eighteenth-Century Culture and History)* as your daily resource information.

Michael Durkin:

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