THE PEOPLE OF A WEEK:

HANNAH EMERSON DUSTON

dux faemina facti:

"WHEREIN A WOMAN WAS THE ORIGINATOR OF THE DEED"
The People of A Week: Hannah Emerson Duston

A Week: On the thirty-first day of March, one hundred and forty-two years before this, probably about this time in the afternoon, there were hurriedly paddling down this part of the river, between the pine woods which then fringed these banks, two white women and a boy, who had left an island at the mouth of the Contoocook before daybreak. They were slightly clad for the season, in the English fashion, and handled their paddles unskilfully, but with nervous energy and determination, and at the bottom of their canoe lay the still bleeding scalps of ten of the aborigines. They were Hannah Dustan, and her nurse, Mary Neff, both of Haverhill, eighteen miles from the mouth of this river, and an English boy, named Samuel Lennardson, escaping from captivity among the Indians. On the 15th of March previous, Hannah Dustan had been compelled to rise from childbed, and half dressed, with one foot bare, accompanied by her nurse, commence an uncertain march, in still inclement weather, through the snow and the wilderness. She had seen her seven elder children flee with their father, but knew not of their fate. She had seen her infant’s brains dashed out against an apple-tree, and had left her own and her neighbors’ dwellings in ashes. When she reached the wigwam of her captor, situated on an island in the Merrimack, more than twenty miles above where we now are, she had been told that she and her nurse were soon to be taken to a distant Indian settlement, and there made to run the gauntlet naked. The family of this Indian consisted of two men, three women, and seven children, beside an English boy, whom she found a prisoner among them. Having determined to attempt her escape, she instructed the boy to inquire of one of the men, how he should despatch an enemy in the quickest manner, and take his scalp. “Strike ‘em there,” said he, placing his finger on his temple, and he also showed him how to take off the scalp. On the morning of the 31st she arose before daybreak, and awoke her nurse and the boy, and taking the Indians’ tomahawks, they killed them all in their sleep, excepting one favorite boy, and one squaw who fled wounded with him to the woods. The English boy struck the Indian who had given him the information, on the temple, as he had been directed. They then collected all the provision they could find, and took their master’s tomahawk and gun, and scuttling all the canoes but one, commenced their flight to Haverhill, distant about sixty miles by the river. But after having proceeded a short distance, fearing that her story would not be believed if she should escape to tell it, they returned to the silent wigwam, and taking off the scalps of the dead, put them into a bag as proofs of what they had done, and then retracing their steps to the shore in the twilight, recommenced their voyage.
Thomas Duston and Elizabeth Wheeler Duston emigrated to America with the Trelawney expedition. In 1677 their third child and only son Thomas Duston, who had been born in 1652 in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, would marry Hannah Webster Emerson, who had been born in 1657 in Haverhill, Massachusetts and would henceforth be known to the world as Mrs. Hannah Emerson Duston.
Hannah Emerson Duston was born in Haverhill, Massachusetts as Hannah Webster Emerson.
April 10, Saturday (Old Style): According to Jane Emerson James’s The Haverhill Emersons: Revised and Extended (Lake Winnebago MO, 1983, page 25), bad things were beginning to happen in the life of Elizabeth Emerson, a sister to Hannah Emerson Duston, in consequence of a sexual liaison she was having with an older local married man of Haverhill, Samuel Ladd:

On 10 April 1686 Elizabeth Emerson, unmarried, gave birth to Dorothy of whom no further record has been located by me. The father was Samuel Ladd, then 37, who was married to Martha (Corlis) Ladd, mother of their 6 children. Elizabeth was 23 at the birth of Dorothy and at 28 she again gave birth, this time to twin boys who did not survive. Again the father was Samuel Ladd, then 42. Whatever else may be thought of Elizabeth, she was not permiscuous [sic].
May 7, Thursday (Old Style): Per RECORDS OF THE COURT OF ASSISTANTS OF THE MASSACHUSETTS BAY, Volume 1, bad things were continuing to happen in the life of Elizabeth Emerson of Haverhill, a sister to Hannah Emerson Duston, in consequence of her long-term sexual liaison with an older local married man, Samuel Ladd:

26th Sept. Elizabeth Emmerson single woman Daughter of Michael Emmerson of Haverhill in the County of Essex being indicted by the Jurors for our Soveraigne Lord & Lady King William & Queen Mary upon their Oathes. For that the sd. Elizabeth Emmerson being with child with two living Children or Infants on Thursday night the 7th of May 1691 before day of Fryday morning at Haverhill aforesd in the house of Michael Emmerson aforesd by the Providence of God two Bastard Children alive did bring forth and the sd. Elizabeth Emmerson not haveing the feare of Cod before her Eyes and being instigated by ye Devil of her malice forethought, the sd two Infants did feloniously kill & Murther, and them in a small Bagg or cloath sewed up, and concealed or hid them in sd Emmersons house untill afterwards, that is to say, on sabbath day May the tenth 1691, the sd two Infants in the yard of sd Emmerson in Haverhill aforesd did secretly bury contrary to the peace of Our Soveraign Lord 6 Lady the King & Queen, their Crown & Dignity, the Laws of God, and the Lawes & Statutes in that case made & provided. Upon which Indictment the sd Elizabeth Emmerson was arraigned and to the Indictment pleaded not guilty & put herselfe upon Tryal by God & the Country, ____1 a Jury was impannelled being the first Jury, whereof Mr. Richard Crisp was foreman, and were accordingly sworne (the prisoner making no challeng). The Indictment Examination & evidences were read, & the prisoner made her defence, The Jury return their Verdict, the Jury say, That she sd. Elizabeth Emmerson is guilty according to Indictment. The Court Order, That sentence of Death he pronounced ag. her.

Elizabeth would spend the following two years in prison and would then be hanged on the Boston Common on June 8, 1693. Although all of Haverhill knew Ladd to be the father, we do not have a record of his being called to account.

In the diary of John Evelyn, we find:

May 7, Thursday (Old Style): [I visited the Earle of Clarindon prisoner in the Tower, kept there still about the late Plot, he told me he expected every day deliverance, and bespake me to stand with his Brother the E[arl] of Rochester &c for security which I promised.]

King William gos now againe into Flanders.

1. A blank in the record.
June 8, day (Old Style): Bad things had happened in the life of Elizabeth Emerson of Haverhill (born January 26, 1664; in May 1676 her father had been fined three shillings for having cruelly and excessively kicked and beaten her), a sister to Hannah Emerson Duston in consequence of her long-term affair with an older local married man, Samuel Ladd — a liaison which had produced three infants none of whom had survived. She had been languishing in the local lockup for two years and despite a plea of innocence and (it would appear) the entire absence of forensic evidence, had been found guilty of several counts of murder:

26th Sept. Elizabeth Emmerson single woman Daughter of Michael Emmerson of Haverhill in the County of Essex being indicted by the Jurors for our Soveraigne Lord & Lady King William & Queen Mary upon their Oathes. For that the sd. Elizabeth Emmerson being with child two living Children or Infants on Thursday night the 7th of May 1691 before day of Fryday morning at Haverhill aforesd in the house of Michael Emmerson aforesd by the Providence of God two Bastard Children alive did bring forth and the sd. Elizabeth Emmerson not having the feare of Cod before her Eyes and being instigated by ye Devil of her malice forethought, the sd two Infants did feloniously kill & Murther, and them in a small Bagg or cloath sewed up, and concealed or hid them in sd Emmersons house untill afterwards, that is to say, on sabbath day May the tenth 1691, the sd two Infants in the yard of sd Emmerson in Haverhill aforesd did secretly bury contrary to the peace of Our Soveraign Lord & Lady the King & Queen, their Crown & Dignity, the Laws of God, and the Lawes & Statutes in that case made & provided. Upon which Indictment the sd Elizabeth Emmerson was arraigned and to the Indictment pleaded not guilty & put herselfe upon Tryal by God & the Country, 4 a Jury was impannelled being the first Jury, whereof Mr. Richard Crisp was foreman, and were accordingly sworne (the prisoner making no challeng). The Indictment Examination & evidences were read, & the prisoner made her defence, The Jury return their Verdict, the Jury say, That she sd. Elizabeth Emmerson is guilty according to Indictment. The Court Order, That sentence of Death he pronounced ag. her.

Although all of Haverhill knew Ladd to be the father, there seems to be no record of his being called to make any accounting. On this day Elizabeth Emerson was taken from her jail cell to listen to the Reverend Cotton Mather as he delivered a sermon which included her purported post-conviction confession, and was then taken from the church and hanged on Boston’s Common. Per the diary of the Reverend Mather:

I had often wished for an Opportunity, to bear my Testimonies, against the Sins of Uncleanness, wherein so many of my Generacon do pollute themselves. A young Woman of Haverhil, and a Negro Woman also of this Town [Boston] were under sentence of Death, for the Murdering of their Bastard-children. Many and many a weary Hour, did I spend in the Prison, to serve the Souls of

2. He was married since December 1, 1674 with Martha Corlis Ladd, with whom he produced six legitimate children. On February 22, 1697 he would be struck in the head and killed in an Indian raid while gathering hay.
3. A girl named Dorothy born April 10, 1686, and then on the night of May 7, 1691 twin boys.
4. A blank in the record.
those miserable Creatures; and I had Opportunities in my own Congregation, to speak to them, and from them, to vast Multitudes of others. Their Execution, was ordered to have been, upon the Lecture of another; but by a very strange Providence, without any Seeking of mine, or any Respect to mee, (that I know of) the order for their Execution was altered and it fell on my Lecture Day. I did then with the special Assistance of Heaven, make and preach, a Sermon upon Job. 36.14. Whereat one of the greatest Assemblies, ever known in these parts of the World, was come together. I had obtained from the young Woman, a pathetical Instrument, in Writing, wherein shee own’d her own miscarriages, and warn’d the rising Ceneracon of theirs. Towards the close of my Sermon, I read that Instrument unto the Congregation; and made what Use, was proper of it. I accompany’d the Wretches, to their Execution; but extremely fear all our Labours were lost upon them; however sanctify’d unto many others. The Sermon was immediately printed; with another which I had formerly uttered on the like Occasion; (entitled, Warnings From the Dead [Or Solemn admonitions unto all people; but especially unto young persons to beware of such evils as would bring them to the dead, Boston: Printed by Bartholomew Green, for Samuel Phillips, at the west end of the Exchange, 1693]) and it was greedily bought up; I hope, to the Attainment of the Ends, which I had so long desired. T’was afterwards reprinted at London.

Elizabeth had pled not guilty until, under sentence of death in prison, the Reverend Mather had worked his word magic on her. We have no way of knowing whether she actually had been guilty of anything more than simple fornication, and of giving birth to infants which either due to their biological condition or to their deprived environment had been unable to survive — indeed we have no way of knowing whether or not such an uneducated young woman could have fashioned the confession that was being “recorded” on her behalf. We can legitimately infer that in that era, the American court system was not following the precept “Innocent until proven Guilty.” What the Reverend Mather read that he characterized as having been Elizabeth’s confession to him in the jail cell, on that day, he carefully preserved for us in his Magnalia Christi Americana. –You can decide for yourself how much of this is what Elizabeth wanted to say about herself, versus how much of it is what the good Reverend had desired to hear from her, and considered suitable for the moral education of the other sinners of his flock:

I am a miserable sinner, and I have justly provok’d the holy God to leave me unto that folly of my own heart, for which I am now condemned to die. I cannot but see much of the anger of God against me, in the circumstances of my woful death. He hath fulfilled upon me that word of his, “Evil pursueth sinners!” I therefore desire humbly to confess my many sins before God and the world; but most particularly my blood guiltiness. Before the birth of my twin-infants, I too much parlied with the temptation of the devil to smother my wickedness by murthering of them. At length, when they were born, I was not insensible that at least one of them was alive; but such a wretch was I, as to use a murderous carriage towards them, in the place where I lay, on purpose to dispatch them out of the world. I acknowledge that I have been more hard hearted than the sea-monsters; and yet for the pardon of these my sins, I would fly to the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is the only “fountain set open for sin and uncleanness.” I know not how better to glorifie God, for
giving me such an opportunity as I have had to make sure of his mercy, than by advertising and entrieving the rising generation here to take warning by my example, and I will therefore tell the sins that have brought me to my shameful end. I do warn all people and especially young people, against the sin of uncleanness in particular. ’Tis that sin that hath been my ruine. Well had it been for me, if I had answered all temptations to that sin as Joseph did, “How shall I do this wickedness, and sin against God?” But, I see, bad company is that which leads to that and other sins; And I therefore beg all that love their souls to be familiar with none but such as fear God. I believe the chief thing that hath brought me into my present condition, is my disobedience to my parents. I disposed all their godly counsel and reproofs; and I was always of a haughty, stubborn spirit. So that now I am become a dreadful instance of the curse of God belonging to disobedient children. I must bewail this also, and although I was baptized, yet when I grew up, I forgot the bonds that were laid upon me to be the Lord’s. Had I given my self to God, as soon as I was capable to consider that I had been in baptism set apart for him, How happy had I been! It was my delay to repent of my former sins, that provoked God to leave me unto the crimes for which I am now to die. Had I seriously repented of my uncleanness the first time I fell into it, I do suppose I had not been left unto what followed. Let all take it from me: They little think what they do when they put off turning from sin to God, and resist the strivings of the Holy Spirit. I fear ’tis for this that I have been given up to such “hardness of heart,” not only since my long imprisonment but also since my just condemnation. I now know not what will become of my distressed, perishing soul. But I would humbly commit it unto the mercy of God in Jesus Christ.

Amen.
Warnings from the Dead.

OR

Solemn Admonitions

Unto

ALL PEOPLE;

but especially unto

YOUNG PERSONS

to Beware

Of such EVILS as would bring them to the Dead.

By COTTON MATHER.

In Two Discourses,

Occasioned by a Sentence of DEATH,

Executed on some Unhappy MALEFACTORS. Together with the last CONFESSION, made by a Young Woman, who Dyed on June 8, 1693. ONE of these Malefactors.

Boston in New-England;

Printed by Bartholomew Green, for Samuel Phillips, at the West End of the Exchange. 1693.
The Bay colony offered its citizens a reward of £50 each for native American scalps.\(^5\)

5. Of course, no-one would do this sort of thing without a damn good reason.... For instance, during this year some Hurons sneaked down from Quebec and killed a young girl and kidnapped her siblings in an inland settlement of the Massachusetts Bay Colony (as a result of this incident, some of the 20 to 30 Huguenot farm families –never more than 70 to 80 persons– that lived at New Oxford would abandon their work and flee to the safety of Boston).
The Bay colony reduced the reward it was offering its citizens for native American scalps from £50 each to £25 each.6

6. Gee, I wonder if this means only half as many people are going to get murdered for their body parts? That would seem a small step in the right direction....
December 16, Wednesday (Old Style): The Bay colony abolished entirely the reward it had been offering its citizens for native American scalps.7

7. Abolished the trade in human body parts entirely, but with exceptions as we shall see....
March 15, Monday (1696, Old Style): Toward the very end of the seven-year period of frontier hostilities known as “King William’s War,” Haverhill was attacked by native American allies of the French. In an effort to gain New World influence for France, the Colonial Governor of Canada, Count Frontenac, was during this period offering set bounties for English scalps and prisoners.

Daniel Bradley, probably a son of the Daniel Bradley who had in his elder years been killed by the Indians in 1689, was killed, along with his wife Hannah Bradley and their children Mary Bradley and Hannah Bradley (or by another account, their children Joseph Bradley, Martha Bradley, and Sarah Bradley).

[Milton] Bradley came from a family ruled, for generations, by nothing so much as an angry God. The Bradleys had been in New England since 1635, when Daniel Bradley, an apothecary’s son, settled in Salem, Massachusetts. Their sufferings were Biblical. Daniel was killed by Indians in 1689, six years before Abenakis captured his fifteen-year-old son, Isaac. In 1697, another son, his wife, two of their children, and three more Bradley children died in an attack on Haverhill in which Hannah Bradley, the wife of still another of Daniel’s sons, was taken captive. She escaped, only to be captured again in 1704 and carried to Canada; on the journey, she gave birth to an infant who was killed when her captors poured hot embers into its mouth. Her husband, Joseph Bradley, trudged after her through waist-high snows, with his dog, to pay her ransom and bring her home. The next time an Indian came to her door, Hannah shot him. (She lived to be ninety, but her old age was probably more haunted than happy.)

In 1739, two of the next generation of Bradleys, Samuel and Jonathan, were cut off in their youth in an ambush in New Hampshire. By the time Jonathan’s direct descendant Milton was born, nearly a century later, and given the name of the Puritan author of “Paradise Lost,” the family’s fortunes had not gained much against adversity.

Still, the story of Bradley’s ancestors was a story not of failure but of fate: God had chosen to visit them with affliction, and there was nothing they could do but praise Him. They would have had little patience for the eighteenth-century coffeehouse debate over which game life is most like. By the end of the century, the debate had become a cliché. “Sure, life’s a game of cricket,” a Bostonian joked in 1785. “Yet death has hit my wicket.”

The family of Thomas and Hannah Duston was staying in a house on the west side of the Sawmill River in the town of Haverhill, on a short street now known as Eudora Street leading off the east side of Hilldale Avenue (on the opposite side of what is now Monument Street is a giant boulder we refer to as the Duston Boulder). The husband was constructing at another location, with bricks made by himself, a new home for the family.

Since the taking in August 1696 of Jonathan Haynes and his four children while they were picking peas at Bradley’s Mills near Haverhill, there had not been much in the way of Indian hostilities in the district. The Dustons’ 12th infant, Martha, had been born on March 9th and Mary Corliss Neff, age 50, was helping in the home. Of the dozen infants 39-year-old Hannah Emerson Duston had borne, eight had survived, which in that era was a fairly satisfactory ratio. Although Thomas was a bricklayer and farmer, according to family tradition
he also kept his own almanac and had just completed a term as Constable for Haverhill’s “west end.” On this morning the husband was attending to chores near the home, gun and horse at hand, when he spied Indians approaching. He rode toward the house, shouting, and the seven children responded by dashing in the direction of the garrison house of Onesiphorus Marsh, a mile away on Pecker’s Hill, the nearest of the six garrison houses furnished by the town with a small complement of soldiers. Recognizing that it would be impossible to save both his wife and six-day-old daughter inside the house, and the other children outside the house, he rode after the band of children, who were being pursued by some of the attackers. He dismounted and used his horse as a body shield, threatening with his single-shot rifle over the saddle to shoot the first person to advance toward them. Had he been so unwise as to discharge his piece, of course, they could have taken all of them at once. This threat was successful, all reaching the safety afforded by the fields of fire around the garrison house. In the home, however, nurse Mary had been intercepted while attempting to escape with the baby. Hannah rose and dressed herself while their possessions were being rifled. In being dragged outside she unfortunately lost one of her shoes. Setting fire to the house, the captors dragged Hannah and Mary, who was carrying the infant, toward the woods, while the rest of the band, rejoined by those who had been pursuing Thomas and the children, attacked other houses in the village, killing a total of 27 and capturing 13 more hostages. Finding Mary unable to keep up, one of the attackers seized the infant and dashed out its brains against the trunk an apple tree. Rejoining the native women and children, on this first day of her captivity the group hiked in Hannah’s estimation “about a dozen miles” in the general direction of Canada and the ransom money that was fueling this frontier activity:

For this, father Thomas would be exacting a race vengeance that nobody talks much about these days (that would, you see, dreadfully complicate the received story):

March 30, Tuesday (Old Style): After having covered about 100 miles, near the junction of the Contoocook and Merrimack rivers about 6 miles north of Concord, New Hampshire, thirteen of the invaders (two red men, three red women, one white boy of 14 from near Worcester named Samuel Lenorson or Lennardson who had been playing Indian for about 18 months at this point, and seven red children), taking with them Hannah Emerson Duston and Mary Corliss Neff, broke away from the main party and stopped at what is now known as Dustin Island, situated where the two rivers unite near the present town of Penacook NH. This was the home of the man, Bampico, who was claiming the women as his hostages, and here the group planned to recuperate before continuing toward Canada. One of the red children was a clear favorite of the family, something of a pet. Samuel had at this point begun to tire of playing Indian in the woods in the winter and was on the lookout for a way to extricate himself from the situation he had created for himself and return to civilization without being
punished. Upon reaching their home island, the Indians had grown somewhat careless. The river being in flood, Samuel having come to be considered one of the family and the two hostages being obviously worn out, no watch was set. This family had been influenced more recently by French Catholicism than by English Protestantism. Bampico would sometimes attempt to offer them counsel: “What need you trouble yourself? If your God will have you delivered, you shall be so!” Bampico had some years earlier been in the service of the Reverend Rowlandson of Lancaster, and he commented to Hannah that “when he prayed the English way he thought that it was good, but now he found the French way better.” They had family prayer morning, noon, and night. The children said prayers before eating or sleeping. That night the red children said their prayers and everyone drifted off to sleep. In the middle of the night Hannah woke Mary and Samuel. Each armed with a hatchet or tomahawk, they crept to a position near the heads of the sleeping Indians. At a signal from Hannah both males, two of the three females, and six of the children were whacked, only two, one squaw being hacked seven times but still managing to escape into the woods.8

The trio could not bring themselves to hack that favorite child and so they let him continue in his slumbers, intending to carry him off with them. Evidently, however, he had been merely playing possum under the covering, for as soon as they were diverted the child slipped away into the shadows. Hastily piling food and weapons into a canoe, including the gun and knife of Hannah’s late master and the hatchet with which the white boy Samuel whom he had befriended had offed him, the trio scuttled the other canoes and set out down the Merrimack. Suddenly Hannah remembered an item on the shopping list which they had forgotten, and ordered a return to the island. She then scalped the corpses of their ten victims, wrapping the trophies and the knife in some cloth that had been cut from Hannah’s loom in Haverhill on the day of her capture.

“As the star of the Indian descended, that of the Puritans rose ever higher.”

8. Deposition of Hannah Bradley in 1739: “above penny cook the Deponent was forced to travel farther then the rest of the captives, and the next night there came to us one Squaw who said that Hannah Dustan and the aforesaid Mary Neff assisted in killing the Indians of her wigwam except herself and a boy, herself escaping very narrowly, shewing to myself & others seven wounds as she said with a Hatchet on her head which wounds were given her when the rest were killed.”
Traveling by night and hiding by day, the trio finally reached the home of John Lovewell in old Dunstable, now part of Nashua, New Hampshire. 9

9. Presumably his 6-year-old son John Lovewell (who would grow up to become a famous Indian-killer in his own right) was suitably impressed by this entourage.
After resting overnight at the Lovewell home,
Public Library and the town’s Common facing it:

Below are the plaques on the four faces of the Haverhill statue, depicting comic-book style the taking of the prisoners followed by the retaliation of Hannah’s husband (which nobody talks much about nowadays), Hannah’s killing and scalping of the band, and their night escape with their bounty scalps down the dark and silent Merrimack River:

Today, by car, it is 66 miles from Haverhill to the island near Lancaster, situated at the entry of the Contoocook River into the Merrimack River, on which Hannah took her scalps. Leave Haverhill on I-495 southbound from exit 50, travel to exit 40, turn north on I-93 and travel to Exit 17. There is no sign announcing the Duston monument there. You must pay a 75-cent toll between exits 16 and 17. You will be six miles north of Concord NH. Go west on US-4 for about half a mile to a Park-‘n-Ride beside the river. There is a cast-iron historical marker at the entrance to the lot. At the west end of the lot a paved path leading down to the river and over an unused railroad bridge onto the island. The island boasts a monument erected in 1874 with Hannah at the top.  

April 5, Monday (Old Style): The recent native raid had made the town of Haverhill, Massachusetts aware that it could make use of several more garrison houses. Though the source of clay was not far off, soldiers were assigned to guard the laborers who carried it to the kiln for the firing of the bricks. An order establishing Thomas Duston’s new brick house as one of these supplemental garrison houses bears this date, which was about the time that Hannah Emerson Duston returned home. Thomas was the master and Josiah Heath, Senior, Josiah Heath, Junior, John Heath, Joseph Bradley, and Joseph and Thomas Kingsbury were assigned as the garrison.

10. You are aware, of course, that Hard-Hearted Hannah has the distinction of being the 1st woman in honor of whom USers had ever erected a monument!
April 21, Wednesday (Old Style): Husband Thomas Duston escorted Hannah Emerson Duston, Mary Corliss Neff, and Samuel Lenorson or Lennardson to Boston, where they had an opportunity to tell their story and display their bloody sack of trophies to the Reverend Cotton Mather and to Judge Samuel Sewall. A special bounty of £50 would be authorized, an ungenerous £5 per scalp whereas a few years before such scalps would have fetched £50 each out of the Commonwealth coffers, and of this Hannah would receive £25. Mrs. Neff and young Samuel, as players of secondary standing, needing to split the remaining £25 between themselves. The situation being as dicey as it was, nobody would be inclined to ask this teenager any pointed questions about what role he had played during the raid on Haverhill. A nifty personalized silver tankard would be presented by the Great and General Court of Massachusetts. Governor Sir Francis Nicholson of Maryland would have a set of pewter plates made in London, and later would present them to Hannah. A monument to Hannah and her deed would be erected in 1879 in the G.A.R. Park at the center of Haverhill, Massachusetts.

If for some ungodly reason you should desire to view such a memorial, take I-495 to exit 50, turn east on Route 97 (which is Broadway Street) past the rotary that has a statue of Lafayette until you come to the Haverhill Public Library and the town’s Common facing it:

Below are the plaques on the four faces of the Haverhill statue, depicting comic-book style the taking of

11. One can only speculate as to the caution with which Hannah told her tale to this Reverend Mather — the righteous Boston being who a few years earlier had participated in the righteous hanging on Boston Common of her sister Elizabeth.
12. That’s the simplified story we tell, but it ignores the obvious fact that it was quite impossible in that era for a Mrs. to be the recipient of such a payment. A wife in those days had no such economic independence. She was a married woman, everything pertaining to her was handled by her husbandman the head of the household. What actually happened therefore —of course— was that the Commonwealth paid out this prize money into the hand of the Mr. in recognition of the Mrs., for him to do with as he saw fit.
13. Nota Bene: The custodians have a practice of loaning the tankard for the weddings of brides who can trace their ancestry to the Emerson family. Since another source alleges that it was the Governor of Maryland who sent the inscribed silver tankard, we really should ask such a bride to take a close look at that inscription, and report to us what it says. These collectibles are at the “Buttonswoods” home of the Haverhill Historical Society, which long since has been forced to throw out Hannah’s collection of moldering human body parts, retaining only the rag in which they had been wrapped.
the prisoners followed by the retaliation of Hannah’s husband (which nobody talks much about nowadays), Hannah’s killing and scalping of the band, and their night escape with their bounty scalps down the dark and silent Merrimack River:

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14. You are aware, of course, that Hard-Hearted Hannah has the distinction of being the 1st woman in honor of whom USers had ever erected a monument!
May 12, day (Old Style): Judge Samuel Sewall made an entry in his diary, noting the singular detail that the captivities of *Mistress Mary Rowlandson* during “King Phillip’s War” and subsequently of *Mrs. Hannah Emerson Duston* during the French and Indian Wars, seemingly captivities entirely unrelated to one another, were instead in fact, behind the scenes, links in a common chain. Why had not living in connexion with a minister of the gospel, why had not the previous instance of captivity and restauration, had the effect of preventing this man from engaging in a fresh incident of interracial abuse? Is it that the savagery of this savage was too primitive, too dark, for the religious example which that reverend had offered to be able to overcome — or might it perhaps be that the sum of all the religiosity which that reverend had had to offer actually amounted more to a mockery of God than to real religion, and thus was incapable of motivating those who came in contact with him, and with it, to begin to live lives of personal decency?

(I’m not joking here. It really does seem to me to be an open question, whether the religiosity and the religious example offered by a person such as the Reverend Rowlandson amounted to nothing more than self-privileging, and thus was unavailable as a source of moral guidance for others. Just because a person is a reverend of the gospel, we need not infer that that person is a decent or whole or insightful human being.)

NOTE: There is some material about Mary Rowlandson that I need to insert somewhere, and since there is no good place to put this, arbitrarily, I am going to insert it here. There has been a story floating around, that Mary Rowlandson wrote about an incident during her captivity by the Wampanoag that does not now appear in her narrative as printed: “He gave me a bisquit, which I put in my pocket, and not daring to eat it, buried it under a log, fearing he had put something in it to make me love him.” This has surfaced in Louise Erdrich’s story titled *Captivity* and in Sherman Alexie’s poem titled “Captivity” (in *First Indian on the Moon*). In fact, however, this is something that happened not to Mary Rowlandson but to John Gyles (page 99 in the Vaughan and Clark collection *Puritans Among the Indians*) and represented Gyles’s fear not of the native Americans, but of the Jesuit who was offering to redeem him from the Indians: “The Jesuit gave me a biscuit which I put into my pocket and dare not eat but buried it under a log, fearing that he had put something in it to make me love him, for I was very young and had heard much of the Papists torturing the Protestants, etc., so that I hated the sight of a Jesuit.”
May 31, Monday (Old Style): After the return from Boston Thomas Duston recollected that, while he had been a town constable of Haverhill, he had advanced £10, 14 shillings, 8 pence to Colonel Nathaniel Saltonstall to pay his soldiers and had received a security paper from the Province Treasurer, which document had evidently been destroyed in the house fire. Colonel Saltonstall wrote the Province Treasurer on this date, attesting to receipt of the advance, and an order to repay Thomas would be approved by the Council on June 4, 1697.

June 8, Tuesday (Old Style): The petition to the Governor and Council filed by husband Thomas Duston on behalf of hatchet murderers Hannah Emerson Duston, Mary Corliss Neff, and Samuel Lenorson or Lennardson was read before the Massachusetts House of Representatives, pleading that “the merit of the Action remains the same” and claiming that “your Petitioner haveing Lost his Estate in that Calamity wherein his wife was carryed into her captivity redrs him the fitter object for what consideracon the publick Bounty shall judge proper for what hath been herein done,” etc.15 The General Court voted payment of a bounty of £25 “unto Thomas Dunston of Haverhill, on behalf of Hannah his wife,” and £12 and ten shillings each to Mary and Samuel. This would be approved on June 16, 1697. The order in Council for the payment of the several allowances would be passed on December 4, 1697.16

Note carefully that this was never a request for a scalp bounty, and never a request for any restitution due to the Mrs., but was instead a request from him all and only for damages done to him: “your Petitioner haveing Lost his Estate in that Calamity.” He had lost a house which he had owned. He had lost the newborn 12th infant Martha which had had its brains dashed out against an apple tree. He had for about a fortnight been denied the usufruct of his wife Hannah. He should be compensated for these losses! This award by the Bay government would have amounted to but £5 per scalp whereas a few years before such human scalps had been fetching £50 each out of the Commonwealth coffers. The lost house alone was worth far more than this £25, not even counting the lost infant, and the temporarily lost usufruct of the wife! The injured husband must have been keenly disappointed at such state tokenism.

15. MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES, Volume 70, page 350.
16. Chapter 10, Province laws, MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES.
September 27, Tuesday (Old Style): Mrs. Hannah Emerson Duston was brought before the Court of General Sessions of the Peace of Essex County in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, heavily pregnant, on a charge of fornication. Daniel Cheney (born on December 31, 1670, at the time 27 years of age) confessed having fornicated with her and was fined 40s.

October 4, Tuesday (Old Style): Mrs. Hannah Emerson Duston, 41 years old, the wife of Thomas Duston, whose 12th infant, Martha, had in March 1697 had its brains dashed out against an apple tree, at this point gave birth to a 13th infant, Lydia. The infant had not been fathered by her husband but by Daniel Cheney, age 27, who had paid a fine of 40s for this misconduct.
The Reverend Cotton Mather recounted the captivity narrative told to him by Hannah Emerson Duston, in Good Fetch’d Out of Evil: A Collection of Memorables Relating to Our Captives. (If you remember, Mrs. Duston waited until the children had said their Christian prayers, and had drifted to sleep, before she whacked them on their little heads with a hatchet and recovered their scalps, for the Salem scalp reward, with a knife.) It seems that, on the authority of ancient Jews, if one is armed with sufficient determination one may bring good by doing great harm. Since there is no record that anyone ever has gone broke by underestimating the cupidity of his or her audience, perhaps we will not be surprised to learn that this book sold 1,000 copies in the first week.

Here then is the manner in which the Reverend’s atrocity story is rendered in the 1852 edition of his Magnalia Christi Americana; Or The Ecclesiastical History of New-england (Volume 2, Article XXV, pages 634-636):

Mather’s Magnalia, I
Mather’s Magnalia, II

[following screens]

The Reverend, also during this year, in his The Negro Christianized, originated the “stewardship” argument which is being recycled today by “religious greens” to justify the pacification of the planet under benevolent human control — that as God’s steward each slavemaster had a duty to Christianize his black slaves, to make their souls white as snow.

His congregation made the good Reverend the gift of one black man, who had originated in Burkina Faso and who had as a child there been variolated against the small pox. The Reverend bestowed upon his new slave the name Onesimus, a gift more precious than rubies.
Magnalia Christi Americana:
OR, THE
Ecclesiastical History
OF NEW-ENGLAND,
FROM
Its First Planting in the Year 1620, unto the Year of our LORD, 1698.

In Seven BOOKS.

I. Antiquities: In Seven Chapters. With an Appendix.
III. The Lives of Sixty Famous Divines, by whose Ministrsity the Churches of New-England have been Planted and Continued.
V. Acts and Monuments of the Faith and Order in the Churches of New-England, passed in their Synods; with Historical Remarks upon those Venerable Assemblies, and a great Variety of Church-Cases occurring, and resolved by the Synods of those Churches: In Four Parts.
VI. A Faithful Record of many Illustrious, Wonderful Providences, both of Mercies and Judgments, on divers Persons in New-England: In Eight Chapters.
VII. The Wars of the Lord. Being an History of the Manifold Afflictions and Disturbances of the Churches in New-England, from their Various Adversaries, and the Wonderful Methods and Mercies of God in their Deliverance: In Six Chapters: To which is subjoined, An Appendix of Remarkable Occurrences which New-England had in the Wars with the Indian Salvages, from the Year 1688, to the Year 1698.

By the Reverend and Learned COTTON MATHER, M. A.
And Pastor of the North Church in Boston, New-England.

LONDON:
Printed for Thomas Parkhurst, at the Bible and Three Crowns in Cheapside. MDCCII.
These two poor women were now in the hands of those whose "tender mercies are cruelties;" but the good God, who hath all "hearts in his own hands," heard the sighs of these prisoners, and gave them to find unexpected favour from the master who hath laid claim unto them. That Indian family consisted of twelve persons; two stout men, three women, and seven children; and for the shame of many an English family, that has the character of prayerless upon it, I must now publish what these poor women assure me. 'Tis this: in obedience to the instructions which the French have given them, they would have prayers in their family no less than thrice every day; in the morning, at noon, and in the evening; nor would they ordinarily let their children eat or sleep, without first saying their prayers. Indeed, these idolaters were, like the rest of their whiter brethren, persecutors, and would not endure that these poor women should retire to their English prayers, if they could hinder them. Nevertheless, the poor women had nothing but fervent prayers to make their lives comfortable or tolerable; and by being daily sent out upon business, they had opportunities, together and asunder, to do like another Hannah, in "pouring out their souls before the Lord." Nor did their praying friends among our selves forbear to "pour out" supplications for them. Now, they could not observe it without some wonder, that their Indian master sometimes when he saw them dejected, would say unto them, "What need you trouble your self? If your God will have you delivered, you shall be so!" And it seems our God would have it so to be. This Indian family was now travelling with these two captive women, (and an English youth taken from Worcester, a year and a half before,) unto a rendezvous of salvages, which they call a town, some where beyond Penacook; and they still told these poor women that when they came to this town, they must be strip’d, and scourg’d, and run the gantlet through the whole army of Indians. They said this was the fashion when the captives first came to a town; and they derided some of the faint-hearted English, which, they said, fainted and swooned away under the torments of this discipline. But on April 30, while they were yet, it may be, about an hundred and fifty miles from the Indian town, a little before break of day, when the whole crew was in a dead sleep, (reader, see if it prove not so!) one of these women took up a resolution to imitate the action of Gael upon Siberia; and being where she had not her own life secured by any law unto her, she thought she was not forbidden by any law to take away the life of the murderers by whom her child had been butchered. She heartened the nurse and the youth to assist her in this enterprize; and all furnishing themselves with hatchets for the purpose, they struck such home blows upon the heads of their sleeping oppressors, that ere they could any of them struggle into any effectual resistance, "at the feet of these poor prisoners, they bow’d, they fell, they lay down; at their feet they bow’d, they fell; where they bow’d, there they fell down dead." Only one squaw escaped, sorely wounded, from them in the dark; and one boy, whom they reserved asleep, intending to bring him away with them, suddenly waked, and scuttled away from this desolation. But cutting off the scalps of the ten wretches, they came off, and received fifty pounds from the General Assembly of the province, as a recompence of their action; besides which, they received many "presents of congratulation" from their more private friends; but none gave 'em a greater taste of bounty than Colonel Nicholson, The Governour of Maryland, who, hearing of their action, sent 'em a very generous token of his favour.
On March 15, 1697, the salvages made a descent upon the skirts of Haverhill, murdering and captivating about thirty-nine persons, and burning about half a dozen houses. In this broil, one Hannah Dustan, having lain in about a week, attended with her nurse, Mary Neff, a body of terrible Indians drew near unto the house where she lay, with designs to carry on their bloody devastations. Her husband hastened from his employments abroad unto the relief of his distressed family; and first bidding seven of his eight children (which were from two to seventeen years of age) to get away as fast as they could unto some garrison in the town, he went in to inform his wife of the horrible distress come upon them. Ere she could get up, the fierce Indians were got so near, that, utterly despairing to do her any service, he ran out after his children; resolving that on the horse which he had with him, he would ride away with that which he should in this extremity find his affections to pitch most upon, and leave the rest unto the care of the Divine Providence. He overtook his children, about forty rod from his door; but then such was the agony of his parental affections, that he found it impossible for him to distinguish any one of them from the rest; wherefore he took up a courageous resolution to live and die with them all. A party of Indians came up with him; and now, though they fired at him, and he fired at them, yet he manfully kept at the rear of his little army of unarmed children, while they marched off with the pace of a child of five years old; until, by the singular providence of God, he arrived safe with them all unto a place of safety about a mile or two from his house. But his house must in the mean time have more dismal tragedies acted at it. The nurse, trying to escape with the newborn infant, fell into the hands of the formidable salvages; and those furious tawnies coming into the house, bid poor Dustan to rise immediately. Full of astonishment, she did so; and sitting down in the chimney with an heart full of most fearful expectation, she saw the raging dragons rifle all that they could carry away, and set the house on fire. About nineteen or twenty Indians now led these away, with about half a score other English captives; but ere they had gone many steps, they dash'd out the brains of the infant against a tree; and several of the other captives, as they began to tire in the sad journey, were soon sent unto their long home; the salvages would presently bury their hatchets in their brains, and leave their carcases on the ground for birds and beasts to feed upon. However, Dustan (with her nurse) notwithstanding her present condition, travelled that night about a dozen miles, and then kept up with their new masters in a long travel of an hundred and fifty miles, more or less, within a few days ensuing, without any sensible damage in their health, from the hardships of their travel, their lodging, their diet, and their many other difficulties.
May 11, Sunday (Old Style): After returning to Worcester from playing teenage Indian in the woods, Samuel Lenorson or Lennardson had found that his father had removed to Preston, Connecticut. He’d grown to manhood in Connecticut, gotten married with a woman named Lydia, and they’d generated 3 sons and 2 daughters. On this date, at an age of approximately 35, Samuel died.
In March 1929, the sexton of Haverhill Center Congregational Church, Marcus C. Jean, would discover, behind an old gallery pew, a set of documents that appeared to be more than several centuries old. One was a sincere petition from an aged Mrs. Hannah Emerson Duston to the elders, for church membership:

I Desire to be Thankful that I was born in a Land of Light & Baptized when I was Young : and had a Good Education by My Father, Tho I took but little Notice of it in the time of it : —I am Thankful for my Captivity, twas the Comfortablest time that ever I had; In my Affliction God made his Word Comfortable to me. I remembred 43d ps. ult — and those words came to my mind — ps. 118.17. ... I ave had a great Desire to come to the Ordinance of the Lords Supper a Great while but Unworthiness has kept me aback; reading a Book concerning +s Suffering Did much awaken me. In the 55th of Isa. Beg. We are invited to come:— Hearing Mr. Moody preach out of ye 3rd of Mal. 3 last verses it put me upon Consideration. Ye 11th of Matthew has been Encouraging to me— I have been resolving to offer me Self from time to time ever since the Settlement of the present Ministry: I was awakened by first Sacram’l Sermon (Luke 14.17) But Delays and fears prevailed upon me:— But I desire to Delay no longer, being Sensible it is My Duty—. I desire the Church to receive me tho’ it be at the Eleventh hour; & pray for me — that I may hon’r God and obtain the Salvation of my Soul.

Hannah Duston wife of Thomas Àtat 67.

She says this to be her 11th hour, as it might well have been taking into account that during her child-bearing years this mother had given birth to no fewer than thirteen infants — but in fact we know from the probate of her will that she would survive to reach what was then an extreme age, 79 years, not dying until 1736.
March 10, Wednesday (1735, Old Style): According to a will proven in Ipswich on this date and recorded in Salem Registry of Essex Probate, Hannah Emerson Duston had recently died. (Hannah had died in the home of her son Jonathan in Haverhill. A granite monument had been erected more or less near this site, but the city had not paid for it and so the stone works repossessed the materials and hauled them off and sandblasted away the inscriptions, and sold the monument to somebody else intending it for some other purpose. A glacial erratic, cheaper because excavated out of Bradley Brook where it empties into the Merrimack River (the point at which Hannah stepped out of the canoe after her escape), now marks this site.

The tomahawk used by Hannah to kill and scalp four adults and six children, or one like unto it, is on display at the Haverhill Historical Society at 240 Walter Street, as well as a crude knife found sticking in one of the corpses.)

New York’s Governor William Cosby died of consumption. Captain Peter Warren, brother-in-law of Governor Cosby’s associate James Delancey, would pay £110 for Crosby’s 14,000 acres on the south bank of the Mohawk River.
February: The Quaker poet John Greenleaf Whittier developed the captivity narrative of Hannah Emerson Duston as recounted by the Reverend Cotton Mather and others, in his tale “The Mother’s Revenge” in his 1st book-length publication, LEGENDS OF NEW-ENGLAND IN PROSE AND VERSE. Not as convinced as the Reverend Mather had been in the previous century that the authority of ancient Jews was superior over the authority of the author of the Sermon on the Mount, this Quaker poet evaded some of the complexity of the narrative by masking the fact that six of the persons killed and scalped in that pre-dawn act of vengefulness had been children, and by masking the fact that these children before lying down to sleep that night had recited their Christian prayers.
Benjamin L. Mirick’s HISTORY OF HAVERHILL, MASSACHUSETTS recounted the captivity narrative of a white woman, Hannah Emerson Duston.\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{17} It is very possible that John Greenleaf Whittier had a hand in the production of this book, but that his contribution was not properly credited by Mirick.
January: Nathaniel Hawthorne was able to move out of his “dismal and squalid chamber” under the eaves of the Manning Home in Salem in which his “FAME was won,” because he had been appointed editor, at a yearly salary of $500.00, of Samuel Griswold Goodrich’s American Magazine of Useful and Entertaining Knowledge, his first regular employment. He moved into Boston. His job as editor turned out to be the filling of pages by making inventive abstracts from old articles in forgotten magazines borrowed from the library, “writing a history or biography before dinner.” He would include his “The Duston Family” as his own peculiar version of the captivity narrative of Hannah Emerson Duston in his hackwork for THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE OF USEFUL AND ENTERTAINING KNOWLEDGE. However, the promised salary would not seem to be forthcoming, for Goodrich seemed to be better at concocting such schemes, and schemes for a two-volume PETER PARLEY’S UNIVERSAL HISTORY ON THE BASIS OF GEOGRAPHY, than at keeping his promises.

Here is a sample of young Hawthorne’s efforts:

Philosophers have always been puzzled to contrive such a definition of man, as should completely distinguish him from every other animal. We are not aware that, among the many attempts of this sort, he has ever been described as an animal that gets on horseback. Yet this is one of the most peculiar characteristics of the human race.
John Warner Barber’s Historical Collections, Being a General Collection of Interesting Facts, Traditions, Biographical Sketches, Anecdotes, &c., Relating to the History and Antiquities of Every Town in Massachusetts, with Geographical Descriptions (Dorr, Howland & Company) was published in Worcester. This volume included an untitled poem on sweets from which Henry Thoreau would quote a couple of lines in Walden.
**WALDEN:** Every New Englander might easily raise all his own breadstuffs in this land of rye and Indian corn, and not depend on distant and fluctuating markets for them. Yet so far are we from simplicity and independence that, in Concord, fresh and sweet meal is rarely sold in the shops, and hominy and corn in a still coarser form are hardly used by any. For the most part the farmer gives to his cattle and hogs the grain of his own producing, and buys flour, which is at least no more wholesome, at a greater cost, at the store. I saw that I could easily raise my bushel or two of rye and Indian corn, for the former will grow on the poorest land, and the latter does not require the best, and grind them in a hand-mill, and so do without rice and pork; and if I must have some concentrated sweet, I found by experiment that I could make a very good molasses either of pumpkins or beets, and I knew that I needed only to set out a few maples to obtain it more easily still, and while these were growing I could use various substitutes beside those which I have named. "For," as the Forefathers sang,—

"we can make liquor to sweeten our lips
Of pumpkins and parsnips and walnut-tree chips."

Finally, as for salt, that grossest of groceries, to obtain this might be a fit occasion for a visit to the seashore, or, if I did without it altogether, I should probably drink the less water. I do not learn that the Indians ever troubled themselves to go after it.

Thus I could avoid all trade and barter, so far as my food was concerned, and having a shelter already, it would only remain to get clothing and fuel. The pantaloons which I now wear were woven in farmer’s family, —thank Heaven there is so much virtue still in man; for I think the fall from the farmer to the operative as great and memorable as that from the man to the farmer;— and in a new country fuel is an encumbrance. As for a habitat, if I were not permitted still to squat, I might purchase one acre at the same price for which the land I cultivated was sold —namely, eight dollars and eight cents. But as it was, I considered that I enhanced the value of the land by squatting on it.
Here John Warner Barber presents Hannah Emerson Duston’s ordeal:

On the 15th of March, 1697, a body of Indians made a descent on the westerly part of the town, and approached the house of Mr. Thomas Dustin. They came, as they were wont, arrayed with all the terrors of a savage war dress, with their muskets charged for the contest, their tomahawks drawn for the slaughter, and their scalping knives unsheathed and glittering in the sunbeams. Mr. Dustin at this time was engaged abroad in his daily labor. When the terrific shouts of the blood-hounds first fell on his ear, he seized his gun, mounted his horse, and hastened to his house, with the hope of escorting to a place of safety his family, which consisted of his wife, whom he tenderly and passionately loved, and who had been confined only seven days in childbed, her nurse, Mrs. Mary Neff, and eight young children. Immediately upon his arrival, he rushed into his house, and found it a scene of confusion - the women trembling for their safety, and the children weeping and calling on their mother for protection. He instantly ordered seven of his children to fly in an opposite direction from that in which the danger was approaching, and went himself to assist his wife. But he was too late - before she could arise from her bed, the enemy were upon them.

Mr. Dustin, seeing there was no hope of saving his wife from the clutches of the foe, flew from the house, mounted his horse, and rode full speed after his flying children. The agonized father supposed it impossible to save them all, and he determined to snatch from death the child which shared the most of his affections. He soon came up with the infant brood; he heard their glad voices and saw the cheerful looks that overspread their countenances, for they felt themselves safe while under his protection. He looked for the child of his love - where was it? He scanned the little group from the oldest to the youngest, but he could not find it. They all fondly loved him - they called him by the endearing title of father, were flesh of his flesh, and stretched out their little arms toward him for protection. He gazed upon them, and faltered in his resolution, for there was none whom he could leave behind; and, indeed, what parent could, in such a situation, select the child which shared the most of his affections? He could not do it, and therefore resolved to defend them from the murderers, or die at their side.

A small party of the Indians pursued Mr. Dustin as he fled from the house, and soon overtook him and his flying children. They did not, however, approach very near, for they saw his determination, and feared the vengeance of a father, but skulked behind the trees and fences, and fired upon him and his little company. Mr. Dustin dismounted from his horse, placed himself in the rear of his children, and returned the fire of the enemy often and with good success. In this manner he retreated for more than a mile, alternately encouraging his terrified charge, and loading and firing his gun, until he lodged them safely in a forsaken house. The Indians, finding that they could not conquer him, returned to their companions, expecting, no doubt, that they should there find victims, on which they might exercise their savage cruelty.
The party which entered the house when Mr. Dustin left it, found Mrs. Dustin in bed, and the nurse attempting to fly with the infant in her arms. They ordered Mrs. Dustin to rise instantly, while one of them took the infant from the arms of the nurse, carried it out, and dashed out its brains against an apple-tree. After plundering the house they set it on fire, and commenced their retreat, though Mrs. Dustin had but partly dressed herself, and was without a shoe on one of her feet. Mercy was a stranger to the breasts of the conquerors, and the unhappy women expected to receive no kindnesses from their hands. The weather at the time was exceedingly cold, the March-wind blew keen and piercing, and the earth was alternately covered with snow and deep mud.

They travelled twelve miles the first day, and continued their retreat, day by day, following a circuitous route, until they reached the home of the Indian who claimed them as his property, which was on a small island, now called Dustin’s Island, at the mouth of the Contoocook river, about six miles above the state-house in Concord, New Hampshire. Notwithstanding their intense suffering for the death of the child - their anxiety for those whom they had left behind, and who they expected had been cruelly butchered - their sufferings from cold and hunger, and from sleeping on the damp earth, with nothing but an inclement sky for a covering - and their terror for themselves, lest the arm that, as they supposed, had slaughtered those whom they dearly loved, would soon be made red with their blood, - notwithstanding all this, they performed the journey without yielding, and arrived at their destination in comparative health.

The family of their Indian master consisted of two men, three women, and seven children; besides an English boy, named Samuel Lennardson, who was taken prisoner about a year previous, at Worcester. Their master, some years before, had lived in the family of Rev. Mr. Rowlandson, of Lancaster, and he told Mrs. Dustin that “when he prayed the English way he thought it was good, but now he found the French way better.”

These unfortunate women had been but a few days with the Indians, when they were informed that they must soon start for a distant Indian settlement, and that, upon their arrival, they would be obliged to conform to the regulations always required of prisoners, whenever they entered the village, which was to be stripped, scourged, and run the gauntlet in a state of nudity. The gauntlet consisted of two files of Indians, of both sexes and of all ages, containing all that could be mustered in the village; and the unhappy prisoners were obliged to run between them, when they were scoffed at and beaten by each one as they passed, and were sometimes marks at which the younger Indians threw their hatchets. This cruel custom was often practised by many of the tribes, and not unfrequently the poor prisoner sunk beneath it. Soon as the two women were informed of this, they determined to escape as speedily as possible. They could not bear to be exposed to the scoffs and unrestrained gaze of their savage conquerors - death would be preferable. Mrs. Dustin soon planned a mode of escape, appointed the 31st inst. for its accomplishment, and prevailed upon her nurse and the boy to join her. The Indians kept no watch, for the boy had lived with them so long they considered him as one of their children, and they did not expect that the women, unadvised and unaided, would attempt to escape, when success, at the best, appeared so desperate.
On the day previous to the 31st, Mrs. Dustin wished to learn on what part of the body the Indians struck their victims when they would despatch them suddenly, and how they took off a scalp. With this view she instructed the boy to make inquiries of one of the men. Accordingly, at a convenient opportunity, he asked one of them where he would strike a man if he would kill him instantly, and how to take off a scalp. The man laid his finger on his temple - “Strike ‘em there,” said he; and then instructed him how to scalp. The boy then communicated his information to Mrs. Dustin.

The night at length arrived, and the whole family retired to rest, little suspecting that the most of them would never behold another sun. Long before the break of day, Mrs. Dustin arose, and, having ascertained that they were all in a deep sleep, awoke her nurse and the boy, when they armed themselves with tomahawks, and despatched ten of the twelve. A favorite boy they designedly left; and one of the squaws, whom they left for dead, jumped up, and ran with him into the woods. Mrs. Dustin killed her master, and Samuel Lennardson despatched the very Indian who told him where to strike, and how to take off a scalp. The deed was accomplished before the day began to break, and, after securing what little provision the wigwam of their dead master afforded, they scuttled all the boats but one, to prevent pursuit, and with that started for their homes. Mrs. Dustin took with her a gun that belonged to her master, and the tomahawk with which she committed the tragical deed. They had not proceeded far, however, when Mrs. Dustin perceived that they had neglected to take their scalps, and feared that her neighbors, if they ever arrived at their homes, would not credit their story, and would ask them for some token or proof. She told her fears to her companions, and they immediately returned to the silent wigwam, took off the scalps of the fallen, and put them into a bag. They then started on their journey anew, with the gun, tomahawk, and the bleeding trophies, - palpable witnesses of their heroic and unparalleled deed.

A long and weary journey was before them, but they commenced it with cheerful hearts, each alternately rowing and steering their little bark. Though they had escaped from the clutches of their unfeeling master, still they were surrounded with dangers. They were thinly clad, the sky was still inclement, and they were liable to be re-captured by strolling bands of Indians, or by those who would undoubtedly pursue them so soon as the squaw and the boy had reported their departure, and the terrible vengeance they had taken; and were they again made prisoners, they well knew that a speedy death would follow. This array of danger, however, did not appall them for home was their beacon-light, and the thoughts of their firesides nerved their hearts. They continued to drop silently down the river, keeping a good lookout for strolling Indians; and in the night two of them only slept, while the third managed the boat. In this manner they pursued their journey, until they arrived safely, with their trophies, at their homes, totally unexpected by their mourning friends, who supposed that they had been butchered by their ruthless conquerors. It must truly have been an affecting meeting for Mrs. Dustin, who likewise supposed that all she loved, - all she held dear on earth - was laid in the silent tomb.
After recovering from the fatigue of the journey, they started for Boston, where they arrived on the 21st of April. They carried with them the gun and tomahawk, and their ten scalps - those witnesses that would not lie; and while there, the general court gave them fifty pounds, as a reward for their heroism. The report of their daring deed soon spread into every part of the country, and when Colonel Nicholson, governor of Maryland, heard of it, he sent them a very valuable present, and many presents were also made to them by their neighbors.
THE PEOPLE OF A WEEK: HANNAH EMERSON DUSTON

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN A WEEK

JOHN WARNER BARBER

ABINGTON, MASS.
ACTON, MASS.
ADAMS, MASS.
ALFORD, MASS.
AMESBURY, MASS.
AMHERST, MASS.
ANDOVER, MASS.
ASHBURNHAM, MASS.
ASHBY, MASS.
ASHFIELD, MASS.
ATHOL, MASS.
ATTLEBOROUGH, MASS.
AUBURN, MASS.
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<th>People Mentioned in A Week</th>
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<td>Beverly, Mass.</td>
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<td>Boston, Mass.</td>
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<td>Boxford, Mass.</td>
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<td>Boylston, Mass.</td>
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### People Mentioned in *A Week*

- **Bradford, Mass.**
- **Braintree, Mass.**
- **Brewster, Mass.**
- **Bridgewater, Mass.**
- **Brighton, Mass.**
- **Brimfield, Mass.**
- **Brookfield, Mass.**
- **Brookline, Mass.**
- **Buckland, Mass.**
- **Burlington, Mass.**
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<th>City</th>
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<td>Cambridge, Mass.</td>
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<td>Carver, Mass.</td>
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<td>Chesterfield, Mass.</td>
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<td>Chilmark, Mass.</td>
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# The People of A Week: Hannah Emerson Duston

## People Mentioned in A Week

- **Clarksburg, Mass.**
- **Cohasset, Mass.**
- **Coleraine, Mass.**
- **Concord, Mass.**
- **Conway, Mass.**
- **Cummington, Mass.**
## People Mentioned in *A Week*

- **Dalton, Mass.**
- **Dana, Mass.**
- **Danvers, Mass.**
- **Dartmouth, Mass.**
- **Dedham, Mass.**
- **Deerfield, Mass.**
- **Dennis, Mass.**
- **Dighton, Mass.**
- **Dorchester, Mass.**
- **Douglass, Mass.**
- **Dudley, Mass.**
- **Dunstable, Mass.**
- **Duxbury, Mass.**
### People Mentioned in *A Week*

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<th>Location</th>
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<tr>
<td>EAST BRIDGEWATER</td>
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<td>EASTHAM, MASS.</td>
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<td>EASTHAMPTON, MASS.</td>
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<td>EDGARTOWN, MASS.</td>
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<td>ERVING, MASS.</td>
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<td>ESSEX, MASS.</td>
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THE PEOPLE OF A WEEK:

HANNAH EMERSON DUSTON

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN A WEEK

FAIRHAVEN, MASS.
FALL RIVER, MASS.
FALMOUTH, MASS.
FITCHBURG, MASS.
FLORIDA, MASS.
FOXBOROUGH, MASS.
FRAMINGHAM, MASS.
FRANKLIN, MASS.
FREETOWN, MASS.
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<td><strong>GILL, MASS.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>GREAT BARRINGTON</strong></td>
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<td><strong>GROTON, MASS.</strong></td>
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THE PEOPLE OF A WEEK:    HANNAH EMERSON DUSTON

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN A WEEK

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<td>Hingham, Mass.</td>
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THE PEOPLE OF A WEEK: HANNAH EMERSON DUSTON

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN A WEEK

HINSDALE, MASS.
HOLDEN, MASS.
HOLLAND, MASS.
HOLLISTON, MASS.
HOPKINTON, MASS.
HUBBARDSTON, MASS.
HULL, MASS.
IPSWICH, MASS.
KINGSTON, MASS.
### PEOPLE MENTIONED IN A WEEK

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<th>Town</th>
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<td>Lynn, Mass.</td>
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<td>Lynnfield, Mass.</td>
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THE PEOPLE OF A WEEK: HANNAH EMERSON DUSTON

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN A WEEK

MALDEN, MASS.
MANCHESTER, MASS.
MANSFIELD, MASS.
MARBLEHEAD, MASS.
MARLBOROUGH, MASS.
MARSHFIELD, MASS.
MARSHPEE, MASS.
MEDFIELD, MASS.
MEDFORD, MASS.
MEDWAY, MASS.
MENDON, MASS.
METHUEN, MASS.
MIDDLEBOROUGH, MASS.
MIDDLEFIELD, MASS.
MIDDLETOWN, MASS.
MILFORD, MASS.
MILLBURY, MASS.
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<td>Milton, Mass.</td>
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<td>New Marlborough</td>
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<td>New Salem, Mass.</td>
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THE PEOPLE OF A WEEK: HANNAH EMERSON DUSTON

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN A WEEK

NEWTON, MASS.
NORTHAMPTON, MASS.
NORTHBOROUGH, MASS.
NORTHBRIDGE, MASS.
NORTH BRIDGEWATER
NORTH BROOKFIELD
NORTHFIELD, MASS.
NORTON, MASS.
THE PEOPLE OF A WEEK:

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN A WEEK

OAKHAM, MASS.
ORANGE, MASS.
ORLEANS, MASS.
OTIS, MASS.
OXFORD, MASS.
PALMER, MASS.
PAWTUCKET, MASS.
PAXTON, MASS.
PITTSFIELD, MASS.
PEMBROKE, MASS.
PEPPERELL, MASS.
PERU, MASS.
PETERSHAM, MASS.
PHILLIPSTON, MASS.
## People Mentioned in A Week

- **Plymouth, Mass.**
- ** Plympton, Mass.**
- **Prescott, Mass.**
- **Princeton, Mass.**
- **Provincetown, Mass.**
- **Quincy, Mass.**
- **Randolph, Mass.**
- **Raynham, Mass.**
- **Reading, Mass.**
- **Rehoboth, Mass.**
### People Mentioned in *A Week*

- Richmond, Mass.
- Rochester, Mass.
- Rowe, Mass.
- Rowley, Mass.
- Roxbury, Mass.
- Royalston, Mass.
- Russell, Mass.
- Rutland, Mass.
# People Mentioned in *A Week*

- Salem, Mass.
- Salisbury, Mass.
- Sandisfield, Mass.
- Sandwich, Mass.
- Saugus, Mass.
- Savoy, Mass.
- Scituate, Mass.
- Seekonk, Mass.
- Sharon, Mass.
- Sheffield, Mass.
- Shelburne, Mass.
- Sherburne, Mass.
- Shirley, Mass.
- Shrewsbury, Mass.
- Shutesbury, Mass.
- Somerset, Mass.
- Southampton, Mass.
THE PEOPLE OF A WEEK: Hannah Emerson Duston

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN A WEEK

Southbridge, Mass.
South Hadley, Mass.
South Reading, Mass.
Spencer, Mass.
Springfield, Mass.
Sterling, Mass.
Stockbridge, Mass.
Stoneham, Mass.
Stoughton, Mass.
Stow, Mass.
Sturbridge, Mass.
Sudbury, Mass.
Sunderland, Mass.
Sutton, Mass.
Swansea, Mass.
# People Mentioned in *A Week*

- Taunton, Mass.
- Templeton, Mass.
- Tewksbury, Mass.
- Tisbury, Mass.
- Tolland, Mass.
- Townsend, Mass.
- Truro, Mass.
- Tyngsborough, Mass.
- Tyringham, Mass.
The People of A Week: Hannah Emerson Duston

People Mentioned in A Week

Upton, Mass.
Uxbridge, Mass.
Wales, Mass.
Walpole, Mass.
Waltham, Mass.
Ware, Mass.
Wareham, Mass.
Warren, Mass.
Warwick, Mass.
Washington, Mass.
Watertown, Mass.
Wayland, Mass.
Webster, Mass.
Wellfleet, Mass.
Wendell, Mass.
Westborough, Mass.
THE PEOPLE OF A WEEK: HANNAH EMERSON DUSTON

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN A WEEK

WEST BOYLSTON, MASS.
WEST CAMBRIDGE, MASS.
WESTFIELD, MASS.
WESTFORD, MASS.
WESTHAMPTON, MASS.
WESTMINSTER, MASS.
WESTON, MASS.
WESTPORT, MASS.
WEST SPRINGFIELD
WEST STOCKBRIDGE
WEYMOUTH, MASS.
WHATELY, MASS.
WICHENDON, MASS.
WILBRAHAM, MASS.
WILLIAMSBURG, MASS.
THE PEOPLE OF A WEEK: HANNAH EMERSON DUSTON

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN A WEEK

WILLIAMSTOWN, MASS.
WILMINGTON, MASS.
WINDSOR, MASS.
WOBURN, MASS.
WORCESTER, MASS.
WORTHINGTON, MASS.
WRENTHAM, MASS.
YARMOUTH, MASS.
Late in the year: Henry Thoreau alluded to the fields and groves of Lancaster as the scene of Mistress Mary Rowlandson’s capture in the writing of “A WALK TO WACHUSETT”, saying:

**WALK:** This, it will be remembered, was the scene of Mrs. Rowlandson’s capture, and of other events in the Indian wars, but from this July afternoon, and under that mild exterior, those times seemed as remote as the irruption of the Goths. They were the dark age of New England.

We may note, however, that at this point, rather than begin a retelling of the captivity narrative, Thoreau continues with a mere remark that now that such events are the materials of a history book we seem unable to conceive of the events as they might appear to us were they occurring in the present. ¹⁸

**WALK:** On beholding a picture of a New England village as it then appeared, with a fair open prospect, and a light on trees and river, as if it were broad noon, we find we had not thought the sun shone in those days, or that men lived in broad daylight then. We do not imagine the sun shining on hill and valley during Philip’s war, nor on the war-path of Paugus, or Standish, or Church, or Lovell, with serene summer weather, but a dim twilight or night did those events transpire in. They must have fought in the shade of their own dusky deeds.

¹⁸ Thoreau would later incorporate this passage into the material which would follow his account of the captivity narrative of Hannah Emerson Duston in *A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS*. As his source for the Duston material used in “Thursday” of *Week*, Thoreau perhaps utilized Thomas Hutchinson’s *HISTORY OF THE COLONY OF MASSACHUSETTS BAY*, which drew upon William Hubbard’s *GENERAL HISTORY OF NEW ENGLAND*, the Reverend Cotton Mather’s Article XXV “A Notable Exploit; Dux Faemina Facit” in *MAGNALIA CHRISTI AMERICANA; OR THE ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY OF NEW-ENGLAND*, and Daniel Neal’s *HISTORY OF NEW ENGLAND*, and perhaps utilized Benjamin L. Mirick’s *HISTORY OF HAVERHILL, MASSACHUSETTS*. I do not know that he referred to the Nathaniel Hawthorne version “The Duston Family” that now appears in *SKETCHES AND ESSAYS*. 
March 12, Friday: While Waldo Emerson was offering the manuscript of Henry Thoreau’s *An Excursion on the Concord & Merrimack Rivers* to Evert Augustus Duyckinck of Wiley & Putnam for publication as part of their Library of American Books, but only as “a very slender thread for such big beads & ingots as are strung on it,” pointing out that its author had an article on Thomas Carlyle running in the current issues of Graham’s American Monthly Magazine, Thoreau was continuing to polish his ms throughout the spring while busily adding yet another big bead, the captivity narrative of Hannah Emerson Duston.19

More of the “California B’hoys” of Colonel Jonathan Drake Stevenson, aboard the Susan Drew, arrived at the Golden Gate.

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19. As his source for the Duston material discussed in “Thursday” of *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*, Henry Thoreau perhaps utilized Thomas Hutchinson’s *History of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay*, which drew upon William Hubbard’s *General History of New England*, the Reverend Cotton Mather’s Article XXV “A Notable Exploit; Dux Faeminae Facti” in *Magnalia Christi Americana; Or the Ecclesiastical History of New-England*, and Daniel Neal’s *History of New England*, and perhaps utilized Benjamin L. Mirick’s *History of Haverhill, Massachusetts*. I do not know that he referred to Nathaniel Hawthorne’s story of “The Duston Family” that now appears in *Sketches and Essays*. 
May 30, Wednesday: As the last Wednesday in May, this was Election Day.

James Munroe and Co. published Henry Thoreau’s *A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS* with the notice in its endpapers, “Will soon be published, WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS. By Henry D. Thoreau.”

The author had included comments on the captivity narrative of Hannah Emerson Duston in the “Thursday” chapter, recycling some material about the validity of historicizing which he had originally created while contemplating the captivity narrative of Mistress Mary Rowlandson of Lancaster after hiking past the rocky terrain on which Rowlandson had been ransomed and which he had previously incorporated into “A Walk to Wachusett”:

On beholding a picture of a New England village as it then appeared, with a fair open prospect, and a light on trees and river, as if it were broad noon, we find we had not thought the sun shone in those days, or that men lived in broad daylight then. We do not imagine the sun shining on hill and valley during Philip’s war, nor on the war-path of Paugus, or Standish, or Church, or Lovell, with serene summer weather, but a dim twilight or night did those events transpire in. They must have fought in the shade of their own dusky deeds.

Bob Pepperman Taylor has, in his monograph on the political content of Thoreau’s ideas *AMERICA’S BACHELOR UNCLE: THOREAU AND THE AMERICAN POLITY*. (Lawrence KA: UP of Kansas, 1996), provided a most interesting analysis of Thoreau’s accessing of the Duston story. The author starts his chapter “Founding” by offering three Waldo Emerson sound bytes by way of providing us with a typically trivial

Emersonian take on the concepts of nature and freedom:

“The old is for slaves.”

“Do not believe the past. I give you the universe a virgin today.”

“Build, therefore, your own world.”

**Professor Taylor** points up in his monograph how tempted Emerson scholars have been, to presume that Thoreau would have shared such a perspective on nature and freedom, and offers C. Roland Wagner as a type case for those who have fallen victim to such an easy identification of the two thinkers. Here is Wagner as he presented him, at full crank:

Thoreau’s uncompromising moral idealism, despite its occasional embodiment in sentences of supreme literary power, created an essentially child’s view of political and social reality. Because his moral principles were little more than expressions of his quest for purity and of hostility to any civilized interference with the absolute attainment of his wishes, he was unable to discriminate between better and worse in the real world.

Taylor’s comment on this sort of writing is that

if Thoreau holds an understanding of nature and freedom similar to that found in Emerson’s writings, we cannot expect a social and political commentary of any real sophistication or significance. In this event, it is easy to think that Thoreau is little more than a self-absorbed egoist. There are good reasons to believe, however, that Thoreau’s views are significantly different than Emerson’s on these matters. In fact, these differences can be dramatically illustrated by looking at Thoreau’s first book, *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*. In this work Thoreau immerses himself in American colonial history, specifically investigating the relationship between Indian and European settler. Far from encouraging us to escape our past, to cut ourselves off from our social legacies and the determinative facts of our collective
lives, Thoreau provides us with a tough, revealing look at the historical events and conditions and struggles that have given birth to contemporary American society ... what is thought of as a painfully personal and apolitical book is actually a sophisticated meditation on the realities and consequences of the American founding.

In other words, Taylor is going to offer to us the idea that Emerson was not, and Thoreau was, a profound political thinker. He goes on in this chapter “Founding” to further elaborations upon the overlooked sophistication of the political analysis offered by Thoreau in *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*:

Thoreau begins his book with the following sentence:

"The Musketaquid, or Grass-ground River, though probably as old as the Nile or Euphrates, did not begin to have a place in civilized history, until the fame of its grassy meadows and its fish attracted settlers out of England in 1635, when it received the other but kindred name of Concord from the first plantations on its banks, which appears to have been commenced in a spirit of peace and harmony." Out of respect for historical chronology, Thoreau presents the Indian before the English name for the river. The river itself and, by implication, the native inhabitants are of ancient lineage, while "Concord" and the people responsible for this name are relative newcomers. In the second sentence of text, Thoreau explains that the Indian name is actually superior to the English, since it will remain descriptively accurate as long as "grass grows and water runs here," while Concord is accurate only "while men lead peacable lives on its banks" - something obviously much less permanent than the grass and flowing water. In fact, the third sentence indicates that "Concord" has already failed to live up to its name, since the Indians are now an "extinct race."

Thoreau wastes no time in pointing out that regardless of the "spirit of peace and harmony" that first moved the whites to establish a plantation on this river, relations between the natives and the settlers soon exhibited very little concord indeed. In these opening sentences Thoreau presents us with an indication of a primary problem motivating his trip down the Concord and Merrimack Rivers: he hopes to probe the nature of the relationship between Indian and white societies and to consider the importance of this relationship for understanding our America. Joan Burbick, one of the few to recognize the primacy of the political theme underlying Thoreau's voyage,
writes that in this book Thoreau “tries to forge the uncivil history of America.” We know the end of the story already: one “race” annihilates the other. Part of Thoreau’s intention is to not let us forget this critical truth about our society, to remind us that our founding is as bloody and unjust as any, try as we may to put this fact out of sight and tell alternative stories about our past. As the story progresses throughout the book, however, we see that another intention is to explain the complexity and ambiguity of the historical processes that led to and beyond this bloody founding. The history Thoreau presents is “uncivil” in two senses: first, and most obviously, it is about violent, brutal, uncivil acts; second, it is not the official or common self-understanding that the nation wants to hold. Thoreau’s journey is not only aimed at personal self-discovery, despite the obvious importance of that theme for the book. On the contrary, the opening sentences and the problems they pose suggest that Thoreau is first and foremost interested in a project of discovery for the nation as a whole, the success of which will depend upon looking carefully at the relationship between settler and native. The project of self-discovery is to be accomplished within the context of this larger social history. Thoreau’s personal and more private ruminations are set quite literally between ongoing discussions of events from the colonial life of New England. We are never allowed to forget for very long that our contemporary private lives are bounded by, in some crucial sense defined within, the possibilities created by this earlier drama of Indian and colonist.

Duston is taken from childbed by attacking Indians, sees “her infant’s brain dashed out against an apple-tree,” and is held captive with her nurse, Mary Neff, and an English boy, Samuel Lennardson. She is told that she and her nurse will be taken to an Indian settlement where they will be forced to “run the gauntlet naked.” To avoid this fate, Duston instructs the boy to ask one of the men how to best kill an enemy and take a scalp. The man obliges, and that night Duston, Neff, and Lennardson use this information to kill all the Indians, except a “favorite boy, and one squaw who fled wounded with him to the woods” — the victims are two men, two women, and six children. They then scuttle all the canoes except the one needed for their escape. They flee, only to return soon thereafter to scalp the dead as proof of the ordeal. They then manage to paddle the sixty or so miles to John Lovewell’s house and are rescued. The General court pays them fifty pounds as bounty for the ten scalps, and Duston is reunited with her family, all of whom, except the infant, have survived the attack. Thoreau ends the story by telling us that “there have been many who in later times have lived to say that they had eaten of the fruit of that apple tree,” the tree upon which Duston’s child was murdered. Striking as it is, many of the themes of this story are repetitive of what has come before, a powerful return to the material from the opening chapters, primarily the violence in “Monday.” Thus, Thoreau starkly conveys the grotesque violence on both sides of the conflict, and he concludes here, as he did earlier, that we are the beneficiaries, even the products, of these terrible
events — it is we, of course, who have “eaten of the fruit of
that apple-tree.” But this story is different too. Most
obviously, it is a story in which women and children,
traditional noncombatants, play a crucial role. The brutality
in the Lovewell campaigns is between men who voluntarily assume
the roles of warrior and soldier. The brutality in the Duston
story is aimed primarily at those who are most innocent,
children. And this brutality, like that among male combatants,
is not confined to one side. The Indians murder Duston’s infant,
but she, in turn, methodically kills six children and attempts
to kill the seventh (the “favorite boy” was a favorite within
his family, not to Duston). In addition, this murder of children
is conducted not only by men but by women and children as well.
The violence and hostility between Indian and settler have
reached a point at which all traditional restraints have
vanished, where the weakest are fair game and all members of the
community are combatants. Here, not in the Revolution, is the
climax of the American founding. In this climax all colonists
and Indians, even women and children, are implicated, and the
entire family of Indians, not just the male warriors, is
systematically killed off. This frenzy of violence, of
escalating atrocity and counteratrocity, of total war, is the
natural culmination of the processes Thoreau has been describing
throughout the book. The Duston story represents the victory of
the colonists and the final destruction of the Indians. Thoreau
is returning down the river to his own home, as Duston had to
hers 142 years earlier. His investigation into the nature of the
American founding, his “uncivil history,” is mainly complete.
Consider Thoreau’s use of the Hannah Emerson Duston
story as the
climax of a historical process set in motion by the collision
of incompatible societies. He is appalled by the events, but he
also understands that they are the culmination of huge political
conflicts that are greater than the individual players.

Professor Taylor goes on in this chapter “Founding” about the political content of A WEEK ON THE CONCORD
AND MERRIMACK RIVERS to consider each drama of Indian and colonist recounted there by Thoreau,
culminating in the last and perhaps most powerful of these major tales, that of the Duston
odyssey in “Thursday”:

It is instructive to contrast this analysis with Cotton Mather’s
simple praise of Duston as a colonial heroine and with
Hawthorne’s shrieking condemnation of her when he calls her
“this awful woman,” “a raging tigress,” and “a bloody old hag”
on account of her victims being primarily children. Thoreau’s
analysis is considerably more shrewd than either Mather’s or
Hawthorne’s, and Thoreau resists the temptation of either of
these simpler and much less satisfactory moral responses.
Thoreau’s conclusion about our political interconnectedness is
built upon a hard-boiled and realistic political analysis
combined with a notable moral subtlety. As we have seen, Thoreau
believes that the forms of life represented by Indian
and colonist are simply and irrevocably incompatible; the
structure of each requires a mode of production and a social
organization that makes it impossible to accommodate the other.
This argument is compelling ... the Hannah Emerson Duston story
in *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* represented for Thoreau the final destruction of the Indians at the hands of the white settlers.

Joan Burbick, one of the few to recognize the primacy of the political theme underlying Thoreau’s story of a riverine quest, points up the fact that in his *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* Thoreau was attempting to “forge the uncivil history of America.” Here is our narrative as it is supposed to get itself narrated, within a basic-rate Western Union telegraph message of eleven words:

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Thoreau is not going to allow his readers to indulge in any foundation myth that can serve as a legitimation scenario, but instead he is going to remind us that our founding has been quite as vicious, quite as bloody as any other. Thus we find, in the pages of his book, that when he refers to the three extraordinarily notorious Indian-killers Captain Myles Standish of the Plymouth Colony, Captain Benjamin Church of King Phillip’s War, and Captain John Lovewell of the 18th Century, he does so by deployment of one single, solitary, unremarkable descriptor: “sturdy.” These problematic individuals were, simply, sturdy men. They did what in their time seemed to need to be done, to wit, exterminate entire families of people, man, woman, and child, who threateningly differ from one’s own sort.
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A Week: On the thirty-first day of March, one hundred and forty-two years before this, probably about this time in the afternoon, there were hurriedly paddling down this part of the river, between the pine woods which then fringed these banks, two white women and a boy, who had left an island at the mouth of the Contoocook before daybreak. They were slightly clad for the season, in the English fashion, and handled their paddles unskilfully, but with nervous energy and determination, and at the bottom of their canoe lay the still bleeding scalps of ten of the aborigines. They were Hannah Dustan, and her nurse, Mary Neff, both of Haverhill, eighteen miles from the mouth of this river, and an English boy, named Samuel Lennardson, escaping from captivity among the Indians. On the 15th of March previous, Hannah Dustan had been compelled to rise from childbed, and half dressed, with one foot bare, accompanied by her nurse, commence an uncertain march, in still inclement weather, through the snow and the wilderness. She had seen her seven elder children flee with their father, but knew not of their fate. She had seen her infant’s brains dashed out against an apple-tree, and had left her own and her neighbors’ dwellings in ashes. When she reached the wigwam of her captor, situated on an island in the Merrimack, more than twenty miles above where we now are, she had been told that she and her nurse were soon to be taken to a distant Indian settlement, and there made to run the gauntlet naked. The family of this Indian consisted of two men, three women, and seven children, beside an English boy, whom she found a prisoner among them. Having determined to attempt her escape, she instructed the boy to inquire of one of the men, how he should despatch an enemy in the quickest manner, and take his scalp. “Strike ‘em there,” said he, placing his finger on his temple, and he also showed him how to take off the scalp. On the morning of the 31st she arose before daybreak, and awoke her nurse and the boy, and taking the Indians’ tomahawks, they killed them all in their sleep, excepting one favorite boy, and one squaw who fled wounded with him to the woods. The English boy struck the Indian who had given him the information, on the temple, and he also showed him how to take off the scalp. On the morning of the 31st she arose before daybreak, and awoke her nurse and the boy, and taking the Indians’ tomahawks, they killed them all in their sleep, excepting one favorite boy, and one squaw who fled wounded with him to the woods. The English boy struck the Indian who had given him the information, on the temple, as he had been directed. They then collected all the provision they could find, and took their master’s tomahawk and gun, and scuttling all the canoes but one, commenced their flight to Haverhill, distant about sixty miles by the river. But after having proceeded a short distance, fearing that her story would not be believed if she should escape to tell it, they returned to the silent wigwam, and taking off the scalps of the dead, put them into a bag as proofs of what they had done, and then retracing their steps to the shore in the twilight, recommenced their voyage.
A WEEK: In the words of the old nursery tale, sung about a hundred years ago, —

“He and his valiant soldiers did range the woods full wide,
And hardships they endured to quell the Indian’s pride.”

In the shaggy pine forest of Pequawket they met the “rebel Indians,” and prevailed, after a bloody fight, and a remnant returned home to enjoy the fame of their victory. A township called Lovewell’s Town, but now, for some reason, or perhaps without reason, Pembroke, was granted them by the State.

“Oh all our valiant English, there were but thirty-four,
And of the rebel Indians, there were about four-score;
And sixteen of our English did safely home return,
The rest were killed and wounded, for which we all must mourn.

“Our worthy Capt. Lovewell among them there did die,
They killed Lieut. Robbins, and wounded good young Frye,
Who was our English Chaplin; he many Indians slew,
And some of them he scalped while bullets round him flew.”

Our brave forefathers have exterminated all the Indians, and their degenerate children no longer dwell in garrisoned houses nor hear any war-whoop in their path. It would be well, perchance, if many an “English Chaplin” in these days could exhibit as unquestionable trophies of his valor as did “good young Frye.” We have need to be as sturdy pioneers still as Miles Standish, or Church, or Lovewell. We are to follow on another trail, it is true, but one as convenient for ambushes. What if the Indians are exterminated, are not savages as grim prowling about the clearings to-day? —

“And braving many dangers and hardships in the way,
They safe arrived at Dunstable the thirteenth (?) day of May.”

But they did not all “safe arrive in Dunstable the thirteenth,” or the fifteenth, or the thirtieth “day of May.”
When the Reverend George Ripley would review *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*, he would profess to be disturbed at what he took to be Thoreau’s irreverent stance:21

> ...he asserts that he considers the Sacred Books of the Brahmins in nothing inferior to the Christian Bible ... calculated to shock and pain many readers, not to speak of those who will be utterly repelled by them.

Thoreau inscribed a copy of his book for the Reverend Orestes Augustus Brownson, writing on the front free endpaper: “Rev. O. A. Brownson with the Regards of the author.” This copy is now in the rare book collection of the University of Detroit and it is to be noted that after page 272 the text is unopened. Brownson had not read past that point:

21. In 1853 or 1854, in the creation of Draft F of *Walden; Or, Life in the Woods*, Henry Thoreau would tack in what would be in effect a response to the Reverend George Ripley’s reaction to *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*:

> I do not say that the Reverend Ripley will realize all this; but such is the character of that morrow which mere lapse of time can never make to dawn. The light which puts out our eyes is darkness to us. Only that day dawns to which we are awake. There is more day to dawn. The sun is but a morning star.

(Well, OK, what he would insert would not be so specific as this, actually he would distance the remark through the deployment of cartoon characters: instead of “the Reverend Ripley” he wrote “John or Jonathan.”)
The People of A Week: Hannah Emerson Duston

People Mentioned in A Week
June 1, Saturday: Several centuries beyond Hannah Emerson Duston’s bloody act of 17th-Century race vengeance, the 1st monument in the United States commemorating the fame of a woman, a 25-foot obelisk, was erected, in Haverhill, Massachusetts. Guess who?22

At some point during this month J.D. Mills would demonstrate to President Abraham Lincoln a Union Repeating Gun that someone, perhaps Edward Nugent or William Palmer, had developed. This device was mounted on wheels and had a tray of cartridges that, as the operator turned a crank, dropped into the rotating cylinder. Lincoln would in a few months on his own authority place an order for 10 such “coffee-mills” at $1,300 each. Mann responded to a long list of inquiries from his mother.

Q. XIII. Do you get the war news? A. We get a little of it, though not enough to make us very excited.
Q. XIV. Do you think Mr. T. is prudent A. Yes.

22. At some point during this decade the 25-foot granite monolith which the town of Haverhill had erected upon its common in honor of its fave local ax murder, Hannah Emerson Duston, would be repossessed by the stonemasons and cut up into individual tombstones for resale, when subscribers got behind in their payments.

New England literati wrestled over Duston’s grisly tale for centuries. Cotton Mather lauded her courageous stand against Catholic (French) inspired “idolators” and saw her deliverance as evidence of God’s mercy. Henry Thoreau, floating down the same Merrimack by which Duston had fled, thought her exploits worthier of the Dark Ages than an enlightened modern era. Haverhill native John Greenleaf Whittier cast her as an avenging angel acting in a fury of passion. And intent as always on revealing a stain in the Puritan soul, Nathaniel Hawthorne dourly offered in The American Magazine of Useful and Entertaining Knowledge, “Would that the bloody old hag had been drowned in crossing Contocook river.”
At this point I interrupt the narrative for a special mention. Henry Thoreau was interested enough to insert a drawing in his notes, of the way the cables of the ferry were slung from cliff to cliff across the Mississippi River below Fort Snelling, and how the people running the ferry hauled on tackle attached to these cables to move the ferry back and forth across the river. And Walter Harding couldn’t figure out Thoreau’s drawing so he omitted it from his published account. But I have come across a drawing made from a daguerreotype of that ferry in midstream at an unknown date, and a stereograph at the Minnesota Historical Society made of that ferry at the river side by Whitney’s Gallery in 1860, and you can just about make out from these illustrations the way they...
had the cables of the ferry rigged to the cliffs on the river banks:
Several centuries beyond Hannah Emerson Duston’s bloody act of 17th-Century race vengeance, a monument to such bloody acts of race vengeance was dedicated on Duston Island in Penacook, New Hampshire, where the unburied earthly remnants of two men, two women, and six children still lie mingled unrecognizably with the soil. (Please to not step off the paved area; please to clean up after your doggie.)
Several centuries beyond Hannah Emerson Duston’s bloody act of 17th-Century race vengeance, a local millionaire paid to have a bronze in honor of her and her hatchet erected upon Haverhill Common, to replace a 25-foot obelisk of earlier times that had been repossessed by the stonecutters after the villagers failed to keep up the payments. So there “St. Hannah” stands, tomahawk clutched in her right fist, while dangling from the extended index finger of her outstretched left hand one may imagine a clump of dripping scalps. Philip Burnham has asked, perhaps not entirely rhetorically, whether the Duston originally honored by this 25-foot erection had been a “pioneer mother” or a “Puritan skinhead”:

For revisionists, Duston seems more like a John Wayne in drag with ten notches on her hatchet.

If for some ungodly reason you should desire to view such a memorial, take I-495 to exit 50, turn east on Route 97 (which is Broadway Street) past the rotary that has a statue of Lafayette until you come to the Haverhill

23. Like Henry Thoreau’s headstone, this hatchet keeps getting carried off by tourists, and has had to be replaced a number of times.

24. In fact that is the very image which was once captured on a Jim Beam whiskey bottle, circa the 1970s: when you look closely at the label on this bottle, you see that although the lady seems to be holding a bouquet of flowers, this is definitively no a bouquet of flowers. Incidentally, we don’t know when Hannah’s ten scalps had gotten maggoty and stinky and had been thrown out, but we still have, on display in Haverhill, the piece of linen in which during her lifetime she had most carefully preserved her treasured little mementos of her sacrifice. What may be the only cross-racially collected scalp remaining on exhibit in America is preserved in salt water in the Union Pacific Railroad Museum in downtown Omaha, Nebraska. This body part once belonged to a worker on the Union Pacific Railroad, William Thompson, scalped by Cheyenne in 1867. Which raises an interesting question: why would it be that precisely all the cross-racially collected “bounty” scalps of native American men, women, and children have as of this date been thrown out, and just this one cross-racially collected scalp preserved? At first blush it might have appeared, at least in accordance with the usual strictures regarding the preservation of historical evidences, that scalps accumulated by local governments in return for bounty payments would have stood a much better chance of having been preserved! Is it only a coincidence that the one scalp we have left for our consideration is of a white victim, victimized by non-whites — or is this most definitely not any coincidence at all?

Public Library and the town’s Common facing it:

Below are the plaques on the four faces of the Haverhill statue, depicting comic-book style the taking of the prisoners followed by the retaliation of Hannah’s husband (which nobody talks much about nowadays), Hannah’s killing and scalping of the band, and their night escape with their bounty scalps down the dark and silent Merrimack River:

Today, by car, it is 66 miles from Haverhill to the island near Lancaster, situated at the entry of the Contoocook
River into the Merrimack River, on which Hannah took her scalps. Leave Haverhill on I-495 southbound from exit 50, travel to exit 40, turn north on I-93 and travel to Exit 17. There is no sign announcing the Duston monument there. You must pay a 75-cent toll between exits 16 and 17. You will be six miles north of Concord NH. Go west on US-4 for about half a mile to a Park-‘n-Ride beside the river. There is a cast-iron historical marker at the entrance to the lot. At the west end of the lot a paved path leading down to the river and over an unused railroad bridge onto the island. The island boasts a monument erected in 1874 with Hannah at the top.\textsuperscript{26}

\textsuperscript{26} You are aware, of course, that Hard-Hearted Hannah has the distinction of being the 1st woman in honor of whom USers had ever erected a monument!
Just in case you’re wondering what the locals have made out of this bloody history, consider the following, which I downloaded from the town’s official history page on the Internet. You will note that in this Internet history lesson, it is made to seem to the incautious peruser as if the “10 captors” whom Hannah killed and scalped, apparently all by herself, were all armed adult males, perhaps a painted-up warparty, rather than what they actually were, a native Christian family mostly made up of women and little children:

Hannah Duston (1657-1732) is noted in history for her daring escape in 1697 from 10 Native Americans. On March 15, 1697, Hannah, her 1 week old daughter Martha, and 39 others were kidnapped and forced to walk over 45 miles to a site along the Merrimack River near Concord, NH. The legend says that her daughter was then murdered. Soon after her baby’s murder, Hannah learned that she was to be taken to a faraway village. Fearing for her own life, Hannah plotted her escape knowing that there was little chance of any rescue attempt being made to save her. On March 31, 1697, Hannah scalped and killed her 10 captors and escaped. Hannah brought back the scalps to prove her story and collect a bounty.
A monument was erected in Nashua, New Hampshire near the home of John Lovewell of old Dunstable where the fugitives Hannah Emerson Duston and Mary Corliss Neff and Samuel Lenorson or Lennardson had in the early spring of 1697 spent their 1st night under a roof and in a bed and in safety.

Presumably Mr. Lovewell – since he had been of the same race as these mass murderers bearing hatchets and
fresh body parts– had had no difficulty drifting off to slumberland in their company (!).\textsuperscript{27} Let us say that this monument must have been erected so that tourists could pay attention to such an extraordinarily interesting and revealing factoid having to do importantly with the role of race in unifying Americans.

\textsuperscript{27} Presumably his 6-year-old son John Lovewell (who had grown up to become a famous Indian-killer in his own right) had also been suitably impressed by this entourage of white people, and had also not been fearful that the intrepid Mrs. Duston might slaughter them as they slept the sleep of the righteous.
A new Howard Johnson Motor Lodge in Haverhill, Massachusetts featured a John Greenleaf Whittier room, presumably for casual nighttime Quaker meditation.

This new HoJo also featured a Hannah Emerson Duston room, presumably for casual nighttime hatchet murders.
In this era an interesting conceit was captured as a Jim Beam whiskey bottle: when you look closely, you see that although the lady of repute seems to be grasping a cluster of flowers, this is upon examination not a nosegay. The bearer of the media message is Hannah Emerson Duston, the very 1st American woman to be honored with a monument, and she has secured her dripping bundle of human scalps.²⁸

²⁸ Incidentally, we don’t know when Hannah’s ten scalps had gotten rank and were thrown out, but we still have, on display in Haverhill, Massachusetts, the piece of linen in which during her lifetime she most carefully preserved her treasured little mementos of sacrifice. (What may now be the last remaining cross-racially collected scalp on exhibit in our nation is preserved in salt water in the Union Pacific Railroad Museum in downtown Omaha, Nebraska. It is a body part once belonging to a worker on the Union Pacific Railroad, William Thompson, scalped by Cheyenne in 1867. Which raises an interesting question: why would it be that precisely all the cross-racially collected “bounty” scalps of native American men, women, and children have as of this date been thrown out, and just this one cross-racially collected scalp preserved? At first blush it might have appeared, at least in accordance with the usual strictures regarding the preservation of historical evidences, that scalps accumulated by local governments in return for bounty payments would have stood a much better chance of having been preserved! Is it only a coincidence that the one scalp we have left for our consideration is of a white victim, victimized by non-whites — or is this most definitely not any coincidence at all?)
H.D. Kilgore, Historian, Duston-Dustin Family Association. THE STORY OF HANNAH DUSTON, HAVERHILL TERCENTENARY — JUNE 1940

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"It’s all now you see. Yesterday won’t be over until tomorrow and tomorrow began ten thousand years ago."

- Remark by character "Garin Stevens"
  in William Faulkner’s INTRUDER IN THE DUST

Prepared: August 4, 2014
This stuff presumably looks to you as if it were generated by a human. Such is not the case. Instead, someone has requested that we pull it out of the hat of a pirate who has grown out of the shoulder of our pet parrot "Laura" (as above). What these chronological lists are: they are research reports compiled by ARRGH algorithms out of a database of modules which we term the Kouroo Contexture (this is data mining). To respond to such a request for information we merely push a button.
Commonly, the first output of the algorithm has obvious deficiencies and we need to go back into the modules stored in the contexture and do a minor amount of tweaking, and then we need to punch that button again and recompile the chronology—but there is nothing here that remotely resembles the ordinary “writerly” process you know and love. As the contents of this originating contexture improve, and as the programming improves, and as funding becomes available (to date no funding whatever has been needed in the creation of this facility, the entire operation being run out of pocket change) we expect a diminished need to do such tweaking and recompiling, and we fully expect to achieve a simulation of a generous and untiring robotic research librarian. Onward and upward in this brave new world.

First come first serve. There is no charge.
Place requests with <kouroo@kouroo.info>. Arrgh.