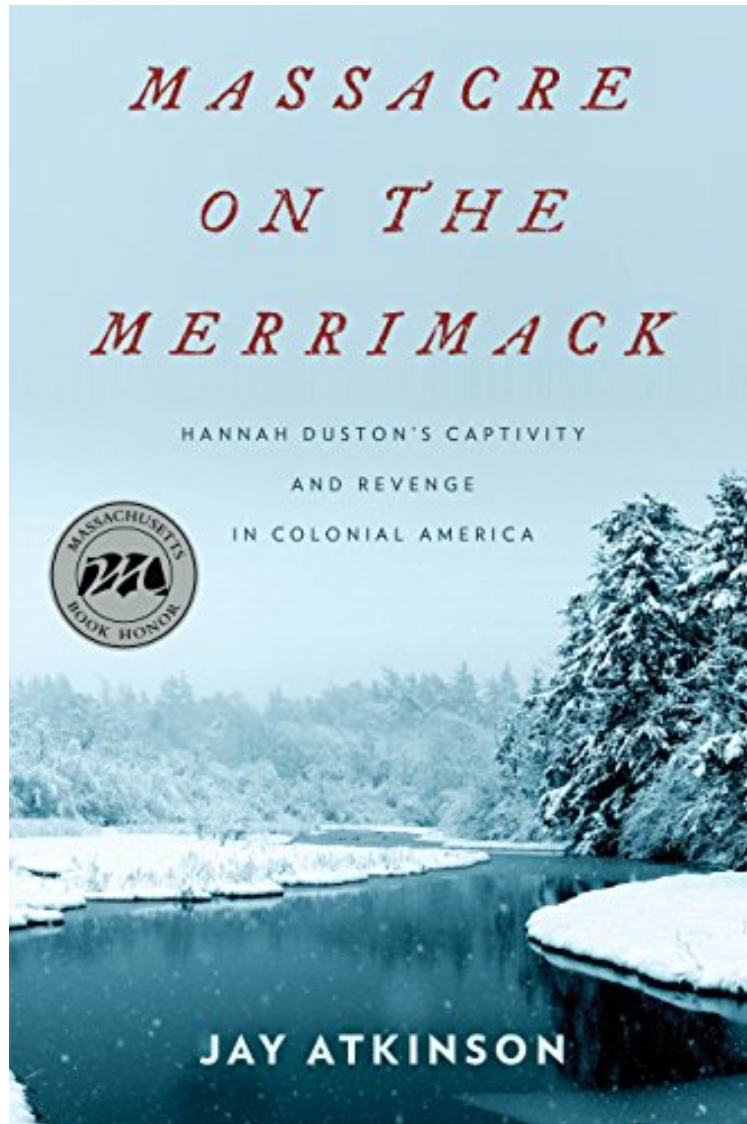


# Massacre on the Merrimack: Hannah Duston's Captivity and Revenge in Colonial America

Jay Atkinson

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**Jay Atkinson : Massacre on the Merrimack: Hannah Duston's Captivity and Revenge in Colonial America** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Massacre on the Merrimack: Hannah Duston's Captivity and Revenge in Colonial America:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Knowledgeable and worthwhileBy A. R. St JeanIf you love native American and early colony history this is a book that must be read. It gives and excellent view of life both with the

colonists and the native tribes in addition to the fascinating story of Hannah Duston. It also makes one wonder if today's Americans could endure a life that was so harsh, demanding and fraught with constant danger every day.<sup>3</sup> of 3 people found the following review helpful. An excellent storyBy Kindle CustomerAtkinson brilliantly researched and wrote an outstanding read of the ordeal of Hanna Duston. In 1697, in Colonial Massachusetts, she was captured by Abenaki Indians. She escaped with two others and got revenge by killing ten of her captors and taking their scalps. She returned to her home and what was left of her family. Atkinson does a great job in describing the stark and brutal dangers that they faced. Duston's revenge is debated to this day. An outstanding history that is highly recommended.<sup>0</sup> of 0 people found the following review helpful. I loved this bookBy oldgalI loved this book. I especially liked the way the author gives us the background politics, policies, and history to put it all in perspective. It's so easy to think of things and picture them in a rather skewed way by sub-consciously referencing them to our own time, but having the perspective of their time rounds out the picture so much more accurately. Occasionally I would have liked some kind of segue between the point of view switches, but the fact that they are there makes us SO much better able to see the things happening through their eyes and their experience. I did love the film "Dances With Wolves," and to me, as that was a good representation of many aspects of life in that time portrayed, this book gives a realistic look back at the even earlier time of colonization. For me, it was less dry than some history books, more dry than a novel (to be fair to novel-only lovers), and was the perfect blend of rounded out information combining perspective of the time back then, with interesting language of today.

Early on March 15, 1697, a band of Abenaki warriors in service to the French raided the English frontier village of Haverhill, Massachusetts. Striking swiftly, the Abenaki killed twenty-seven men, women, and children, and took thirteen captives, including thirty-nine-year-old Hannah Duston and her week-old daughter, Martha. A short distance from the village, one of the warriors murdered the squalling infant by dashing her head against a tree. After a forced march of nearly one hundred miles, Duston and two companions were transferred to a smaller band of Abenaki, who camped on a tiny island located at the junction of the Merrimack and Contoocook Rivers, several miles north of present day Concord, New Hampshire. This was the height of King Williams War, both a war of terror and a religious contest, with English Protestantism vying for control of the New World with French Catholicism. After witnessing her infants murder, Duston resolved to get even. Two weeks into their captivity, Duston and her companions, a fifty-one-year-old woman and a twelve-year-old boy, moved among the sleeping Abenaki with tomahawks and knives, killing two men, two women, and six children. After returning to the bloody scene alone to scalp their victims, Duston and the others escaped down the Merrimack River in a stolen canoe. They braved treacherous waters and the constant threat of attack and recapture, returning to tell their story and collect a bounty for the scalps. Was Hannah Duston the prototypical feminist avenger, or the harbinger of the Native American genocide? In this meticulously researched and riveting narrative, bestselling author Jay Atkinson sheds new light on the early struggle for North America.

A strong sense of place and vivid narration underscore journalist Atkinson's tale of war, survival, and murder in colonial Massachusetts. . . .Atkinson's storytelling skills are superb; he crisply moves from events in Haverhill across the panorama of colonial rivalries in North America to Hannah's captivity experiences. (Publishers Weekly)A woman's life in dangerous times. In 1697, Hannah Duston, a Haverhill, Massachusetts, wife and mother, was abducted by Abenaki Indians and forcibly marched north toward French-occupied Canada to be ransomed. Her week-old infant was brutally murdered during the march, other captives were beaten to death, and the survivors were starved and abused. Desperate, Duston managed to take revenge, slaying not only her captors, but squaws and children, as well, hacking off scalps for monetary reward. Journalist and fiction writer Atkinson narrates Duston's story in gory detail, aiming to convey 'the moral truth of what happened' and allow readers to judge whether Duston's act of savagery was justified. . . .Drawing on archival documents and contemporary and recent histories, Atkinson has written a compelling narrative. (Kirkus)"Jay Atkinson is one of my favorite writers, and *Massacre on the Merrimack*, detailing an important yet little-known episode of captivity and revenge in colonial-era Massachusetts, benefits from his accomplished writing and keen-eyed historical perspective." -- Chuck Hogan, author of *The Town*In this superb book, *Massacre on the Merrimack*, Jay Atkinson tells two stories: First, the dramatic tale of a young woman, Hannah Duston, who is abducted by Abenaki tribesmen and force-marched across a hundred miles of frozen wilderness, before fighting her way free. That alone is a dramatic tale of heroism, savagery, and survival against overwhelming odds. Simultaneously, Atkinson elucidates the bloody fight for the land we now inhabit, once known as the New World, now America. French and English imperialists, Jesuit missionaries, as well as rival Indian tribes—the Mohawk, the Abenaki and the Iroquois among them—were fighting, killing, scalping, and massacring for the right to call "New England" home. This is the rare book that succeeds in telling both as a useful and succinct history, and as an intimately narrated story of a young woman fighting, successfully for her life, and for the lives of her friends and family members. There is a statue of Hannah Duston in Massachusetts, and now there is this wonderful book—a fitting memorial to an extraordinary woman, whose story is finally, and brilliantly, told here. Alex Beam, Boston Globe columnist and author of *American Crucifixion: The Murder of Joseph Smith and the Fate of the Mormon Church**Massacre on the Merrimack* is colonial

history told as a thriller. The writers research and craftsmanship are stamped throughout the book. It's an engaging story, and you will want to savor every page. It also makes a terrific gift for young students of American history, as it depicts history the way it really happened. Lou Ureneck, author of *The Great Fire* Jay Atkinson has written a gripping account of the brutal struggles in seventeenth-century New England and Canada among British and French immigrants and various resident Native American tribes. He makes the shifting alliances comprehensible and conveys in vivid prose the desperate motives and aspirations of each group. This book portrays the sad and bloody shadow side of our perennial American Thanksgiving Day myth of happy camaraderie among European settlers and their native hosts. Anyone interested in the earliest origins of the United States will want to read this dreadful tale of greed, violence and amazing courage on all sides. Lisa Alther, author of *Blood Feud* Resurrecting one of the most fascinating and horrific stories of colonial America, Jay Atkinson delivers a riveting and thrilling narrative of savagery, murder, and revenge. His elegant prose animates the drama, allowing readers to experience not only the terror and visceral anger that Hannah Duston felt while being held captive, but also her sense of relief upon brutally killing her tormentors and returning home. Atkinson also provides a nuanced perspective on the deeply troubling relationship between whites and Indians during the early years of the American experience. This book is an excellent read. Eric Jay Dolin, author of *Leviathan and the Emancipation of America* About the Author Jay Atkinson, called the bard of New England toughness by *Mens Health* magazine, is the author of eight books. *Caveman Politics* was a Barnes Noble Discover Great New Writers Program selection and a finalist for the Discover Great New Writers Award; *Ice Time* was a Publishers Weekly Notable Book of the Year and a New England Booksellers Association bestseller; and *Legends of Winter Hill* spent seven weeks on the Boston Globe hardcover bestseller list. He has written for the *New York Times*, *Boston Globe*, *Newsday*, *Portland Oregonian*, *Mens Health*, *Boston Sunday Herald*, and *Boston Globe* magazine, among other publications. Atkinson teaches writing at Boston University and has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize three times. He grew up hearing Hannah Duston's story in his hometown of Methuen, Massachusetts, which was part of Haverhill until 1726. He lives in Methuen, Massachusetts.