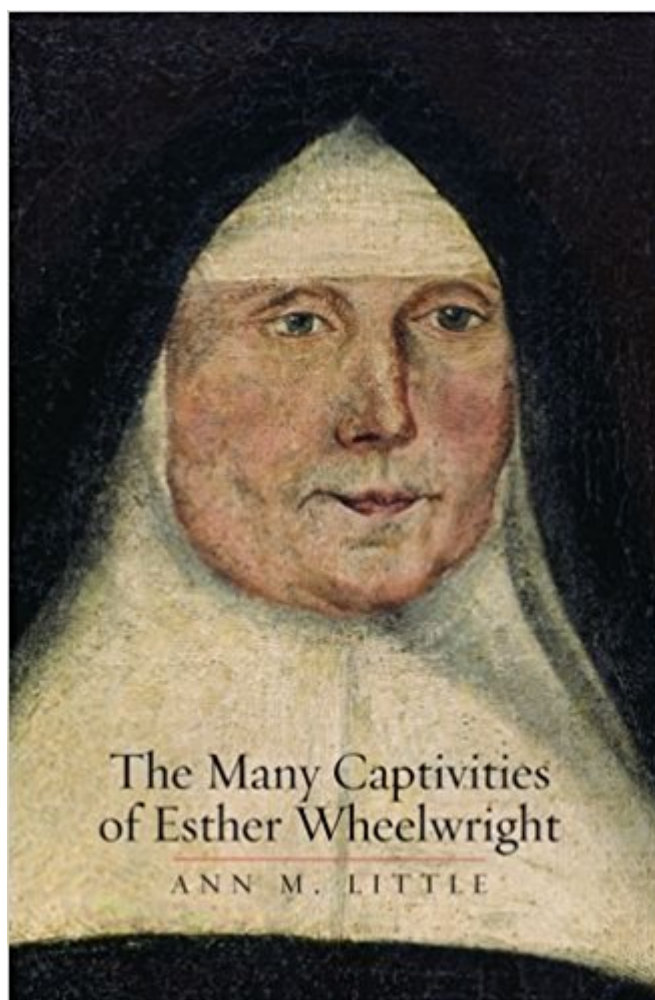


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# The Many Captivities Of Esther Wheelwright (The Lewis Walpole Series In Eighteenth-Century Culture And History)



## Synopsis

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

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

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

told analysis of a singular life. Little offers us a fresh way to think about early America by foregrounding a female subject and a rich body of primary sources produced by women, and by challenging our gendered notions of appropriate biographical subjects.

•Sophie White, author of *Wild Frenchmen and Frenchified Indians: Material Culture and Race in Colonial Louisiana* (Sophie White) “Esther Wheelwright’s journey from Puritan girl, to Wabanaki captive, to mother superior of the largest Catholic convent in French Canada is one of the most fascinating personal stories in the annals of what we call colonial history. And now, as recounted by Ann Little, it offers something more. Deeply researched, and wonderfully contextualized, *The Many Captivities of Esther Wheelwright* opens a wide window on three major cultural venues, whose interplay defined and shaped a whole era.”

•John Demos, author of *The Unredeemed Captive: A Family Story from Early America* (John Demos) “Ann Little has produced a stunning biography. From fragments she has woven a compelling tapestry, restoring the life of an eighteenth-century North American woman with depth and sensitivity, not only to her subject but to the ways of recreating past lives.”

•Peter C. Mancall, author of *Fatal Journey: The Final Expedition of Henry Hudson* and *A Tale of Mutiny and Murder in the Arctic* (Peter C. Mancall) “Little has produced a fascinating biography of an extraordinary woman. . . . A must-read.”

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

•Portland Press Herald (Portland Press Herald)

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

After seeing a picture of this oil painting and another depiction of her being taken by the Abnaki Indians, I was curious about what her life was like and how she got to be a nun. The book is well researched and tells such an interesting story. This is of particular interest to people living in coastal Maine near Wells, Kennebunk, and Ogunquit. Include a visit to the Wells Meeting House on Route One to see the pictures I have referred to.

Anyone interested in the history of early America and/or the history of women should not miss this

fabulous book. An inventive, highly readable account of a young colonial girl kidnapped by Native Americans who ends up in a French convent in Canada.

An outstanding examination of the life of Esther Wheelwright, a Colonial American child captured in a Wabanaki raid in 1703 who was raised among the Wabanaki before becoming a Catholic nun in the Ursuline convent in French-Canadian Quebec City. Little's essential thesis is that Wheelwright's life spanned three distinct cultures in a way that provides a counter-narrative to received notions of American identity and culture. To this non-expert the research seems superbly thorough and the exposition lucid and engaging. The historiographical positionality seems extremely robust and legitimate, providing an insightful revisionist perspective while not whitewashing the limitations of the source material and the era's sometimes harsh structural realities. (did that make any sense?) All this said my favorite part is probably still where Dr. Little describes being hit in the face by a dried-out tea bag (accidentally, one hopes) during a Bicentennial Parade in 1976.

This is such a great book. Wheelwright was captured as a girl but also had a life bounded by gender as women did everywhere, from the stays of little girls's dresses, to pregnancy and nursing, to the cloister, to the garrison walls that nearly everyone lived within, to the actually enslaved women in the household of Esther Wheelwright's family.

comfortable,nice . This product is so great. I love it. It cuts like no other product I have even had. If you want A great product you need this one. my parents need it, fast and in time, as described .

The basic facts are presented accurately. The writing is good, and the life and times of Esther Wheelwright make for an interesting story. . Unfortunately, the writer imposed a twentieth century feminist viewpoint on the story of a woman born in 1696! This distracts from the story and provides a skewed interpretation of her life and times. I was disappointed in this book. If you are interested in the life and times of Esther Wheelwright a better choice would be the book written by her descendant Julie Wheelwright.

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