

## Early American History, 1492-1800: Primary Source Worksheets

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### Introduction

In this activity, students will examine rare books, manuscripts, historical maps, and early newspapers to gain a basic familiarity with the types of sources that scholars use to study the history of North America from the colonial period up to about 1800. It is also intended to inspire further exploration and interest in the topic.



Activity worksheets with guided questions are provided below, along with a key containing answers or possible answers to the questions.

### Audience

- Students in an undergraduate or early-graduate-level seminar on colonial American history
- A course on historiography.
- Advanced information literacy / library instruction courses.
- Instruction sessions related to visual literacy (see worksheets for maps).

### Activity

Print the worksheets below and station 1-3 students around each source. After giving a brief demonstration of how to properly handle rare materials, ask the students to spend about 15 minutes familiarizing themselves with their source and answering the worksheet questions. Move around the room and assist as necessary. Follow up by having the students discuss the worksheets and their experience working with these kinds of primary sources.

Though the activity works best for a small seminar, larger classes could be accommodated by having students work in groups of 4-6 and/or view the materials in the Special Collections reading room before the discussion session.

(Note: This activity was originally developed for "Doing Early American History," taught in the UNM History Department, Spring 2017.)

## Source

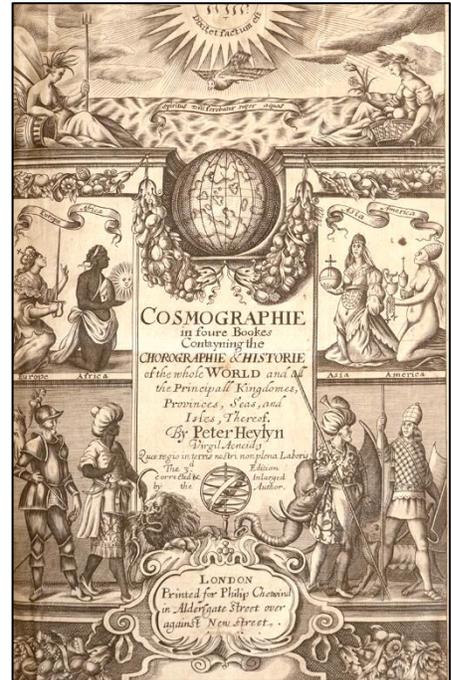
Peter Heylyn, *Cosmographie* (1665).

Location: 909 H51c3 Oversize

## Questions

Looking at the decorative title page, can you guess what the word *cosmography* means?

Find the section on America. What authorities does Heylyn cite in the first two pages? What do you think this implies about the book's accuracy?



What are the eight main divisions of North America that Heylyn gives?

Is this a first-hand account?

Describe the book's physical format? Who might have owned a book like this?

What problems, if any, did you encounter while examining the book?

Can you find the description of New Mexico? (Hint: use the index.)

## Source

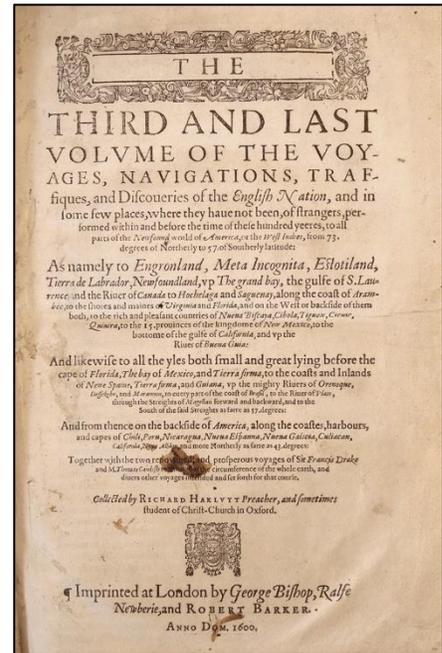
Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation* (1599-1600).

Call number: G240 H145. Volume 3.

## Questions

When and where was the book printed? What English colonies existed in North America at that time?

How is the book organized?



Can you find the section on the founding of Virginia? Can you find the list of English settlers and the name of Virginia Dare, the first English child born in the Americas? Give page number.

Using the printed section headings in the margins, try to find a passage describing conflict between the English and the Indians of Virginia. Give page number and brief description.

What problems, if any, did you have while working with this source? Did anything make it difficult to read?

Describe the book's physical format. Do you think this was an expensive book, and if so, who might have owned it? (Hint: see bookplate on the back side of the title page.)



## Sources

Map of New France and view of the Indian village of Hochelaga, in Giovanni Ramusio, *Terzo volume delle navigationi et viaggi* (1556).

Call number: 910.8 R14n

## Questions

Early maps often contain reference to mythical places. This map of New France—the first map focusing specifically on what became New England and the Canadian maritime provinces—purports to show the location of the legendary settlement of Norumbega. Can you locate it?

Can you find any other features that are related to myth or legend?

What does the map accurately tell us about life in this region?

How was unexplored territory marked on early European maps?

On the right side of the map of New France is an island called *Terra Nova*. Can you guess what this is called today?

See if you can find the cross that Jacques Cartier planted to claim ownership for the King of France. How else does the map signal European intentions of conquest and ownership?

How does the view of Hochelaga depict both peace and hostility between Indians and Europeans?

How do you think the view of Hochelaga has been made to fit Renaissance visual tastes? Do you think this happened frequently with early images of the Americas?

### **Extra activity**

Ask one student to describe his or her neighborhood or another location. Have the other students attempt to draw a map of it from that description. Compare the maps – are they accurate?

*A short Testimony concerning Ann Goldsborough*  
She was born of believing parents at Wincasle upon Tyne  
in the year 1687, and Religiously Instructed from her youth,  
about the 27 year of her age she was call'd to the work of the  
ministry and was diligent in the exercise of her gift, her  
Service Acceptable; when found a concern to visit some  
Neighbouring Counties she had the approbation of her Friends  
at home and well receiv'd where she travell'd;  
she being endow'd with Universall Love & Charity was  
of service in our discipline, and labored therein, while  
she had strength, being often concerned for our young  
Brethren that they might be preserved in the narrow straits

*The Solemn Affirmation, the Declaration of Fidelity, and  
the Effect of the Abjuration Oath, as requir'd to be ad-  
ministr'd to the People call'd Quakers, by an Act of Par-  
liament made in the Eighth Year of King GEORGE the  
First.*

I. *The SOLEMN AFFIRMATION.*  
I A. B. do solemnly, sincerely, and truly Declare and Affirm.

II. *The DECLARATION of FIDELITY.*  
I A. B. do solemnly and sincerely Promise and Declare, That I will be True and  
Faithful to King George; and do solemnly, sincerely, and truly Protest, Testifie,  
and Declare, that I do from my Heart Abhor, Detest, and Renounce, as Impious and  
Heretical, that wicked Doctrine and Position, That Princes Excommunicated or De-  
prived by the Pope, or any Authority of the See of Rome, may be Deposed or Murdered  
by their Subjects, or any other whatsoever. And I do Declare, that no Foreign Prince,  
Person, Prelate, State or Potentate, hath, or ought to have, any Power, Jurisdiction,  
Superiority, Preheminence, or Authority, Ecclesiastical or Spiritual, within this Realm.

III. *The Effect of the ABJURATION OATH.*  
I A. B. do solemnly, sincerely, and truly Acknowledge, Protest, Testifie, and De-  
clare, That King George is Lawful and Rightful King of this Realm, and of all other  
His Dominions and Countreys therunto belonging. And I do solemnly and sincerely  
Declare, That I do believe the Person pretended to be the Prince of Wales, during the  
Life of the late King James, and since his Decease, pretending to be, and taking upon

## Sources

- 1) Broadside, "The Solemn Affirmation, the Declaration of Fidelity, and the Effect of the Abjuration Oath, as requir'd to be administr'd to the People call'd Quakers"
- 2) Manuscript, "A short testimony concerning Ann Goldsborough."

Location: MSS 237 SC

## Questions

What is the date of the broadside?

Can you explain the document's context in 2-3 sentences?

What questions do you have about it? How would you find out more?

Discuss any difficulties you had reading it.

What is the "short testimony" about? When did Ann Goldsborough live?

What skills do you think historians working with early American documents need?



## Source

Bartolomé de las Casas, *An Account of the First Voyages and Discoveries Made by the Spaniards in America* (1699).

Location: F1411 .C426 1699

## Questions

Can you summarize the book in 2-3 sentences?

From whose perspective is the narrative told?

What are some interesting features of the book?

Based on what you know about colonial North America, what impact do you think this book might have had? Can you guess why it was popular in England and other Protestant countries?



## Source

Peter Schenck, *Tabula Mexicana et Floridae...* (ca. 1720)

Call number: new acquisition

## Questions

How does the map acknowledge occupation by Indians but ownership by Europeans?

How do you think this map was used? By travelers? For reference? Another use?

What language does the map use? Why?

What scientific features does the map have?

Can you find an example of a historical or ethnographic note on the map?



## Source

Thomas Jefferys, *The West-India Atlas* (1775).

Call number: 912.729 J38w Oversize

Turn to map 3, "The coast of West Florida and Louisiana"

## Questions

How do you think this map was used? For navigation? Reference? Another use?

Try to identify a few of the map's scientific features.

How could the map be used to study history? What historical notes has the mapmaker included?

## Source

*Columbian Centinel* (Boston, February 11, 1792)  
*The Weekly Museum* (New York, March 8, 1794)

Call number: PN4899 .I59 Oversize

## Questions

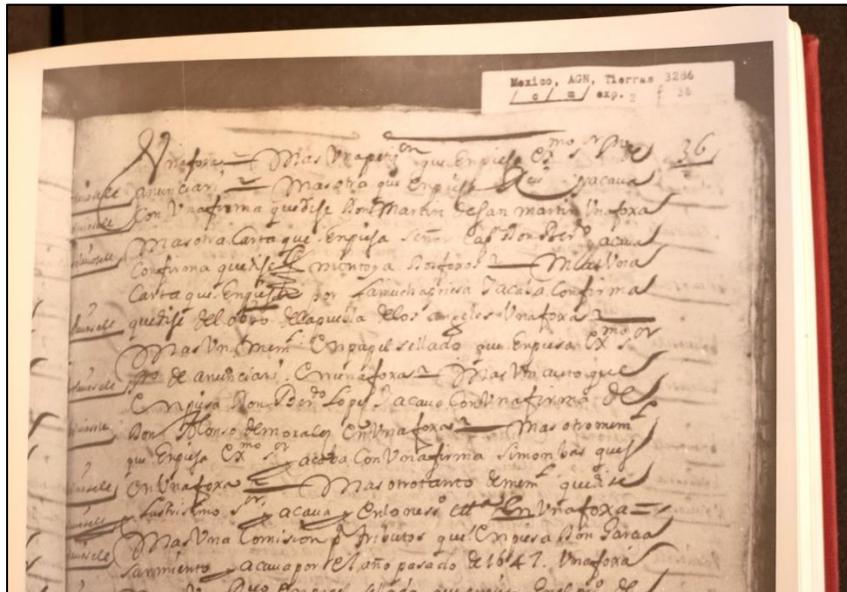
What general kind of content do these newspapers contain?

How are Native Americans represented? In a negative way?  
A positive way?



How might you use these newspapers to study women in colonial America?

Look at the catalog record for the newspapers. Could you search the catalog using the terms "Native American" or "women's history" and located these sources?



## Source

Photo reproductions of documents from the Archivo General de la Nación (17th century).

Call number: Anderson Reading Room, AGN, v. 115a

Consider giving this source to any students who read Spanish.

## Questions

Can you decipher any of the documents?

Do transcripts usually exist of historical documents?

What skills would a historian of the Spanish colonial period need?

What challenges do you see to using a source like this?

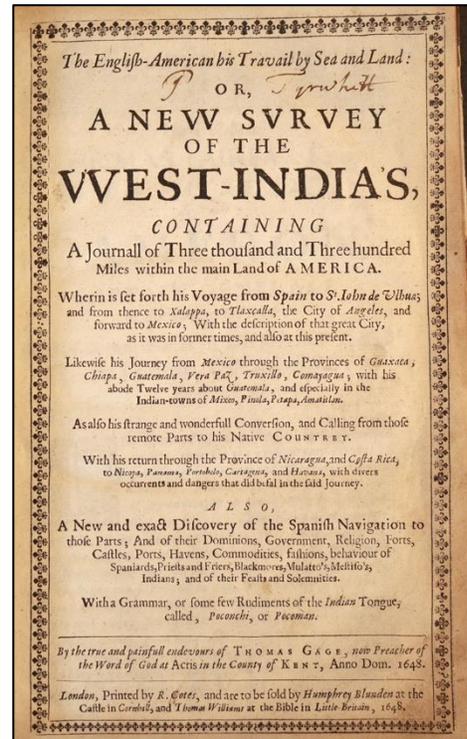
## Source

Thomas Gage, *The English-American his Travail by Sea and Land: or, A New Survey of the West-India's* (1648).

Call number: F1211 .G13

## Questions

Using the table of contents, find the chapter on chocolate. Give page number. How was chocolate used in Europe at this time?



Find the dedication. What can you learn from it about the author? To whom is the book dedicated? What perspective was Gage writing from? How is his narrative a work of propaganda?

Turn to page 213. What do you find? Try to read the first paragraph – what do you learn?

What problems, if any, did you have while working with this source?

## Source

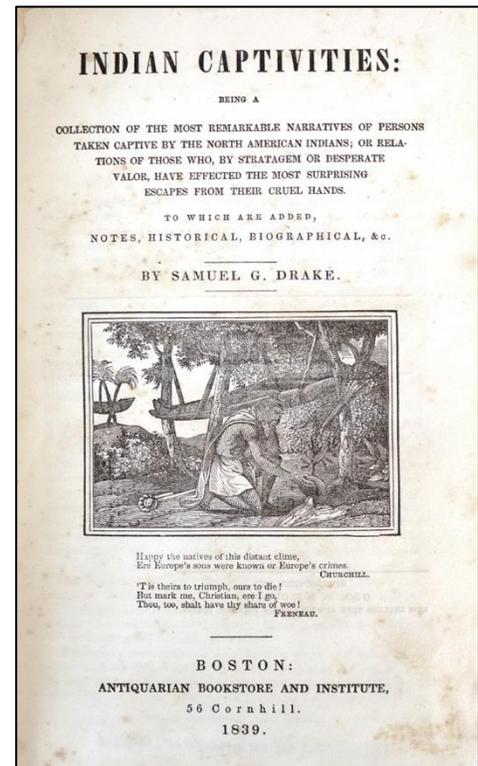
Samuel G. Drake, *Indian Captivities* (1839).

Call number: E85 D75 1839

## Questions

Describe the book's physical features (binding, typography, illustrations, etc.). Who do you think was the original audience for this book?

Looking closely at the title page, what do you see that tells you that the book might be slightly sympathetic to Indians?



How might you use this book to study the history of women in early America? (Hint: look at the table of contents on page 9).

Look at the catalog record – could you search the catalog using a term like “women’s history” and locate this book?

## Key to Questions

**Source:** Peter Heylyn, *Cosmographie* (1665).

Looking at the decorative title page, can you guess what the word *cosmography* means?

*A study of the cosmos, or history of the earth.*

Find the section on America. What authorities does Heylyn cite in the first two pages? What do you think this implies about the book's accuracy?

*Plato, Seneca, Mela, other Classical authors*

What are the eight main divisions of North America that Heylyn gives?

*Estotiland, Canada, Virginia, Florida, California, Nova Gallicia, Nova Hispania, Guatemala.*

Is this a first-hand account?

*No. The information is collected from different authors.*

Describe the book's physical format? Who might have owned a book like this?

*Large folio, leather binding, more than 1000 pages. Expensive. Elite owner, or possibly a university.*

What problems, if any, did you encounter while examining the book?

Can you find the description of New Mexico? (Hint: use the index.)

*Page 1043.*

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**Source:** Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation* (1599-1600).

When and where was the book printed? What English colonies existed in North America at that time?

*London, 1599-1600.*

How is the book organized?

*It is an anthology of voyages by English explorers.*

Can you find the section on the founding of Virginia? Can you find the list of English settlers and the name of Virginia Dare, the first English child born in the Americas? Give page number.

*Section on Virginia begins on page 243. List of settlers, page 287.*

Using the printed section headings in the margins, try to find a passage describing conflict between the English and the Indians of Virginia. Give page number and brief description.

*Page 263, etc.*

What problems, if any, did you have while working with this source? Did anything make it difficult to read?

Describe the book's physical format. Do you think this was an expensive book, and if so, who might have owned it? (Hint: see bookplate on the back side of the title page.)

*Large, 868 pages. This is just the third of three volumes. Bookplate of Baron Compton, 1703.*

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**Source:** Map of New France and view of the Indian village of Hochelaga, in Giovanni Ramusio, *Terzo volume delle navigationi et viaggi* (1556).

Early maps often contain reference to mythical places. This map of New France—the first map focusing specifically on what became New England and the Canadian maritime provinces—purports to show the location of the legendary settlement of Norumbega. Can you locate it?

*Lower left.*

Can you find any other features that are related to myth or legend?

*Devils in top right corner. Sea monsters at bottom.*

What does the map accurately tell us about life in this region?

*Canoes, fisheries, etc.*

How was unexplored territory marked on early European maps?

*With the phrase "parte incognita" or "terra incognita."*

On the right side of the map of New France is an island called *Terra Nova*. Can you guess what this is called today?

*Newfoundland.*

See if you can find the cross that Jacques Cartier planted to claim ownership for the king of France. How else does the map signal European intentions of conquest and ownership?

*French coat of arms, top right. The name "New France." European ships at margins.*

How does the view of Hochelaga depict both peace and hostility between Indians and Europeans?

*Friendly greeting of Europeans. Stone throwers on village walls.*

How do you think the view of Hochelaga has been made to fit Renaissance visual tastes? Do you think this happened frequently with early images of the Americas?

*Perfect symmetry of village. Box with captions in a Palladian design.*

**Extra activity:** Ask one student to describe his or her neighborhood or another location. Have the other students attempt to draw a map of it from that description. Compare the maps – are they accurate?

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**Sources:** 1) Broadside, "The Solemn Affirmation, the Declaration of Fidelity, and the Effect of the Abjuration Oath, as requir'd to be administered to the People call'd Quakers"; 2) Manuscript, "A short testimony concerning Ann Goldsborough."

What is the date of the broadside?

*"... the eighth year of King George the First," i.e., 1722. Explain regnal years.*

Can you explain the document's context in 2-3 sentences?

*Quakers refused to swear oaths of testimony in courts of law or oaths of allegiance to the English crown. They believed in telling the truth at all times, therefore an oath was unnecessary, since it assumed that without it, someone might not tell the truth. This got them into trouble in England and caused many to emigrate to Pennsylvania, seeking religious freedom.*

What questions do you have about it? How would you find out more?

*Questions... Find a secondary source – scholarly book, an encyclopedia, a reputable website, etc.*

Discuss any difficulties you had reading it.

*Old language, legal language?*

What is the "short testimony" about? When did Ann Goldsborough live?

*It is an obituary or eulogy for Ann Goldsborough. Lived from 1687-1754.*

What skills do you think historians working with early American documents need?

*The ability to read handwriting from this period.*

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**Source:** Bartolomé de las Casas, *An Account of the First Voyages and Discoveries Made by the Spaniards in America* (1699).

Can you summarize the book in 2-3 sentences? From whose perspective is the narrative told?

*Las Casas was a Catholic priest who exposed the cruelty committed by Spanish colonists on the Indians. His book was intended to promote a more humane policy of colonization.*

What are some interesting features of the book?

*Graphic illustrations depicting cruelty toward Indians.*

Based on what you know about colonial North America, what impact do you think this book might have had?

Can you guess why it was popular in England and other Protestant countries?

*Published at a time of religious wars between Spain and Protestant countries like England and the Netherlands. Used by Protestant propagandists to perpetuate ideas about Catholic brutality, oppression, etc., and justifying war with Spain.*

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**Source:** Peter Schenck, *Tabula Mexicana et Floridae...* (ca. 1720)

How does the map acknowledge occupation by Indians but ownership by Europeans?

*The names of indigenous peoples are shown, but only within European-claimed territory more prominently delineated by lines and colors.*

How do you think this map was used? By travelers? For reference? Another use?

*Probably for reference. Propaganda?*

What language does the map use? Why?

*Latin, possibly to reach an international audience.*

What scientific features does the map have?

*Lines of latitude and longitude. Scale. Compass rose.*

Can you find an example of a historical or ethnographic note on the map?

*"Ins. Antillanae detecta per Christophorum Columbum, anno 1492."*

*Mention of Indians who live in caves, near Virginia.*

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**Source:** Thomas Jefferys, *The West-India Atlas* (1775). Turn to map 3, "The coast of West Florida and Louisiana"

How do you think this map was used? For navigation? Reference? Another use?

*Navigation. (Trivia: Explain difference between a map and a chart.)*

Try to identify a few of the map's scientific features.

*Lines of latitude and longitude. Rhumb lines. Compass rose. Scale. Depth soundings.*

How could the map be used to study history? What historical notes has the mapmaker included?

*See area around New Orleans – "The Colapissas formerly inhabited these parts."*

*See Gulf of Mexico – "The Flota's track from la Vera Cruz to Havana."*

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**Sources:** *Columbian Centinel* (Boston, February 11, 1792) and *The Weekly Museum* (New York, March 8, 1794)

What general kind of content do these newspapers contain?

*Domestic and international news, letters, anecdotes, shipping news, poetry, advertisements, notices of entertainments.*

How are Native Americans represented? In a negative way? A positive way?

*Columbian Centinel: contains documents about conflicts with the Indians in the Ohio Valley.*

*Weekly Museum: contains the prologue from and advertisements for a play, "Tammany, or The Indian Chief."*

How might you use these newspapers to study women in colonial America?

*The play "Tammany" was written by a woman. Article, "Considerations addressed to the fair sex." Advertisements for businesses owned by women.*

Look at the catalog record for the newspapers. Could you search the catalog using the terms "Native American" or "women's history" and located these sources?

*No.*

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**Source:** Photo reproductions of documents from the Archivo General de la Nacion (17th century). Consider giving this source to any students who read Spanish.

Can you decipher any of the documents?

*Very difficult because of language, old handwriting, quality of reproduction.*

Do transcripts usually exist of historical documents?

*Sometimes, but not always.*

What skills would a historian of the Spanish colonial period need?

*Paleography skills, language skills, ability to locate sources, etc.*

What challenges do you see to using a source like this?

*Old language and handwriting. Poor quality reproduction. Index lacking or difficult to use. No transcription. May need to synthesize many similar documents to understand. Mention that sources like this are often on microfilm.*

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**Source:** Thomas Gage, *The English-American his Travail by Sea and Land: or, A New Survey of the West-India's* (1648).

Using the table of contents, find the chapter on chocolate. Give page number. How was chocolate used in Europe at this time?

*Page 106. Chocolate used medicinally.*

Find the dedication. What can you learn from it about the author? To whom is the book dedicated? What perspective was Gage writing from? How is his narrative a work of propaganda?

*The book is dedicated to Sir Thomas Fairfax, a general in Oliver Cromwell's army. Gage was an English Catholic who traveled in New Spain and saw the cruelty and corruption of Spanish Catholic colonists. He converted to Puritanism on his return to England. His writings were used to portray the Spanish in a negative light and justify war.*

Turn to page 213. What do you find? Try to read the first paragraph – what do you learn?

*Vocabulary of an Indian language. Spanish priests were learning native languages to spread Catholicism.*

What problems, if any, did you have while working with this source?

*Old spellings and style of language, difficult to skim, etc.*

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**Source:** Samuel G. Drake, *Indian Captivities* (1839).

Describe the book's physical features (binding, typography, illustrations, etc.). Who do you think was the original audience for this book?

*Cloth publisher's binding, made for mass production, cheaper than leather. Typography very small, reduced amount of paper necessary and thus cost. Woodcut illustrations, somewhat sensational – all indicates a popular audience.*

Looking closely at the title page, what do you see that tells you that the book might be slightly sympathetic to Indians?

*Woodcut of an Indian burying a love one. Lines from a poem by Charles Churchill, "Happy the natives of this distant clime, Ere Europe's sons were known or Europe's crimes."*

How might you use this book to study the history of women in early America? (Hint: look at the table of contents on page 9).

*Many captives were women. Could also study relationships between male captives and native women.*

Look at the catalog record – could you search the catalog using a term like “women’s history” and locate this book?

*No. A researcher would need to think independently of the catalog and deduce where information on women’s history might be found.*