

for saddle clothes and cut up for head dresses and waist girdles. There was no device too ridiculous for their attire and nothing too costly for them to destroy.⁴¹⁶

Indian appropriation and misuse of white clothing operated on many levels for the captives. Captive women felt that Dakota wearing these items had no respect for the previous owners or for what the clothing symbolized, which was probably true. Dakota deliberately misused white clothing to emphasize that power had shifted from white settlers and the government back to the Indians. At the same time, captive women did not realize that Dakota men and women wore plundered clothing and jewelry according to their own standards of beauty and adornment. Plundered clothing and jewelry represented an opportunity for Dakota to wear finer fabrics and jewels than they commonly possessed. Urania White moved beyond Sweet in her comments on the power of plundered clothing:

During this week of tepee life the ludicrous alternated with the sublime, the laughable with the heart-breaking and pathetic. We saw papooses of all sizes robed in rich laces and bedecked in many fantastic styles with silk fabrics, until one must laugh despite all their fearful surroundings. When the laugh died on our lips, the terrible thought crowded into our minds, Where did these things come from? What tales could they tell if power were given them to speak? Where are the butchered and mutilated forms that once wore them? My heart was crushed, my brain reeled, and I grew faint and sick wondering, or rather trying not to wonder, what would be our own fate.⁴¹⁷

Dakota use of clothing and jewelry was comic, but the reality that clothing signified was very bleak. Minnie Buce Carrigan described being devastated when the young Dakota woman she lived with put on one of her mother's dresses:

One day the young squaw put on my mother's dress, a dark green woolen one, and it just about fitted her. I looked at her and then laid down on the ground and burst out crying. I could not bear to see her. She seemed to know what I was

⁴¹⁶ Sweet, 368.

⁴¹⁷ White, 405-406.

crying about and took it off. She never put any of my mother's clothes on again while I was with her.⁴¹⁸

A Dakota woman wearing her mother's green dress was a far too painful and intimate reminder that Carrigan's mother was dead. The losses wrought by the war resurfaced with the sight of a single item of clothing. Wakefield emphasized this point as well when she was given a dead woman's dress:

About this time some squaws brought me a dress belonging to Mrs. Dr. Humphrey. How strange are God's ways! How little did I think when I assisted her in making the dress of my ever wearing it, and at such a place and under such circumstances. Now she was dead, and I, where was I? In a camp of Indians, not knowing but I should be, at last, murdered by them, for I had many miles to travel before reaching civilization."⁴¹⁹

Even more powerful than Indian uses for plundered clothing was denial of much needed clothing by Dakota women. Janette DeCamp Sweet recognized her heartbreak when much needed clothes were offered but not supplied. Speaking of an Indian woman named Hazatome she said:

She had often come to our house and been kindly used. Her pity was so great that she offered to give each of us an Indian costume. Never doubting her sincerity, I was greatly pleased and told her I would come for it the next day. I ran the risk of going some great distance from our lodge to meet her and receive the clothing . . . I found Hazatome and asked her for the articles, fully persuaded that they would be forthcoming. Imagine my surprise when she would not utter a word. She neither affirmed nor denied having promised them, but simply ignored me altogether. I could not help crying with disappointment, but left her, thinking that I would never believe or trust an Indian again.⁴²⁰

Without the much-needed clothing, Sweet felt betrayed on a number of levels. Foremost, she and her children desperately need Indian clothing so they would be better protected from the elements. Also, Indian attire would help them blend in better among the Dakota especially because threats were repeatedly made against white captives. In this way,

⁴¹⁸ Carrigan, 12.

⁴¹⁹ Wakefield, 111.

Indian clothing worked as a dual signifier sometimes marking white women's distance from white civilization and other times showing a captive's acceptance of Indian culture. Dakota attire for Sweet and her children would have provided a sign to all that she had claimed a role in the tribal network thus making her position a little less tenuous.

Food

Food was also an important issue for female captives and many of the captives commented on the quantity, quality and preparation in Dakota camps. While clothing and food were both cultural signifiers for these women, food and water were obviously much more pivotal for their survival. Minnie Buce Carrigan commented on the lack of food at one family she stayed with:

While I lived with them I was nearly starved all the time and was always sickly. Once when I was very hungry I saw an Indian girl put some potatoes in hot ashes to roast and then go off and play. I could not resist the chance of procuring a square meal even if by questionable means, so I watched and waited until I thought the potatoes were cooked, and saw that the girl was at play on the other side of the tepee, and then I took the potatoes back of another tent and ate them with great relish.⁴²¹

Even though she knew stealing was wrong, she did it anyway just to have something to eat. Helen Tarble and her children faced serious food deprivation during her time in the wilderness after escape: "They cried but little, but constantly begged for something to eat. All I could give them was wild rice straw to chew for the juice, a few plums and berries, and some roots which I dug. There was plenty of water and I made a drinking cup by pinning two large leaves together with thorns."⁴²² At times, lack of food was a harsh reality for captive women and their children.

⁴²⁰ Sweet, 368.

⁴²¹ Carrigan, 17.

⁴²² Tarble, 36.

Hunger in camp was sporadic as there was an abundance of food due to plunder of white households. According to Urania White, “The Indians through plunder had on hand a good supply of provisions, consisting of flour, dried fruit, groceries of various kinds, and an abundance of fresh meat.”⁴²³ Wakefield recognized this as well:

My children never knew what it was to be hungry in the Indian camp, for food was plenty, and that which was good. Nearly every day some little dainty was brought to ‘Jute Wicaste Tawicu’—English doctor’s wife. I really thought my children would be made sick by Indians, for they were continually feeding them.⁴²⁴

Frazer and Wakefield at least felt that food was plentiful in camp. Water was another issue. Many of the captives found the water used by Dakota as filthy and unpalatable.

Urania White described in detail the problems with Dakota water sources:

That part of the train where I was, pitched their tepees beside a mossy slough, from which we obtained water for tepee use. The first few days the water covered the moss and could be dipped with a cup. The cattle were allowed to stand in it, and dozens of little Indians were playing in it every day; consequently the water soon became somewhat unpalatable to the fastidious. However, we continued to use it. After remaining there three or four days, the water sank below the moss. To get it then we had to go out on the moss and stand a few minutes, when the water would collect about our feet. It is astonishing how some persons will become reconciled to such things when forced upon them.⁴²⁵

Even though animals and people stood in the water, White and her captors continue to use it. This upset White who normally would not have used dirty water. After being deprived of water while in hiding, Wakefield discussed what thirst drove her to: “As we walked along we passed through a muddy piece of ground and I dipped up the filthy water in my hands and drank and gave my child. It was refreshing, but I think a dog would refuse to drink such water at ordinary times, but my mouth was parched with

⁴²³ White, 406.

⁴²⁴ Wakefield, 112.

⁴²⁵ White, 411.

thirst.”⁴²⁶ Even temporary deprivation of food and water made anything palatable for captive women and children.

Captive women closely scrutinized how Dakota women prepared food because this was one of their primary duties before captivity. Urania Frazer described how certain foods were prepared:

Their manner of broiling beefsteak was not much of a trick, but very remarkable for labor saving. They put the steak across two sticks over the blaze, without salting, and in a few minutes it was done... Tripe was an extremely favorite dish among them, and they were quick in its preparation. The intestines were taken between the thumb and finger, the contents were squeezed out, and then, without washing, the tripe was broiled and prepared in regular Indian epicurean style Truly these noble red people can justly be called a labor-saving people, whatever other qualities they may lack.⁴²⁷

Making bread was much easier for the Indian women who used the same bowl for mixing and cooking as noted by Helen.⁴²⁸ What the captives had labeled as poverty among the Indian women before, they came to see as a lifestyle unencumbered by excess work for more stringent standards of food preparation.

Even though Dakota food did not seem appetizing to captives, they ate it because they had no other alternative. White noted “Their manner of cooking was not every elaborate; an epicure would not have relished it as well as we did, until after being forced by the pain or weakness caused by want of food. Hunger will make food cooked after the manner of the Indians palatable.”⁴²⁹ Captives learned to eat food prepared by Dakota women out of necessity, but they would never eat dog. Both Carrigan and White described a dog feast they witnessed during their captivities. Carrigan related her disgust in a detailed description:

⁴²⁶ Wakefield, 81.

⁴²⁷ White, 406.

⁴²⁸ Ibid, 19.

The next morning after this incident I heard a great commotion again. On investigation I saw a most disgusting spectacle. Side by side, with their throats cut and their feet in the air, lay a number of dogs. I returned to the tent sickened by the sight, but in a little while my curiosity got the better of my sensations and I went out again. By this time the Indians were singeing the hair off the dogs with burning hay. I recognized our little white poodle among the carcasses. The Indians had eight to ten kettles on the fire and as soon as a dog was singed it was thrown into boiling water. Perhaps they were only scalding them preparatory to cooking. I concluded they were cooking them without preparation and resolved not to eat any of the meat if I had to starve.⁴³⁰

Carrigan was horrified to see her own poodle among the dogs being prepared for the feast. White also described the dog feast but analyzed its political function where only warriors were allowed to partake in preparation for war. At other times, all could partake of the dog if it was prepared in a different way.⁴³¹ The thought of eating dog horrified most captives who had sentimental attachments to their own dogs.

Food also functioned as a symbol of white civilization. Jannette Sweet had difficulty tolerating Indian food during her captivity. She felt she did not have a decent meal until she escaped to the friendly Indians: "She and her daughter cooked a nice supper of beef and bread and placed it on the table, and we ate with such appetites as hunger alone can give. It was the first real food in many weeks."⁴³² Sweet did not consider food prepared by Dakota women at Little Crow's camp to be real, meaning civilized and fit for white consumption. Sweet could not satisfy her hunger until she had beef but especially bread, served at a table, not sitting on the ground like in the camps. Bread was also important to Carrigan as well, "I never saw any bread from the time I left

⁴²⁹ White, 406.

⁴³⁰ Carrigan, 16.

⁴³¹ White, 417.

⁴³² Sweet, 371.

home until I got among white people again.”⁴³³ Food acted as a powerful symbol of white civilization as well.

Women’s Work

Over time, as white women were incorporated into the female network of Indian camps, they observed in detail Dakota women’s behavior and work patterns. Sometimes Indian women ridiculed white women for acting in ways that were specifically white. Urania White told how Dakota women made fun of her because she did not behave in the proper female manner:

The Indians and squaws had rules of etiquette, which they strictly observed, and would frequently, admonish me concerning them. They would tell me how to sit on the ground; how to stand; and how to go in and out of the teepee door, which was very low. I think they must have considered me a dull scholar, for I could not conform, or would not, to all their notions of gentility. The Indians would frequently have a hearty laugh to see me go in and out of the teepee door.⁴³⁴

Here White exposed larger cultural conflicts over proper female behavior. In captivity Dakota and Euro-American cultural norms came into direct conflict as white women were expected to learn and act according to Dakota gender roles and behaviors. These two groups of women had distinctly different behavioral expectations that clashed within the context of captivity. When captives violated gender roles or cultural taboos, there were consequences. Wakefield learned this when she washed her feet in the family’s communal water pail:

One day I went for water, and as my feet were dirty, I tho’t I would wash them; as the pail was an old one I thought I would wash my feet in it, for I could reach the water only by lying down on my face; so I thought I would dip it up and wash, and then wash the pail. When I got back to the tepee the family were all in great commotion. Chaska brought in an interpreter, who said I had committed a great sin by putting my feet in the pail, for all vessels belonging to a tepee are sacred, and no women are allowed to put their feet in them or step over them. I told him I

⁴³³ Carrigan, 11.

⁴³⁴ White, 417.

could scrub the pail, but he said it would not do, for they would never use it again, and they did not. It was turned upside down, and when we removed they left it on the prairie.⁴³⁵

Wakefield unwittingly broke a Dakota taboo and exposed the gulf in understanding that existed between two cultures. Luckily her ignorance and Chaska's presence saved her from punishment for stepping outside Dakota female roles.

While the women were in captivity, they were also incorporated into Dakota women's world through work. Based on their new roles in the tribe, white women hauled wood and water, cooked, helped to move the camps and cared for children. In "Living on a Frontier Part'—Virginia Women Among the Indians, 1622-1794," Jennifer Davis McDaid noted that female captives and Indian women shared similar tasks in captivity:

In retrospect, the tasks may have seemed more severe than they were in reality. Although the surroundings were dramatically different, food cultivation and preparation remained women's concerns, whether they working in English or Native American context. Indian women and captives tended crops, gathered wild plants, took care of village children, and performed household chores.⁴³⁶

The experiences of many women in camp were similar to that of Helen Tarble who worked as a servant during her brief captivity: "They put me to work and found plenty of it to do. I chopped wood, brought water, gathered corn from the fields and fed the horses, and all the time I was closely watched and never allowed to go alone."⁴³⁷ Wakefield also performed woman's work: "I had not many idle moments. I made short gowns for squaws, made bread, fried meat and potatoes, brought water and went to the river three or four times a day to wash my baby's clothing."⁴³⁸ They often saw some of these chores as onerous but could not help observing that the Dakota women had many labor saving

⁴³⁵ Wakefield, 100-101.

⁴³⁶ Jennifer Davis McDaid, "Living on a Frontier Part'—Virginia Women Among the Indians, 1622-1794" *Virginia Calvacade* 42 3 (Winter 1993): 109.

⁴³⁷ Tarble, 34.

ways of doing things that the captives learned to utilize. For example, Carrigan described how a Dakota woman washed her:

My dress was washed only once while I was a prisoner. The old squaw took me down to the creek and made me sit down in the water clear up to my neck. I screamed, for I thought she was going to drown me. She held me with one hand and with the other hand she fished out a bar of soap from her waist and went rubbing it over my dress, for I had been soaking in the water quite a while. She rubbed and washed all over me a while and then she told me to 'pockagee.' I had to dry my dress on my back, for it was the only one I had. I expect her washing answered two purposes—she washed me as well as the dress, for an Indian always likes to save work.⁴³⁹

Urania White described how Dakota women washed themselves:

This was the first washing that had been done since my stay with them. The squaws' mode of washing their wardrobes was to walk into water two or three feet deep, then quickly lower and raise themselves, and at the same time rub with their hands. Their wet clothing was allowed to remain on them to dry.⁴⁴⁰

While this manner of washing seemed odd, it was much easier than white methods of boiling water, scrubbing with a washboard, line drying and ironing.

Indian Women as Protectors

While food and clothing were important concerns for the captives, personal safety was their greatest worry and the one area where Dakota women provided the most aid. As Indian hopes for the war faded and the warriors' frustration grew, captive women and children were regularly threatened throughout captivity. During this time, Indian women protected white women and children by hiding them from male aggressors. Helen Tarble had been in the Indian camp only a short time when four Indian men began disputing over her. Little Crow decided to settle the matter by having her killed instead of giving

⁴³⁸ Wakefield, 103.

⁴³⁹ Carrigan 15-16.

⁴⁴⁰ White, 416.

her to one of the Indians as his wife. She appealed to an Indian women for help but was initially refused:

I appealed to the squaw as a woman and a mother to help me and my children to escape, but she said "no," and that she would do nothing to help me. When night came, however and I was just about to put my children to bed, the squaw ordered me to take them and come with her to a corn-field. It began to rain hard and I objected to taking the children out, but she was very imperative and I had to obey her. When we got to the about the middle of the corn-field she said I could remain there, and that the Indians were coming to kill me and the children.⁴⁴¹

This Dakota woman not only saved Tarble's life but also hid her in a place from which she escaped with her two children. Tarble's appeal as a woman and mother was very powerful as she drew on mutual gender roles for protection. Mary Schwandt also related how closely Maggie guarded her after her adoption:

Late one night, when we were all asleep, Maggie in one corner of the tent, her mother in another, and I in another, some drunken young hoodlums came in. Maggie sprang up as swiftly as a tigress defending her young, and almost as fierce and ordered them out. A hot quarrel resulted. They seemed determined to take me away or kill me, but Maggie was just as determined to protect me.

Snana had her own reasons for protecting Mary. According to Snana's own narrative, she lost her oldest daughter eight days before the war began. Snana asked for a captive to adopt to take that child's place, which was commonly practiced among the Indians to replace lost family and tribal members. Her uncle located Mary and Snana's mother bought her with a pony. Snana said of Mary:

When she brought this girl, whose name was Mary Schwandt, she was much larger than the one I had lost, who was only seven years old; but my heart was so sad that I was willing to take any girl at that time. The reason why I wished to keep this girl was to have her in place of the one I lost. So I loved her and pitied her, and she was dear to me just the same as my own daughter.⁴⁴²

⁴⁴¹ Tarble, 34.

⁴⁴² Snana, *Narration of a Friendly Sioux in Through Dakota Eyes: Narrative Accounts of the Minnesota Indian War of 1862*, edited by Gary Clayton Anderson and Alan R. Woolworth (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1988): 143.

Snana wanted a captive child to replace her daughter and help her heart heal. As a result she cared for Mary and defended her as she would her own children, “and I thought to myself that if they would kill my girl they must kill me first. Though I had two of my own children at that time with me, I thought of this girl just as much as of the others”.⁴⁴³ Snana clearly revealed two things in this statement. First, she showed how Indian women viewed care of captive children and also how captive children fit into Indian families. Mary Schwandt became her daughter as a result of adoption. As a captive Schwandt fulfilled a role within the tribe replacing Snana’s lost daughter. In the fall of 1894, thirty-two years after the war, Schwandt and Snana were reunited. Snana said of that visit, “It was just as if I went to visit my own child.”⁴⁴⁴ In many ways, she did. Snana became a mother to Mary during her captivity and Mary never forgot her tender care. Snana’s care came at a pivotal point for Mary who would have continued to endure sexual assaults and probably would not have survived her captivity.

Chaska’s mother hid Sarah Wakefield and her children several times to keep them from being harmed:

Chaska’s mother came into their lodge, saying that a man was coming to kill me; and she caught up Nellie, my baby on her back and told me and my boy to hurry. She told an old man her story, and he said “Flee to the woods.” She gave me a bag of crackers and a cup, and we ran to the ravine . . . She hid me in the tall grass and under brush, and bidding me sit still, left me saying she would come in the morning.⁴⁴⁵

The Dakota woman’s kindness continued the next day as she cared for Wakefield who had been exposed all night in the storm:

But after several hours I saw the old woman coming, and I was overjoyed to see her... She took Nellie on her back and I tried to get up, but found I could not

⁴⁴³ Ibid., 143.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid., 258.

⁴⁴⁵ Wakefield, 72.

stand... But the old woman rubbed me and while doing so said the men had gone who were going to kill me, and I must try to walk to her tepee, and she would give me some dry clothes and some coffee.⁴⁴⁶

Dakota women were not afraid to protect captive women and children and acted within their role as caregivers to do so. Dakota women used their power to prevent violence against captive women and children.

Indian women's kind acts were not forgotten once the captives were released. In their narratives, Schwandt, Wakefield, Frazer, and DeCamp Sweet all openly acknowledged, thanked and hoped for the continued well being of those who helped them while in captivity. Mary Schwandt's acknowledgment of Maggie in her narrative was especially emotional and heartfelt:

I learn that she is somewhere in Nebraska but wherever you are, Maggie, I want you to know that the little captive German girl you so often befriended and shielded from harm loves you still for your kindness and care, and she prays God to bless you and reward you in this life and that to come.⁴⁴⁷

Even as a grown woman Schwandt referred to herself as a German girl recalling her role as Snana's adopted daughter. Urania Frazer also acknowledged the gratitude she felt towards her adoptive Indian parents: "...and although more than a third of a century has elapsed since that event, strange as it may appear to some, I cherish with kindest feelings the friendship of my Indian father and mother."⁴⁴⁸ While in captivity, these women realized that not all of the Indians were bad people and in fact many were willing to help the captives however they could. Despite the horrors of capture and captivity, many women realized and appreciated the sacrifices the Indians made. Captives had to

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid., 74.

⁴⁴⁷ Schwandt, 21.

⁴⁴⁸ White, 404.

overcome some of their own prejudices and stereotypes to recognize the humanity and morality of the Indians who saved them and their children.

Indian Women as Tormentors

All Dakota women did not protect or assist captives. There are only a handful of instances of outright cruelty by Dakota women with most slights taking less obvious and more gender specific forms. Some Indian women refused to acknowledge or help women they had known before the war. This was the case for Jannette DeCamp when Hazatome refused to give her promised clothing or even acknowledge her presence. Sweet was devastated by Hazatome's denials of clothing and personal acknowledgment. Hazatome treated Sweet as if she did not exist violating whatever relationship the two women had before the war. Pauline Turner Strong noted that betrayal by Indian women was a dual violation, "The opposition between a fearful female captive and her insolent and abusive 'mistress' portrays captivity as a double violation (in both gender and ethnicity of colonial patterns of domination."⁴⁴⁹ It hurt Sweet deeply because she needed the clothing to protect herself and children and because this was a woman she had been kind to before the war. Their relationship did not survive during captivity.

Minnie Carrigan noted when a Dakota friend of her mother's also ignored her in camp: "While a prisoner I met her quite often and spoke to her, but she never answered me and acted as if she had never seen me."⁴⁵⁰ This hurt Carrigan who expected friendly prewar relations to continue in camp, especially at a time when she desperately needed a familiar face and a friend. Captive women could not understand why Dakota women

⁴⁴⁹ Pauline Turner Strong, "Captivity in White and Red: Convergent Practices and Colonial Representation on the British-American Frontier 1606-1736" in *Crossing Cultures: Essays in the Displacement of Western Civilization*, Daniel Segal, Editor (Phoenix: University of Arizona Press, 1992): 39.

⁴⁵⁰ Carrigan, 17.

were slighting them. Dakota women may not have known themselves. Perhaps it was the only way they could deal with the destruction and displacement wrought by war. Captive women and children signified to them that their lives were radically changed as well. No matter who won the war, Dakota women could never go back to their prewar lives. The woman Carrigan referred to may have felt guilty because warriors killed Carrigan's mother and took the child captive. Dakota women had just as difficult a time trying to bridge the losses felt by the captives and when they could not, ignoring the women seemed to be the only solution.

Assistance by Indian women was muddied further by mixed blood captives whose allegiances vacillated between their Indian relatives, white culture they felt aligned with and other mixed bloods. Nancy McClure, a mixed blood captive, explained her reaction to the white captives brought to camp. "Towards midnight the Indians brought in a lot of captive white women and children, who cried and prayed the rest of the night. How I felt for them, but of course I could not help them."⁴⁵¹ She worried that if she helped white women and children, she would be seen as sympathetic towards them thus endangering her own safety. McClure did have troubles of her own in captivity, especially when an Indian woman began abusing mixed blood captives:

An Indian woman near me began abusing us. She said: 'When we talk of killing these half-breeds they drop their heads and sneak around like a bird-dog.' Her taunting speech stung me to the heart, and I flew at that woman and routed her so completely that she bore the marks for some time, and I am sure she remembered the lesson a great deal longer!⁴⁵²

McClure was not afraid to fight back after being abused by an Indian woman. As a mixed blood captive, she may have felt safe enough with the Dakota to defend herself.

⁴⁵¹ McClure, 452.

⁴⁵² Ibid., 455.

Other captives did not fight back when they were being abused or ridiculed because of the uncertainty of their situations but also because slights from Dakota women pushed their already frail emotional state over the edge.

Cruelty to white women usually took gender specific forms including denial of food and clothing for captive women and children—areas where Dakota, not white women, exercised control. Sarah Wakefield noted in detail how Winona, Hapa's wife, destroyed her clothing and valuables:

She tried every way to make me unhappy when Chaska was absent, but was very good in his presence. I will here say that my trunk of clothing, which was very valuable, she appropriated to her own use, and would not give us anything to wear, and the old woman would go around and beg when my children needed a change of clothing. She would not give me a pin to fasten my sacque, and I was compelled to sew it together. She took my embroidered under-garments, dressed herself in them, and then laughed at me because I was so dirty and filthy. One day her boy had a collar (which I prized very highly,) in the dirt, playing with it. I asked him to give it to me. He did so, but she took it from me and tore it in pieces, and then threw it into my face. . . . She took my ear-rings from my ears and put tin ones in their place, and dressed herself in mine; cut up my silk dresses and made her boys coats to tumble around in the dirt with. All little articles, such as miniatures, etc., she would destroy before me and would laugh when she saw I felt sad. I would like to be her judge, if she is ever brought within my reach.⁴⁵³

This is quoted at length for a number of reasons. Winona deliberately destroyed Wakefield's clothes and sentimental items to hurt her and show that power between Dakota and white women had shifted. This must have been a hard blow for Wakefield who watched much needed items destroyed limiting her ability to properly care for herself and children. Wakefield revealed the depth of her attachment to her personal belongings, especially her trunk of clothes. This trunk and its contents were the only things that remained from her household and were her last ties to her former life.

⁴⁵³ Wakefield, 75-76.

Without them, the symbols that moored her to white culture and civilization were gone leaving her one step closer to uncivilized Indian ways.

Captive women also noted the role of Dakota women in war as they helped warriors with various war preparations and engaged in plunder. In “‘Warrior Women’: Sex Role Alternatives for Plains Indian Women,” Beatrice Medicine discussed the role of Plains Indian women in war. Unlike nineteenth century white culture, Plains culture allowed for more flexibility of gender roles including institutionalized masculine roles for women which gave them more power and prestige.⁴⁵⁴

Women who had achieved war honors played an important role in the winoxtca (the female equivalent of the male akicita or soldiers). It is noteworthy that while the female warrior role was apparently common among eastern Dakota (i.e., Mdewakanton, Sisseton, Wahpeton), it has not been reported for Western Dakota.⁴⁵⁵

Although captive narrators never noted that Dakota women acted in this manner, they may have. Captives reported differences in how Dakota women treated them and these differences may have emerged due to certain Dakota women’s roles as enforcers of proper female behavior for less powerful Dakota and white captive women alike.

Medicine also noted that Plains women chose to fight for a number of reasons: “Reasons for female engagement in warfare—defense, glory, and revenge—were not different from those that inspired men to fight.”⁴⁵⁶ Indian women and men both grew up in a culture which valued warfare and raiding as contributing to tribal well being and women were just as likely as men to support it.

⁴⁵⁴ Beatrice Medicine, “‘Warrior Women’: Sex Role Alternatives for Plains Indian Women,” in *The Hidden Half*

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 274.

⁴⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 275.

Although no captives mentioned that Dakota women engaged directly in war, they did note the Indian women's roles in plunder and providing support for the warriors. Jannette Sweet noted that Indian women participated in plunder, "The squaws made haste to leave with their ponies and wagons, if they were fortunate to have them, to be in at the plundering of the fort."⁴⁵⁷ Urania White also noted Dakota women's role as plunderers, "His four wives, all sisters, were busily engaged packing away plunder which had been taken from stores and the houses of settlers."⁴⁵⁸ Dakota women had direct roles in the war as looters after the whites were killed, captured or escaped. Indian women were also pleased when domestic animals were brought to camp to be used as food, "The squaws seemed at all times to be highly elated over the good success the Indians had in bringing into camp beef cattle; 'ta-ton-koes,' they called them."⁴⁵⁹ These animals were important for fresh meat and drying and storing for winter food stores.

Indian women also supported the warriors through a number of war related tasks. Before big battles, Dakota women helped warriors make bullets: "As soon as the tepees were set the squaws and Indians commenced running bullets. They had bar lead, bullet moulds, and a ladle to melt lead in."⁴⁶⁰ Dakota women participated in battle by providing food and ammunition for warriors and bringing back the dead and wounded Indians. Medicine noted that "Even when women did not participate in warfare directly, they played a very important role in supporting the military activity of men."⁴⁶¹ This was true for Dakota women in this war as well because they too had a stake in its outcome.

⁴⁵⁷ Sweet, 366.

⁴⁵⁸ White, 404.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid., 413.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid., 418.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid., 275.

Captive Interaction

Besides Dakota women, white captives could also act as tormentors during and after captivity as they harshly judged the behavior of their fellow captives. The eight women mentioned fellow captives an average of 8.6 times in their narratives, ranging from six times for Tarble, McClure, Schwandt and White, seven times for Carrigan, eight for Sweet, thirteen for Renville, and seventeen for Wakefield. Women mentioned their fellow captives for a number of reasons ranging from passing references to detailed stories of a captive's experience to indictments of the captive's behavior during and after captivity. Whatever the reason, the presence of other white women was important and this is revealed clearly in their narratives.

Because white settlement was concentrated in certain areas on the reservation, some of these women knew each other, at least by sight, before captivity. This was especially true of the women who lived at or near the agencies and the German-speaking women who lived in an enclave near Beaver Creek. Nancy McClure and her husband lived two miles from the Redwood Agency and she enjoyed the company of other families:

There were a good many settlers in the country, some few French families among them, and the most of them were young married people of pleasant dispositions. We used frequently to meet at one another's houses in social gatherings, dancing parties and the like, and the time passed very pleasantly. I was twenty-five years of age then, had but one child and could go about when I wanted to, and I went frequently to these gatherings and came to know a good many people.⁴⁶²

⁴⁶² McClure, 448.

Captive	Page Number	Captives Cross Referenced
Carrigan	13	Mrs. Inefeld & baby, Mary Schwandt, Augusta Lenz, Mrs. Urban & four children
	14	Henrietta Mannweiler, Ludwig Kitzman
	15	August Gluth
	18	Large list of captive women and children prior to entering Camp Release
	19	Camp Release-in a tent with Sarah Wakefield, Urania White, Mrs. Adams, Mary Schwandt, Ben Juni and others
	20	Mrs. Adams
	22	Mrs. Lammers
Tarble	30	Initial capture with Mrs. David Carrothers & baby, Mrs. Earle & two daughters, Urania White & two children, her own children Althea and Thomas
	31	Carrothers, Julia Earle, Julia White
	32	Mrs. Earle, Urania White
	33	Urania White
	34	Urania White moved to another home
	McClure	452
465		Mrs. Carrothers, Urania White & daughter, Miss Williams
457		Mrs. Huggins
Sweet	361	Mattie Williams, Mary Anderson, Mary Schwandt
	364	Mary S. and Mattie taken away, Mary Anderson traveled with Sweet
	365	Mattie, Mary Anderson died
	366	Unnamed captive shot
	369	Mrs. Hunter, Mrs. A. Robertson
	371	Lucy
	374	Mrs. Robideaux & five children
Schwandt	15	Sweet
	16	Mary Anderson died
	18	Nancy McClure
	20	Mrs. Sweet
	22	Captive woman shot
	23	Sarah Wakefield and Mrs. Adams
White	404	Helen Tarble, Mrs. Earle & daughter, Her own son and daughter
	409	Remark on mixed blood captives
	410	Mrs. Earle and her daughter
	411	Reunited with her daughter Julia
	421	Captives at Camp Release
	422	Tarble and Mrs. Earle
Renville	9	Sarah Wakefield
	15	Mrs. Huggins, Miss Laframbois

	18	Sweet & her children
	21	Sweet & children again
	23	Mrs. Newman & three children
	24-25	Sweet & children again
	28	Brown family
	32	Mrs. Lucy T
	33	Mrs. Newman and Sweet
	34	Sweet
	36	Helen Tarble
	37	Urania White, Mrs. Adams
Wakefield	57	Mary Butler Renville
	70-71	Unnamed German captive, two week old infant
	83	Roaming captives
	85	General captives
	87	General captives
	94	Sweet & children turned out in the elements
	96-96	Sweet
	99	Ms. E B
	102	Sweet
	105	All captives but Wakefield and another moved to friendly camp
	107	Mary Butler Renville
	108	Ms. E. B
	113	Mrs. A
	115	Problems with other captives
	117	Mentions two captives were raped that she know of, Ms. E. B
	118-121	Mrs. H on the way to St. Peter
	124	Mrs. Earle

She enjoyed visiting her neighbors and this was probably true for many of the other captives as well.

During the initial attacks, many of these women were taken captive together as part of larger groups trying to escape. Helen Tarble was taken captive with:

Mrs. David Carrothers and her baby; Mrs. Earle and her two daughters, aged 13 and 7; Mrs. N. D. White and her baby daughter, Julia, and myself and my two children, a little daughter, Althea, aged 4, and a little son, Thomas W., of 2 years were put into two wagons by our captors and our journey into captivity began.⁴⁶³

Urania White confirmed this in her own narrative, "Mrs. James Carrothers [Helen Tarble], Mrs. J. W. Earle and a little daughter, myself and babe, were taken to Little Crow's."⁴⁶⁴ The movements of other captives were important to women beginning with mutual descriptions of capture.

Women also noted the whereabouts of other captives during the initial parts of their captivities. Wacouta hid Jannette Sweet after she was taken captive. Later in the evening, three other girls were brought to Wacouta's house as well, "They unfastened the door, and, entering, I was surprised to see both Miss Williams and Mary Anderson with two Indians." They were joined moments later by Mary Schwandt who was brought in by Godfrey and another group of Indians.⁴⁶⁵ Mary Schwandt echoed this in her narrative as well, "Here I found Mrs. De Camp (now Mrs. Sweet), whose story was published in the Pioneer Press of July 15."⁴⁶⁶ Sweet and Schwandt carefully noted when they met each other early in their captivity even though they did not remain together throughout. Helen Tarble and Urania White spent their first night of captivity together at Little Crow's house. Here they were told to make Indian clothing and Tarble had to persuade

⁴⁶³ Tarble., 30.

⁴⁶⁴ White, 404.

⁴⁶⁵ Sweet, 361-362.

White to put it on, “Mrs. White sewed much faster than I could and got her costume done first, but was very loth to put it on; but I persuaded her that we had better do as the Indians wished us, for we had everything to lose and nothing to gain by opposing or displeasing them.”⁴⁶⁷ Urania White also noted this shared moment.⁴⁶⁸ These two women found strength and comfort in each other during the initial stages of captivity—especially when they were forced to relinquish white clothing for Indian and compromise their white female identities.

After initial captivity, women settled into life in the different Indian camps. Carrigan, Schwandt, White, and Wakefield remained in the hostile Indian camps until the end of their captivities. Tarble escaped her captivity after a two days and Sweet escaped with the help of friendly Indians about four weeks into her captivity. Mary Renville lived with the friendly Indians during her whole captivity. Even though the camps were large, the captives did visit back and forth providing sympathetic, non-Indian company during captivity. Urania White noted the number of captives in the camps: “one hundred and seven white prisoners and about the same number of half-breeds who called themselves prisoners (they may have been prisoners in one sense of the word).”⁴⁶⁹ White revealed her perceptions of mixed blood captives. She seemed to feel that they were not true captives like herself and the other white women because they were part Indian.

Wakefield related an early meeting she had with Sweet:

She was very unhappy, and begged me to ask her people to give her a squaw dress, as I could speak Dakota. She was very filthy, and so were her children. She came in one morning and said that she was nearly starved, and I gave her all I had left from my breakfast. She sat a long time talking about our situation. She

⁴⁶⁶ Schwandt, 15-16.

⁴⁶⁷ Tarble, 33-34.

⁴⁶⁸ White, 405.

⁴⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 409.

remarked several times during our conversation, that she would be thankful if she was as comfortable as I was. I told her she took a wrong course with the Indians; that she cried and fretted all the while, making them feel cross towards her; that they gave her the best they had, and she must try and be patient; that her life would be in danger if she kept on complaining and threatening them; it done no good, only enraged them towards her.⁴⁷⁰

Wakefield tried to provide comfort as a fellow sister in suffering but Sweet was inconsolable. According to Wakefield, Sweet was determined to agitate the Indians when she should have taken a more conciliatory route. Sweet just did not have the good sense to take Wakefield's sound advice. Mary Renville also commiserated with another captive woman:

We were always glad to see any of the captives. When she came in she threw her arms about our neck and wept bitterly. She was about twenty years of age. Though we never saw a murder committed, yet they were brought before us so vividly by the captives it seemed as if we were living in the scenes.⁴⁷¹

Renville welcomed the company of other captive women but the meetings were bittersweet. White captives turned to each other for comfort and shared their horror stories, which provided relief for emotions stifled and hidden from Dakota captors.

While the visits sometimes provided comfort, they also sparked problems among the captives. Schwandt in particular remarked on the behavior of Wakefield and a Mrs. Adams:

I remember Mrs. Dr. Wakefield and Mrs. Adams. They were all painted and decorated and dressed in full Indian costume, and seemed proud of it. They were usually in good spirits, laughing and joking, and appeared to enjoy their new life. The rest of us disliked their conduct, and would have but little to do with them. Mrs. Adams was a handsome young woman, talented and educated, but she told me she saw her husband murdered, and that the Indian she was living with had dashed out her baby's brains before here eyes. And yet she seemed perfectly happy and contented with him!⁴⁷²

⁴⁷⁰ Wakefield, 96-97.

⁴⁷¹ Renville, 37.

⁴⁷² Schwandt, 23. I do not know the first name of Mrs. Adams. She was referred to only this way in the narratives.

Carrigan also related the story of Mrs. Adams:

Her husband was wounded and got away, but she supposed he was killed. Then they took her baby from her arms and dashed its brains out on the wagon wheel. She was taken prisoner. She laughed while telling her story and said she could not cry for her child. I regarded her as a brute and always hated her after that.⁴⁷³

A child at the time, Carrigan failed to realize that Mrs. Adams was deranged from trauma and acted inappropriately as a result.

Other captives singled out Adams and Wakefield for ridicule because their behavior in captivity was deemed inappropriate by white standards. Wakefield's and Adam's pride in their Dakota attire and apparent enjoyment of Indian life made them pariahs to the other captives because it was assumed that they had taken Indian husbands as well. By appearing to adopt new roles as wives of Dakota men, Wakefield and Adams violated taboos about interracial sex thus repudiating their spouses and white notions of womanhood. Also, they were treated better than the other captives were because they acted in Indian ways and this galled those who faced deprivation.

Once the captives were surrendered at Camp Release, they lived together in tents before being moved to safer locations. Urania White said of Camp Release, "I believe every adult captive has a warm place in her memory for this spot of prairie land, where so many destinies hung by a thread, with the balance ready to go for or against us."⁴⁷⁴ She spoke for all the captives about the bittersweet nature of that place as they shared their own experiences and learned about the fates of family and friends. Minnie Buce Carrigan and her younger sister Amelia were placed in a tent with several other women including Sarah Wakefield, Urania White, Mrs. Adams and Mary Schwandt. They stayed

⁴⁷³ Carrigan, 20.

⁴⁷⁴ White, 421.

there between two and three weeks and Carrigan stated of her time there, "While we stayed at Camp Release I heard some of the saddest stories I have ever heard. These stories were told in English and translated to me by Mary Schwandt."⁴⁷⁵ Nancy McClure perhaps best summed up the dislocation and devastation learned about at Camp Release:

One day her little girl, three years of age, a bright child, came to our tent when my husband and I were eating dinner, and we gave her a seat with us. The little thing said: 'This is not like the dinner mamma made the day papa was killed. The Indians killed my papa on his very birthday. We were going to have a good dinner. Mamma made a cake and everything nice, and papa came home with a load of hay, and the Indians shot him. But my papa isn't dead for sure. He is in heaven with God. You know, Mrs. Faribault, God is everywhere.' We could not eat another bite after that.⁴⁷⁶

This simple statement by a small girl was a damning accusation against the Dakota and losses they caused. Families were fractured as their homes and livelihoods were destroyed leaving orphaned children and burnt buildings in place of thriving white settlement. McClure lost her appetite in the wake of this innocent but chilling statement.

Most women referred to their fellow captives to note their presence, movements, and lives among the Dakota. Sarah Wakefield, on the other hand, had grievances against the behavior of her captive sisters. She was especially upset with Jannette Sweet, who escaped and told tales about Wakefield before she was rescued and could answer the accusations Sweet made against her:

Poor woman, I feel very much for her, although she misrepresented many things. But I know she was about crazy while in camp; and then, the death of her husband must have affected her very much. I well remember her saying to me, 'Mrs. Wakefield, your husband is really dead. I heard an Indian say he has seen his body.' At that time I was in hopes he was alive, and her words seemed to paralyze me. When I could speak, I made this remark, 'If that is so, I might as well pass the remainder of my days here as any place. He was my all. I care not to live: life will be a burden to me.' This had been told in a very different way. . . . I tried every way to encourage the lady, but she was determined to look at the

⁴⁷⁵ Carrigan, 20.

⁴⁷⁶ McClure, 547.

worst, and would not be comforted. But her *situation* [advanced pregnancy] at the time had much to do with her feelings, so I will not blame her.⁴⁷⁷

Wakefield had become increasingly frustrated with Sweet and lost patience with her when she painted an unfavorable portrait of Wakefield. Wakefield drew upon her own strength to forgive Sweet but it did not ring true. Wakefield used her narrative to publicly castigate Sweet for turning public sentiment against her.

Towards the end of her narrative, Wakefield criticized the captives as a whole:

There are many things I would like to speak about in this narrative, but I would be obliged to mention particular names, and I will forbear; but I will say this, that many persons told entirely different stories respecting their treatment, after Sibley came, than they did before. One lady very often visited me, and she often complained of being uncomfortable from eating so heartily, but said the squaws forced her to eat, as that is their way of showing their kindness towards a person. Now many times I have listened to her telling the soldiers that she was nearly starved by the squaws, going days without food of any kind. It shocked me, and I reprimanded her severely for telling such untruths; but she was only one of a class of females that were endeavoring to excite the sympathies of the soldiers.⁴⁷⁸

She accused other captives of lying about their treatment during captivity to excite sympathy and deny the humane care provided by the Indians. Wakefield was outraged that women would lie and contribute to a climate of hatred that needed little fuel.

Captive women's identities and roles were challenged and reshaped through close daily contact with Dakota women. White captives saw a new concept of womanhood supported by a different cultural ideology, which caused a shift in their own perceptions and roles as well. This was especially true for Minnie Carrigan and Mary Schwandt who gained Indian mothers during captivity and Sarah Wakefield who allegedly gained an Indian spouse, even if she emphasized their relationship as one of protector and victim. Mary Renville and Sarah Wakefield also used their captivity experiences to become

⁴⁷⁷ Wakefield, 97.

⁴⁷⁸ Wakefield, 124.

cultural critics. By living closely with the Dakota during captivity, these women saw how white abuse and government mismanagement drove the Indians to war. Both women fearlessly supported the Dakota cause due to their strong moral and religious convictions but also because of their experiences with Dakota men and women in captivity. Dakota gender ideology supported these new roles for captives and continued to influence the women as they struggled to find peace upon rejoining white society. Changes in women's roles begun through capture and interaction with Dakota men were solidified through close interaction with Dakota women. As part of the female network, captive women moved beyond victimhood as servants and adopted kin to Dakota women.

Conclusions

Gender and Ethnicity in Captivity

Each captive narrated the events of her captivity using her own cultural constructs to define her experience. Although each captive had relationships with individual Dakota before the war, captivity pushed cultural encounter to its limits. During initial attacks and early captivity, white women saw Dakota men as they had never seen them before. Dakota men were labeled in white cultural terms as heathens, barbarians and devils because their actions were unjustifiable and beyond comprehension. Throughout captivity, women continued to feel threatened by Dakota men as they warred on whites. But captive women also realized that not all Indians were the same with certain Dakota men singled out for special mention because they protected or helped captives escape. When Dakota men acted in this way, they were perceived as acting nobly, just as white men would to female captives. Dakota men who acted as protectors were usually older, thus eliminating threats presented by younger, virile warriors, or had become Christians whose actions were influenced by God and not Indian character. To the captives, a Dakota man could not protect them unless he was influenced in some way by white society. It was inconceivable that he would disagree about war and act on his own beliefs to protect white women and children. While captive women appreciated the aid and protection offered by Dakota men, their views of Indians as subhuman changed very little. Atrocities witnessed in the early days of war secured this image in captive minds.

Captive interaction with Dakota women was also described in gendered terms. Once captives were in Indian camps, they lived and interacted primarily with Dakota women. Before the war, both groups of women shared certain gender specific tasks. In

captivity white women lost control of these things and therefore paid careful attention to how Dakota women cared for captive children, prepared food, maintained a home and cared for their persons. Over time captives realized that Dakota ways of doing things, while seemingly unclean, did save time and labor—not such bad things for women living in rural and sometimes primitive conditions. White women also noted the role of Dakota women as protectors. Dakota women hid white women and children innumerable times during many of the women's captivities thus saving them from violence from Indian men. This role as protector was an extension of Dakota motherhood that extended to captives as well. But Dakota women could be cruel in gender specific ways as well by denying captives food, clothing, and shelter—all duties for both groups of women. Captives felt this a dual violation of gender and ethnicity as they depended on Dakota women for necessities.

The presence of a mixed blood population drew attention to racial issues during captivity. Mixed blood captives had a position as tenuous as that of whites because they did not fit neatly into either society. Dakota considered them kin but were angered when mixed bloods fought with whites during the war. Whites never really trusted mixed bloods because of their Indian heritage but also because their identities and allegiances seemed to shift depending on their needs. Captive Nancy McClure epitomized this struggle in her narrative as she tried to find her own identity somewhere between two very different cultures.

Captive women framed their narratives with careful observations about Dakota life and differences they perceived between the two cultures in numerous areas, especially duties shared by both groups of women. White captives framed their captivity

experience in terms of moving away from and returning to civilization. This movement can be traced through captive descriptions of the destruction of white institutions such as agency buildings and Williamson's mission and church but also through more intimate losses of family members, their homes, clothing and personal items. Each signifier the captive lost drove her further from white civilization and further into chaos. Even when captive women were sympathetic to the difficult situation of their captors, Dakotas were still Indians with all the cultural baggage that entailed.

Through careful explorations of eight captive-captor relationships, new roles for female captives have emerged. Traditional historiographic classifications of captive women characterized them as frail flowers and victims; vanquishers and amazons; mothers, daughters and sisters; transculturated women; and survivors. These images of captive women are defined based on their roles in white culture and society. But captive women had other roles during captivity that were instead defined by the Dakota culture in which they were held captive. As a result, four new roles for captive women emerged during this study: slave or servant; wife and mother; adopted kin; and cultural critic. Each of these roles reflected the captives role in the tribal setting allowing each captive to move through multiple roles, based in both white and Indian culture, during the course of their captivities.

The addition of these roles is important for the advancement of captivity narrative historiography. While the work done by Derounian-Stodola, Levernier and Namias is vitally important to interpreting women's narratives, it is important to move beyond examination of captives only in white cultural. By expanding to include captor-defined roles, a more thorough picture of captive women's lives emerges.

Through the course of captivity, two women moved beyond cultural constructs to have sympathetic relationships with their captors. Sarah Wakefield had a strong bond with one of her captors, Chaska, and it cost them both dearly. Throughout captivity, he protected her and she felt it her moral duty to try and protect him once he surrendered. When she failed to do this and he was hung, she wrote her narrative out of outrage over the deliberate mishandling of his case and execution. She and her children survived because of him; he died because of her—a sad example of the injustice war wrought for both peoples.

Snana adopted Mary Schwandt after she endured repeated rapes in her early captivity. This adoption and Snana's subsequent protection created a lasting bond between the two women that was not forgotten thirty two years later when they met again. Mary Schwandt was forever changed by her experience but Snana's careful attention kept her safe and Schwandt never forgot that kindness. Perhaps Mary Schwandt summed up the captivity experience for all the captives when she said, "Life is made up of shadow and shine. I sometimes think I have had more than my share of sorrow and suffering, but I bear in mind that I have seen much of the agreeable side of life, too." That is the legacy for Minnie Buce Carrigan, Helen Mar Tarble, Nancy McClure, Jannette DeCamp Sweet, Urania Frazer White, Mary Butler Renville and Sarah Wakefield as well—bitter losses tempered with the sweetness of renewed life.

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