

# **Colonial American Travel Narratives Study Guide**

## **Colonial American Travel Narratives by Various**

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## Plot Summary

"Colonial American Travel Narratives" is a collection of four pieces of writing by colonists living in America between 1675 and 1744. The narratives give a cross section of perspectives from people of different backgrounds writing at different points in America's colonial history. They also provide insight into the ways in which colonial society changed over this time period as settlement, trade and religious ideas expanded.

In an introduction entitled "Mapping American Life," editor Wendy Martin provides historical context for the four narratives, relating the changes that took place as the colonies moved from a largely rural society to one with increasingly larger commercial centers and towns. She also charts the changing nature of travel as an affluent class of colonials emerged.

The first narrative in the collection is that of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson who was taken captive in 1675 by a band of Native Americans who raided the village of Lancaster in Massachusetts. Rowlandson traveled through the wilderness for eleven weeks, led by her captives. She witnessed their daily life. Finally, Rowlandson was ransomed by her husband and returned to her family. Her narrative is presented as an ordeal of faith, and she describes her trials in deeply religious terms of God's will.

The next narrative in the collection is by Sarah Kemble Knight, a Boston business woman in the early 1700s. Knight travels from her home in Boston to New Haven, Connecticut, where she helps a relative with some business matters, then proceeds on to New York where she stays for a time before returning to Boston. Knight's account of her travels are amusing and entertaining and provide the perspective of an intelligent and savvy woman traveling through largely rural America. Knight has a quick wit and describes the small obstacles faced by a woman traveling alone with humorous detail.

The third narrative is called a "Secret History of the Line," by William Byrd II, a wealthy Virginian who is appointed to lead a commission of surveyors to map the border between Virginia and North Carolina in 1729. Byrd gives an earthy account of the hard-drinking and sometimes belligerent behavior of the band of men who set out with him. Written for private circulation, the "Secret History" includes personal details that Byrd left out of his official report.

The final narrative in the book is that of Dr. Alexander Hamilton, a physician who was born and educated in Scotland and England. He moves to Annapolis Maryland to practice. Traveling purely for leisure, Hamilton wanders through the northern colonies making observation about the gentlemen and ladies that he encounters with several pithy and witty remarks about the differing people and customs in the north country.

# Introduction

## Introduction Summary and Analysis

In an extended introduction, the editor Wendy Martin places the travel narratives included in the volume into a larger perspective of Colonial America. The first travel narrative to be presented is that of Mary Rowlandson, a woman taken captive by Native Americans for 11 weeks in 1676. Following that is an account by Sarah Kemble Knight, a businesswoman who traveled from Boston to New York City and back in 1704. The third narrative is by William Byrd II and describes the surveying of the boundary between Virginia and North Carolina in 1728. The fourth narrative is by Dr. Alexander Hamilton of Maryland, who spent four months on a recreational journey through the Northeast in 1744.

These four narratives provide a wide scope of perspectives. Rowlandson's story is primarily recounted in terms of religious redemption and protection. Knight is a savvy merchant traveling on business. Byrd is an aristocratic Virginian leading a group of men through uncharted wilderness. Hamilton is a privileged gentleman traveling for leisure. The changing nature of the American colonies is also reflected over time, Martin explains. When Rowlandson was writing, colonists were still very much outsiders in the New World, still warring with the Native Americans they were destined to displace. By the time of Dr. Hamilton's travels in 1744, the colonies were solidly established to the point that travel could be undertaken for leisure.

After providing a brief description of each author and their narrative in the introduction, the editor includes a list of suggested further reading and a note on the texts used in the collection.



# Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson, Preface and Removes 1-3

## Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson, Preface and Removes 1-3 Summary and Analysis

The first narrative presented is that of Mary Rowlandson, and is entitled, in full, "A True History of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson, A minister's wife in New-England." The narrative is prefaced with a historical note explaining how on February 10, 1676, the Massachusetts village of Lancaster was attacked by Native Americans in a battle over and known as King Philip's War which would continue until the colonists had virtually driven the Natives out of New England. Rowlandson was born in England around 1636. She has three children, Joseph, Mary and Sarah who are captured along with her. Mary's husband, John, was away in Boston to ask for more protection. He returned to find most of the houses burned and his wife and three children abducted. Rowlandson's narrative differs from the others presented in the collection in its religious perspective that presents her ordeal as a test of religious faith and proof of the mercy of God.

Rowlandson opens her narrative with a preface that explains how the English forces had pushed the Native Americans back but had then left Lancaster without adequate protection. The result of this decision to draw troops back was inevitable, she suggests. Rowlandson also offers her reasons for publishing her story. It is not for her own benefit, she explains, but for the benefit of others that she tells her story, so they might better understand God's mercy.

Following the preface, Rowlandson describes the attack on Lancaster on February 10, 1675, beginning around sunrise. Alarmed by the sounds of gunfire, she looks out and sees that neighboring houses and barns have been set on fire. The settlers fight back as best they can, but soon 37 of them are trapped inside Rowlandson's house, which the Natives try to set on fire. Of the 37, 12 are killed, she explains, while all but one of the rest of them are taken captive. One person escapes. Rowlandson describes the gruesome deaths of some of her fellow settlers, who are stripped of their clothes after being struck down.

Rowlandson is taken captive along with her children. She explains that before the attack she had often thought and said that if attacked by the Indians she would rather be killed than captured, but at that moment, she writes, she wanted more than anything to live.

Rowlandson divides her narrative according to the several times her captors moved from place to place. She calls each movement a "remove." In the first remove, Rowlandson is taken about a mile from Lancaster to a nearby hill where the Indians camp and feast on some of the spoils of their raid. She has her youngest daughter with her, who is wounded, but does not know the fate of her two other children. She wonders



about her husband and is told by her captors that when he comes back to Lancaster he will be killed.

The second remove begins the following morning when Rowlandson leaves sight of the town and is taken into the "vast and desolate Wilderness" (p. 13). She walks, while her wounded child, moaning in pain, is carried on a horse. She tries to carry her child herself, but she is also wounded and soon falls. She is put on a horse with the girl. When it starts to snow, the party stops and she and her feverish child spend the night outside sitting near a small fire. She expects that her child will not live through the night, but in the morning they are both still alive, she writes.

The third remove begins the following morning. They travel for several days with little food until they come to an "Indian town" called Wenimesset. Here Rowlandson meets with a man named Robert Pepper who had been living among the Natives and had heard of her capture. He gives her some advice for treating her wound. Sarah, her wounded daughter, dies from her wounds and Rowlandson is distraught, particularly when the Indians take her daughter's body from her to bury it. She learns that her other daughter, Mary, a girl of about ten years, is also in Wenimesset, but she is only allowed to see her briefly.

Rowlandson is extremely upset, but says she finds comfort in her religious faith, believing that her trials are the will of God. When some Indians return a raid on the town of Medfield, one of them gives her a Bible taken in the raid. She learns there are nine other captives in Wenimesset, eight children and one other woman, whom she visits. The woman, whose last name is Joslin, is pregnant and says she intends to run away. Rowlandson convinces her not to run, but points to a passage in her Bible that says to wait on the Lord.



# Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson, 4-20

## Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson, 4-20 Summary and Analysis

Rowlandson is separated from the other captives, including her daughter Mary, whom she will not see again until they have both been rescued. She writes that she later learns the fate of Mrs. Joslin, who continued to plead to be let free after she had given birth to her child. In response to her constant pleading, the Indians stripped her naked and formed a circle around her, chanting and singing before killing her and her child with blows to the head. They did this in front of the other children as a warning against trying to escape.

The fifth remove brought the party to a river, which they crossed by rafts. Rowlandson notes that she was fortunate in not getting the slightest bit wet while crossing. The occasion for the move, she surmises, is that there are English troops on the way toward the party in pursuit. While the Indians are able to cross the river, the English troops stopped there and did not try to cross. Rowlandson presents this as God's will in preserving the "heathens" while not showing the English a way they, too, might cross the river after them. Given Rowlandson's earlier remarks about how the town of Lancaster was left unprotected by the English troops and following so closely after her description of crossing the river herself without even getting her foot wet, this passage sounds like a sharp criticism of the English troops even though Rowlandson appears to hold them blameless.

Rowlandson is given very little food at first, and finds most of the food she is offered to be disgusting. After a few weeks, however, she finds she is not only willing to eat the "filthy trash" she is offered (p. 19) but enjoys it as if it was the finest food. She manages to obtain extra food and other things by knitting stockings for her master and mistress, the Indians who "own" her, and making shirts and other items.

In the sixth remove, they come to the edge of a swamp and halt for the night. In the seventh remove, they climb a high hill and then move through some ruined croplands where Rowlandson scavenges a few ears of corn, one of which is quickly stolen from her.

In the eighth remove, the party comes to the Connecticut River where King Philip, the leader of a group of tribes at war with the settlers, is encamped. While waiting to cross, Rowlandson is surprised to meet with her son, John. They console one another while reading from the Bible.

Once across the river, Rowlandson finds herself in a large encampment. She is taken to meet King Philip, who asks her to make a shirt for her son. Her skills at making clothing



is in demand and her master allows her to keep much of the payment she receives. She is allowed to see her son John. She expresses her hope that her master will follow through with his stated intention of taking her to Albany and trading her for gunpowder.

Rowlandson crosses the river in the ninth remove. She continues to make clothing and trades two shirts for a knife, which she gives to her master, pleased that she has something he will find useful. He allows her to travel to see her son, who is about a mile away, and when she gets lost before returning, he shows her the way himself.

Rowlandson travels along the river with her master and a small group of Indians in the tenth and eleventh removes. During the twelfth remove, she asks her master if he intends to sell her back to her husband and he answers that he does. This brightens her spirit and gives her strength to continue, even though she has been given a heavy pack to carry. That night her master puts her out of his wigwam, saying there is no room. She has trouble finding another place to sleep, but finally is let into another wigwam.

Rowlandson is saddened at the thirteenth remove when they do not move toward Boston, but further down the river, where they camp for about two weeks. She meets with some more recent English captives and has a close call with death when she is accused of plotting to run away with one of them. She assures her master she will not run away and is gradually allowed more freedom. She meets again with her son, briefly, and learns he has been sold to a new master. She continues to make stockings and other items. She is careful to keep her Bible out of sight of her mistress, who is angry when she sees it.

In the fourteenth remove, they begin to move toward Boston and the other towns near the bay. During the journey Rowlandson had only small crumbs from a piece of cake that had been given to her several weeks before and which she had kept in her pocket until it was dried and moldy. They continue to move toward Boston in the fifteenth remove.

At the sixteenth remove, they wade across the Baquaug River and Rowlandson is upset to be the source of humor for the Indians who laugh as they watch her struggle across. Her spirits brighten, however, when she is told she must go to Wachuset, where her master is living, as negotiations are underway to pay for her release. A party of Indians dressed in English clothes comes to escort her. The seventeenth remove is easier for her, she writes, because of the good news. In the eighteenth remove they come to an Indian town where some captive English children are living including her niece. She finds them in good health, although she and the other captives are very hungry.

In the nineteenth remove, the party continues to move toward Wachuset, where Rowlandson lodges with one of her master's three wives. She is excited when two "praying Indians" arrive with a letter from the English about the captives. The Indians hold a meeting about the letter and call Rowlandson to them to ask how much her husband would give for her. She writes that she knows all of their possessions had been burned in the attack and she expected her husband had very little money. Still she





made a guess at twenty pounds, and they sent a message back to the English that this would be their price.

Rowlandson describes one of the rituals followed by the Natives at Wachuset after returning from a successful raid of the English. She describes the ritual in terms of the Devil, emphasizing her feeling that she is among the godless. She does describe being well treated by one Indian and his wife, who offered her good food although they had never seen her before.

During the twentieth remove, a man named John Hoar comes from the English with food, goods and money to trade for the captives. He also gives a pound of tobacco to Rowlandson from her husband, but she quickly alerts the reader that she had not asked for the tobacco and had given up the habit of smoking when she was captured. She sold the tobacco. After some negotiations, it was finally decided that she be allowed to go home.

Rowlandson returns to Boston with Mr. Hoar and is reunited with her husband. After some time and further trading, her two surviving children are also redeemed. She learns that her ransom was raised by donations and she further describes the kindness the church people of Boston showed in arranging for a house for her family. She explains that her eleven weeks and five days in captivity have given her a new appreciation for her faithful life in the church and once again describes the entire episode in terms of God's will. Just before closing the narrative, she once again mentions the shortcomings of the English army, which left Lancaster unprotected and missed the opportunity to catch the attacking Indians on the run. The Indians made fun of the slowness of the English she explains, and she brings up the episode at the river again, where the English turned back after the Indians crossed. She also mentions the strategy of the English of cutting down the corn and bean crops of the Indians, thinking this would starve them. She has learned during her captivity that they are very resilient and able to find food almost everywhere.



# The Journal of Madam Knight

## The Journal of Madam Knight Summary and Analysis

The next narrative is that of Sarah Kemble Knight, who made a journey from Boston to New York City and back in 1704. In an introduction to the narrative, the editor explains that Knight was the daughter of a Boston merchant who married a shipmaster and had one daughter. As her husband was often away at sea, she served as head of the household and earned an income from a shop and by teaching. The route to New York was becoming more traveled, the editor explains, but was still dangerous in places. Knight hired guides for each segment of the journey, negotiating their payment and arranging for lodging and food along the way.

Knight leaves her home in Boston in October, 1704, heading on horseback toward New Haven, Connecticut, a journey of about 200 miles. She is accompanied by a relative, Captain Robert Luist, to the town of Dedham, where she intends to meet up with the Western post, the rider carrying the mail toward Connecticut. The post does not arrive after a while and so she arranges for a guide to take her 12 miles further to the place where the post rider usually stays the night. She arrives at the house, owned by a family named Billings, who are surprised at what they first think is a woman traveling alone on the dark road. They provide her very basic lodging.

The next day she has pork and cabbage given to her for breakfast, which she is able to eat because she is very hungry, however "what cabbage I swallowed serv'd me for a Cudd the whole day after" (p. 55). This remark is typical of the frank humor Knight shows regarding her food and lodging at private homes along her journey. She is a fairly affluent woman and is used to more comfortable environments. She is not above sleeping in cramped rooms or eating simple food, however, although she usually has a witty remark to make about it.

Knight meets up with the post rider further along the road to New Haven and travels with him and a group of others almost to New Haven. She hires a young man to guide her the last stretch to the town. The road is well-traveled but sometimes treacherous, with swamps and river crossings slowing her down.

Knight makes several observations about the people of New Haven. Their laws are similar to those in Boston, although she finds them a "little too independent in their principles" (p. 63). They entertain themselves with lectures, riding from town to town, and the young men hold regular shooting contests. She takes special notice of the way they transact business, she being experienced in commerce herself. She also gives an amusing account of rural visitors to the stores in New Haven who do not come in and announce what they want to buy, but wait to be asked and then proceed to purchase one thing at a time.



Knight concludes her business in New Haven and decides to accompany a relative, Thomas Trowbridge, who has business to transact in New York City. They stay at private homes and inns along the way and Knight provides more commentary on her fare. "Here being very hungry, I desired a fricasee, which the Frenchman undertaking, managed so contrary to my notion of Cookery, that I hastened to Bed supperless" (p. 67).

Knight stays in New York City about two weeks. She remarks on the tall brick buildings which have a different style of hearth than houses in Boston. It is winter, and she notes that the main entertainment is riding to and from a place called the Bowery in sleighs. She leaves New York on December 21 with Trowbridge, heading back toward New Haven. They stay briefly in Norwalk, where she relates a funny story. Sheep dung is highly prized by the townspeople and the church owns a flock of sheep which are moved from pasture to pasture, with the owners of the pastures paying the church a fee for the privilege of keeping the sheep overnight. The system works well, she notes, except that one person returned the sheep the next day and they had all been shorn of their valuable wool. This wry story is typical of Knight's sense of humor in choosing the relate entertaining tales she hears along her journey.

After stopping in New Haven for several weeks, Knight sets to Boston in late February, arriving on March 3rd, 1705. She relates a treacherous river crossing along the last segment of her journey where she is taken by canoe across a swiftly-moving river while a guide swims across with her horse. It is one of many similar dangerous river crossings she endures on her trip and underlines the relative wildness of the country at the time. She concludes with a brief thanks to God for delivering her back safely to her mother and daughter after her journey of five months.



# Secret History of the Line - February to April, 1728

## Secret History of the Line - February to April, 1728 Summary and Analysis

The next narrative is by William Byrd II and is entitled "The Secret History of the Line." The introduction to the narrative by the editor gives some biographical information about the author, who was born in Virginia in 1674 to a wealthy family and sent to England for his education. He returned to Virginia on the death of his father to manage the family's large estate. After his first wife died of smallpox, he remarried. Active in politics, Byrd was appointed to lead a commission on behalf of Virginia to survey the disputed border between Virginia and North Carolina to the south. He wrote two accounts of the expedition, one called "History of the Dividing Line," meant for public distribution, and "The Secret History," which includes a more personal account that outlines some of the racier details and personal feuds that took place.

The Secret History opens with an explanation of Byrd's appointment to the Virginia commission to work with a similar commission from North Carolina to fix the location of the line between the two colonies. He gives fictitious names to the others in the party, chosen based on their characters. Three other commissioners, whom he calls Steddy, Firebrand and Meanwell, are appointed, with surveyors called Astrolabe and Capricorn. A chaplain is also appointed, called Dr. Humdrum. The governor of North Carolina appoints men he calls Jumble, Shoebrush, Plausible and Puzzle Cause. Furthermore, a mathematician he calls Orion is appointed to assist in the surveying.

After an exchange of letters between the Virginia and North Carolina teams, a date is set to meet in March, 1728. Byrd describes the coming together of the various members of his team and the group of men who will help push through the first part of the surveying, which is to be through a wide swamp called the Great Dismal Swamp through which nobody has ever traveled before.

The band of men move through the countryside toward the coast where they will start their survey. They camp along the way, with the leaders sometimes stopping at houses to seek entertainment, food and lodging. One of the attractions of the houses are the wives and daughters living there, and Byrd always comments on the relative attractiveness and charm of the women they met, as well as the attempts that some of the men make to get amorous with the women. These details are the type of thing Byrd leaves out of his official account.

The men boat out to an island off the coast where they intend to begin surveying the line. On the way, their boat frequently becomes grounded on sandbars, and Firebrand shows his quick temper by swearing at the oarsmen continuously and loudly. This is an



early introduction to the fiery-tempered Firebrand, with whom Byrd will have several disputes with over the course of the expedition.

After settling the line upon the island, the expedition moves back to land and the surveyors and several men are sent into the swamp through which the line runs. This wide swamp has never been fully explored and is thought by some to be impassable. While the men work their way through, Byrd and the other leaders move their provisions and equipment by horseback along the outer edge of the swamp. They lose touch with the men in the swamp, sometimes firing guns along the edges as a signal to see if any signal comes back.

As they move through the countryside along the swamp, the expedition is an attraction that brings people to look at them in curiosity. On Sundays, their chaplain gives sermons that attract a large number of people, although Byrd speculates that most of them attend in order to gaze at the strange men.

On March 22nd, the surveyors emerge from the swamp and Byrd includes a summary of their description of the conditions within. He praises the team highly for the difficulties they endured moving through the demanding environment. The men carried on in good spirits, he is told, except for Orion, the mathematician, who complained continuously and was all the more offended when nobody else would join in his sour mood. After emerging from the swamp, Orion complains to Firebrand that Astrolabe had given him personal offense by refusing to help him carry his load. Firebrand takes Orion's side in the matter and it is brought before Byrd, who said he would not punish anyone without having heard all sides, and Orion does not press the matter further. Firebrand, however, becomes even more disagreeable after this rebuke, Byrd notices.

The expedition moves along land in a regular routine. In the mornings they send the surveyors out ahead as they prepare to move their equipment and provisions forward. They camp near houses where possible, purchasing food and drink from the householders, as well as food for their horses where they can. Firebrand and others drink heavily at night whenever possible while Byrd does his best to avoid them. On Sundays they rest, and the chaplain gives a sermon attended by the local inhabitants.

Relations between the Virginia and North Carolina teams are mostly cordial, although Byrd has a generally low opinion of them. Firebrand, who he believes seeks to strengthen his own position against Byrd by seeking support from the North Carolina leaders, conspires to bring complaints before Byrd and to undermine his authority whenever possible.

On April 4, the party votes on moving just 2 miles more before stopping for the season. The surveyors create two copies of a map showing the location of the line as surveyed to that point, and the teams from both colonies sign the maps, each taking a copy. The expedition disbands and they move back toward their homes, with men being discharged as they near their own homes.



During the interim, the disputes involving Firebrand continue. The first dispute is over the date on which the teams from Virginia and North Carolina will meet again to continue their survey. Firebrand conspires with some of the North Carolina commissioners to oppose Byrd's suggestion that they start again on September 20. Despite Firebrand's efforts, the Council decides on September 20. There is also a dispute over the number of men to take and the matter of Byrd being given complete authority, which Firebrand opposes. He is appeased, however, when he is given three men who will answer directly to him.



# Secret History of the Line - April to November, 1728

## Secret History of the Line - April to November, 1728 Summary and Analysis

Byrd leaves his wife and family again on September 17, moving toward the point agreed on to meet on the 20th with the North Carolina team. The leaders and men assemble along the way in much the same fashion as in the earlier expedition. As their expedition will take them beyond the settled area of the colonies, extra men are brought along to hunt for game to provide meat. They move along as before, with the surveyors moving ahead in the morning and the others breaking down, moving, and setting up camp further along. Depending on the weather and terrain, sometimes the surveyors measure only a few miles, sometimes as much as 12 miles in a day. An Indian man is hired as a guide and to help with the hunting. The game consists largely of deer and turkey, with occasional bear.

Byrd takes it on himself to treat the various illnesses and injuries suffered by his men. His treatments consist mainly of inducing vomiting, giving laxatives, and bleeding, which he says usually relieve the men of their fevers and other complaints.

On October 5, a representative from the North Carolina team surprises Byrd by notifying him that they believe the line has been surveyed as far as is necessary to allow for the further growth of each colony for a long time, and that the North Carolina expedition intends to turn back for home. Byrd is dismayed by this news, as he understood that the order of the King was that they survey the line as far as possible, which he assumed would be to the mountains that stood to the west. He notes that the North Carolina team had brought enough provisions and men to continue on for several more weeks and wonders why they did not tell about their intentions sooner.

In preparation for the departure of the North Carolina team, two more maps are drawn up with the line surveyed to that point. The men from North Carolina also give written notice to Byrd that they agree upon the border up to that point, but that any extension of it surveyed by Byrd's team alone will be in dispute. Byrd returns a written reply outlining his objections to the sudden departure of the North Carolina team and implying they are directly disobeying the wishes of the King. Byrd is made more suspicious when Firebrand announces that he intends to return with the North Carolina team, as well. Byrd assumes he is in a hurry to get back to the Council to present his complaints about Byrd before he has a chance to defend himself. Despite their animosity, Byrd writes a letter to the governor praising Firebrand's service to the expedition, asking Firebrand to carry it back with him. The departure of Firebrand and the North Carolinians has a positive effect on the mood of the remaining Virginians, with the exception of Orion, Byrd notes, who, like Firebrand, took sides with them against Byrd.



Byrd and his men continue on until October 26, when the terrain begins to become so hilly that their horse have difficulty. They estimate they have surveyed the line to a length of just over 241 miles. The following day is Sunday and they rest, giving thanks that they have succeeded in their mission without any serious injury to anyone. They turn back and retrace their path toward the east, facing increasingly rainy weather that sometimes brings the river levels up dangerously high. On November 15, they reach the outer areas of habitation and stop at a small house for refreshment, where they are greatly pleased to be served potatoes and milk after a long diet of mostly meat. Byrd announces to his men that they have all performed their duties well and that he will have them paid as soon as possible. As they move through the inhabited areas, they will be discharged as they get close to their own homes. Byrd himself arrives home on November 22 to find his family well, although he learns that his son had been seriously ill while he was away. He concludes the Secret History with a list of the commissioners from each colony, the surveyors, and the men. He provides the real names of the men, only giving pseudonyms for the commissioners and surveyors. He also provides a table of the expenses incurred, which amount to one thousand pounds sterling. Finally, he gives a table of distances between the places mentioned in the history, as surveyed by the expedition.





# Itinerarium of Dr. Hamilton - Annapolis to New York

## Itinerarium of Dr. Hamilton - Annapolis to New York Summary and Analysis

The final narrative presented is by Dr. Alexander Hamilton. In the introduction, it is explained that Hamilton is a doctor living in Annapolis, Maryland, having come to America from Scotland where he was raised and educated. Suffering from tuberculosis, he embarks on a four-month journey through the Northeast in May 1744 at the age of 31, to escape the heat of the Maryland summer. He is an affluent gentleman, traveling at a leisurely pace with no special schedule or destination. The editor explains that one of the difficulties he faces is that each colony issues its own paper currency, so to avoid carrying a large amount of cash money he arranges for letters of introduction to various other gentlemen on his way who will provide him with credit.

Hamilton is an educated man who enjoys good company and conversation. Much of his journey consists of arriving in a town or city, finding an inn, and engaging others there in conversation. He also remarks on conversations overheard while traveling. He is an amateur naturalist, and takes note of plants that are new to him.

Hamilton leaves Maryland on May 30, 1744, making his way through Baltimore and on to Susquehanna, where he searches for ginseng root, having been told the plant has medicinal qualities. He provides a bleak portrait of a family at Susquehanna that invites him to share their supper of fish. He is astonished that they eat the fish from a single dish using their hands and eating the skin and scales. "They used neither knife, fork, spoon, plate, or napkin because, I suppose, they had none to use" (p. 181). It is as if he is looking backward in time, he remarks, to a savage age.

By June 5th, he has reached Pennsylvania and heads toward Philadelphia. Conversation along the way centers largely on the prospects of war against the French. Religion is another popular topic, and Hamilton expresses some strong views against some of the newer sects of Christianity that have appeared recently.

In Newcastle, Pennsylvania, Hamilton meets a man names Morrison who is remarkable in that he appears to have a good deal of wealth but dresses poorly and speaks like someone from the country rather than a refined gentleman. Morrison becomes angry at an inn when he is given service as if he was a tradesman or laborer rather than an affluent landowner.

Hamilton reaches Philadelphia on June 6th. He remarks on the regular grid pattern of the streets, which he seems to dislike because they offer no variety. The streets are filled with the scraps from the frequent building taking place, he notices. He stays in Philadelphia about a week, spending his time visiting with a local doctor named Bond,



who introduces him at a gentleman's club called the Governor's Club. On June 11th, a proclamation of the King of war against France is read by the Governor, along with a call to ship owners to outfit their vessels for protection and battle against hostile ships. Along with the King's proclamation, the Governor reads one of the people of Pennsylvania, denouncing war and hostility against France. This proclamation is in deference to the large Quaker population of Pennsylvania, who follow a doctrine of non-violence.

Hamilton leaves Philadelphia and crosses into New Jersey, on his way to New York. In Trenton, he stops at an inn, causing much curiosity as he arrives with his black servant, Dromo, riding before him. He meets a gentleman from Trenton who comes to visit him upon hearing of his arrival. The man's name is Cadwaller, and he proceeds to ask Hamilton of news from Maryland, asking about several people in particular. A funny exchange follows when Cadwaller asks about the doctor named Hamilton in Annapolis, who he had never met but had heard was in poor health. Hamilton joyfully announces that he is speaking to the man himself.

The next day, Hamilton travels to Brunswick, where he stays the night. On Friday the 15th of June, he crosses by ferry into New York.



# Itinerarium of Dr. Hamilton - New York to Boston

## Itinerarium of Dr. Hamilton - New York to Boston Summary and Analysis

Hamilton is impressed by the amount of shipping he sees in New York, a city which he describes as having "a very fine appearance." (p. 206) He finds lodging at an inn called the Cart and Horse, where he finds the usual company of other men gathering to drink and converse in the evenings. Hamilton does not drink as much as the "toapers" he encounters throughout his journey, a word he uses to describe those who drink to excess. Hamilton notes the fine appearance of the largest church in New York and is taken around by some gentlemen of the city to visit people in New York society. He is taken to look at the battery, a fortification at the south end of the city with the home of the Lieutenant Governor nearby. He is impressed by the gardens around the house and is told the platform around the fort is a place where men come after dark to hire "courtezans," or prostitutes.

After several days in New York, Hamilton leaves by boat to travel up the Hudson River to Albany. He travels with a man named Milne, a minister originally from Albany, and Milne's wife, a Dutch woman. Along the river journey he sometimes finds Milne's conversation overbearing and tiresome, but he maintains polite relations with him. Hamilton makes note of the islands and physical features of the river bank as they pass by. They occasionally stop at villages along the way to drop off and take on passengers, where he and Milne go ashore to visit a tavern or look at the local churches and buildings. He encounters several Dutch speakers along the journey and is dismayed that fewer and fewer of the people he meets speak English.

In Albany, Hamilton is the guest of Milne, and stays on an island owned by Milne. He is impressed by the large manor of the "patroon" of the city, Jeremiah Ranslaer, a Dutchman whose family was given the land by King Charles II. He is not as impressed by the women of Albany, who he says "both old and young are remarkably ugly." (p. 222)

On June 28, Hamilton rides to the village of Schenactady and remarks on the fine brick houses there. Milne takes him to visit Dutch doctors, who are mainly self-taught herbalists, he notes. By July 2, Hamilton writes, "I now began to be quite tired of this place where was no variety or choice, either of company or conversation, and one's ears perpetually invaded and molested with volleys of rough sounding Dutch, which is the language most in use here." (p. 227) He thanks Milne and returns to New York by the river. During his journey back, he is again dismayed to hear so many people speaking Dutch.



In New York he again makes the rounds of society and spends time conversing with other gentlemen at the regular club meetings they hold. He makes several observations of the remarks and behavior of these men as they proceed to get drunk while Hamilton sits by soberly. Nevertheless, Hamilton finds enough good company and conversation to proclaim New York as good as Philadelphia for supplying both.

On July 10, Hamilton leaves New York for Boston. He travels by water to New London, Connecticut, then by road through Rhode Island, where he is the guest of a wealthy Indian man who has taken to dressing like an Englishman. The man has a large house surrounded by a very large farm and receives Hamilton very politely.

He continues by road through Massachusetts, passing through Bristol and Dedham and reaching Boston late in the day on July 18.



# Itinerarium of Dr. Hamilton - Boston to Annapolis

## Itinerarium of Dr. Hamilton - Boston to Annapolis Summary and Analysis

Hamilton finds Boston to exceed Philadelphia and New York in the civility of its people and the high quality of the company he enjoys. He stays there ten days then takes a trip to Salem, Massachusetts, returning to Boston on August 4.

At an inn in Boston, Hamilton meets a French man named la Moinnerie who is keeping a low profile in his room out of fear he will be taken for a spy since the declaration of war with France. Moinnerie is studying English and Hamilton remarks on some of the amusing mistakes he makes in the language. Nevertheless, Hamilton is impressed with Moinnerie's manners and cheerful disposition even in the face of adversity.

Hamilton leaves Boston on August 15 and heads back toward New York, arriving back in the city on August 31. He returns to visit the society people he had met in his earlier stays and has a new suit of clothes made, having worn through his traveling clothes. He is delighted to receive a letter from Moinnerie and returns his letter, in French. He leaves New York headed toward home on September 11.

Hamilton travels through New Jersey and stops for a few days in Philadelphia. The increasingly rainy weather keeps him in his room many days, reading. Leaving Philadelphia on September 19 he stops briefly in the town of Chester, which he predicts will one day become the largest city in North America owing to the sober and dedicated nature of its inhabitants. He moves on toward Maryland, knowing he is getting close when he reaches a familiar road. He jokes that he knows that he has crossed into Maryland when every house he passes seems to have someone sick inside.

Hamilton arrives at Annapolis on September 27 having been gone four months and having traveled, by his reckoning, 1,624 miles. He reflects briefly on his journey as he ends the journal, remarking that the people in the northern colonies are larger and seem generally more healthy than those in Maryland. He finds one town as good as another in terms of "politeness and humanity" (p. 327) although Boston stands above the rest for its high level of civilization, despite its relatively small size.



# Characters

## Mary Rowlandson

The author of "The Restoration of Mary Rowlandson," Rowlandson is a mother of three children and the wife of a minister living in the village of Lancaster in the Massachusetts Colony in the 17th Century. While her husband is away in Boston in February, 1676, Lancaster is attacked by a group of hostile Native Americans who kill several of the residents and take Rowlandson captive. She travels with the Indians for eleven weeks before she is finally ransomed and returned to her husband.

Rowlandson's children are also captured and two of them are separated from her while the youngest dies from a wound received during the attack. Rowlandson herself is wounded, but survives. She is adept at sewing and knitting and trades her skills for money, food and other considerations from her captors. Rowlandson is deeply religious and frames her entire ordeal in terms of the will of God. She views the Indians as untrustworthy heathens, even the ones who profess to have accepted Christianity. At times she seems to admire their resourcefulness, but she ultimately views them as inferior. She is at times sharply critical of the English army that is supposed to protect the people of the colony, but which failed to prevent or defend the attack on Lancaster. She frames her narrative as a religious example to others to demonstrate that God will protect those whose faith remains strong.

## Sarah Kemble Knight

Sarah Kemble Knight is a resourceful woman living in Boston in the 17th and early 18th Centuries. She is the widow of a successful sea merchant who has become self-reliant owing to her husband's frequent absences at sea. She has a daughter who is 15 in 1704, when Madam Knight undertakes a journey from Boston to New Haven and from there on to New York and back. While she is an intrepid traveler, as a woman Knight does not travel alone and arranges for guides along the way or travels with postal riders. She stays at houses along the way that commonly take in travelers for a fee. She is not used to what can be cramped, unclean and uncomfortable accommodation, and frequently includes remarks in her narrative about the bad food and poor company. These remarks are made with wit and humor, however, demonstrating that she knows this is what she can expect when traveling.

Knight is an astute businessperson and is quick to observe the fashion and trends in commerce wherever she visits. She also finds humor in the regional differences in dress and dialect as she moves through Massachusetts and Connecticut. While she finishes her narrative with a short thanks to God for keeping her and her daughter safe while they are apart, she does not frame her narrative in religious terms, providing a contrast to the narrative of Mary Rowlandson that precedes the narrative in the collection.



## William Byrd II

William Byrd II is a privileged and educated Virginian living in the colonies in the early 18th Century. Born in Virginia, he is educated in England, as is fashionable among the wealthy colonists. He returns to Virginia as a young man to manage the estates of his family. His first wife dies of smallpox and he remarries, having a total of six children from the two marriages. In 1728, Byrd is appointed as a commissioner of a team charged with surveying the disputed border between Virginia and North Carolina to the south. Byrd is to lead the Virginia commission, which will work alongside a similar commission from North Carolina. The other commissioners are chosen mainly through political considerations, which Byrd describes in his "Secret History of the Line." The narrative is an alternate account of the expedition produced alongside his official report, but including the personal conflicts and sometimes bawdy behavior of his men.

Byrd has a generally superior attitude toward the others in his party, calling all of them by pretend names in his narrative that reflect his opinion of their character. His chief rival with a short temper is called Firebrand, for example, while he calls the dreary minister who accompanies them Dr. Humdrum. His opinion is similarly low regarding his counterparts from North Carolina. Byrd is well versed in the medical practices of the day, which consist largely of inducing vomiting, bleeding or giving laxatives. He regularly recommends and administers these treatments to his men. He is interested in nature, and notes the different topography, plants, and animals that he encounters along the expedition.

## Dr. Alexander Hamilton

Dr. Alexander Hamilton is a colonist living in Maryland in the mid 18th Century. Born in Scotland in 1712, he moves to Maryland to practice medicine in 1739 settling in Annapolis where he becomes a popular doctor. He contracts tuberculosis, which weakens his constitution, and in 1744 he decides to escape the oppressively hot summer of Maryland and tour the northern colonies. He sets out at the end of May, 1744 and makes his way through Philadelphia and New York to Boston, stopping at several smaller towns along the way. He returns to Annapolis in September, having traveled over 1,600 miles.

Unlike the other three travelers included in the collection, Hamilton travels only for his own leisure, having no particular business or destination. He travels by horseback along with his black servant, Dromo, usually stopping at established inns where he receives better accommodation and the company of gentlemen similar to himself. He lies to take part in long conversations on literature and politics, although he does not share the fondness for alcohol that many of the gentlemen he meets seem to have. He has strong opinions on religion and dislikes when the subject comes up in conversation.

In Philadelphia, New York and Boston, Hamilton lingers among the higher social classes of those towns. He enjoys attending club meetings to discuss intellectual topics of the



day, although many of the discussions are dominated by the recent declaration of war by England against France.

## Joseph Rowlandson

Joseph Rowlandson is the husband of Mary Rowlandson. He is a minister who leaves his village of Lancaster to travel to Boston in an effort to convince English soldiers to return to protect his village from Indian attack. His wife and children are taken captive while he is away. He works to arrange the ransom of his wife and brings her to Boston with him. They later ransom their children as well.

## King Philip

King Philip, also called Metacomet, is the leader of a group of Native Americans from different tribes who wage a steady war against the English colonists. Mary Rowlandson is taken to a large encampment where Philip is living and meets the chief, who asks her to make a shirt for his son.

## Caleb Trowbridge

Caleb Trowbridge is a cousin of Sarah Knight who lives in New Haven, Connecticut. When his wife dies, Knight travels to New Haven to help him settle matters related to her estate. This is the occasion for the journey that she relates in her narrative.

## Firebrand

Firebrand is one of the commissioners who travels with William Byrd on behalf of Virginia. He is short-tempered and resentful of Byrd's authority, as Byrd depicts him. He attempts to undermine Byrd and sometimes becomes violent with other members of the expedition who displease him. Firebrand is the fictitious name given him by Byrd to describe his character.

## Reverend Humdrum

Reverend Humdrum is another of the men who accompany William Byrd on the surveying expedition. He gives sermons on Sundays and performs baptisms for the people living at the far reaches of the inhabited area of the colonies as the surveyors pass through. He has a mild personality, which Byrd sums up in the fictitious name that Byrd gives him. He is easily shocked by the loose behavior of the other men, which amuses Byrd.





## Mr. Milne

Mr. Milne is a minister from Albany, New York, who accompanies Dr. Hamilton on his journey from New York City to Albany and provides him with lodging once in Albany, taking him around to visit the social elite and showing him the important buildings and features of the area. Hamilton is polite to Milne, but considers him to be not as much an intellectual as he imagines himself.

## Moinnerie

Moinnerie is a French man Hamilton meets in Boston who provides him with friendly and amusing companionship. At first afraid to leave his room for fear of being taken as a French spy, Moinnerie clears his name with the governor of the colony and goes out with Hamilton, with whom he practices speaking English. Hamilton relates some amusing stories regarding Moinnerie's attempts to speak English.



# Objects/Places

## Colonial America

Refers to the period in American history before the English colonies declared independence from England in 1776. All of the narratives in the collection describe Colonial America.

## Lancaster

A village in the colony of Massachusetts located near the frontier. Lancaster is the home of Mary Rowlandson, who is captured by Native Americans when they attack the village.

## Wachusset

The large encampment where Rowlandson was held near the end of her captivity, and where King Philip was staying. Located along the Connecticut River near the present border of Vermont.

## Boston

The largest town in the Massachusetts colony, Boston is located on a bay of the Atlantic Ocean. Three of the authors in the collection mention the town. Rowlandson eventually is taken to Boston after her rescue. Sarah Kemble lives in Boston and travels from there to New York and back. Dr. Hamilton visits Boston twice on his journey and finds it to be the most civilized of the towns he visits.

## New Haven

A town in Connecticut where Sarah Kemble stops to assist a family member in settling an estate.

## New York

At the time of Kemble and Hamilton's visits, New York is not much more than a town located on the southern tip of Manhattan Island. Kemble visits the town in the winter and notes the popular pastime of riding in sleighs in the snow. Hamilton visits the town three times in his journey during the summer months.

## **Annapolis**

A port city in the Maryland colony where Dr Hamilton lives and practices.

## **Virginia**

The southern American colony where William Byrd II owns a large estate. Virginia borders North Carolina to the north. Byrd's narrative describes the surveying of this border.

## **North Carolina**

A southern American colony located south of Virginia and sharing a border with it.

## **The Great Dismal**

An expansive swamp near the coast of the Atlantic Ocean between Virginia and North Carolina. Byrd's survey crew must pass through the swamp to complete their survey.

## **Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**

One of the principal towns in Colonial America when Dr. Hamilton takes his journey in 1744. Hamilton stops in Philadelphia at the beginning and hear the end of his journey.

# Themes

## Religion

Each of the four writers included in this collection of travel narratives discuss religion as a regular part of their lives and as a central part of colonial American society. They present differing approaches to religion, however, that are interesting to compare.

Mary Rowlandson is the wife of a minister and makes her religious faith a prominent part of her narrative. Indeed, she claims that her reason for publishing her story is to provide an example for other religious people of how God delivered her from the ordeal and how she never lost faith. Her suffering was the will of God, intended to demonstrate his power to her and to those who hear her story. Rowlandson inserts Bible passages into her narrative to illustrate how she was guided at all times by God's word.

Sarah Knight is a businesswoman, and she mentions religious matters mainly in a factual way, describing the different churches she sees and relating how church governance and traditions vary from those in Boston. She is slightly critical of these differences, but does not make religion or religious ideas a central part of her entertaining narrative. She does conclude with a brief thanks to God for delivering her home safely and keeping her mother and daughter safe in her absence, but this reads almost like a formality she includes as a matter of course. Nowhere else in the narrative does she appeal directly to God or make reference to her deep faith in the way that Rowlandson does.

William Byrd also seems to treat religion as a matter of course. His group of commissioners include a minister who travels with them to provide the men with sermons on Sunday so they might follow the commandment to keep the Sabbath. One of the minister's other duties is to perform baptisms of people living on the frontier who do not have ready access to any churches or clergymen. Byrd halts the expedition on Sundays for rest, but he describes the minister satirically, making fun of his uptight ways and giving him the fictional name "Dr. Humdrum" to indicate his general opinion of him. Byrd does not appear to hold the clergy in very high esteem or to be especially devout about observing the Sabbath. It seems like a formality to him.

By the time Dr. Hamilton is traveling through the northern colonies, settlement has broadened and a more diverse group of people exists. There are several established churches, denominations and sects that he describes, including the English church, the Dutch church, Quakers, Presbyterians, Seventh-Day Adventists, Jews and a sect called "New-Light," which he is highly critical of. Conversations between Hamilton and the other gentlemen he visits in Philadelphia, New York and Boston often center on religion and he is frequently critical in his journal of religious beliefs he believes are wrong or misleading. Religion has become a topic for intellectuals, who debate the finer points of observance and the true meaning of the Bible. While it is still assumed, as in the earlier



narratives, that a person will have some kind of religion as part of his life, the wide variety of beliefs means that not everyone shares a common religious experience.

## The Changing Nature of Travel

The different style of travel described in the four narratives chart the changing nature of travel in colonial America as it becomes more prosperous and widely settled. In colonial Massachusetts during Mary Rowlandson's time, travel is dangerous. She lives near a frontier with hostile Native Americans. Her village has a small fortification and some of the houses also have simple fortification against Indian attack. People travel only when necessary, such as when Rowlandson's husband goes away to Boston to seek help from the English army in protecting Lancaster. Her journey does not take place on roads, but goes through wilderness.

By the time Sarah Knight makes her trip from Boston 30 years after Rowlandson's ordeal, there are well-established routes between the settlements and towns through the New England colonies. Although there are roads, travel is not always safe and the routes are not always clear. Kemble hires guides or travels with others for the length of her trip, and describes several occasions where she is fearful of being washed away in a dangerous river crossing or falling from a rickety bridge. She does fall from her horse at times. She sees Native Americans along her journey, but they are no longer the violent raiders of Rowlandson's narrative. She and the other colonial still largely view them as savages, however they do not represent a serious danger to travelers.

As the colonies expand, the need to define their borders increases, and this is the primary purpose of William Byrd's journey in 1729. As the inhabitants of the colonies of Virginia and North Carolina spread out into the open country, it becomes necessary to fix the location of the line between the colonies and to extend it out beyond the frontier to allow for further growth. Byrd and his team are soon beyond the reach of paths and roads, traveling in open country as they survey by day and camp at night. He is an explorer, pushing the frontier of America westward.

By the time Dr. Alexander Hamilton is making his travels in 1744, it is possible for an affluent gentleman to travel purely for pleasure. Several prosperous towns have arisen and trade routes between them have established reliable roads. Professional, educated people like Hamilton now live in many places throughout the colonies, and Hamilton is fond of visiting them and engaging in long conversation. While Mrs Knight 40 years earlier sometimes had to stay in private homes that took in travelers, Hamilton finds established inns throughout the New England colonies where he finds comfortable accommodation.

## Alcohol

Each of the four authors in this collection of narratives makes regular reference to the use of alcohol by others and sometimes by themselves. the consumption of alcohol



appears to have played an important, if not always beneficial role in colonial American society.

In 1675, Mary Rowlandson lives among several devoutly religious people. Although she does not mention using alcohol herself, she does admit to smoking tobacco, although she seems somewhat ashamed of it. In her narrative, alcohol is something craved by the Indians she considers to be heathens. She describes how the Native man who was given ownership of her was at one point willing to ransom her for alcohol:

"When we were lain down, my master went out of the wigwam, and by and by sent in an Indian called James the Printer, who told Mr. Hoar, that my master would let me go home tomorrow, if he would let him have one pint of liquors." (p.39)

Sarah Knight and Dr. Hamilton, although writing some 40 years apart, have similar stories to tell of stopping at inns and public houses along their journey and being kept awake by the loud and annoying conversations of drunken men. While Dr. Hamilton drinks moderately himself, he is highly critical of gentlemen who get too drunk. Mrs. Knight admits to drinking nothing stronger than hot chocolate.

In William Byrd's narrative, daily alcohol consumption is a fact of life among his traveling survey crew. Like the other authors in this group, he is critical of drunkenness and loud and obnoxious drunken behavior. Like Dr. Hamilton, however, he also drinks moderately. His main objection, also like Dr. Hamilton, is that drunkenness lowers the quality of the conversation he so much enjoys.

# Style

## Perspective

"Colonial American Travel Narratives" is a collection of four narratives written at different times in history. Each of the authors presents an independent perspective. The first narrative, written by Mary Rowlandson, tells the story of her captivity for eleven weeks among the Native Americans who were hostile toward the English colonists. Written after her rescue, Rowlandson presents a religious interpretation of her ordeal, framing the events in terms of God's will. She writes that she feels she was put through the crisis to provide an example to others that God will preserve the faithful. Rowlandson travels unwillingly, and she is suspicious and fearful of her captors. Her perspective in describing them afterwards is critical and hostile.

The second narrative presented is by Sarah Kemble Knight. Knight is a businesswoman and teacher traveling from Boston to New Haven, Connecticut, to help a relative with some business affairs. She is a confident person with a relatively sophisticated and educated background traveling among the rural population and staying in crude houses and inns along the road. Her perspective is one of a wary, privileged person in a situation less comfortable than what she is used to. Kemble writes about the poor food and uncomfortable conditions, but she uses humor and sarcasm to maintain a light perspective on her troubles.

The third narrative in the collection is that of William Byrd, II, who leads a commission of Virginians to survey the border between Virginia and North Carolina. Byrd is a wealthy landowner in Virginia and has a full education. He holds an inferior view of the other leaders of the expedition as his remarks and the satirical names he provides them reveal. He praises the hardworking laborers who attend the expedition and do much of the actual hard work. His perspective is one of a privileged elite performing an important duty to his king.

The final narrative is also by a privileged gentleman, Dr. Alexander Hamilton. Unlike the other three travelers in the book, Hamilton travels purely for his own entertainment and recreation. He takes a casual perspective toward the people and places he visits, noting on the social customs and the conversations he has with those he meets. Hamilton does not drink to excess, by his own account, but notes that many of the other gentlemen he meets are frequently drunk. He shows his dim view of their behavior several times. He also has some definite views on religion, which come out in his remarks.

## Tone

The tone among the four narratives differs with each author. The first narrative by Mary Rowlandson is serious in tone, describing her ordeal as a captive of hostile Native



Americans. She describes in detail the gruesome fatal wounds that some of her fellow villagers received during the raid in which she is captured, and indicates her deep sorrow when her own wounded child dies in her arms shortly after they are taken. Rowlandson takes a deeply religious perspective on her ordeal and quotes regularly from the Bible with examples of how God has tried the patience and faith of others.

Sarah Knight's narrative is much lighter in tone. She has a humorous and self-effacing style of describing what she sees as somewhat backward rural people and their customs. She sometimes describes unpleasant episodes, such as when some bad food makes her vomit, in roundabout language that makes light of the issue. She repeats humorous stories and passes along rumors and observations in a conversational way that makes her narrative entertaining.

William Byrd uses a similar method of employing roundabout language to describe some of the more blunt topics in his narrative, while simultaneously maintaining a light and humorous tone. Byrd also includes some of the dry facts and figures of his surveying expedition along with his observations on the plants and animals he finds, and these passages have a less lively tone. When he is describing the conflicts between himself and the other commissioners, or making fun of the mild-mannered minister with them, or relating the sometimes bawdy and drunken behavior of his fellow travelers however, Byrd's sarcasm and flowery style are similar to Knight's in their entertaining qualities.

Dr. Hamilton's narrative is very similar to Knight's and Byrd's in tone. Like them, he often employs roundabout language to poke fun at others. He is often blunt, too however, especially when criticizing the drunken pronouncements on religion and politics made by some of the other gentlemen he meets.

## Structure

"Colonial American Narratives" is a collection of four separate pieces of writing by four different authors. The narratives are preceded by an extensive introduction by the editor who places each narrative in its historical context and provides some background information about the authors. The introduction is followed by a list of suggested texts for more information.

Following the introductory material the narratives are presented in chronological order, beginning with "The Restoration of Mary Rowlandson," which describes events that took place in 1675. The next narrative is "The Journal of Madam Knight" from 1704 followed by "The Secret History of the Line" by William Byrd in 1729. The final narrative, "The Itinerarium of Dr. Hamilton" is from 1744. Each narrative is preceded by its own introduction by the editor as well as a map showing the areas described in the narrative.

By their nature, the travel narratives are all structured in chronological fashion, like a journal. Rowlandson's narrative, which is written in retrospect after her captivity, is divided into sections based on each time she was moved by the Indians who had





captured her. While she marks the passing of weeks within her narrative by referring to the Sabbath days, she does not provide exact dates and places for each portion of her tale. The other three narratives are structured more like journals, with daily entries of where the traveler goes on that day and describing the day's events. All of the journeys described in the book are "round trip" with the writer beginning and ending at the same place.



## Quotes

"On the tenth of February 1675, came the Indians with great numbers upon Lancaster: their first coming was about sunrising; hearing the noise of some guns, we looked out; several houses were burning, and the smoke ascending to heaven" (Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson, p. 9).

"The first week of my being among them I hardly ate any thing; the second week I found my stomach grow very faint for want of something; and yet it was very hard to get down their filthy trash; but the third week, though I could think how formerly my stomach would turn against this or that, and I could starve and die before I could eat such things, yet they were sweet and savory to my taste" (Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson, p. 19).

"I have seen the extreme vanity of this world: One hour I have been in health, and wealthy, wanting nothing. But the next hour in sickness and wounds, and death, having nothing but sorrow and affliction" (Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson, p. 47).

"Monday, Octb'r. the Second, 1704. About three o'clock afternoon, I begun my journey from Boston to New-Haven, being about two Hundred Mile. My Kinsman, Captain Robert Luist, waited on me as farr as Dedham, where I was to meet the Western post" (The Journal of Madam Knight, p. 52).

"There are everywhere, in the towns as I passed, a number of Indians the natives of the country, and are the most savage of all the savages of that kind that I had ever seen: little or no care taken (as I heard upon enquiry) to make them otherwise" (The Journal of Madam Knight, p. 64).

"...the next day being March 3d we got safe home to Boston, where I found my aged and tender mother and my dear and only child in good health, with open arms, ready to receive me, and my kind relations and friends flocking in to welcome me and hear the story of my transactions and travels, I having this day been five months from home" (The Journal of Madam Knight, p. 74).

"It was afterwards agreed by the Commissioners on both Sides, to meet on the North Shoar of Coratuck Inlet, on the 5th day of the following March in Order to run the Dividing Line. In the mean time those on the Part of Virginia divided the trouble of making the necessary preparations" (Secret History of the Line, p. 86).

"It is easy to imagine the hardships the poor Men underwent in this intolerable place, who besides the Burdens on their Backs, were oblig'd to clear the way before the Surveyors, & to measure & mark after them. However they went thro' it all not only with Patience, but cheerfulness" (Secret History of the Line, p. 105).



"We cou'd not decamp before 11, the People being so much engaged with their Beef; I found it always a Rule that the greater our Plenty, the later we were in fixing out" (Secret History of the Line, p. 162).

"I set out from Annapolis in Maryland, upon Wednesday the 30th of May at eleven o'clock in the morning; contrary winds and bad weather prevented my intended passage over Chesapeak Bay; so taking the Patapscoe road, I proposed going by the way of Bohemia to Newtown upon Chester, a very circumflex course, but as the journey was intended only for health and recreation, I was indifferent whether I took the nearest or the farthest route, having likewise a desire to see that part of the country" (Itinerarium of Dr. Hamilton, p. 178).

"Just as I dismounted at Tradaway's, I found a drunken Club dismissing. Most of them had got upon their horses, and were seated in an oblique situation, deviating much from a perpendicular to the horizontal plane, a posture quite necessary for keeping the center of gravity within its proper base, for the support of the superstructure; hence we deduce the true physical reason why our heads overloaded with liquor become too ponderous for our heels" (Itinerarium of Dr. Hamilton, p. 180).

"I found but little difference in the manners and character of the people in the different Provinces I passed thro' ; but as to constitutions and complexions, air and government, I found some variety. Their forms of government in the northern Provinces I look upon to be much better and happier than ours, which is a poor, sickly, convulsed State" (Itinerarium of Dr. Hamilton, p. 327).



## Topics for Discussion

What role does religion play in the journeys of each of the authors?

What changes in colonial America are evident through the writings of the authors in this collection?

Mary Rowlandson opens her narrative giving justification for making her story public. Why might she feel the need to explain herself?

Sarah Knight is an unusual woman for her time. How does she acknowledge this in her narrative?

What do you think William Byrd's intention was in writing an official report as well as a "secret" history of his journey?

How does Dr. Hamilton's narrative differ from the previous three in the collection? What similarities does he have with the other authors?

What are the obstacles to travel faced by the different authors in this collection as they travel. How do these obstacles change over time? What obstacles remain the same? Why?